Shaping Diyarbakır through words.
Representations and narrations of the city in Kurdish and Turkish literature during the twentieth and twenty-first century.

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to discuss the image of the city of Diyarbakır as emerging from Kurdish and Turkish literature throughout the twentieth century. Diyarbakır city represents a highly contentious place in socio-political and cultural terms for the Kurdish vis-à-vis the Turkish imagined community. The first chapter is dedicated to the image of the city previous to the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 as emerging from accounts of travellers from different ages and different languages. Then, in four different chapters, four different corpuses of Turkish and Kurdish literature are taken under the focus of the analysis. Each corpus allows the discussion of certain aspects and themes related to the city. Overall, each chapter and each corpus constitute a piece of the deconstructed literary image of the city, which is at the centre of this research.

Since Diyarbakır is a contested city, its representations are deeply involved in processes of appropriation and symbolization of place. Therefore, in the shaping of literary Diyarbakır throughout the twentieth century, the conflicting political dynamics between the Turkish State and local Kurdish actors play a crucial role.

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1. Introduction

This research engages with the literary image of the city of Diyarbakır, Turkey's largest Kurdish city. After an introduction on the historical image of the city, the research focuses on the period beginning in 1923, the year of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey. The state founded in that year undertook a multi-faceted endeavour to modernize the territory it governed and its people's mentality. This meant a significant reorganization of the urban configuration of the country and of the structure of each city. For Diyarbakır, this process signified an unprecedented historical development that brought to light, on the urban level, the deep incongruity between the newly founded Turkish State and its non-Turkish, and particularly Kurdish, population. Almost a century later, Diyarbakır has gone a long way to becoming the emblematic city for the Kurds in Turkey, the principal urban face of their conflict with the State.

Diyarbakır is a city shaped by a clash between the State and the city's population. However, in this research, rather than focusing on this clash *per se*, I analyse the literary reflections of such discord. After an overview of the appearances of this ancient city in the written records, I look at the portraits of it offered by Turkish and Kurdish writers. I look at the ways these selected writers lived in, perceived and represented the city to others, through the medium of literature. With their words, writers contribute to the definition, or rather to the continuous re-definition of the identity of this city. The particular perspective of each writer offers a reflection of the many *Diyarbakırs* that are present simultaneously in the same place. This operation I believe, allows the reader to elaborate a complex, surely not complete, image of this city which is crucial to the understanding of the history of the Kurdish issue in Turkey, of its spatial dynamics, of its cultural implications, and of its social actuality.

Past and recent events are just there to remind us how difficult is for the Turkish State and the local Kurdish population to find ways of peaceful and communal cohabitation in this city. In 1925, the first Kurdish rebellion against the Republic of Turkey saw Diyarbakır as one of its main theatres. Ninety years later, in 2015, extremely violent clashes between the Turkish military and armed Kurdish youth activists of the PKK[1], brought destruction to vast areas of the historical town. One year later the Turkish Government expropriated almost 80% of the historical town (known as Sur) and appointed a trustee to administer the municiapality of the city instead of the elected Kurdish mayor Gültan Kışanak, who was arrested and jailed on charges of being a member of the PKK.

These recent events took place while I was striving to reach the final section of this research. While they significantly hindered my ability to concentrate on merely literary representations of the city, they strongly reaffirmed the relevance and the modernity of the spatial struggle in Diyarbakır. However, and this brings me closer to the very argument of this thesis, the space in Diyarbakır (perhaps in any other place too) is not only physical but also representational. Therefore, the clash is not merely physical but also representational. Whilst the Kurdish youth claimed to defend with weapons a political autonomy in their own city, the Turkish nationalists widely circulated images and video-clips of Turkish soldiers ‘violating’ or ‘liberating’ (according to one’s perspective) that space, tracing nationalist and Turkish-supremacist slogans on Diyarbakır’s walls or on the blackboards of destroyed schools in the historical neighbourhood of Sur. They hung huge Turkish flags on Diyarbakır’s ancient city wall. Both actors were advancing claims on the same city and the representations of the space they gave were crucial to justify their actions.

Hence, this thesis looks at the various claims over the ‘ownership’, the ‘identity’, the true ‘personality’ of Diyarbakır by various actors in different historical periods though their writings. The clash over the space of the city is in fact represented in literature, but also played through literature.

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[1] Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê – Kurdistan Workers’ Party, is an organization founded in 1978. Since 1984 the PKK is running a guerrilla warfare against the Turkish State. Its recognized leader is Abdullah Öcalan, jailed in 1999. It is considered a terrorist organization in Turkey, the U.S. and EU. Its political ideology is based on Marxism-Leninism and in a first phase Kurdish nationalism; its first aim was to establish an independent Kurdish State through an anti-colonial struggle. From the mid-1990s its ideology became distanced from outright nationalism and developed towards concepts of federalism and democratic autonomy.

Before moving into the detail of each chapter, a brief discussion of the history of Diyarbakır, especially after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, is due, along with a discussion of the theoretical debate that informs and lays the ground for the conception and writing of this doctoral dissertation.

2. Diyarbakir's real-and-imagined space

In the wake of the so called Spatial Turn and of the work of authors such as Lefebvre, Harvey, Soja, Bermann and Massey (among others), who have shed light upon the importance of the spatial embodiment of power relationships, scholars have tried to highlight better the relevance of the space axis in shaping and reflecting social dynamics. Applying this perspective to Turkey's Kurdish question, authors like Houston, Öktem, Gambetti, Jongerden, Üngör and others focused on the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles, analysing how "the dialectics of power of appropriation and re-appropriation, symbolization and re-symbolization operate" in the spatial realm (Gambetti and Jongerden 2015) between the Turkish state and the Kurdish subject. In this context Diyarbakır emerges as a key stage and as an emblematic paradigm (Gambetti 2005, 2010).

From the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Turkish authorities developed a variety of spatial policies intended to produce the new space of the Turkish homeland. The population was to be shaped according to the Turkish nationalist paradigm, and specifically, the Kurdish population was to be Turkified; the early republican Turks perceived the Kurds as "future-Turks" (Yeğen 2007) or "Turks in the making" (Scalbert-Yücel 2015). Therefore, in the urban milieu, "the time and space of the ethnic other" had to be incorporated or obliterated (Öktem 2004a), starting from the very names of places; the State in the early Republican time and then again in the 1950s and 60s and after the 1980 coup d'état, strove to substitute the names of places that were non-Turkish sounding or reminiscent of cultural specificities other than the Turkish one (Öktem 2008; Jongerden 2007). The name 'Diyarbakır'[2] was conceived as a Turkification of the spurious 'Diyarbekir' with a decision taken by the Türk Dili Kurumu (The Turkish Language Institution) in 1937. This reform, however, "destroyed the meanings of the former, obfuscated historical connections and ethno-religious patterns, but failed to replace it with an alternative sense of meanings" and therefore proved misplaced in the long term (Öktem, 2008, 65).

Not only in the southeast, but also throughout the whole of Turkey, the re-settlement tendencies steered towards urban settlements, which were seen as means of modernization. In the Kemalist elite's outlook, the switch to urban lifestyle, as opposed to that of villages, was a necessary step to fulfil the building of a modern nation and eventually to create the Turkish citizen. The city space had to be designed so that no other sense of narrative except of Turkish could be expressed. Christopher Houston defines the Turkish cities after the foundation of the Republic as "Kemalist":

> Sites signifying the Turkish nation, through the performing and disciplining of what we might call an excess – in the spatial sphere a hypersensitivity – of Turkish nationalist identity. Here I include the physical or directive design of public space, its symbols, its sensory order (sounds and smells), its rituals and its expected convivialities (Houston 2008, 2005).

Therefore, the city became the place of a symbolic and cultural exile. For the "ethnic other", the city became a place signifying the inferiority of its ethnic membership and the illegitimacy of its own culture, language and memory. Again, with Houston:

> the State's sometimes murderous incorporation of Kurdish regions into the Turkish Republic has encouraged many Kurds to imagine themselves as a

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[2] The name of Diyarbakır can be subject to many different spellings in the sources I will use in this chapter. It can be Diyarbekir, Diyar-I Bekir, Diyarbekr. In addition, the other name derived from the Greek-Latin Amida can be used in different spelling such as Amid, Amed, Qara Amid, Karamid and others. In particular, Amed is nowadays recognized by Kurdish nationalists as the city's Kurdish name. Throughout the dissertation, the city will be named with its official name, except in particular cases, where the author cited use a different name.

> nation or ümmet under occupation, sedentary exiles in their own land (Houston 2005).

In sum, during the Turkish nation-building process a new organization of the cities was much needed, to mark a concrete and perceivable fissure with the Ottoman past; as noted by Bozdoğan the Turkish example shows well "how paintings, artwork, buildings, projects and urban spaces are active means by which modern national identities are produced and reproduced" (Bozdoğan 2008). In this endeavour the eastern Anatolian regions represented a difficult challenge because of their ethnic variety (Üngör 2012b). Diyarbakır in particular, being the largest urban centre of a region that "boasted a formidable diversity of ethnic and religious groups" (Üngör 2012b), was the place in which policies of modernization, nationalization, and homogenization "were applied in the most serious way" (Çağlayan 2014). It had to be transformed into a "strong centre of Turkishness" and in fact Diyarbakır's Turkishness was constantly repeated in official documents of the early Republican era (Çağlayan 2014); claims that continue to this day in the ultranationalist Turkish outlook (Üşümezsoy 2010). The ethnic homogenisation of the region and of the city in particular moved in three phases: the elimination of the Christian population; the deportation of sectors of the Kurdish population, and the assimilation of the remaining Kurdish population through education (Üngör 2012b).

Nonetheless, the discrepancy between the nationalist narrative inscribed in the city and the culture inherited by its inhabitants constitutes the basis upon which the counter-hegemonic struggle of re-appropriation and re-symbolization relies.

The first Kurdish revolt of the Republican era (1925), known by the name of Shaikh Said, affected Diyarbakır's region, but it was not an urban revolt. In that event, Diyarbakır city was firmly in the hands of the Turkish Government and the Seventh Army corps was stationed there. The city was a target in the aspiration of the Kurdish rebels, led by the Shaikh, to which they tried to lay siege. However, when most of the rebellious troops retreated to the mountains, the leaders of the revolt were hanged in Diyarbakır, marking a wound linked to the city in Kurdish collective memory. As will be seen in the analytical chapters, these events have had a huge influence on descriptions of the city by Turkish nationalist writers of the Kemalist era, as well as on contemporary Kurdish nationalist writers. However, it is only during the late 1960s and the 1970s (Güneş 2015, 49) that the urbanized and educated Kurdish national elite progressively affirmed and selected Diyarbakır as their main urban seat. The landmark election of Mehdi Zana as mayor of Diyarbakır in 1977 (Dorronsoro and Watts 2009) signs a turning point for two reasons: first, the Kurdish elite seized a State instrument, which is the Municipality, starting off, for the first time, an opposition conducted from within the State machine; and second, Diyarbakır became the city-symbol with which this struggle identifies itself. By some European spectators, the city starts to be called "the capital of Turkish Kurdistan". The Kemalist signs, through which the cityscape was affirming its belonging to the body of the Turkish State, began to be contested; the need for new symbolizations and narrations coherent with the ethnic and cultural local reality was voiced. Strategies of "re-appropriation" of the memories obliterated by the State nationalist cultural and educational policies (Üngör 2012b) were put into practice. Even if Zana's political experiment could run only for a short time, it breached the monolithic state narrative that made possible, in the following years, the resurgence of alternative narratives. The third chapter of this dissertation will analyse the surge of new cultural narratives in Diyarbakır, starting from the legacy of Mehdi Zana's election and the political memoirs he wrote later.

The 1980s opened in Turkey with a heavy repressive season following the military coup. Diyarbakır is emblematic of that period, because in its notorious prison the military junta carried out some of the most horrific atrocities of modern history (Zeydanlıoğlu 2009). This period is very important in the discourse of Kurdish nationalism and the prison is a hugely influential theme in contemporary literature in Turkey. However, one of the side-effects of the violent practices of Diyarbakır prison was that of turning a generation of Kurdish activists into a generation of Kurdish armed fighters (Zeydanlıoğlu 2009). The resistance in the prison of Diyarbakır, the re-activation of the myth of Kawa the blacksmith and the calendarization of *Newroz* celebrations (Van Bruinessen 2016), the conceptualization of Kurdistan as a colony (Güneş 2015, 83) with

Diyarbakır seen as its biggest occupied city (Uzun 2005), were among the key features of the modern Kurdish nationalist discourse. In fact, the armed guerrilla fight started by the PKK in 1984 raised the Turkish-Kurdish conflict to a completely different level: that of a national liberation struggle (Güneş 2015, 81). This period of time, to the mid 1990s, is remembered as Diyarbakır's "bloody years" and the image the city projects into literature during those years is dark and grim.

A year signalling an important turning point is 1999. At the beginning of that year the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, was arrested and detained. The PKK changed its main political line, abandoning Kurdish nationalism and separatism, and turned towards democratic confederalism (Akkaya and Jongerden 2012; Jongerden 2017). In that same year, for the first time since Mehdi Zana, the Municipality of the city was taken by a Kurdist party (Watts 2010) that administered it until 2016, when the Government jailed the elected mayor and appointed a trustee (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2016). During those years, the city underwent significant developments. As Öktem has rightly noted, conflictual or post-conflictual situations unlock opportunities for renegotiation and redefinition of the cultural vocation of places: "the urban space – both as a symbol and materiality – emerge as a central site of multiple antagonism and negotiations of identities and rights of 'ownership'" (Öktem 2005). In fact, in Diyarbakır after 1999, the urban language spoken by the city began to tell a different story. A process of spatial de-colonization of the city kicked-off (Gambetti 2010, 2005); Kurdish traditions were reinvented and replaced in the urban context (Scalbert-Yücel 2009); the architectural design began to reflect a different narrative (Güvenç 2011); the city begun to be inscribed on a different cultural map with a leading role (Casier 2011); the lost cultures of the city, specifically the Armenian heritage, were revalued and given dignity again; the city was redesigned as a would-be Kurdish capital (Boucly 2016), or at least as a leading cultural centre of the region. The city launched its own book fair, where it spread the growing corpus of Kurdish literature (with important publishers being established in the city), it organized film festivals, and it started to have a lively cultural scene consisting of screenings, book presentations, exhibitions, concerts etc. This political and cultural development obviously had a huge influence on the written literary production that concerned itself with the representation of Diyarbakır, as will emerge in this dissertation.

However, despite the fact that this topic goes beyond the scope of this research, it has to be said that all the abovementioned developments have been either blocked or capsized in the last couple of years, after the appointment of the government trustee, who undertook to ensure that the multicultural, pluralist and inclusive narrative propagated by the city's space between 1999-2016 reverted to a sturdy centralist and nationalist narrative (S. Güneş 2017). A vast area, including the Infidel District (see chapter 3), inside the old neighbourhood Sur has been completely razed to the ground to pave the way for a gentrification initiative and a demographic substitution of the residents (M. Bozarslan 2017a, 2017b; Kadioğlu Polat 2016; Kamer 2017; Gosse 2018).

In general, the historical relationship between Kurds and the urban setting, and the role of the latter in Kurdish culture, as reconstructed by O'Shea (2004) shows ambiguous aspects. The cities of Kurdistan have historically been inhabited by a variety of peoples, cultures and religions. Until the end of World War I, Kurdistan's urban environments rarely possessed an overwhelming Kurdish majority. Only subsequent to the massive ethnic homogenization of those territories, during the first decades of twentieth century, did Kurds become predominant inhabitants in the cities:

> The language of choice in the city [was] often other than Kurdish, and the city-dwellers would often deny being Kurdish […] Most cities were either located on the margins of the Kurdish core, often close to, or inside, the corridors of non-Kurdish inhabitants. Many cities were inhabited by, or surrounded by non-Kurdish minorities...Urfa and Diyarbakır flanked by Turkish and Armenians settlement, (O'Shea 2004, 49).

Jongerden rightly notices that "Diyarbakır has been territorially mapped in different ways in various political discourses" and highlights how during the Ottoman Empire Diyarbakır "was not considered to have any peculiar cultural identity, but a multiple one. Turkish nationalists conceived the area as part of a greater Turkish nation. Kurdish nationalists...mapped Diyarbakır as part of a greater Kurdish nation and rebelled against the spatial practice of establishing a Turkish cultural identity on the land where they lived” (Jongerden 2007).

Van Bruinessen described Diyarbakır as one of the “major interface[s] between vernacular Kurdish culture and the ‘high’ cultures of the neighbouring states” (Van Bruinessen 2013). The Turkish Republic’s attempts to control the Kurdish population have eventually “proved counter effective”. In Bruinessen’s words:

> The effort to deny the Kurdish guerrilla popular support by banning the nomads from the summer pastures and destroying the villages caused much social and economic disruption but resulted in large urban Kurdish population concentrations with a strengthened sense of ethnic identity […] It has moreover proved more easy to politically mobilize these urban populations than villagers (Van Bruinessen, 2013b, 291).

Given these developments of the Kurdish inhabitation of the city, we may be allowed to assume also that the Kurdish cultural representations and elaborations of the urban environment radically changed through that time, reassessing themselves according to the social transformations and the new needs they were answering.

Traditionally, the Kurdish nationalist discourse elected the rural idyll and the mountainous landscape as representative symbols of the nation and the Kurdish essence. With the words of O'Shea:

> Despite the urban origins of the modern nationalist movement, the mountain village Kurds are often idealised as the true supporters of a nationalist struggle, whereas the city and plains dwellers are co-opted by the host regimes and corrupted by opportunities, bribery and easy living (O’Shea 2004).

In fact, if on the one hand the migration might have strengthened, on the imaginative level, the idealization of rurality by Kurds, given the traumatic loss of their rural homeland and representations of the difficulty of coping with city life (Scalbert-Yücel 2010), on the other hand, at a pragmatic level, it put before the Kurds the necessity of producing rhetorical strategies capable of representing urban life. Traditionally a “stranger” environment, and in addition featured by the nationalistic and repressive assertions of the State, the city became for Kurds a place of symbolic and cultural exile. Thus, in the political and cultural striving to imagine a homeland (Galip 2015), Kurds, and particularly Kurdish intellectuals, might have felt the necessity to re-symbolize the city space, structuring a counter-hegemonic narration and connotation of the urban milieu.

> The massive urbanisation of Kurdish society might be thought to hold prospects for a renaissance of a Kurdish literate culture, such as once existed under the patronage of Kurdish semi-independent rulers. […] the combination of a large Kurdish-speaking urban population with the existence of a wide range of Kurdish print and electronic media would ideally make a new flourishing of Kurdish arts and literature possible (Van Bruinessen 2013).

Diyarbakır, Turkey's largest Kurdish city, has become a very important place for this process. One with both a strategic and symbolical value. At the onset, when I embarked on this doctoral research project, one of the proposed aims was to study the role given to literature in the municipality’s project to culturally re-design the city. I would have studied the interplay between physical space and the representational space of the city of Diyarbakır. However, only few months into the journey, in March 2013 I was prohibited entry into Turkey for an “undetermined” time; perhaps because of my interest in Kurdish culture, which has always been very sensitive in that country. In the years that followed, many things have changed in the public sphere of Diyarbakır. It went from very positive, when in 2013 during the Newroz celebration in Diyarbakır peace looked really close at hand, to very negative when in 2015 the tension again was raised high during the electoral campaign and then exploded into violent clashes. It was for me very difficult to follow the evolution of the spatial clash without the possibility of conducting field-work research. Therefore, this dissertation had to readjust so as to focus mainly on the representational space of Diyarbakır. Hence, while the dynamics of Diyarbakır’s urban evolution and the dialectics of clash over its space are soundly in the background of this study, the analytical focus is chiefly in the realm of the symbolical level of the city. It does not look mainly at what the city "is", but at what the city "means"; or, perhaps more correctly, it looks at how the reality of the city is activated, manipulated, and selectively represented in literature to make it "mean" something to the readers. In fact, the symbolical domain of Diyarbakır is very rich. In Turkey the city is – often too – easily associated with notions of terror, violence, "otherness" (Marilungo 2016). On the other hand, for many Kurds, in Turkey and in other parts of Kurdistan and in the diaspora, Diyarbakır is considered as the capital-city of their inexistent country, or at least as a very important political, cultural and social centre for their people. Also, as Tuan recognized, a city is an entity that always addresses us with a double level of communication, a physical and a symbolic one:

> A large city is also known at two levels: one of high abstraction and another of specific experience. At one extreme the city is a symbol or an image (captured in a postcard or a slogan) to which one can orient oneself; at the other it is the intimately experienced neighbourhood (Tuan 1974).

Literature, perhaps similar to a postcard or a slogan, in my opinion is a powerful medium that can subsume the "intimately experienced" city of the writer into the realm of images and symbols, which circulate in various ways in the community and carry some specific meanings. Certainly, although the city is one single object, its intimate perceptions are virtually infinite; there are as many literary images of Diyarbakır as there are writers who approached its representation. The perception of a place, and the meaning attached to the virtual image of the place, may vary according to the person's own social, cultural and political sensibility.

Ultimately, this research project offers a rather large variety of examples of imagined and written *"Diyarbakırs";* but I believe that such a sample may bring us closer to an understanding of the 'real' Diyarbakır; or at least to look at it with multi-focal lenses, that allow us to see it in all its richness, refraining from monochrome readings and understandings; whatever the colour may be.

3. Methodology and geocritical approach

When I started to delve into the vast and heterogeneous corpus of representations of Diyarbakır – a city that can boast records in many languages form the ninth century B.C.E. until our present day – I was confronted by the methodological issue of how to systematize the primary material in a coherent way. Besides helping me to distribute the material, a clear criterion was also to help me select the most relevant representations of Diyarbakir and discard others; in fact, this dissertation necessarily does not focus on all the representations of that city, but only with the portion of them I have reckoned more interesting and relevant for the understanding of the city.

In recent times, the scholarly literature that studies and analyses the relationship between space and literature, and more precisely between city and literature, is growing steadily. In this rich and enriching debate, there are many interesting insights one can follow to approach a city, but they are quite dispersed and scattered. In my opinion, the most systematic approach to the subject it is the one provided by Bertrand Westphal in his book *Geocriticism*, published in French in 2007 and translated in English in 2011. The concept of Geocriticism has in turn generated a prolific debate which is testing and refining its analytical instruments. In my case, I deemed Geocriticism a good solution to inform the structure of the research and distribute the vast body of primary sources. The criteria of this methodology, that I will shortly discuss here, are at the base of the construction of the overall dissertation; it suggests an overarching perspective for a comprehensive look towards Diyarbakır.

In short, the geocritical approach, outlined by Westphal in the fourth chapter of *Geocriticism* (*Elements of Geocriticism*) prescribes four main criteria: geocentrism, multifocalization, stratigraphy, and polysensoriality. I would leave aside the latter for one moment and discuss the others here, as polysensoriality, although being a useful tool in the actual reading of the texts, it is not part of the reason I decided to structure the dissertation the way it is.

Geocentrism implies that the primary object of the literary analysis is not an author, a genre, a literary period, but a place. The research will not look at the use of a place in the work of an author or a group of authors. The focus is not directed towards literature, but towards the place. The aim of the geocritical study is the comprehension of the place. Hence the centre of this dissertation is Diyarbakır. The aim is formulating an understanding of the city *through* its literary representations and not an understanding of *the* literary representations.

This entails a significant reversal of the traditional approach to the literary study of place. Rather than using the thematics of place to better understand the works studied (say, Venice in Proust or Mann), the texts are taken as part of a body of evidence that will lead to a better understanding of the place (Prieto 2016). As aconsequence of the fact that the very object of study is the place, the attention devoted to the analysis of a particular author is motivated by the fact that his or her work is interesting for the understanding of the place. In other words, the research is not too much interested in the literary career of an author, or for that matter, to the relevance of his/her literary attention to Diyarbakır in the framework of his/her literary trajectory. The texts are selected primarily for their pertinence to the city studied, as they are tools to raise, illustrate and discuss political, cultural and aesthetic issue concerning that very place.
Hence, this methodology sometimes leaves little space for more in-depth literary text analysis, sometimes the aesthetic values of the work are paid less attention and the reader might feel something missing, in the reading of a text. However, the object this methodology enable us to read is the city, the place, through the lenses of literary texts. The focus is never on the text *per se*, but rather on its ability to shed light on the comprehension of the place, activating unique perspective angles.

Multifocalisation requires that in order to have a thorough understanding of the nature of a place, as many texts as possible need to be taken into account. In fact, through multifocalisation the analysis can challenge fixed realities and move towards the deconstruction of any given definition of a place. “The goal is to develop a polyphonic or dialogical understanding of the place in question, one that incorporates the widest array possible of perspectives" (Prieto 2016). With Westphal's own words:

> In this way, we contribute to the process of determining a common space, born from and touching upon different points of view. Also, we come closer to the essential identity of the referenced space. At the same time, we confirm that any cultural identity is only the result of incessant efforts of creation and re-creation (Westphal 2011).

As the object of this study is a city caught in the middle of a fight for cultural appropriation by two competing actors, I consider the analytical concept of multifocalisation very important. However, this concept implies that the number of sources collected and analysed is very large; as a consequence, it is not possible, for reasons of space, to provide detailed biographical and aesthetic information about every single author, or to provide an informed account of the literary trends to which each author might refer. Furthermore, for some author Diyarbakır might represent a very central theme of their work; for others, instead, it might be very marginal and the work anlyzed in this dissertation might not necessarily be representative of the literary endeavour of any single writer or of his/her literary value. Nonetheless, that specific work finds space in this dissertation because it has something interesting concerning the city studied here.

Finally, stratigraphy. For Westphal "literary representations provide precious evidence of the various ways in which places have been perceived at different moments in their history, making it possible to get a sense of the transversal path cut by the place through history" (Prieto 2016). In studying the city, here the approach is somewhat similar to that of the archaeologist that studies different strata of sedimentation of human inhabitation. Similarly, Westphal recognizes that "a place is composed of an accumulation of past moments" (Prieto 2016).

Following these three criteria that bring in the categories of space, time and plurality of representations, this dissertation centres on Diyarbakır bringing together a variety of focuses and perspectives, by different cultural communities and in different historical times. Geocentrism inspires the dissertation inasmuch as the goal is the appreciation of the nature of Diyarbakır, of its specificity as a place; therefore, authors and writer here are studied on condition that they provide representations of Diyarbakır. Multifocalisation implies that a broad variety of authors is compared and studied; the historical relevance, the literary talent, the "quality" of the authors are not criteria that inform the selection, which instead is based on the significance of the representation given to articulate a discourse about the city. Given the contentious context of a city like Diyarbakır, this approach helps in deconstructing the narratives that each community attaches to the city. Lastly, stratigraphy allows us to see the relevance of the analysis of Diyarbakır in historical depth since, as Westphal also argues, the spatial analysis may not avoid temporal dimension; the comprehension of the place moves through acknowledging the accumulation of representations about it. In my belief, structuring the thesis according to these criteria allows an understanding of the "incessant efforts of creation and re-creation" of Diyarbakır carried out by many different actors, especially after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. In fact, since at least 1923, Diyarbakır has had an evolving literary image inspired and activated by concurrent political figurations, that continues to be very active today.

If these three geocritical elements are the pillars of the structure of this dissertation, each analytical chapter necessarily make use also of other interpretative tools. For instance, chapter one recurs to the existing literature on travel writing and its peculiarities; chapter two makes significant use of Jameson's category of "national allegory" in reading the representations of Diyarbakır in the Turkish novels of the Kemalist period; the third chapter mobilizes the concepts of 'memory' and 'nostalgia', and therefore returns to theorists such as Huyssens (Huyssen 2003) to see how the past is inscribed in the urban space, or Boym (Boym 2001) to see how the category of nostalgia re-activates fragments of the past for the present. The fourth chapter discusses "lyrical cartographies" constructed through poetry, whilst the last chapter makes use again of the "national allegory" category in understanding the subtle entanglements between the political, the libidinal and the geographical in contemporary literature concerned with Diyarbakır. The concept of a “colonial city” is involved in the representations of the Turkish nationalist writers, and with opposite tones in the representation of the urban space of Uzun when he depicts “two socially and architecturally diverging cities” (Graebner 2014) or what Frantz Fanon has called “Manichean City”, an urban setting planned to neatly distribute concepts of “cleanliness, civility and modernity” (Herbert 2014); in this context, both in its real and imagined dimensions, “the urban space becomes a key site of colonial oppression but also of anticolonial resistance” (Herbert 2014). This dynamic also implies a look at the representation of the urban outsider: what Keunen and De Droogh have analysed in socioeconomic terms, but that in the context of Diyarbakır may also be interpreted as “ethnic outsider” (Keunen and De Droogh 2014).

Moreover, in the analytical readings the geocritical element of polisensoriality is also retrieved. With Steven Feld’s wordplay: “as places make sense, senses make places” (Feld 2005). Sensory perception is interpreted as culturally constructed but also as the ground base of our cultural constructions (Howes 2005). Also Rodaway understands the senses as a crucial means for the creation of spatial sense: “the senses both as a relationship to a world and the senses as themselves a kind of structuring of space and defining of place” (Rodaway 2002). Therefore, in the analysis of literary texts great attention will be paid to the sensorial elements as they are manipulated by the writers to provide a certain “sense of place” in their work, specifically, a certain sense of Diyarbakir.

In sum, although geocriticism pervades the structure and provides some analytical tools for this dissertation, the approach is integrated also with other critical approaches that are useful to discuss themes considered in this research emerging from the literature about Diyarbakır. Most of all, geocriticism has been useful in structuring my selection critieria: holding firmly to the fact that the object of study of this research is the city, however seen through literary lenses, and not literature in itself, any text that would help raise important and interesting issues regarding the city could be selected, even though that particular text might have a very marginal role in the production of one author; in fact, the interest is not much on the author and on his/her production, but rather on the city and the literary inspiration it is able to provide, the themes it suggests etc. At certain points, the reader might feel the need to have more biographical details of one author, closer readings of some texts: this is indeed a limit of my methodology tha must be acknowledged, as the collection of a huge number of different and varied sources about the city, restricts the space that a doctoral dissertation might reserve for a deeper and more detailed textual reading. It might be argued, that the only theme and literay element analysed in thi sreasearch is Diyarbakır city in itself. Although this might have some limitations, I reckon it is a good way to have a culturally different study of this city.

Geocriticism is one of the many results in the humanities of a new, burgeoning and variegated scholarly trend in social sciences that has been called "the spatial turn" (Warf and Arias 2008). As Tally notices "over the past few decades spatiality has become a key concept for literary and cultural studies" (Tally 2013). The categories of space and place have grown in relevance in literary studies, acknowledging how literature can also be considered an act of mapping, of drawing 'real-and-imagined' (with Soja's famous expression) boundaries and cartographies, of connecting emotionally to places. In the last decades this has assisted with the development of a "spatial hermeneutic" (Soja 2011) of which literature has been recognized as a crucial instrument as it is able to show "how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology" (Soja 2011).

In this respect, the writer can be equated to the cartographer, since he provides a representation of a certain world and invites the reader to explore it according to the coordinates suggested. Both the writer and the cartographer enmesh the "real-and-imagined" space into the "real-and-imagined" space of the page, of language. The reader is called to interpret and navigate the map offered by the writer. Thus, in the depiction of a city, the writer provides a representation of the "real" space, and the "imagined" coordinates to navigate it; needless to say, such coordinates vary according to the cultural, political and ideological worldview of the writer. Therefore, the very same place or the same city may result in very different spatial itineraries for the reader, leading to disparate cultural and political landscapes. Beyond the intimate experience of the lived city, of which literature provides an echo through the sensorial instructions, city are also mind-spaces, ideas of space. As de Certeau has pointed out, a city can be seen as a whole from above or fragmented at the street level (Certeau 1984). Through a fictitious journey into the real space, literary depictions of cities are often articulations of ideas about those cities. Consequently, I think that for a city that is made the object of desire for numerous political and cultural constructions, such as Diyarbakır, it is fruitful to look at as many literary descriptions as possible, to have a grasp of the variety, the heterogeneity and the conflictual character of such constructions.

The relation between city and literature is perhaps as old as history; for Redfield and Singer “the story of civilization may be told as the stories of cities” (Redfield and Singer 1954). The very region where Diyarbakır is located is considered to be the birthplace of both writing and urban inhabitation. For Goody and Watt, literacy is “an essential factor in the rise of the urban cultures of the Orient” (Goody and Watt 1963). As has been said: “the city has been the locus of literary fervour ever since there was literature” (Weinstein 2014). The industrial urbanization of the Nineteenth century brought a new interplay between city and literature: authors such as Hugo, Balzac, Baudelaire are deeply interconnected with the urban reality of Paris in that century, or Dickens with London, Dostoevsky with St. Petersburg, etc. Modernism with authors such as Kafka, Eliot and Joyce has also brought forward such an interconnection. Postmodernism, with authors like Italo Calvino, George Perec, Jorge Luis Borges – just to name a few – has interrogated again the bond that ties literature and urban space.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, studies dedicated to the city in literature began to appear. In 1973 Raymond Williams published his famous *The Country and the City*. In 1981 Richard Pike published *The image of the city in modern literature* (Pike 1981), whilst another book born out of a conference dedicated to the same theme appeared: *Literature & the urban experience* (Jaye and Chalmers Watts 1981). In the following years it is worth mentioning *City Images* (Caws 1991) and *Writing the City* (Preston and Housley 1994). In 1998, Richard Lehan attempted to give a more comprehensive guide with his *The city in literature: an intellectual and cultural history* (Lehan, 1998). The following year Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel* (Moretti 1999) showed the fruitful implications that occur between literature and geography.

In the last decade, scholarly interest in city and literature has proliferated. The English translation of Westphal's *Geocriticism* was published in 2011*.* In that book, Westphal seems to have provided the most systematic theoretical approach in literary criticism, in the light of the geographical indications coming to the humanities from the so-called Spatial Turn. Since that book, particularly through the work of Robert T. Tally and Eric Prieto, the influence of *geocriticism* on contemporary literary criticism has deepened and developed. In 2014, Tally launched for the publisher Palgrave Macmillan a series entitled *Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies*, which already has eighteen monographs. Perhaps as a pinnacle to all this academic interest is the publication in 2014 of *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature* (McNamara 2014) and in 2017 of *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space* (Tally 2017) that is a large and updated collection of articles exploring the huge variety of themes that the Spatial Turn has suggested in literary criticism.

Understandably, at first this interest has focused mainly on "primary" cities, such as Paris, London, New York and the like. Cities that attract a lot of literary interest and that can boast a huge number of representations. However, lately the attention has also moved to consider other spaces and cities, including the lesson of Edward Said's *Orientalism* as in *The Geocritical Legacies of Edward W. Said* (Tally 2015), and of postmodernism as in Prieto's *Literature, Geography, and the Postmodern Poetics of Place.* This interest has also brought into consideration "second cities", or cities that are less considered for their geographical, economic, political, cultural, ethnic "secondariness". Two years after a conference in Turku, Finland in 2015, *Literary Second Cities* (Finch, Ameel, and Salmela 2017) was published; in that book, part of this dissertation was expanded into an article that approaches Diyarbakır through literary sources read in the light of this critical debate on literature and space (Marilungo 2017).

4. The issue of language and the literary field.

Approaching the literature concerning Diyarbakır through the abovementioned theoretical lenses, one is faced with the issue of the linguistic variety of texts. The vast majority of literary sources analysed in this dissertation are produced either in the Kurdish or the Turkish language. However, the linguistic divide does not necessarily imply a clear-cut distinction between the Turkish and Kurdish literary fields. As has been suggested by Clemence Scalbert-Yücel, the boundaries between these two literary fields are rather “blurred” (Scalbert-Yücel 2011, 2012, 2014) or, in other words, the threads constituting these fields are rather intertwined.

The language policies applied by the Turkish State after its establishment in 1923, strictly prohibited the use of the Kurdish language and this severely hindered the emergence of a Kurdish literature in Turkey. The “invisibilisation” of the Kurdish language (Skutnabb-Kangas and Bucak 1994; Haig 2003) and the absence of an educational system that contemplates education in the mother-tongue has left a deep “scar” in Kurdish society (Coşkun, Derince, and Uçarlar 2011) that has been reflected in literary production. The re-emergence of contemporary Kurdish literature was mainly made possible by authors living in diaspora in the 1980s and 1990s. After the lift of the ban on Kurdish Language in 1991, Kurdish literature was slowly able to “come back home” and be produced in Turkey’s big cities such as Istanbul or in culturally crucial Kurdish cities such as Diyarbakır.

In this dissertation, although in some chapters the material is divided and disposed along linguistic lines (Turkish/Kurdish), I do not consider a precise boundary exists between Turkish and Kurdish literary fields, at least for certain authors. Authors such as Suzan Samancı, Yılmaz Güney, Şeyhmus Diken or

Mehmed Uzun straddle the two fields: by reason of their alternate use of Kurdish or Turkish language they can be considered to be in dialogue with both the Turkish and the Kurdish readership. They can be called “Kurdish authors writing in Turkish” (Mignon 2014). Even when the author mainly produces literature in Turkish, as is the case for Diken, his work can be considered as straddling the two fields, as it tackles themes closely related to the Kurdish-inhabited regions of Turkey, and specifically to Diyarbakır. It should not be forgotten that, in Turkey, the entire educated Kurdish population has proficiency in the Turkish language, whilst not all the Kurdish population has proficiency in the Kurdish language, let alone the Kurdish written language, for reason of the abovementioned linguistic policies applied by the State (Zeydanlıoğlu 2012). In this context “use of languages can be considered as a literary strategy enabling a writer to pass from one field to another, leading to greater recognition” (Scalbert-Yücel 2011); for many authors, selecting Kurdish language for their work is not merely a matter of linguistic proficiency but rather of “political engagement” (Scalbert-Yücel 2011).

The Kurdish literary production finds itself at the intersection of many linguistic, political and geographical directories: to a certain extent, Kurdish literature in Turkey can be considered the minority section of “Turkey’s literature”; at the same time, at least at the very beginning of this production, the literature referring to the Kurdish geographical space, to its cities, to the events that happened in those places and to those people, were produced from the diaspora; simultaneously, by many Kurdish intellectuals, the contemporary Kurdish production is part of the institutional body of Kurdish literature produced also in other countries such as Iran, Iraq, and Syria and in other Kurdish dialects. As this dissertation pivots around Diyarbakır and its portraits, examples from these three directories are discussed. Some authors frame their depiction of Diyarbakır in the geographical, political, cultural and literary context of Turkey; some others, locate the city in the framework of the geographical, political, cultural and literary map of Greater Kurdistan; some others “inhabit” the city from the a-territorial and purely imaginary suggested by the diasporic physical displacement. Furthermore, something should be said also for the Turkish writers analysed in this dissertation such as Halide Edib Adıvar, Yakup

Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Özcan Karabulut and Murat Uyurkulak. What distinguishes them in this dissertation from other authors writing in Turkish is their cultural identity and their geographical origins: none of them is from Diyarbakır. They all come to it propelled by a cultural curiosity of sorts.

Each writer considered in this work, whether a traveller writing in Turkish, Kurmanji Kurdish or Sorani, Armenian or another language, or a person who lived in Diyarbakır for a while at a certain point in his/her own life, or not, all represent their own personal perceptions of the physical and imaginary reality of this city. However, while they all speak about their own Diyarbakır, they also activate or respond to the role that this city plays in a certain political and cultural discourse, they all mobilize the city as a literary object in order to express and place a message of their own. Therefore, looking at their descriptions of the city, it is useful to understand, beyond their personal literary operations, the variety and the nature of the discourses that pivoted around this contested city.

Each chapter selects a specific and coherent corpus of literary works that concern the city of Diyarbakır. Each of them represents a different perspective from which to look at the same place. And obviously, this variation of the point of observation leads to variations in the object observed. The first chapter offers an overview of the historical description of the city given by travellers and passers-by since its first appearance on written record. The second chapter presents the Turkish nationalist approach towards the city, analysing the description of the city provided by key intellectual Turkish nationalist figures around 1923 and in the following two decades. The third chapter analyses a body of memoirs, to study the role played by memory in the contemporary re-definition of the city, constructed in the mirror of the past. A fourth chapter studies lyrical representations of Diyarbakır provided in poetry written in the Kurdish and the Turkish language. A fifth and final chapter discusses the works of fiction of six contemporary writers who have offered detailed and significant descriptions of this city.

This disserations originates at the intersection of the burgeoning fields of Kurdish Studies and space-oriented literary criticism, with significant contribution of works of Turkish studies, especially for the second and the sixth chapters. I reckon the combination of these scholarly fields productive. In fact I believe that a space oriented approach in the study of the literature addressing this city, helps to understand the spatial conflict occurring in the physical space in its elevation to the realm of imagination, where entanglements of emotional and political affects towards the place are expressed and spread through literature. On the other hand, this dissertation offers to the growing field of space-oriented literary criticism, a city, and perhaps most significantly, a corpus of literature to which so far little international critical attention has been devoted. The focus on the city of Diyarbakır, beyond showing the peculiar spatial and cultural dynamics occuring there, allows to shed some new light on the corpuses of Turkish and Kurdish literature this place has inspired and generated.

2. The gaze from outside and the step inside: An entrance to Diyarbakır.

> Truly, Diyarbakır, that looks out from its fine bluff upon the lands of four old empires – Assyria to the south, Armenia to the north, Media to the east, and Rome to the west, might have much to meditate upon, were it allowed time for meditation between the continual rebellion and persecution that tear it.
>
> **Ely Banister Soane, *To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in Disguise*.**

Yi-Fu Tuan has shown how sometimes the “physical layout” of cities, “their geometry and hierarchical ordering of forms, are architectural means to express an ideal of cosmos and society” (Tuan 1974, 197). Any spatial ordering presumes, and at the same time produces and embodies, a consequent moral and aesthetic ordering. As Victor Hugo sensed, architecture is a “form of writing” that articulates space in *words*, *lines*, *sentences*, structures of meaning, layered *books* in which “each race wrote, in passing, its line” (Hugo 1978, 194). Thus, at the onset of this research, it might be useful to see what Diyarbakır does “speak”: what is the sound and the content of its *words* and *sentences*, what is the plot of the *book* that the city itself represents and what are the lines that compose it. How does the ordering of the forms of this city generate an “ideal cosmos and society”? In which fashion does the physical shape of the city tell us about its history? And finally, how, and how much, have its shape, its position, its colours affected the way in which Diyarbakır was and mayb be imagined and represented?

The architectural languages spoken by the city are diverse and heterogeneous. The historical walled town, known as Sur, had a population of approximately 250,000 people, whilst now Diyarbakır has a population of almost a million and a half. Successive waves of construction greatly broadened the surface of the city and significantly changed its ‘architectural language’. The first structural developments outside the walled town date from to the 1920s. Kemalist Republican architecture constitutes the first belt of buildings outside the old city walls.[3] Further away from the historical town and just after the railway line, the chaotic conglomeration of buildings in Bağlar district tells us about the vast number of forced migrants who settled in the city during the 80s and 90s, escaping from villages evacuated by the Turkish army in the surrounding mountainous regions. A further and more recent architectural belt is the product of a recent wave of construction investments and speculation that made Diyarbakır prices for properties and land among the highest in Turkey.[4] Whereas in Bağlar the labyrinthine narrow alleys constitute the most striking feature, the outer belt is characterised by wide, rational and “Haussmanian” boulevards, shopping malls, parks and theme parks; features that reflect the progressive opening of the city to the neoliberal experience (Yüksel 2011). Architecturally speaking, in Diyarbakır we recognize a layering of “languages” each of which speaks about a specific historical moment of the place. If, until the late nineteenth century, the architectural layering was made relatively homogeneous and “local” by the sameness of the construction material (the black lava basalt stone obtained from the nearby dormant volcano, Karacadağ), the twentieth century signals a major fracture in the architectural language of the city, seeing the importation of modernist architectural schemes prescribed by the state ideology of the newly founded Turkish Republic (Dalkılıç and Halifeoğlu 2011). The effect of secularist and modernist intervention is easily legible in the contour of the city itself: the modern development of the city happens, so to speak, “outside” the historical city, namely outside the city walls.

For many centuries, cities were often defined by the mural enceinte; the walls defined the city as an “inside” distinctly opposed to an “outside”[5]. The city was somehow like a house: one had to enter through the door, almost knocking; the gates closed at a certain time. The city enclosed in itself a special sense, a production of specific meaning necessarily different from any other city. Today the flux of global capitals tends to homogenize urban spaces. In the case of Diyarbakır, as with several other walled towns, the walls are defeated not because they have been torn down, but because the "outside" that constituted them as spots of meaning has been taken away. The edifices built outside the city walls are higher than the walls themselves and they peep into the city without difficulty. The city no longer advocates an exclusive inside and a peculiar production of human activities and meanings.

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[3] For Example the Soldiers dormitory, the Governorate building, the Military Barracks, the train station, the silos of the TMO- directorate for the earth products, etc. (see Çağlayan 2014).

[4] See (‘Land Price Speculation Gets out of Hand in Diyarbakır’ 2011).

[5] James D. Tracy in his *Introduction* to *City Walls. The Urban Enceinte in global perspective* relates how in classical Chinese a single character was used for both city and wall and quotes the town secretary of Eisenach as saying in 1399: “What has a

That said, the line of the old city walls still bestows on the city of Diyarbakır its main symbolic assertion. The space inside the city walls still encloses a sort of "otherness" from the rest of the city. The old town seems to separate a space, a geography, but simultaneously seems to preserve intact another "time". Although the function has changed radically, the preserved walls are the embodiment of a presumed "authenticity" of the place, they represent the city's main heritage (Girard and Scalbert-Yücel 2015). They are the pretext for the construction of narratives of "rootedness" and historical belonging. Not just a symbolic value, the walled town is also the main marketable, physical heritage in Diyarbakır and at the same time has a peculiar social conformation. The managing of this architectural heritage is also problematic for social reasons: inside and immediately around the walls live some of the poorest people of the city, most of whom took refuge around the walls after having been displaced from their villages of origin.

The contentious nature of the walls and the district they enclose, again came to the fore with considerable violence in the summer 2015, only a month after UNESCO declared Diyarbakır citadel and the Hevsel gardens part of the World Heritage. Then the Turkish Military responded with heavy military force to the barricades erected to protect the self-declared autonomy of the Kurdish youth movement YDG-H, linked to the PKK. In several districts of the Sur (Walls)

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wall around it, that we call city." For Tracy the "association between cities and perimeter walls [is] much older than written memory" (Tracy 2000, 1).

municipality round-the-clock curfews were imposed; many lives were taken in the military clashes and some 35,000 (a considerable percentage of the municipality) people were displaced from within the walls to other neighbourhoods of the city. In March 2016, the State declared the expropriation and nationalization of 80% of parcels of land in Sur and razed to the ground a considerable area of the municipality, purging even the ruins of houses and buildings damaged in the conflict. Shortly after, through the government Housing Agency named TOKI, the State divulgated its plan to reconstruct and gentrify the Sur municipality, so as to make it "a new Toledo", as stated by the then Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu ('"Sur'u Toledo Gibi Yapacağız"' 2016; 'Davutoğlu'nun Sur Için Örnek Gösterdiği Toledo, Özerk Bölgenin Başkenti' 2016).

When Diyarbakır presents itself to the outer world, it does so showing the profile of the walls. The mural enceinte and the history preserved within them are unquestionably the main heritage of the city; again as Tuan reflects, "at one extreme a city is a symbol (captured in a postcard or a slogan)" (Tuan 1974, 224). The walls are undoubtedly the main "postcard feature" of this city. At the same time though, they are also the principal battlefield of cultures competing for their presence and visibility in the city. They are still the embodiment of the contentious nature of the city; they are the primary surface onto which any community which has a claim on the city would like to impress its signature.

In this chapter I will focus on the representations and the symbolic value of the walled town (called by the inhabitants *sur* or *suriçi* = "inside the walls") and the world they enclosed, as represented through history by travellers and external visitors, hailing from various places and backgrounds. Through the accounts of travel writers, who came to the city mainly –but not only- before its modernist architectural development in the 1920s and 1930s, this chapter focuses on historical Diyarbakır, the part of the city defined by the boundary of the city walls and its record in history. Arguably, this main spatial feature suggests some patterns of representation, and shapes the descriptions made by authors. Trying to structure a multi-focused and stratigraphic gaze at the city, I will gather and discuss in this chapter descriptions of Diyarbakır made by authors of different historical periods, writing in different languages, mainly coming to the city from elsewhere and writing from an outsider perspective. This adds a different perspective compared with the subsequent chapters in which the authors of the representations of the city are from within Turkey – even though they still write in different languages.

Although this chapter does not feet into the definition of “Turkish and Kurdish contemporary literature” provided in the dissertation title, I reckoned it still very uselful to introduce the reader to the city and to its physical shape, showing the affluence of historical descriptions inspired by it, andin so doing, setting the ground for the understanding of the strong break represented for the history of the city by the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. I believe that having this historical depth allows the reader to have a more comprehensive idea of the way in which the definition of a city is a continuously evolving phenomenon; furthermore, some of the themes analysed in this chapter (especially this eregarding the city-walls) are interestingly at use still today, and contemporary Turkish and Kurdish writers often set themselves in dialogues with the historical foreign visitors discussed in this first chapter.

The city walls are (or at least used to be) the first presentation of the city to the visitor and thus the impact of the vision of the walls is crucial to the overall idea (the *imagined* city) the author is going to form in his/her own mind. They are somehow also the first *re-presentation* of the city. As if guiding the reader to the city, I set out to offer a multi-focused gaze through the eyes and the pens of travellers. In this way we can also have a sense of the stratigraphic layering of representations of the city in different historical times and conditions. In reading through the pages of these authors, emphasis is given to their sensorial perceptions and representations of the city: physical features, like for instance shape and colour, have a huge impact in determining the personality of the place as represented through the words of our authors. In this chapter, we might have an idea of how Diyarbakır looked, sounded, smelled or even tasted to foreigners and travellers in different historical epochs. While the following chapters will discuss the image(s) of the city from different perspectives chronologically from the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, this chapter constitutes a brief overview of the city’s representations before that date.

2.2 The walled city and its cosmos

This is how the famous Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi introduces the reader to the city he visited in 1655:

> To begin with, the city of Qara Amid[6] is a widely renowned fortification and firm barrier, a solid bulwark of black basalt built on top of a high hill that soars up to the zenith on the bank of the Tigris (Evliya Çelebi 1988, 129).

Perfect in his concision and terseness, Çelebi synthesizes in a sentence some of the main features of the city. Whilst positioning the city in its geographical setting (for which see Karadoğan 2015), he describes it as “firm”, “solid” and “renowned”(for the walls as a military defence see Alper and Alper 2015; Lorain 2015). The firmness and solidity seem to suggest moral values deriving from the view of the city, whilst the author was right to say that the fortification was already well-known six centuries before, as in 1061 the Persian poet Nasir Kushraw, who visited the city during the Kurdish Kingdom of the Marwanids (see Ripper 2012), has this to say about Diyarbakır’s walls:

> I have seen many a city and fortress around the world in the lands of the Arabs, Persians, Hindus, and Turks, but never have I seen the likes of Amed on the face of the earth or have I heard anyone else say that he had seen its equal (Nāṣir-i Khusraw 2001, 7).

For its fortitude, Diyarbakır was a city without equal. The look of the black ramparts distinguished the city from other places. In the words of Lieutenant de Cholet, who travelled there at the end of the 19th century:

> As a whole similar to all the other big cities of Turkey, Diyarbakır distinguishes itself for a remarkable enceinte, marvellously conserved and showing clearly

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[6] The name of Diyarbakır can be subject to many different spellings in the sources I will use in this chapter. It can be Diyarbekir, Diyar-I Bekir, Diyarbekr. In addition, the other name derived from the Greek-Latin Amida can be used in different spelling such as Amid, Amed, Qara Amid, Karamid and others. Given that during the research I will be referring always to the same very city I will ask the reader to be aware of the manifold ways the city can be referred to, not to overwhelm the text with footnotes or explanations each time the city is named in a different way and confident in the fact that there cannot be many possibilities of confusion with other places.

> the distinctive characters, as well as the inscriptions of the peoples who built it, (Cholet 2007, 253).[7]

The walls make Diyarbakır what it is and they imbue the history of the place: they are the place and its account at once. They are the physicality that marks the urban space and forms the first impression on the written page. The impact of the city walls on representations of Diyarbakır is so immediate that for centuries their colour literally gave the place its name: "Qara Amid", literally "Dark Amid". We will see how the colour of the city's stone might affect metaphorical representations in accounts written in times of decadence and social unrest. However, as we see in Çelebi, up to a certain time, the walls commanded mainly a sense of strength and robustness. Diyarbakır was one of the main military and trade centres of the Middle East, comparable in importance to Aleppo and Damascus. For its strategic position in a liminal region, caught first between the Roman and the Persian worlds and then between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires, the city carries its own history embodied in the mural enceinte, which several times became the surface of contact of clashing civilizations, kingdoms and cultures. The French traveller Paul Lucas, who visited the city in the seventeenth century, follows Kushraw in saying that Diyarbakır's walls are something unique in the whole Ottoman Empire:

> I have not seen in all Turkey a city in which the fortifications and the walls are better preserved than this, (Lucas 1704, 183).[8]

"Stateliness", "opulence" and "great strength" are what the walls communicate to James Silk Buckingham in 1827. For Lord Warkworth, "there is no other city in the world that could preserve so closely the look of the times of the Roman domination" (Lord Warkworth 2003, 191). Indeed, the architectural features of the city raised the interest of western archaeologists at the end of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth. Possibly, the most extensive and detailed work on the history and the archaeological remains of the city is still that undertaken at the end of the nineteenth century by Max Von Oppenheim (von Oppenheim 1909), followed by the work of Max Van Berchem with contributions from Josef Strzygowski and Gertrude Bell (van Berchem et al. 1910). The French architect and archaeologist Albert Gabriel specialised in Anatolian architecture and worked extensively on Diyarbakir during the 1930s (Gabriel 1931, 1940);[9] he might be considered the person who actually saved Diyarbakır's walls from the Turkish authorities' intention of destroying them, putting forward reasons of health and safety.[10]

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[7] When English translation of the text quoted are not available I provide my own translation and quote the original in footnote: "Analogue dans son ensemble général à toutes les grandes cites de la Turquie d'Asie, Diarbékir s'en distingue cependant par une enceinte remarquable, merveilleusement conserve et portant d'une façon ostensible les caractères distinctifs, ainsi que les inscriptions des peuples qui la construirent."

[8] "Je n'ay point veu dans toute la Turquie de ville où les fortifications & les murailles soient plus entieres qu'à celle-cy."

The city walls are not simply metaphorically, pages onto which the history of a city is written and therefore can be read (C. Parla 2005, 2012; Halifeoğlu 2013; Pizzoccheri et al. 2015). That is true for many walled towns in the world; however, as it has been shown by Sheila S. Blair, who retraces the history of the city reading through the forty-four inscriptions still legible on the walls, Diyarbakır is "the most important and complete example of Roman fortification to survive from the fourth century A.D., as well as a major source for tracing the evolving concept of city walls over the centuries" (Blair 2000, 493). Analysing the layering of subsequent historical ownerships and appropriations of the city by several dynasties and families, through the accurate reading of the wall inscriptions, Blair (Ibid., 525) notes that:

> The traditional signs of Muslim sovereignty are to mint coins and to insert one's name in the Friday bidding prayer at the congregational mosque. The inscriptions at Diyarbekir show that another sign of sovereignty was to put one's name on the walls of a major city.

Every historical owner made sure he wrote his own name on the black basalt "body" of the city, so that we have inscriptions in at least five different languages. For Lorain "the towers, gates or curtain walls were not solely a means of protecting the city, but were also veritable propaganda monuments built in honour of those who held the city" (Lorain 2015, 55). The gesture of writing one's name on the walls to signify the tight relationship between the person and the space – therefore a sense of ownership - proves to be still active at a metaphorical level, as we will see later in the research, with examples taken from contemporary Turkish and Kurdish literature. The walls are the prime physical body of the city of Diyarbakir but they are somehow also its primal imaginary body, its elective and more immediate metonym. As effectively put by Fikri Amedî (2013, 83):

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[9] See also (Erdur and Pinon 2006), (Soyukaya 2015).

[10] See also (Garden 1867), (Creswell and Gautier-van Berchem 1979).

> When Amed is mentioned the walls come to one's mind...when walls are mentioned Amed comes to mind. In Amed, in the meaning of the word 'walls', there is stone as much as dream; past and future are mixed together.[11]

Before the 1920s, from whichever cardinal direction the traveller may have come, from a distance Diyarbakır would have presented itself with the view of its imposing black basalt stone walls. For the traveller coming from West, North and Northeast, the walls would have been visible, standing out against the surrounding plain and cultivation fields. For the traveller coming from South and Southeast, after a few curves along the flow of the Tigris, the city would present itself with the menacing line of the walls high on top of the steep hill that dominates the river. This is how author J. S. Buckingham describes his first sight of the city:

> It was on the moment of our coming on the brow of the slope, which here formed the southern bank or the river, and gave us the view of the stream flowing by, that we caught the first sight of Diarbekr, which burst upon us all at once, and presented a picture of so much interest, that I involuntarily checked the bridle of my horse to dwell upon the scene; while my companions, to whom it was a familiar one, dashed across the river without heeding it for a moment, (Buckingham 2012, 207).

It is interesting to note how the perception of the external view of the city is different to the Cornish author compared with that of his local guides.

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[11] Translated from the Kurdish: "Gava qala Amedê dibe, beden tê hişê meriv...qala bedenê jî dibe Amed...li Amedê di maneya bedenê de, kevir û xeyal; pêşeroj û paşeroj ketiye nava hevûdin."

Something similar happens to the American missionary Horatio Southgate, who travelled to the city in 1840, and does not have the same perception of its distant sight as his Tatar guide:

> At this point the Tatar could discern the minaret and walls of Diarbekir, but I could not myself discover them until we had come upon the brow of a hill about six miles distant, when the Tigris and the city both broke up upon my sight at once. [...] The banks of the Tigris formed a long vista, extending three or four miles to the North, and closed by a rising ground, upon which stood the lofty walls of the city, towering above the vale, (Southgate 1840, 290).

Major Soane, possibly one of the 19th century travellers who most familiarized himself with Kurdish culture and gave a comprehensive account of it to the western public, did not much appreciate the view of the black walls from a distance:

> Approaching from the west, Diarbekir is not beautiful nor remarkable. In the middle of a great desert, the river, too, hidden by its cliff banks, Diarbekir appears as a citadel of black stone without any green or vegetation. Nearer views revise the unfavourable first impression, (Soane 2007, 57).

The English man of religion William Wigram, in a comparative work, elects Diyarbakır as the finest Roman wall-enceinte to be found:

> We possess many cities in Europe which are still entirely encircled by Roman or medieval ramparts. Such are Carcasonne, Aigues Mortes, Avila, Lugo, and Rothenburg; […] But, having seen all these examples, we feel bound to put it on record that the basalt walls of Diarbekr are distinctly the finest of all, (Wigram and Wigram 1936, 27).

The Rev. Edward Cutts, approaching the city from north-west in 1915, describes the view with interest; the external look is to him worth of its history of sieges and battles:

> The aspect of the city as approached from this side is very imposing, and realises better than any place I have seen the ideal of a great ancient city. The dark walls are lofty and entire, with great round towers at intervals; they rise sheer out of the extensive playa without any suburbs. Behind the walls are seen towers, domes, and minarets; the size of the town is considerable, and at this

> distance all looks perfect. […] It looks worthy of its history, for this is the famous city of Amida, so often taken and retaken by the Roman and Persian arms, (2006, 95-96).

In 1915, the traveller could still see the place free of any suburbs, being able to spot the city walls from far away and experiencing their menacing profile as an introduction to the place itself. To the Rev. Cutts the city looks “perfect” from a distance; however, perceptions might change when one crosses the lines of the walls and enters the city’s “cosmos”.

One last example showing the sight of Diyarbakır walls from afar, and a progressive approach that leads us inside, might be given to the words of the walls’ saviour himself: Albert Gabriel, who in his *Voyages Archeologiques dans la Turquie Orientale* describes the scene as such (quoted in Alper and Alper 2015, 63):

> While approaching from Mardin, Diyarbekir can be seen from a long distance. The first thing seen in the horizon is a smooth line which is even darker than the basalt plateau. As you come closer, this line becomes thicker, and towers scattered regularly become visible from the shadows and the walls of the magnificent castle, on which a few minarets are seen, becomes visible in the light taking the place of dark. So weird… The urban life is as if it is carefully hidden behind these strong stones surrounding it…

2.2 Inner and outer world. A scenery for siege

The German Field Marshall Helmut Von Moltke, in one of his letters from Turkey about Diyarbakır, notices the contradiction between “the magnificence of the castle and the poverty it encloses” (2003, 107), as does the French geographer Vital Cuinet:

> As soon as you start to walk towards the city-centre you lose the ideas originated by the outward view of the city. On one side smelly puddles on the other side heaps of rubbish left here and there, the piles of debris that obstruct the passage, the rows of houses doomed to fall into pieces…(Cuinet 2003, 61).

Walls are a liminal space. With their presence, they create two different realities, two different places, one of protection and homeliness and another of danger and wilderness. Alternatively, one of pomp and magnificence and another of misery. The line of the city walls clearly defines and separates an internal and an external space. Tuan writes of T'ang city in China (Tuan 1999): "Walls defined space. Beyond the city walls lay the natural and human forces of anarchy, within them the heavenly and human forces of order."

The external somehow presses and menaces the internal space, which for its part, strenuously resists to keep itself intact. As scholars have shown, walled towns often exhibit communal characteristics. Their actual shape prompts an imaginative and psychological reaction. As Oliver Creighton argues (2007, 340):

> Urban walls are also mental constructs and critical components of the multi-layered self-images of communities, and it is perfectly legitimate to consider some urban communities as psychologically walled even where the physical fabric of defences has been removed or compromised in some way.

And elsewhere (Bruce and Creighton 2006, 235): "Town walls represent not only physical monuments but also ideas": necessarily ideas of separation, necessarily ideas of division, of protection. This is particularly true for a city like Diyarbakır.: it has been a city on whose walls different civilisations came to face each other; it has been a city of religious clashes at the end of nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries; it is a city of ethnic and political conflict between the Turkish State and the Kurdish movement nowadays. The walls can, therefore, be used in literature and art[12] as a symbol of conflict, opposition and separation between different worlds. Nonetheless, the necessity of marketing the enceinte as the principal touristic attraction of the city imposes new dynamics, and new treatments of the symbolical value of the walls. In 2012 the Turkish Tourism Ministry, Diyarbakır Municipal administration and the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO started the process for the walls of Diyarbakır, and the adjacent Hevsel Gardens, to be accepted in the list of the

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[12] See the drawings by Kurdish artist Beritan Can, drawn during the curfews declared by the State in 2015 in the district of Sur.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites (see *Uluslararası Diyarbakır Surları Sempozyumu - International Symposium of the City Walls of Diyarbakır* 2012). The process culminated with their acceptance on the list in July 2015. In the first phase, the attempt to exploit the touristic potential of the monuments (see also Yüksel 2011) meant that contrasting and violent narratives were purposely avoided; the walls were celebrated as "welcoming and embracing". Tunbridge and Ashworth, in their study of the management of touristic heritage, include urban walls in the category they call "heritage of atrocity". As the authors highlight:

> Walled towns make high-profile tourism attractions […] the wall is deliberately stressed as a tourism advantage, enclosing and bounding the tourism product, […] Further, the symbol of the wall is interpreted as a sign of friendship, containing and accommodating the visitor […]. The historical fact that such walls were often built either to keep enemies out or to contain and control untrustworthy populations, having police, customs and taxation functions, is overlooked. Historically they represent either the national or dynastic enmities or local tyranny and oppression, (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1997, 115).

Notwithstanding such downplaying of contentious aspects, when the walls were accepted on the UNESCO list in 2015, the political conditions between the Turkish state, the local pro-Kurdish municipality and the insurgent PKK were dramatically different from when the bid was started. Renewed tensions in the district enclosed by the walls – as well as in many other Kurdish towns in the region – showed again the walls as a veritable "heritage of atrocity". As the Amnesty International envoy John Dalhuisen put it in a report: "Much of the population of this world heritage site have been forced to look on as their own heritage has been bulldozed" ('Turkey: Curfews and Crackdown Force Hundreds of Thousands of Kurds from Their Homes' 2016).

The Turkish Government's current effort of turning the city into a touristic attraction, after massive destruction and expropriation of the land and properties within the walled-town, marks the latest historical clash of competing powers trying to claim ownership of the place, and therefore dominate the effort to re-symbolize the space. Following the military clashes in Sur municipality, the Turkish Government arrested the two co-mayors of the city – elected with a strong majority of 55.1% of the votes in 2014 – and replaced them with a government trustee (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2016). After decades during which the locally elected municipality strongly controlled the symbolization of the space in Diyarbakır (Gambetti 2005, 2010; Güvenç 2011), following the events of 2015-2016, the State has taken back much of the control of the city, immediately striving to erase the most patent evidence of a pro-Kurdish spatial narrative of the urban space (see for example the removal of the Roboski Monument, 'Roboski Anıtı Kaldırıldı!' 2017).

Despite the fact that they are no longer useful to protect the city from enemies and sieges, walls could still be used to represent a conflicting situation; they can be an embodiment of clash, or the border between two different socio-economical worlds. And this has been the case for much of the time since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, when a new modernist architectural narrative was juxtaposed on the mural enceinte, factually surrounding it and condemning it to a temporal secondariness (see Fabian 1983). When Yaşar Kemal travelled to Diyarbakır in the 1950s, the walls appeared to him as the precise *limen* that separated two radically different spaces; actually two different cities:

> There are two Diyarbakırs: one is the old one inside the city-walls, the other is the new Diyarbakır outside the walls. The old Diyarbakır, with its architecture, houses, coffee-shops, streets and roads, clothing, shortly with all its features it is old as the walls themselves. [...] Coming to the new city, its has been built and continues to be built outside the walls, on the Western side, towards the train station. In the new city, you are in front of a modern city, in the word's proper meaning. Here is increasingly developing. [...] In a few years the city inside the walls will not be but a district of the new city, (Kemal 2011, 13).[13]

Building on this distinction, throughout all the reportage, Kemal stresses this distinction between the novelty and dynamism of the "modern" Diyarbakır, and the backwardness and immobility of the old town, which is identified with the very walls. The walls here enclose, separate and, at the discursive level, signify the distinctive socio-economic condition of poverty and destitution. Furthermore, Kemal identifies poverty and backwardness with the condition of being “doğulu” (easterner in Turkish). In his words, while the Diyarbakır outside the walls is a fully-fledged “western and modern city”, the Diyarbakır inside the wall looks like an “eastern village”. At that time the words “easterner” and “villager” in Turkey could easily stand as metonyms for the word Kurd, which was prohibited and dangerous (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008). Yaşar Kemal in his reportage implicitly identifies the new Diyarbakır as the place in which the modernizing efforts of the Turkish Republic took place, and inside the walls Diyarbakır as a place of contradiction, otherness and stubborn resistance to any modernizing and assimilating effort. Coherently, the refugees forcibly displaced from villages by the Turkish military between the 1960s and the 1990s (Jongerden 2007), took shelter all around the internal city walls (therefore settling in the “village-like” part of the city, and reproducing it as such), and building neighbourhoods of gecekondu (shanty-towns) that became contentious, especially after the 2000s when the heritage value of the walls was recognized and was set to be exploited by different actors.

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[13] Translated from: "İki Diyarbakır var: Biri surun içindeki eski, öteki surun dışındaki yeni Diyarbakır. Eski Diyarbakır, mimarisi, evleri, kahveleri, sokakları, caddeleri, giyinişi, velhasıl her haliyle, surları kadar eski. […] Yeni şehre gelince, günbatıda, surları dışında, istasyona doğru inşa edilmiş ve ediliyor. Yeni şehirde tam manasıyla modern bir şehir karşınızdadır. […] Birkaç yıl sonra sur içi şehir, burasının bir mahallesi gibi kalacak."

As a bordering surface, the walls always have two different languages: one for the people inside and another for the outsider. On one side, they convey a message of reception while on the other they express threat and menace. Again writer Fikri Amedî synthesizes this very well in the space of a sentence: “The city-walls that communicate horror and fear to the outwards, give their love to those inside and they leave a space open so that we can look at the sky” (Amedî 2013, 83).[14] Professor Sheila Blair, in her study of the inscriptions on Diyarbakır’s walls, recognizes two different languages of the latter, according to whether they are carved on the outside or on the inside of the walls. When political tensions were mainly concerned with the struggle for power of local families, the inscriptions “spoke” to the citizen living inside the city and reminded the rivals who was the owner of the city. In contrast, historically when conditions are different and the threat is perceived to be from distant enemies or other cities, the inscriptions are located on the outer side of the wall and “speak” principally to the visitor. The study of the inscriptions “shows the political changes occurred in the cities but also in the broader region; inscriptions show the complex and changing settings of the city in Islamic times. The inscriptions were carefully manipulated and reflect contemporary concerns, particularly that of advertising one’s sovereignty over the city” (Blair 2000, 526).

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[14] “Bedena ku xof û tirsê dixe dilê ên derva, evîna xwe dide ên hundir û ji bo ku em li esmanan binêrin navberekî ji me re dihêle”

City walls might be relished by some, but at the same time other groups may want to destroy them “to eradicate the long standing division they embody” (Creighton 2007, 345). Modernist movements might see in the walls an incrustation of the past that needs to be removed. In 1930, during the first decade of the Turkish Kemalist Republic, the authorities set out to destroy the walls of Diyarbakır, maintaining that they were detrimental to the city’s ventilation and healthy living, only to be stopped by the intervention of architect Albert Gabriel. In sum, the walls are no easy heritage to manage, at least symbolically. They embody a past of conflict, a time of two conflicting spaces, the inner and the outer; simultaneously the walls suggest a certain kind of narration, they are a stage for battles. In ancient times, the besieged city is an ideal narrative space, from Homer’s *Iliad* to Aeschylus’ *Seven Against Thebes,* for instance. Diyarbakır’s first appearance on the records is also of such a nature.

Diyarbakır’s entrance into history dates back to the 9th century BCE. As narrated in his *Annals*, in 866 BCE, the Assyrian King Assurnasirpal II sieged and conquered a city then called Amedu, capital city of the Aramean kingdom of Bit-Zamani (ca. 1300 BCE, see Lipinski 2000; Szuchman, 2007). The passage that refers to this event introduces the city to written records and does so with an account of siege and violence (quoted in Grayson, 1991, 220; see also Yıldırım, 2012):

> I took to Amedu, its royal capital, the survivors and the heads: I piled up the heads before the city gate. I impaled the survivors on stakes around his city. I waged battle once and I reached the city gate and I cut down its orchards.

Since its debut on the written record, the walls have been the main feature of the city. They automatically imply an alternation between internal and external space, and consequently internal and external forces. The city embodies a space-time of conflict; the stone walls draw a limen between different worlds. Ammianus Marcellinus, a fourth-century roman soldier and historian, in the XVIII and XIX books of his *Res gestae*, narrates the siege of the city (at that time called by its Latin name, Amida) by the troops of the Persian Shah Shapur II, in 359 A.D. It is in this period that the magnificent enceinte we see today was projected and rearmed and “therefore became a citadel feared by enemies” (Assénat 2015, 37). With Ammianus Marcellinus another ominous narrative pattern seems to have become attached to the city. The siege brings along accounts of deaths and sorrow, war, treachery, dead bodies, blood. As we will see in a rapid overview, this will become a recurring descriptive theme for this city. As the soldier Ammianus approaches the walls from outside the city in the middle of a battle, he makes his way among the dreadful landscape of the slain, whilst the walls themselves, making here their second entry in the world of the paper and written word, present the only possibility of rescue:

> Although showers of weapons from all kinds of artillery flew from the battlements, nevertheless, the nearness of the walls saved us from that danger, and when I at last entered the city by a postern gate I found it crowded, since a throng of both sexes had flocked to it from the neighbouring countryside, (Marcellinus 1950, 18-8-11).

After this passage about Diyarbakır/Amida at the end of book XVIII, in the following book Marcellinus moves on to give a historical account of the origins of the walls:

> This city was once very small, but Constantius, when he was still a Caesar, in order that the neighbours might have a secure place of refuge […] surrounded Amida with strong walls and towers; and by establishing there an armoury of mural artillery, he made it a terror to the enemy and wished it to be called after his own name, (Marcellinus 1950, 18-9-1).

The city walls are a “secure place of refuge” for the community inside and a “terror” for the enemy outside. Located at the extreme east corner of the Roman

Empire, Amida-Diyarbakır, was also, in Marcellinus' mind, a threshold between the "civilised" world and the "barbarian" other. After a brief description of the physical features of the city, Marcellinus carries on to narrate the actual siege, and here the dynamic alternation between outside and inside acquires greater relevance. The Persian army lined up outside the city trying to terrify the population of Amida:

> When the first gleam of dawn appeared, everything so far as the eye could reach shone with glittering arms, and mail-clad cavalry filled hill and dale. […] However, the power of heaven […] had driven the king [Shapor] to an enormous degree of self-confidence, and to the belief that all the besieged would be paralysed with fear at the mere sight of him, and would resort to suppliant prayers, (Marcellinus 1950, 19-1-2, 4).

Looking all around, from the ramparts, Marcellinus sees that "horsemen filled all places which the eye could reach" and "lines of elephants, frightful with their wrinkled bodies and loaded with armed men, a hideous spectacle, dreadful beyond every form of horror". Defeat is nearing relentlessly and when the historian looks inside the city he sees a "quantity of corpses scattered through the street, maggot-infested bodies and a plague added to so many ills" (Marcellinus 1950, 19-1-2,4). Diyarbakır begins to settle in the imaginary as a place of clash and rampage.

Almost a century and half later, in his account of wars, *Bella*, Procopius tells us another story of siege in Amida: two subsequent reciprocal sieges. The Persian Cabades attacks and conquers the city in 502 CE and two years later, the Romans win it back. The Roman historian does not expend many words on the description of the city but praises the citizens for their "fortitude in holding out against dangers and hardships" and for resisting the siege without much help from the military garrisons. While telling about the vain attempts of Cabades to advance on the city Procopius commends the robustness of the city-walls:

> For, though he [Cabades] battered the wall many times, he was quite unable to break down any portion of the defence, or even to shake it; so secure had been the work of the builders who had constructed it long before, (Procopius 1990, 1, VII, 13).

However, any proper siege seems to end in massacre and bloodshed. After Cabades cunningly manages to enter the city "there followed a great massacre of the townspeople". Conflict and death are always present when Diyarbakır appears on the page.

In a later work entitled *De aedificis* about the architecture and buildings of the Byzantine Empire, the same Procopius mentions the walls of Diyarbakır, this time to praise the intervention of the emperor Justinian who refurbished them and "so transformed them all that they were perfectly secure" (Procopius 1940, II, 4, 19). Many of the western travellers who would later visit the city, nourished in classical education, arrived at the city with the images of Procopius and Marcellinus in their minds.[15] So does, for example, Sir Buckingham; while already calling the city "the capital of Kurdistan", in the wake of Marcellinus he recalls the ill-omened promise made by Prince Shapor after losing his only son during the siege of Amida:

> The grief of the aged father was alleviated by the solemn promise of Shapor, that the guilty city of Amida should serve as a funeral pile to expiate the death and to perpetuate the memory of his son, (Buckingham 2012, 218)***.***

In the 19th century, the Rev. Cutts recalls the very same story; Von Moltke also starts his account moving on from Marcellinus, as does Gertrude Bell, while Irish journalist James MacCoan understands the city as "long fallen from its ancient importance as the Roman Amida" (McCoan 1879, 96). The Exeter born geographer and traveller William Francis Ainsworth, in his *Travels and Researches in Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Chaldea and Armenia* (1842), tells about the seraskier Hafiz Pasha who, while fighting against the "hardy mountaineers", Kurds, at the time perceived not as related to urban environments but hidden out in "their mountain fastness", falls in admiration of the city:

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[15] For context about British travel writing in the Ottoman Empire see (MacLean 2006, 2008) and the Special Issue of Studies in Travel Writing, D. Landry, G. MacLean (eds.), 2012, *Travelling in Anatolia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Republic of Turkey,* vol. 16, 4.

> The beautiful and durable walls of the ancient Amida used to excite his admiration. He saw that they were superior to anything done in the present day by the Turks, and he would ask over and over again, when riding beneath the lofty arch of a Roman gateway, who were the architects! But his historical knowledge of the power and the refinement of the former possessors of Western Asia was not sufficient to enable him to remember their name, or policy made him wish to appear ignorant of the works of infidels, (Ainsworth 1842, 292).

Just as he blames his character, Ainsworth seems to ignore the more than thousand years in which what he would call “infidels”, the Muslims of the Arab, Turkmen, Kurdish and Turkish dynasties who alternatively took over Diyarbakır, took care of the walls constructed by the Romans. For each race that in passing “wrote their line” on the city-book, recognizing the language and the contribution of others has not always been easy. And it is also so today.

In sum, given its history and its physical shape, Diyarbakır is often connected with narratives of sieges and clashes. The walls, built for military defence, which are also the most evident and notorious architectural feature, suggested discourses that structured the form of the imagined Diyarbakır, the city produced and “built” through written accounts.

2.3 Watermelons, artisanship and local traditions

After crossing the boundary of the walls, how would have the city appeared? What would have been its core business? Which would be its spoken language and what would be the overall feel of the city? Mirella Galletti (2001) and Şefik Korkusuz (2003) have collected a substantial number of traveller accounts related to Diyarbakır, but they either had too general a look at places encircled under the slippery definition of “Kurdish City” (Galletti), or they anthologized accounts without a great deal of analysis and contextualization (Korkusuz). Building on their work and using the sources along the guidelines of Geocriticism, in the next two sections I investigate the image of the city of Diyarbakır inside the wall perimeter as it was perceived by external visitors.

It seems that after the above-mentioned Persian poet Nasir-I Khusraw, the next recorded traveller going to Diyarbakır is the historian of Armenian origins, Simeon of Poland, who went through the city in 1608-1619. He calls the city "the Athens of the Armenians". For the historian, the city is a "capital of kings and bishops […] as it has been during history and also today is a centre of religion and knowledge" and notes that "all the people there are well-educated and informed and speak with a literary accent". On Sundays and Christian holy days "the city has a frosty and dead aspect, because the Armenians do not open their shops and do not work" (Hrand 1964, 15). The dead aspect of the city on festive days, when the Armenians are not around, seems fatally to prelude the actual loss of the Armenian population at the end of the 19th century and especially after the 1885 and 1915 events (Verheij 2012; Gaunt 2012; Üngör 2012a): a loss that nourishes much of the contemporary memoir literature discussed in chapter 3, and that has a crucial role in the political sphere of today's Diyarbakır. Traditionally the Armenians and the Syriacs were recognized as the merchants and craftsmen of the city. Simeon of Poland in the Seventeenth century lists a lively variety of artisans: "jewellers, wood-carver, cobblers, boot-makers and other" (Hrand 2003, 15). He also mentions two of the culinary symbols of Diyarbakır: he says that already in the Seventeenth century the "kebab of Diyarbakır [was] famous", as it is today, and more interestingly he names "huge and sweet watermelons" (2003, 16), a fruit that has become one of the identifying symbols of the city, along with the walls.

Certainly, the most detailed account of Diyarbakır in the Seventeenth century is that included in Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* (Evliya Çelebi 1988). During those times, Diyarbakır was a very important administrative centre of the Ottoman Empire, rich in bureaucratic and military functions. The account of Çelebi, who visited the place three times at the end of the Seventeenth century, reflects the relevance and the liveliness of the city of those times. Like Simon of Poland, he mentions the incomparable ability of the Armenian artisans and blacksmiths: "Swords, scimitars, maces, axes, arrows, daggers, spear-blades and arrowheads such as those forged hereabouts are made nowhere else, except perhaps by the weapon-smiths of Isfahan." Quite interestingly though, the work of the blacksmiths not only gives an idea of the economic importance of the city but also contributes to shaping a peculiar soundscape (Evliya Çelebi 1988, 157):

> With their hammer-beating and bellow-pumping all the Armenian blacksmiths here produce musical tunes. Melodiously playing classical *Kar* and *Naqış* and *Zecels* or eastern songs, they work away, earning their profit while playing songs. And their servants, knocking their hammers, do this in twenty-four different rhythmic patterns, beating a *tirtaqa tirtaq tirtirtaq* in the double two-one metre. The kettlemakers here, working in a group of twelve, similarly hammer the red copper on their anvils in the *Sufiyane* metre *tan tana tan tana*, and even experts are struck with amazement when they hear the melody of Hüseyni being produced and these rhythmic patterns developing.

Like other authors after him, Çelebi praises the city for the richness and healthiness of its waters. One especially, the Hamravat source, is defined as "the pride of Diyarbekir" for its curative and therapeutic qualities; according to him even the Sultan Ibrahim Han ordered some of that water to be brought to him in Istanbul (Evliya Çelebi 1988, 147). The properties of the water, together with the mild climate, would make the people look extremely healthy and the young boys rather attractive to the writer:

> People's face here have a healthy reddish colour. They are mostly handsome men of medium stature, strong physique and comely build. […] Never failing from sexual intercourse, they live to the age of hundred. […] There are lovable boys here, who fill one's heart with desire: young men of graceful beauty, modest kindness, and charming looks, with peri-like bodies and faces bright as the moon. They speak so pleasantly and eloquently in their native dialect –for this is the Orient- that people with an amorous temperament are ravished when they hear them, (Evliya Çelebi 1988, 158-159).

We shall recall these words after reading some late Nineteenth Century travellers' descriptions of people's faces in the city, to have an idea of the radical changes that occurred in the sensible (and maybe sensual) sphere of the city and the different tone of representations it inspires. Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that the arousing accent of the city's dwellers is an element that will appear in contemporary Turkish literary examples, discussed later in this thesis; the sexual dimension intertwines significantly with the linguistic, the political and the military, in the history of this city. Another traveller who, discussing Diyarbakır, connects sexuality and military conquest is Alessandro de Bianchi, an Italian patriot who took shelter in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century[16] to escape Austrian repression; he gave an account of his travels around the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire. For him, Diyarbakır is "one of the better built cities of the Empire" (De Bianchi 2005); nonetheless, he curiously cites a risqué reputation of the city. In fact, he refers to having heard that the moral reputation of Diyarbakır's women was not flawless. He quotes a supposed inscription on the walls of Dağ Kapı (Mountain Gate) that reads: "he who stays twenty-four hours in Diyarbekir and leaves it without having slept with a damsel or a popinjay, is a useless man". Then he adds, without quoting the source, that during the Persian siege of the city in the VI century CE, the Magi prophesized that the city would fall "for the shamelessness of its women who from above the walls showed to the assailants their most intimate parts" (De Bianchi 2005). Here De Bianchi interestingly connects the element of the siege, and therefore notions of conquest and subjugation to a gendered image of the city. These two elements present themselves in many other representations, as will be shown in following chapters; gendering the city is another way of presenting military impulses and drives to possession.

From the account of Evliya Çelebi, we have the perception of a city happy and healthy, rich in Turkish baths, noteworthy architecture and literary production: "hundreds of proficient and eloquent poets of accomplishment are found here" (Evliya Çelebi 1988, 159), a feature also noted by Simon of Poland. The position and the good climate in the city make people intelligent and versed in languages and eloquence: "All the people speak Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic, Ajami and Armenian. As for readiness of tongue, some persons are highly proficient in correctness and elegance of speech. […] They are all merry and saucy, mirthful and witty people" (Evliya Çelebi 1988, 183). Other main aspects of Çelebi's description are food and drink. Accordingly, other travellers in the Eighteenth century will notice agreeably the taste and profusion of Diyarbakır's cuisine. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, who visited the city at the end of the 17th century, highlights the quality of Diyarbakır's waters, soil, bread and wine but "above all, there you can eat some pigeons that exceed in size and taste those that we have in Europe." Tavernier praises buildings and squares and claims that the water of the Tigris has "a very peculiar feature" and this makes possible the production of textiles in the city which "way outdo all the other you can find in the Levant" (Tavernier 1712, 302). One British traveller, responding to the name of Donald Campbell, on his way to India stopped over in Diyarbakır. He received a gracefully positive impression from the place. He described the city as located in a "delightful plain"; it appeared to him as "one of the richest, most trading, strong, and populous cities in Asiatic Turkey […] adorned with many piazzas and market places" (Campbell 1796, 107):

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[16] In the 19th century many Italian patriots took shelter in the Ottoman Empire to flee Austrian or Papal persecution: among them is Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, who during her stay wrote in French three novels with Ottoman themes, one of which focusing specifically on the Kurds: *Scènes de la vie turque: Emina, Un prince kurde; Les deux femmes d'Ismaïl-Bey*, Paris, 1858.

> This city is supplied amply with water by a canal cut from the Tigris, and has many caravanserais on both sides of the river. Few countries in the world exceed that about this city for natural richness and beauty.

Extolling the quality of bread, fruit and wine, eventually Campbell admits that in Diyarbakır he had "the most delicious repast [he would] ever remember to have eaten." Another traveller we can add to the list of enthusiasts for Diyarbakır is John Jackson. Traveling from India to England, John Jackson and his Tatar guide pause for a while and have a good time in Diyarbakır. To him, the city seems to be in complete harmony with the surrounding natural environment and "commands a delightful prospect over a fertile country". The edifices are "very elegant", the Armenian Church is a "handsome structure", the craftsmanship of the city is highly developed and, most of all (Jackson 1799, 163): "People of all descriptions seem here to enjoy much liberty. The various sects of Christians have their chapels and churches, and each follows his own mode of worship without molestation." The Italian Domenico Sestini, who reached the city a decade earlier, agrees with Jackson. Quoting the quality and abundance of the meals and the enormity of the watermelons, he also notes how an atmosphere of tolerance and hedonism hovers in the city:

> Turkish women here enjoy greater freedom compared to other places; they leave the house often, they have rendez-vous, and secretly give themselves

> easily. In this case, there are 'Bacchus and Venus' as I will tell later, (Sestini 1786, 101).[17]

Describing the space of the city, that he finds "a labyrinth with a multiplicity of streets and alleys", Sestini highlights that the black lava stone gives the city a considerably different aspect compared with other Turkish cities in which wood is often employed in the construction. And he shrewdly notices: "if volcanos elsewhere quashed cities, here they have been of use to build them" (95). Sestini appears to have read the account of Tavernier and, from this period on, we can see how all these authors start to build on each others work, almost all of them referring in first instance to the classic Latin sources (Marcellinus, Procopius). Two last noteworthy quotations from Sestini show how the senses often contribute to shape and represent the socio-cultural (in this case religious) urban landscape. Firstly Sestini mentions an unpleasant characteristic of Diyarbakır, retold later by many authors, which is the huge presence of a local scorpion; he conveys this element to us 'dramatically', referring to the cries of a young man bitten by the scorpion "[he himself] heard in the city". Not just an otiose aspect, we will see further in the account of Cutts, how the scorpion contributes in summer to giving the city a special look. The second has to do with smells and with their relevance in structuring socio-religious relationships in the public space:

> The Propaganda Missionaries are beings that do not meet the Turkish genius, and obstinate in not wanting to leave their evil-smelling cape, it follows that they do not fit well with the scents of the Easterners, and slander and discredit to the mission always reigns because of these subjects, (Sestini 1786, 98).[18]

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[17] ''Le donne turche godono maggior liberta' che negli altri luoghi; escono di casa spesso, hanno dei rendez-vous, ed in segreto facilmente si prestano. İn tal caso vi e' Bacco e Venere come diro' in seguito.''

[18] ''I Missionari di Propaganda Sono esseri, che non troppo incontrano il genio turco, mentre ostinati a non voler lasciare il loro male odoroso manto, ne viene che non si accordano con i profumi degli Orientali, e la maldicenza a disdoro della missione regna sempre in questi soggetti.''

Almost ten years after Sestini is William Eton[19] who seems to give a quite optimistic description of Diyarbakır, in his *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (1799, 277):

> Diarbekir was the most populous city in Turkish Ottoman Empire but a few years ago it might still have been counted among the first cities in the world for magnitude, and, notwithstanding the exaggerated accounts of Cairo and Constantinopole, it containd more people in its walls than either of these cities. In 1756, there were 400.000 inhabitants, at present there are only 50,000.

Also, the Danish author Carsten Niebuhr, in his travelogue, nominates Diyarbakır for its thriving trades but also, singularly, for some apparent trouble in the city soundscape. This is interesting since, as we will see in further chapters, the contemporary soundscape, filled with siren noises, helicopters and jet rumbles, tells us a lot about the history and the suffering of the city. In Niebuhr's times, the problem was of a rather more idyllic and innocent nature (Niebuhr 1994, 285) and referred to a "troublesome croaking of frogs".

2.4 "Black are the walls and black are the hearts of black Amid": a landscape of bleakness.

The Nineteenth century would experience an incredible increase in "traffic", of Western travellers passing through Diyarbakır. At the beginning of the century though, something begins to change in the travellers' perception of the place. The city and its surroundings assume negative connotations. The above-mentioned Jackson, while praising the quality of life in Diyarbakır, has already spoken of how "the circumjacent country, to a considerable extent, is so much infested with banditti, that no one can travel to or from the city without a strong military guard" (1799, 166). The theme becomes stronger as the century progresses, and perceptions will start to be recorded of the tensions between Christians and Muslims, that will lead to the massacre at the end of the century.

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[19] Mirella Galletti actually mistook the author of this work for Lefebvre C., which is instead the translator of the French edition of the book, *Tableau Historique, Politique et Modern de l'Empire Ottoman*, 1799.

Horatio Southgate, whom we previously saw giving an account of the view of the city walls, speaks of the “inhospitable regions of Kurdistan” and of a Kurdish village-chief “who was in habit of plundering the unfortunate travellers that sought shelter in his village” (1840, 289). Although the surroundings are perceived as menacing, the city still retains much of the positive atmosphere of the previous accounts:

> While I was in the place, the weather was delightful; vegetation was in its early freshness, and cultivation had commenced. I saw little of the signs of poverty and wretchedness so common in Turkish towns. The city is well supplied with the comforts of life, and with not a few of its luxuries, (Southgate 1840, 292).

To conclude he mentions, as many others have, that “melons [are] particularly celebrated” and coming to the city from the Arab south, he realizes that he is entering “the country of the Osmanlees” by the fact that “the Turkish language begins to prevail” and by the “white head-dresses of the females and the manners of the people” (Ibid., 293).

The British traveller William Heude, passing through the city on his journey overland from the Persian Gulf to England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, despite noticing that the city “was better built than any other Mahomedan city [he had] ever visited”, he also indulges in a connotation of the place in quite obituary terms:

> There are few places in these parts, I think, that offer a more novel and interesting appearance to the European traveller than this: the rapid stream almost seems the boundary of life, as immediately after passing the bridge, the abode of death presents itself on every side; and the stranger is at once surrounded with tombs, and awe-struck at the melancholy gloom of the black marble battlements which encircle the sable pile. From dark lofty porticoes of imposing strength, a busy crowd issues forth to complete the illusion; fair, restless, and decked in a thousand colours, they almost appear the beings of another world, enrobed in all their vanities, and revisiting their earthly tenements, (Heude 1993, 233).

After a few steps into the city he slips in the literary-imaginary world (Ibid., 233):

> In proceeding through the streets, the same impression is still kept-up; and the wanderer, without any very strong appeal to imagination, may almost fancy himself in the vale of tears, in the palace of enchantment and despair, which the fair Scheherazade so well describes.

Gloomy representations of the city begin to take over. In 1850 Soane can still give an overall positive overall account, although he has to mention the interreligious violence that has started to characterize the place:

> Diarbekr at first sight strikes the stranger as a remarkably clean, bright, busy, city, with streets unusually broad for the East. [...] The place was crowded and busy; the Kurds, released from their snow-bound mountains, were coming in to buy summer clothing, the Armenians, who are the craftsmen of Diyarbekr, were enjoying a period of immunity from the terror in which they often exist, (Soane 2007, 60-62).

Just a year later, Frederick Walpole seems to enjoy the city only from outside. The view of the castle standing out on the high-Mesopotamian plain, inspires in him a romantic feeling of 'sublime', however when he enters the city, and gets closer to the details, the connotations change and he dislikes some of the local drinking traditions; again the internal and external contradictions of the walled-town:

> We reached the summit, whence a noble view burst before us. […] It was, indeed, magnificent; and countless folds of the Tigris glistened like silver here and there along the plain before us. Diyarbekr was there. […] Diarbekr is surrounded by high walls of black basalt, to which may be attributed much of its unhealthiness. […] The streets are dirty, and struck me as more wretched-looking than those of most Eastern cities. […] A sort of sherbet is made here of the cocoon of the silk-worm; it is considered a great luxury, and is exported for a beverage of the rich all over the surrounding country. To me it appeared very nauseous, tasting exactly as the cocoons smell, which, though perhaps a delightful odour to him who trades, is not pleasant as an abstract perfume. […] The town has the usual number of khans, mosques, and baths. The only one of the latter I used was mean and dirty, (Walpole 1851, 364).

A few days after arriving, Walpole leaves Diyarbakır, mounting on a raft that would bring him to Mosul, flowing down the Tigris. It is just when he leaves the city and sees it again from a distance that positive adjectives again find some place on the page (Ibid., 373): "Diarbekr formed a fine point of view for some time and the scenery below it was of equal beauty, though the immediate banks were low and uninteresting." A rather different experience will occur in 1865 to the German Orientalist Heinrich Petermann. When leaving the city he will find himself under a "rain of stones thrown by some young boys" (Petermann 2003, 127). With bitter irony, this episode seems a prelude to the 1990s when Diyarbakır will become famous in Turkey and the world for children throwing stones at the police and being severely punished for such a crime.

J. Lewis Farley, in 1866 as the good banker he was, gives us a glimpse of the rising British interest in the economic potential of Kurdistan and the possibilities of exploiting them. He praises some of Diyarbakır's artefacts and the fertility of the surrounding fields, noticing that: "In respect of climate, soil, and capability of irrigation, there are few countries in the world which could compete with Kurdistan, in the production of good middling cotton, were energy, skill, and capital brought to bear on the enterprise; but the Koordish farmers are either wretchedly lazy, or unaccountably oblivious to the profit which they might derive from this particular crop" (Farley 1866, 219).

The walls that inspired strength and magnificence to previous writers, slowly become characterized in a different way. Chevalier Lycklama, in 1875, on entering the city was "struck by the picturesque but sombre aspect of Diyarbekir" (Lycklama à Nijeholt 1872, 225). MacCoan, stressing the dangerousness of the environs, affirms that "wild and warlike Kurds have no literature" (McCoan 1879, 137). Three years later Austrian officer Schweiger-Lerchenfeld describes the city as "cheerless" and "unattractive", a reservoir of plagues and "fevers". And although "the black basalt-stone walls are standing as a symbol of past and solidity", what is visible inside the walls sounds quite distant from the accounts of Evliya Çelebi and Simeon of Poland (von Schweiger-Lerchenfeld 2003): "In this cauldron formed by the basalt dark stones life in every aspect is stopping; the fountains are drying out."

We have an ever-growing volume of account in the 1890s. At the beginning of the decade Doctor Lamec Saad, being free from any duty, strolls around in the city as a *flaneur* and mentions a proverb that many other authors will cite later:

> A French proverb says this for Diyarbekir: ''pierres noires, chiens noir, coeurs noirs'' (Black stones, black dogs, black hearts). This proverb describes Diyarbekir in a very creative way, (Saad 2003, 155).

Lamec Saad, reinforcing the contrast between the outward look and the internal feel of the city, confirms the ethnic distribution of the city and the surroundings and pronounces on the health of the inhabitants in a radically different way compared to Çelebi (Ibid., 156):

> When you look at it from a distance Diyarbakir has a lovely aspect; but from a closer look, due to the fact that all the houses are made of black stones and mud, it looks like a cemetery […] It is rare to see the face of a healthy person.

Also Henry C. Barkley in 1891 receives a negative impression and represents in this way his first view of the city (Barkley 2011, 271):

> Diarbekir was in view for an hour before we reached it, but I cannot say we fell in love with it at first sight, for a more dismal, jail-like place is not to be found.

And further ahead, talking about the walls, he says (Ibid., 272):

> They are fast falling into decay [...] As we approached not a creature was to be seen outside the gates, and we felt as if we were coming to a city of the dead, and should not have felt astonished if on passing the gate we had found a population of skeletons. There was nothing novel and nothing pleasant in the town itself; on the contrary, from being a walled-in place, the streets were even narrower and the houses smaller and more crowded than in open towns, and I think the smells were stronger. Bad times had fallen on the place.

The author misses the "comforts and luxuries of civilization" that authors from the previous century thought Diyarbakır was guaranteeing generously. However he feels relieved at meeting in Diyarbakır Mr. Cummings, and being hosted in his "English home-like house". One thing that can make the place a little better is the memory of home and the refinements and luxuries expecting at one's return (Ibid., 282):

> Wherever one finds English men and women, one is sure to find the piano. Mountains, rivers, deserts, bad roads, and no roads cannot exclude it. If a little feeble and out of tune in its notes, it looks well, and I suppose is felt to be a friend by those who are fond of music and helps to remind them of pleasanter and happier homes miles away across the sea. Diarbekir being the most ungetable place we had seen, yet had its piano [...] and though it had passed some years among Turks, Greeks, Kurds, Arabs, and others, it could yet speak in the old familiar notes when called on to do so under the skillful hands of Mrs. Cummings.

Barkley evidently has to justify a British military intervention in Kurdistan and describes the place as ravaged by violence, operations against the Kurds in the mountains and against the Christians in the cities, and concludes: “we found all living on the hopes of English intervention” (Ibid., 281).

The French Army Lieutenant of the 76th infantry regiment, Count De Cholet, publishes his *Voyage en Turquie D’Asie, Arménie, Kurdistan et Mésopotamie* in 1892. The 10th chapter of his work is devoted to the description of the arrival, the staying and the departure from Diyarbakır. Traveling from Bitlis, he reaches Diyarbakır from the northeast and the vision that is offered before his eyes is, again, that of the city exquisite in the middle of the high-Mesopotamian plain:

> The high minarets and domes, and the powerful walls of the ancient Amida stood out at our right, with a sombre look under a golden sky enlightened by the last beams of the sun…(Cholet 2007, 248).[20]

The author talks about “Arméniens persecutés” and ethnic tensions among Kurds and Armenians, but maintains that the situation is much quieter compared to the surrounding regions:

> If the crisis that broke out among the Kurds and the Armenians is equally manifest, it is far from the intensity with which develops in the surrounding provinces. Even inside the city, order and perfect tranquility rule. Christaians

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[20] “Les hauts minarets, les coupoles élevées et les puissantes murailles de l’antique Amida se détachent à notre droite, toutes sombre sur un ciel d’or illumine par les derniers rayons du soleil.”

> and Muslims walk peacefully in the middle of the winding streets, (Cholet 2007, 252).[21]

Coming to the architectural beauties of the city, the only thing Cholet finds worth noticing is the city walls, the only feature that, according to the author, distinguishes the city from other cities in Turkey. Cholet publishes a nice photograph of Diyarbakır's dungeons and, like Walpole before him, leaves the city on board a *kelek* (a raft), descending the Tigris towards Hasankeyf and Mosul as was usual at the time, for trade and transportation: two decades later, ominously, it was used for the deportation of the city's Armenian population.

Only one year later German geologist Edmund Nauman is to travel to the city and to express, through the colour of the walls, the social conditions he witnessed in Diyarbakır (Naumann 2003, 177): "The dark colour of the walls, like a dress of sadness the city wears since long time, points out at striking events."

Nauman is struck by the massive presence of beggars, ill-faced dervishes and the like, and remembers "fevers" and "scorpions". The same gloomy tone pervades Charles Wilson's description in 1895 (2003, 183):

> When you look from outside Diyarbakir has a spectacular aspect, when you enter inside it disappoints the traveller. The internal aspect of the city does not only communicate sadness, but it is actually depressive, because the houses are made of porous black stones. This gives to the city an atmosphere of mourning.

Wilson goes on to notice that some "Venetian" and "French" fashion is spreading in the city which is "one of the most strange cities of the East" in which the language spoken is Turkish and in which many citizens carry an unpleasant looking "abscess on their cheeks" (Wilson 2003, 183).

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[21] "Si la crise qui sévit entre les Kurdes et les Arméniens s'y manifeste également, elle est loin d'acquérir l'intensité avec laquelle elle s'est développée dans les provinces environnantes. A l'intérieur même de la ville qu'il habite, l'ordre règne ainsi que le calme le plus parfait. Chrétiens et musulmans se promènent tranquillement au milieu des rues tortueuses."

Also, the Turkish playwright Ali Bey, in his *Seyahat Jurnalı* (Travel diary) refers to the proverb of the "black stones, black dogs, black hearts of Amida" to give an idea of the "pitiful conditions of the people". Notwithstanding, Ali Bey talks of Diyarbakır as a place of education and literary erudition:

> Out of [Diyarbakir's] dynasties and inhabitants there are a lot of men of letters, people of elegance, education and erudition. Among these for example has to be mentioned the strong pen of Sait Paşa, with his historical and literary works, (Ali Bey 2003, 173).

Similar to Wilson, Ali Bey notes in the city some "westernizing" fashions, especially in several sectors of the society. As we will see, the effort to radically change the aspect of the people in the public space, will be a key point of the cultural assimilation policies of the Turkish Republic after 1923. But already by 1897 the politicization of attire is working (Ibid., 174):

> The notables and aristocrats of Diyarbekir (the rich, the nobles and the progressive) together with those who work for the government, they dress up like the people in Istanbul. The merchants and the artisans, as all the rest of the people, wear *şalvar* and a cloak; the Muslims wear a crochet worked veil, the Jews a yellowish and the Christians a black one. The westernized Christian youth came out with this fashion of wearing a jacket on top of the *şalvar,* and look strange and ugly to the eye.

The agricultural administrator Louisa Jebb published her famous account of her trip to Baghdad in 1908. Recalling the famous proverb, she has this to say about our city:

> They say of Diarbekr that its houses are black, that its dogs are black and that the hearts of its people are black—and they say so truly. The first moment that one catches sight of it in the distance one is impressed by the blackness of its walls, built of a black volcanic stone. When one gets inside, the people look dourly, (Jebb 2012, 141).

Curiously, Louisa talks about the city as a place you can visit walking on top of roofs, glancing in the houses and private lives of other people and leaving the city on a raft going down the Tigris river waters. When losing sight-contact with the city, she feels like abandoning herself to the wild and dangerous environs, losing any contact with civilisation:

> As we were carried along the winding course of the sluggish river a higher mud bank shut it altogether from our view, and I felt we had severed that link with the world which one feels so strongly on arriving in any town of a distant uncivilised land, where a European mail occasionally arrives and a telegraph wire eliminates the isolation of its natural position. We were drifting into an unknown world at the mercy of these unknown Kurds, (Jebb 2012, 146-147).

For the English Church of England priest William Wigram, the profile of the city is “menacing and grim”, while the name of the city, and thus its first wordy representation, is “inseparably” linked to its colour:

> At length, two full days beyond Severek, we descry a city ahead of us. A city notable for its size, and yet more for its menacing aspect: a grim black row of massive towers and curtains, with the slender stems of a dozen minarets shooting up into the sky behind the ramparts like reeds behind a dyke of stone. […] Such is Diarbekr-Black Amida; whose classical name is not yet disused entirely, and which owes its inseparable epithet to the basalt of which is built, (Wigram and Wigram 1936, 26).

I mentioned earlier how the Rev. Cutts reckoned the city “worthy of its history”, how he referred to classical sources and how he went into the city looking for “interesting remains of past times”. As do other travellers of the time, he signals that Diyarbakır is probably one of the most “fanatic” cities of the region (thus contrasting with earlier representations), but another interesting observation is the one he makes about the roof-bed used in the regions to escape the humid heat of summer and the bites of dangerous scorpions:

> The house in which we were residing was perhaps the loftiest in the town, and from the windows of our bedroom in the upper storey we could see a wide sweep of the walls and towers, the ruined citadel, the mosques and minarets, and, lastly, we overlooked the housetops of that quarter of the town. These housetops presented a curious picture of Eastern life. Upon every one of them was a great wooden bedstead, with posts at the four angles, and horizontal laths to carry curtains. About sunset the women might be seen busy unrolling the bundles of bedding and arranging them, then spreading the white curtains

> of the bedstead, till every housetop possessed its square tent, within which the whole family passed the night. By sunrise in the morning the curtains were removed, the bedding rolled up into great bundles, and the city assumed its usual aspect. […] As we ascended the opposite hills and got a view over the whole town, it put on a very curious appearance. We have already described the curtained beds on the housetops which are in general use. By this late hour of the evening they were all prepared; and the whole town looked as if it had erected an upper story of white walls, (Cutts 2006, 103-109).

Just one year later, in 1909, famous traveller, archaeologist, writer and British agent Gertrude Bell, visited the city. At the time of Bell's visit, the internal ethnic-societal balance of the city and of the all Ottoman Empire in general had tumbled down. The city of Diyarbakır was significantly affected by the Hamidian massacres of Armenian population; six years after Bell's visit the vast Christian population of Diyarbakır and the surrounding area had been swept away in the Armenian genocide, carried out by Turkish authorities and sectors of the local Kurdish population (Jongerden & Verheij, 2012). The landscape before the eyes of the English writer is not as harmonious and idyllic as that accounted for by travellers a century earlier. Nourished with classic readings Bell, in her very first description of the city, recurs to Ammianus Marcellinus and possibly postulates a continuity of destruction, humiliation and gloominess since the times of the Roman historian:

> "Black are the dogs and black the walls and black the hearts of black Amid," says the proverb. Since the days when Ammianus Marcellinus took part in the desperate resistance to Shapor, and watched from the towers of Amida the Persian hosts "collected for the conflagration of the Roman World," the din of battle has never been far from Diyarbekr, (Bell 2007, 116).

The physical feature of the stone, the black colour, is rhetorically extended to a permanent condition of the city, which has never been free from "the din of battle" and to the human condition of living in the very same city: "black are the hearts". Furthermore, if in Marcellinus' times Amida was the easternmost bastion of Roman civilization, for Gertrude Bell now the city is already "the lawless capital of Kurdistan". Again a strategic key stronghold, when Bell is writing Diyarbakır is torn to pieces by ethnic clashes and the persecution of

Armenians and Syriacs by Kurds and Turks. The echo of massacres that occurred fourteen years before Bell's visit still hovers in Diyarbakır when she is writing:

> There is no peace for the lawless capital of Kurdistan. Warring faiths struggle together as fiercely as rival empires, and the conflict is embittered by race hatreds. The heavy air, lying stagnant between the high walls, is charged with memories of the massacres of 1895, (Bell, 2007, 116).

The air itself is charged of sorrowful memories: in Bell's reading, Diyarbakır seems to be particularly adroit in joylessness. What is interesting, though, is that an historical condition is tied to the physical layout of the place. In any case, after having read the author's lines, for us it is not hard to imagine the even more devastating proportion of massacres that will follow six years after her letter, when Diyarbakır will be one of the directive centres of Armenian and Syriac genocide of 1915 (Üngör 2012b; Jongerden and Verheij 2012). The British political interest in the area goes along with cultural curiosity towards Mesopotamia (Atia 2012) and few years after Gertrude Bell, in the same year of the Armenian genocide, Mark Sykes, whose action had a tremendous importance for the political destiny of the region and the Middle East in general, publishes *The Caliph's Last Heritage: A short history of the Turkish Empire.* The book is both a geographical and political survey of the Ottoman Empire and an account of the author's travels in the region. His depiction of Diyarbakır is in keeping with the negative discursive trend highlighted above. Even before reaching the city, the British diplomat receives negative sensations form the surroundings: "Ill-cultivated land and miserable villages were the first things that impressed one. The inhabitants, who are Kurds, are tall, dark, and unprepossessing" (Sykes 1915). For the villagers around the city he has adjectives such as "idle", "thievish" and "coward" and "particularly unpleasant" (Ibid.). The landscape "offers no attraction of any kind" (Ibid.). The description of the city develops coherently with such and introduction (Ibid. 538):

> The town of Diarbekir has a sombre and ominous appearance from without. The great dark walls, which bulge out in frowning bastions, give the exterior of the city a prison-like aspect. Within […] the funereal black of the basalt, of which the whole of the dwellings are constructed, has a depressing effect.

The physical aspect, the colour and the shape of Diyarbakır are easily exploited on the musings of travellers to restitute to the readers the decadence of the place. Such representations are the total reverse of those of, for example, Evliya Çelebi who found the city flourishing and its dwellers peculiarly attractive. Instead, almost three centuries later, for Mark Sykes, Diyarbakır inhabitants are of a “debased race” and “whether Christian or Moslem equally displeasing” (Sykes 1915).

When Max Kirsch visits the city in 1924 the Turkish Republic has already existed for one year. While accounting for an interesting episode that enlivened the soundscape of the city during his visit, he also gives us a sense of how the mentality was changing for those he calls “progressive Turks” towards religious and ritualistic traditions (Kirsch 2003, 243); he describes with orientalist fascination the sounds of dervishes playing and dancing in Diyarbakır, that sounded “as if danger was nearing” (Ibid.); his travel companion, “a progressive Turk”, belittles such traditions as “uninteresting”, but Max Kirsch seems equally to surrender to the exotic charm of the scene (Ibid.):

> The voices went on all night and did not let us sleep. The mystic excitement coming from the voices of the limitless dervishes poured into the Eastern night; this excitement was so strong and driving that it was like if I had profoundly participated the rite as well. Our first night in Kara Amid found its end with this rite.

Noelle Roger says how the walls of the city are the best-preserved in Turkey and says that is possible to read “the animate history of the city” leafing through the inscriptions legible on its walls. Furthermore, after accounting for all the sieges and the subsequent civilisations that took over the city, he also maintains that Mustafa Kemal decided to destroy the walls “for war reasons”. On arrival, before his eyes, Diyarbakır appears like this:

> The paunch of a city closed as a prison, protecting itself against the assault of the desert, suspicious, desolate, here is Diyarbakir, (Roger 2003, 247).

Lord Kinross, in his *Within the Taurus,* gives a sort of literary review of all the travellers who passed through the city before him. He mentions for example Professor Creswell who defined the city as “one of the greatest masterpieces in the military architecture of Islam" (Kinross 1954, 141); and mentions the habitual proverb and also Sir Mark Sykes and Mr. Barkley who both found the city "prison-like", adding "I did not find it so" (Kinross 1954, 142). Lord Kinross also introduces us to the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, accounting for the shifting policies of the Turkish Republic towards the Kurds. In 1954 the Christian population of the city was almost reduced to nil and as the project of the Turkish Republicans, the subsequent task would have been that of assimilating culturally the Muslim Kurds, now progressively taking over on the demography of Diyarbakır:

> In the past it was Turkish policy to dominate these rebellious highlanders by force. Today the policy was to educate them, particularly in the Turkish language, and thus gradually to assimilate them into the Turkish community, (Kinross 1954, 145).

Lord Kinross thus provides insights into the mechanism and strategies of assimilation implemented by the Turkish State. Notwithstanding, in the 1950s the electoral strategies of the Democratic Party allows the Kurds some sort of cultural liberties and this reflects on the attire, and on the general look and feel of the city's public space. After Kemal Atatürk's "sartorial" revolution in Turkey, the clothing began to assume a specific political message and even changing to traditional trousers instead of modern ones could have been seen as an act of resistance and protection of one's ethnic specificity (and indeed even recently clothing has proved still to be contentious, as shown by the decision of the Diyarbakır Governor to ban Kurdish clothes, see 'Diyarbakır Valisi, "Şal Û Şepik"i Yasakladı!' 2016). Kinross talks of "manifestations of reaction, religious and sartorial":

> The veil is returning. The Kurds in the villages were being allowed, once more, to wear their traditional head-dresses, instead of the uniform cloth cap; and in Diyarbakir the youth of the city was tending to revert in its costume to the broad baggy trousers of the *ancient regime*: a far cry from the days when Atatürk's police would forcibly cut out the seats of men's trousers with a large pair of scissors, (Kinross 1954, 145).

More recently, the gloomy and lugubrious image of Diyarbakır has become strongly established, by reason of the peaks of violence of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict since the 1984. William Dalrymple, on his journey along the track of the Christians of the Middle East approached the city and described it, once more, in dim terms. The British travel writer visits the area in years (1994) in which the armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish military is extremely violent. As in the genocide of 1915, Diyarbakır is the main base of the Turkish State to conduct military operations in the region, and makes the headlines of national and international newspapers with news of attacks, street fighting, tortures and extra-judiciary executions. When Dalrymple visits the region, the death toll is growing day-by-day. The city's physical features can easily be exploited by the author to characterize the whole situation, simply through the use of negatively connoted adjectives:

> A bleak journey: mile after mile of blinding white heat and arid, barren grasslands, blasted flat and colourless by the incessant sun. […] Diyarbakir, a once-famous Silk Route city on the banks of the River Tigris, was announced by nothing more exotic than a ring of belching smokestacks. The old town lies to one side, on a steep hill above the Tigris. It is still ringed by the original Byzantine fortifications built by Julian the Apostate in the austere local black basalt, and their sombre, somehow unnatural darkness gives them a grim and almost diabolic air. […] The Byzantines knew Diyarbakir as 'the Black', and it has a history worthy of its sinister fortifications. [...] Today the city retains a bloody reputation. It is now the centre of the Turkish government's ruthless attempt to crush the current Kurdish insurgency, and indeed anyone who speaks out, however moderately, for Kurdish rights, (Dalrymple 1998, 79).

One last quotation might be taken from Polish journalist Witold Szablowski, who, different from all the other examples related, arrives in the city on a plane and retains the first impression of the city from above. One would say that, not only the development of the modern city, but also the means of transport are changing the ways in which we form our ideas of cities and places:

> From above Diyarbakir looks like a pancake with a few blisters of air bulging up on its surface. In places there are some dark brown bumps protruding. As the plane descends, I can see that they're rocks, scattered here as if they had

> sprung out of the ground. […] According to the guidebook, after the Great Wall of China, this is the second most famous wall in the world. There should be thousands of tourists coming here, but there aren't. Diyarbakir has a bad reputation. It is the capital of a country that doesn't exist – Kurdistan – and of a people who are prepared to take up arms and fight for its right to exist. Only a few years ago business used to bypass this city, but since the Kurds have ceased to plant bombs and the army has stopped shelling neighbouring villages, businessmen have been coming here too. Diyarbakir has a million inhabitants. These days no city in Europe would be ashamed of its main drag, which has modern shops and expensive restaurants. Every month there are more and more of them, because the devil known as consumerism has settled in for good, (Szabłowski 2013, 36-37).

2.5 Conclusion

As it appears from the many passages quoted in this chapter, the travellers' perceptions of Diyarbakır and their written rendition have changed a lot through history. It is arguable that the bleak image of Diyarbakır is predominant in the last century and a half, contrasting strongly with previous representations of the city, especially in the Modern Times, in which it looked flourishing, urbane and attractive. Lately, the gaze of the western traveller has been captured by the dark colour of the stone, which in turn becomes a metaphor for the conflicting social environment and for the overall atmosphere of decadence. The physical aspect of the place becomes a metonym of its historical conditions. The sight of the porous black basalt, that once inspired feelings of magnitude and strength, by the passing of time began to persuade the visitor to indulge in gloomy thoughts of ruination, and somehow to heighten the miserable social conditions they witnessed to the level of essential features, intrinsic to the city. The walls, the bastions and the ramparts prepare the scene for narrations of battle, fight, clash, conflict; the black stone seems to suggest a funereal sensation of doom, irreversibly the imagined representation of Diyarbakır. In this sense, the literary destiny of the city seems as if it has been determined ever since the times of Marcellinus' and Procopius' accounts. As it will emerge from the next chapters, Diyarbakır has been during the nineteenth century, and still is, the battlefield its walls want it to be. Its physical and representational spaces are locations for the cultural and political clash between the Turkish and the Kurdish imagined communities. Therefore, the physical features analysed in this chapter are mobilized also by Turkish and Kurdish writers, with aims and results that will be studied in the next chapters.

3. Modernity besieges the city.

Perceptions of Diyarbakır in the Turkish nationalist perspective.

The collapse of the Ottoman Empire created in Anatolia a new institutional and administrative entity, the Turkish Republic, which in many aspects was revolutionary (F. Ahmad 2008). Despite the fact that this process was the result of a complex dynamic of continuities and discontinuities with the previous political environment, the makers of the Turkish Republic perceived and called themselves *inkilapçı*, revolutionaries. Not merely an institutional change, the transition from Empire to Republic meant a historical shift in terms of mind-set, culture, language, and identity politics; even though it might look as an abrupt change, its premises were actually in incubation in the Ottoman society from at least the mid-nineteenth century. This chapter will look at the representations of Diyarbakır given by Turkish writers who saw themselves as an integral part of the intellectual and political revolution that materialized into the Turkish Republic. The chronological span goes from the years preceding the foundation of the Turkish Republic on 29th October 1923, to the early 1950s. Specifically, it looks at the image of Diyarbakır within the new Turkish nationalist imagination as constructed by three leading writers: Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924), Halide Edip Adıvar (1884-1964) and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889-1974). This particular perspective enlightens also the relevance of print-culture, literacy and literature in the creation and framing of the Turkish national “imagined community” and the unique role appertaining to Diyarbakır in the new Republican context. In this context, Diyarbakır came to represent the irreducibility of the Anatolian region, and in particular of the south-eastern region, to the modernist precept of the Republic. Furthermore, the city’s ethnic restlessness characterized it as an overt challenge to the supposed ethnic and cultural unity of the new country.

The three authors studied in this chapter belong roughly to the same generation; and during the time-span selected one main political actor unquestionably dominated the public scene: the *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası* founded in 1923 and since 1935 called – as it is today –*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party, hereafter CHP). This period is generally called by historians the "one-party state period" (Zürcher 1993, 173-214). During almost thirty years, the CHP (until 1938 under the direct leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk) was the incontestable leader of Turkey's political life, the key-holder of the Turkish nationalist ideology that was at the base of the new state, and the strongest actor during the nation-building process. Mustafa Kemal founded the party less than two months before the establishment of the Republic and the party is still active today, although since the 1950s it has lost its absolute leadership of Turkish politics, and since 2002 it represents the main opposition party. Its ideology came, in time, to be called "Kemalism" (see Ciddi 2009; Mango 2010), and was synthetized in 1931 into six key concepts: republicanism, secularism, nationalism, populism, statism, and revolutionism (Zürcher, 1993, 189). Any early opposition (both at political and regional levels) was immediately crushed by the CHP. In 1924 a new party, the Progressive Republican Party, was founded by the moderate wing of the CHP, dissatisfied at the way the Republic was proclaimed. However, one year later, after the outbreak and subsequent crackdown of the Sheikh Said Kurdish rebellion in the Diyarbakır region (see below), the new party was closed down by the government and its members brought to court (Zürcher, 1993, 176-180). In the words of Faroz Ahmad (2008, 229):

> Having crushed the Kurdish rebellion and free of all opposition, the Kemalist regime was able to implement policies that destroyed the social foundations of the old order and established those of the new one.

When established in 1923 by the cultural, political and military elite that fought the invasion of colonial forces on Anatolian soil, Turkey inherited a relatively smaller portion of the Ottoman lands; but above all, it inherited a society that was, in the eyes of the leaders of the revolution, profoundly ready for cultural reform. As put concisely by Zürcher, Turkey's political life was dominated by "a movement for national sovereignty being victorious (1922), going through a pluralistic phase (until 1925) and then establishing an authoritarian regime, which embarked on a programme of reforms [aimed at] secularizing and modernizing society" (Zürcher 1993, 180). The reforms included the forcible westernization of the dress code, the closure of shrines and convents, and the radical reform of the Turkish language and alphabet with the so-called “Alphabet Revolution” of 1928-1930 (Szurek 2015, 71; see also Lewis 1999); changes obviously inspired by Turkish nationalist values, for which the concept of nation had to overlap perfectly with the new geographical entity. A trailblazer of such linguistic Turkish “puritanism” had been Ziya Gökalp, co-founder in 1911 of the *Yeni Lisan Hareketi* (The New Language Movement). As noted by Ertürk, who saw the linguistic reform of 1928 as the culmination of a process already active in Ottoman society at the end of the 19th century, such reform “necessarily touches on the discomfiting question of ethnocentrism” and reveals “the fear of the ‘illegible’ social other(s) within the social body itself” (Ertürk 2013, 5).

In order to build a modern nation state based soundly on the values of the Turkish nation, the State had to design new institutions ad organizations able to disseminate the new reforms to the society. One of those institutional tools was the the *Türk Ocakları* ("Turkısh Hearths", see Üstel 1997). Despite being a private association, the “Turkish Hearths” was animated by the same key figures as the political and cultural elite. In 1932, the “Turkish Hearths” were replaced by the party-run *Halkevleri* ("People Houses", Szurek 2015, 83; see also Lamprou 2015). The scope of these institutions was that of “mingling all the citizens, infusing the Republic’s reforms into the citizens’ thoughts, diffusing the reforms into the spirit of the people or indoctrinating feelings of nationalism and patriotism” (Öztürkmen 1994, 162). Diyarbakır’s “People’s House” was one of fifteen pilot houses opened in the country. The role of the “People Houses” was also that of spreading in society new rituals and ceremonies related to the national narrative, as well as transmitting new modernist aesthetic practices considered well-suited to the new society. In realizing these social changes a crucial role was played by the “missionaries of the new regime” (Aslan 2007, 246), volunteers, politicians, students, political activists, and also intellectuals and writers. As put by Seyhan, “Atatürk needed another army to spread the gospel, to popularize the new reforms. This corps was formed by novelists, journalists, diplomats, teachers” (Seyhan 2008, 39) since the common denominator of these societal operations was the Turkish language and the complementary eradication of the “public visibility and audibility of non-Turkish languages” (Aslan 2007, 246). Although the “People’s Houses” in the southeast were instruments for the assimilation of the Kurdish population into Turkishness, the level of their efficacy and keeping up with the high expectations of the central government is another matter (Aslan 2011, 77), of which a literary echo will be discussed in the section about Karaosmanoğlu.

Aiming at a radical anthropological transformation, one of the key concepts was that of “homogeneity” (Çaglayan 2014, 15). At its onset, Turkey had a large demographic variety in its territory. In fact, a number of cultural, religious, political, ethnic and linguistic affiliations were possible, sometimes simultaneously, during the Ottoman Empire. Being Ottoman, one could be ethnically Greek, Armenian or Assyrian and religiously Christian. One could be ethnically Turk, Kurd, Arab or Turkmen and be religiously Sunni or Shia Muslim. With the purpose of building a demographically homogeneous society, the Republic implemented a variety of measures (administrative, military, cultural, spatial, legal, etc.), in this respect following the route of policies implemented by the Empire. In order to craft a homogenous “geographical nationalisation” (Ülker 2008, 2007) out of the Ottoman pluralistic cauldron a variety of tools were put into use aimed at normalizing the ethno-cultural category of Turkishness” (Ülker 2008, 51). For these reasons, as the Turkish national culture was perceived as fundamental and exclusive, this project of social engineering can be called one of “Turkification”. As Ayhan Aktar (2009, 29) explains:

> By “Turkification” policies I mean the way in which Turkish ethnic identity has been strictly imposed as a hegemonic identity in every sphere of social life, from the language spoken in public to the teaching of history in public schools; from education to industry; from commercial practices to public employment policies; from the civil code to the re-settlement of certain citizens in particular areas. The preconditions of the implementation of Turkification policies can be summarized as follows: the emergence of Turkish nationalism as a well-structured political ideology, the recognition of this ideology by the great majority of the political elite in power, and the existence of an international political conjuncture favourable to the implementation of these policies domestically.

Along with the ethno-cultural denominator, the concept of secularism was also a key to the CHP's understanding of society. In the first revolutionary years of the Republic, the party oriented actions and decisions to a hard-line laicism. Consequently, the Caliphate, held by Ottoman sultans since the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, was abolished in 1924, as part of the secular reforms implemented by Mustafa Kemal. Although movements aiming at a lesser role for religion in the public sphere had risen at least a century earlier, Kemalist reforms signalled a watershed and firmly excluded Islam from social arenas until the 1950s when, with the passage from a one-party state to democracy, Islam regained currency in the political discourse (White 2008, 357).

During the period that led from the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the foundation of the Turkish Republic a substantial alliance held together the relations between Kemalist and Kurdish nationalists (Bozarslan 2008, 338). The First World War, the Armenian Genocide, and later on the War of Independence fought by Turks and Kurds (Shaw and Shaw 1977, 340-372), strengthened the connection between Kurdish notables and landowners in the Turkish nationalist and, later, Kemalist movement (Bozarslan 2008, 337), although exceptions are to be found (Jongerden 2012). Mustafa Kemal was welcomed in the Kurdish regions, for promises that he would not keep after 1923. Therefore, after the establishment of Turkey, a period of unrest began in the southeast. Bozarslan identifies three main reasons for the rupture of the Turkish-Kurdish collaboration: the imposition of linguistic policies by the Kemalists, the abolition of the Caliphate, and the non-fulfilment of Atatürk's promise of liberating the province of Mosul, corresponding roughly to southern Kurdistan region, from the British (Bozarslan 2008, 338-339).

In this context, the southeast region represented a thorny issue, both for its ethnic variety and for the endurance of religious conservatism (Üngör, 2012, 12). In the southeast, the State found what Aslan calls "an area of dissidence, which presents a high capacity for resistance to state domination and control" (Aslan 2011, 78). Recent studies have devoted specific attention to Diyarbakır (Jongerden 2007; Üngör 2012; Çağlayan 2014) as a city in which one can read emblematically the intentions of the State's social and cultural engineering plan to homogenize a population ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse. In fact, for Diyarbakır the constitution of Turkey meant a substantial geographical slide; as part of a new entity the city was in some respects pushed to the background. As noticed by Üngör (122):

> One aspect of the 1923 establishment of the Turkish Republic was the naturalization of the ‘geo-body’ of the Turkish nation state: the rectangular shape of the state relocated Diyarbakır province, formerly a centre of economic, political and cultural activity, to a nation state’s periphery.

The city’s geographical position in the newly born State was peripheral and poorly connected. Despite the genocide of the Christian population during 1915, Diyarbakır was also still “peripheral” with its demographic and cultural structure, in relation to the centrality of the Turkish ethno-linguistic paradigm. As events will show, shortly after 1923, Diyarbakır was the biggest city in a region that was not prone to submitting to the new hegemonic administrative and cultural entity. Thus, in the eyes of the Kemalists, it was a city that required “special attention” (Çaglayan 2014) and a particular effort to incorporate it into the nation-state body. Reading the republican reports on the Vilayat-ı Şarkiye (The Eastern Province), Çağlayan argues that for the government “Diyarbakır had to be turned into a strong centre of Turkishness” (Çaglayan 2014, 16; see also Üngör 2012, 188). Accordingly, the process of incorporation of the city into the State was multifaceted. It involved, for instance, demographic and social engineering: as part of these measures, Turks from the Balkans were settled in the south-eastern regions, whilst large landowners and influential religious leaders from those regions were relocated in the west of the country, especially after the Settlement Law, promulgated in 1934 (Ülker 2008, 44). The integration of the city into the national transportation network was crucial: the construction of the railway and the train station had both a functional and a symbolic value. It made it easier to reach the city from the centre of the country, thus easier to control by sending military troops and bureaucratic personnel. In addition, it brought to the city the mechanical symbol of modernity, thus revolutionizing the space-time perception of the local population: a society that calibrated time on the call for prayer, had now to regulate itself with train timetables (Çaglayan, 2014, 27). In Diyarbakır, today the railway line marks a clear urban boundary, dividing a rationalist area constructed in the early Republic times (Dalkılıç and

Halifeoğlu 2011), from a more chaotic area shaped by the massive migration waves post 1950s. In fact, a crucial means for “Turkifying” the environment was architecture. Modernist and rational architecture, reflecting State and national values, entirely informed the construction of the first two districts built outside the city-walls (Vilayet and Ofis). The numerous public buildings built in Diyarbakır between 1923 and 1950 turned the city into the regional administrative centre and, apart from the city walls, they are the buildings that bestow on the city its distinctive architectural character (Dalkılıç and Halifeoğlu 2011). Space also came to represent time and mind-sets: the confusing intertwining of alleyways within the city walls stays as a materialization of the multicultural and relatively chaotic Ottoman society, whereas the perpendicular lines, the right angles, and the monuments in Vilayet and Ofis, are figures of the assertiveness of the rationalist and secularist ideas of the Republic. While new urbanizations were needed to host the growing numbers of public personnel coming to the city, arts and architecture were also co-opted to mark and ratify “the radical cultural shift from the multicultural artistic/architectural production of the late Empire to the monocultural Turkish nationalism of the early Republic” (Bozdoğan 2008, 422; see also Bozdoğan 2001). In those years Ankara was the exemplary Kemalist city and other places in Anatolia, in leaving behind the past to join the modernist journey, were to conform to the aesthetic values emanating from the capital (Dalkılıç and Halifeoğlu 2011). Atatürk, himself, visiting the city in 1937, had the chance to give his personal suggestions on the architectural development of Diyarbakır (ibid.). The environment had to “signify” the Turkish nation, the urban space had to be “sacralised” according to the Turkish national rituals, and the figure of the founder Mustafa Kemal, represented in statues and monuments, had to loom over the citizens, in order to shape a “Kemalist city” (Houston 2005).

A saying that concisely expressed the instruments of modernization used by the State went like “okul, yol, karakol” (school, street and police station). The “police station” as a symbol of the military grip of the central government on the region; the “street” recalls the urbanistic measure just mentioned above, whereas “school” invokes the subject of further sections of this chapter. In effect, culture in general and literature in particular were fundamental tools for the construction, articulation and inculcation of a nationalist and modernist narrative, especially through schooling (Üngör, 2012 171-217). In 1924 the control of schools was brought under the government and a common curriculum was imposed all over the country (Aslan 2007, 251). As put by Fortna, who dedicates several works to the effect of the spread of literacy during the transition from Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic:

> Expanding literacy played a crucial role in the transformation of "traditional" society. Reading on a wider scale made possible the individuation of modern society but also facilitated the coalescing of individuals in common cause, whether in the form of its specific associative affiliations and groups or in the general sense of an Andersonian imagined community, (Fortna 2010a, 5).

The "Andersonian" imagined community in this case was obviously the Turkish community, whereas the Kurdish one was downplayed or obliterated. For Çağlayan:

> Especially if we look at Diyarbakır, we can see how the aim was to spread the national language and completely liquidate Kurdish from the public sphere by applying intensely assimilative and prohibitive policies. In plain words, the Republican paradigm, on the one hand wanted to increase the average of literacy in the region, while on the other hand teaching Turkish to the region's people aimed at Turkifying Kurds, (Çağlayan 2014, 176).

The following sections will analyse the representations of Diyarbakır produced by three authors who are all foundational in the Turkish national imagery: three authors that represent a consistent part of any Turkish literature school textbook in the country. As noted by Azade Seyhan: "Halide Edib belongs to a generation of writers, including Güntekin and Karaosmanoğlu, who are credited with underwriting the educational policies of the new nation during the early years of the republic" (Seyhan 2008, 46). These authors played a significant role in structuring the educational curriculum of the new state and quickly became instant classics of modern Turkish literature, being taught in those schools that oversaw "the creation" of Turkish citizens. Here it is useful to recall the notion of "print-capitalism" (Anderson 1983), that helps us in conceptualizing the significant role that literature played in structuring and disseminating the Turkish national imagined community. The works produced by these authors provided the Turkish citizen in Ankara with categories useful to interpret his/her own civilizational mission and with lenses able to read the geography of the new nation. Furthermore, to the citizen in the east, exposed to such literary representations through compulsory schooling and through the activities of the “People’s Houses”, they provided categories for self-interpretation.

The three authors analysed in this chapter belong roughly to the same generation, although the works taken into account here belong to three quite different historical phases. Gökalp’s letters and writings in *Küçük Mecmua* (published with some interruptions between 1921 and his death in 1924) belong to a time in which the Turkish State was yet to be, or newly created, and was still in the process of finding a cultural and ideological definition. Adıvar’s novels (*Kalp Ağrısı*, 1924 and *Zeyno’nun oğlu*, 1928) were written straddling the year of the Sheikh Said Kurdish revolt (1925) that played a crucial role in the further development of Turkish national politics. Finally, Karaosmanoğlu’s novel *Panorama* (Karaosmanoğlu 1987) was published almost three decades after the Republican revolutionary process began, and results, as well as shortcomings, can be spotted in society. The reason why works from such a range of time have been chosen is because these are the only works by these authors (and in general Turkish authors of the time) in which substantial representations of Diyarbakır are given (cfr. Alakom 2010; Yücel 2011). By looking at their works, we can see how the city of Diyarbakır was perceived by authors relatively organic to the new State ideology thus observing the general perception of the actors who were trying to transform the city itself by incorporating it in the state-body. Secondly, we can gain insight into how the self-perception of students and readers from the Diyarbakır region was constructed and shaped. As seen below, in these novels a constant divide of modernity-tradition is geographically constructed along the lines West of Turkey -Diyarbakır. Therefore it can be inferred that, a reader from the region (who might probably have been from Kurdish, Armenian, Assyrian, Zaza or Arab as well as Turkish ethnic origins) attending compulsorily state-schools in Turkish after 1923, was made to perceive him or herself as “traditional” and in need of the “modern” education brought by the State (Çaglayan, 2014, 175-224). Within the Turkish national “imagined community” that was, in the years covered in this chapter, being constructed and actively imagined, Diyarbakır has a quite relevant place in conveying notions of “marginality”, “backwardness”, “tradition”, and reaction to the Turkish “national revolution” (Aslan 2011, 76). Nonetheless, it is represented as an integral part of the nation-state body, and therefore as the place in which the modernist mission had to test itself more robustly.

3.1 Ziya Gökalp, Diyarbakır and the Turkish nation

At the heart of present day Diyarbakır, a few streets behind the Great Mosque, there is a museum founded in 1956 that has a particular meaning and a paradoxical destiny. It is called “Ziya Gökalp Müzesi” (Ziya Gökalp’s Museum) and has quite a controversial symbolic value. In October 2014, during the heavy street protests and clashes that erupted in Diyarbakır to show support for the fight of Kurdish forces against the Islamic State in the Syrian town of Kobane, and to protest against the Turkish authorities’ closure of the border between the city and Turkey, the museum was attacked and extensively burnt.[22] The building housing the museum is the birthplace of one of the most influential theorists of Turkish nationalism, a key intellectual figure for the Young Turks movement and a pillar of Kemalist ideology, as well as a member of the committee that drafted the first Republican constitution. Ziya Gökalp was one of the major contributors to the nationalist journal *Genç Kalemler* (Young Pens, see Belge 2010) and author of seminal works on Turkish nationalism such as: *Turkification – Islamification – Modernisation* (1918) and *The principles of Turkishness* (1923); two works in which he defines his sociological and political ideas, which are crucial to the theorisation of the Turkish Republic’s founding ideology. Being the birthplace of Ziya Gökalp, “the single most important architect of Turkish nationalism” (Konuk 2008, 76), Diyarbakır, one of the cities that most strenuously resisted that ideology, looks as if it is in an ambiguous position. Although Gökalp is quite unpopular among many Kurds, who regard him as a traitor and an oppressor, he was officially celebrated and commemorated in Diyarbakır, by local governorates, entitling to him names of schools and streets; organizing conferences and seminars on his thought, etc. (Beysanoğlu 1976). He was born in 1876 and was a member of a family of Diyarbakır's elite. Notables in Diyarbakır were mainly members of the establishment who lived from land-owning and trades. They were, in other words, urbanite and absentee landlords, playing a crucial role in the political and cultural life of the city, often in opposition to the Sultan and more sympathetic with the modernist political movements born in the empire after the Tanzimat period (Jongerden 2012). Ziya's uncle, Arif Pinçizzade, was suspected to be among the instigators of the Armenian persecutions and massacres that took place in Diyarbakır in 1895. Ziya Gökalp himself was owner of a small number of villages in the area surrounding Diyarbakir and an active cultural figure, even when it came to inciting a war against the local Kurdish chieftain, Milli Ibrahim Pasha, who was trying to protect Christians during the massacres and was closely linked to the Sultan (Jongerden, 2012). Gökalp was among the central figures of the Diyarbakır branch of the Committee of Union and Progress (*Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, below called CUP), the secret society created at the end of the Nineteenth century which evolved into a political party that later merged into the Young Turks movement, (Shaw & Shaw, 1977, 272-339). In 1923 he represented his native city in parliament (Öztürkmen 1992, 184). In short, Gökalp belonged to and was one of the key figures of the new cultural and political current that rose during the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, and constituted the ideological base for the Republic founded in 1923. He is recognized as "the most prominent champion of Turkish nationalism" and "the first theorist of Turkish nationalism" (Seyhan 2008, 35). While, at the beginning, the Ottoman nation was seen as the foundation of the state, the CUP soon interpreted the Turkish nation as the pillar of the new state that had to replace the falling Ottoman Empire. Gökalp saw the cosmopolitan multiculturalism of the Ottoman society as an "impediment to the nation's potential" (Konuk 2008, 76) and promulgated the idea of a homogenous society based on Islamic ethics, western technology and above all Turkish culture.

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[22] As reported by many Turkish newspapers 12th October 2014, (EnSonHaber, Haber Star, DunyaBulteni, CCNturk among others). For an English language report see: https://conflictantiquities.wordpress.com/tag/ziya-gokalp-museum/ 28.02.2015.

The influential Turkish sociologist Niyazi Berkes wrote in 1954: “Thirty years after his death Ziya Gökalp still stands out as the most original and influential among the Turkish writers of the 20th century”(Berkes 1954, 375). At a time when cultural frameworks were changing swiftly in the Ottoman lands, one of Gökalp’s main themes was wrapped around ways of acquiring Western culture, and the integration of such a culture within Turkish and Islamic traditions. While other intellectuals were reasoning about that theme, Berkes Gökalp has been acknowledged as the only one able to formulate it in a “coherent intellectual framework” and elaborate a “cultural policy” (Berkes 1954, 376; see also Koçak 2010; Yavuzyılmaz 2013). Despite the existing differences between Gökalp’s ideas and the Kemalist Republic’s early materialization of them:

> He remains as the best intellectual formulator of the main trends of the Turkish Republic: Westernism, democracy, political and economic national independence, and secularism. Although, in actual practice, there have been deviations from some of his contentions, it is still his style of thinking with regard to the basic issues which has intellectually dominated the modern reforms in Turkey, (Berkes, 1954, 376).

Uriel Heyd in 1950 dedicates a book to Ziya Gökalp entitled *Foundations of Turkish Nationalism*, in which he explores in detail Gökalp’s philosophical and sociological thinking, (Heyd, 1950). For Taha Parla, Gökalp “is the only systematic thinker of stature that Turkey has produced in the twentieth century” (T. Parla 1985, 1), while more recently, for Uğur Ümit Üngör, Gökalp ”was perhaps the most influential intellectual of the CUP era” (Üngör, 2012, 31). In sum, until today he seems to have been regarded as the author with the greatest influence on the political ideology dominating in Turkey since the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

Gökalp was deeply influenced by the idea of society presented by the French sociologist Émile Durkheim, and his work was dedicated to elaborate a “unique synthesis of a Muslim Turkish nationalism”, rejecting the identification with “non-Turkish Muslims such as Albanians, Arabs, Kurds, and Persians living in the Ottoman Empire” (Üngör, 2012, 31). He “advocated the ‘Turkification’ of the Ottoman Empire by imposing the Turkish language and culture on all the citizenry” (Üngör, 2012, 35) and did not see national affiliation as a matter of blood and ethnicity. Rather, he understood nationality as a cultural membership, on the base of the belonging to a linguistic community. Gökalp was persuaded that human "personality lies not in our bodies, but in our spirit", thus upbringing is more crucial than blood. To him, nationality depended on education and cultural affiliation. In Üngor's words (2012, 36):

> The argument of the primacy of nurture over nature in establishing national identity […] prompted correspondent policies by the Young Turks political elites. Social engineering would develop along the lines of the enforced socialization of Turkish culture.

Gökalp tried to overcome the ethnic and religious diversity of the population inherited by the Turkish Republic, formulating an all-encompassing and inclusive theorization of the nation, according to which anyone from any ethnic origin could feel a "Turk". In his important essay on Gökalp, Taha Parla evaluates this concept as a democratic, embracing and non-racist idea when he says that the sociologist from Diyarbakır defined the nation as based on (Parla, 1985, 36):

> shared' education, culture and emotion, with language as the primary medium. Thus, the nation is a social group or collectivity consisting of individuals who have received the same education, and who have a common language, emotions, ideals, religion, morality and aesthetic feeling. In other words, nation is the most developed social group; society rests on social solidarity; and the highest form of solidarity is that based on common language and culture, and on cognitive and affective norms.

Although these concepts may at first sight sound inclusive and democratic, when evaluated in the light of the Turkish nation-building process, and considering that the "common" language or the "shared" education are in reality a compulsory education in a "dominant" language for all the linguistic minorities of Turkey, their coercive nature emerges. In fact for Gökalp, "language constituted the core of the national spirit" and accordingly he advocated for the best possible purity of Turkish language (Öztürkmen 1992, 181). Hence, it is possible to see how Gökalp's ideas have meant, for instance for Kurds, a theoretical background for applied assimilation policies, within the "Turkification" project. In his ideas about education, expressed in *Turkish*

Nationalism and Western Civilization, Konuk recognizes “the catalyst for the series of education reforms that ensued” (Konuk 2008, 77). Öztürkmen acknowledges that his ideas acquired “wide popularity and inspired those who took the next steps in forming a national language” (Öztürkmen 1992, 181).

As culture is the base of the nation, a new nation can be created by imposing a dominant culture over minority ones. However, along with language, Gökalp saw Islam as a powerful instrument in the nation-building process, and it was probably for this reason that he was not appreciated by the early Kemalists, who had a tenacious laicist agenda (Aktar 2009; Berkes 1954; Davison 1998; Üngör 2012). Gökalp, who is suspected of having played a role in the population policies against Armenians in the Diyarbakir region (Jongerden 2012; Üngör 2012, 39), saw Islam as the ethical and moral base of the new nation, compatible with the scientific progress brought in from European civilisation (Özervarli 2007). He makes a clear distinction between the concepts of culture and civilisation (Berkes 1954). The first is constituted of a special blend of Turkish language, history, and tradition with Islamic ethics; whereas the latter is scientific and technological knowledge of a specific historical time. Gökalp was convinced that the Turkish nation, if firmly relying on its cultural and religious core, had to acquire Western civilisation; here equivalent to modernity. To him, culture is national, while civilisation is international. Any nation that wants to participate in the international civilizational debate has to have solid cultural/national roots:

> In short, he believed that the necessity of grasping the crucial conceptual difference between what he called their culture and what he called their civilisation underlay the ability of the Turks to retain both their national culture and their Islamic religion while also absorbing desirable aspects of modernity, (Davison 1998, 92).

In her research on Turkish folklore Arzu Ötürkmen has pointed out how Turkish intellectuals, after the loss of considerable parts of the Ottoman lands, devoted their attention to “rediscover and celebrate Anatolia” (Öztürkmen 1994, 171); in fact the Turkification project had already been specifically engineered by the Young Turks for that region (Ülker 2005). Gökalp did his share by producing a corpus of research about the region he knew best; he wrote extensively about the Kurds and Diyarbakır. While he was in search of expression and values of Turkishness, through anthropological studies focused on folklore, he also came out with strategies of “denationalisation” of the Muslim minority that was to be assimilated into Turkish culture. *The Sociological Studies on Kurdish Tribes* (Kürt Aşiretleri Hakkında Sosyolojik Tetkikler) were published after his death, but in several articles published in *Küçük Mecmua,* he delves into the “Turkishness” of the city (Çaglayan, 2014, 17). In an article published in *Küçük Mecmua* in 1922, entitled “Urban Civilization, Village Civilisation” (*Şehir medeniyeti, Köy Medeniyeti*), he clearly creates a straightforward division between Kurdish/Village on one side and Turkish/city on the other. He argues that Turkish culture is “for natural inclination” an urban culture, whereas Kurds were stuck in an under-developed and feudal village civilisation. This approximate distinction proved to be influential, for instance for Halide Edib Adıvar (see next section), who was influenced by Gökalp’s writings. According to Gökalp, in the Diyarbakır region half the villages are Kurdish-inhabited and half Turkish-inhabited and he adds: “Turkish villages chiefly are located outside the areas of feudalism” (Gökalp 2009, vol. 3, 124). Even if the author elaborated on an inclusive idea of Turkishness, it is clear that he worked for the structuration of a hierarchy of cultures. The supposedly scientific and sociological explanation of why cities are mainly Turkish-inhabited is essentialist in nature. After having sketched out the economic dynamics of feudalism in Kurdish villages, he concludes (Gökalp 2009, vol.3, 125):

> It is easy to explain why Turks gathered in cities, after having looked at these economic feudal phenomena. The Turkish is a nation ever since in love with freedom and equality. In the southern provinces, freedom and equality can be found only in cities. […] Urban civilization is the exact opposite of the tribal and feudal village civilisation.

Two economic and social conditions, feudalism and urbanism, with their cultural aspects of being respectively linked to subjugation and to freedom, are essentially attached to ethnicity, insofar as establishing an auspicious stereotype that would justify Turkish national “assimilational” discourse towards the “underdeveloped” and “backward” Kurdish culture as a “civilizational” one; in this respect Yavuz Akan notes how categories such as “tribalism” and "feudalism" "establish Kurdishness as a theme in Republican discourse that legitimizes the deployment of 'special' rules and regulation" (Aykan 2013). The journal *Küçük Mecmua* advocated for friendship and a "national pact" between Turks and Kurds, mentioning the loyalty of Kurds and how they did not create problems for the state (Gökalp & Filiz, vol 2, 17); but Turkish culture was considered as overarching Kurdish culture and numerous articles published in the journal can be considered as a miscellany about the alleged Turkishness of Diyarbakır. Berkes argues for a profound influence of his hometown based on Gökalp's cultural idea (Berkes 1954, 382). Undoubtedly, Gökalp's personal emotional attachment for his birthplace played a significant role.

In 1919, after World War I, Gökalp was arrested for his activities within the CUP movement, accused by the English occupation forces of having had a role in the attacks against Armenians in the Diyarbakır region (Heyd 1950, 37) and sent to prison in Malta. In the letters he wrote to his family during his captivity, *Limni ve Malta Mektupları* (The letters from Lemnos and Malta) published in 1965, Gökalp often recalls with nostalgia his hometown, Diyarbakir. Writing to his wife, Vecihe, on 1st September 1919, he measures the landscape of Lemnos in front of him, by the metre of his familiar panorama (Göçgün 1992, 65):

> Here I feel like I was in Diyarbekir. We are in a high place like in Fis-kaya. […] The sea is thin like a river and reminds the river in Diyarbekir. There is a village on the other side of the river that looks like Kırtbıl. […] on the other side there is a village that looks like Sa'di village. The village on the left reminds of Sünbüllü. In short, in front of me I see the Tigris, the Gardens, the hillside behind Kırtbıl. Like though I was on top of Fis-Kaya. The place where I am is as such…If I look around me, I remember Diyarbakır, our house in that city, and our prosperity in that house. [23]

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[23] "Ben burada kendimi Diyarbekir'de sanıyorum. Fis-kayası gibi yüksek mevkideyiz. Bu deniz bir ırmak kadar ince; Diyarbekir'deki Çay'ı andırıyor. Irmağın ötesinde bir köy var ki, Kıtırbıl'a benzer. Karşı yakanın sağ tarafında bir köy var ki, Diyarbekir'in Sa2di köyüne benzer. Sol taraftaki köy de Sünbüllü'yü andırır. Hasılı, karşımda Dicle'yi, Bostanlar'ı, Kıtırbıl'ın arkasındaki yamaçları görüyorum. Sanki Fis-kayası'nın üstündeyim. Bulunduğumuz yer böyle.. Etrafıma baktıkça Diyarbekir'i oradaki evimizi, evimizdeki eski bahtiyarlığımızı hatırlıyorum.''

He finds that the morals of Istanbul might be corruptive and foreign to his sons and his people, and writing again to his wife in Istanbul he elevates Diyarbakır to the level of a depository for any "true" morality (Göçgün, 66): "Istanbul morals is quite bad…We have to preserve the morals of our hometown. *The original Turkish morals* can be found in our hometown." In January 1920, he effuses about his longing for Diyarbakır's foods; he wishes he could receive some by post (Göçgün, 155). In May 1920, when his wife is in economic difficulties, he writes (Göçgün, 67):

> If you now were in Diyarbekir, you would not have problems. God will, we will go back together to the fatherland. Our old life wasn't it sweeter? I spend the time thinking about those days with nostalgia. God will, one day we will go back to that peaceful life.

And in August of the same year (Göçgün, 67):

> How sweet it was the life we had in Diyarbekir? Why did we leave our native place? Why did we abandon our hearth?[24]

In 1922, Gökalp is again in Diyarbakır where he founds and edits the local monthly journal *Küçük Mecmua*. As mentioned above, the journal had a miscellaneous nature ranging from science to literature, from politics to economics and local history. Often, articles and contributions focused on Diyarbakır, as well as poems meant to spread his sociological ideas. As noted by Van Bruinessen (2016, 18): In the form of poetry, he spread romantic notions about Central Asian Turkish social life, about Turkish tribes swarming out over the world, conquering vast regions but becoming culturally dominated by others."

In the twelfth issue, Gökalp published a poem entitled "Karacadağ", after the dormant volcano nearby Diyarbakır. He recalls how in his childhood people used to leave the city in summer, moving to the high pasturelands on top of the volcano. Diyarbakır is described as a place visited by benign fairies and home to a healthy and robust breeding (Gökalp 2009, vol. 1 21):

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[24] ''Şimdi Diyarbekir'de bulunsaydınız, sıkıntı çekmezdiniz. İnşaallah baba yurduna beraber gideriz. Eski münzeviyane hayatımız daha tatlı değil miydi? Ben, o günleri mütehassirane düşünerek vakit geçiriyorum. İnşaallah birgün yine o sükunetli hayata avdet ederiz.'' And: ''Diyarbekir'de geçen hayatımız ne tatlı bir hayattı? Niçin yurdumuzdan çıktık? Niçin ocağımızı terkettik.''

> At that time Diyarbekir,
> For us was just a wintering…
> In summer, the city would get empty!
> Everyone would go to the mountains…
> In the pure air of these pastures
> No illness would catch on [...]
> At that time Diyarbekir
> Was the country of bonny people
> Who wouldn't know about malaria. [25]

This healthiness it is both physical and moral. Gökalp clearly sees Diyarbakır's blend of urban and rural life as an edifying life-style for the nation; as was seen previously in the letters, he identifies in it a "morality" that should be the base for the education of next generation. However, life in the city is much about the legacy of past generations too, the cemetery and the monument being the principal spatial devices for remembrance. In this respect, there is an interesting article published in *Küçük Mecmua* in 1922, issue 20. Ali Nüzhet, a frequent contributor to the journal and a follower of Gökalp's ideas (as well as his son-in-law), writes an article entitled "The military cemetery" about a cemetery located right outside Diyarbakır's walls: "Between the barracks and Diyarbakır there is a cemetery surrounded by high walls and with a memorial at its centre. Who's reposing there?" asks Nüzhet. The graves of this "city holy to the Prophet", are graves of "superhumans" who mix "myth and history", "higher than the heroes of fairy tales". The author talks about the dead of the cemetery in hyperbolic terms: "These brought freedom in history, independence and virtue to life" (Gökalp 2009, vol. 1, 150). He is talking about people who fell during the Turkish War of Independence. The author laments that the citizenship of Diyarbakır has never been able to pay the tribute due to these people who died for the motherland. The cemetery used to be unprotected against weather conditions and “every time I used to pass there a nostalgia mixed with melancholy would take me”. Finally, though, thanks to the care of Cevdet Pasha, walls have been constructed around the graves and a memorial monument has been created. On the memorial marble, a poem by Ziya Gökalp is carved. Keeping in mind the “primarily didactic” nature of Gökalp’s poetry (Öztürkmen 1992, 182), some passages of the poem are worth quoting at length (Gökalp 2009, vol. 1, 151):

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[25] ''o zamanlar Diyarbekir / Bize yalnız bir kışlaktı.. / Boşalırdı yazın şehir! / Herkes dağa çıkacaktı.. / Saf havali bu yaylada / Hastalıklar yaşamazdı.. / Gelse bile kapısına.. / O zamanlar Diyarbekir / Gürbüzlerin ülkesiydi.. / Bilinmezdi sıtma nedir''

> Life is a stream that never finds an end,
> The individual dies but never dies the community
> Dead people do not need houses or walls
> This stone, this grave are for those alive, […]
> If we do not make a nice graveyard to the dead
> This fatherland remains deprived of beauty.
> However, when the city and the people together
> Make a nice grave with walls, trees, and flowers
> Then, cheer up both the homeland and the hearth
> While this land becomes nicer than heaven. [26]

In this poem, we can see how the land, by its function of housing the dead who fought for “freedom and, independence”, is tied to the nation. The cemetery in fact is a key element for the crystallization of a sense of belonging. By remembering the heroes who died for us, we recognize what we are today. In 1922, Ziya Gökalp was elaborating his personal sense of belonging, as well as that of the entire city, to the Turkish nation. He, who would later be recognized as one of the brightest Turkish intellectuals, was in Diyarbakır the voice of a political and cultural thought that was recognized by the city as oppressive and tyrannical, as shown by the episode of the attack on the museum dedicated to him. However, he had a huge influence on future political choices (Van Bruinessen 2016, 20) as well as on the work of later writers, for example, Halide

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[26] ‘’Hayat bir seldir ki bulmaz nihayet / Fertler ölür, lakin ölmez cemiyet! / Ölüler istemez ne ev, ne duvar, / Diriler içindir bu taş, bu mezar… / Ölüye yapmadık güzel kabristan, / Güzellikten mahrum kaldı bu vatan! / Ne zaman yaparsa halk şehri beraber / Duvarlı, ağaçlı, çiçekli makber / O zaman şenlenir hem yurt, hem ocak / Cennetten daha hoş olur bu toprak.’’

Edib Adıvar. His crucial idea of national blending of civilizational and cultural features, inspired Adıvar in her search for the balanced appropriation of Western culture, and especially in her meditation over the nature and role of the "Turkish national woman" (Kandiyoti 1989, 1988). In particular, Gökalp was convinced that "Turkish literature had to go through an education in two schools of art for its development: one is folk literature and the other is Western literature" (Seyhan 2008, 36) and such a conviction shed an important light on the works of Halide Edib Adıvar.

3.2 Halide Edib Adıvar: the "Orient" within us. Exotic views on Diyarbakır.

"The bride is beautiful
but she is married to another man"
(Uncertain attribution, see Karmi 2007)

As mentioned in the previous section, Ziya Gökalp's ideas are still today very important for understanding Turkish nationalism (Berkes, 1954; Parla, 1985). Pertaining not only to political thought, his influence spreads quite obviously to literature, and an author upon whom Gökalp's influence is highly consistent is Halide Edib married to Adıvar (Enginün 1978, 15). Halide Edib is undoubtedly among the most important Turkish novelists of the first half of the Twentieth century. A devoted nationalist, she was deeply involved in the nationalist movement that brought about the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, committing herself to issues related to education and women's rights (Arat 2010).[27] She was an early follower of pan-turanist[28] ideas and called among Turkish nationalist circles "the mother of Turks" (Adak 2003, 510). Halide was among the lines of the Turkish Nationalist army during the war of independence, and published soon afterwards her most well-known nationalist novel *Ateşten Gömlek* (The Shirt of Flames, 1922). Her life and work were deeply intertwined with the socio-political life of the time and she can rightly be seen as a “public intellectual” (Seyhan 2008, 43). Later in her life, after the establishment of the Turkish Republic with Mustafa Kemal as its unquestioned leader, Edib’s political convictions brought her into disagreement with the leader and detachment from the Republican People’s Party. Her husband, Adnan Adıvar, was also a political activist and among the founders of the short-lived Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası,* 1924-25. Below TCF). Because of the banning of that party in 1925, Mr and Mrs Adıvar were forced to move to Europe, spending four years in England and fourteen in France. During this self-imposed exile, Halide wrote, among many other works, two volumes of memoirs, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, 1926 and *The Turkish Ordeal* (Adıvar 1928, 2005) to account for her participation in the national struggle and to defend herself and her fellows from the accusations waged by the leading Republican People’s Party elites. Her overall production includes more than twelve books, among which figure novels and memoirs written in Turkish and English.

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[27] For Halide Edib Adıvar's accurate biography see (Halide Edip Adivar, 1928; Edib, 2005; Enginün, 1978, 18-76)

[28] Pan-turanism was a cultural and political movement active particularly at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, aiming at unifying the Turkic populations of Anatolia and Central Asia, believing in some supposed ancestral common origins. It can be compared to the contemporary Greek pan-hellenism or pan-slavism political and cultural movements. (See Özdoğan 1990).

In two of her novels Edib deals directly with Diyarbakır, and it is my aim in this section to look at the overall image of the city emerging from these two works. The novels are *Kalp Ağrısı* (1924) and *Zeyno’nun oğlu* (1928) which are interlinked. The core of the plot of *Zeyno’nun oğlu* (except the beginning and the end) is set in Diyarbakır while the novel is the narrative development of an episode which occurred in the city and was told in *Kalp Ağrısı*. Both novels are written in the years immediately following the establishment of the Turkish Republic and they give us an idea of the general views held by the nationalist movement towards the Kurdish regions and the biggest Kurdish city of the country. They account for the initial shaping of a Turkish geographical imagination. Although Edib detaches from mainstream Kemalism and criticizes Mustafa Kemal for the complete affinity between his ego and the nation as famously formulated in the *Nutuk*, she shares the core convictions of mainstream Turkish nationalism. Contrary to Mustafa Kemal, she does not identify herself with the nation and vice versa, but she kind of absorbs herself into the nation, as she says in 1922 after the Nationalist Turkish Army marched into Izmir, ending victoriously the War of Independence (quoted in Hulya Adak 2003, 519):

> I suddenly ceased to exist as an individual: I worked, wrote and lived as a unit of that magnificent national madness.

In the descriptions of Diyarbakır produced by Edib, we might be able to recognize the gaze towards the Kurdish city of a Turkish nationalist, educated in values and ideas of the “West” but also committed, in the wake of Gökalp, to discovering and promoting a national culture that was to support educational models. Furthermore, I argue in accordance with other scholars (Alan 2014), that we can recognize in Edib’s words a clear “orientalist” approach towards a territory that was rather problematic to integrate within the vision of Turkish nationalism. Following Ismail Beşikçi’s idea of Kurdistan as a “colony” (Beşikçi 2004), we might look at Edib’s production as the cultural discourse produced by a colonizing power, similar to what Edward Said has famously done in his works for the literary production of western powers about the Arab world. Jameson’s interpretive category of “national allegory”(Jameson 1986), after accepting Ahmad’s warning about its too far-claiming nature (Ahmad 1987), proves useful in understanding how in Edib’s work the libidinal conceals (and reveal at the same time) the political. As noted by Rohat Alakom (Alakom, 2010, 87):

> In the novel *Kalp ağrısı*, whose follow-up is *Zeyno’nun oğlu*, we see frequently used the classic kind of exotic portrayals that colonial powers use to draw of their own colonies as attractive and pleasing places.

Alakom is right in highlighting the attractiveness often attached to colonies by colonizers, but, as I will try to show, colonies sometimes may also be quite disturbing. Mixing fascination and uneasiness, colonies sometimes have the features of the “uncanny”. As rightly noted by Alan, the colony for Edib is also “wild” and “uncivilized” (Alan 2014, 56).

I will proceed chronologically, looking at the episode concerning Diyarbakır in *Kalp Ağrısı* first, then move to the second novel and look at the use of Diyarbakır made by the author to articulate a broader discourse about the East-West divide, alias Modernity-Tradition, in Turkey's late Ottoman and early Republican times - themes largely relevant for the author, as for much of Turkish literature after the Tanzimat era (Enginün 1978, 461; Kandiyoti 1989; Moran 1983). The "West" was represented as active and resourceful, whilst the East was passive, introspective and overall démodé. A sort of aesthetic inferiority complex experienced by Ottoman culture in comparison with European culture, especially after the opening reforms of the Tanzimat era, appeared to be reproduced internally after the establishment of the Republic – against the "inner-east", namely the Kurdish lands. As we know after Said and postcolonial studies, descriptive stereotypes and discursive categories conceal power structures and hide political and military relationships. Now Turkish nationalism, finally theorized as a balanced synthesis of western civilisation and national culture, and equated to Western power by the foundation of an independent Nation-State, proudly reacted to the inferiority complex by reactivating the same discursive categories to narrate and frame the internal subject nations, firstly the Kurds.

3.2.1 *Kalp Ağrısı*: sexualizing, possessing and impregnating the colony

Kalp Ağrısı (Heart-pain, 1924; see Enginün, 1978, 219), was first published as a feuilleton in the newspaper *Vakit* and tells the troubled love story (the heart pain of the title) of Zeynep and Hasan. The story is set in Istanbul soon after the War of Independence. Zeynep is an intelligent, educated and dynamic girl from Istanbul, engaged to a doctor; Hasan is an army officer, loved and jealously pursued by Azize. Hasan will eventually marry Azize and move to Vienna, while Zeynep will find consolation marrying Miralay Muhsin Bey, an army general in an office in Diyarbakır. In Vienna, Hasan, nostalgic about Zeynep, entertains himself with the company of open-minded and "modern"

Dora. Towards the end of the novel, though, he begins to be obsessed by the memories of his one youthful adventure. It dates back to the time when he had just graduated from the military school and was appointed as a Commander Assistant in Diyarbakır. It is on this particular episode that I want to focus now. When Hasan recalls it, Diyarbakır emerges from the mist of his memory as follows (Adıvar 2000a, 240-1):[29]

> He entered in Diyarbakır in a moonlit night. Enclosed in its *frightening* walls, with its long minarets and its houses on a row similar to a chicken roost, under a *vague* light with a *feverish* trembling, it looked like a *dreamy* city. There was such a ripe and burning summer heat that it was like if under the *gnarled*, *bent* and *narrow* streets there was an *infernal* fever-mechanism, and the ground together with the houses and the air looked like they were trembling in a *strange* and constant *malaria* shivering. Under the colossal moon in the clear, low and blue sky, in these *shadowy* streets, Hasan was sometimes listening to the ringing bells of the continuous and rhythmic lines of camels, passing by driven by their owners wearing a huge conical hat, and to the *beautiful chants* receding in the night's tranquillity. Sometimes in these *dusky* streets, he was looking at the *enigma* of *ghostlike* women who, sitting at the bottom of the walls under their bright red and yellow coloured headscarves, were blurring with the colours of the ground. Despite his young body's exhaustion, Hasan was unconsciously sucking the *fire* gushing out that *strange* and *warm land*, and the wave of *passion* trembling in its air; in his heart, a new *excitement* was awakening.[30]

I considered the passage worth quoting at length as it shows some classical elements of an orientalist description. The adjectives used by Edib give us the sense of a place both attractive and terrifying at the same time. Its vagueness, its dream-like appearance, the feverish heat, the passion floating in the air, are all elements aimed at arousing Hasan’s appetites. Recalling that Hasan is a young Turkish soldier we might understand sexual appetites as symbolically invoking a military and territorial appetite, of annexing a territory that is, in the author’s word, “strange” and enigmatic. Here is where, according to Jameson, a “private and libidinal dynamic […] projects a political dimension in the form of national allegory” (Jameson 1986, 69). Tellingly, the “passion” is emanating from the land itself, as an “infernal” and “feverish mechanism” seems to emanate from underneath. After arriving in the city, Hasan settles in the headquarters where he is the assistant of Commander Muhsin Bey. In the headquarters, there is a Kurdish girl, Zeyno, who is working as a cleaner and who is renowned among the soldiers as the “Kurdish Peach” ("Kürt Şeftalisi", 2000, 243). Hasan’s young blood immediately begins to seethe for her.

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[29] Here-hence, the italics in the quotations are mine. They are intended to stress particular and significant characterizations given by the authors.

[30] ''Diyarbakır'a mehtaplı bir yaz gecesi girdi. Korkunç kale duvarları içinde, uzun minareleri, sıra ile dizilmiş tavuk kümesine benzeyen evleriyle müphem bir ışık ve hararet titreyişi ile bir rüya şehrine benziyordu. O kadar olgun ve yakıcı bir yaz sıcağı vardı ki, yamrı yumru, dar yollarının altından cehennemi bir hararet cihazı, toprakları, evleri hava ile beraber garip ve daimî bir sıtma titreyişi içinde titriyor gibi geliyordu. Berrak ve alçalmış mavi gökteki kocaman altın ayın altında bu gölgeli sokaklarda Hasan kâh muttarit ve ahenkli yumuşak ayaklı deve dizilerinin korkunç külahlı sahipleriyle geçerken çıngıraklarının, gecenin sükununda güzelleşen ve uzaklaşan teranelerini dinliyor; kâh bu loş sokaklarda çok parlak sarı ve kırmızı renkleri erimiş başörtüleri altında kadın hayaletlerinin duvar diplerinde toprak renkleri arasında kayboluveren esrarına bakıyordu. Hasan'ın genç vücudu yorgunluğuna rağmen bu sıcak ve garip memleketin toprağından fışkıran ateşi, havasında titreyen ihtiras dalgasını bilmeyerek emiyor, kalbinde yeni bir heyecan uyanıyordu.''

The terms with which Edib Adıvar typifies the characters and the atmosphere are quite interesting. To begin with, the appellative “Kurdish Peach” is not as innocent as it might look. The peach recalls something sweet, juicy and tasty, but also something appetizing, tantalising and consumable, and in this respect it is in keeping with the general atmosphere that the author offers to the reader. With regard to this atmosphere, we might look at the use Edib makes of adjectives to characterize the environment and the characters. It is immediately noticeable that there is a constant occurrence of the word “garip”, a word signifying strange, curious, bizarre, unusual. It is referred to the word “land” twice (2000, 241-2). Hasan is taken by a “garip hissi”, a “strange sensation” (2000, 243). Diyarbakır is burnt by a “strange heat” (244) and Hasan finally gets his crush for Zeyno, described as a girl with a “strange scent” (250). To rephrase the episode, the soldier Hasan is in a strange land scorched by a strange heat; there he is taken by a strange sensation for a girl with a strange perfume. This indefinable “strangeness” makes us vigilant, since it seems to be conveying a “strange” entanglement of the erotic and the political. Progressively, Hasan surrenders to the “mystery” (esrar) and “fascination” (cazibe) of this “warm” land (246). In other words, the sexual attraction is triggered both by the girl and the land from which she comes. She seems to tease him with all her being, to the point that he tries to avoid looking at her (244). She wears a headscarf, but moving around every now and then she shows “red cheeks inviting to love” (243); she has long, silky eyelashes “that you can find only among Kurds” (243). She looks at Hasan with “deep black eyes” and with an “indistinct and charming swoon” (243). She has a smile “like a lightning” and a “beauty mark next to her red lips” (244). However, maybe most importantly, the girl “never speaks” (243) and replies to questions always by shaking her head and body. “She was a silent and quiet creature” (244); an image of subaltern colonized Kurds, prevented from using their language. Zeyno is presented at the same time as sensual and provocative, as well as compliant and submissive. Sweet and passive like a ‘peach’, she is ready to be grabbed and consumed by the protagonist.

Müslüm Yücel in his wide-ranging work *Osmanlı-Türk Romanında Kürt İmgesi*, suggests that the love affair between a male Turkish soldier and a Kurdish girl is a recurring pattern in Turkish literature, and gives several examples before concluding (Yücel, 2011, 78-9):

> There is a strange proportion between the soldier, the Kurd and sexuality: the soldier is masculinity, the Kurd is femininity, with sexuality at the centre. […] the Kurd and sexuality are offered to the reader as one with Power’s desires.

Underneath this recurring narrative pattern, so well exemplified by Edib’s account of Hasan’s exotic passion in Diyarbakır, lies the structure of a “political (and colonial) unconscious” (Jameson 2013; see also Lazarus 2011). The sexual attraction of the soldier for the Kurdish girl conceals and testifies to the colonial impulse of possession and domination of the newly founded Turkish Republic toward the Kurdish, seductive but to be dominated lands. Notably, female characters in Edib’s novels are not naively constructed and they respond to specific ideological and educational categories that the author has in mind (Kandiyoti, 1989).

At the first real opportunity, in a night “hot like hell”, when he misses his mother and the Bosporus “like a child”, while Diyarbakır castle resembles a “spectre” and from a distance can be heard “Diyarbakır melodies, yearning and touching as much as the heat gushing out from the earth” (245), Hasan takes Zeyno. He is alone on the rooftop of the headquarters when Zeyno obsequiously comes to ask if he needs anything. He is exotically attracted by her accent, as she pronounces the "h" in a thick way (247):

> This strong pronunciation, together with the *hot woman scent* - attar of roses mixed with cinnamon - exhaling from her body was making his mind feel *dizzy* and *inebriated*.[31]

In the previous chapter, we have already seen, in Evliya Çelebi's account, how the linguistic peculiarity of the city is linked to the realm of the libidinal and this element will recur in further chapters. However, in the episode here in question the nostalgia, the atmosphere, the pronunciation and the smell are all elements resonating with the "foreignness" of the land where Hasan finds himself; overall it is beyond what he can resist and eventually he "pulls the girl with desire and passion accumulated in months" (247); for her part, the girl just "gives herself" passively.

In any event, fascination quickly comes and quickly goes, and sometimes quickly turns into its opposite. Halide Edib in the space of a sentence closes Hasan's romance as following (247):

> Hasan quickly got bored of this *primitive* love, that before use to burn him like *Diyarbakir's hellish fever*. That skin smelling like the *spices* of hot countries that would make him *faint* and *go crazy* previously, was now reminding him of the strong smell of porter's sweat dancing at parties. […] The constant flame of her *hot* cheeks looked now to him like the banal redness of a *peasant*."[32]

Zeyno was to Hasan clearly little more than a mirage at the beginning, but to him she swiftly became a "chain" (248). However, his acts have greater consequences. Zeyno becomes pregnant and this ominously leaks to her family and taints her family's honour. Zeyno's fiancé goes after Hasan to kill him; yet the commander, Mushin Bey, covers for him and helps him to escape Diyarbakır, as superior tasks await him the army: the Gallipoli Campaign (1915-16). The morning he leaves the city is for Hasan a life turning point (254):

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[31] ''Bu kuvvetli telaffuzuyla beraber vücudundan yayılan gülyağıyla karışık tarçın gibi sıcak bir kadın kokusu başına sersem ve sarhoş bir tesir yapıyordu.''

[32] ''Evvela Diyarbakır'ın cehennem gibi sıtması kadar yakan bu iptidai aşk, Hasan'ı çok çabuk bıktırdı. Kendisini ilk temaslarda bayıltan, çıldırtan, tarçın gibi, sıcak memleketlerin baharatı gibi kokan ten, ona bayramlarda oynarken hamalların hacıyağıyla karışık ter kokularını hatırlatıyordu. Kızın koyu sıcak yanaklarının daimî alevi şimdi ona adi bir köylü kırmızlığı gibi geliyordu.''

> He turned his head; in the morning orange and blue light, he saw white minarets towering over Diyarbakir's castle walls. That was a sudden leap further from his youth.[33]

As the man of action he is, Hasan is also quick to forget this adventure and project himself toward the future, as a man who cannot remain "chained up" by a "primitive" love with a "peasant", but has to move on towards more modern and refined attractions (254):

> Diyarbakır had become a past place stuck in the back of his mind, where people store needless and unimportant memories. Now in a new place like Istanbul classy women, shapely and with pale skin, were going around stirring a lovely zest in his young mind and heart.[34]

In a sentence, we have a sort of geography of Hasan's erotic instincts. Diyarbakır in one corner, Istanbul in the other; Zeyno's "fiery submissiveness" (255) on one side; more urbane and cultivated pleasures on the other. The protagonist hesitates between "the woman of the upper-middle classes and the woman of the people – characterized in terms of the nation state itself" (Jameson 1986, 78) and his desire is "at once social and individual" (ibid. 79). Hasan ends up telling this old story to his paramour in Vienna (incidentally, a city awakening feelings of failed conquests in the Turkish imagination). If we interpret Hasan, a soldier, metaphorically, we can even go as far as reading in this episode Turkey's military and cultural impulses of the time: arbitrary possession, seizure and insemination toward the internal colony, Kurdistan, on one side; attraction and allurement for a modern, western-like style of life on the other.

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[33] ''Başını çevirdi, sabahın turuncu, mavi ışığı içinde Diyarbakır'ın kale duvarlarından taşan beyaz minarelerini gördü. Gençliğinin ani bir ileri atılışı oldu.''

[34] ''Diyarbakır zihninin gerisinde, insanların lüzumsuz ve ehemmiyetsiz hatıraları yığdıkları bir geri mevzii olmuştu. Şimdi genç zihninin ve gönlünün ileri mevziinde İstanbul'un zarif endamlı, solgun başlı kadınları hoş bir zevk uyandırarak gelip geçiyorlardı.''

3.2.2 *Zeyno'nun oğlu*: before and after the dusty storm

İnci Enginün, probably the first Turkish scholar who dedicated an extensive study to Halide Edib, sees a relevant stylistic and philosophical gap between *Kalp Ağrısı* and Edib's following novel. *Kalp Ağrısı* can be considered as a novel still belonging to Edib's pre-Republican style and mind-set, whereas with *Zeyno'nun oğlu*, something changes. The inner geography and society of Anatolia comes to the foreground, a west-east synthesis is discussed not only between Turkey and the West, but also between Turkey and its inner East; we perceive clearly the growing influence and diffusion of Gökalp's ideas and we might assume that the sociologist's articles about Diyarbakır have been studied by Edib for the writing of *Zeyno'nun oğlu*. Furthermore, crucial events took place between the publication of *Kalp Ağrısı* and the writing of *Zeyno'nun oğlu*, started in 1926 as a feuilleton in *Vakit* and published for the first time in volume in 1928 (Enginün, 1978, 226). Events that would have direct repercussions on Halide Edib Adıvar's life – the Sheikh Said Rebellion.

> In February 1925 a large area of Turkish Kurdistan rose in revolt. Towns, the seats of Turkish republican administration, were taken and Turkish officials expelled or taken prisoner. The charismatic leader of this revolt was a Naqshbandi Shaikh with great local influence, Shaikh Said; the explicit aim of the rebellion was the establishment of an independent Kurdish state, where Islamic principles, violated in modern Turkey, were to be respected (Bruinessen 1992, 265).

It was the first Kurdish rebellion that the Turkish Republic had faced. The Kurdish, mainly rural and mountainous, population of the areas north of the Diyarbakır plains, organized behind the leading religious figures of Sheikhs, a revolt against the state for grievances due to the nationalist, secularist and repressive nature of the newly established state. Shortly after the foundation of the Republic, Kurdish was forbidden in public places, Kurdish landowners and intellectuals were sent into exile and expropriated from their lands (Bruinessen, 281). As highlighted by Tejel Gorgas, this rebellion further "nurtured the view of the East as 'other', as simultaneously 'door' and 'fortress' of the Turkish nation"

(Tejel Gorgas 2009, 15). The charismatic Sheikh Said led the rebellion. In late February 1925, thousands of rebels moved toward Diyarbakır and set a siege around the walls. The walls were too difficult to be taken by the poorly armed rebels. Although internal supporters belonging to the urban proletariat managed to let some besiegers inside, the rebellion was violently quelled by Turkish forces, consisting of more the 35,000 men.

> The counter-insurgency warfare that followed after the reconquest of Diyarbekir province was total: villages were torched, civilians as well as combatants summarily executed. The killings followed the methods of the destruction of the Armenians, a decade ago [sic] in the same region (Üngör 2012, 127-8).

In September 1925, Sheikh Said was hanged in Diyarbakır along with forty-seven of his comrades (an event that carved a scar on the Kurdish collective memory) and large sections of the rebellious population were displaced to the west of Turkey (see Ülker 2007, 2008; Akyürekli 2014).

> The Kurdish political and social elites were to be prevented from reviving as a ruling class, so that the east would never again become a field of confrontation between Kurdish and Turkish nationalism. The territory would be cleared of 'persons, families, and their relatives whose residence in the east the government considers inappropriate' through deportation to Western Turkey (Üngör, 135).

The events that took place in the Kurdish regions were not limited to local impact but were interlinked with major political transformations in the entire country (Zürcher 1993, 176). Those events were to affect Turkey, and Halide Edib Adıvar's life, directly. For the author, the year 1925 represents a historically negative turning point for Turkey's social and cultural freedom. In her own words, in the political memoir *Turkey faces West* (Adıvar 1930, 214): "In 1925, a violent change took place, and what the outside world calls a dictatorship came into existence."

Together with her husband, Halide was involved in the movement that brought about the creation of the Progressive Republican Party (TCF) in 1924, which was committed to reforms toward a more liberal democracy, but with a deeper respect for conservative religious feelings, at least in comparison to the extreme laicism of the Republican People’s Party (CHP). The TCF, led by the retired army commander of the Eastern Front, Kazım Karabekir, was accused of being an instrument in the hands of Islamist movements, like Sheikh Said’s, trying, among other goals, to overturn the government and re-establish the Caliphate which was abolished in March 1924. This is how Edib recalls the episode (Adıvar 1930, 220):

> The Kurdish revolt, which had been under way for some time, took on a graver aspect and proved a trump card for the extremists in the People's party to play against the Progressive Republicans. They argued that the clause in the program of the Progressive Republicans advocating freedom of thought had encouraged the insurgents.

The Tribunals allegedly instituted to suppress the revolt in the east, were used also to crack down on internal political opposition; accused of treachery, Halide and Adnan Adıvar left the country in 1926. As Hülya Adak has pointed out (Adak 2007), a number of autobiographies were written in the following years, as protagonists of that political season felt the necessity to defend themselves against the accusations pronounced by Atatürk himself, chiefly in his famous speech *Nutuk*. As put by Edib (1930, 221):

> [Then] Mustafa Kemal Pasha played a superb political game. He proposed the Law of Maintenance of Order, which would re-establish Revolutionary Tribunals, with absolute power to arrest and execute anyone suspected of endangering public order [...] After one of the famous long speeches of Mustafa Kemal Pasha lasting some ten hours in the party meeting, the Law of Maintenance of Order was passed in March 1925. The army then pacified the Kurdish regions, and the tribunals suppressed opposition and instituted a reign of terror which lasted nearly two years. The dictatorship thus created never called itself by that name in Turkey. It had been voted by an Assembly. But the long tradition of oppression and spies became at once a part of the regime. The press was terrorized by the arrest of leading journalists who had criticized the Government before the passage of the Law of Maintenance of Order.

It is necessary to keep in mind this briefly sketched historical context in order to understand the representations of Diyarbakır given by Edib Adıvar in the second novel analysed here. Tejel Gorgas has shown how the violent events of the 1920s contributed in the creation of ‘the East’ or ‘Eastern Anatolia,’ understood, beyond the geographic reality, at once as the location of actual armed resistance and the representation of a region intrinsically conservative and counter-revolutionary” (Tejel Gorgas 2009, 4). In the novels of Halide Edib Adıvar we see a novelistic reflection of this phenomenon. In *Zeyno’nun oğlu* Sheikh Said rebellion is called “the storm”, and in that metaphor, Halide is trying to include the potentiality of those events in upsetting the protagonists of the novel, as well as Turkey in general, and her own personal life. Although Alakom notes that the facts relating to the revolt are dealt with only superficially in the novel (Alakom 2010, 87), the use of them as a watershed case is, I think, consequential. Edib Adıvar moves forward from a classic orientalist portrayal. In *Zeyno’nun oğlu*, the representation of the city and of the Kurds is thus quite different, and the relationship between the Kurdish lands and Turkish national body takes a step further from a dynamic of mere sexual drive and possession, is more complexly articulated in a dialectic of tradition and modernity, while “national” female and “asexualized” female models are introduced (Kandiyoti, 1989). The underlying intertwining of libidinal and political is still present, but less obvious and self-evident. In this novel, the city of Diyarbakır hardly claims the active role of a character and it is actually rarely described, even though the core action is set there. The city’s narrative function is that of a pole on which to hook a reasoning about modernity and tradition; on another pole lies Istanbul, the starting and ending place of the plot.

As poignantly noticed by Jale Parla, in early Republican Turkish literature the journey to Anatolia represents a recurrent theme: “the journey involves the uprooting of the patriotic individual from Istanbul to travel to Anatolia, either to join the War of Independence, or to serve the cause of improving a neglected region” (Parla 2007, 12). *Zeyno’nun oğlu* (Zeyno’s son) fits in this group of early republican novels. It tells the story of the fruit of the exotic-erotic adventure told in the episode of *Kalp Ağrısı* discussed above; thus it represents also a development of the intertwined libidinal and political theme of the precedent. A child called Haso has been born out of the union between the Turkish soldier Hasan and the Kurdish “peach” Zeyno. Furthermore, this novel tells the story of a modernist elite of men and women from Istanbul, gathering around the national army in Diyarbakir to implement “state authority” (Enginün, 1978, 226). They are what Aslan calls the “missionaries of the new regime” (Aslan 2007, 246). This group of cultivated men and women moves to Diyarbakır and lives in the city, completely secluded from the local people, in the months leading up to the “storm”: Sheikh Said rebellion, the force that also brings the plot to a resolution. At the beginning, Edib introduces a group of women and men (already met in *Kalp Ağrısı*) preparing to leave Istanbul to go to Diyarbakır. Zeynep is joining her husband, Muhsin Bey, a military commander in service in Diyarbakır. Mesture and Mazlume, mother and daughter, are joining their respective husband and father, a governor in Diyarbakır. Hasan is escorting this group of women on the order of his commander Muhsin Bey, now Zeynep’s spouse. In this group, we see depicted the intellectual and administrative elite of the newly established country, moving south-east to implement the state services, or in their words to “modernize” and Turkify those regions. Again Parla puts it well: “the War of Independence being over the virgin land now awaits […] redeeming intervention to transform it into an El Dorado of culture and civilisation” (Parla 2007, 12). These characters are “the zealous and dedicated personnel” of the Turkification project (Aslan 2011, 84), they bring with them their own cultural mind-set; they have “European style” (‘alafranga’) education and habits; they perceive themselves as civilized and modern; they mix nationalism and patriotism with westward-looking cultural aspirations. In *Zeyno’nun oğlu*, their journey eastward brings them to one of the most peripheral corners of the state. There they encounter a backward society with traditional and unsophisticated habits. It is a journey through which they will try to bring “civilization” and “modernity” to Diyarbakır, before the “storm” scatters them and pushes them back (see also Alan 2014, 56).

The opposition of Diyarbakır-tradition against Istanbul-modernity is concisely summarized in a sentence at the beginning of the novel. When Mesture, an upscale grumpy mother from Istanbul’s bourgeoisie, tries to dissuade her daughter from going to reach her father in Diyarbakır (Adıvar 2000, 36):

> Precisely at an age when you should get used to 'modern life' and 'high society', how come you want us to go into the wastelands of Diyarbakır.[35]

Urbanite culture on one side; desert, wilderness and savagery at the other. Nonetheless, Mesture cannot stop the journey toward the south and joins her daughter, but undertaking a personal mission: bringing "high-society" and "modern" manners and rituals to the city, especially in the form of western dances and balls (see Öztürkmen 2001, 2003). On the day they leave Istanbul for Diyarbakır, from Haydarpasha train station, Mesture is described as:

> Showing herself as a woman with a progressive mind, bringing civilization to Diyarbakır […] In Diyarbakır she was to be some sort of a queen of the new life, she would have Diyarbakır taste ball dancing as one of the highest blessing of civilisation (Adıvar 2000b, 49)[36]

The author's words are loaded with irony towards the frivolousness of Mesture, but her derision seems to be toward her cheap and shallow understanding of modernity; Edib's didactic and tacit message is a critique of the superficial imitation of the West she stigmatizes in Mesture's behaviour. Imitating western habits and "vices" does not mean to become western in terms of values; nor does it mean to seize modernity or glean positive civilizational values. In the wake of Gökalp, Edib's cultural ideal is in fact a balanced mixture of western civilization and national tradition. As shown by Kandiyoti (1989), the "frivolous and inconsequential alafranga" woman was a literary *topos* in Turkish novels from the Tanzimat era to the Republican era, to articulate meditations on the corruption brought by western culture to women's (thus society's in general) mores. At the same time, though, Edib seems somehow convinced that Diyarbakır, and by extension the region, needed a civilizational intervention. The entire novel, in fact, is there to demonstrate the actual impermeability of Diyarbakır to civilization and modernisation. To Mesture's whimsical inconsistency, the city will reply with an armed rebellion. The message seems to be that Diyarbakır, thus the Kurdish regions of Turkey by augmentation, needs a more substantial effort to be integrated factually into the body of the Turkish nation. It needs, potentially, a firmer military hand and a clearer educational project, rather than perfunctory "alafranga" habits. The disappointment and the failure of the patriotic intellectual and soldiers who moves to Anatolia to redeem it from its condition is a recognized *topos* of early republican Turkish literature; with Parla, "Anatolia turns out to be a harsh region that is not ready to receive its savior as the latter had fancied" (J. Parla 2007).

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[35] ''Tam asri hayatı öğreneceği, sosyeteye alışacağı bir yaşta nasıl Diyarbakır çöllerine gidelim?''

[36] ''Diyarbakır'a medeniyet götüren müteceddit ruhlu bir kadın gibi gösteriyordu. Diyarbakır'da yeni hayatın bir çeşit kraliçesi olacaktı. Balo gibi medeniyetin en yüksek nimetini de Diyarbakır'a tattıracaktı.''

In the chapters dedicated to the days the child Haso and his mother Zeyno spent in a village near Diyarbakır, life is portrayed as harsh, backward and primitive. Stereotypically, the village is "famous for growing watermelons" and it is unambiguously "half Turkish half Kurdish" (67), as discussed earlier in the article by Gökalp. Ramazan, Haso's step-father, regularly beats Zeyno and the child (67) and in the village, Haso gets Islamic education from Sheikh M. (a fictional figure of Sheikh Said himself), who teaches him to read the Quran and tries to instil in him Kurdish nationalist feelings (137), sentiments that would tear the country apart. The village is a place of endless blood feuds, fought to protect "honour". It is only thanks to her previously acquired experience, living next to "Istanbul families" in the military headquarters, that Zeyno is able to look after her child well and with "solicitude" (72). Adıvar comments (72):

> The kid Haso was the most triumphant example of natural distinction and superiority, for being the son of the prettiest Kurdish woman and a handsome Turkish man; he entered in Zeyno's life as God's unattainable grace and blessing. [37]

Haso, the result of the libidinal energies activated in the previous novel, becomes a literary symbol of the long searched for "synthesis" between East and West, in this case internal (or national) East and West. If Zeyno's only blessing comes from being "used" for the sexual appetites of a Turkish soldier; if her ability to look after her son derives from her having been a nurse for

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[37] ''En güzel bir Kürt kadınıyla yakışıklı bir Türk erkeğinin en güzel yerlerini bu çocukta toplayan tabii ıstıfanın en muzaffer nümunesi olan Haso Çocuk, Zeyno'nun hayatına, Allah'ın erişilmez bir inayeti, bir lütfu gibi girmişti.''

Istanbulite families, then it sounds as if the sole educative stance and the only possible blessing for the Kurdish territories comes from the west of Turkey and its urbane culture. The only positive character in the Kurdish villages is in fact a Turk, Şaban Amca, the only one who protects Haso and Zeyno from Ramazan's vexations, and the only one from whom Haso learns "calm and tranquil behaviours" (135). At some point, Haso and his mother Zeyno move to the house of the Sheikh, next to the military headquarters in Diyarbakır. Hence, in the second part of the novel, the child struggles between an attraction for the world he sees in the headquarters and his traditional roots. He becomes a little friend to Zeynep while also Hasan, his natural father, starts to feel affection for the child, especially given his amazing skills. The child plans to escape to Istanbul to save his mother from Ramazan's harassment, but meanwhile his ambition is stirred through feelings of belonging with the Turkish army. Haso appears confused about the ethnic divide between Kurdish and Turkish; in his pure naivety, he understands it as a diverse temperamental disposition (135). However, when he finds out about Hasan's treatment of his mother, on that hot exotic night in *Kalp Ağrısı*, he returns to the village, on the side of Sheikh M. who plans to use him in the rebellion and fosters in the child hate toward the Turks (281):

> The Sheikh long explained [to Haso] how he wanted to eliminate from the earth's surface the sinful, cruel and evil Istanbulites to serve God.[38]

Edib articulates an irreconcilable dispute between the conservative, feudal, and insubordinate Kurdish village and the modern, secular and urbane Turkish city. The Sheikh is described with "bloody eyes" and throughout the entire novel, there is a constant sense of the looming rebellion. When the latter actually explodes, it gives a final thrust to the plot. The "modern" feasts and balls come to an end in Diyarbakır. After being wounded in a conflict, Hasan eventually engages with Zeyno and together the two move to Istanbul bringing Haso with them. The happy conclusion of the novel is set on the shores of the Bosporus. As suggested by Yücel, Diyarbakır is not depicted as a possible location for a happy-ending (Yücel 2011, 199). Furthermore, Edib seems to suggest that there is no need for ethnic divisions. If Turkish (male, soldier) and Kurdish (women, submissive) unite, they can give birth to beautiful and skilful children, or out the allegory to a strong nation (Yücel, 2011, 199). Obviously, the Turkish side of the equation takes on the leading position, whilst the Kurdish side should confidently surrender to being led toward a civilized future.

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[38] ''Şeyh, evvela İstanbulluların zalim, günahkar ve fena insanlar olduklarını, bunları yeryüzünden kaldırmak için Cenabı Hakk'ın kendisini memur ettiğini uzun uzadıya anlatmıştı''.

As mentioned earlier, Diyarbakır is rarely described in its physicality and the daily life of the city, and its social rituals are almost never addressed; we only look to the *beau monde* pivoting around the army headquarters or, in opposition, to the harsh and uncivilized village life. This is a reminder of the clear-cut distinction in Gökalp's article "Urban civilisation, Village civilisation", discussed in the previous chapter.

When the city appears in *Zeyno'nun oğlu*, it is always in an elusive mist. Diyarbakır seems for Edib an object hard to comprehend and to describe. For example, when Haso comes back to the city from the village, the former – echoing the descriptions of many foreign travellers – appears as follows (128):

> When they were getting nearer to Diyarbakir, the sun had risen and the plain was wrapped up in the paleness of the daily mist. Under this indefinite smoke, Diyarbakir, with its walls and its domes, looked like to the kid as the display of a *vision*. [39]

In addition, Halide Edib Adıvar compactly portrays the milieu rotating around the army headquarters as a Turkish environment, faithful to the state and concentrated on discussion about "eastern" and "western" civilisations (Enginün, 1978) or on balls and other alcoholic mundane events. However, this is quite anachronistic, as we know that the situation was more nuanced (Bruinessen, 1992, 283):

> Many of the Kurdish officers in the Turkish army had [Kurdish] nationalist sympathies. In the Seventh army corps, stationed at Diyarbakir, no less than

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[39] ''Diyarbakır'a yaklaştıkları zaman güneş yükselmiş, ovayı her günkü beyazımtırak duman sarmıştı. Bu müphem dumanın altında Diyarbakır, duvarları ve kubbeleriyle çocuğa bir hayaş meşheri gibi göründü''.

> fifty per cent of the officers as well as the rank-and-file were Kurds, while even many of the Turkish officers were said to be sympathetic to the Kurdish cause.

To conclude, if in *Kalp Ağrısı* Diyarbakır is just an exotic place to set the adventure of a young Turkish soldier, with the unconscious and allegorical political implications I have pointed out earlier, the year that followed the publication of the novel brought the city forcefully to the attention of Turkish public opinion. The Sheikh Said rebellion portrayed Diyarbakır as the emblem of a contradiction in the newly founded Turkey. The rebellion established it at the antipodes of the modernist revolution carried out by Young Turks and Kemalists, for which cities of the west like Ankara and Istanbul become emblematic. Diyarbakır became a symbol of backwardness and a headache for Turkish authorities in terms of public order. For Halide Edib Adıvar, it was a perfect location to set a novel that reasons about substantial ways to acquire modernisation. Hence, the episode of *Kalp ağrısı* is picked up and developed by the writer.

In Edib's work Kurdish identity is not denied *per se*; Kurdish characters such as Zeyno and Haso are depicted positively, insofar as they are peaceful and submissive, and prone to be led by more enlightened Turkish characters; whereas the overall portrayal of Kurdishness was linked to notions of conservativism, opposition to modernity, backwardness, reactionary religious leanings and, obviously, violence. Although Turkish authorities appeared to be firmly in control of the city, in Adıvar's words, Diyarbakır is anyhow a place of otherness, an ultimate bastion in the hands of modernizing forces against an indistinct ocean of worrying and unsettled identities.

Throughout the novel Edib builds her characters, especially female characters, as models "blending the best traits of Ottoman Islamic and Western womanhood in their persons" (Seyhan 2008, 44). As noted by Emel Sönmez, there is a generational divide for which "the imitators are the old and the genuinely modernized are the young" characters (Sönmez 1973, 107). The characters are constructed as social types that might be understood in the light of Gökalp's sociological categories, in the wake of the analysis of Edib's female characters by Kandiyoti (1989). Mesture, the devoted 'worshipper' of "modern entertainments", is the figure of a wrong acquisition of the western civilisation since she reduces it to its superficial manifestations. Zeynep and Mazlume, are figures of a "new" and balanced Turkish woman, conscious of her personal social role, committed, aware of the positive contribution coming from Europe and the West, but also conscious of the relevance of local, Anatolian traditions: a female 'Gökalpian' ideal of integration of Turkish culture and Western civilisation. Finally Zeyno, Kurdish, beautiful, and pure but dominated by the feudal and backward "Kurdish" society, disempowered, and ready to "bow her neck to life as if it was an incident or destiny", is an example of the fact that "the women from those regions did not even think yet of rebelling" (Enginün, 1978, 229). She is eventually saved, however, thanks to the intervention of the figure of the 'Turkish soldier' Hasan: being impregnated by Hasan, Zeyno gets her chance of being rescued from a feudal society, a pre-modern time, and a burdensome geography: Diyarbakır. In these two novels by Edib Adıvar the libidinal dynamic of the marriage between a Kurdish girl and a Turkish soldier becomes the allegory for political, geographical and moral messages that the author sets to convey in an educational didactic effort, so as to share her expertise "in the service of a wider public, or to political and liberatory ends" (Seyhan 2008, 43). As it will be analysed in the last chapter, in particular in the section dedicated to Özcan Karabulut, such images and interpretation of the Kurds and the Kurdish places have some persistence, despite variations, in today's Turkish culture.

3.3 Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu: *Panorama* of a missed revolution.

As noted again by Inci Enginün, Gökalp's ideas and writings about the integration between nation and modernity do not only have an influence on Halide Edib, but generally on a generation of writers; Halide's novelistic treatment of those themes will affect "her close friend Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu" (Enginün, 1978, 17). Despite some ideological distance, the two authors have in fact a lot in common (Seyhan 2008, 57). Interestingly, in a late work of Karaosmanoğlu, Diyarbakır appears again in Turkish literature as a literary location to set a dialogue about the results and the shortcomings of the process of modernisation and transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic. *Panorama* is one of the last novels of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, one of the most prolific and important Turkish writers of the first half of the 20th century. *Panorama* was published in two volumes in 1949 and 1952 and it represents a lengthy novelistic dissertation on the status of what was called the Turkish "Kemalist" Revolution. The book is a generational novel, as it portrays a variety of characters in their individual adaptation to the new cultural, political and institutional framework, and the reactions of the people towards the revolutionaries. Its time span spreads from 1923 to the 1950s, retracing the duration of the Republic until then. As a fully-fledged analysis of the novel and the topics it tackles is beyond the scope of this section, I will focus only on the representations of Diyarbakır given by Karaosmanoğlu in *Panorama*. However, I can anticipate that the section of her novel in question tackles the issue of the failure of the reformist spirit, its bitter encounter with the reality of the country and its partial disillusionment towards the capacity of the *inkilapçı* to change society. In the very same year of publication as *Panorama,* Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, perhaps the most important Turkish writer of the 20th century, choses the filters of irony and satire to expose the grotesque results of the attempted radical transformation of society in a novel entitled *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (The Time Regulation Institute, written in 1954). Karaosmaoğlu instead, faithful to his political history, choses here to reinforce and strengthen, despite frustrations, that reformative will.

In the fourth chapter of the book, there begins an exchange of letters between the philosophy teacher Ahmet Nazmi and his close friend Cahit Halid. The latter receives from Izmir, a symbolical city in history of the Turkish War of Independence and recognised as one of the more "progressive" cities in the country; Ahmet writes back from Diyarbakır, where he is appointed as a teacher. According to Özlem Kayabaşı:

> Ahmet Nazmi and Cahit Halid, who are conducting political discussions and making continuous comparisons between pro and anti-Revolution ideas, constitute the sources of the political thought of the novel. The conceptual

> elements of the novel are contained in the letters exchanged by these two friends, (Kayabaşı 2012, 1441).

The exchange of letters between the two intellectuals goes on throughout the novel and it becomes a theoretical argumentation on the flaws of the Revolution and the possible remedies a committed Kemalist intellectual should try to implement. In this respect it modulates a very common theme in Turkish Literature: that of the intellectual travelling to Anatolia to disseminate the gospel of the revolution and, to his bafflement, finds his country to be "a recalcitrant group of ignorant savages" (Parla 2007, 16). The exchange of letters gives Karaosmanoğlu the possibility of expressing his political views, that are mainly in line with the ideas expressed in the journal *Kadro* (1932-1934) of which he had been a founder and contributor (Kayabaşı 2012, 1446; Türkes 2001). Karaosmanoğlu moves from the conviction that the revolution has not yet been fully materialized, especially on the subject of Turkey's economic independence and self-sufficiency, elements that must follow political and institutional independence (Kayabaşı, 2012). The objectives of *Kadro* (thus of Karaosmanoğlu) was according to Türkeş (2001, 91):

> to develop an ideological framework in which to interpret the Turkish revolution that had created the republican regime led by President Mustafa Kemal Atatütrk and to suggest economic policies that, in accordance with this ideological framework, the regime should pursue in the future.

With Karaosmanoğlu, we recognize here a third stage, after Gökalp and Edib Adıvar: the former was writing before the establishment of the State and the Kemalist "revolutionary" reforms; he was trying to lay down the theoretical fundaments of those revolutionary events; the latter, was writing the novels we have discussed when Turkey was only a few years old and subject to an authoritarian twist. She personally suffered the consequences of detaching from the path along which Mustafa Kemal was leading the Republic and, inspired by Gökalp's views, discussed the quality of the modernisation process. Karaosmanoğlu eventually wrote *Panorama* more than twenty years after the Kemalist revolution, and could see its effects and its failures materialized in the society. In the terse words of Orhan Pamuk:

> The revolt of the province, the province's impenetrable darkness was not feared by the Ataturkist elite in the early years of the Republic as much as it was so in the 1950s, the years of my childhood. At that time this fear was expressed in the form of the Westernizing reforms of Ataturk not reaching the province or in the form of a certain weakness of the bureaucracy; it was hoped that one day the scrawny resistance of the far, unenlightened and miserable citizen would be broken; with the rhetoric of enlightenment and modernization the problem was remitted to the magic wand of time and industrialization, (Pamuk 1999, 429).[40]

In this context, it is interesting for us to see here that Diyarbakır is a recurring *topos*, a place mobilized in literature to convey a flow of mental and culture-bound associations. In fact, as noted by Parla, under the obsession of the intellectuals for the province and the "recalcitrance of a primitive population […] lies an internal colonialist attitude towards the motherland" (Parla 2007, 13).

Ahmet Nazmi's first letter from Diyarbakır is replete with dissatisfaction, grievance and complaint. He recently came back to Turkey from Paris: if after coming back to Turkey from the French capital he felt like a 'fish out of water', now in Diyarbakır he felt like "a fish spasmodically fighting between life and death, almost rotten" (Karaosmanoğlu 1987, 107). The first element of the city summoned by Ahmet in his letter is the Tigris River. He arrived full of literary and intellectual expectations, but the gap between the river's fame and its actual view is quite disappointing and reminds him of the disgruntled travellers who arrived in the city with great expectations, nourished by reading classical literature:

> I confess you that when I was coming here I was carrying a huge craving towards it: Tigris...Only this word was enough to awake in me a vast array of historical and literary enthusiasm. Turan, Agniylağani [Song of Songs?],

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[40] "Taşranın başkaldırısı, taşranın nüfuz edilemez karanlığı Cumhuriyet'in ilk yıllarında değil, 1950'li yıllarda geçen benim çocukluğum sırasında da Atatürkçü seçkinlerin korkusuydu. O zamanlar bu korku, Batılılaşmacı Atatürk reformlarının taşraya ulaşmaması, ya da bürokrasinin bir çeşit zayıflığı şeklinde dile gelir, uzaktaki, karanlıktaki, zavallı ve aydınlanmamış vatandaşın cılız direnişinin ileride bir gün kırılacağı umulur, aydınlanma ve modernleşme retoriği ile sorun, zamana ve sanayileşmenin sihirli değneğine havale edilirdi."

> Alexander, Darius, Plutarch, Ferdowsi, and finally Ahmet Haşim were all inside that word (1987, 107-8).[41]

Ahmet walks night and day along the river somehow trying to hear the voice of the poets and have a material taste of his intellectual expectations, but to no avail!

> The Tigris, the river that produces the biggest watermelons in the world, is limitless and constituted of a muddy, long brook. No, this cannot be part of the glory of Assyrian legends; no, you cannot find here a drop of the waters flushing Semiramis' hanging gardens. What made the Tigris 'The Tigris' was not but poets, storytellers, historians' imagination (1987, 108).[42]

A pessimistic rhetoric of decline, ruination, fall and disillusionment dominates Ahmet's words. As Seyhan has noted, in Karaosmanoğlu's other novel *Yaban* (The Alien, 1932), the ailing landscape becomes an "allegory for the state of the Republic" (Seyhan 2008, 61). The intellectual expectations awoken by literature, as well as the social expectations stirred by the revolution, are not met. However, there is something good in Diyarbakır, something that survived the ruination process and keeps him alive and testifies for the past splendour: the walls (1987, 108-9):

> According to some information, I can conclude that at certain points this place – this city once called Amid – reached the level of being one of the most important cultural centres of the time. I can find a number of documents supporting this conclusion in the inscriptions on the walls carrying layered features of several epochs and Sultanates. […] I am reduced to walk around these walls and try to extract some meaning

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[41] ''Bununla beraber, seni temin ederim ki, buraya gelirken yüreğimde ona karşı sonsuz bir özlem taşıyordum: Dicle…Yalnız bu kelime, bende türlü türlü tarihi ve edebi heyecanların uyanmasına yeter geliyordu. Bütün Turan, Ağniyalağani, İskander, Dara, Plutark, Firdevsi, ve nihayet Ahmet Haşim benim için hep bu kelimenin içindeydiler.''

[42] ''Dicle, dünyanın en kocaman karpuzlarını yetiştiren ucu bucağı yok bir uzun bulanık ırmaktan ibarettir. Hayır; Asur ve Gildan efsanelerinde bunun bir şeref hissesi olamaz; hayır, Semiramis'in asma bahçelerini sulayan sularda bundan bir damla bulanamaz. Dicle'yi Dicle yapan, efsanecilerin, tarihçilerin, şairlerin muhayyelesidir.''

> out of these writings. Can you picture me in your mind me with this dullish touristy mood? [43]

Ahmet's complaint derives from the impression that the revolution passed through the country without actually changing much; seeing the world from Diyarbakır he asks his friend: "where is now our progressive and illuminated civilisation?" (1987, 108). The *panorama* and the people in front of him, thus Diyarbakır, contributes substantially to feelings of melancholy, of useless effort. Nevertheless, the walls, the only leftover of past grandeur, are an object able to entertain the "westernized" intellectual Ahmet in Diyarbakır. The testimony of the past is the sole consolation against the dejection inspired by the present condition. The walls are also the starting point for a deeper meditation about the path taken by Turkey, about past and modernity. While representing the walls as a mirage to the newcomer, as many other authors did before (see Edib and Chapter 2) he recalls a key episode in the walls history (109):

> Please know that, if it was not for these majestic, imposing walls that surround Diyarbakır and that appear to the person coming from Mardin as a proper *phantasmagoria*[44], I could explode out of boredom. Talking about the walls, hearing that, I do not know out of what urbanistic, administrative or hygienic reason, they are going to be destroyed, it gives me the creeps and I cannot retain myself from cursing those people who can even think about this act of *vandalism*. Luckily, this operation of destruction is not possible for technical problems, or it may be because it costs too much. This resistance shown by some good things saved from the past against a misunderstood and bad form of *modernism,* has for me a very symbolic significance.[45]

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[43] ''Bazı tarih bilgilerine göre, burasının –yani eskiden Amid denilen bu şehrin- zaman zaman en mühim kültür merkezlerinden biri mertebesine erişmiş olduğuna hükmedebiliyorum. Üstüste birkaç devrin ve birkaç saltanatın mimari hususiyetlerini taşıyan duvarlarındaki kitabelerinde de bu hükmümü haklı gösterecek birtakım belgeler bulmaktayım. Bu duvarların etrafında dolaşmaya ve bu yazılardan bir mana çıkarmaya inhisar etmiştir. Bu ahmak turist halimle bilmem, gözünün önüne geliyor muyum?''

[44] Karaosmanğlu uses the French 'fantasmagorie', and briefly later 'vandalisme' and 'modernisme', to stress the westernized education of Ahmet who is, may be worth reminding it, a philosophy teacher just returned from France.

[45] ''Fakat bil ki, Diyarbakır'I çepçevre saran ve Mardin yolundan gelirken insana adeta bir *fantasmagorie* gibi görünen bu haşmetli, bu hemen hemen mehabetli diyebileceğim duvarlar da olmasa can sıkıntısından patlayıvermem işten değil. Onun için ara sıra,

Diyarbakır's city walls prompt Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu to set up his reasoning on modernism, which he understands as a force not necessarily positive, but as a force that has to be dominated, controlled and integrated with positive cultural values of the Turkish tradition. Yet, in Diyarbakır, and in the past, not all is good. The opposite is true (109):

> I said a few good things. Well, inside these walls there is an array of ugliness and repulsiveness left from the past that, alas, show the very same resistance against any attempt of purification and innovation. Even the letter "r" of the word revolution, which we kept shouting for years, has not reached here. [46]

Here we have Diyarbakır as the geographic symbol of the failure of the revolution, or in other words of the geographic limit of the revolution. Ahmet does not blame it on the people of the city, whose ethnic identity is never mentioned, but on the administrators. He goes on to give examples of the contradiction of a city in which the "general inspector" of the school tries to accustom people to "European" manners by organizing reception parties "in smoking" (similarly to the character of Mesture in Edib's *Zeyno'nun oğlu*), whilst the school director "goes around every day in heelless slippers" (110). There is a feeling of "strangeness" (*gariplik*, see the use of the word *garip* by Halide Edib) taking Ahmet in Diyarbakır, here clearly defined as part of the "homeland" (110):

> What is the reason of my complaint? What is the cause of my anguish? Onto this piece of the homeland kneaded by thousands of different historical

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bilmem hangi şehircilik, belediyecilik ya da hijyen sebepleri yüzünden bunların da yıktırılacağını işittikçe, tüylerim diken diken oluyor ve böyle bir *vandalisme'I* aklından geçirenlere lanet okumaktan kendimi alamıyorum. Bereket versin ki, bu yıkma işi teknik bakımdan mümkün değilmiş, ya da pek ağır masraflara bağlıymış. Geçmişten kalma bazı güzel şeylerin yanlış anlaşılmış kötü bir *modernisme'e* karşı bu mukavemeti, benim gözümde sembolik bir mana ifade ediyor.''

[46] ''Bazı güzel şeyler dedim. Bu duvarların içinde yine geçmişten kalma bir yığın çirkinlikler, mundarlıklar da var ki, heyhat, bunlar da, her temizlenme ve yenilenme hareketine karşı aynı mukavemeti göstermektedir. Yıllar yılıdır, geceli gündüzlü haykırıp durduğumuz inkılap kelimesinin daha (i) harfi bile buraya aksedememiş.''

> memories, where is this strangeness, this desolation, this nostalgia coming from?[47]

Ahmet is overcome by "loneliness", he cannot find anyone to talk with about his ideas; the journals coming from Istanbul and Ankara are left untouched by the locals; and he concludes ironically: "in this abode of culture, it is impossible to find paper and ink, let alone books!" (111). In Ahmet's letter, we see all the doubts and the uncertainties assaulting the Kemalist intellectual, once he verifies the status of the revolution in the east of the country. The people do not seem to have internalized the six principles of the revolution; literacy is yet far from reaching everyone. Karaosmanoğlu introduces the contradictions between a slice of society that looks at modernization as a shallow imitation of the West, and another part of the society still stuck in "ignorant and feudal times". For the two friends exchanging the letters, thus for Karaosmanoğlu, the revolution seems entrapped between these two extremes. Plus, in Ahmet's pessimistic attitude, Karaosmanoğlu seems to stigmatize the scepticism of the "westernized" intellectuals, a sort of nihilism that arises from ascertaining the shortcomings of the revolution. In the response written to Ahmet by his friend Cahid Halid from Izmir, the author has the opportunity to express clearly his political and economic views, criticizing such defeatism and showing a positivist way forward. Cahid's letter debut is quite significant for the reference it makes to an inspirational and founding father of the revolution (111):

> What a depression! What a defeat! I would say. I am afraid that by this tenor one day you might pick up an excuse and put a bullet in your head like Diyarbakır's illustrious son, Ziya Gökalp[48]. Those romantic times are gone! [49]

Although fundamentally for the revolution, Gökalp belonged somehow to "romantic times", when the new Turkey was still embryonic. Nevertheless, mentioning him is a way of giving a sense of continuity between Gökalp's times (and ideas) and the present condition. Cahid strongly declares that the time for doubts and meditations has definitely gone and an age in need of assertive intellectuals is coming. It is not a time for intellectual investigations, "thesis and antithesis", as in the time when they were students in Europe. It is no time for doubt, but for actions: "you need to clear your mind from any hesitation or reluctance", (115). In response to Ahmet's complaint about the lack of an intellectual milieu in Diyarbakır he writes (112): "You do not even think about creating that milieu, about the fact that you need to turn that place into an intellectualized one!"[50]

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[47] ''Şikâyetim nedendir? Istırabımın sebebi nedir? Vatan topraklarının bu bin türlü tarihi hatıralarıyla yoğrulmuş parçası üstünde bana bu gariplik, bu kimsesizlik, bu yurt yerimserliği nereden geliyor?''.

[48] The reference is to Gökalp's suicide attempt committed in his youth, (cfr. Heyd, 1950).

[49] ''bu ne yılgınlık ne hezimet! Diyeceğim. Korkarım ki, bu gidişle, sen de, günün birinde kendini Diyarbakır'ın şanlı evladı Ziya Gökalp gibi bir buhrana kaptırıp da alnının ortasına bir kurşun yerleştirmeye kalkışmayasın! Sakın ha; o romantik devirler çoktan geçti.''

This is a cry that closely recalls the passage of *Yaban* in which Karaosmanoğlu expresses the same exhortation: "You are responsible for this, oh Turkish intellectual! What have you done for this devastated land and these impoverished human masses?" (Seyhan 2008, 63). The revolution, in other words, is not something that at once achieves good, but it is, in the first instance, a process that needs to be continuously taken care of by the missionaries of the regime, and the intellectuals. Every intellectual, official, bureaucrat or teacher like Ahmet, must feel responsible for bringing enlightenment and national values wherever there is a lack of them. Cahid tries to shake his friend and remind him of his revolutionary duty as an intellectual: turn Diyarbakır into a civilized place against all odds, thus implicitly to implement cultural measures to further materialize the Kemalist project in the city: to "Turkify" it. Furthermore, Cahid takes the opportunity to discourse on the economic and cultural-political character of their revolution, marked by the relevance of the concept of Turkish nation above any other political concept (115)

> When we say we are revolutionaries, we do not mean that we want to bring equality among people like the French revolutionaries, or that we want a social class to dominate others like the October insurrectionists. For us, freedom means independence and what we understand for equality is bringing the Turkish nation at the same level of the other nations in terms of progress and

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[50] ''o havayı senin entellektüelleştirmen lazım gelebileceğini aklından geçirmiyorsun.''

> relevance. We do not know class struggle, because the Turkish community is a one-storeyed building.[51]

Here probably Karaosmanoğlu himself is speaking, pointing his reader to the right attitude toward the problem of society and the specific character of the Turkish national revolution. We listen to a call for homogenization. "Turkishness" appears as a concept that does not contemplate differences within it and overarches economics, politics and culture, uniting the community through the national denominator. The shortcomings of the revolution and the slowness of the Anatolian masses are blamed on the "Ottoman times" that left Turkey deprived of an economic and intellectual class, dismembered by complacency towards the colonial powers. Finally, the revolution appears as an ongoing process started by Kemal Atatürk, although much work strenuously needed to be done to keep it going, as the conditions of Diyarbakır itself clearly demonstrate.

The exchange of letters between the two intellectuals continues throughout the novel, but Ahmet leaves Diyarbakır and moves on to Istanbul; again the same geographical trajectory as in Adıvar: the missionary of the regime moves from west to east to fulfil his/her mission, and find herself/himself in a "strange" place almost unworthy of his/her own redemptive exercise; therefore he/she goes back to the West, Ankara or Istanbul. Here, at the onset of this political rumination running through *Panorama*, Karaosmanoğlu uses Diyarbakır to show a sort of geographical nadir of the Kemalist revolution, a low point of the grip of nationalist principles on the territory perceived as the "homeland". His words are a testimony of the "fear" of the province expressed by Pamuk, since the province proved to be the defeat of the elitist revolution started thirty years before.

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[51] ''Biz, 'İnkılapçıyız!' derken ne 93 inkılapçıları gibi bütün insanlara hürriyet ve müsavat getirmek, ne de Oktober ihtilalcileri gibi bir sınıfı öbür sınıflara hâkim kılmak iddiasında bulunuyoruz. Bizim için 'Hürriyet = İstiklal'dir' ve müsavattan anladığımız şey, Türk milletinin, büyüklük ve ilerilik vasfını inhisar altına almış diğer milletlerle başbaşa getirilmesi, denkleştirilmesidir. Sınıf mücadelesini bilmeyiz; zira, Türk cemiyeti zaten yalınkat bir binadır.''

3.4 Conclusion.

In this chapter, it was my intention to bring together three essential Turkish authors of the period that goes from the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire to the first large phase of the Turkish Republic. Naturally, they present differences in terms of biography (Gökalp being the only one born in Diyarbakır, hence with an emotional bond to the city), education, ambitions, styles, etc. Nonetheless, a line can be traced uniting them in a coherent development of Turkish thought. They all are sincere Turkish patriots. They all are committed to culturally heightening the Turkish nation. At some point in their intellectual careers, they all used in their works the city of Diyarbakır to convey specific political and cultural meanings.

Gökalp, a native of Diyarbakır, in his intellectual commitment to the articulation of a cultural definition of Turkishness, struggled to put his somehow peripheral hometown at the core of the nation, stressing the historical connections between Turks and Diyarbakır, downplaying the relevance of other Muslim ethnic groups (Kurds, Arabs) in the city, as well as Christians (Armenians, Syriacs). With its balanced mingling of urban and rural life, Diyarbakır represented for him the perfect repository of Turkish mores, distant from the “western corruption” of a megalopolis like Istanbul, but also detached from feudal and backward Kurdish traditions. He writes in a time when the Turkish Republic is still in gestation (theoretically and factually), but the resonance of his writings is still immensely deep in Turkish national thought today. His ideas are crucial for the other writers dealt with in this chapter. Gökalp today also represents an uneasy heritage for Diyarbakır, a city transformed in social, political and cultural terms since his time. The episode of local Kurdish protesters burning his museum in 2014 emblematically demonstrates how Gökalp is regarded with suspicion, to say the least, by some of his Kurdish fellow citizens and how the city has assumed a different position within (or perhaps outside) the Turkish nationalist imaginary compared with what he envisioned.

With Halide Edib Adıvar’s and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’s works, we enter properly into the Republican era, and Diyarbakır seems to begin to play a different role; not quite at the core of the nation, as Gökalp envisioned, but rather at the periphery; a significant periphery. With Edib's works we looked at the early years of the new State, revolving around the turning point of the Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925. The two novels taken into consideration here tackle Diyarbakır in two different ways, one prior and one after the 1925 events. If in *Kalp Ağrısı* Diyarbakır seems to play pretty much the role of an "inner" Orient, in *Zeyno'nun oğlu*, after the political developments of 1925 showed the problematics of this city, Edib choses to articulate about Diyarbakır a more profound reflection on the complicated integration between modernity and tradition, local culture and western civilisation, Turkish "progressive" attitudes and Kurdish conservativism. In this respect, she was clearly influenced by Gökalp's writings, which she might have studied carefully when deciding to write a novel located in that city. Diyarbakır serves as a geographical pin for the verbalization of a culturally and politically polarized society. It still retains this function twenty years after *Zeyno'nun oğlu*, in Karaosmanoğlu's *Panorama*, where the city appears again in Turkish literature. In Karaosmanoğlu's words, Diyarbakır seems to have become even more peripheral, disconnected from the centre, reluctant to change, stuck in a muddy quagmire. Ruination compels, whilst a misled modernization process tries to cancel good legacies of the past, withholding bad ones. The intellectual solution proposed by Karaosmanoğlu seems to be to make a stronger effort for the "education" of Diyarbakır, a renovated enthusiasm for the Kemalist revolutionary-elitist mission of dragging the backward geographies of the country into light. In other words, modernize, secularize and Turkify them according to the principles of that all-encompassing Turkish culture (elaborated firstly by Gökalp and nourished by Edib and Karaosmanoğlu), that does not contemplate differences (linguistic, ethnic, religious, in a word cultural), nor deviations from the path opened by Mustafa Kemal, father of the Turks and step-father of the "others".

4. Memory is a City. Placing the past in urban memoirs

> To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized
> need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define.
> A human being has roots by virtue of his real, active, and natural
> participation in the life of a community which preserves in *living
> space* certain particular *treasures of the past* and certain particular
> *expectations for the future*.
> **Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots (1979).***

> ‘The past is a foreign country,’ goes the famous opening sentence of
> L.P. Hartley’s novel The Go-Between, ‘they do things differently there’.
> But [a] photograph tells me to invert this idea; it reminds me that
> it’s my present that is foreign, and that the past is home,
> albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time.
> **Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands (1991).***

4.1 'Presenting' the Past. Memory, Trauma and Space in the Urban environment.

In 1985 David Lowenthal named one of his books *The past is a foreign country* - after the famous opening line of L.P. Hartley's novel *The Go-Between*. In that sentence, time is instantly “spatialized”. The past is a place, and even more so a place we are strangers to, a place we might want to visit or otherwise protect ourselves from. The past definitely speaks another language. The full line of Hartley's start actually includes an important gloss: “The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there” (Hartley 1953, 1). The past implies a “there” opposed to a present “here”: in the middle lies a space of confrontation and negotiation in which we come to terms with the past's strangeness. Between us and our past selves develops a process of differentiation: “Things work differently there” – we might comment that often they even worked better than they do now. Hence a feeling of nostalgia. In any case, the past occupies room. Flowed-away time becomes a space, a site we can walk through at will; while flowing away, time calcifies in objects (souvenirs, monuments, cities, books) and leaves behind traces all around. With Lowenthal's words, (Lowenthal, p. XV):

> The past is everywhere. All around us lie features which, like ourselves and our thoughts, have more or less recognizable antecedents. Relics, histories, memories suffuse human experience. Each particular trace of the past ultimately perishes, but collectively they are immortal. Whether it is celebrated or rejected, attended to or ignored, the past is omnipresent.

When we walk in an urban environment the past is literally everywhere. A human past that speaks of ourselves. If the past is a foreign country then a city is often at its core: it is, so to speak, its capital. The city is a “physical time” that inscribes us in a narrative flux. Past's traces are collectively selected and made “immortal”. The city, which is our clearest collective realization, can be interrogated in order to get answers about our present selves. We today shape and mould the past according to our times' needs and vocations. We grow a feeling of attachment for what has been lost and we wish it was not; we “save” memories doomed to go astray; we resent loss of what we consider nowadays valuable, but we also often creatively forget what we no longer need of the past. In this sense, if we are to paraphrase Hartley's inception, the past is not simply a foreign country but is our present-day colony. It is a land we intervene in and shape according to our own needs.

As has been pointed out by a growing scholarship (Casey 2009; Huyssen 2003; Staiger, Steiner, and Webber 2009) our contemporary society is characterized by a memory culture. As Andreas Huyssen has demonstrated in his studies about Berlin, time has nowadays entered space. The cities are organized and narrated in apposite ways to represent, contain and market memory:

> One of the most interesting cultural phenomena of our day is the way in which memory and temporality have invaded spaces and media that seemed among the most stable and fixed: cities, monuments, architecture, and sculpture. After waning of modernist fantasies about creation ex nihilo and of the desire for the purity of new beginnings, we have come to read cities and buildings as palimpsests of space, monuments as transformable and transitory, and sculpture as subject to the vicissitude of time, (Huyssen 2003, 7).

Along with memory, this epoch is also characterized by a surge of urbanization and the two phenomena are not unrelated. In fact, as noted by Edward Casey (2009, 186-187):

> It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. […] We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported. Moreover, it is itself a place wherein the past can revive and survive; it is a place for places…

Ralph Waldo Emerson expressed it "the city lives by remembering" (quoted in McNamara 2014, 11). Others have noticed how the notion of memory "acquired particular resonance through research on the city" as the latter is emblematically "a concrete site of encounter with the past" (Staiger, Steiner, and Webber 2009, 1-2). A city is often a battlefield of memories. Thus a battlefield of different pasts. This is even more so when we speak about a contested city, in which conflicting narrations of the past "enact symbolical claim on the urban environment"; the latter becomes a virtual arena of clashing approaches to memory and memorialization, since "incompatible desires, to remember or to forget a violent past that continues to inform the present, are therefore often played out as if by proxy, in and through the urban environment" (Staiger, Steiner, and Webber 2009, 7). Thus, a city is a venue where social groups spatially confront each other on the base of class, gender, ethnic and age group differentiations, based on their disparate narration of the past.

And that is the case in Diyarbakır, where State narratives clash with local memories. According to Üngör's formula, the Turkish State considered 1923 as a sort of history "year zero", and soon after its establishment structured an "organization of oblivion" based on "silencing the violence" that took place during the constitutional process and a creative "construction and deconstruction of memory" (Üngör 2012, 218); an operation that with Connerton we might call "organized forgetting" (see Allison 10). In fact, Akçam showed how among the five jurisdictional principles constituting the pillars of Turkish nationalism were: 1) "There are no Kurds in Turkey" and 2) "There is no Armenian Genocide, such thing never happened" (Akçam 2005, 231). As has been shown by Hülya Adak the historical legacy of the Armenian “tehcir” (deportation, relocation) was systematically whitewashed or actively forgotten in the several autobiographic memoirs of key political and intellectual persons of the Republic; emblematic are the words of Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, an intellectual who was, among other things, co-founder with Karaosmanoğlu of the journal *Kadro*: “regarding the Turkish-Armenian confrontation, I believe that is a page of history that humanity is better to forget [...] forgetting for good would be better”[52] (Adak 2007, 248).

Throughout the whole country, and in Diyarbakir in particular, effacing the traces of the Armenians and of the Kurdish revolt of 1925 was integral part of the elaboration of a Turkish nationalist narrative. A booklet on the history of the city entitled *Diyarbekire bir Bakış* (A Glance at Diyarbekir) published in 1935 by the party-State CHP, concluded that the city was “founded by the Hittites… and although it suffered invasions, it never lost its Turkishness… and is a city that always stayed Turkish” (quoted in Üngör 2012, 233). Not only limited to the early years of the Republic, such claims on the Turkishness of the city are still audible today, despite the unquestionable demographic changes that took place (Üşümezsoy 2010). As also discussed in the previous chapter, the State implemented a variety of measures to impose a Turkish symbolical enlivening of the city, while erasing vestiges of other cultures. In this direction, for example, it wrought the destruction of Armenian cemeteries (Üngör 2012, 219), placed a ban on books and journals in minority languages (Ibid. 2287) as well as making “toponymical changes” that factually aimed at rewriting a geography (Öktem 2008, 2004; Üngör 2012, 240). In sum, to return to Huyssen’s words, the will for a “creation ex nihilo” or for a “pure new beginning” deeply characterized the Turkish early Republican experience, although the fading of these “modernist fantasies” paved the way for an explosion of memory practices that strove to recover what those fantasies pretended to cancel. As stated by Marc Nichanian in a discussion about the Armenian genocide (Kazanjian and Nichanian 2003, 127): “For the victims, memory is necessarily, constitutively a denial—a denial of the Catastrophe, a denial of the fact that they have been deprived of the law of mourning."

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[52] “Türk-Ermeni boğuşması ve hesaplaşması, öyle sanıyorum ki, insanlık tarihinin unutulması daha iyi olacak bir sayfasıdır…hikayeyi ebediyen unutmak daha doğrudur.”

Since the 1980s, in accordance with a more general memory boom in Turkey, local authors contrariwise struggled to highlight traces of the inhabitation of other ethnicities, countering the official narrative (Neyzi 2011, 4). In Turkey the "memory upsurge" has coincided with "mass initiatives to reclaim popular memories, on the part of both minorities and the ethnic Turks" (Allison 2013, 11). This operation, that mainly "focused on diversity" (Ibid., 12) has been largely mediated by a recourse to memory: at the same time, both individual and social, and most of all *placed* in the city. In some respects, it might be seen as an example of the conflict between history and memory, as structured by Pierre Nora (for a discussion of these concepts see Allison 2013, 10). Some authors deeply attach their personal biography to the city, either by narrating their lives in that specific urban environment or by writing so extensively and in detail about it that the city and the texts concerning it begin to intermingle. The past then, be it historical, familiar or personal is summoned to help recall a certain idea of life, of society, of the city. A certain idea of the present. Hence the past is "placed" or, in other words, extracted out of the concrete space.

One of the key emotional and narrative tools used to conduct this operation is nostalgia, a word whose Greek etymology explains it as a longing for going back home. Hence nostalgia implies the notion of exile, be it spatial or temporal. Svetlana Boym in her study of nostalgia, says that "it charts space on time and time on space […]. To unearth the fragments of nostalgia one needs a dual archaeology of memory and of place" (Boym 2001, XVIII). In his inventory of the human attitude towards the city and the built environment, Italo Calvino emblematically discloses the role of nostalgia in the urban space; he does so by describing the "invisible" city of Maurilia:

> In Maurilia, the traveler is invited to visit the city and, at the same time, to examine some old post cards that show it as it used to be […] If the traveler does not wish to disappoint the inhabitants, he must praise the post-card city and prefer it to the present one, […] the metropolis has the added attraction that, through what it has become, one can look back with nostalgia at what it was. Beware of saying to them that sometimes different cities follow one another on the same site and under the same name, (Calvino 2006, 30).

In the Turkish context, the notion of nostalgia in the urban environment can be placed near the concept of *hüzün* (translatable with melancholy, blues, sadness) which has been famously elaborated by Orhan Pamuk as “the soul of Istanbul” (İşin 2010) in *İstanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir* (Pamuk 2003), at least as perceived and reflected by the author. As the title of the book shows, that feeling is at an intersection of the space of the city with the time of the memory. This sort of rumination over loss and ruins seems to be primarily an exercise of the memory on contemplation of space, in a constant attempt to reverse the chain of changes and recover, at least emotionally, the past.[53] A process that goes in parallel with urban transformation, particularly after 2002 and the election to government of the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi). However, as we will see, such a concept is not place-specific to Istanbul, but appears to be very relevant also in the context of Diyarbakır. In fact, the same Orhan Pamuk, years before writing his book on Istanbul, had already formulated a description of Diyarbakır that itself sounds much like a melancholic contemplation of a journey towards the past:

> When I went to write about the Northern Iraqi Kurds who fled to Turkey from Saddam's armies in 1991, I saw in the shop windows of the streets of Diyarbakır, the center of the Kurdish Revolt and its biggest prison, old stoves, rubber boots, armchairs, oil boxes, sugar, chocolate and sausage brands, flashlights, playing cards, and gas cookers that I remembered from my childhood and that I thought were not produced anymore or used anywhere. As long as the mournful, dark and demonic poetry that these objects and their complementary human relations create will not be listened to but forcefully silenced by Turkey’s dominant forces obsessed with consumption and “Westernization”, not only “there” but the entire Turkey will continue to be a huge prison full of prohibitions, (Pamuk 1999, 431).[54]

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[53] For another peculiar kind of nostalgia in the Turkish context, namely the longing generated in the secularist little bourgeoisie of the country by the loss of the Kemalist primacy in the country public sphere since the 1990s see (Özyürek 2006).

[54] “1991 yılında, Saddam’ın ordularından Türkiye’ye kaçan Kuzey Iraklı Kürtler hakkında yaı yazmaya gittiğimde, Kürt İsyanı’nın merkezi ve en büyük hapishanesi Diyarbakır’ın sokaklarında çocukluğumdan hatırladaığım ve artık üretilmegiği ve hiçbir yerde kullanılmadığını sandığım eski sobaları, lastik ayakkabıları, kotukları, yağ kutularını, şeker çikolata ve sucuk markalarını, el fenerlerini, oyun kağıtlarını, gaz

To some extent the nostalgic upsurge in Turkey's collective memory seems to be a byproduct of failure of the nationalist modernist dream discussed in the previous chapter: "The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia" summarizes Boym, before adding an observation that seems very much applicable to the Turkish case: "outbreaks of nostalgia often follow revolutions" (Boym 2001, XV-XVI). As Neyzi points out, the nostalgic approach paved the way for a fully-fledged industry that trades on placing "lost" cultures: "A nostalgia industry has emerged, ostensibly offering up tidbits from a "lost" past such as the cosmopolitan neighbourhoods of Istanbul complete with their "lost" minority populations." (Neyzi 2002, 142).

Bearing in mind this cultural context, in analysing the attempts made by authors at constructing a counter-memory in Diyarbakır that, by the very act of recovering childhood memories, challenges the State narrative, the stratigraphic approach of *geocriticism* as formulated by Westphal (2011, 137) allows us to address another layer of sedimentation of representations in space. Books about a place always add layers of perception. In addition, books often focus on specific moments of the past. They concentrate on one peculiar stratum of the layered structure, creatively forgetting other strata. Thus, the use of memory (of this peculiar kind of "placed" memory) made by writers is cogent of the idea of the present place they formulate and want to communicate. Analysing the space-time of the city often means recognizing scars and wounds that past events left on the surface. History often bequeaths a battery of traumas inscribed or readable in the space. However, the collectivization of such traumas through the literary media of the memoirs allows "loss [to] become a condition and necessity of a certain sense of community" (Butler 2003, 468). Literary memory, or memoirs, often tackles and narrates the present interpretation of those traumas. Social traumas imply the loss of a specific condition, and the consequent creation of a worse condition. Nostalgia

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ocaklarını vitrinlerde gördüm. Bu nesnelerin ve onları tamamlayan insani ilişkilerin oluşturduğu kederli, karanlık ve demonik şiir, tüketim ve ''Batılılaşma'' hırsına kapılmış Türkiye'nin hakim güçleri tarafından dinlenmediği, kaba güçle susturulduğu sürece, yalnız ''orası'' değil bütün Türkiye yasaklarla dolu bir büyük hapisahane olmaya devam edecek.''

for the past is often connected to a disdain for the present. In a city that has lost its past glory, sometimes leaving its cultural heritage to fall into ruins or to be forgotten, and in a city in which excavations for restoration bring to light bones and corpses of recent conflicts[55], ruination and re-surfacing of traumas are crucial elements for the understanding of the identity of the place and for its present cultural atmosphere.

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In this chapter I will focus on memoirs written in the Turkish language by inhabitants of Diyarbakır. Most of the works analysed here seem to present or introduce Diyarbakir to a public and a readership unfamiliar with the city. They seem to address and challenge some established representations of the city, stereotypical characterizations, rooted prejudices. In doing this, they adopt the language of the centre to speak back to the centre. Turkish is also, for many Kurdish writers (for example Uzun) the language used for their non-fictional works. The implicit reader of this text seems more often than not to be a Turkish reader, someone for whom Diyarbakir is a dangerous, violent, and backward place. Overall, notwithstanding their diversity, this corpus of works produced from the early 1990s, challenges official narratives about the city, its culture, its ethnic composition and its memory. In some cases (Margosyan, Uzun, Zana, Odabaşı) the writers used to live in Diyarbakır but left it, often for political reasons. In these circumstances, abandoning the city left a scar, a trauma in the author's mind. The books and authors I will discuss in this chapter are Mehdi Zana (*Bekle Diyarbakır*, 1991), Mığırdiç Margosyan (*Gavur Mahallesi*, 1992), Mehmed Uzun (*Nar Çiçekleri*, 1996), Şeyhmus Diken (*Sırrını Surlarına Fısıldayan Şehir*, 2002, *Diyarbekir Dıyarım Yitirmişem Yanarım*, 2003, *Gittiler İşte*, 2011, *Şehramed*, 2014), Yılmaz Odabaşı (*Hoşça kal Diyarbakır*, 2013), Birsen İnal (*Özümsen Diyarbekir*, 2013), Mehmet Atlı (*Hepsi Diyarbakır*, 2014).

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[55] I refer here to many news report of January 2012: in the İçkale area of the city, bones dating back from the 1980s and 1990s were found during the excavations for the works of restoration of the city's most ancient area.

4.2 Mehdi Zana and the new political identity of Diyarbakır

In Kurdish collective imaginary Mehdi Zana (1940) is a name closely connected to the city of Diyarbakır. His political role in the 1960s and 1970s in Diyarbakır marks a turning point in the history of the place. He was the first Kurdist[56] mayor of the city, elected in 1977. His historical presence signs the possibility of the opening up of a Kurdish discourse about the city and the region at large. In a process of re-appropriation of the space mediated firstly through a linguistic re-appropriation:

> Zana spoke openly about the need to defend Kurdish culture and community, forcefully advocating the right to use one's mother tongue and to identify oneself as Kurdish. He gave many of his election speeches in Kurdish, arguing that Kurds in Turkey had been subject to “colonialist” and “fascist” aggression and that he was a candidate who would forcefully resist this. He thus clearly posited a Kurdish “we” against an official and nationalist Turkish “they”, (Dorronsoro and Watts 2009, 471).

The struggle to name “things” in a different way is in fact the first step toward the actual transformation of those very things. One of the main tools of fruition, organization and management of the space is language, and the appropriation of urban space is realized also through a linguistic production. The principal level of a city soundscape is the spoken level. For this reason, the denial of a language and its oppression are mainly urban operations. They do not work the same way in villages or up in the mountains (see Pinter 1988) where the assimilation policies had a much lesser effect. The city speaks, both metaphorically and factually, the language of the national centre, and has a profound administrative impact. Civil servants, teachers, police officers, soldiers come to the city from other parts of Turkey to implement the national-hegemonic discourse in all its declinations, but first of all linguistic (see previous chapter and Aslan 2007, 2011). Thus, the struggle for the right to the city by a community which is culturally and economically silenced is, first, a struggle for a linguistic and discursive liberation, for the possibility of autonomous definition of the "language" spoken by and in the city.

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[56] I follow Dorronsoro and Watts’ definition of the word Kurdist (Dorronsoro-Watts, 2009, p. 475): “Kurdist signifies an actor who explicitly and publicly advocates for collective Kurdish cultural or political rights in Turkey. Such advocacy may, but does not necessarily, include demands for decentralization, federalism, or independence. We use it because the more usual word, “Kurdish,” simply denotes ethnicity and contains no information about political preferences”.

With Mehdi Zana, we have the first contemporary Kurdish political initiative for the right to speak in, to and about the city in Diyarbakır. This discursive revolution was actually pioneered by the "Eastern Meetings" organized in 1967 by the Turkish Workers Party and "Kurdish contenders who imagined and reconstructed a different 'East' in their protests and actions against ethno-nationalist suppression and exploitation by the Turkish state elite and dominant classes" (Gündoğan 2011, 389) and realized also with the help of a young Mehdi Zana in many cities of Turkey's South-east. In those meetings, the "East" of Turkey - a category that was the result of the interactions of State extreme measures and local resistance in the 1920s and 1930s as seen in the previous chapter (Tejel Gorgas 2009) - started to raise its voice about the recognition of political and economic rights and tried to speak for itself, after at least two decades of "silence" (Watts 2007). The distinction is, at this stage, mainly geographical (East vs. West) and not yet ethnic, but still the "easterners" placed demands particular to their region and not comparable with the rest of the country (Gündoğan, 2011). A first brick for the articulation of a new spatial definition is laid down, as well as the "ideological and social framework" of the contemporary Kurdish movement (Watts 2007). The election of Mehdi Zana can be seen as the peak of the social and political movement started in the 1960s by a young and educated Kurdish intelligentsia that "introduced the language of Kurdish rights into political parties, student movements and the press for the first time since the creation of the Republic" (Watts 2007). With him, a decade later, the unpronounceable is said: almost automatically the word Kurd substitutes Easterner, while Kurdistan substitutes East. This, of course, constitutes a clear challenge to the nationalist Turkish Republic from a Kurdish perspective, the first since the late 1930s, and came with a heavy price that Zana's generation will pay with the persecutions post-1980.

All this process is traceable in Mehdi Zana's autobiographical and political memoir *Bekle Diyarbakır* (Wait Diyarbakır, 1992). It is one of many memoirs published by actors of Turkish and Kurdish political life in those years. We might mention here at least two works contemporary with Zana’s: Musa Anter’s *Hatıralarım* (“My memories”, two volumes, Anter 1990) and Kemal Burkay's *Anılar Belgeler* (“Memories and Documents”, Burkay 2002). Both writers were Zana’s fellow members of the *Türkiye İşçi Partisi* (Turkey’s Workers Party, henceforth TİP) and noted Kurdish intellectuals. *Bekle Diyarbakır*, although focusing directly on the political life of the author, gives us an important background image of the city. There are no lyrical ignitions toward the city (as we will see, they become frequent in more recent memoirs). The author is never tempted by nostalgia. He has the attitude of the political man, for whom history is not something long gone but something still in the making. The recovery of past actions is made to explain present positions, justify errors and shortcomings of political accomplishments. Rarely Zana lingers on descriptions of the city, but through his account we have the image of a city that in the late 1970s is “changing skin”. A city that claims its specificity, a city that becomes a “castle”, a symbol of a vast arrays of struggles: regional, class and ethnic struggles (Dorronsoro-Watts, 474).

> Like Kurdist officials in the late 1990s and 2000s, Zana sought to craft a form of specifically Kurdish representation. In 1977, as in the period between 1999 and 2009, municipalities were “captured” by actors who publicly used them as resources for furthering Kurdist agendas. The idea that Diyarbakır city constituted a kind of “castle” or fortress (*kale*) to be conquered by (or taken from) Kurdish nationalists—a metaphor and phrase very much in evidence in the 2000s—gained currency during these years.

Through Mehdi Zana's actions and words starts a discourse of otherness concerning Diyarbakır that will be seen recurring in later memoirs. Political praxis in the city and cultural discourse about the city go hand in hand. With the words of Dorronsoro-Watts (2009, 458-459):

> New political actors emerged in urban areas and began articulating demands that had not been made in the past; in the case of cities such as Diyarbakır, these demands reflected specific cultural, administrative, and economic

> concerns not necessarily shared by groups in other parts of the country […], actors such as Zana were able to assert their own interests and impose their own agendas on the local political scene.

As we see, the region tried to establish a new agenda, different from that of the central authority. Diyarbakır becomes the regional centre that symbolizes and voices precise demands. The process launched by Mehdi Zana in 1977 will be crushed during the heavily repressive season of the 1980 military coup-d'état (see Chapter 6). The author himself will serve eleven years in prison, He accounts for those years in the last part of *Bekle Diyarbakır* and in another memoir entitled *Prison n°5 eleven years ın Turkısh jaıls* (Zana and Vauquelin 1997), by this establishing another narrative and rueful “myth” about the city which is that of the prison, theatre of numerous human rights’ violations, killings and tortures. Despite the violence of the repression, Zana's election marks a point of no return for the history of the city and the affirmation of a discourse about it that, through several evolutions, was still ongoing until a State-appointed trustee took control of the city after the arrest of the elected pro-Kurdish mayors.

A key moment in *Bekle Diyarbakır* is the section entitled *Türkeş is coming*. Alparslan Türkeş (1917-1997) was the leader and founder of the nationalist far-right wing MHP (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi/ Nationalist Movement Party). In the second half of the 1970s he was planning a political visit to Diyarbakır. Zana gives us an account of that day as a moment in which different factions in Diyarbakır find a way to unite against a common enemy and establish the base for a future common struggle:

> One day when I was at the shop, I noticed someone distributing leaflets. After I read it, I realized it was an MHP leaflet. In the leaflet, it was said that Türkeş (the head of the ultra-right Nationalist Movement Party, MHP) was coming to Diyarbakır and that people were being called upon to greet him. This would have been the MHP's first show of force in Diyarbakır. “Something should be done,” I thought to myself, (Zana 2012, 100).

The city soon appears as a castle to be defended against an attack. Zana sees himself at the centre of the struggle. He strives to bring together people from different political organizations and different cities in a demonstration against Türkeş and claims, (Zana 2012, 102): “It was a rare thing that so many factions had come together, especially for Diyarbakır. [...] Diyarbakır was virtually boiling over. People were flooding in from all around.” And later on, addressing the crowd:

> When Türkeş steps onto the soil of Diyarbakır, he should receive a slap from the Kurdish people that the whole world will hear. […] The cry of the crowds was crashing like a wave that had begun to hit the shores. The cries left the sky screaming in Diyarbakır. The shouts echoed in the streets.

Diyarbakır appears as a single Kurdish voice opposing fascism and nationalism. The streets resonate in harmony with the will of the people and even the sky corresponds. Zana sees himself as the man who made the city perform its role and resolutely affirm its identity. Not only an “easterner” identity, but overtly a Kurdish one. In the following pages, we see Zana in the electoral run-up trying to hold together all the different “souls” of the city and he will finally succeed, being elected mayor in December 1977 as an independent candidate, for the first-time in the history of the city. Zana’s election broke many taboos. Firstly, he was a “son of the people” (*halk çocuğu*): a person of low-class origins, a tailor’s apprentice, a communist, an atheist and most of all a Kurdish nationalist. He had many enemies. From State organs such as the police, the military and the Governorship, to the local notables and some conservative, large land-owning families (the latter ethnically Kurdish). Soon after being elected we see him trying to break down State-imposed rituals, taboos and 'performative' ceremonies intended to assert Turkish national values. Here is an example:

> Then came May 5th, the day of Atatürk's visited to Diyarbakır [sic]. Every year May 5th was celebrated. A friend gave me some text about the day. It was a decision that was taken by the municipality in 1936. and this text was to be read out at every May 5th celebration. When I looked at the text, I saw many archaic words; a few flashy sentences, swearing, attacks, uncertainties, and so forth. I

> told them to take that text away. I ignored my friends telling me that it was "compulsory". It just wasn't possible for me to read something that I didn't believe in. To accept something like that would mean being disrespectful to my own identity, (Zana 2012, 131).

Here we see quite clearly Zana expressing the will of Kurdish people, of a new symbolization of space, rituals and the concept of citizenship. The super-imposed Turkish nationalist narrative denied, up to then any official expression of any ethnic minority in the country. With Mehdi Zana, we see for the first time a minority seizing a State institution (the Municipality) and trying to change the political discourse. If that was a short-lived experience, because of the 12th September1980 coup, Zana's example is inspirational to Kurdist municipalities in the 1990s and 2000s (Watts 2007). A process of creation of "competing truths" (Watts 2010, 122). Obviously, this kind of attitude turned Zana's political activity into something difficult because of the hindrances and hurdles posed by the central Government, provincial Governorship, Police and Military. For this reason, Zana had to trespass on the national boundaries and get support from abroad: this also being a strategy of Kurdish municipalities later on. During Zana's service as Mayor, Diyarbakır was twinned with Rennes and, in a sense, the Kurdish issue was twinned with the French issue of the Breton minority, (Ibid., 154). Furthermore, a shipment of buses from France arrived in Diyarbakır as a gift in support of the local Municipality that was doing its job despite difficulties. At the same time, Zana tried to show to the national audience the real face of Diyarbakır, its social and economic problems. Instead of accepting a post-card image that would enhance tourism he prefers to show the social reality (Ibid.,136)

> Once a TV Crew came to film the landscape of Diyarbakır and its historical sites. The head of the crew was an acquaintance of mine. I helped them out with the filming. They also interviewed me. In the interview, I said that there was an epidemic of cholera in Diyarbakır. When they broadcasted it, the Deputy Prime Minister Faruk Sükan denied it. […] The governor Yılmaz Tümtürk, called me to his office. He asked me to end this battle of statements with the minister as soon as possible. His reason was that if the news of a cholera epidemic spread, no tourists would come, and we would lose foreign currency. It was

> impossible for me to stay sane. How can one be against the people to such an extent? How could we knowingly let the people die because of some foreign currency that a few tourists might bring?

Tourism or social reality: a dilemma still relevant today to Diyarbakır Kurdish municipalities, although the terms seem now inverted; in between, a shift in the perception of heritage as an important marketable asset and as a vessel for identity politics has occurred (Girard and Scalbert-Yücel 2015). In the 2000s and 2010s, the Municipalities might prefer in some cases to offer, or endure, sweetened images of the city to attract tourists and revenues, instead of highlighting the social problems.[57]

To sum up, in *Bekle Diyarbakır* we see a profound identification between a city and a man who has been for some years the city's “voice”. A first voice in a new political and cultural language that will greatly influence the recent history of the place. This identification is not mediated through a lyrical attachment to the physical features of the city, but through political actions. This is how Zana concludes his memoir (Ibid., 220): “Diyarbakır is the focus of my life and my political struggle. I am both the subject and the witness of the political struggle that developed in this city after the 1960s.” His memoir might not be read – as the following memoirs will be – through the lenses of nostalgia; Zana instead looks at the past with pride; however, it was important to read Zana’s memoir because it has the merit of opening up a narrative discourse on a period of political transformation of the city that will have enormous influence in the process started by the Kurdist municipalities in 1999 and that went on until 2016. In this sense, his reconstruction of the past, of his conter-hegemonic season, has fundamental repercussion on the overall discourse about the city and is of great inspiration for a number of political measures that will be implemented from 1999 until 2015.

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[57] See also (Marilungo 2016).

4.3 The self and the city: a farewell to Diyarbakır by Yılmaz Odabaşı

A young boy who militated in the ranks helping out for Zana's election recalled this season when he became a grown-up writer and wrote his own memoir dedicated to Diyarbakır (Odabaşı 2013, 85):

> The 1978 generation in Diyarbakır was like a waterfall coming down from a mountain. [...] For Diyarbakır a new time had started; […] The sons of peasants, workers and labourers coming from the suburbs for the first time after many years had changed the destiny of the city. They'd chosen for the mayoral office, that had been in the hands of landowners and tribe chieftains for generations, a tailor coming from the suburbs like them; a civilian and disobedient Kurd like them. They had chosen Mehdi Zana. [58]

Yılmaz Odabaşı is a poet and a journalist born in 1962. In *Hoşça kal Diyarbakır* (Farewell Diyarbakır, 2013) he accounts for his political experience as a leftist poet and journalist in a city surrounded by the gloomy atmosphere of repression. He also accounts for his emotional bond to a place that seems somehow to ward him off. Crucial notions of belonging, membership and affinity come into play here. Whereas in Zana the feeling of belonging to the city and to its people is never questioned, in Odabaşı it is a matter of anguish and the problematic relationship between the author and the city that is evident in many of his poems, and we will see this in the next chapter. The repressive and constraining political season of the 1980s and early 1990s, seems to have generated a process of withdrawal into the self that in turn produces an agitated relation with the surrounding space and community.

In this section, I focus on the recently published memoir *Hoşça kal Diyarbakır*. The epigraph opening the book is a two-line quotation from one of Odabaşı's own poems, made extremely famous in Turkey by the music of Ahmet Kaya.

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[58] "Bir dağdan inen çavlan gibiydi Diyarbakır'da da 78 kuşağı... Diyarbakır için yeni bir dçnem başlamıştı. Varoşlardan gelen ırgat, işçi ve amele çocukları, uzun yıllardan sonra ilk kez şehrin yazgısını değiştirmiş, kuşaklar boyu ağaların ve aşiret reislerin ellerinde tuttuğu Diyarbakır Belediye Başkanlığı makamına tıpkı kendilerini gibi varoşlardan gelmiş bir terziyi, tıpkı kendileri gibi sivil, itaatsiz bir Kürt'ü, Mehdi Zana'yı belediye başkanı seçmişti."

The lines go: *ne Diyarbakır anladı beni ne de sen/ oysa ne çok sevdim ikinizi de bilsen* (neither you nor Diyarbakır understood me, / if you'd only know how much I loved you both); such an epigraph set the tone for the account of his turbulent relationship with the city that actually concludes with the "farewell" of the title.

Especially in the first and last sections of the book the city has the significance of a character that plays an important emotional role. At the onset Diyarbakır is introduced with a description of all its main features: the bazaar, the bridge, the walls, the old houses with a courtyard, the prison where the author spent one year after the 12 September 1980's coup (Ibid., 11). The soundscape is presented as well: peddlers' call mingles with the Kurdish storytellers' (*dengbêj*) voices, Kurdish music from car radios is towered over by the screaming of minibus drivers. With such passage, the place is enlivened for the reader's sensorial sphere and right after that we are introduced to the emotional link that connects it to the author (Ibid., 12):

> Diyarbakır is a city that always occupied an enormous room in my mind. Everyone has a city, isn't it? Loving a city is like loving a person: can you love a person or a city you don't know? […] The first meeting, the first time, the first suffocating longings. After that is a repetition; you know that everything is a repetition now. The second, third love, detention, solitude, delusion. But those "firsts" they are all in that city, and no force can change that.[59]

Diyarbakır is an imprint for the rest of life and follows the poet wherever he goes (Ibid., 17). More specifically, Odabaşı's life in Diyarbakır is closely tied to a specific neighbourhood, Bağlar. A neighbourhood that with its very spatiality crystallizes a painful chapter of the city's history. In fact, in Diyarbakır, architecture and urban design show clearly different historical moments of the city. After the railway line, that separates it from the modernist and republican neighbourhood, Bağlar, with its chaotic clump of alleyways, tells stories of poverty and migration, unemployment and segregation, displacement and violence. Not only a physical place, Bağlar is also a source of literary inspiration for Odabaşı: “Because cities' most precious stories and novels are lived in the city's guts, namely in the suburbs; and if they are to be written they must be written from there” (Odabaşı 2013, 18). “Bağlar boys” like himself, generally poor and with a tattered attitude are presented in opposition to “Ofis boys”, at that time son and daughters of Diyarbakır's bourgeoisie who attended high ranking schools. Bağlar for Odabaşı corresponds to “Bukowsky's descriptions of suburbs” and he describes it as a “concentration of shanty antithetical to contemporary architecture” (Ibid., 23). Bağlar is where as a seventeen years old boy he excitedly assisted Mehdi Zana’s electoral discourse and, according to the author, is the district that paid the highest price in the violent 1980's coup (Ibid., 28) - a season tellingly named “the bloody season” (*kan mevsimi*) that Odabaşı accounts for in another memoir published in 1991, *Eylül Defterleri* ("September Notebooks", Odabaşı 1991). Everybody from that neighbourhood in fact might have looked “suspicious” to the authorities since the district began to be stigmatized as highly politicized and restless (Ibid., 25).

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[59] "Hafızamda hep devasa bir yer kaplayan bir şehirdir Diyarbakır. Değl mi ki herkesin bir kenti vardır: bir insanı sevmek gibidir bir kenti sevmek; tanınmaya kent, bilinmeyen şnsan sevilebilir mi? [...] İlk görüşme, ilk volta, ilk özlemler buram buram ve buğulurcasına. Sonrası nakarat; biliyorsun şimdi her şey nakarat. İkinci, üçüncü aşklar, gözaltılar, yalnızlıklar, yanılgılar; ama ''ilk''ler o kenttedir ve hiçbir güç bu doğruyu değiştiremez..."

Yılmaz Odabaşı is often attentive to the sense-scape of the city. Along the autobiographical account of his personal experience, sounds and smells characteristic of the city are often recalled, also as a means of conveying social and political messages. A peculiar sound-related phenomenon, for instance, takes place in Diyarbakır's skies (Ibid., 35):

> In those years, the only airport of the region was right in front of us, joined to the village Yeniköy. Since the first lights of dawn all along the day the noise of jets and helicopters doing detection flight, going to various military bases and flying down to the border would scratch our ears and when they would all finish to come back to the landing field, the evening guard would be taken over by pigeons. One by one the pigeons would have been released from the roof of Bağlar bird-lover's houses.[60]

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[60] “O yıllar bölgenin tek havaalanı hemen karşımızda, Yeniköy’ün bitişiğindeydi. Sabahın ilk ışıklarından itibaren gün boyu keşif uçuşları yapan, bölgenin muhtelif askeri üslerine, sınır boylarına gidip dönen jetlerin, helikopterlerin kulaklarımızı tırmalayan gürültüleri tümğnğn pistlerine dönmeleriyle kesildiğinde, akşamüstleri

The military, violent and repressive “message” sent by the State and conveyed by the sound of helicopters and fighter-jets, is answered by the peaceful and innocent image of pigeons freed by the local inhabitants. The flight of the birds replies to those “masses of iron and steel” that “occupying the sky” (Ibid., 35).
Chronologically, *Hoşça Kal Diyarbakır* is almost a continuation to Zana's memoir as it tells the story of the grim days of the city following the crack-down after Zana’s election. After the 1980's coup and the kick-off of the PKK guerrilla fight in 1984, Diyarbakır experienced probably one of the worst periods of its modern history, going form the second half of the 1980s to the 1990s. It is, for instance, the time of the *faili mehçul* (literally, unknown executioner). Many journalists and political activists were murdered in those years without their executioner being found or arrested. It is mainly to those times that Diyarbakır owes its dark reputation. Reporters trying to bring to the national audience the repressive practices put in place by the Turkish military, Police and Secret services often paid with their lives. Odabaşı tries to make his way in this difficult context. He is hard-fought between pure literary writing and journalism. He is active in the city, opening two bookshops and surrounding himself with experienced authors and colleagues such as Veysel Öngören, Hicri İzgören, Mahmut Ortakaya, Orhan Miroğlu, Ahmed Arif[61] and, in his own words, “a dozen of young poets writing poetry in Diyarbakır in that period” (Ibid., 101). Of all the native Kurdish speakers who struggled to master the Turkish language, just a few ripened and became established poets. Odabaşı comments as follows on their literary value, comparing it also with poets who strove to write in their native language (Ibid., 101):

> I think that the rise of a strong poetry in Turkish written since the 1980s until now in Diyarbakır and able to get read in the rest of Turkey, is due also to the experienced linguistic problems. We shouldn't even regard as little the accomplishments of those who after the 1980 wrote in their mother tongue.

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nöbeti güvercinler devralır, Bağlar semtinin kuşbazları evlerinin damlarından ayrı ayrı salarlardı güvercinlerini gökyüzüne...”

[61] Poets of Kurdish origins writing in Turkish language. Ahmed Arif and Hicri İzgören are analyzed in the next chapter.

> Even Arjen Arî[62] on his own is an amazing example.[63]

While becoming an established poet for Turkey's readership, Odabaşı tries to enliven the cultural life of the city, which is living under the OHAL (Governorship of Region in State of Emergency), declared in 1987. He works in the cultural office of the Municipality and, in the framework of the first Diyarbakır Festival of Culture, organizes the 1st Poetry Prize, named after the Diyarbakır-born Turkish poet Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı (1910-1956). However, after misunderstandings with the Municipality, the author dedicates himself full-time to journalism.

Odabaşı seems to express a bivalent relationship with the city that he loves but from which he does not feel appreciated and esteemed enough as an intellectual. When he is deprived of his bookshop telephone number for credit-related issues, he blames it on the city: “I couldn't understand why Diyarbakır was always taking back quickly what had previous given to me” (Ibid., 163). Writing poetry is almost impossible for Odabaşı, given the sorrowful political situation; journalism would satisfy his moral dedication to his people, but it has become a very dangerous practice in the city at the beginning of the 1990s. Musa Anter, Halit Güngen, Mehmet Şenol are some renowned journalists and writers murdered in those years that Yilmaz Odabaşı recounted in detail in his book *Güneydoğu'da gazeteci olmak* ("Being a Journalist in the South-East", Odabaşı 1998). In the early 1990s, he is the correspondent from Diyarbakır for the *Turkish Daily News*, he writes in several magazines and sees his work in the framework of a broader leftist movement and not strictly a Kurdish nationalist movement. He considers being a journalist in Diyarbakır an important task, as the city could be “a window for the Turkish left on what was going on in the region” (Ibid., 214). He is subject to smear campaigns from Kurdish nationalist newspaper *Özgür Gündem,* a journal able to deeply influence the public opinion of the city; he is considered a traitor for substituting in his news the word “Kurdistan” with the word “South-east”; the geographical markers in facts convey an immediately political framework, as “south-east” reveals an implicit acceptance of Turkey's national borders. However, if one day he is considered a traitor to the citizens of Diyarbakır, the next day, rehabilitated for some reasons by the same newspaper, he becomes a "honoured poet confronting death in Diyarbakır" (Ibid., 199). All these episodes further developments lead to a definitive breakage (Ibid., 235-236):

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[62] See next chapter.

[63] “1980’lerden bugüne yazdıklarını Diyarbakır’dan Türkiye’ye okutabilmeyi başaran güçlü bir Türkçe şiirin çıkmayışının, biraz da dille yaşanan sıkıntından kaynaklandığını düşünüyorum. 80 sonrası ana diliyile yazanların başarısı da azımsanamaz. Bir Arjen Ari bile tek başına muhteşem bir örnektir”

> Your hometown does not give you the possibility of breathing and staying as a living being. You are now a man living here only by chance and you see that while drying up in these tensions this city does not allow you to write, not only news but even poetry. Don't you get that? Look, this city does not even give you enough to rent a house. It does not give you a telephone. It does not allow you a package of cigarettes. No woman in this city kisses you. To kiss a woman, you always have to go to other cities. […] Believe, none in this city is waiting for the news you are going to publish tomorrow. Look at the bed you are sleeping on, this city does not even give you a proper bed. No-one worries about your state in this city. […] Go somewhere and miss Diyarbakır from there, go somewhere and cry.[64]

In 1994 he leaves the city. The last section of the book is a half lyrical, half discursive farewell to Diyarbakır, in which he expressed the sorrow of the detachment and therefore the strength of the emotional bond, which is however "unrequited" (Ibid., 240):

> "Diyarbakır you look like yourself and me, / Inclined to hope, condemned to sorrow." […] I was now a man who wherever he would go he kept his eyes in this city's eyes, and kept his heart in this city's heart. [...] I said: "Diyarbakır I always felt pride being your son and I loved you with a great, dismal, and

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[64] "Memleketin, sana soluk alma, burada canlı bir organızma olarak kalma fırsatı vermıyor. Şu an bile burada sen sadece tesadüfen yaşayan bir adamsın ve görüyorsun ki değil haber, bu gerilimde giderek çölleşirken bu şehir şiir yazmana bile fırsat vermiyor düpedüz, anlamıyor musun? Bak, bu şehir sana bir ev kirası bile vermiyor. Bu şehir, sana bir telefon vermiyor. Bu şehir, sana bir paket cığara bile vermiyor. Bu şehirde hiçbir kadın sana bir öpücük bile vermiyor. Sen bir kadını öpebilmek için bile hep başka şaehirlere gidip geliyorsun... İnan bu şehirde hiç kimse, senin bir sonraki gün yapacağın yeni haberi beklemiyor! Bak, uyuduğun şu yatağa; ulan bu şehir sana bir yatak bile vermiyor. Hiç kimse ne haldesin bile etmiyor... Git orada özle Diyarbakır'ı ya da git orad ağla."

> unrequited love. Farewell![65]

The poet's very last wish is to be buried in Diyarbakır (Ibid., 243). A possibility of real reunion seems to be given only after death, when the body of the writer can be literally enclosed in the city's body and memory. But even in this way Odabaşı is not comfortable about his belonging to the city, his bivalent attachment lasts until the very end of the book (Ibid., 243-244):

> What is a person's life compared to a city's life? Those cities that welcome a person in their arms, make him grow, make him walk and then, you look, they flick him away. Maybe Diyarbakır has never been my city, perhaps I only believed so...[...] I used to think that everyone has a city; I always said that and wherever I'd go, in one side of my heart I had your (Diyarbakır's) name. However, given that neither Diyarbakır nor my lover understood me I got to know that everyone does not have a city, everyone has got a self.[66]

In this last sentence Odabaşı plays with the Turkish accusative form of the word city (*kenti*) and the word self (*kendi*), stressing the opposition between a nucleus of belonging and identification (the city) and the lonely existence of the individual (the self). Although a couple of pictures at the end of *Hoşça Kal Diyarbakır*, shot in 2013, show the poet reunited with some key features of Diyarbakır (the city walls, the train station), the sense we receive from the overall book is one of anguish. The impossibility of self-fulfilment in literary and political terms in Diyarbakır, engender a feeling of dissatisfaction and unrequited love towards the place. The city, in this case equated to the lover, seems to reject his fond son. The State's military grip and political repression on the city, produce a partial retreat towards the self, the psyche, the libidinal, at least in comparison with the overtly positive and communal relationship described by Zana. Odabaşı probably projects on the image of the city both the difficult relationship with his father and his extended family (Ibid., 106) as well as the critical rapport with the Kurdish nationalist movement that until recently had remained suspicious about the author. Personal and political issues are both projected onto the city, and vice versa the contentious atmosphere of the place begets a contentious psychological inner world.

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[65] "Diyarbakır, sen kendine ve bana benzersin; umuda meyilli, kedere mecbur... Nereye gitse gözü hep şehrin gözlerinde, gönlü hep bu şehrin gönlünde asılı kalan bir adam olmuştum...''Diyarbakır'', dedim, ''ben senin oğlun olmakla her zaman onur duydum ve senin hep büyük, kederli ve karşılıksız bir aşkla sevdim. Hoşça kal...''

[66] "Zaten şehirlerin ömrünün yanında nedir ki insanın ömrü? O şehirler ki bir insanı göğsüne alır, büyütür, yürütür, ama sonra bir bakarsınız göğsünden atıvermiştir. Belki de Diyarbakır, hiç benim şehrim olamıştır, belki de sadece ben öyle sanmışımdır... Hep 'herkesin bir kenti var' derdim; hep öyle derdim ve dünyanın neresine gitsem, kalbimin bir kıyısında adınla giderdim. Fakat ne Diyarbakır, ne yar beni anlamayınca, bildim ki herkesin 'bir kenti değil', 'bir kendi' var."

4.4 Renovating the (multicultural) past or the history of the "Infidel District"

Both *Bekle Diyarbakır* and *Hoşça Kal Diyarbakır* are autobiographic political memoirs. Although there is a significant difference in their sensibilities and styles, both authors reconstruct their political lives in the historical context of Diyarbakır, articulating in the pages also their feelings of attachment for the place. Moreover, with Mehdi Zana we also see the beginning of the socio-political transformation that affected the city and that powered-up a process of spatial and cultural transformation. With Odabaşı's memoirs we moved forward and saw a writer in the midst of these transformations. Although written and published in 2013, *Hoşça Kal Diyarbakır*'s account stops in 1994. Around that date, precisely two years before and two years later, two authors born in Diyarbakır and living elsewhere for different reasons, published two books that would establish a new literary and cultural theme related to the city: I refer here to Mığırdiç Margosyan, who published *Gâvur Mahallesi* (The Infidel District) in 1992 and to Mehmed Uzun, the contemporary pioneer of Kurdish literature, who published, in Turkish, *Nar Çiçekleri. Çokkültürlülük Üstüne Denemeler* (Pomegranate Flowers. Essays on Multiculturalism) in 1996. It is on these two books and on the theme of multiculturalism in Diyarbakır as a critique to the State official historiography that I will focus hereafter. In fact, "Uzun's and Margosyan's literatures included subversive approaches against the colonization process which discriminated and oppressed Armenian and Kurdish communities" (Nas 2011, 3).

The theme of multiculturalism, and more broadly of the recollection of the memories regarding the multi-ethnic society of the Ottoman Empire, is not peculiar to Diyarbakır at all, but is common in general throughout Turkey, and was especially so in the 1990s. A growing wave of cultural liberalism, after the 1980's coup and violence, facilitated the discussion of the monolithic cultural set predominant in the Turkish Republican history since 1923 that entailed the denial of the Armenian Genocide and the planned oblivion of the Armenian memory (Adak 2007). As noted by Çelik and Öpengin:

> The current that kicked off with the witnessing literature focusing on the consequences of the dreadful social trauma created by the September 12, 1980 military coup was continued with the literary output that dealt with the state violence exercised in Kurdish region during the 1990s. Subsequently, the works of Migirdiç Margosyan (e.g. *Gavur Mahallesi* [Quarter of non- Muslims] in 2000) but especially Fethiye Çetin's *Anneannem* [My Grandmother] in 2004, the murder of Hrant Dink in 2007, and the increasing discussions about 1915 due to the approach of the centennial anniversary of the genocide, all contributed to the increase in literary works dealing with the Armenian genocide, (Çelik and Öpengin 2016, 10).

Turkey's approach to the European Union, the cultural frame that depicted the country as a "mosaic of cultures", and the privatization of media that gave way to a growing liberalism, opened up the possibility of a discussion around a peaceful cohabitation of cultures in the framework of a modern Turkish Republic (see also Girard 2015). Noteworthy is the publication of two novels, Fethiye Çetin's *Anneannem* ("My Grandmother", Çetin 2005) and the Turkish translation of Elif Şafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* (Shafak 20006). Both books - the former a memoir, the latter a novel – present the discovery of Armenian origins by people who considered themselves Turkish. In addition, Nobel Prize winning author Orhan Pamuk in his novel *Kar* (Pamuk 2002) had partially focused on issues related to the problematic combination of the Republican mind set and the country's ethnic and religious variety. These works contributed to breaking the silence hitherto hovering over the Armenian file in Turkish literature (Türkeş 2015). A recent volume has been dedicated to this issue: Catharina Dufft (ed.), *Turkish Literature and Cultural Memory.*

«Multiculturalism» as a literary theme after 1980 (2009). In this volume one essay by Nüket Esen (2009) has been dedicated to Margosyan and Uzun, the same two authors I intend to analyse in this section. The memory wave that interested the Turkish cultural environment has had a huge influence in unearthing the Armenian memory that has been silenced by official history. However, as the regions in which the Armenian genocide took place are the very same regions in which the Kurdish population largely reside, and because the Kurds have been subject to the same silencing by cultural policies, the recollection and re-evaluation of the Armenian memory has a particular meaning in Diyarbakır and its surroundings. Indeed, the Kurdish cultural milieu has been more open than its Turkish counterpart to the Armenian traumatized memory (Ayata 2009). Such an attitude paved the way for retrospectives in oral history (Neyzi and Kharatyan-Araqelyan 2010; Tekin 2013) and led to much greater attention being paid to Kurdish literature towards the Armenian subject and its suffering in Turkey at the beginning of the twentieth century (Çelik and Öpengin 2016).

Although somewhat common to the whole country (see also Yaşın 2000), the theme of multiculturalism seems to assume a specific relevance in Diyarbakır, a city which is at the core of a minority struggle, and in the south eastern region in general. Noteworthy also is the city of Mardin (see Biner 2010, 2007; Öktem 2005) - in which traces of a peaceful cohabitation, as well as the traumatic wounds of its interruption, are still quite visible. Trauma often implies nostalgia, a feeling of attachment for what has gone, been lost. But nostalgia is not simply a feeling looking at the past. It also has important repercussions on the present and future. In Lowenthal’s words (1985, 8): “Nostalgia is memory with the pain removed. The pain is today. We shed tears for the landscape we find no longer what it was, what we thought it was, or what we hoped it would be.”

Thus, nostalgia is the expression of our present projections, wishes, and dreams of the past. Nostalgia erases from the past the pains, the problems, the negative contingencies, and it turns into a feeling directed to the future. We project into the past what we would like to see in the future, and this imaginative projection is indeed a first step toward the construction of that very future. Recalling a peaceful multicultural and multi-religious inhabitation of Diyarbakır means actually to tell the story of a possible planning of a multicultural society in the city. I will investigate this attitude through the books of Margosyan and Uzun, in accordance with Nuket Esen's words:

> By giving us a glimpse into such a cultural intimacy in the past of Diyarbakır in their texts, Margosyan and Uzun may be said to provide us with possibilities for the future, (Esen 2009, 134).

Margosyan is an Armenian writer born in Diyarbakır in 1938. He spent his childhood and youth in that city and later moved to Istanbul. Most of his literary production (both in Turkish and Armenian) refers to his place of origin and specifically to his childhood neighbourhood Hançepek Mahallesi, the "Infidel district" that gives the name to his first and most famous memoir - a collection of short stories in Turkish, *Gâvur Mahallesi* (Margosyan 2011). The infidel district is located within Diyarbakır's city walls, on the eastern side of the thoroughfare. This is where the large Armenian population used to live before the ominous 1915 genocidal events and continued to do so in small numbers up to the 1970s. The loss of the Armenian population is a profound wound in Diyarbakır's history. Through his nostalgic memories, Margosyan scratches the wound left hidden in the Turkish cultural discourse with veiled references to the genocide (Adak 2007, 251). The uncomfortable heritage of the Armenian genocide is today still difficult to manage in the public discourse. In the eight short stories of the collection, Margosyan recalls his childhood memories of the daily life in that neighbourhood and in general in Diyarbakır in the 1940s and 1950s: he gives to memory a "spatial structure – Diyarbakir's streets" (Hendrich 2009, 98) in which the sensorial plays a crucial role in activating remembrance. Significantly, the first sign presented as witness of a peaceful cohabitation of Christians and Muslims in the city is a sound. The senses again are the vessels that convey deeper cultural messages. On a snowy winter night, a young Armenian girl, Meryem, has died. The bell ringer, Uso, announces the sad event to the city ringing the bells of Surp Giragos Church while at the same time the muezzin from the nearby four-footed minaret calls Muslims to prayer (Margosyan 2011, 7). When Margosyan is writing this scene, the church is abandoned in decay. His operation is a sort of reviving of the ruins, and restoring fictitiously and nostalgically what is actually doomed to complete deterioration in real life. Such a fictional action is a prelude twenty years in advance of a real one, when in 2011 the church is restored by an Armenian foundation with the help of the local Kurdist Municipality. We might be able to see a clear thread leading from *Gavur Mahallesi*'s publication (along with other works, obviously) to the restoration of the church, passing through the progressive opening of the multicultural discourse in the city and in the country. The discursive recollection of the sensorial and apparently personal memory of Margosyan paves the way for a spatial restorative action in the streets of his childhood.

In *Gavur Mahallesi*, Margosyan seems always to be introducing Diyarbakır to people who do not know the city: he often introduces topics repeating forms like "bizim oralarda" (Margosyan 2011, 17), "bizim Diyarbakır'da" (Ibid., 23), "bizim oralarda, Diyarbakır'da", (28), "Bizim oralarda, Diyarbakır demek istiyorum" (Ibid., 36), "bizim oralarda" (Ibid., 53), all approximately translatable as "there in our region, I mean in Diyarbakır". This gives the book something of a tourist-guide taste, or at least reveals that the reader for Margosyan is most probably someone who does not know the city, someone who is unaware of the cultural discourse that such a city might offer to the Turkish readership. But while he presents with candour the city in its everyday life, showing traditional habits and local characters, he is actually conveying a much stronger message with which we might assume Turkish readership in 1992 was still unfamiliar and uneasy: that Diyarbakır was a city historically inhabited mainly by people speaking in Kurdish and Armenian and that with the name of Dikranagerd the city used to be a centre of Armenian culture. The oblivion imposed on the Armenian memory and on the Kurdish ethnic alterity by the official historiography is automatically subverted in Margosyan's pages. The picture that features almost no Armenians in the city would implicitly pose more than a question to a nation officially denying the reality of the Armenian genocide. Moreover, this action is made with the naturalness of one nostalgically retrieving his own childhood memory. The multicultural reality of past Turkey (and even the non-Turkishness of Diyarbakır) are presented to the readership in a way that makes people interrogate the reasons for the present conditions. One of the liveliest elements of Margosyan's Diyarbakır is the linguistic richness (see also Hendrich 2009, 98). This element in itself essentially criticizes the official hegemonic view that claimed Turkish as the only language spoken in Turkey, the only one deserving to be taught in schools and spoken in public. In Margosyan's memories Armenian artisans in Diyarbakır would speak Kurdish with peasants coming to their shops from rural villages (Ibid., 45); Mığırdiç's parents would talk in Zazaki (a northern Kurdish dialect) to hide their conversation from their son, (Ibid., 20) or his blacksmith uncle would use Kurdish with him to maintain a professional distance when the author was working as an apprentice (Ibid., 39). In his short stories, as well as in his first novel *Tespih Taneleri* ("Rosary Beads", Margosyan 2006) and collection such as *Biletimiz Istanbul'a Kesildi* ("Train Ticket to Istanbul", Margosyan 2007), reporting the "forgotten" discourses and languages as located in the "spatial structure" of the streets of Diyarbakır, in turn produces the possibility of an alternative discourse about the culture of the city and by extension of the country at large.

In his essay *Nar Çiçekleri* (1996), Mehmed Uzun also focuses his attention on the "infidel district". The essay, on account of which Uzun was tried in 2001 (Nas 2011, 9), is written from his exile in Sweden and is projected into the past. It tellingly starts with the words "My childhood..." and then goes on to elaborate on multiculturalism, leading from his childhood experience in Gâvur Mahallesi in Diyarbakır. When introducing Diyarbakır to his reader, Uzun has a moment of hesitation, "how can I explain this magic city?" he asks (Uzun, p.19). He resorts to the help of a quote from Calvino's *Invisible Cities* and comments:

> Diyarbakır was a city like that. A city which kept alive the desires of its inhabitants and erased those of the innumerable powers and armies which had invaded it, (Uzun 2003, 36).[67]

Memory, thus, is a force that counters that "erasure". After these words, we enter the infidel district, and there is the feeling that Uzun is introducing it to a reader unfamiliar with the place. It is presented as an "oasis" immersed in silence, "an imaginary country belonging to the past". The only sounds that could break (or maybe enrich) the silence were, like in Margosyan, the competing sounds of the bells and the voice of the muezzin from the minaret (Uzun 2006, 19). Once again, the cohabitation between Muslims and Christians is conveyed through the same sounds. “These sounds would not spoil the tranquillity, on the contrary they would give meaning to it” (Ibid., 20). After this auditory entrance into the quarter, Uzun addresses directly the issue of the Armenians. Uzun is writing about a place prior to the “nationalist homogenization policies” (Günay 2008, 44) or one that at least survived with its multicultural character until the time of the writer’s childhood, despite such homogenization policies. He recalls childhood memories of when he used to play with his Armenian friend Mıgo, and go on picnics with his family. The situation would immediately create an incredible linguistic variety: Mehmed Uzun would speak Turkish with Mıgo, Kurdish with his parents, who would use Armenian between themselves. Mıgo's father, Ape Vardo, used to sit in front of the Tigris and, after having dried a bottle of rakı, he would start crying. Uzun then starts to explain the “nostalgia” contained in those tears. Ape Vardo was a “sword left over” (kılıç artığı) meaning a person who somehow survived what the author explicitly names “Armenian Genocide” (Ibid., 28). Ape Vardo's tears spring out of the traumatic experience of the massacres to which his relatives were subjected. The landscape and alcohol suggest a feeling of nostalgia for the past, a moment of meditation upon loss. Yet, another trauma is to be added over the memory of the Armenian Genocide. In 1971, following the military coup, Uzun is arrested and detained in the military prison in Diyarbakır. What he finds in the prison's cells is a “Mesopotamian mosaic”: Kurdish people speaking Kurmanji and Zazaki, Muslims from Sunni and Alevi denominations, Armenians, Assyrians, Jews, Turks, Circassians, Arabs, and Yezidis. The Mesopotamian Mosaic that no longer exists in society is well-represented in jail. When two years later, in 1973, Uzun is released, he decides to go and visit the infidel district. What he finds is a quintessential nostalgic landscape (Ibid., 53):

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[67] "Diyarbakır böyle bir kentti; şehir sakinlerinin arzularını diri tutan, onu istila eden sayısız güç ve ordunun arzularını silen bir kent".

> After staying at home for a few days, I made my way to Diyarbakir to the "Quarter of the Infidels." The scene was the same there. Time had taken away many things, leaving impressions of nostalgia in our hearts. Migo was from now no longer there, not any more than Apê Vardo or his wife… They had left for the unknown, like the streaking stars from the nights of my childhood. There was

> no longer any room for them in this Diyarbakir from now on famous for its military prisons, its dark jails, its gallows, its caravanserais and its Turkish baths, its taverns and its brothels, in this city, citadel of sorrow and nostalgia.

And few sentences later (Ibid., 54): “Maybe because of my mood I perceived it like that but to me there was in the air a nostalgia with all its shades of grey.”

Past Diyarbakır has gone, lost forever under the strikes of a blind nationalism unable to recognize difference as a resource rather than a threat. But what sounds like a complaint for a past lost, is actually a reproach to the present. And Uzun's words have not been left unheard. The recovery of the Armenian and Christian heritage in the city has been a clear strategic goal of Kurdist Municipalities since 1999. On his part in 2006, when diagnosed with a stomach cancer, the author decides to break his long exile of thirty years and go back to die in Diyarbakır. At his funeral, he is accompanied by thousands and he is celebrated by the words of other Kurdish authors. In 2009, a municipal library is named after him by the Kurdish Mayor of the city. In the same year, the mayor of the Sur Municipality inaugurates Mığirdiç Margosyan street, obviously in the very neighborhood of his childhood and of his short stories. The city solidifies in the public space demands of Kurdish and the multicultural symbolization of the environment coming from literature. The shape of a city depends on the discourse that concerns it. Plunging into the past with the tool of nostalgia allows our authors to resurface with discourses aimed at changing the established narrative about the city and consequently altering its physical space, claiming it back from previous imperative and exclusivist conceptions. Margosyan and Uzun’s memories bring back voice to the silenced and the “invisibles” of the city, offering to the present a vision of the past that is in essence a cultural critique of the state and an instruction for the future. Their work seem to validate Boym’s assumption that “unlike melancholia, which confines itself to the planes of individual consciousness, nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups and nations, between personal and collective memory” (Boym 2001, XVI).

4.5 “The city has got a memory and a voice”: Şeyhmus Diken

“The infidel district” seems to have become a well-established literary and tourist topos of Diyarbakır. For example, in 2008 Müjgan Arpat published a photo-book dedicated to the neighbourhood: *Gâvur Mahallesi* (Arpat 2008). But there is another author who conducted a systematic work about that specific area of the city and in general on the memory of the Armenian population and the trauma of their loss. Şeyhmus Diken (1954) is a Kurdish author who dedicated almost the entirety of his production (more than a dozen of titles) to his hometown, Diyarbakır, and he writes in Turkish. Diken worked for several years as chairman adviser for Diyarbakır Municipality. His literary endeavour is chiefly concerned with recollecting the memory of his birthplace, investigating the identity of the city and introducing it to Turkey’s readership. In 2011, he published *Gittiler İşte* (So they are gone), a collection of essays, articles and memoirs. As evidence that the multicultural discourse framed in nostalgic vocabulary, from Margosyan's first memoir, passing through Uzun's essay, has been seriously included in the political framework of local administrators we have as an epigraph to Diken's book a quotation from a speech of Osman Baydemir, Mayor of the city for almost ten years, addressed generally to Armenians:

> Those who lost are not only those who were forced to go and who suffered. We lost as well. They have brought with them the abundance and the fertility. From now on we will not lose anymore diversity and values of this lands. I beg you, please come back to your land, (Diken 2011, 1).[68]

The title of Diken's book is permeated with the feeling of nostalgia, loss, and condemnation for the present state of things. The book cover eloquently features the burnt plaque of the Saint Giragos Armenian Church. The two articles collected in the book show the trajectory of this itinerary from literature to urban space. The first, *Gavur'u Gitmiş, Mahallesi kalmış mı?* (The infidel has gone, has his district remained?) focuses on Mığirdiç Margosyan: “since the moment he put that name on his book, *Gavur Mahallesi*, the 'infidel district' has begun to be pronounced more comfortably” (Ibid., 17). The second one, *Amidalı Surp Giragos'un Çanı* (The bell the Diyarbakır Saint Giragos), salutes the effort of the local administration in restoring the Saint Giragos Armenian Church: “Now Saint Giragos Armenian Church is in its own place and in its own geography; without the help of the State...” (Ibid., 40). The recollection of the Christian heritage is functional for the author to challenge the image that central authorities (The Government, the Provincial Governorship) try to shape for the city, in a contest of competing pasts. The attempts of the Governorship to evaluate the cultural features of the city or the stressing of its religious values (“city of the prophets” is an epithet that gained popularity recently with the ruling AKP government) for Diken are politically motivated (Ibid., 44):

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[68] “Kaybeden yalnızca gitmek zorunda kalanlar ve acı çekenler değil, bizler kaybettik. Onlar bolluğu da bereketi de beraberinde götürdü. Bir daha bu coğrafyanın tek bir farklılığını, tek bir değerini yitirmeyeceğiz. Lütfen sizlerden ricam toprağınıza geri dönün.”

> This operation has got one possible definition: to depersonalise the city and abstract it from its opposing and plural Kurdish identity. In other words, to operate for its transformation into an inactive and empty identity.[69]

For Diken, the Kurdish struggle, which makes its castle in Diyarbakır, is not exclusive but comprehensive of the rights of the Armenians and Assyrians who used to live there and were forced to leave. Compared with previous authors, who were following the thread of their memories in the city, Diken's work is more systematic and accurate. In *Gittiler İşte*, he recollects folk songs and rhymes, mingling Turkish, Armenian and Kurdish (Ibid., 53) and shows himself taking care of the Christian heritage of the city, making connections with bishops and Armenian intellectuals to save what is left (*Diyarbakır'dan Artin(ler) gider, eksik kalırız,* 50-9). He methodically documents experiences of Christians (mainly Armenians but also Assyrians) born or linked to Diyarbakır, but bound in exile from the city. For example, the artist Sami Hazinses, an actor and composer famous in Turkey and born in Diyarbakır to an Armenian family: his actual name was Samuel Agop Uluçyan (Ibid., 60). Or writer Oşin Çilingir who comes back and does not recognize his old hometown. In the chapter dedicated to him, Diken has once more the space to complain about the loss of the city's past lustre: “Who should account for the transformation of this city, once a mixture of several cultures and now, in the hands of rude people, has become a graveyard of culture?” (Ibid., 69) and quotes from Jeremiah lamentations on the fall of cities (Ibıd., 74):

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[69] “Bu ‘operasyon’ un bir tek adı vardır: Şehri muhalif ve çokçu Kürdi kimliğinden soyutlayıp kimliksizleştirmek. Ya da yeni ve etkisiz, içi boşaltılmış bir kimliğe evrilterek işlevlendirmek!”

> How lonely sits the city that was full of people!
> How like a widow has she become, she who was great among the nations!
> She who was a princess among the provinces has become a slave.[70]

Quotations on Diyarbakır or on loss in general are gathered from various authors and literatures to adorn the biographies of Armenians who fled Diyarbakır. Diken tells the story of Karabete Xaco, an Armenian singer from Diyarbakır, who sang in Kurdish for the famous Radio Yerevan (Blum and Hassanpour 1996; Hassanpour, Sheyholislami, and Skutnabb-Kangas 2012; Ayata 2011), that used to broadcast Kurdish music from the Soviet Union and was an important medium to create a modern Kurdish cultural community in the 20th century[71] (Diken 2011, 75-80). Or the story of the famous American writer William Saroyan, whose family was from Bitlis, another important Kurdish-Armenian city not too far away from Diyarbakır. Or again the story of the American musicians Onni and Ara Dinkçiyan who are interviewed by Diken on their feeling for the city they had to leave: “Diyarbakır for me means to know who you are” (Ibid., 97). Rather meaningful is the story of Aram Tigran, an Armenian singer and composer born in Syria from a family originally from Diyarbakır. One year before his death Tigran is invited to a concert in his city of origins and writes a song in Kurdish for the occasion entitled *Rojbaş Diyarbekir* that goes: “Even in my night dreams I never believed, / That I'd see you with my eyes, city of Diyarbekir. / Hello Diyarbekir, I waited a lot for you, / you opened your door to me and made me happy.” The embrace between the singer and the city goes well beyond the metaphorical realm; one year later, close to death due to an illness, Tigran decides to be buried in Diyarbakır (“there is the earth of my life, the reason of my existence”, 106), just like Mehmed Uzun few years earlier; again the relationship between the intellectual and the city is profoundly physical. Diken comments on this fated recall of the city: “Diyarbakır has been for both (Uzun and Tigran) the source of 'healing'” (Ibid., 106). In 2010 the Municipality, lead by the Kurdist party, in the constant effort to make resonate the city space with local culture (in opposition to State imposed culture) inaugurated the “Aram Tigran Conservatory”. Following is the story of oud player Udi Yervant Bostancı, who comes back to the city he had left it in 1976 for the U.S. and lately decided to settle again in Diyarbakır. Diken describes him “taking strength from the city-walls for picking oud's strings” (Ibid., 115); Udi Yervant himself wrote for the city lines of longing: “Diyarbekir, my essence, / you always live in my heart.” (Ibid., 117).

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[70] “O Şehir ki, halkla dolu idi, tek başına nasıl oturuyor! / Milletler arasında büyüktü, dul kadın gibi oldu! / Ülkeler arasında bir emire idi, haraç veren oldu!”

[71] Opening slogan of the Kurdish program of Radio Yerevan was: “Radyo e denge Yerevane, kilamen cemata Kurdan.” - “The Radio Voice of Yerevan: the song of the Kurdish community.”

In the remainder of the book Şeyhmus Diken discusses the Armenian intellectual Hrant Dink, an important icon of the re-emergence of the Armenian issue in Turkey and assassinated in 2007; pays tribute to Fethiye Çetin who, with the publication of *Anneannem* opened a trend for the literary unearthing of Armenian memories. Finally, Diken elaborates on Naim Faik, the Diyarbakır born founder of modern Assyrian nationalism. Diyarbakır, a city with many names (one for each culture that enlivened it), even gains one more name from the last article collected by Diken in *Gittiler İşte*. A name that symbolically turns the city into a knot of solidarity between the Kurdish and the Armenian people: DikranAmed (junction of the first half of the Armenian name of the city Dikranagerd and the Kurdish name Amed). A name that by tying together Turkey's most problematic minorities turns the city into a symbol of multiculturalism and reverses the politics of obliteration enforced by the Turkish State (see Üngör 2012; Akçam 2005). A name that mingles past wounds and present struggles. Some lines from and ending the poem give us the clear sense of nostalgia that the traumatic loss of the Christian population suggests to the author (Ibid., 222-3):

You went,

now you are in the rush of return
because every departure is pregnant with the nostalgia of return.
There was a song do you remember
it goes “in Diyarbakır happiness flows...”
if you ask Diyarbakır, happiness does not flow anymore now...
[...] in your return please know it
there is a pinch of nostalgia and lots of tears remaining for you
you will not find anymore what you have left behind. [72]

The idea of a feeling of nostalgia lingering on the city's streets seems to be predominant in all the examples given so far. Nostalgia that stems from the wounds readable in the city space. Notions of trauma, loss and exile become crucial to the understanding of the overall image of the city. Memory, through the medium of literature, functions as a balm that, while trying to heal past wounds, produces a complaint about the present condition and asks for actions for a different future. A future able to acknowledge the multicultural face of the city. This operation also creates a sort of cultural marketable store, an array of tourist points of interest. With the words of Lowenthal (1985, 4): “If the past is a foreign country, nostalgia has made it the foreign country with the healthiest tourist trade of all.”

A Turkish word often used in these cases and that we can translate for nostalgia is “hüzün”. The latter is a word, and a concept, that seems by no means unique only to Diyarbakır, but extends meaningfully to the whole of Turkey's urban memory. “Hüzün” (also translatable with “blues”, “sadness”, “melancholy”) is a key word of Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir*: the book that identified the writer with the city, and gained him the Nobel Prize in 2006. In the former Ottoman capital, as well as in the provincial Diyarbakır, hovers a sense of irreparable and traumatic loss of the past that generates a nostalgic condition. The swift process of modernization and cultural Turkification brought along by the Kemalist revolution, and the passage from the Imperial past to the

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[72] “Gittin / Şimdi dönmek telaşındasın / velakin her gidiş / dönüşün hüznüne gebe /bişarkı vardı anımsarsın / hani, ‘diyarbekir şadakar’ derdi ya! / diyarbekiri sorarsan, şad akmıyor artık… dönüşünde yok artık bilesin / sanakalan bşr tutam hüzün bolca gözyaşı / bide giderken ardında bıraktıklarını bulamamaktır.”

Republican present, has silenced a variety of stories that now try to find voice. If time has flown away and historical memory in many cases has not been allowed, then space, the urban-scape, has remained as a silent witness to the loss. It is in the space, and mainly cities, that memory finds the stratified traces and clues from which it may try to narrate a different story. In the words of historian Esra Danacıoğlu, who in 2003 wrote the foreword to Diken's "*Diyarbekir Diyarım Yitirmişem Yanarım*" (Diyarbakır, my hometown, I am lost and burnt):

> Like other ancient cities of Anatolia Diyarbakır during last 50-100 years has changed its face very much. Baudelaire by saying "Old Paris is no more (the form of a city / Changes more quickly, alas! than the human heart)", had underlined that actually to change by time is a natural condition of any city. But in Turkey cities, streets, bazaars, all that contributes to create a historical identity of this geography, remind the treasure house of a country under siege. The journey towards "modern times" we have started with the Republic, after a long time turned the "past times" into an Atlantis from which we had to detach; it paved the way to perceiving a continent of calamities. In recent years, from local history groups to initiatives of the civil society, in a framework reaching also the local administrations, there is a new interest directed to local history, and to city-history as part of it. Within this field of interest there are cities that start to speak out with a loud voice. But Diyarbakır is one of those cities that has forgotten its voice (Danacıoğlu 2003, 12).[73]

Cities' voices are writers. *Gittiler İşte* is Diken's work that specifically focuses on the Christians of Diyarbakır and issues of multiculturalism. However, in his many writings, Şeyhmus Diken collects a huge variety of themes about the city. In the foreword to one of his main works *Sırrını Surlarına Fısıldayan Şehir: Diyarbakır* (The city that whispers its secret to the walls: Diyarbakır), Mehmed Uzun crowns Diken as “Diyabakır's voice” (Diken 2002, 10); a much needed voice as, for Uzun, “Diyarbakır is a city whose pain, melancholy and hope have not been expressed yet” (Ibid., 11). By his own admission, all of Diken's production is a process of “identification” with the city (Ibid., 7). He touches upon a multiplicity of topics and refers to various kinds of sources: from historical documents, travellers' accounts (like those discussed in the first chapter), contemporary writers' quotations, oral history, music, personal memory. He elaborates on cultural as well as social and political issues; describes peculiar architectural and naturalistic spots of the city, as well as traditions, customs and famous people. Diken's corpus, constituted mainly of collections of articles published in newspapers, is a matchless repository of miscellaneous knowledge about Diyarbakır, fundamental to everyone who wants to approach the city. It forms a sort of dispersed encyclopaedia (often accompanied by pictures) that goes from Diyarbakır's football team, to the history of the city walls; from food culture to literature; from the documentation of social problems to the promotion of tourist values. Şeyhmus Diken is an active figure in the cultural scene of the city and works as a counsellor for the Municipality. In many of his writings, the aforementioned concept of “hüzün”, thus the idea of loss and longing for the past, is consequential. “Hüzün” informs the perspective not only when looking at the ruins of the past and the decline or disappearance of multicultural ways of living, but also when comparing past glory with present day decadence, or past serenity with present day anguish. In *Sırrını Surlarına Fısıldayan Şehir: Diyarbakır* (2002) there is a whole section entitled “Yeni Şehrin Hüznü” (The Nostalgia of the New Town). An interesting case is the one made for the district of the New Town Bağlar. This is a neighbourhood that, as we saw while discussing Yılmaz Odabaşı, has been, since the 1960s up until today, an abode of sufferings, discriminations and the poorest living conditions in the city. Divided by the railway line from the rationally built and Republican Ofis and Vilayet districts, Bağlar is a huge, chaotic and densely populated district where the many displaced from rural villages took refuge in subsequent waves during the 20th century. Bağlar, with its idiosyncratic labyrinthine structure, has also become one of the strategic areas of the urban guerrilla against the police. But names sometimes reveal the stratigraphy lying dormant in physical space, and they might be the stepping stone from where one can start to tell a different (often lost) story. “Bağlar” in Turkish means vineyards. In one of his articles Diken's goes digging in that name to unearth a memory of the Christian inhabitation of the city and shows how a present day social tragedy, as the present Bağlar district is, is superimposed on a vacuum of loss. In a sort of Karma-directed history a present pain is the result of a past violence, namely the erasure of the Christians from the city. In fact, vineyards leading to wine and food can become an important vessel of nostalgic reminiscences (Hendrich 2009). And wine, in a region today inhabited mainly by Muslims, leads to Christians (see also Diken 2017). The article's title comes from the lyrics of a popular Turkish song, *Diyarbakir etrafında bağlar var* (There are vineyards around Diyarbakır) to tell the story of the Christians’ notable families of the city that possessed vineyards outside the city walls and used to produce wine, in an atmosphere of folkloric playfulness. But today's landscape is quite different. The vineyards are supplanted by chaotic storey-buildings housing the thousands Muslim villagers who migrated to the city from rural areas. Diken modifies the song titles with a parenthesis that transfers everything in the past gone by: *Diyarbakır etrafında bağlar var(dı)*[74]. In the crack between past and present melancholy penetrates (Ibid., 117):

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[73] "Diğer kadim Anadolu kentleri gibi Diyarbakır'ın da çehresi son 50-100 yıl içerisinde bir hayli değişti. Baudelaire ''Eski Paris artık yok, ne yazık, bir şehrin şekli, bir faninin kalbinden daha çabuk değişiyor'' derken, aslında zamanın önünde değişmenin her kent için bir doğa durumunu olduğunun altını çizmişti. Ama Türkiye'de kentler, sokaklar, çarşılar, coğrafyanın tarihsel kimliğini oluşturacak her ne varsa tümü, işgale uğramış bir ülkenin hazine dairesini andırıyorlar. Cumhuriyetle birlikte 'modern zamanlara' doğru çıktığımız yolculuk, uzunca bir süre 'geçmiş zamanları' hızla uzaklaşmamız gereken bir 'Antlantis'; bir felaketler kıtası olarak algılamamıza yol açtı." Son yıllarda yerel tarih gruplarından sivil inisiyatiflere, yerel yönetimlere kadar uzanan bir çerçevede yerel tarihe, kent kimliğinin bir parçası olarak kent tarihine yönelik bir ilgi doğmuş bulunuyor. Bu ilgi içerisinde artık yüksek sesle konuşmaya başlayan kentler var Ancak Diyarbakır kendi sesini unutmuş kentlerden biri."

> And now Bağlar is melancholy. With its narrow and labyrinthine alleyways people have to carry the infirm and dead on their shoulders, because the district is deprived of the structure that allows vehicles to reach houses. Now with a population of 300.000, gigantic problems, with ovens like those you can see in villages, and stables for animals, Bağlar stands in front of us.

The year after the publication of *Sırrını Surlarına Fısıldayan Şehir* (2002), Diken published a book of interviews with Diyarbakır born people: writer, artists, artisans, but also simple Diyarbakır citizens like his mother Ayten Diken, *Diyarbekir Diyarım Yitirmişem Yanarım* (Diken 2003). The focus is always on the relationship between the individual and the city, their emotional bond and their story enclosed by the city's story. The underlying aim of this oral history collection is again that of saving the memory that could be lost to the city. But paradoxically, the fact that Diyarbakır has lost a lot, means that today it has much to offer. Probably the most systematic work of Şeyhmus Diken is the book published in 2014 in a series of books dedicated by Heyamola, editor of city memoirs, *ŞehrAmed* (Amed-City). Here Diken recurs to a loose fictional structure to systematize almost all the information he had previously conveyed in earlier works. *ŞehrAmed* is a kind of hybrid: a city memoir in the form of something in between a tourist guide and a novel. It is structured as a five-day walk in the city made by a voyager (*gezgin*) guided by a writer (*yazar*), behind whom we easily recognize Diken himself. The voyager is a retired person curious of the world. On a plane flight, he happens upon a booklet entitled *Diyarbekir El Sallıyor* (Diyarbakır waves hands, a short tourist guide written by Diken himself and published in 2009). He then becomes interested in a city to which he always postponed travel because of perceived security issues and prejudices (Diken 2014, 14). Here again, the discursive dynamic of presentation of the city to strangers is triggered, through the gaze of the tourist/protagonist. Time now has come for the voyager to visit Diyarbakır and he gets in touch with the writer to have a knowledgeable and reliable guide. The trip starts on a significant day: the 21st of March, the day of Newroz celebration, an event that the *writer* presents as the Kurdish National Celebration. It is immediately clear that the book is something more than a simple, fictional city-guide. It is actually a presentation that tries to offer a new image of the city for the Turkish reader’s imaginary, directly deconstructing prejudices and biases. Through the fictional figure of the *voyager* Diken can impersonate the average naive Turkish outlook on a city, generally perceived as dangerous and hostile. The aim of the book is both economic, attracting tourists to the city and giving them a handy yet detailed guide; and political, representing in the figure of the *voyager* the progressive collapse of a suspicious (and tacitly anti-Kurdish) mind set. The *writer* leading the *voyager* through the city, provides an opportunity to stage a 360-degree tourist experience for the reader. *ŞehrAmed* also works as a sort of commercial: not only foods and traditions are explained but also actual restaurants and shops are indicated to the reader. So, we read about the best place to eat a liver-kebab or the best venue for a traditional breakfast; we read the names of the best artisans in town and we are led to some specific bookshops rather than others. The *voyager* (thus the reader) is introduced to Diyarbakır literary figures: Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı, Esma Ocak and Ahmed Arif and the museums related to them. Also mentioned are Ziya Gökalp, one of the founders of cultural Kemalism and thus perceived as a sort of traitor to his Kurdish ethnicity by many in the city; Mehmed Uzun, buried in Diyarbakır cemetery; but also contemporary intellectuals like Mıgırdiç Margosyan, Yılmaz Odabaşı or Lal Laleş, the founder of a publishing house Lîs, that is giving a new impulse to Kurdish literature. Through the discovery of the city's main architectural features the voyager comes to know about past glories (the city walls, the Big Mosque, the Armenian Church, the Hasan Paşa Han, the Four-Footed Minaret and the Ten-Eyed Bridge among others) but also about old and more recent wounds (The fire of the bazaar and the Armenian genocide, or the infamous Prison number five). The section about the prison, particularly, opens a discussion about urban memory and trauma. The *writer* explains that there is a controversial plan by the government to turn the prison building into a school, while local intellectuals like himself would prefer to see the edifice turned into a museum or a memorial centre (*hafıza merkezi*) as a reminder of the sufferings caused by past conflicts, pretty much as the Auschwitz camp in Germany is now made into a national museum (Ibid., 175-183). The *voyager,* little by little, starts becoming acquainted with recently “invented” Kurdish traditions - notably the Dengbej (Ibid., 154) about which see Scalbert-Yücel (2009) – and with local notable families that struggled for the autonomy of Kurds (namely Şeyh Said's revolt or Cemilpaşazade family, 2014, 208 and 220); by the end he comes to recognize the richness of cultures, hidden behind the “monist and Turkist” ideology of the State (Ibid., 100) and asks himself a question that Diken assumes may be lingering in many a Turkish citizen wary of Diyarbakır (Ibid., 215):

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[74] The particle *-dı* turns the present tense of the verb “var-there are” into the past tense “vardı-there were”.

> When I went back to the hotel I was literally surprised. Why did I kept far for all these years from the people of this ancient city. The answer for me was with a simple word, insensitivity mixed up with prejudice.

The nostalgic attitude that strongly characterized Diken’s recollection of the city’s memory paves the way for the marketing of the place in the touristic trade. The reservoir of memory seems to become the city’s key marketable good, and this preludes self-orientalist and postcard-like representations of the place as in the work of Birsen İnal.

4.6 “In old-time Diyarbekir” ...with Birsen İnal

Another author who recently dedicated a memoir book to Diyarbakır is Birsen İnal (1954). In her *Özümsen Diyarbekir* (The Intimate Diyarbakır, 2013) we are projected toward a past (yet lost) Diyarbakır. Quite explicitly a poetic invitation calls the reader towards a past world, still alive only in memory (İnal 2013, 17):

> Let's sit on a bench,
> like this in front of the Tigris,
> let's sit
> and let's go to that Old Diyarbekir
> that we keep alive in our hearts.

We are invited into a sentimental geography, where everything is not just what it is but is emotionally charged. Birsen İnal's account tells, from a female point of view, the traditions and the daily life of old Diyarbakır. The phrase “eski Diyarbekir” or “old Diyarbakır” is used dozens of times in the book and there is a generally prevalent sense of loss and distance from that good old town in which “there was not anything bad” (Ibid., 21). Looking backwards, the natural happiness of childhood is spread in the space around and permeates Diyarbakır, implicitly becoming a permanent condition of that city now lost in the past: “we the happy children of Diyarbekir...” (Ibid., 24); one might say, borrowing Raymond Williams’s observation about John Clare’s poetry, that “what is most urgently being mourned […] is a loss of childhood through a loss of its immediate landscape” (Williams 1973, 138).

Interestingly, here the female perspective offers us a new point of view on the local traditions. İnal's book, overtly autobiographic, is mainly focused on the stages of a girl’s life in the city: one of the first episodes tells the importance of the local pilgrimage place, Sultan Şeyhmus, for couples that could not have children (Ibid., 34), something Şeyhmus Diken had also told in his books and to which he owes his name (Diken 2002, 15). A pilgrimage to the site would benefit pregnancy and İnal's account starts with pregnancy so that she can tell us customs and traditions related to that particular sphere of life. “In old Diyarbekir, people would prefer to give birth in the house” (İnal 2013, 46), certain names were given to children for particular reasons and a whole battery of precautions were taken during the first 40 days after delivery.

One interesting aspect realized by İnal is the use of language. Descriptive passages in “correct” modern Turkish are alternated with dialogues written in the local Turkish, *Dıyarbakır Türkçesi*. This also happened, for example, in Odabaşı's memoir, but İnal's approach is more radical and systematic. She basically uses another alphabet. One that includes letters (x, w, q) that for many years were forbidden in Turkey. This allows her to give a precise transcription of the local spoken language and bring the reader inside the city soundscape; but also allows her to give a sense of “otherness” and peculiarity to Turkish readership, with a blink to the Kurdish language (and thus somehow the Kurdishness of the environment) that uses those letters. Furthermore, at the end of the book we find a glossary with the explanation for the vernacular words used by the author, as happens in many examples of contemporary Kurdish literature in which the paratext is used as a space of contestation of State linguistic policies or of the community linguistic behaviours (Scalbert-Yücel 2013). One passage is quite relevant, because in it we can read how the author tries to define a linguistic uniqueness of Diyarbakır, in the special moment of the definition of a “mother tongue” (Ibid., 63):

> Diyarbekir children had a very distinct language. Only mothers and children from Diyarbekir would know that language. It wasn't Kurdish, nor Turkish; it wasn't Arabic nor bird-language, nor any other language. The language that mothers from Diyarbekir would speak, was understood only by Diyarbekir babies, who would reply with their facial expressions. So different a language

> was that of Diyarbekir babies...[75]

The comparison between the old and the new city is continuous. The decadence of the environment suggests a resentful nostalgia for the loss of old habits and customs. For example, the habit to go regularly to the Turkish bath passes in front of the authors eyes “like a strip of a black and white movie” when she verifies that “now our Turkish-baths are dens of scorpions, storehouses for cheese, warehouses... and with them a culture has passed by” (Ibid., 89). A similar complaint is made for the loss of public fountains and the social relations (especially for women) moving around them in the daily practice of collecting water for the house (Ibid., 97). Social transformations and transformation of the public space are deeply interlinked, but along with old habits and public places, there is a whole battery of tastes and sensory perceptions gone astray (Ibid., 110). The memory of the multi-ethnic environment is always (as it was for Diken, Uzun, and Margosyan) equated to a happy sociality and the political and economic reasons underlying its loss are generally left unspoken. In general, the feeling reigns that once, everything was better: the past is a foreign country where we used to live better than here-now. “Once houses were small and guests numerous, now houses are big and guests just few” (Ibid., 112). When not binding us in nostalgia, remembrance is an act that leaves us with a “sour happiness” (Ibid., 114). İnal seems to be a disciple of Diken in her attitude toward the city. She quotes him saying that “Diyarbakır is better lived than told” (at least paradoxical for two authors who dedicated their literary career to tell the city) and shows a similar attachment towards the architectural/tourist heritage of the city (Ibid., 127):

> The historical monuments of our Diyarbekir for me are like the ribs of my skeleton. If one of them is doomed to disappear or is abandoned to its destiny,

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[75] “Diyarbekirli çocukların çok ayrı bir dili vardı. Bu dili sadece Diyarbekirli anneler ve bebekler bilirdi. Ne Kürtçe’ydi ne Türkçe’ydi ne Arapça ne kuşdili ne de başka bir dilceydi. Diyarbekirli anaların konuştuğu bebelerin de mimikleriyle cevapladığı bu dili sadece Diyarbekirli bebekler anlardı. Diyarbekir bebeklerine özge öylesine bir dildi işte…”

> a rib on my left side breaks and I am taken by a deadly pain.[76]

With İnal we learn about institutions that “played a very important role in old Diyarbekir” like engagement celebrations, weddings, circumcision rituals, funerals or dowries that had the function of “transferring culture from one generation to another” (Ibid., 212). We are driven to a time when relationships were more 'authentic', although regulated by complex and codified social rituals: a principal institution being that of the neighbourhood relationships (komşuluk). While reading about this old-time Diyarbakır, we receive a folkloric image of the urban space. Past is constantly idealized as a time (a place?) where everything was better, more genuine. It lacks any argumentation on the reasons of this cultural loss and the complaint for a lost city equates with the complaint for the loss of a personal condition: youth. In fact, while describing a place the book tries to trace the curve of human life: it starts with the description of child delivery-related rituals and it ends with death-related rituals (Ibid., 321):

> Starting with birth and ending with death: that is the process we call life. The traditions and customs contained within, for what I can recall in my memory and express with my language, ***were like this in the old-times intimate Diyarbekir***.[77]

Deprecation of the present and idealization of the past. A lament for the ruination of the physical space that solidified whole patterns of social relationships and convivialities. A folkloric water-coloured city in which “nothing actually was bad”. In the work of Birsen İnal, who seems to bring extreme consequences to the attitude of her predecessor and mentor Şeyhmus Diken, Diyarbakır becomes a sort of lost Eden (Scott and Simpson-Housley 1994, 337):

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[76] “Diyarbekirimizin tarihi eserleri, benim için iskeletimdeki kaburgalarımdır. Hangi biri yok olmaya yüz tutar ya da kaderine terkedilirse kaburga kemiklerimden biri sol yanıma batar ve amansız bir sancı kaplar içimi.”

[77] “Doğumla başlayıp ölümle sonuçlanan, adı yaşam olan süreç; içine aldığı gelenek ve görenekleriyle belleğimde kaldığı ve dilim döndüğünce ***ÖZÜMSEN DİYARBEKİR’DE BÖYLEYDİ İŞTE O ZAMAN…***”

> Foucault coins the term 'heterotopia' to refer to this sort of unreal reality. Reiterating the structures of Foucault argument, we might say that fictional representations of city life are heteroptopias, real other places which are yet unreal, mirrors held up to the realities of contemporary urban existence, offering implied critiques of the economic, social and political conditions we encounter in the Babylon of today's cities, yet unwilling or unable to dictate specific remedies, clear visions of a New Jerusalem.

4.7 A new dynamic look at Diyarbakır's space: Mehmet Atlı

The richness of publications and the emergence of a public debate on the city has made it possible for more critical voices to be heard and listened to, and recently there have been some interventions to criticize this emotional-nostalgic attitude towards the city and its space. In 2014, musician and architect Mehmet Atlı published *Hepsi Diyarbakır. Herkesin Bildiği, Kimsenin Bilmediği* (All of Diyarbakır. Everyone knows it and nobody knows it), a work that he defines as a “monographic-autobiography or an autobiographic-monograph”, in so doing stressing the connection between the city and the self, as if an autobiography couldn’t be but a monography about the city and vice versa. In the ten essays composing the book, Atlı tries to detach from naive and emotionally-driven approaches, although he does not hide an attachment to Diyarbakır. The personal experience in the city as much as the education in architecture is important in producing Atlı's individual reading of the urban space. He constantly put the stress on the “dynamic roles” (Atlı 2014, 35) of places and architecture. He tries to avoid fixing and securing a certain image of places, but strives to see them in their dynamic transformation, in connection with historical, political, sociological as well as cultural developments. Shunning anecdotal narratives, Atlı's approach is more holistic and “scientific”. Although he does not claim to be objective, and actually defends his right to be overtly subjective, he proposes a reading that struggles to go deeper in the understanding of the urban space and does not stay content with nationalist or nostalgic views (Ibid., 12-3):

> If we talk about writing an urban history of Diyarbakır city aimed at establishing the city's connections and networks but also its specific aspects, then we are to abandon not only the nationalist language, but also the “folkloric-nostalgic” vocabulary and imagination. […] This vocabulary or imagination does to Diyarbakır what has been done to many other cities and villages in Turkey: above all, it “provincialises” it. [...] Everything becomes typical/touristified and the possibilities to be understood in itself (or at the mirror of something else/similar) shrink. Symbols come to prominence, but they become invisible. We get stuck in attitudes like “Our region is famous for the city-walls and the watermelons” but we don't think about writing a history of the watermelon and we don't attach importance to such a thing.[78]

In the critique of the nationalist approach, Atlı is on the multicultural line we drew from Margosyan to İnal (“Diyarbakır is a Turkish city as well as a Roman, Greek, Armenian, Assyrian, Arab, Kurdish, Refugees', Pigeons', Gipsies city”, 14), but when it comes to the overall approach for the interpretation of the city he detaches from previous authors and develops a critique of a folkloric approach that produces opaque symbols (Ibid., 67):

> As for the nostalgia for other cities, also in Diyarbakır the nostalgic narrative is quite typical and shows the same pattern of characteristics as its antecedents or similar: to a great extent it imitates the Istanbul nostalgia. […] The nostalgic expression, is able to fix a precise date of death of the elements it longs for, but it is not interested on the first time they appeared and it does not mention it. Things are pictured as “always being there” but gone at a certain date.[79]

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[78] “Diyarbakır şehrinin, söz konusu bağları ve ağları dikkate alan ama kendi özgül yanlarını da tespit etmeye yönelen bir kent tarihinin yazılabilmesi için yalnız milliyetçiliklerin değil, ‘folklorik-nostaljik’ dil ya da tahayyülün de aşılmasına ihtiyaç vardır. Bu dil ya da tahayyül, Türkiye’nin pek çok kent ve kasabasına yaptığını, Diyarbakır’a da yapar. Onu, öncelikle ‘yöreleştirir’. Her şey turistikleşir ve kendisi olarak (ve başkalarının/benzerlerinin aynasında da) anlaşılma imkanları daralır. Semboller öne çıkar ama görünmez olur; ‘Karpuzu ve surları ile ünlü yöremiz’e’, takılınır kalınır da mesela, karpuzun tarihini yazmak akla gelmez ya da bu gibi şeyler önemsenmez.”

[79] “Tüm kent nostaljileri gibi, Diyarbakır’a dair nostaljik anlatılar da oldukça tipiktir ve öncülleri ya da benzerleri ile aynı kalıp özellikleri gösteriri; büyük oranda da Istanbul nostaljisini taklit eder. Nostaljik söylem, nostaljisini yaptığı unsruların ölüm tarihini kesin bir milatla tanımlayabilmekte ama onların ilk ne zaman belirdiği ile ilgilenmekte, bunun hiç bahsi edilmemektedir. Bu söylemde, bu unsurlar hep varmış ama bir tarihte yitirilimiş gibi resmedilir.”

A telling example is the different reading of the Bağlar district given by Atlı, when compared with that of Şehymus Diken, previously analysed. Where Diken is taken by a melancholic feeling and is content with excavating in the name of the district to recall a past better than the present (thus highlighting the destructive aspect of the social transformations that occurred), Atlı goes forwards and looks at the creative sides of such transformations. The disappearance of vineyards (bağlar) is not a reason for nostalgia but it gives way to something new that should be understood in itself (Ibid., 93):

> In the 1960s and 1970s, while the vineyards and wine factories were decreasing one by one, a new and different sociological-political-spatial Bağlar was taking shape. One of the interesting elements of this “other Bağlar” is the architectural language, completely different from the rest of the city's language, of the “migrants’ houses”.[80]

With Atlı, we see reinstituted the image of a socially experimental district that will bring along the historic political developments of the city, that will see Mehdi Zana, or Yılmaz Odabaşı as protagonists. If, for Diken, Bağlar is the symbol of something lost and the very image of the troublesome present condition of the city, for Atlı it is the spatial and architectural evidence of a new chapter in the city’s history: “Bağlar was an insubordinate, proletarian, socially eventful, and ready to explode political city on the banks of the old city” (Ibid., 96).

4.8 Of loss, trauma and exile: conclusions

In a special issue of the Journal “Değirmen” dedicated entirely to Diyarbakır, Serdar Bülent Yılmaz published an article entitled “Kıyıya Vuran Ceset. Medeniyetten Maduniyete bir Şehir Ölümü ("The Corpse hitting the Shore: the death of a city from Civilization to Subalternity", Yılmaz 2013). The whole article sounds like an obituary to the city. After giving the picture of a glorious past, the author moves to sketch out a present of decline. Metaphorically, the city turns into its opposite, the desert (Yılmaz, p. 63):

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[80] “Bağ köşkleri ve üzüm bağları birer birer eksilirken, sosyolojik-siyasal-mekansal bir başka Bağlar şekillenmekteydi, 1960 ve 70’lerde. Bu ‘bir başka Bağlar’ın en enteresan unsurlarından biri de şehirdeki diğer mimari dillere, ev mimarilerine hiç benzemeyen ‘göçmen evleriydi’.”

> Remaining subject to the destructive and merciless violence of the modern nation-state system, the city lost its social texture, its economic structure, its urban specifics, its cultural quality, and started to dry up. [...] For this reason Diyarbakır at every step leaves a sour taste to the palate of your souls.

Yılmaz exposes all the wounds of the city, from the Armenian genocide to the crackdown on the first Kurdish Rebellions; from the migration waves of the 1960s to the political violence of the 1980s and the policies of assimilation implemented by the State. Because of all these events, Diyarbakır he concludes “is a city that experienced a rupture from its great past...and has lost contact with its magnificent roots” (Yılmaz, p. 78). This elegiac vocabulary seems to have become a standard for Diyarbakır-related literature. Traumas, wounds, conflicts, and loss inspire a lamenting and nostalgic attitude. For authors like Odabaşı, the trauma is experienced in the very relationship between the individual and the city. For others, the trauma is outside the self, in the social and spatial traumatic changes brought along by political choices. However, as we saw mainly in Diken, and also for other authors, nostalgia is actually a forward-pointing feeling and aims at future transformations. The description of the past is a demand for the future. Nonetheless, it limits the approach to a folkloric one; in this framework, the promotion of the local specifics concludes mainly in an invitation for tourists (see *ŞehrAmed*). But, in the last couple of decades, as the city starts to discover something alive under the ashes, or in other words becomes the centre of a new cultural-political narrative, new vocabularies might be produced (Atlı 2014). A resilient perspective might evaluate the traumas as a possibility of change and development. Urban space, rather than doomed to ruination or postcard crystallisation, might be seen in its dynamic nature and recognized as space-time. A stratigraphic sedimentation of different experiences to be unearthed and heard.

The key concept we can recognize present in many of the discussed authors is the concept of exile. We talk here of a literal exile for Mehdi Zana, Yılmaz Odabaşı, Mığırdıç Margosyan and Mehmed Uzun; and of a sort of temporal exile for writers like Şeyhmus Diken and Birsen İnal. If, for the first group of authors, the city is physically far and the condition of exile is geographic in nature, for the second group of authors who are still living in the city, we might talk of an exile in time: a condition of distance from the “real” identity of the city. The city that nurtures a feeling of belonging seems to be placed in the past, before the occurrence of some political and social trauma. The memoir is the literary medium to express and overtake this nostalgic condition, creating a connection with the real city. In general, in many of these memoirs Diyarbakır seems to be represented as a place that suggests placelessness in the present.

5. Drawing the City ‘lines’. Emotional and political discourse in poetry

In this chapter, I focus on analysis of poetic representations of Diyarbakır. I intend to look at the ways in which the lyrical form shapes, and voices affect, emotions towards the city. I regard poetry as a tool to shape, spread and legitimize a sort of emotional geography of Diyarbakır. The poem voices the poet’s emotion in first place, but its collectivization through the process of private or public readings transfers the emotion to the readers. Therefore, when poetry summons up geographical features it often suggests a battery of shared affects related to them: belonging, exile, love, dissatisfaction, ambivalence, ambition, possession, exaltation, complaint etc. Sentiments that are collectivized through the poetic enunciation. Although the reception of such poems it is not the focus of this chapter, for a highly-politicized city such as Diyarbakır, the literary and poetic representations are not solely personal expressions of the author, but often refer to a broader and shared emotional imaginary. In a place whose space is contested and continuously renegotiated in its political and cultural definition, I believe that poetry, specifically, might constitute a key instrument for redrawing imaginatively established “cartographies” of affects and charge the space with new emotional, symbolical and relational values. In other words, the lyrical seems to open the way for cultural representations different from the established.

The analysis of two different corpuses of poetry in this chapter, one in the Turkish language and the other in the Kurdish language, shows how the city might be positioned within one political and cultural discourse or another. I sketch out a process of poetic re-symbolization in the making, by looking at how Kurdish language poetry counters established geographical (hence, political) visions of the city, while putting forward an alternative cartographic framing. Moreover, in this poetic overview of Diyarbakır I aim at highlighting the key themes, moods and patterns of emotions concerning this city as they are reproduced through the lyrical medium. Nonetheless, the cleavage between the corpus in the Turkish language and the one in the Kurdish language is not closed to trespass; as it will be clear from the examples provided below, many themes are common to both corpuses, and some authors who dedicated a huge part of their poetic endeavour to Diyarbakır straddle the two corpuses.

I set out to analyse in this chapter the role played by poetry concerning a city like Diyarbakır that, at least since the 1970s, underwent a process of “decolonization” and re-symbolization by Kurdist actors (Gambetti 2010; Güvenç 2011). How do the political spatial process and the development of literature interact? How does the poetic discourse concerning the city reflect the new political discourse and how does it contribute to creating and fostering a sense of belonging, ownership and affiliation? Above all, how does poetry contribute to configuring geographical frameworks, voicing specific emotions? In other words, how does poetry intervene to collocate Diyarbakır in a spatial-temporal-cultural periphery or, on the other hand, how does it intervene in positioning the city at the centre of a certain emotionally and culturally imagined community?

To answer such questions, I have brought together a large and heterogeneous corpus of poetry. The number of poems concerning Diyarbakır in contemporary poetry, written in Turkish and especially in the Kurdish language, is immense. My selection is based not merely on criteria of aesthetic and poetic quality but is as wide as possible, in order to give a sense of the relevance of the broader emotional languages or moods concerning the city: recurring themes, or similar rhetorical patterns, voice collective and shared affections for the city. For example, the personification (often with feminine attributes) of the city is a representative pattern that recurs in many poems in both corpuses, as well as the multifaceted nostalgic lens through which many authors look at Diyarbakır. Firmly connected to that kind of gaze is the complaint about the multicultural past of the city, whilst the latter is in many ways widely exploited as a national symbol, both by authors writing in the Turkish language and – perhaps more significantly – by authors writing in the Kurdish language.

The language variety is also a challenge to the coherence of this chapter. Indeed, one might find poems about Diyarbakir in several languages as diverse as Turkish, Kurdish (Kurmanji and Sorani), Armenian, Aramaic, Arabic, Persian and other international languages. Nonetheless, I remain consistent here to limit myself to the Turkish and Kurdish languages, since they constitute the bigger corpuses, and they allow us to see the articulation of the political and cultural discourse happening around the city in the last decades within the Turkish State and Kurdish national ‘imagined community’. The city has a high symbolic value also for Armenians and Assyrians, who were violently severed from the place during World War I. However, for the scope of this chapter I confine myself to the study of the Turkish language and Kurdish language poetry, as they are more relevant in size as well as in their connection with the conflicting political discourse regarding the city and the Kurdish regions.

It must be made clear that the language division that structures this chapter does not correspond to a clear-cut distinction in the emotional approach towards Diyarbakır. As has been discussed in the introduction the definition of Kurdish and Turkish literary fields is a delicate and nuanced issue. Many authors who might be considered Kurdish (for origins, as well as political and cultural horizons), write or wrote their oeuvres in the Turkish language for different reasons. Therefore, many themes emerging in this chapter concerning Diyarbakır criss-cross the language divide, which after all is only a handy practical distribution of the material analysed here. Having said that, I will try to highlight how, generally speaking, the corpus of poetry in the Kurdish language frames the city in a distinctive geographical map that presumes and implies a distinct political and emotional orientation, a phenomenon that is relatively less present in poetry written in Turkish, especially in the last decades.

In fact, what emerges from the overview of the two corpuses of poetry considered here, is the tendency to position Diyarbakır in a completely distinct geographical and cultural frame according to the author’s imaginary and political affiliation. In this context, it seems plausible that the difference in language favours a different imaginary that structures the geography of the city. Along with the language, the imaginary landscape changes and Diyarbakır is not, for example, mapped within a Turkish national horizon, but within an alternative and oppositional map that, although unrecognized in the reality of official maps, finds its realization in the imaginative landscape of the Kurdish poet and reader. The geographical and territorial connections made by poets are different. The city is often seen, by several authors writing in Kurdish, as occupied by the Turks, who are perceived as a foreign colonial force. In many Kurdish poems Diyarbakır turns into Amed, namely it is constructed as the Kurdish castle and capital urban centre of the resistance against the Turkish State (C. Scalbert-Yücel 2014, 2013). Where for many of the authors Diyarbakır often figures in a dialectical discourse between the poet and the city, pinned around effects of loss, nostalgia, and melancholy, in poetry written in Kurdish more often the city becomes a crucial symbol of a larger community, a shared common good, a political vision. Moreover, if in the framework of the Turkish cultural and literary imagination Diyarbakır is a peripheral city, far from the thriving, modern cultural centres of the West, and engulfed in a region in decay, in the framework of Kurdish imagination Diyarbekir/Amed is at the very centre. It is a legitimate candidate for the position of cultural capital of a nation; or, at least, the emblematic city of the biggest of the four parts of a divided country, Kurdistan.

In *Türk Şiirinde Taşra*, Selim Temo debates and analyses the concept of “taşra” (translatable with “periphery”, “province”, and “country” or in general “whatever is outside the ‘centre’”) as it develops in Turkish poetry in 1859-1959 (Temo 2011). In his discussion, Temo makes use of the concept of political-literary centre and reflects on the way its aesthetics shape and inform the province. The author acknowledges the deep bond between urban centre, political power and literary development when he states, “All kind of political authorities take place in the centre. This is also true for “poetic” authorities. […] In this respect, the province is defined by the centre. This definition is often repeated by the point of view of the province looking at the centre. Literate people gather in the centre, or their face is turned to the centre” (Ibid. 10). And he continues (Ibid. 18):

> Going to the centre or seeing oneself accepted by the centre has been one of the main aims of poets. If in the epoch of “divan” poetry, this situation had to do with the patronage of the time, similarly in modern times it has to do with dimensions of ‘being known’ or ‘being seen’.

In Turkish poetry, certainly Diyarbakir might be considered part of the “taşra”, for it is outside the centre in many respects: geographical, cultural, ethnic and linguistic. Therefore, the poetic discourse concerning it is shaped and informed in dialogue within the broader Turkish literary and cultural discourse. Nevertheless, when we shift the focus to Kurdish literature, Diyarbakır is not peripheral in any way, but aspires to the position of “centre”: an alternative and counter-hegemonic centre if seen in relation to the Turkish political and literary discourse. This discursive shift happens in conjunction with political and societal developments occurring in the city. The need for a new symbolizatıon of the urban space of Diyarbakır (C. Scalbert-Yücel 2009; Gambetti 2010; Güvenç 2011; Gambetti 2005) finds its equivalent in the space of the abstract city, inhabited through imaginative acts, such as that of poetical imagination.

For many poets hailing from Diyarbakır and solidly integrated by political choice, career or other reasons in the Turkish Republic, the city has chiefly the features of a peripheral, yearned-for, deplorable and lost “hometown”. Generally, the poet has left the city to move towards the political, economic and administrative –Turkish- “centre”. The hometown is lost in the mist of childhood; it is assaulted by ruination, decay and carelessness. The emotions the city voices belong to the field of melancholy and nostalgia for the past, of which the urban environment is a physical symbol, a concrete dress for an intangible feeling.

Nonetheless, especially in the work of a poet like Ahmed Arif, the geographical and economic alterity of Diyarbakir (as well as the South-East) begins to be not only a reason of complaint and disillusionment, but also a source of pride, struggle, political mobilisation. This goes in concurrence with the political climate of the 1960s and 1970s and mobilisation processes such as the Eastern Meetings. Even so, the discourse, both on the political and cultural level, necessarily remains framed within the boundaries of Turkey and in a deep relation with the overbearing centre. For this reason, the city is bordered within geographical lines drawn according to the ‘central’ discourse; Diyarbakir is seen in relation to other Turkish cities or, for instance, is seen as the “Door of the East” (see infra Bejan Matur). The geographical concept of East appears to presume in advance a central pin according to which one can measure West and East, North and South; centre and periphery (Tejel Gorgas 2009). With the words of Üngör (2012, 122):

> One aspect of the 1923 establishment of the Turkish Republic was the naturalization of the 'geo-body' of the Turkish nation state: the rectangular shape of the state relocated Diyarbakir province, formerly a centre of economic, political and cultural activity, to a nation state's periphery.

The emotional coordinates change significantly when we move to look at the corpus of Kurdish poetry. Although voicing of complaint for the condition of the urban-scape, and feelings of nostalgia, are not absent, the ascent of Diyarbakır (called Amed or Diyarbekir), to the level of "heart" of a new and alternative geographical and imaginative territory, strikes the attention. The city is no longer peripheral or provincial; rather it is central and foundational, although sadly occupied, in the hands of disdainful strangers. The imaginative lines drawn to put the city in connection with other places, so as to create a "meaningful" geography, are consistently different from the previous poets. Amed is not seen so much in relation to Ankara or Istanbul, but rather with the Kurdish cities of Kamishli (Syria), Mahabad (Iran) and Sulaymaniyah (Iraq). It no longer lies at the "east" of anything, but has somehow acquired a pivotal position.

However, it must be said that the distinction is not clear-cut along the lines of the language divide. Authors who write in Turkish sometimes do so from an oppositional stance. In the years during which writing in Kurdish was not permitted in Turkey the "blurred boundaries" distinguishing Kurdish and Turkish literary fields must be borne in mind (C. S. Scalbert-Yücel 2011; C. Scalbert-Yücel 2014). Authors like Ahmed Arif and Yilmaz Odabaşı, who are ethnically Kurds, are ideologically nearer to the Kurdish political field despite the fact they are writing in Turkish; the same goes for Şeyhmus Diken or Bejan Matur. However, in order to make the distinction clearer in this chapter, Turkish language and Kurdish language poetry are examined in two separate sections. Therefore, the language divide does not necessarily presume a political and ideological divide. The work of several authors straddles the two literary fields and despite being written in the Turkish language it is pronounced by a Kurdish voice, so to speak. However, the language entails a difference where the notion of readership is called into question. Writing in Turkish for a Kurdish author means that his or her words can be read and understood by readers belonging not just to their national community but also to their perceived political enemy; this implies also notions of fear and self-censorship. Whereas those authors who write only in the Kurdish language seem more comfortable in addressing only their national and linguistic community, with a shared imaginary. Language seems to create a distinction of what is “speakable” about Diyarbakır and what is not; the language seems to activate a certain horizon of expectations on the images of the city, given also the different potential audience it implies.

This chapter does not aim to be an exhaustive or comprehensive poetry anthology about the city of Diyarbakır, but rather an overview of a considerable number of poetic representations that enable us to identify a variety of political and cultural discourses, as well as emotional attachments, concerning such a contested place.

5.1. “The crown of the East”

Diyarbakir is one of the cities to which is dedicated a *Şehrengiz*, which is a particular poetic genre of the Ottoman tradition that compliments the beauties and qualities of cities. It dates back to 1572 and relates to the name of *Şehr-engiz-i Amid* written by a poet called Halife (Gülhan 2012); that work was published during the city’s golden age, few years before Evliya Çelebi’s visit (Evliya Çelebi 1988).

Nonetheless, without going back to such an old tradition, we can argue that in the historiography of modern Turkish literature, Diyarbakir is regarded as a city eminently important, mainly as the birthplace of several revered writers and intellectuals. In a previous chapter, I have discussed the importance of Ziya Gökalp in Turkish nationalist ideology. However, he is not the only important Turkish intellectual born in the city: Süleyman Nazif (1870-1927), Ali Faik Ozansoy (1876-1950), Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı (1910-1956), Ahmed Arif (1927-1991), Sezai Karakoç (1933), are also names of prominence in Turkish language poetry, taught and studied in Turkish school syllabi. Interestingly, their literary careers developed mainly elsewhere and few of them have written extensively about their birthplace. However, their affiliation to the city shapes today a spatial discourse of urban design. In an article about Diyarbakir-born intellectuals published in the journal *Değirmen,* in a special issue about the city, Mehmet Ali Çınarlı states that "establishing places in memory of certain intellectuals should be a job of great concern" (Çınarlı 2013, 213). Harmonizing the urban-scape according to a poetic "Olympus", in a city that hosts a clash between two cultures, brings about the question of the selection of the "canon". Which canon, whose canon? In the ambitious collective volume *Diyarbakır: Müze Şehir* ("Diyarbakir the city museum", Beysanoğlu, Koz, e İşli 1999) that aims at giving a comprehensive cultural and historical introduction to the city from a perspectıve that tends to downplay, if not erase, the Kurdish element ın the city, there is a section of articles dedicated to the literature of the city: it focuses only on Ziya Gökalp, Süleyman Nazif, Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı, Ahmed Arif and Sezai Karakoç, all of them obviously writing in Turkish.

This poetic canon has a spatial reflection in the very space of the city. As an example, we might just think here of central Ziya Gökalp Street. It is a street connecting the entrance of the central Great Mosque with the northern section of the walls. In that street, two museums, opened by the Province Governorate, stand side-by-side exposing oscillating Turkish flags: they are the Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı Museum (1973) and Ahmed Arif Museum (2011). In one single street, the city memorialises three authors hailing from the city whose production is in Turkish. Süleyman Nazif Street is just few metres away. Although Nazif, Gökalp and Tarancı are key intellectual figures of Turkish culture, for Arif the case is different, since he possessed a leftist oppositional personality, sympathetic, as I will try to show, to the Kurdish discourse. His poetry proved to be an inspiration for Kurdish poets and intellectuals. Even so, since he wrote his poetry in Turkish he can be absorbed (perhaps partially neutralized) within the Turkish literary canon. As discussed in the Introduction, the urban space also reproduces a literary discourse. In Ziya Gökalp Street, for instance, literature, language and urban space are connected along a Turkish lineage whilst the possibility of giving names hailing from the Kurdish literary canon is denied. In response, Kurdish contemporary poetry (and Kurdist contemporary municipal administration) elaborates an alternative discourse in which Diyarbakır is framed within a different cultural, political and emotional map.

In a previous chapter, I have discussed the poems of Ziya Gökalp published in his edited journal *Küçük Mecuma*, in which he describes Diyarbakir as integral part of the Turkish Nation, although surrounded by an uncivilised Kurdish rural world. In the early twenties, when Gökalp published that journal, Diyarbakır is undergoing a process of broad transformation, both in terms of demographic engineering and cultural policies (Üngör 2012; Çağlayan 2014). Gökalp, through his academic endeavour presents a rational and 'scientific' demonstration of the Turkishness of Diyarbakir, whilst his poetry proposes an emotional osmosis of the city into the Turkish imagined nation. For Gökalp, Diyarbakir was almost by definition an integral part of the map of the nation state that he envisaged, strictly based on and ruled by an encompassing Turkish culture. However, as will become progressively evident in this chapter, the poetic image of Diyarbakir seems to be more kaleidoscopic; its national and geographical acceptance is not as self-evident as Gökalp maintained. A number of the poets analysed in this chapter produced poetry in Turkish language in which the city figures firmly framed in a cultural and geographical discourse inherent to Turkey. Nonetheless, many authors, also writing in Turkish, began to question such an image of the city, which allowed the emergence of minority cultures and hidden memories; others directly thwarted the official image of Diyarbakir and start claiming its "otherness". Finally, when switching to the corpus of Kurdish language poetry, we will read a completely different political, cultural and geographical discourse about Diyarbakir.

Munis Faik Ozansoy (1911-1975), the Turkish bureaucrat son of the poet and governor Ali Faik Ozansoy and nephew of Süleyman Nazif, was an exponent of a Diyarbakir family consistently devoted to poetry (and indeed the surname Ozansoy, chosen in consequence of the "Surname Law", promulgated in 1934, means "Race of the Poet"). Munis Faik Ozansoy worked for most of his life in the Turkish State bureaucracy, also as a secretary of the Presidency Office, and we might infer that his geographic imaginative horizon overlapped for the most part with the state official discourse. In his collection "Disappearing World" (Kaybolan Dünya, 1972), there is a poem entitled "Diyarbakır".

Hey city that cultivates poets
I loved you for years without seeing you
There is your soil in all my body
In you is buried my far ancestor
You crown of the East, my beautiful homeland
I lived a life imagining you,
I stood watching you in my dreams
Oh Tigris adorned by the Milky Way (Mercan 2002, 274).[81]

Here the city is characterized for its literary and cultivated lineage. It is intensely tied to the emotional and imaginative world of the poet: the interpenetration between the soil, the body and the remains of the ancestors creates a strong conceptual bond. The city is romanticized and idealized in consequence of the distance: the Tigris also being a culturally fascinating element for the erudite associations it suggests. Quite interestingly, the city is defined as "the crown of the East", a definition that implies a clear set of geographical, cultural and moral structures. Whilst being an item of fascination, Diyarbakır is positioned on the East, namely the East of Turkey's geography. The word East (Doğu), in Turkish takes on peculiar associations. As Ayşe Öncü has put it:

> Travelling in the direction of "the East" means moving backwards in time, towards a distant past fraught with ethnic cleansing and sectarian violence, which have refused to go away in the present. Its symbolic geography marks the "outside" of the nation. Yet this East is such an "indelible part of the nation's body" (to translate directly from Turkish) that it must be defended at any cost against threats to tear it away from the whole […] (Öncü 2011, 49).

Therefore, while we see the poet "positioning" the city in a precise emotional location – corresponding to his ancestry and his origins – he also refers to some sorts of geographical-cultural coordinates. Although, Ozansoy published this poem in 1972, such geographical framing is in still use, as will be clear in the analysis of Bejan Matur's poetry.

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[81] Ey ozanlar yetiştiren belde / Seni yıllarca görmeden sevdim / Toprağın var bütün vücudumda / Sende yatmakta en uzak ceddim / Doğunun tacı ey güzel yurdum / Yaşadım bir ömür hayalinle / Seni düşlerde seyredip durdum / Kehkeşanlarla süslenen Dicle.

To see another example of a similar territorial, cultural and political mapping of Diyarbakır one can look at a more recent poem by Mehmet Mercan, 'Everywhere is Diyarbakır" (Her Yer Diyarbakır, 2000), who frames the city clearly in relation with other Turkish cities, drawing both in latitude and longitude the real-and-imagined Turkish borders. This author also expresses a profound attachment for the city, which is included within both an emotional/individual and territorial/collective map:

> You are everywhere, you are every place
> From Edirne to Ardahan
> From Anamur to Sinop
> My longing goes for you,
> My Diyarbakır (Mercan 2002, 292) [82]

I consider it interesting to include a comparison with a list of cities such as those produced by poets writing in Kurdish (see infra), who clearly claim a linkage of Diyarbakır with the other parts of Kurdistan lying outside the Turkish borders. Here the cities of Edirne, Ardahan, Anamur and Sinop trace the breadth and height of the Turkish national territory, from West to East and from North to South: the Turkish national "geo-body". The emotional bond to the city makes it ubiquitous, pervading the whole Turkish territory, the one for which the author nurtures a reciprocity. That is the geographical network and the imaginary landscape in which Diyarbakır is inscribed, while also bound by a deep emotional and personal connection.

Mehmet Mercan published a book in 2002 entitled *Diyarbakır Türküsü* (Diyarbakir's song), in which he delves into the culture of the city with the aim of "explaining Diyarbakir's civilisation" and of metaphorically "dissolving the dark clouds" gathered over the city's sky. The author moves from the assumption that "Diyarbakir is impoverished". In a section of the book entitled "Longing for the homeland" (Sıla Hasreti) he collects 28 poems dedicated to the city, all written in Turkish, mainly by authors who had spent time in the city and took part as "literature fighters" in the activities at the local Peoples' House (Mercan, 215 see also Lamprou 2015; Öztürkmen 1994; Aslan 2007). Hereafter, I analyse some of these poems gathered in an anthology of Turkish poems about Diyarbakır, edited by Mercan.

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[82] "Her yerde sen varsın, Sen her yerdesin, / Edirne'den, Ardahan'a / Anamur'dan Sinop'a / Hasretim sana, / Diyarbakır'ım." Edirne is a city at the North-Western corner of Turkey, whilst Ardahan is at the North-Eastern corner. Anamur is a town at the centre of the Southern Turkish Mediterranean coast, whereas Sinop is a city at the centre of the northern Black Sea coast.

Quite explicit in tying Diyarbakır to the Turkish motherland is a 1979 poem by Dr. Bedri Noyan, a versatile Turkish Alevi intellectual. Through the connection between the walls and the surrounding environment and soil (a true love relationship) the poet "shows" and claims the Turkishness of the city:

> Finally, the walls have embraced again the walls,
> As a couplet written to the high history of the Turk,
> The walls have shaken hands as if they're dancing,
> Narratives of centuries like a bolero on its shoulders.
>
> During history has kneeled down to the land
> Has stood with sorrow against thousands assaults
> These dungeons that bravely love the Turkish homeland
> I saw that, they are not made of black stone, but bright light (Mercan 2002, 285) [83]

The walls here are presented as a defence of the Turkish territory and civilisation against all sorts of attacks. The love bond between the dungeons and the Turkish "homeland" conjecture such a relationship as unquestioned, implicitly silencing the protracted restlessness of the region.

Şevket Beysanoğlu (1920-2003) was an author who worked extensively on the history, the folklore and the general culture of the city of Diyarbakır from a political and cultural perspective close to the official nationalist and Kemalist doctrine of the Turkish Republic. His first publication issued through the local People House, the state organ committed to spreading Kemalist values of Turkish Nationalism in the city and in researching local culture, highlights the Turkish element and downplays “others” (Üngör 2012; Çağlayan 2014). As a requirement of his career as a judge, Beysanoğlu left his native Diyarbakır, working in various other cities and dying eventually in Ankara. In a poem published in 1938 entitled “Nostalgia” (Hasret), he voices a longing for the city similar to Ozansoy and Mercan. Here is the complaint of the intellectual or professional worker who had to leave the city to go and work in the –economic, political, cultural- “centre”; Diyarbakir remains behind, and inside, dressed up in nostalgia:

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[83] Surlar yine surlarla sarılmışta nihayet, / Türk'ün yüce tarihine olmuş birer ayet, / Vermiş el ele üç ayak oynar gibi surlar, / Cepken gibi sırtında asırlarca rivayet. // Tarih boyu topraklara diz vurmuş oturmuş, / Bin bir akının saldırısı kahrıyla durmuş, / Türk yurdunu arslanca seven yar gibi burçlar / Gördüm ki, siyah taşla değil, gün gibi nurmuş.

> The nostalgia that reeks from my eyes in exile
> It liquefies as a candle, Oh Diyar,
> Even if I travel the entire world
> I cannot find a place nearer to myself than you
> If I’d blossom like a rose, I’d soon wither
> Without you everything is dark, my work useless
> Hey my Diyar as pretty as heaven
> Even if I’d be lucky, without you what for? (Mercan 2002, 276)[84]

İzzettin Yüzçelik, also talks about the sorrow of separation from the city, while introducing the theme of disappointment with the present condition of the city in comparison to “what once was”. As time passes, the city becomes a correlative of one’s own natural process of aging and decay as shown by this passage of a poem written in Adana in 1980:

> You are not as when I left you
> You are in dark, your voice is broken
> They have burned your soul
> They have stolen you, and I burn.
> Far away from you

---

[84] Gurbette gözümde tüten hasretin / Eritir mum gibi beni ey Diyar, / Dolaşsam gezsem de bütün cihanı, / Bulamam kendime yakın sen kadar / Gül gibi açsam da çabuk solarım / Sensiz her şey kara, her işim yarım / Ey, bence Cennet güzel Diyarım / Bahtiyar olsam da sensiz, ne çıkar.

My hair turn white
And I cry at our separation (Mercan 2002, 281)[85]

The personification of the city, here as in other examples, strengthens the emotional bond with the poet and serves the enunciation of Diyarbakır's "good-old times" which seem to have become a widespread feature of those poets committed to the contemplation of their "peripheral" home-town and to the introduction of the latter to the Turkish public and readership. Kadri Göral's poem "Ben-u-Sen", from his collection "Küçe Kapısı", that seems to be little more than a poetic advertising of the city to the (Turkish) national audience – similarly to what we have seen in the previous chapter for İnal and Diken -, opens with the question "Do you know the old-Diyarbakır status?" and goes on exalting the "Paradisiac" qualities of the city, calling for people to experience them (Göral 1998).[86] The use of an imagined bright past, is also, and clearly, a way to condemn the current state. Celebrating the lost golden age of the city implicitly calls for actions that must be undertaken in the now and the metaphor of the dark clouds coalescing over the city becomes common. For example, Necip Başak Köprülü in "My City" (Şehrim) published in the Journal "Öteki-Siz" in 2001, activating such a metaphor along with other "gloomy" images choses a direct way of overt reproaches and reprimand towards the city (Başak Köprülü 2001):

Miserable city
Dirtier than dumping ground
Yours are the widow evenings
That veils themselves in dark clouds
While slowly the sun perishes
[…]
Look, and feel ashamed for the efforts paid for you
A moral plague has encircled the ancestors' ruins
Your black walls

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[85] Bıraktığım gibi değilsin,/ Karanlıktasın, sesin kısılmış,/ Ruhunu yakmışlar,/ Seni çalmışlar, yanarım. / Senden uzaklarda,/ Ak düşmüş saçlarıma, / Hicranıma ağlarım..."
[86] Sen, Diyarbakır'ın eski halını bilir misin?

Your black bridges
Your black luck
Your black stones,
Do you think they've taken
Their colour from your eyes' make-up?
Hey lonely everyone's lover,
Buried in the mist of lust
Land of drunkards
City messed up in
Blood, lie and fraud.
Your hollow laments
Your fake smiles,
Will it come the end of your blasphemous mornings?[87]

It is not clear whom or what is held accountable for such a state of decadence, but the complaint is laid on the whole "personified" city, as though it could be responsible itself. What is interesting from my perspective is the progressive establishing of the articulation of a "gloomy" present against the image of a bright past, a temporal-moral comparison. This seems to be a theme that criss-crosses the linguistic divide as well as the political orientation of the author. Nostalgia, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is an emotional key that paves the way for the expression of political messages, using, so to speak, the past against the present. In this framework, the city as a space seems to crystallize moral conditions, due to the political situation left in the background. Diyarbakir appears in its character of "present Babylon" and "lost Eden".

Ihsan Fikret Biçici is a poet who wrote extensively about Diyarbakır, struggling to make the city known in Turkey and challenging the negative reputation it had. He voices the complaint for the loss of ethnic variety in the city and talks of a past in which ethno-cultural variety used to enrich the urban scene. As a particular aspect of what Scalbert-Yücel calls the “dispossession of the living environment” (C. Scalbert-Yücel 2010) one might perhaps talk of the feeling of “dispossession of the neighbourhood”, perceived by all those Diyarbakır citizens who experienced the tragic loss of the Christian population as a consequence of the 1915 events and afterwards, up until the 1960s. The physical environment (the street, the square, etc.) has remained the same, but the people enlivening it have disappeared leaving behind a sort of ghost dressed in nostalgia hovering on the streets. The material and immaterial memory of the disappeared populace is abandoned to ruination, and what is left to the present is the absence of more commingled social relations, as it emerges from the poem *O zaman böyle miydi* (Was it like that then?) published in 1998:

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[87] "Bedbaht şehir/ çöplüklerden de kirlidir/ güneşi yavaş yavaş can veren/ ve kara bulutlarla örtünen, / dul akşamların senin […] gör de utan sana harcanan emekleri /ahlak vebası sarmış atalarından kalan harabeleri /kara surlarının, /kara köprülerinin /ve kara bahtın gibi /kara taşlarının, /renklerini gözlerinin /sürmesinden mi aldılar sanırsın? /ey herkesin kimsesiz yâri / şehvet buğusuna gömülen /sarhoşlar diyarı. / kanla / yalanla / hileye bulaşık şehir. / kedersiz matemlerinin, / sahte gülüşlerinin, / ve duasız sabahlarının sonu gelmeyecek mi?"

> We hung the skies with an Armenian cloud,
> Then how did it work?
> After an Assyrian rain, the floods took me away.
> In narrow alleyways with a Chaldean light
> Puzzling shadows reverberating on the curtains,
> While a Jewish scent permeated the streets
> Were Diyarbakir’s houses like that once upon? (Mercan 2002, 275)[88]

The bemoaning of the loss of the multicultural past often goes hand-in-hand with the denunciation of the carelessness and negligence to which the city is left prey. Here the nostalgic attitude is quite distinct from that of the poems quoted earlier. The past is mobilized as a symbol of peaceful and multicultural co-habitation of the space, abruptly interrupted. The nostalgic repertoire can be activated both from a nationalist perspective and from its opposite. In this poem, time and oblivion, and the violence of forced-migration, have led the city from a past of glory and harmony among various elements, to a present state of decay and conflict, as expressed in the poem *Vay Limin* published in 1997:

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[88] Ermeni bir bulutla kaplamıştık gökleri, / sonra nasıl oldu da, / Süryani bir yağmurla seller götürdü beni. / Keldani bir ışıktı daracık sokaklarda, / perdelere yansıyan acaip gölgeleri, / bir Yahudi kokusu sinmişken gecelere / o zaman böyle miydi Diyarbekir evleri.

Vay Limin
This city of Amid.
This great Diyarbekir
How many adventures has it gone through?
Far back in time, as well as in ancient and recent history
[…]
Now…
Is like looking for old lovers
Remembering you in old pictures,
They have turned Ben-u-Sen in a forest of shanties
The mosque covered in carelessness
Spiders have wrapped up the church
Broken the house of my heart
Vay limin (Biçici 1997).[89]

Here we have a different longing for the city, if compared with the personal longing of the intellectual who left the city for his career at a young age; here what is longed for, rather than the cradle of childhood, is a common and shared public space, a cultural idea. In the same poem, after a list of the different ethnicities who once lived in Diyarbakır (Kurdish, Turkmen, Assyrian, Armenian, Jew, Zaza), Biçici praises how the city used to be a "peerless mosaic", whilst to define his personal physical relationship with the present conflicting situation of the city he uses a powerful metaphor: "my hands into a bloody-soaked handkerchief".[90] A similar emotional attitude towards the place, coupled with the complaint of loss, is shown by Yılmaz Çakın in "Yitik kent" (Lost city): "We remained foreigner to these lands / Even beyond foreignness, we lost each other. / I search for myself / I search for my homeland" (Mercan 2002, 286)[91] Or in Bülent Sönmez who speaks of “birds flying away from the last drying trees / while nostalgia collapsed in every corner of the city” (Sönmez 2013).[92]

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[89] Vay Limin, Bu şehr-i Amid / Bu koca Diyarbekir ki / Nice sergüjestler görmüştür / Uzak tarihte, eski tarihte, yeni tarihte, […] / Eski sevgilileri arar gibi / Eski resimlerde yad edip seni, / Bir gecekondu ormanına çevirdiler Ben-ü Sen'i. / Camiini cehalet kaplamıştır /Örümcekler sarmıştır kiliseni, / Yıkılmış direği can evimin, / Vay, limin''

[90] Eşi menendi görülmemiş bir mozaik. / Şimdi, Bir kanlı mendil gibi ortasında ellerimin.

[91] "Yabancı kaldık bu topraklara, / yabancılardan öte / Yitirdik birbirimizi. / Kendimi arıyorum, / Memleketimi arıyorum''

The city is seen as part of “taşra” by most of these authors, who recognize Turkey as the centre; their attitude is pretty much that of introducing a peripheral place like Diyarbakır to people who do not know it, or that of complaining about loss, be it of the childhood space-time or of a cultural idea. In these poets’ views the city is marginal in geographical, moral and temporal terms, in respect to the centre. Nonetheless, it is central in their personal emotional geography, although shrouded by distance, longing, nostalgia or complaint for its unrelenting decadence. The theme of decadence and nostalgia is not necessarily related to the issue of centre-periphery; however, whilst it seems to locate the city at the centre of the emotional sphere, it fails to understand the city as a positive symbol of pride or as a key element of a large national or cultural community.

Another poet who gives space in his work to Diyarbakır and the region in general is Sezai Karakoç (1933). He was born in Ergani, a town a few kilometres north of Diyarbakir, and spent much of his adult life between Ankara and Istanbul. Despite this fact, the city celebrates the poet with the name of a boulevard and a school. In his poetry, his birthplace, Diyarbakir, the ‘South-Eastern’ region as well as the Tigris River, are prominent (Yaşar 2012; Toprak 2013). They are important both as elements of his childhood memories, which take a relevant place in his writing, and as symbols working in a network of meanings that shape his vision of the world. For Karakoç, Diyarbakir is notable for its historic and religious role, although pitied for its present conditions of poverty and destitution. Similar to Ahmed Arif (see infra), Karakoç suffers for the economic and social conditions of his birthplace, but differently from his fellow poet, he does not turn those arguments into inspiration for struggle (Yaşar 2012, 2616). His religious vision of the world implies a consequent civilizational geography in which Istanbul is at the very centre, although Diyarbakir, along with other key cities of the Muslim world like Bursa, Konya and Baghdad, occupies a very important place. The city acquires a mystic and metaphysical status as in the poem *Gül Muştusu* (The rose announcement) published in 1969:

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[92] ‘’kuruyan son ağaçtan uçardı kuşlar / hüzün çökerken dört bir yanına kentin’’.

> A city between the Tigris and the Euphrates
> Where the Quran is read on silk divans
> Full of roses at open windows
> Burnt at the white foam of sun
> A kingdom of fairies (Karakoç 1969)[93]

Karakoç, too, frames Diyarbakır with geographical coordinates, "East" or "South", that assume a centre elsewhere – in this case Istanbul, the capital of the Muslim nation. Nonetheless, for its location in upper Mesopotamia on the banks of the Tigris River, the city owns a sort of "moral" authority. In line with Gökalp's definitions, the poet sees in Diyarbakir "a place intact and authentic" (Yaşar 2012, 2617), untouched by the negative aspects of modernization, and that compensates for "the lack of material wealth with spiritual wealth". The Tigris, defined as "Turkey's head", is the element that connects, purifies and nurtures the Islamic lands, the land of the prophets, connecting cities such as Diyarbakır and Baghdad. In his work known as Islam *Diriliş* (Islam Resurrection), he summons the city – often spelled with its official Turkish name - in a list of places along an imaginative Muslim international geography: "Hey Tigris, hey Baghdad, hey Damascus, hey Euphrates, hey Istanbul, hey Diyarbakır, hey Nile, hey Egypt, hey city of the enlightenment Medina…" (Toprak 2013, 155). Again, towards the end of the poem: "Oh help of the prophet, reach Mecca, Medina and Damascus, reach Jerusalem, Baghdad and Istanbul, Samarkand, Tashkent and Diyarbakır". Once more, geography allows us to see the coordinates and the border of an imaginative landscape with cultural, linguistic and political repercussions. Karakoç was also the founder of an overtly religious political party named "Party of the Resurrection" (Diriliş Partisi), convinced of the necessity for a united country and state for the Muslim nation; his poetry can be seen as the theoretical and imaginative base of this political and religious idea, and Diyarbakır has an eminent “spiritual” positioning in Karakoç’s imaginary network of “meaningful” cities. In other words, for this author, the city is not a peripheral backwater, as it looked to some Turkish nationalist poets, but in his ecumenical Islamic vision, it is a key spiritual centre.

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[93] "Dicleyle Fırat arasında / İpekten sedirlerinde Kur'an okunan / Açık pencerelerinden gül dolan / Güneşin beyaz köpüklerinde yanmış /Bir şehir bir eski kanatlar ülkesi."

5.2 “Castle without a voice”. Ahmed Arif

With Ahmed Arif, a leftist militant poet, we see the articulation of an alternative identity and an alternative geographical definition for Diyarbakır. Although his writing is in the Turkish language, he is considered by some as a Kurdish writer: Bali and Uzun include him in their Anthologies of Kurdish literature (C. S. Scalbert-Yücel 2011). Arif is recognized as one of the most important socialist poets in Turkey (Gülendam 2010, 249), who moved in the wake of Nazım Hikmet, certainly the most influential communist Turkish poet in the twentieth century. His influence spreads both to the the Kurdish readership as well as reaching many committed leftist Turkish poets from the 1960s onwards, and it also has a very significant impact on his fellow citizen Yılmaz Odabaşı, who will be discussed below. In his view, the concept of ‘Anadolulu’ and ‘Doğulu’ (Anatolian and Easterner) identity is crucial (Arif 2014; see Çınarlı 2013, 207 about Arif’s insistence in using the “d” as an ending to his name instead of the more ‘orthodox’ Turkish “t”); for him a metaphor of class struggle internal to the Turkish state. Arif brings in his poetry the spoken language of the Anatolian peoples, being nourished at the reservoir of popular cultures. More specifically, he brings into Turkish leftist poetry the political “voice” of the East, the unspoken and under-represented part of the country. His poetry, written mainly during the 1940s and 1950s, needed to wait for a time of relative loosening of censorship and persecution of oppositional works in order to be published. Appearing sparsely in leftist magazines, Arif’s poetry became widespread and extensively read during the time of the dawn of alternative discourse in Turkey that we have recognized with the Eastern Meetings, namely the late 1960s and 1970s (Gülendam 2010, 246). In an interview[94] Ahmed Arif recalls how his poems were shouted and chanted during those meetings, so decisive for the future of the city of Diyarbakir and the entire eastern region.

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[94] Now in Arif, *Hasretinden Prangalar Eskittim*, 172: “There is something that makes me really proud. Some of my poems, long before even getting published, were translated into Kurmanji and Zazaki and spread out from hand to hand up to the

The city appears as a protagonist in his *Diyarbekir Kalesinden Notlar* (Notes from Diyarbekir's Castle), a section of his first, and for a long time only, collection *Hasretinden Prangalar Eskittim* (Fetters worn out by longing) published in 1968. Diyarbakır is described as a "castle with a mouth but without a voice" (Arif 2014, 96)[95], a line that expresses neatly the need for the elaboration of a different "language" for the city. Furthermore, Arif establishes a pattern that will recur in several Kurdish poets: namely that of associating the thought of the city with the thought of the beloved (Ibid. 97):

> "I think of you like if you were spring,
> You, like Diyarbekir,
> To what is not overwhelming
> The taste of thinking of you?"[96]

Although Ahmed Arif is considered a constituent part of Turkish Literature, his geographical and political discourse is radically alternative in respect to the State discourse; he asks for redefinitions of space and identities, asks for a say to be given to the unheard. Cemal Süreya defines Arif's poetry as "guerrilla poetry" and, although recognizing the affiliation with the master Nazim Hikmet, he distinguishes the two by the character of their poems:

> Nazim Hikmet is the poet of cities. He speaks to people from the valley, from the great plains. He is like a huge and plentiful river flowing into the plain. He is civilized. Ahmed Arif instead tells the mountains. Far from "citizenship", eternal and "rebellious" mountains. His poetry is like a long and unique lament. It is dedicated to "children who have not yet seen the sea". It is poetry said among the wolf, the bird and the wild-flower and carved in a dagger's handle (Ibid., 122).

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villages. […] I also remember with respect the thousands of fellow compatriots that would spend money out of their daily livelihood to buy my book after it was published and that would yell, when my poems were read during the Eastern Meetings".

[95] "Bir de ağzı var dili yok / Diyarbekir Kalesi".

[96] "Seni, Baharmışsın gibi düşünüyorum, / Seni, Diyarbekir gibi, / Nelere, nelere baskın gelmez ki / Seni düşünmenin tadı...".

Nonetheless, although pronounced from the mountains, brought down by the winds, Arif's poetry speaks to the city. His poems are translated into the "local" languages, Kurdish and Zazaki, and shouted aloud in public at demonstrations in the South-East, his words become the words of the political struggle framed in geographical terms by the "Easterners". Arif also connects the city of Diyarbakir to concepts of imprisonment, exile and resistance. Detention is for him a strong source of inspiration. Prison writing is, in effect, an established tradition in Turkish poetry that will significantly "revive" after the 1980 coup-d'état and the experience of the harsh condition in Diyarbakir prison (see following chapter). The poem "Yurdum Benim Şahdamarım" ("My homeland is my Carotid", from the homonymous collection) establishes a synthetic connection between geographical space (the homeland), distance (exile), political struggle (the jail), and identity (the carotid). The homeland becomes a crucial part of the body as he writes: "Hey, I loved you in jails, / I loved you in exiles, / my homeland / my carotid!" (Ibid.148) [97] Words that somehow set the tone for many other poems about the city; one can think for example of Alpaslan Akdağ, who quotes these lines in the epigraph of his poem "Far from my mother-homeland" (Anayurdumumdan Uzakta) in which he voices the wish to be buried "embraced" by his city and cries the "melancholy" of distance and exile (Alparslan 2013, 59):

> And you, oh ancient city,
> You are far beyond,
> You, imaginary country by transparent wings
> Blinking far from a distance.[98]

5.3 "Neither you nor Diyarbakır understood me." Yılmaz Odabaşı

An important name on the Turkish language poetic scene in Diyarbakır is that of Yilmaz Odabaşı. He takes on the legacy of socialist poetry following Ahmet

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[97] ''Lo ben seni hapislerde sevmiştim / Ben seni sürgünlerde. / Yurdum benim şahdamarım…"

[98] "ve sen ötelerdesin ey şehr-i kadim! / Sen / taaa uzaklardan göz kırpan / cam kanatlı düş ülke…".

Arif and inspires his work to social criticism. He is considered the first to coin the expression “Kurdish poet in Turkish language”(C. S. Scalbert-Yücel 2011) and writes much about the city in the post-1980 coup-d’état years. Odabaşı’s poetry was translated into English in 2005 in *Everything but you* (Odabaşı 2005). Although throughout his poetry a strong emotional attachment to Diyarbakır is perceivable, he feels somehow misunderstood by its native place and condenses this feeling in one of his most famous couplets (popularly amplified by a song version made by songwriter Ahmet Kaya), in which both the beloved woman and the place confine the poet to a sentiment of exile: “Neither you nor Diyarbakır understood me / but if you’d ever knew how much I loved you both…” (Odabaşı 2014, 9).[99] Despite his deep relation with the city, Odabaşı consider himself as “stateless” in Turkey and appears to be in a constant love-hate relationship with his birthplace. As narrated in his memoir *Hosçakal Dıyarbakir*, the author’s literary and political apprenticeship, as well as his activities as journalist, took place in the darkest years of the city’s modern history, in the 1980s and early 1990s. After that period Odabaşı turned to a more intimate poetry focusing on individual, rather than political and social, themes. Much of his significant work about Diyarbakır recounts that dark period as, for example, in the poem *Aynı Göğün Ezgisi* (Melody of the same sky) written in 1987 (Odabaşı 1994):

> On a sweaty night in the heart of Diyarbakır
> They have stolen a life in the narrowing streets
> They shot in the back my brother Abduselam.[100]

Another similar example is taken from *Batman Garı* (Batman Train Station, 1994): “At that time, sweat on the history’s forehead, humanity silent staring into atrocity’s eyes. At that hour of the night by a perfidious bullet, a man falls in the heart of Diyarbakır. Do not move in vain, oh sky, you cannot cry as much as my homeland”.[101]

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[99] “Ne Diyarbakır anladı beni ne de sen; / oysa ne çok sevdim ikinizi de bir bilsen...”

[100] Diyarbakır'ın göğsünde terli bir akşam / daralan sokaklarda bir yaşamı çaldılar; / Abdülselam kardeşimi arkasından vurdular!

[101] O saat tarihin alnında ter, insanlık vahşetin gözlerine baka baka susuyor...O saat gecede bir kahpe kurşun, Diyarbakır’ın göğsünde bir adam düşüyor. Boşuna çırpınma gökyüzü: Yurdum kadar ağlayamazsın!

Diyarbakır and the Kurdish regions are repeatedly described as colonized in *Dağınık Gazel*'s (1998) refrain "Cry my colony, perhaps I won't come back",[102] or as "shrinking" in "The everyday shrinking geography", where coğrafya ("region, geography") becomes a euphemism for that word "unspeakable" in the Turkish public sphere: Kurdistan.[103] A direct exemplification of Diyarbakır's subaltern condition is Diyarbakır's sky, which is occupied by military jets so that the poet's imaginary horizon also becomes subjugated:

> While the airplanes were nose-diving into the city's sky, I told you, look: we don't even have a sky to gaze at.[104]

In Odabaşı's work, the image of city is also coupled with emotions of nostalgia and frequently connected to a lost love, as for example in *Çalınmış bir mahşer için ahval* (1998), in which three times the poet recalls: "the distant and warm eyes of a girl in Diyarbakır".[105] Or in *Her ömür kendi gençliğinden vurulur* (1991), in which private affairs and public issues condense in the city space, and significantly in the prison:

> I loved you with my strongest sides
> While destinies were divided in this city
> In Diyarbakir, in such a desert miserable night..
> On the cross of the days
> I loved you with all my sides that hurt you
> With my imprisoned arms
> I spent years in our absence here
> I gave years to your absence
> Here.[106]

Odabaşı has been arrested several times for the books he published (in 1980, 1994 and 2000), therefore, prison-writing plays an important role in his poetry.

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[102] "Ağla sömürgem, belki dönemem"

[103] Fire Veren Coğrafiya'da ''Her geçen gün fire veren bu coğrafyada''.

[104] YUZUNU ARADIM Geçtim 1991: "Uçaklar pike yaparken bu kentin göklerinde, bak dedim, bakacak bir göğümüz bile kalmadı işte!

[105] "Aklımda Diyarbakırlı bir kızın uzak ve sıcak gözleri"

[106] "Seni en güçlü yanlarımla sevdim;/birer birer aralarken bu kentte kederleri,/Diyarbekir, böyle zavallı bir çöl gecesi.../ Günlerin çarmıhında/ seni ağrıyan yanlarımla sevdim, /tutuklu kollarımla;/ yokluğunda burada yıllar verdim./Yokluğuna /burada!

He gives a detailed account of the prison experience in *Eylül Defterleri* (September Notebooks, see next chapter).

As mentioned above, by that time Odabaşı's poetry progressively detaches from political and social themes and becomes more personal and intimate, reviving the poetic lesson of the Ikinci Yeni (Second New), a sort of loose generational poetic movement in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s(Messo 2009) inclined to introspection and individual themes. A sign of Odabaşı's retrieval of that lesson is a poem dedicated to Edip Canserver, one of the main exponents of that literary wave; in *Sesi Kaldı* (The voice remains, 1997), Odabaşı highlights how "his poetry smelled of sea breeze even in Diyarbakır".[107] Odabaşı's poetic turn causes the relationship between the poet and the city to remain problematic and, despite a profound attachment, an evident feeling of disconnection sometimes looms. As for example in *Kumrular Sokağı Şiirleri* (The poems of Turtledove Street, 1997):

> Rain takes on a pensive melancholy in October,
> And I remain as an extracted tooth in Turtledove Street:
> A tooth extracted from Diyarbakir…[108]

In this paragraph dealing with Yılmaz Odabaşı it may be appropriate to open a digression about the continuous and fundamental interaction between poetry and music in the Turkish/ Kurdish context in general, and in the case of Diyarbakir in particular, especially when we consider low rates of literacy in various areas of the city and the Kurdish regions. In fact, Odabasi's poetry has been put to music several times by popular leftist singers like Ahmet Kaya (*Diyarbakır Hasreti; Yakarım Geceleri; Dağlarda Ölmek isterim* and many other songs) Onur Akın, Ferhat Tunç, Grup Yorum (Aynı göğün ezgisi) and İlkay Akkaya. In this respect, it is important to mention the work of Yusuf Hayaloğlu who, although born in Dersim, has written a number of very popular poems and song lyrics relating to Diyarbakir. His brother-in-law was the immensely popular leftist songwriter Ahmet Kaya who used the lyrics of Hayaloğlu for many of his songs. Here it is important to mention at least three: *Diyarbakir Türküsü, Bahtıyar, Diyarbakır Etrafında Tanklar var*. They all describe a city "oppressed", torn apart by conflict and violence that pushes people to escape to the mountains, hoping that one day "the fire of the city" will end. *Bahtiyar* describes state violence against the expression of Kurdish culture, exemplified by the death of Bahtiyar: "He was from Diyarbakir his name was Bahtiyar, as far as I know his fault was playing the saz". Finally, *Diyarbakir Etrafında Tanklar var* (Tanks around Diyarbakir) reverses a traditional song, *Diyarbakir Etrafinda Bağlar var* (Vineyards around Diyarbakir) that exalts the beauty of the city's environs; it tells the Turkish military siege of the city and the repression of the city's culture:

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[107] "Şiirinin Diyarbakır'da bile imbat kokması"

[108] "Yağmur dalgın bir efkâr giyinir Ekim'de./ Kumrular sokağı'nda çekilmiş bir diş gibi kalırım; çekilmiş bir diş gibi / Diyarbakır'dan..."

> Tanks around Diyarbakir
> They've sieged the city from every side
> The city-walls are about to stand up
> They do not want me to die without seeing tomorrow. [109]

5.4 "The stones are witnesses". Şeyhmus Diken

Şeyhmus Diken wrote a poetry collection in which, similar to other prose works by him that I have discussed in previous chapter, he voices the loss and the nostalgia that the present condition of Diyarbakır invokes. The book is entitled *Taşlar Şahit* ("The stones are wıtnesses", Diken 2008) and develops a continuous interrelation, playing also with the similarity in sounds, between the self (kendi) and city (kent). The poetry collection talks perpetually about Diyarbakır, but it is also a theoretical reflection on the concept of city. The latter is often represented as a living being, with voice and character. Furthermore, it is an object that people use to structure their own identity. In the opening poem, "I live in Amida since ever" (Amida'da yaşadım bildim bileli), interestingly the city is connected to its cultural opposite, the mountain, through the "gift" of lava basalt stone made by the dormant volcano Karacadağ (Ibid., 15): in such a way, the physical connection between the city and the surrounding natural environment is underlined. In the following poem, the city is represented as a

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[109] "Diyarbakır etrafında tanklar var / Kuşatmışlar dört bir yandan kenti ordular / Kalkacak neredeyse ayağa surlar, surlar / İstemezler gün görmeden ölesem aman."

"mirror" of the person that reflects "identity": "if the image is broken / fault / is either on the face or on the mirror" (Ibid., 17).[110] Looking at the city, Diken suggests, one can see oneself and understand oneself. Nonetheless, as much as identity, the city is often an elusive object, blurred in an overlapping between real and ideal projections; in a poem dedicated to Yılmaz Odabaşı it is said: "watermelons do not chatter anymore in my courtyard / the city stays in dreams and imaginations." (Ibid. 21)[111] Diyarbakır is a layered, stratified place in which "whomever came added something", thus a collective work (Ibid., 25). Ahmed Arif famously stated that Diyarbakır was "a castle without a voice", but in resonance and in opposition to Arif, Diken seems to claim that the city has got its own voice, that has to be listened to:

> Cities too…
> Don't you think they have no language
> They own it certainly
> They speak with the stones' language
> This city whispers its secrets to the walls (Ibid., 29). [112]

The metaphor of the voice of the place conceals cultural and political power structures between the "centre" and the "taşra", "the province", the voice being a symbol of the autonomous capacity to speak. If Arif, during the 1950s, expressed the exclusion of Diyarbakır from the political discourse, Diken decades later lays claim for the city to raise its voice. In Şeyhmus Diken's work, urban milieu and 'enlightenment' are intrinsically connected (the intellectual firstly is a city-dweller) and the role of the intellectual is to interrogate "streets, walls, stones" in order to "solve its secrets" (Ibid., 31). In line with Walter Benjamin's understanding of the ruins "as allegories of Thinking" (Benjamin 2009, 177-178), for Diken the task of the city-dweller is to listen to the "voice of the ruins" to learn the past and move toward the future in a conscious way (Diken 2008, 43). Moreover, as mentioned above, Diyarbakır is a city described with human features: eyes, skin, voice; it is menaced and besieged by "barbarians" (Ibid., 35), a metaphor that we can later see used in Kurdish poetry.

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[110] ''suret bozuksa / kusur / aynada ya da insansandadır''.

[111] ''karpuzlar çatırdamıyor avlularımda / düşlerde ve şiirlerde kaldı şehir''.

[112] "Kentlerin de... / sanmayın ki dili yok / vardır elbet / taşların diliyle konuşur / sırlarını / surlarına / fısıldayan memleket".

Nostalgia and contemplation of the ruins permeate almost every poem in the collection: the city is described as fallen from a past of glory and grandeur: “the sun does not rise in this city / once upon a time the world’s sun used to rise from here” (Ibid., 51).[113] Furthermore, sentiments of nostalgia and disappointment seem to be generated by the gap between “image” of the place and its “reality”; the fault of this condition is attributed to “foreigners” (Ibid., 57):

> Whatever gate I enter, a different nostalgia
> What I imagined outside the gates
> Once I have entered the gates
> Does not turn into reality in this city
> Dull earthlings
> Foreigners to the city
> Have made it look like themselves
> so much that…[114]

In another poem, two words highlighted in italics set Diyarbakır as the stage for the contraposition between two national groups. In a few lines, the symbolic and territorial contestation between the Kurdist movement and the Turkish State going on in the city battlefield is exemplified by the Kurdish symbolic celebration of Newroz (a recurring symbol in Kurdish poetry, see below) and the Misak-ı Milli[115]:

> That day was *Newroz*
> There were hundreds of thousands in Diyarbekir
> Listening to ‘santana’ they made a fanfare at the rhythm of music
> In resistance to someone and to monotony
> But
> They have been told that
> Within the *National Pact*
> Fanfares are not allowed (Ibid., 65).[116]

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[113] ‘’Güneş doğmuyor artık bu kentte / bir zamanlar dünyanın güneşi burada doğardı’’.

[114] “Hangi kapısından girsem bir başka hüzün / kapıların dışındayken düşlediklerim / kapılarda girdiğimde / gerçeğe dönüşmüyor bu kentte / kente yabancı / düşsüz dünyalılar / o denli / kendilerine benzetmişler ki / kenti…”.

[115] Misak-ı Milli, National Pact, namely the establishment of a Turkish national Parliament in Ankara in 1920 and the recognition of the Turkish national borders.

[116] “o gün Newroz’du / yüzbinlerdiler Diyarbekir’de/ santana’yı dinleyip tantana yaptılar müziğin ritmiyle / birilerine ve teksesliliğe inat / oysa / onlara Misak-I Milli sınırları içinde / tantana yapılmaz /demişlerdi”.

Şeyhmus Diken, through the articulation of concepts such as nostalgia, memory and identity in their connection to the urban space of Diyarbakır, and in antithesis to representations of negative "foreign interventions", elaborates demands for Diyarbakır to become able to structure autonomous symbolizations, in keeping with the local needs and cultures. Although normally Diken does not directly mention the opposing sides (Kurdist movement and Turkish State), in this last poem, the contraposition could not be clearer in representing the opposition between a local will (represented by the Newroz) and a national dictating power (typified by the Misak-ı Milli).

In general, in the collection "The Stones are Witnesses", Şeyhmus Diken phrases in verse what he usually expresses through memoirs and articles (see previous chapter). He declares himself in love with the city (Ibid., 99 and 101) although his voice is permeated by a constant disappointment; the city is castrated, missing a godfather, namely someone who protects her – here also an open reference to the disappearance of the Christian population (Ibid., 109). He plays with the slogan of "the Paris of the East" attributed to the city, only to ascertain and deplore the decayed condition of Diyarbakır (Ibıd., 69). Nonetheless the poet sees himself as the "ambassador of the city" (Ibid., 105), fighting against and resisting the "destruction" (Ibid., 111) of it. To voice his intense affection for the place, Diken translates into Turkish a famous metaphor coming from a Kurdish poet extremely significant for Diyarbakir, like Rojen Barnas (see infra), when he says: "I will carve myself / my name / on the walls of my city" (Ibid., 85).[117] Finally, the city, here the direct subject of enunciation, is equated to memory (Ibid., 115):

> Erase from your memory
> All that you have learned before me
> Me
> Being here
> There is no need
> For any of your
> Memorizations. [118]

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[117] "Adımı / kendim nakşederim / kentimin surlarına".

[118] "Benden önceki / Bütün ezberlerinizi silin belleğinizden / Ben / Varken / Gerek kalmayacak / Diğer bütün ezberlerinize."

In sum, Diken’s poetry rotates around some key concepts (memory, identity, nostalgia) and seems to address the Turkish audience, relating a local voice, a local multicultural discourse of demands of rights and autonomy. His poetry, although possessing a local voice, tries to speak to a Turkish audience, delivering “taşra’s” voice to the centre. The “castle without a voice” of Ahmed Arif, now finds its voice in Diken (“do not think it hasn’t a voice”), able to convey the message and fight back the centre, when necessary. Moreover, with Diken’s voice the city finds a proper touristic profile, adorned by cultural and historical features appealing to a national and international audience. The work of this author, in this respect similar to Bejan Matur’s work analysed hereafter, emerges in connection with the touristic exploitation of the city’s cultural heritage from the 2000s onwards (Girard e Scalbert-Yücel 2015) and finds a significant positioning in that context.

5.5. “The Door to the East”. Bejan Matur

The cultural, historical, archaeological and aesthetic characteristics of the city find perhaps their best celebration in a book published in 2009 by the Diyarbakir Foundation of Art and Culture, founded by the author of the book herself. Bejan Matur’s *Doğu’nun Kapısı Diyarbakır* is a photographic book with a high market target; in the title the city is described as “the door to the East”. One can argue that this book is not necessarily representative of the poetic work of Matur; it is actually a rather marginal experience, and the analysis of this book in particular provided here, does not mean to be in any way a general judge of Matur’s work, which is instead rather profound and of great literary interest. As it has been mentioned in the introduction, a rather partial view of the work of a writer, might be seen as one of the shortcomings of the methodology used to build the corpus of this dissertation. Nonetheless, this book represents a very common instrument in Turkey for anyone who wants to have an idea of this city, it is a book that claims to bring back Diyarbakır to the reader, hence it was impossible to avoid it in this dissertation. The ideas, or better the lenses that Matur provides in this book are potentially used by many people who want to get to know the city. These particular lenses she has used have, in my view, some critical aspects, particularly where they selects some specific elements of the city and significantly downplays some others.

Bejan Matur is an Alevi Kurd from Maraş who says of herself that she thinks and write in Turkish but feels Kurdish (Atayurt 2013, 92). She is considered one of the most distinguished Turkish contemporary poetic voices and her work has been translated twice into English: *In the Temple of a Patient God* (2004); *How Abraham Abandoned me* (2012). In her photographic book about Diyarbakir, Matur composes a series of lyrical fragments that accompany pictures about the city, illustrating the history, culture and folkloric features of Diyarbakir. The book deserves space and analysis here since it is entirely dedicated to Diyarbakır and had a remarkable diffusion in Turkey. In effect, *Doğu'nun Kapısı Diyarbakır* seems to speak primarily to the Turkish readership and public audience with multi-faceted results. Quite tellingly, the foreword to the book was written by Ahmet Aydın, the Secretary General of the Special Provincial Administration of Diyarbakır; for him, the book is an important work "in order to create a new vision of the city" (Matur 2009, I). In fact, while in the eyes of the Turkish audience the book rescues the reputation of the city "stained" by years of conflict, highlighting its touristic potential and encircling it in a common cultural imaginary through reference to renowned Turkish poets, it also seems to try to tame the city, diluting or ignoring the ethno-political message of its radical alterity.

The city is also the protagonist of Bejan Matur's poetry in her previous book: *Ibrahim'in beni Terketmesi* (How Abraham abandoned me), published in 2008. In the long poem that gives the title to the collection, Matur selects Diyarbakır as the stage for a mystical and philosophical reasoning. As noted by translator Ruth Christie, for the author Diyarbakır is "a place of poetry" charged with a "sacred atmosphere" (Matur 2012). In a visit to the city, the poem seems to have come down from above "like a meteorite" and rapidly written itself. Diyarbakır seems to be for the author a magical ancestral place quintessentially linked to inspiration, sacredness, antiquity, and authenticity (Matur 2012, 8). Coming to the city in the holy month of Ramadan the authors tells how "Everything was talking to me like a melody, stones, trees, sky". In the poem, the city fluctuates between physical and metaphysical space, appearing as a primeval location of cosmogony, deeply linked to the process of creation. Here are the first lines (Matur 2012, 15):

> And the first sign came down.
> And now night is in Allah’s presence
> And stones spewed from the dragon’s mouth
> Founded the city.
> The dark was beyond the darkness of man.
> The knowledge of prayer and lava
> Opened streets
> And the pain and longing of a thousand years
> Could be lived.

The blackness of the stones and their volcanic essence recalling fire are insistently highlighted throughout the poem, in which the city functions as a philosophical entity, in a complex discourse around ideas of time and space: “the city began again from mind. / The city was told to be” (Matur 2012, 23).

This elevation of Diyarbakır to the abstract level, where it is entangled with religious symbols and embroiled in Islamic imagery, also recurs in *Diyarbakır: Doğu’nun kapısı*. At the onset the author suggests that the meaning of Diyarbakır is revealed by its shape as seen from above: “Diyarbakır, from the sky looks like a heart in the middle of Anatolia […] Diyarbakır is not only the heart of Anatolia, but the heart of the Middle East” (Matur 2009, 9). From the start the city seems pushed to the realm of symbols, wrapped by a halo of legend: “Separated from the world by a black curtain” (Ibid., 12).[119] The city is linked to narratives of unending fights: “in Amid the fight is never-ending” (Ibid., 14)[120] and the several different names attributed to the city are summoned as testimony of numerous transitions from one power to another: interestingly, although the ancient Roman name Amida or Amid is mentioned, no mention is made of Amed, the name currently used in Kurdish nationalist discourse.

Recalling Karakoç, the Tigris is charged with mystical nuances and described as “the road leading to Allah” (Ibid., 16)[121] adding to the intangible and abstract realm of symbolism through which the city is described. Quite interestingly,

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[119] ‘’Dünyadan siyah bir perdeyle ayrılmış’’.
[120] ‘’Amid’de kavga hiç bitmedi’’.
[121] ‘’Allah’a giden yol’’.

Diyarbakır is made a geographical watershed when described as the place where the “East begins”, or where “the East becomes thicker/heavier and gains meaning” (Ibid., 18).[122] A depiction that recalls the “crown of the East” line by Munis Faik Ozansoy, quoted above. The walls are depicted as a “cosmic being […] dividing East from West”; “The border between East and West in Black Amid has been traced with the presence of black stones” (Ibid., 90).[123]

The city is presented, introduced, and explained to an eye looking from outside: the historical, architectural and natural features are introduced similar to a tourist guide. The city is read from a sort of “Istanbul eye” (C. Scalbert-Yücel 2015) that foster its distancing and Orientalization in sentences such as “In the East death and birth are the same thing” (Matur 2009, 236).[124] The “bordering” quality of the city is constantly stressed through the reference to roman-safavid and Islamic-medieval times of conflict (Ibid., 34-36-38-44-46). Diyarbakır is described also as the northern border of the Arabic language and a centre for Islamic culture (Ibid., 86). In general the religious element is highlighted to dilute and accompany more problematic aspects: for Matur, Saladin loved the city because it was “the place in which Kurdishness and Islam unified” (Ibid., 90).[125] The mystical character of the place is continuously stressed through the relation between the city and prophets (Ibid., 26-28). On the appellative of “City of Prophets” attributed to Diyarbakir, and in general on the attempt to stress the religious aspect of the city above other aspects, Diken argues as follows: “Such an operation has one possible scope: To sever the city from its Kurdish oppositional and plural identity and turn it into a city without identity, or to transform the city in order to attach to it a new identity devoid of content. Until recently, the expression ‘’city of prophets’’ was actually launched and often used for Diyarbakir neighbour city Urfa” (Diken 2011, 45).

In general we can say that in Bejan Matur’s book there is a tendency to commodify Diyarbakir, turning it into an object that is appetizing for Turkish and international tourism (Öncü 2011); an operation similar to that generated by

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[122] ‘’Doğunun başladığı yer’’. ‘’Doğunun ağırlaştığı, anlam kazandığı’’.
[123] ‘’Doğunun ve batının sınırı, Kara Amid’de, kara taşların varlığıyla çizildi.’’
[124] ‘’Doüuda ölüm, doğumla bir.’’
[125] ‘’İslam’ın ve Kürtlüğün birleştiği yerdi Amid’’.

Sultan, the first Turkish TV-Series set in Diyarbakır and broadcast in 2012, in which the city is presented as devoid of conflict and ethno-political clashes, rather colourful and lively, in order to put the city on the tourism market's map (Marilungo 2016). In Bejan Matur, the city's cultural lavishness is constantly underlined. The walls are described as "an imaginary blackboard" for the powers that alternated in the city and left a sign of their presence (Matur 2009, 42 and 78). On page 94 the author includes an accurate list of the twenty-three civilisations (from the Hurrians to the Ottomans) that ruled over the city. The architectural features of the city are given much space in the book: churches and mosques, inns, traditional houses, baths are all exalted for their beauty and historical testament. Deliller hani (a traditional inn now working as a private hotel) is for Matur "the beginning of roads leading to the desert" and a traditional "Stopping place of the East" (Ibid., 164).[126] Hasan Pasha Inn, a central and renowned tourist place, is celebrated for the plentiful breakfasts it offers (Ibid., 166), whilst Suluklu Inn, a recently restored inn popular especially among Diyarbakir youth, is remembered for its musical nights, its "mystery and unknown fragrances" (İbid., 168). Whilst the author tries to enhance and rescue the overall negative image retained by the city in the Turkish public sphere, she nonetheless, and perhaps inadvertently, offers the city as an object of consumption for the tourist market. This operation necessitates the downplaying of conflictual and contested elements (Creighton 2007; Girard and Scalbert-Yücel 2015). To add to the commodifying representation of the city, the author recalls its traditional artisanship (Ibid., 208) and specific "tastes" (in particular that of the ciğer, a local recipe for roasting sheeps' liver (Ibid., 210). More than the affective bond between poet and city, prevails Matur's intention of describing the city as a cultural spot, or at times even as a cultural idea, with attention to encyclopaedic information concerning history, religion, architecture, folklore etc. The process of turning the city into a consumable object presumes a substantial orientalist operation, consisting of simultaneous distancing of and fascination for the place. From this book, the city emerges as an "open-air museum" preserved by the "solidity" of the walls (Ibid., 100); the Tigris is a road leading to God and its "waters know more than people can forget" (Ibid., 116).

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[126] ''Çöle giden yolların başlangıcı''.

The recent historical wounds of Diyarbakir (namely the Armenian genocide and the Kurdish insurgencies) are dealt with very fleetingly. Perhaps more space is allotted to the kinds of traditional door handles than to the infamous prison and the Armenians. Rather than for reason of a precise political will, "the tragedy starting in 1914" seems to be due to a "curse" over the city (''Amid lanetlenmiş sanki'', Ibid., 180); nonetheless the city's inhabitant is typified as re-welcoming the Armenians coming back to the city to find out about their origins. As for the prison, only the old Prison (recently restored in the framework of the renovation of the Içkale area) is described (Ibid. 184), whilst the infamous prison N°5, a debated key "witness site" (Çaylı 2015) of Diyarbakır's recent history around which a specific corpus of literature pivots, is basically ignored.

In this book, Bejan Matur makes substantial use of literary and historical references. She mentions travellers - whose works I have analysed in the first chapter – such as Nasir-i Husrev, Paul Lucas, Carsten Niebuhr, Edmond Naumann, Max Kirsch. Furthermore, Diyarbakir's literary soul is exemplified only through the canonical Turkish poets: Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı (Ibid., 218), Ahmet Arif - quite tellingly spelled with a T at the end of his first name, rather than his preferred D - in whose poetry, for Matur, Diyarbakır becomes a person (Ibid., 220); and Sezai Karakoç (Ibid., 224). Despite the book's constant effort to portray Diyarbakır's cultural richness, no mention is made of writers hailing from the city and writing in a language other than Turkish; particularly, there is no mention of Kurdish authors. This contributes to the book offering a subtly Turkified image of the city, that acknowledges and administers diversity. The multicultural mosaic is welcomed inasmuch as problematic elements are absent and a substantial "ethnic hierarchy" (C. Scalbert-Yücel 2015) informs and structures such a mosaic.

In Bejan Matur's work the city both loses its materiality to become the correlation of a "Platonic idea", created in the sky before being realized in concrete, and concurrently is objectified and fetishized in all its tourist-fascinating features. Her refined and symbolist poetry abstracts significantly from the reality on the ground and is informed by the established geographical, political and cultural horizon of Turkey. The legacy of mass deportations, ethnic-conflict, military repression, and state of emergency policies are significantly downplayed. The literary canon cited to represent the city is totally Turkish; despite the city's ethnic and cultural variety being acknowledged and exploited as an attractive element, it is not given voice. From the title, a subtle orientalist scheme underlies the descriptions made of Diyarbakır in this best-selling and, for the Turkish readership, highly representative book *Diyarbakir: the door to the East*. It should be said that in the late 2000s Bejan Matur became a known and respected voice, not only for her successful poetry, but also for her articles, published in the mainstream newspaper *Zaman*, about the Kurdish issue and related problems. Therefore, her depiction of Diyarbakır becomes even more respectable and trustworthy in the eyes of many Turkish readers.

5.6. From the periphery to the centre: Diyarbakir/Amed in Kurdish poetry.

It might be argued with Creswell that "Naming is one of the ways space can be given meaning and become place" (Cresswell 2004, 9). Moreover, re-naming can be a way of transforming a place into another place. The use of geographical elements in connection with an articulated range of emotions makes possible a collectivization of sentiments through their "spatialization". The naming of places in conjunction with a selective list of other places, the creation of a network of specific cities and natural landscape, it might be argued, represents a way of claiming a territory, creating a political geography. Especially when such a territory does not have legitimate ınstıtutıonal recognition and is perceived by some as occupied, naming spatial features, often in correlation with national literary figures, is part of the very process of creation, or "invention" through imagination, of a place. In Kurdish poetry, we see the authors' need of creating their own geographical object of belonging, sort of defining 'what is Kurdistan', an entity so far condemned by historical and political developments as to be more imagined than real, by naming its spaces, features, cities, attaching names to places and creating places by naming.

A need for geographical nomination clearly exemplified in Cegerxwîn's poem "longing for the Homeland" (Bêriya Welat), which is a continuous succession of rhetorical questions about places in Kurdistan: "Where is Viranşehir, where Derik, where Mardin or Nusaybin / Where is Amed, where Hazro, and the Hizan prince?" (Cegerxwîn 2002, 36)[127] and so on for twenty-nine couplets. Therefore, the poetic lines sometimes seem to draw concrete geographical lines; in the Kurdish case, such geographical lines are often counter-lines, as they controvert and challenge existing borders and cartographies. It might even be argued that in a nationalist narrative, imagining the territory of the homeland in discursive and emotional terms is a first step towards the factual crystallization of that territory. Indeed, since tracing lines and borders that are meant to separate distinct political entities is for the most part an arbitrary operation, it first needs to be envisioned before being embodied.

The political and social significance of poetry in Kurdish culture is very high. Being a culture that shared and transmitted its values mainly via oral production, poetry has been undoubtedly one of the crucial media of this process. It has been certainly a mean for sharing national views, a sense of community. Furthermore, it has been a mean to imagine, and therefore inhabit, a geographical space that is denied in real life. It is almost a common lieu to start any discussion about Kurdish nationalism, stressing its relationship with literature, moving from the lines of the 'national' poem *Mem û Zîn* in which Ehmedê Xanî (1650-1707) preliminarily frames the Kurdish nation's besieged geography, along with a sense of national belonging pivoting around language and literature.[128] He laments the lack of "a proud leader" who would be "patron and sympathetic to literature" (Xanî 2010, 163),[129] whilst Kurds are "besieged and oppressed by Persians and Turks" (Ibid., 165).[130] The description of political disorganization and geographical encircling by enemies is soon followed by Xanî's declaration of why he chooses to write his book in Kurdish:

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[127] "Ka Wêranşar, ka Dêrik, ka Mêrdîn û Nisêbîn? / Kanî Amed, ka Hezro, mîrê Hîzan li kû ye?".

[128] "The idea of a Kurdish nation distinct from, and at war with, the ruling Turks, Persians and Arabs was formulated for the first time by Ahmadi Khani in his Mem û Zîn, written in 1693-94", Amir Hassanpour, Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985 (San Francisco: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992). 56. See also "Xanî Kürt Emirliklerinin Onursal Şairi: Burjuva Milliyetçi Teorilerinin Basitliği Üzerine - Xanî, Helbestvanê Rûmetê Yê Mîrîtiyên Kurdan: Li Ser Basîtbûna Teoriyên Neteweperweriya Bûrjûwa" (paper presented at the Uluslararası Ehmedê Xanî Sempozyumu - Sempozyuma Ehmedê Xanî, Diyarbakir, 2008). Jan Dost, "Kürtler'in Kitabı Mem Û Zîn - Mem Û Zîn: Kitêba Kurdan" (paper presented at the Uluslararası Ehmedê Xanî Sempozyumu - Sempozyuma Ehmedê Xanî., Diyarbakır, 2008). Abbas

> So that people might not say: "The Kurds
> Have no origins, knowledge and bases
> […]
> Various nations have their own book
> With the sole exception of Kurds" (Ibid., 28)[131]

By his act of writing, Xanî tries to put Kurds on the map; in other words, tries to give them recognition in geographical, cultural and political terms, thwarting the feeling of encircling, sketched above. In the introductory part of *Mem û Zîn*, the link between language, "the book" (namely literary production), geography and an early sense of national belonging is made very clear and strong. Amin Hassanpour reads these passages as a first clear voicing of Kurdish Nationalism,[132] however Van Bruinessen advices that, even though we can interpret Xanî as a "father of Kurdish nationalism", it might be anachronistic to read him as a nationalist himself, since modern ethno-nationalism as we understand it today is a much later phenomenon (Van Bruinessen 2003). Nonetheless, both authors seem to agree on the relevance of Xanî's lines in terms of Andersonian "imagined communities", stressing the bond between literature and political power. Besides, Xanî is probably the highest fruit of a Kurdish literary season that was later (and currently is) regarded as "classic".[133] Xani's words, as well as his figure, are among the most important symbolical

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Valî, "Ehmedê Xanî Ve Biz - Ehmedê Xanî Û Em" (paper presented at the Uluslararası Ehmedê Xanî Sempozyumu - Sempozyuma Ehmedê Xanî, Diyarbakır, 2008).

[129] "Padişahekî Serfiraz", "ji peyvên xweş ra piştgir û dilxwaz".

[130] "Zorbirî û stûxwarên Tirkan û Eceman".

[131] "Da ku xelk nebêje herçi ku Kurd in/ nezan in, bêesi û bêbingeh û nemerd in/ cure cure netewe, xwedîkitêb in/ Kurd tenê bêpar in û bêkitêb in".

[132] Hassanpour uses the concept of "feudal nationalism" for this stage, as opposed to "modern middle-class nationalism", Hassanpour, *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985*. 56

[133] See at least the article *Klasîkên me – an şahir û edîbên me ên kevin [Our Classics – or our old poets and literates]* published in the journal *Hawar* by Celadet Ali Bedirkhan, under the pseudonym Herekol Azîzan now in *Hawar: Hemû Hejmar 1-57, (1932-1943)*, ed. Lokman Koçhan (Diyarbakir: Belkî, 2012). 558-565.

elements of Kurdish culture today and they have constituted the basis for later waves of Kurdish nationalism. He became, so to speak, part of the real-and-imagined Kurdish – besieged, scattered, or yet-to-be-built– geography.

For example, Osman Sebrî, a Kurdish intellectual who had a prime role in the elaboration of modern Kurdish nationalism in the twentieth century, especially as member of the Xoybun polıtıcal movement and for his writing in the journal "Hawar", in his poem "Tigris and Euphrates" (Dîcle û Ferat) makes a significant connection between the landscape and "Kurdish literature". Sebrî talks about a place he calls "homeland" (welat), while declaring his love for the two rivers that seems to be symbolical sources of identity. In particular, the Tigris is the river that "used to inspire Melaye Ciziri"(Temo 2007, 764);[134] while "Ehmede Xani drank from one of his affluent", while on its shores "refined poets like Feqiye Teyran and Mele Bate / used to mount their horses" (Ibid., 764).[135] The poem concludes with an invitation to Kurds to develop further their under-developed language. In this way, while reasoning over the poor condition of the language, the natural landscape is "nationalized" through literary names. Cegerxwîn in a poem about "Language and learning the language" (Ziman û Hînkirina Ziman), presents the following couplet literally equating literary figures to the "national" landscape (Cegerxwîn 2002b, 57):

> Cîzîrî and Xanî, how heroic they have been
> They are just like the Tigris, Zab or Aras Rivers.[136]

Similarly, Celedet Ali Bedirxan, one of the key intellectual figures of the literary and political development of Kurdish nationalism in the twentieth century, in the poem "Bilura min" (My shepherd pipe), imagines the voice of the pipe as, "consolation of those who love the homeland", flying over the country connecting mountains and plains, rivers and cities in order to make resonate the song of "Kurdistan's freedom": "strong" winds bring poet and pipe's common

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[134] "Melê Cezîrî îlhama xwe ji wî çemî distand".

[135] "Feqiyê Teyran, Melê Batê pirr şaîrên çak / Hespên xwe bezandin di şaxa çemê çalak".

[136] "Cîzîrî û Xanî, çi gernas e ew / Wekî Dîcle û Zab û Aras".

"groan", from the mountains "down to the plain of Sirûc and Diyarbekir" (Temo 2007, 655).[137]

In the following, I will collect and analyse poetic representations of Diyarbakır/Amed as an essential geographic and symbolic element of Kurdish imagination. When compared with representations in the Turkish language poetry considered above, I argue that Diyarbakır/Amed seems to orbit around a completely different system of geographical lines, that in turn imply a whole different system of political and cultural identification. Often Amed is at the centre of this alternative system of representation.

Şêrko Bêkes, a very famous Kurdish poet from Sulaymaniyah, writing in Sorani Kurdish – therefore a small, but significant, exception to our corpus - in one of his poems dedicated to Ismail Beşikçi, ideally unites Kurdistan by naming four symbolic cities of the Kurdish inhabited regions as metonyms of the four divided parts of the homeland. For the Turkish Kurdistan part he obviously uses 'Diyarbekir' (whereas Kamishli represents the Syrian Kurdistan, Kirkuk the Iraqi Kurdistan and Mahabad the Iranian Kurdistan) and makes a claim for a Kurdish autonomous symbolization of the space that sadly has to be postponed in time because of "colonization" and foreign occupation:

A tree said:
You see now we cannot give yet
Your name
To a street in Diyarbakir…

A flower said:
You see we cannot give yet
Your name
To a park in Kamishli…

A stone said:
We cannot carve yet
A statue for you
In the middle of Kirkuk…

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[137] "Deşta Sirûc û Diyarbekrê".

> A poem said:
> We cannot name yet
> A library in Mahabad
> After your name…(Temo 2007, 940).[138]

As we see here, the list of cities draws a different geography if compared with Turkish poems analysed in the previous section, in which Diyarbakır was placed in relation with Turkish or representative Muslim cities. Here the places named alongside Diyarbakır are all outside the Turkish borders but inside alternative – imagined - borders. Furthermore, in Bêkes' words, the space of these cities cannot be animated and symbolized according to Kurdish culture because of the political subjection in all four parts of Kurdistan. The street, the park, the statue, the library in honour of Ismail Beşikçi cannot take place in the reality of these urban spaces, but through Bêkes' poems they do so imaginatively. Similarly, poet Serkeft Botan, in his poem "Mirin" (Death, 2000), in which Kurdistan is evoked as a "leaderless country", imaginatively unifies the homeland by connecting two Kurdish cities at the opposite corners of the imagined nation by addressing "mothers from Amed to Sulaymaniyah", and referring to "cemeteries from Amed to Sulaymaniyah" (Ibid., 1137).[139] The Zaza poet Zulkuf Kişanak again brings together the divided part of Kurdistan by naming cities: Kamishli (Syria), Ranya (Iraq), Urmia (Iran), Amed and Dersim (both from Turkey, the latter adding the Zazaki component to the Kurdish national mosaic) (Arî 2011, 275). Miraz Ronî mentions Amed, along with other cities that recall sorrowful memories for Kurds, in a poem "In memory of Ehmedê Xanî" (Li ser bîranîna Ehmedê Xanî) - a poet defined as the "source of independence" (Ibid., 291).[140] Here Ronî reactivates the famous pattern inaugurated by Xanî, himself of a Kurdistan “colonized” and “surrounded” by enemies:

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[138] Here is the transliteration offered by Temo: "Darek witî: / Ême êsta ke natwanîn / Şeqamêkî Diyarbekir / Be nawî to we naw binêyn.../ Gulêk witî: / Ême êsta ke natwanîn / Baxçeyekî nêw Qamîşlî /Be nawî to we naw binêyn... / Berdêk witî: / Ême êsta ke natwanîn / Peykerêkit / Le singî Babegûgûr da / Bo dirûst keyn... / Şîîrek witî: / Ême êsta ke natwanîn / Pertûkxaneyekî Sablax / Be nawî to we naw binêyn...".

[139] ''dayikên amed û silêmanî''.

[140] ''Serkaniya serxwebûnê.''

> So many times after you [Xanî], they made a cemetery
> Out of the land of Kurdistan, they set it on fire hundred times.
> Amed and Dersim, Zilan and Agir
> Lice, Şirnak, Halabja and Qoçgirî
> On one side, the persecution of Arabs and Persians
> On the other side, the bayonet of the Young Turks (Ibid., 292). [141]

Each one of those cities’ names recalls the tragic memory of a Kurdish revolt crushed by the Turkish state, or massacres of Kurds carried out by the Iraqi State. The above lines repeat the sense of colonization by the neighbours, expressed in the first place by Ehmedê Xanî, as a measure of how nothing has changed since his time, but tellingly adds names of places that, while being emotionally charged for their disgraceful histories, draw the lines and set the parameters of Kurdistan. Amed is again in a list of Kurdish cities, carrying for Kurds a shared tragic and traumatic value, in one of Hoseng Broka’s poems: Halabja (Iraq), Mehabad (Iran), Amude (Syria) and Amed represent four open wounds in the four parts of Kurdistan (Temo 2007, 1247). In Rojen Barnas’ poem “Our Horses” Diyarbakir is cited along with Sulaymaniyah, the Botan region, Hosel, Agri and the Muzur region (Barnas 2013, 94). Fatma Savcı in the prose poem “Xwişka Filehan bûm” (I became the sister of the infidels) imagines unity in Kurdistan and names cities and regions to create this ideal unity. She names Mardin, Mahabad and Hewler, Botan and Bahdinan regions, Kamishli and Nusaybin, and recalls “the fresh shadow below Diyarbekir’s walls and the chants of poor children from the Infidels district” (Savcı 2007, 73).[142] Poet Ferzan Şêr, in a poem in his collection *Otopsiya Berbejnekê*, portrays the “homeland” in a progressive approach from the wilderness of mountains in the first line, “my homeland surrounded by mountains” (Şêr 2009, 46)[143], to the urban space, in a list of cities concluding with Amed. After having characterized the homeland as adorned with poppies, Şêr goes: "in Urmia their colour is green / in Qamishlo is red, / in Erbil is yellow / and in Amed is white" (Ibid., 46).[144] Here again the quartet of symbolical cities unifies the four parts of Kurdistan while the colours associated with cities compose the Kurdish flag. Cengiz Mamo, nominates the "body" of the homeland listing one after another: plains, hills, cities, villages, mountains, wilderness, north, south, west and east, Mahabad, Halabja, Ararat, Kamishli and finally Amed (Mamo 2013). To conclude, Raîfe Bêçarê articulates his collection *Hebana Berxan* as a sort of poetical-geographical Kurdish tour, in which almost every poem tells of a Kurdish city or landscape; of course, Amed cannot be absent; the poet arrives as a "guest" in the city exemplified in its antiquity:

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[141] “Piştê çendî car kirin goristan / Sed car şewitandin xaka Kurdistan / Amed û Dêrsim, Zîlan û Agirî / Lîce, Şernex, Halepçe û Qoçgirî / Zilma Ereb û Ecem li hêlek e / Singûyê jon Tirkan jî li kêlek e.”

[142] “Hênikahiya siya sûra bû…Sirûdên devê zarokên xizan yên Xançêpeka Diyarbekir bû…”.

[143] “welatê min bi çiyayan dorpêçkirî ye”.

> Amed is such an ancient city,
> Its history is like a dream (Bêçare 2010, 212).[145]

In sum, from this short overview it is possible to see how the geography and the collective memory within which Diyarbakir/Amed is inscribed generally in Kurdish language poetry is of a completely different nature compared with Turkish language poetry. Amed is not at the "east" of a supposedly Turkish "Greenwich meridian", but is a constituent part and one of the main regional centres of a divided "homeland". For instance, Arjen Arî puts together an important "Anthology of Northern [Kurdish] Poetry" (Arî 2011) whose title clearly indicates a different geographical division according to which Diyarbakır is no longer in the "East" but in the "North".

However, the city is not only relevant for its location and connection with other places. Its very urban space and shape (mainly the walls) become, little by little, symbols of resistance to oppression. It becomes a central bastion, a bulwark of Kurdishness. In Cegerxwîn's "Cry on the crown and head" (De Bigirî li ser Tac û Sera) the city is presented in a lamentable state, stigmatized in the landscape-image of the execution of Sheikh Said and his fellows. Watching the city one can see the state of the entire homeland, afflicted by occupation and grief:

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[144] "Welatê min bi şilêran ximildanî ye / […] Li Urmiyeyê rengên wan kesk in / li Qamişlokê sor / li Hewlerê zer in / Li Amedê jî zor spî ne".
[145] "Amed bajarek kevn e / Dîroka wê wek xewn e".

> Oh heart, sit down in maze on the shores of Amed's river
> Open your pretty eyes and watch the homeland of Kurds.
>
> They have built gibbets in the city of Amed,
> Where they have hanged the leaders of the Zazas.
>
> [...]
>
> Take out a handkerchief from your pocket and
> Dry your eyes from those tears, like sun does with rain
>
> Cry and put together all your disconsolate voice in a scream
> Oh Amed, till when you have to live with this afflictions and grief [?] (Cegerxwîn 2002a, 63)[146]

Cegerxwîn's poetry is of a militant nature; it is poetry meant to awaken and politically mobilize the Kurdish masses. Therefore, the grievous cry prompted in this poem might be read as an invitation to the reader to take action in order to improve the condition of the city, and by extension the whole country. Addressing again the city, he writes:

> Like you are miserable Ağrı and Dersim and Sasun,
> Like you are broken Tor and Bext and Berzan
>
> Like you are subjugated Hemrin and Shingal Mountain
> Like you are in black ties Sefin and Girde Seywan.
>
> Do cry and moan, hey city of Amed, hey miserable!
> Do cry over the crown, head and throne of Merwan (Ibid., 63)[147]

In the closing lines, the poet feels like dying for the pain inspired by such a situation and invites the reader to make "his coffin-cover out of the wood of the prison door"; his "coffin out the gibbets of Amed". He hopes to be abandoned to “the water of the Tigris” and that people would pay him a visit “in the cemetery of Amed” (Ibid., 64). In all these elements there is a sense of fusion and interpenetration between the poet and city’s spatial markers (the prison, the Tigris, the gibbets, the cemetery), a theme that will recur quite often in later Kurdish nationalist poets, who obviously see in Cegerxwîn a foundational example.

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[146] "Ey dil li qiraxê çemê rune sergerdan; / Rinda çavên xwe veke, temaşa ke welatê kurdan. / Li bajarê Amed çikandine çend sêpî, / Bi wan ve daleqandî ne cindiyê zazan. / […] Ji berîka xwe destmalekê derxe û, çavên xwe / Paqijke, ji wan hêstirên xwe wek tav û baran. / De bigirî bi dengê xwe ê zîz tim bike gazî, / Ey Amedö ta kengê bijî tu bbi van kul û derdan".

[147] "Wek te xwînxwar in, Agirî û Dêrsim û Sasûn tev, / Wek te diljar in, Tor û Bext û Berzan. / Wek te blindest in çiyayên Şingal û Hemrîn, / Wek te reş girêdane Sefî û Girdê Seywan. / De bigirî û binale et şarê Amed ey xwînxwar, / De bigirî li ser tac û sera û textê Merwan ".

Diyarbakır (often spelled Diyarbekir or Amed, as it is usual in Kurdish poetry) frequently reappears in the poetry of Rojen Barnas, a poet born in 1944, expatriated to Sweden in 1981, who is of foundational relevance in Kurdish-Kurmanji contemporary poetry (Özmen 2013, 80).[148] His poetical debut in 1965 is dedicated to the city: *Çûm Diyarbekir* (I went to Diyarbekir). The poem results as an open complaint toward the city. It expresses at once the high expectations the poet had when approaching the place and his disappointment at seeing the status of the city. The youth is “empty-headed, / Hopeless, aimless and sterile” (Barnas 2013, 19),[149] the old people sits in front of mosques just praying and “hoping for Heaven”, women sell themselves, while intellectuals and executives are prone to alcoholism (Ibid., 19). The last stanza concisely voices both the poet’s affection for the city and his dissatisfaction:

> I was upset, frozen on the spot
> What are this state, this sleep, and this lassitude?
> I had offered my soul in sacrifice for you
> Hey, beautiful tattooed girl, city of Amed! (Ibid., 20)[150]

Reality does not match expectations for the city “he has sacrificed” his soul for. However, later in Barnas’ career, especially after his exile in Sweden began in the early 1980s, Diyarbakir becomes a very important symbol of struggle and resistance. In fact, his first poetry collection, *Li Bandeva Spêde* (At the peak of the morning, 1979), contains at least two poems for Diyarbekir. One of them "The woodcutters of Diyarbekir" (Êzingvanên Diyarbekirê) is a realistic depiction of the social conditions of woodcutters, with an accurate description of the Tigris River, the "high black castle of Diyarbekir", and the labour of its inhabitants. However, the other poem from this collection dedicated to Diyarbakır has become extremely popular and has had a wide circulation (particularly after the song version made by Ciwan Haco, a popular Kurdish singer who dedicated an entire album to the city in 1981, *Diyarbekir*). It is entitled *Min navê xwe kola li bircên Diyarbekir* (I carved my name on Diyarbekir's walls). The title is taken from a recurring line of the poem and concisely states the bond between Barnas and Diyarbekir, as the "carving of the name" stands for a sort of signature on the space, metaphor of the person's fusion with the physicality of the city. A closer look at the poem will show this deep and almost embryonic connection more clearly. The initial lines immediately exemplify the controversial dynamics of Kurdish affection towards the city:

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[148] Temo in his Anthology defines him “one of the most important poet of Modern Kurdish poetry”, Temo, *Kürt Siiri Antolojisi*, 1436. Arjen Arî starts his anthology of “northern” Kurdish poetry with Rojen Barnas, Arî, *Bakûre Helbestê Antolojiya Helbesta Bakûr*.

[149] “Ji fikrê xalî / Bê omid, bê armanc, tevek bê feyz in”.

[150] “Ez reş û tarî bûm, sar bûm di cî da / Ev çi hal, ev çi xew, ev çi rexawet? Me digot ji bo te canê me fîda / Zeriya enîreş, bajarê Amed!”

I carved my name on Diyarbekir's walls
When the stars in the sky
Were subjugated
When flutes
        Pipes and drums
        Tambours and clarions
                Were frozen-up. (Ibid., 27)[151]

The "enslaved" condition of sky and stars postulates a communion of Kurdish –subjugated - identity and the natural landscape; whilst the poet carving his name on the walls, or in other words on the city's physical body, expresses a profound identification between self and city. The environment withers into silence as an immediate image of the very "silence" imposed on the Kurdish language and culture:

When rivers

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[151] "Min navê xwe kola li bircên Diyarbekir/ Gava ku stêrk/ Li esmana stûxwar, / Gava ku / ney û bilûr û tembûr / û dehol û zirne / sar / bûn."

Head to tail
Were not humming in their beds
Iris, daisies and basils
Were not blossoming yet.
Gloomy darkness
Sharp and deep
Sinking, with an atrocious bellow
Staggering careless and regardless
Over my homeland
With a soul of steel
I carved my name
Carved my name on Diyarbekir's walls (Ibid., 27)[152]

Earth and skies are blasted and dried-out, because the power ruling over the city is not in consonance with the surrounding environment. Therefore, the poet's struggle in the city, his act of identification with the urban body, is meant to turn this grim and withering condition upside down. The actual features of the city (here the name of the Gates) are redefined in order to express a geography of dignity, a redemption:

I entered inside from Homeland Gate,
I decorated the National Gate with garlands
And I fought in front of Independence Gate
The gardens in Liberation Gate were arid
And I planted there Freedom saplings
And spread the seeds of Honour. (Ibid., 29).[153]

Struggle, resistance and urban space are identified with the substitution of the names of the four Gates of Diyarbakır with four main objectives and values of the Kurdish people (Homeland, Nation, Independence, Liberation). Through the poet's (and reader's) identification of the personal identity with the city (the carving of the name) a process of reversion and reconversion of the city begins, where darkness was dominating and soil was sterile, now saplings and seeds are planted for future generations. The identity struggle nurtures the soil with possibilities of a resurrection of Kurdish culture; the poem concludes: "Yesterday I was a martyr / today I am back again."

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[152] "Û cobar / Nedixuşîn di nivînên xwe de seraser / Sosin û beybûn û rihan / Ne d'bişkifîn di bûtikê de. / Tariyên giran / tûj û kûr / Bi zûrezûr û bi orîneke jakaw / Bê fikare, / bê paxav / dihelişî / li ser welatê min / Bi giyanek pola / Min nave xwe kola / Min nave xwe kola li bircên Diyarbekir."

[153] "Ez / Di Deriyê Niştîmanî de ketim hundir / Min / Deriyê Neteweyî bi zerzenga xemiland / Û li ber Deriyê Serxwebûnê / şer kir / Bêweç mabû baxçêyê Deriyê Felatê / Mın tê de / Şaxên serbestîyê çikand / Tovê xawêndariyê werkir".

Barnas' following collection, the first published in exile, carries the name of the city in the title: *Heyv li Esmanê Diyarbekirê* (The Moon in Diyarbekir's sky, 1983). A poem published in this collection, "Ameda min" (My Amed), testifies again of the deep value the poet attaches to the city, with recurring metaphors of fertility and interpenetration between the poet and Amed:

> Oh my Amed,
> […]
> I hope to be a seed in you
> My blood to be rain for you.
> For as much
> Our neighbours
> Have been mute and deaf,
> -For their own concerns -
> You are fertile
> You defeat the enemies
> You the symbol of the independent homeland
> And of our strength (Barnas 2013, 185).[154]

Similar to previous poems, the theme of fertility is connected with the poet-city physical bond. The city is celebrated as a collective symbol, a provider of symbolic nutriment for the national struggle, whilst in return the individual hopes to dissolve in the city space; his individuality acquires meaning in terms of a corporal contribution to the city. While it is not infrequent to see the motif of poets aspiring to die "re-welcomed" in the maternal womb of the city (see above

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[154] "Ameda min […] / Xweziya min li te tov / Xwîna min li te baran / Cîran / her çiqas kerr û lal bin jî / -bo kêrhayên xwe- / Tu adan î / Tu serxwirê dijmin / Tu nimaya serxwebûna niştiman î/ Û jîndewariya me."

Alpaslan and Cegerxwîn), here Barnas not only imagines his dissolution into the city's soil, but envisions it as an investment for the future of the place. Likewise, in the poem "Heyv li esmanê Diyarbekirê", Barnas invites people "to become a storm, / become a flood / and head down towards the plain of Diyarbakir / towards the black-veiled city of Amed, / towards miserable Amed" (Barnas 2013, 215).[155] Immediately after he exhorts the city: "Don't cry, my Amed, don't cry / Lift that black veil / and never stay in despair" (Ibid., 216).[156] The despair is due, of course, to the perceived Turkish colonial occupation of the city, while natural elements (the storm, the floods) are in opposition: a sign of harmony between environs and city. The moon and Diyarbakir walls stay in poetic dialogue throughout the poem as a clear metaphor of kinship between nature and city; Barnas eventually phrases overtly the perception of colonial occupation by Turks (Ibid., 213):

> And you,
> My Nation,
> […]
> Please tell me
> Whom for
> The Turkish army sits on Amed's castle?
> What has to do there?
> What is it looking for here?[157]

The theme of the enemy who made its seat in Diyarbakır is frequent in Kurdish literature, both poetry and prose, and we have an example of it already in Cegerxwîn's first Divan (poetry collection), when he states that the enemy, "has taken a seat in the middle of Amed's palace" (Cegerxwîn 2002a, 31).[158] However, to stay with Barnas, the city is there again in the two following collections, *Milkê Evînê* (The property of love, 1995) and *Yelda* (Yelda, in *Kadiz*, 2013). In the poem "Gotara Azad", Amed is defined as the "Beautiful city"

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[155] "Bibin bager / Bibin lehî / Û xwe berdin deşta Diyarbekirê / Bajarê Amedê xêlîreş / Bajarê Amedê şerpeze."
[156] "Megirî Ameda min, megirî / Xêliya reş vegire / Lê, tu car û tu car / Bêmefer mebe".
[157] "Tu! / Ey netweyê min / […] Fermo ka bêje / Lejkerê romê / Bo kê / Li sere kela Amedê ye / Karê wî çi ye, / Li wê derê li çi digere?".
[158] First edition published in Damascus in 1954.

(Barnas 2013, 263).[159] Diyarbakır is central again in the poem “Sê Tîrêj” (Three beams). The poem speaks about “three lions” (sê şêr) that ideally come to the city of Diyarbekir to bring their lessons to the children of the city. They are the national martyrs Sheikh Said (leader of the first Kurdish revolt in Diyarbekir’s region in 1925), Seyd Riza (leader of the Dersim rebellion in 1937-38) and Qazi Muhammad (head of the short-lived Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in 1946). They are imagined by Barnas bringing enlightenment to the youth of Diyarbakır, all gathered in front of Mountain Gate (Dağ Kapı), the place where Sheikh Said was made a martyr is located (Ibid., 280). In general, geographical places like rivers and mountains coupled with illustrious names of national leaders or intellectuals seem central in Barnas’ poetry, and Kurdish poetry alike, as an element of resistance and territorial appropriation of the “home-land”. In the later collection *Yelda* the city is summoned within a more private discourse in the poem “Diyarbekir’s nights were cold” (Sar Bûn Şeven Diyarbekirê):

> Nights in Diyarbekir were cold, you know
> When I laid my head on the pillow
> Wrapping up myself in your love
> Every morning I was seeing that pillow wet
> My eyelashes in moisture (Ibid., 363).[160]

In accordance with Barnas’ view of the city, in a later generation of poets influenced by the new political season characterızed by a relatıve relaxation of the restrictions on Kurdish culture and a consequent cultural activism that produced new discourse concerning the city (Watts 2010), we can see how the city has definitively become a powerful Kurdish identity symbol. In a large number of Kurdish poetry collections published in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s, at least one poem dedicated to the city is present. In the following, I will try to give an overview of such a huge presence of the city in poetry and of its symbolical value. Here the number of occurrences of Diyarbakır, is in my perspective more important than the quality of poems in themselves, or the literary trajectory of the author. What I want to highlight with the following quotations is the recent poetic centrality of this city in Kurdish poetry published since the 2000s. While poetry's political and social significance for the Kurdish people helps spread in the community political views of the homeland and of the life lived in it, Diyarbakır is a very common and recurring element, perhaps the most important urban symbol.

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[159] “Spehî bazarî”.

[160] “Sar bûn şevên Diyarbekirê, dizanî. / Lê ku min serî datanî ser balgîv /Û evîna te li xwe dipêça / Her sibe min didît wa balgîvê min şil / Û bijangên min / Bi xunav…”.

Among the recurring elements characterizing the city, the prison - for Kurds the epitome of Turkish occupation of the city (see next chapter) – is one of the most important. Arjen Arî in the poem *Di her Serlêdanê de*, talks about the "familiar door of prison in Diyarbekir" (Arî 2011, 59).[161] Simko Ahmedî integrates the element of the prison with the usual list of cities seen above (Duhokî 2013, 431):

> Aşti and Helgurd
> Are both Kurdish
> They are in a fascist prison…
> But I do not know if that prison
> Is in Kirkuk,
> In Sanandaj or in Diyarbekir. [162]

Bro Omerî mentions the walls and the prison of Amed (Omerî 2013, 101), as does Serkeft Botan in his poem "Bihar" (Arî 2011, 134), while Ehmed Qerenî refers more broadly to the concept of destitution and "occupation" defining the city as "subjugated" and mentioning the "chains", while the city is also called "the flower of cultivated life" (Duhokî 2013, 179). The Newroz (New day), a spring celebration of Zoroastrian and Iranian origins recurring every 21st of March (Van Bruinessen 2016) is renowned in recent years as an element of Kurdish identity, charged with clear oppositional political values, which has been increasingly attached to the city of Amed. The Newroz is celebrated in Qerenî's poem "Divinations of the love cross" (Falikên Xaça Evînê): "the holy fire of Newroz, / the fire of life / in suppressed Diyarbekir" (Duhokî 2013, 179).[163] Hevî Berwarî, a female poet from South Kurdistan, wrote a poem entitled "The wounds of Amed's Castle: an invitation to uprising for Amed". In that she invokes the city as follows: "Oh my Amed, capital of fiery volcanoes" (Şikakî 2012, 202).[164] Hikmet Mehmet Hirorî also associates the Newroz with Amed (Duhokî 2013, 556):

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[161] "Biyanê Diyarbekirê nasên deriyê hepsê", Arjen Arî, *Payîza Peyvê*.''

[162] ''Aştî û Helgurd / Herdu Kurd in / Di zîndaneka faşîstan de dijîn… / Ez nizanim, ev zîndan e / Li Kêrkîkêye / Yan Sinindec yan li Diyarbekrê ye.''

> Every evening Newroz
> A shining flame
> Raised in front of the walls of Amed's castle
> Everyone would leave the house
> And take the streets. [165]

Bro Omerî in the poem *Fire* celebrates the Newroz as "the fire of insurgence" and recalls the tragic memory of Zekiye Alkan, a young medical student who set herself ablaze in protest over Amed's bastion on 21st of March 1990 (Omerî 2013, 101); a statue in Sulaymaniyah now remembers the sacrifice of the girl, a city at the other "corner" of Kurdistan. Hîlmî Akyol inaugurates his collection *Gula Niştiman* (Rose of the Homeland) with a poem entitled Agir im ("I am fire") that goes as follows (Akyol 2014, 7):

> I am fire
> In the heart of Amed
> [...]
> In every part of the homeland
> I have warmed up and illuminated
> The dark prison.
> In Turkey I have been
> Candle and torch for the night.
>
> I am fire
> And in every part of the world
> I burn all the colonies

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[163] ''Agirê Pîroz… bo Newrozê / Agirê jînê / Ya li jêrderst e Diyarbekir''.

[164] "Ameda min/ Ey paytexta volkanên agirîn''.

[165] ''Hemî êvariyên Nevrozê / Gurryeka geş / Ji ber kêleka kela Amedê bilind dibît / Li hemî mala digerît / Li hemî kolana diçît.''

I shade light
Over oppressed peoples.

I am fire
Arrow in the brain of the enemy. [166]

Here the Newroz fire is made a universal anti-colonial symbol for "all the oppressed people" and Amed is symbolically a capital of this struggle, since the fire irradiates from the city's heart and shines all over the homeland and the entire colonized world. Hemîd Dilbihar, in "I have become a free Kurdistan" (*Ez bûm Kurdistaneke Azad*), correlates Amed with Jerusalem as city-symbols of two peoples' struggles and invites the two cities to join in a "revolutionary cry" (Arî 2011, 333). Feratê Dengizî's poem "Newroz is life" (*Newroz jiyan e*) gives a representation of a "nation with a single voice / that wakes up / and escape the historical prison" (Ibid., 586).[167] From Amed "the day spreads around" and "with an army of happy and colourful dancers / Kurds lift their heads with their generous leader / and the homeland is now KURDISTAN" (Ibid.)[168] Tewfiq Hêja dedicates a long poem to Amed and the Newroz entitled "The Fire of Amed Newroz" (Agirê Amedê Newroz). In a depiction of the dances and celebrations, the author repeatedly represents a communion between himself and the city in lines such as the following: "I cry / Amed flares up my voice"; "I cry / Amed vibrates with my cry"; "I cry / Amed cries for me". The author recalls the episode of Zekiye Alkan; the girl is described as climbing the stairs of Amed's castle and, using the red colour of the fire as if were henna, Zekiye "becomes the bride of Kurdistan" (Ibid., 500).[169] The celebration is exalted along political values of which the city seems to be the paladin: "the Newroz of revolution, / of dignity, freedom and redemption / I have kissed the stones of Amed's streets" (Ibid.,

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[166] ''Ez agir im / Li nav Amed / Li her alî Niştiman / Min germ û ronî kir / Tarî zindan / Li Tirkiyê bûm / Find û çira şevan / Ez agir im / Li her alî cîhan / Ez ê bîşewitînim / Hemû mêtîngeran / Tîrêj bidim / Welatê bindestan. / Ez agir im / Tîra mejiyê neyaran.''

[167] ''Netwek bi yek deng / Hişyar dibe / Derdikeve ji zindana dirokê.''

[168] ''Bi artêş govend dîlan û şahî / Kurdan serî rakirin bi Serokê dilovan / Welat êdî KURDSITAN.''

[169] ''Bû bûka Kurdistanê''

501).[170] On such a day of celebration the surrounding natural landscape is in harmony with the people, as if supporting their political will: “With rustling sounds in the air of Amed birds and fowls bring the good news of a new day: a New Day, a New day…” (Ibid., 502).[171] Moreover, to conclude, the cities of the divided Kurdistan, as in various examples above, ideally unite the country as the poet invites “Amed, Hewler and Sanandaj” to shake hands (Ibid., 502).

A frequent metaphor used to express attachment between the poet and the urban space consists of representing the city as a woman, or equating it to a real woman (Kandiyoti 1989, 1988; Peterson 1999; Kaplan, Alarcón, e Moallem 2007). This metaphor quite overtly voices sentiments of possession, protection, and exclusivity toward the place. In the final line of Rojen Barnas’ debut “I went to Diyarbekir”, the city is addressed as a “beautiful tattooed girl”. Yılmaz Odabaşı, as quoted above, laments how he feels misunderstood by his lover and his city (Odabaşı 2014, 9). Similarly, Loqman Polat in “You and Amed” (Tu û Amed) very clearly likens the city to his beloved woman Rojda (Polat 2003, 13). The whole poetry collection is inspired by the nostalgia caused by the exile in Sweden. The collection’s title is “Poems from the exile” (*Helbestên Sirgûniyê*) and in the first poem Polat declares to be “moaning in nostalgia for my homeland” (Ibid., 7). In “You and Amed”, distance and nostalgia seem to be decisive elements in likening city (representative of the entire homeland) and beloved (Ibid., 13):

City at the heart of my homeland
City of my dreams and imaginations
City of my youth and strength
Amed / Diyarbekir.

I crave to see you
I hope for my return […]

My star has remained in Amed,

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[170] ‘’Newroza serhildanan / Erê rûmeta azadî û xelasiyê / Erê, min ji kevirên kolanên Amedê ramûsa.’’

[171] ‘’Xuşexuşa avên A me dê mizgîniya rojeke nû dide teyr / û tilûrên welatê şeyda: Nû roj, Nû roj…’’

> My sweet-fairy, Rojda.
> Write me a letter
> And your scent shall be in the letter.
>
> I tell your name to my frightened heart
> I look for answers about you
> By the river's waves…
> Enough with this nostalgia!
> I am craving for return,
> In the middle of my dreams
> I destroy both my lovers:
> One is you, the other one Amed.[172]

Another example of "feminization" of the city of Amed is given in a poem by Newaf Mîro entitled "Amed"*.* From his exile in Germany, the poet imagines himself to be a "breeze" blowing down from the Karacadağ Mountain and entering "in the middle of the streets and the castle" (Mîro 2007, 59).[173] The poet addresses the city directly, which is described as a lover with female, sensual features: the city possesses "pride and beauty", "hair locks and braids", a "scent", "chest and arms", and has "the sleep of unmarried virgins" (Ibid., 59).[174] The city is constantly recalled in its physicality, as for example "the black stones" (Ibid., 60). Despite time passing by, the city is always "young" and maintains its "beauty and grace" (ciwanî", "bedewî û delalî", Ibid., 60). Interestingly the woman-like representation of the city allows the poet to articulate the theme of colonization around the metaphor of the virgin violated by enemies and nasty people. The city appears surrounded on every side by people who would violate its honour, although it “never bow head in front of the evil armies” (Ibid., 61):[175]

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[172] "Bajarê dilê welatê min / Bajarê xewn û xeyalên min / Bajarê xort û ciwaniya min / Amed/Diyarbekir. / Ex bi hesreta dîtina te / li benda vegerê me […] Stêrka min li Amedê ma / Nazpêriya min. Rojda. / ji min re nameyekê binivîse. / Bila bêhna te bi nameyê be. / Min nave te ji tirsa dilê xwe re got, / pirsa ji pêlên çem kir / Ez geriyam…/ Êdî bes e ev hesret! / Ez li benda vegerê / di nav xewn û xeyalên xwe de / herdu evîndarên xwe dihezînim: / Yek tu yî, yek jî Amed".

[173] "Li nav kolan / Sûr û bedena te".

[174] Respectively, "şahnazî û bedewî", "bisk û kezîyên", "bêhn", "hînav û cengên", "xewna bakîr û azeban".

> Prettiest among the beauties
> Prettiest lover among lover
> Endless love
> You have never
> Been the lover
> Of cruel or cowardly people
> Homeland of my heart, Amed (Ibid., 63). [176]

The poet dreams to “lift the veil” over the city’s “face” and dry “those tears that flow on her cheeks”. The overlapping between erotic and political concepts in Kurdish poetry, and especially on the feminization of the homeland and “lifting the veil” as a metaphor for sexual coition as well as for awakening against the oppression, has already been noticed in the poetry of Cegerxwîn and Barnas (Metin 2014). The triangular relationship between the poet and the city, and mischievous enemies, is articulated in erotic terms. The concept of ‘possession’, seems to blur between its two possible meanings: sexual possession of the lover and territorial possession (occupation) of the city. In addition, Hîlmî Akyol, in his poem entitled “Amed”, thinks of the city in these terms (Akyol 2014, 9): ‘’Diyarbekir, / A bride beautiful and precious’’ (bûka rind û hêja).

Also Veysi Özgür has a poem entitled “Amed” in his collection *Bêje* (Say), and he also articulates the longing for the city from exile with the lexicon of love (Özgür 2007, 16):

> Oh city by the shore of Tigris
> place to profound loves
> […]
> Where is my youth?
> You have taught me how to love

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[175] “Serî tu car natewînin […] Li dij arteşa ehrîman û zordaran”.

[176] “Delalîya delalan / Evîna evîndaran / evîna bê mirin / Tu tucar / Ji zalim û xwe firoşan / Nebû û nabi yar / Dîyare dilê min Amed.”

You gave me love
From beneath the earth
Up until the clouds. [177]

The relational attachment to the city does not seem to change significantly when we reverse the gender perspective. Gulîzer addresses at least two poems to the city. In her poem "Bûka Baranê" (Rainbow, literally The rain's Bride), the place is overtly anthropomorphised and in the end the poet confesses to the city that (Şikakî 2012, 71):

My heart stays with you, Amed.
I cannot do without you.
For as much as I go and come back
Or count other cities
My heart still dwells in you
Amed.[178]

Gulîzer again talks to the city in her poetry in "Diyarê Bakîrê" (a word play with the city name divided in the words "diyar"= land and "Bakîrê"= virgin, unmarried). In the poem "Ba(jar)" (again a word play - bajar means "city", but ba=wind and jar=miserable or poison), Gulîzer puts forward a deep identification between herself and the city (Gulîzer 2006, 35):

My heart has become the face of this city;
My wounds know its alleyways one by one.[179]

Mem Ronga in *Destên Min li Destên Te Digere* includes at least two poems dedicated to the symbolical natural and urban landscape: one is entitled "Dicle" (Tigris) and the other "Diyarbekir". In the latter, the poet in exile in Sweden recalls those summer days in which the extreme heat would prompt people towards the "freshness" given by a bite of those "famous watermelons". From the anguish of the exile, the city is evoked as follows (Arî 2011, 75):

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[177] ''Bajarê li kêleka Dicle / ware evînên kûr /…/ Ka xortaniya min / Te ez hînî / evînê kirim / Te da min evîna / ji binê erdê / heta sere ewran.''
[178] ''Dilê min ji te dimîne / Destê min ji te nabe / Ewqas diberim têm / Dijmêrim bajaran / Dilê min dîsa li te dimîne / Amedê''
[179] ''Dilêm bûye sûretê vî bajarî / Birînên min kuçeyên wî yeko yeko dinasin".

> Oh you ancient, great and unique city
> With your glittering black stones
> And a fresh spring sky
> You flutter in my heart
> In this night of deplorable exile.[180]

In Sîpan Xizan's "Keçika Amedê Ez im" (It's me the young girl of Amed) the entire poem equates the self and the city landscape concluding each stanza with the refrain "in Amed the gorgeous and sweet." Here is just an example (Xizan 2010, 69):

> I am the dove of peace,
> In Amed, the sweet
> I am the harbinger of peace
> In Amed the beautiful and sweet. [181]

During the poem Sipan likens himself to the "girls" and "boys" of Amed, to its physical features (the walls, the gates, the gardens) and to the city's political will for "peace", "democracy", "unity". In another the poem, "Homeland" (Welat), he stretches Kurdistan "from Amed down to Lorestan", urges the youth to take to the streets of Amed and build their own Kurdistan: the city is described has having a "broken heart". Again, the poem "I shall not die" (Ez nimirim) is a long exhortation to resist "until the day of freedom"; the homeland is repeatedly praised for its beauty and people are invited to become "freedom workers" and to build a just Kurdistan, breaking the "chains of workers and peasants". Amed is there again, rising to the role of capital of the country. Xizan encourages his reader: "With stones and the sweat of workers / Let's turn Amed into a palace".

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[180] "Tu bajarê kevnare, mezin û bitenê / bi çirisandinê reşemermer / û asîmanê xwe î biharî / di dilê min de leylan didî / li vê şeva mişextîya kambax".

[181] ''Kevoka aştiyê ez im / Li Amedê şêrîn ez im / Qasîde aştiyê ez im / Li Ameda xweş û şêrîn''.

Further on, towards the conclusion of the poem Amed recurs twice (Arî 2011, 465):

> In Cizre, in Amed,
> At Ehmede Xani's grave
> Let's rejoice the country.
> […]
> I shall not die! I shall not die!
> And see that that jubilee in Amed.[182]

Also in the poem "Qedera Welat", Sipan Xizan, in a context of "black destiny" for the homeland, summons the symbol of Amed with a sense of prominence and pride, just before calling his people to "Make revolution in our country / and change the world", imagining the day "when we too will sit / on the throne of Amed" (Ibid., 466).[183]

Negative representations of the city by that time seem to give way to warmer and more peaceful feelings. This is shown by Feratê Dengizî, who we have seen above celebrating the symbol of Newroz, in the poem "My homeland is beautiful" (Ibid., 587):

> I love so much Amed's dawns
> If a breeze of morning winds blows from Karacadag
> The morning red sun
> Slowly opens up the streets and the bazar…[184]

In Hîlmî Akyol's 2014 collection *Gula Niştiman* (Rose of the Homeland), Amed is a recurrent element. It is possible to spot in Akyol's poetry almost the whole array of themes concerning the city. The use of the Newroz symbol and of the "feminization" of the city in this collection has already been cited above.

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[182] ''Li Cizîrê, Li Amedê. / Ser gora Ehmedê Xanê / Şahî çekin li welatê xwe / … / Ez nemirin ez nemirin / Bibînim cejna li Amedê.''

[183] "Keyê mejî li Amedê / Rûniştîba li ser kûrsî."

[184] "Pir hez dikim ji berbangên Amedê / Tew ku sirek bayê sibê yê Qerejdax jî hebe / Sibe bi rojê sor / Hêdî hêdî kuçe û sûk" vedibe".

Diyarbakir figures at least in three different poems in the collection: “I am fire” (Ez Agir im), “Amed” (Amed) and “The Girl of Amed” (Keça Amedî) (Akyol 2014, 7, 8 and 71). The second poem, “Amed” (written in 1991), is directly dedicated to the city, described in detail in its physicality (Akyol 2014, 8):

> High ramparts
> With many gates,
> Black Stones
> Lined up
> Like pearls.
>
> On the west Urfa Gate
> On the North, Mountain Gate
> On the east, New Gate
> On the south, Mardin Gate.
> Those the famous Gates.
>
> In its waist
> Like a castle
> Springing from the local stone
> A water fountain
> Cooler than ice.
> It is an ancient city
> With both mosques and churches.[185]

Akyol names the gardens by the Tigris River, the Ten-eyed Bridge among the beauties of the city, but most of all recalls Amed as “the target of Sheikh Said / the tomb of the hanged martyrs” (Akyol 2014, 8).[186] The city is: “an arrow in the head of the enemy / the school of Kurdish youth, / Diyarbakır famous city” (Akyol 2014, 8).[187] The edifices, inns and mosques of the city are described alongside as “like the teeth of sixteen years old boys”: The great Mosque, Hasan Pasha Inn, Deliler Inn, the seven Brother Tower (Akyol 2014, 9):

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[185] ‘’Bedena bilind / Bi pir derî / Kevirên reş / Hatine rêz kirin / Weke mircan. / Li Rojava Derê Riha / Li Bakur Derê Çiyê / Li Rojhelat Derê Nû / Li başur Derê Mêrdin / Deryên bin av û nişan. / Navkela wê / Weke qesrek / Ji kevirên dir. / Ava kaniya şêr / Sartitîn ji qeşemê / Bajarê kevnar ê / Hem bi mizgeft û hem bi dêr e.’’

[186] ‘’Nîşangeha Şêx Seîd / Gora şehîdên daleqandî’’.

[187] ‘’Kelemê nav çavên neyar. / Dibistan xortê Kurd’’.

> Amed, the centre
> Of the cities of the region.
>
> Diyarbakır
> A beautiful and precious bride.
> Under the control of the enemy
> Today it resists,
> With its renowned
> Peshmergas.
>
> On its walls
> Is written
> Amed, capital of the homeland.[188]

Reconnecting to Barnas’ foundational poem “I carved my name on Diyarbakir’s walls”, Akyol ideally and imaginatively concludes the process of decolonization of the city from a subjugated, occupied and peripheral space, into a liberated and central place: “On its walls / Is written /Amed, capital of the homeland.” Many years after Barnas’ seminal and resistant engraving of the Kurdish identity on the physical body of the city, symbolized in its key architectural feature (the walls), Akyol seems to close the circle representing those walls expressing the political and emotional centrality of the city for the Kurdish identity; and above all its declaration of alterity in respect to the Turkish State.

Conclusion

What I have tried to show with so many examples is that the role of the city in the Kurdish emotional and political imaginary is crucial. Its geographical position corresponds to an emotional and affective position that locates it at the centre. Despite the fact that the city retains and exemplifies many elements of the wounded Kurdish identity, it is nonetheless a symbol of pride, of redemption and dignity of the latter. The Kurdish language corpus offers the image of a city framed strongly within the nationalist paradigm, and sees a central position assigned to it.

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[188] “Amed navenda bajarên / Li der û dora xwe / Diyarbekir / Bûka rind û hêja. / Di dest û di bin zilma neyar de / Îro berxwe dide / Nav û nîşanên / Pêşmergan. / Li bircên wê / Hatî nivisandin / Amed Serbajarê Niştiman”.

At the same time, the Turkish language corpus offers us a much more nuanced and multifaceted image of the city. It is a plurality of images: it ranges from a symbol of the Turkish nation, to the lost hometown of the intellectual/professionals born in the city who moved towards the economic and political centre of Turkey; from lost abode of a multicultural and peaceful coexistence, to emblem of an entire region and its social and economic demands. Overall, what is to me of great interest is the way in which poetry often offers a geographical and spatial system in which the city is enclosed, and that such a system is significantly diverse in the two corpuses. This spatial weaving of Diyarbakır with other geographical elements corresponds to an emotional and sentimental system of the author and of its readers. In one case, Diyarbakır is perceived within the factual reality of the Turkish State, and the political, social and economic relations it entails. On the other hand, Diyarbakır (re-named Amed or Diyarbekir) is perceived within the framework of an imagined territory, lived and experienced more directly in the imaginative space of poetry than anywhere else.

6. Diyarbakır post 1980. Romance and Reality

In this chapter I set out to analyse the distinctive literary and cultural image of Diyarbakır that emerged nationally and internationally in the years following the 1980 military coup, an event that tragically marked Turkey's contemporary history and that created in the city of Diyarbakır a vast reservoir of traumatic memories. Post-1980 Diyarbakır is a place characterized by violence, torture, extrajudicial killings, curfews, and militarization. The years following the coup have been called the "bloody years" ("kanlı yıllar", Alakom 2010, 122) for the devastating violence that branded them. According to the figures provided by Kısacık, following the 12 September coup 650,000 people were arrested, 230,000 people tried; 517 death penalties were promulgated; among those 50 were fulfilled. Thirty thousand people were removed from their posts, another 30,000 people emigrated abroad as political refugees; 300 people died in suspect circumstances, and 171 died because of torture; 43 committed suicide (Kısacık 2011, 9). Those events left a significant mark on Turkish, Kurdish and also international collectıve memory (Karacan 2016) with a reflection, obviously, in literature.

This chapter, after an overview of the literary corpus that rotates around post-1980 Diyarbakır, will delve into the work of six authors (three of them writing in the Kurdish language and the other three writing in the Turkish language), who published between 1984 and 2015; their works bear evidence and testimony to the events ensuing the military coup d'état and of their consequences on the overall image of the city of Diyarbakır.

In fact, it is hard to deny that, at least after the 1980-coup and the outburst of the PKK insurgency in 1984, Diyarbakır has acquired, nationally and internationally, a dark and violent reputation. The latter is reflected and reinforced by literary representations. As we have seen in Chapter Two, western travellers, reporters and journalists who visited the city in the 1990s and 2000s, in their descriptions of the city accentuated the violent and grim shades. It is in this period of time that Diyarbakır begins to be recognized as a "Kurdish bastion", namely the main urban location claimed by Kurds in Turkey. The image of the 'bastion', which clearly draws upon the physical shape of the city, activates conceptual dynamics of clash: if Diyarbakır is a Kurdish bastion, it is also the headquarters of the Turkish State's heavy hand on the Kurds.

In the last three decades, at least since the mid-1990s but notably since the early 2000s onwards, a burgeoning corpus in Kurdish and Turkish literature has pivoted around the city, providing substantial descriptions of the place and often highlighting its conflict and fierce environment.

6.1. Diyarbakır prison N°5 and its reflections in literature

Undoubtedly, one of Diyarbakır's key sites, where urban space and collective memories and memorialization intermingle, debate and counterpoise at best, is Diyarbakır Prison, also known as Prison N°5 or E-type Prison. Eray Çaylı acutely recognizes and discusses it as one of the city's 'witness sites', namely "architectural spaces that witnessed atrocities whose socio-political legacy has continued to this day" (Çaylı 2015, 63). In particular, for Çaylı the prison holds a "constitutive role in what has come to be called 'the Kurdish question'" (Çaylı 2015, 69). As shown also by Welat Zeydanlıoğlu, the prison epitomizes attempts made by the Turkish State to assimilate and Turkify the Kurdish population in the city and its surroundings, since the start of the Republic in 1923 and with renewed harshness in 1980. The violence in the prison is qualified by an "ethnic character" and many authors agree on the fact that those practices hold a huge share of responsibility for the armed insurgency led by the PKK that erupted in 1984 and that continues today (Zeydanlıoglu 2009, 8):

> It can easily be asserted that the practices in Diyarbakır, the unofficial capital of the Kurdish region, played a crucial role in the crystallisation of nationalist secessionist ideas and the radicalisation of a generation of Kurds.

Hakan Yavuz suggests that the 1980 military coup and the prison practices contributed to creating a "siege mentality" among the Kurds, while the Kurdish politician and former inmate Nazif Kaleli associates those violent practices with the identity of the very place in which the prison is located (Zeydanlıoglu 2009, 10):

> Diyarbakır is something different. History has not seen anything like the Diyarbakır Prison…This is because the identity of Diyarbakır was different and all these practices were targeting this very identity.

In this quotation the city is interpreted as representative of an entire ethnic, political and cultural community and the prison – obviously along with other repressive measures taken after the coup – is understood as an outright and outrageous attack on that community. Bringing this argument forward, Yıldız has noted how the practices implemented in the prison were not meant only to Turkify the prisoner – and to coerce the population outside to submit to the hegemonic Turkish culture – “but rather to inscribe forcibly into their memories the consequences of their political, ideological and ethnic claims. The aim was not to assimilate the prisoners into Turkishness, but rather to destroy their Kurdishness” (Yaprak Yıldız 2016, 190).

As Yıldız highlighted: “The bodies of the prisoners in Diyarbakır prison were turned into mnemonic devices reminding them and the wider Kurdish population that the power of life and death lay with the state” (Yaprak Yıldız 2016, 191). The state attached a peculiarly “educational” vocation to the prison of Diyarbakır. The military officer Esat Oktay Yildiran himself used to refer to the prison as a “military school” and speak about the prisoners as “students”. However, the “didactic” vocation of the prison was not limited only to the prisoners but was meant also for the Kurdish – or at least antagonistic – population outside the prison itself. Again with Yıldız (Yaprak Yıldız 2016, 194):

> By forcing the prisoners to repent for their ethnic identity and political convictions, confess the crimes attributed to them and inform on their fellow prisoners, the regime aimed at destroying their ethnic and political identity, breaking their will and solidarity and discrediting the Kurdish political groups inside and outside the prison.

The scars inflicted on the physical bodies and on the memories of the largely Kurdish prisoners of Diyarbakır military jail were meant to imprint also on the social body of the Kurdish community and on its collective memory. The “spatial dialogue” between the inside of the prison and the outside of the city was intense, not only because of the relational bonds between the inmates and the inhabitants, but also on a symbolical level. Therefore, the experiences of the prison, which occurred mainly in the 1980s, but emerging in literary accounts after the mid-1990s, have contributed significantly to characterizing the overall atmosphere of the city and its representations.

The darkest period in Diyarbakır prison is that occurring between the coup on the 12 of September and 1984 – in particular under the administration of Esat Oktay Yıldıran; after 1984, a relative relaxation of the extreme measures took place. Nonetheless that period left significant scars on people's bodies and on collective memory. Thirty-five prisoners died on account of the tortures they were subjected to or because they used their very bodies as a means of resistance to the authority's aggression: many died on hunger strikes; several committed suicide or burnt themselves to death, reactıvatıng the legendary meaning of fire for Kurdish culture in the figure of Kaveh the Blacksmith and the Newroz celebration.[189]

It is, then, of little surprise that literature has contributed substantially in the memorialization of the traumatic experiences of the prison. This process has happened substantially in the diaspora, since many former inmates in the Turkish prisons fled the country as a consequence. Furthermore, Kurdish contemporary literature at the beginning was mainly produced in the diaspora as well, and so are the three Kurdish novels analysed in this chapter. A number of Kurdish authors who fled their homeland as a consequence of the tragic post-1980 events are considered to be those who made possible a resurgence of Kurdish literature in the diaspora. Released from the restrictions imposed on their mother language in Turkey, diasporic writers had the chance to prove their Kurdishness in telling the stories contained, until then, by the prison walls. In fact, according to Galip, "the coup and the conditions in Diyarbakır prison […] constitute a crucial aspect of [Kurdish] diasporic memory" (Galip 2014, 127).

In particular, Clemence Scalbert-Yücel has analysed the organization of the linguistic knowledge and the literary production of the Kurdish diaspora in Sweden, undoubtedly the most significant section of the Kurdish diaspora in Europe, from a literary perspective. Immigration and educational policies in Sweden made it possible that a vigorously politicized Kurdish diaspora developed Kurdish letters in ways that were not possible at home, under the yoke of the Turkish State's denial of Kurdish language and culture. Many, if not all, of the Kurdish authors who settled in Sweden during the 1980s were fleeing the surge of violence following the coup and, most of all, escaping political persecution (Scalbert-Yücel 2006, 5). Many of them were members of political parties that became outlawed the day after September 12. Therefore, many of them experienced at first hand imprisonment in the infamous prison of Diyarbakır. In this context, the distinction between political commitment and literary engagement is hard to define. Many of these authors conceived their literary work as a means of activism and militancy against the perceived enemy, namely the Turkish State (Scalbert-Yücel 2006, 5). Therefore, while that generation of Kurdish intellectuals was trying to open up new possibilities for the Kurdish language and culture, as a way to foster Kurdish political claims, the prison became a well-established traumatic trope of the Kurdish collective memory. According to Scalbert-Yücel: "Sweden is neatly constructed as the shelter for language-identity and its memory […] a knowledge about one's language but also a knowledge about self, about identity" (Scalbert-Yücel 2006, 2). Moreover, from a literary perspective, it appears to be important that the conformation of memory and identity by diasporic writers is mediated by a literary genre, up until then totally non-existent in Kurdish Kurmanji literature: the novel[190] (Scalbert-Yücel 2006, 2013, 257; Galip 2015).

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[189] "The glorification of Kawe culminated after the violent death of PKK leader Mazlum Doğan in Diyarbakır prison in 1982. According to one necrology, Mazlum delivered a speech to his fellow prisoners on March 21 of that year, explaining to them the meaning of Newroz as a symbol of rebirth after death and of liberation, and lighting a Newroz fire — a candle, or three matches, or in some later versions even himself — after which he was killed by "the colonial powers." Since then, the PKK has celebrated Mazlum Doğan as the Kawe of our days. In the early 1990s, this modern Kawe was immortalised in a theatre play performed at Newroz parties in the diaspora" (Van Bruinessen 2016, 38).

Mehmed Uzun's first novel *Tu* (1984, see infra), which is the first contemporary Kurdish Kurmanji novel (and happened to be published in the diaspora), is entirely narrated by the protagonist from a cell in Diyarbakır prison. Uzun was detained in Turkish prisons for political reasons before escaping to Sweden, where he found the conditions to commit to his project of revitalizing Kurdish literature. As will be clearer later, in the detailed analysis of the book, the account of the harsh conditions in the prison creates the opportunity for a reasoning about the city where the prison is located, which is here described as the "capital city of an oppressed people" (Uzun 2005, 99). Furthermore, Uzun puts forward an interpretation shared by many writers and commentators to this day, namely that the organisation of a Kurdish political and cultural movement was generated by the very internment in the same place of many Kurdish intellectuals. Bûbê Eser is another Kurdish writer who spent three years in Diyarbakır's jail, enduring more than seventy days of torture. After his release in 1983 he fled to Sweden where he began writing. In his career he tackled the prison experiences at least twice: his first novel *Gardiyan* ("The Guardian", 1994) focuses on the events that occurred in the prison between 1980 and 1982; the experiences of the imprisonment are also recalled in his novel *Jiyanek* ("A Life", 2004). Mihemed Dehsiwar, an author born in Batman who migrated to Sweden after the coup-d'état, often refers to the conditions of incarceration in Diyarbakır prison in *Çirîsken Rizgariyê* ("Flames of Liberation", 1995). Medenî Ferho, a journalist and writer, shares the same destiny of migration to Europe after six-and-a-half years of reclusion in Diyarbakır prison following 12 September. In his novel *Xaltîka Zeyno* ("Auntie Zeyno", 1997), similar to what happens in Uzun's *Tu*, the protagonist is held in the infamous prison and from there recounts her life and the places of Kurdistan: the prison cell becomes a prism from which the author envisions the imagined homeland, Kurdistan (see Galip 2015, 132). Mistefa Aydoğan is another Kurd from Turkey who migrated to Sweden in the mid-1980s; in *Pêlên Bêrîkirinê* ("Nostalgia's Waves", 1999) he depicts accurately practices and rituals of torture that took place in the prison and accounts for the scars that those treatments have left upon the protagonist. The scary impact of the tortures inflicted in Diyarbakır prison have a significant place also in *Mamostayê Zinaran* ("Teachers of the Rocks", 1999), a novel about a Kurdish village and the teachers sent to the local school by the Turkish State, written by Fêrgîn Melîk Aykoç, a writer who, similar to those previously mentioned, fled to Germany after experiencing seventeen days of torture in the Prison N° 5. The scars left by the physical and psychological legacy of the days spent inside the prison are the subject also of *Binefşên Tariyê* ("Violets of Darkness", 1999) by Zeynel Abidîn a Kurdish writer who settled in Berlin after fleeing his homeland. The terrible experiences in the prison are dealt with in many novels by Laleş Qaso, a writer from Mardin who then settled in Sweden: *Zindanên Dîyarbekirê û Şoreşgeriya me* ("The Prisons of Diyarbakır and our Revolution", 1999), the trilogy composed by *Sê şev û sê roj* ("Three nights and three days", 1999) *Xezeba Azadîyê* ("Freedom's Wrath", 2000) *Wêran* ("Ruined", 2002) and *Ronakbîr* ("Ronakbir/Intellectual", 2003). Mezher Bozan, a writer who migrated to Sweden in 1986, deals with the 12 September coup d'état and the circumstances of Diyarbakır prison in two novels of a tetralogy *Av Zelal Bû* ("The Water was Clear", particularly volumes II and III, 2004 and 2006) as well as in *Asim* ("Asim", 2007), in which details of the tortures are provided in the descriptions.

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[190] A significant exception is represented by the work of Arab Shamilov, a Yazidi Kurdish novelist who lived in the Sovie Union and published in 1935 what is considered as the first Kurdish novel, *Şivanê Kurmanca (The Kurdish Shepherd).*

This Kurdish corpus had a relatively small audience due to the language and the difficulties of reaching the however small Kurdish readership. A book that managed to report the terrible facts of Diyarbakır prison to a wider audience – thus contributing to the broader image of the city on an international level - was published in French by Mehdi Zana, former mayor of the city who spent eleven years in the prison. His *La Prison No. 5: Onze ans dans les geôles turques* was dictated by the author to André Vaquelin and first published in French in 1995. Translations in English, Dutch and German (1997) soon followed, but only later in Turkish

(2004). The book illustrates to an international audience what the Turkish State had perpetrated on its opponents and especially on Kurds during the 1980s (Neely 2014). Zana's account, in particular, exposes to the world the intrinsic racial value of the violence of Diyarbakır's jail; according to Neely "the intersection between national rhetoric and torture is key to understanding the intentions of the state when administering torture against Kurds" (Neely 2014, 225). Zana provides "a counternarrative to the official history of the Republic of Turkey, re-establishing Turkey's pluralistic history" (Neely 2014; see also Dorronsoro and Watts 2009; Gündoğan 2011). As the prison was a place orchestrated to target Kurds as well as Kurdishness, Zana represented a very high-profile target as he "was a Kurdish mayor of *the* Kurdish cultural center Diyarbakir" (Neely 2014, 222) and managed to bring Turkey's Kurdish question to an international audience: "[*La Prison No. 5*] documented, for the international community Turkey's attempt to legitimize its marginalization of Kurds" (Neely 2014, 230).

As said above, Zana's memoir of the prison was translated into Turkish as late as 2004, almost ten years after its publication. In fact, the literary Turkish language corpus dealing with the coup and the prison is relatively more recent, growing larger particularly during the 2000s and 2010s, when a partial relaxation about the Kurdish question, and perhaps a certain historical distance from the facts, allowed the collectivization and memorialization of the traumatic events of the prison. It also started a public debate about the destiny of the prison building itself. An early exception is represented by Yılmaz Odabaşı's *Eylül Defterleri* ("September Notebooks", 1991), an account of the author's imprisonment in the infamous jail between 1980 and 1985. The memoir, while accounting for the facts that happened in the prison, depicts at the same time the violent atmosphere hovering in the streets of Diyarbakır. Since the 1980 coup, and then the fictional representations of it, Diyarbakır's image became intrinsically connected with violence. One chapter's title reads explicitly: "It was the season of blood; it was Diyarbakır 1980-81." From Odabaşı's early account emerges another trope, briefly mentioned above, of the Diyarbakır prison literature: the prison as a 'school or university'. The prison became the place where the Turkish state involuntarily gathered a Kurdish intelligentsia that in the prison found the chance to exchange knowledge, further elaborate the political value of their Kurdishness and above all organize future resistance. As Neely puts it: "Despite the best attempts of the state, prison became a space of Kurdishness" (Neely 2014, 228). Yılmaz Odabaşı also entitles a paragraph of his memoir "A School", suggesting how in the prison the Kurdish political movement gathered around the election as mayor of Mehdi Zana, who found a way to tighten up relations and develop strategies. Another early publication in Turkish about the events happening in the prison is again authored by Mehdi Zana and entitled *Vahşetin Günlüğü* (The diary of Violence, Zana 1992).

In 2001 Muzaffer Ayata publishes for the first time the two volumes of *Tarihe Ateşten bir sayfa: Diyarbakır Zindanları* (A Page of Fire for History: Diyarbakir prisons, Ayata 2011), compiled as early as 1991, ten years before publication was possible and then re-edited in 2011. In the year 2003 an entire issue (N. 14, September-October) of the journal *Serbestî* is devoted to "Diyarbakır Military Prison No.5". Extensive interviews with former inmates of the prison exposed in detail the humiliating practices implemented by the Turkish military. The issue testifies to the structuring of a narrative of the traumas inflicted by the prison on collective memory. Among the many persons interviewed about the issue there are, for example, two writers in whose literary works the prison experience plays a decisive role: Mesut Baştürk, who wrote in Turkish *Esat, Polat ve Azat* ("Esat, Polat and Azat", 2007), a novel about the prison written with the intention of "attracting the attention of a multitude of people on the facts happened in Diyarbakır prison" (Baştürk 2007, 1); the other is Selahattin Bulut, an author writing in Kurdish who in the short story *Lal* ("Mute", in *Bihuşta Lal*, 2012) gives a representation of the painfully awkward moment occurring for the prison's Kurdish inmates during the visiting hours, when they were forced to talk with their relatives in Turkish, a language often unknown to the elderly.[191] The same author has dedicated another work to the prison experience with the novel *Xadim* ("Eunuch", 2012) in which the author tackles the issue of castration as sterilization of Kurdish men, not only as a practice of torture implemented in the prison, but also as a metaphor of the overall annihilation of Kurdish culture. In recent years the corpus of fictional and memoir works published in Turkish about the prison has been growing significantly: one can mention for example the novels *Hawar* (A Cry for Help! 2014) by Ali Oruç, *Diyarbakir 5 No.lu* (Diyarbakir N°5, 2013) by Bayram Bozyel or *Hawar. Amed'te Vahşet Geceleri* (Help. Nights of Savagery in Amed, 2013) by Abdullah Kanat. In 2003 the historian Hasan Cemal published a study on the Kurds, *Kürtler* ("The Kurds", 2003) in which the first forty pages are dedicated to the memories of a former inmate, Fırat Cemiloğlu, so as to testify to the factual and symbolical relevance of Diyarbakır prison in the contemporary definition of Kurdish identity. In 2004 Orhan Miroğlu in *Ölümden*

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[191] After a trip to Turkey Harold Pinter has given a very poignant representation of this very fact in his piece entitled *Mountain Language* (1988).

Kalma, Diyarbakır Cezaevi'nden mektupları (Escaping Death. Letters from Diyarbakir Prison, 2004) published his private letters written to his relatives and friends during his imprisonment in the jail. In 2006 Selim Çürükkaya published the memoir *O Türküyü Söyle* (Sing that song, Çürükkaya 2006), but fifteen years earlier he had published in Germany another book about the prison entitled *12 Eylül Karanlığında Diyarbakır Şafağı* (Diyarbakır dawn in the 12 September dark, Çürükkaya 1990); in the foreword the editor grasps the deep entangling between the prison and the overall appearance of the city called here "the capital of the Kurds": "Yet today when one says Diyarbakır the first thing that comes to mind is Diyarbakır prison" (Çürükkaya 1990)**.** In 2011 the publishing house Avesta published a conversation between journalist Firat Aydınkaya and former inmate Hamit Kankılıç: *Ölüm Koridoru. Diyarbakır Cezaevi'nden Notlar* (The Death Corridor. Notes from Diyarbakır Prison'', 2011). İsa Tekin, another former inmate, published his personal memoir entitled '*E Tipi Hilton', Diyarbakır Zindanı* ("E-Type Hilton, Diyarbakir Prison") in 2012, whilst in 2015 journalist Raşit Kısacık published a detailed analysis of the prison, the tortures and the political context in *İşkence ve ölüm adresi Diyarbakır Cezaevi* ("Death and Torture's address Diyarbakir Prison", 2015). Facts and characters related to Diyarbakır Prison are to be found also in works from well-established Turkish authors, such as in Oya Baydar's *Sicak Külleri Kaldı* (2000), in Şebnem İşigüzel's novel *Resmigeçit* (2008) and Diyarbakır's violent years are described in Ebru Gökçen Emre's *Aynı Güneşin Çocukları* (2007) and in Vedat Türkali's *Kayıp Romanlar* (2004).

From this rapid overview, it is evident how Diyarbakır prison has produced a relevant corpus of literature, either in Kurdish, Turkish or an international language. The prison located in Diyarbakır has, therefore, become a real-and-imagined place that strongly speaks for Turkey's "bloody years" following the 1980 coup. Also, the prison contributes strongly to the grim, violent and disquieting image of Diyarbakır emerging as a consequence of those years. The prison is emblematic of a social and political season of the city that still suffers its consequences today, as it will emerge in the most recent novels analysed further in this chapter. The brief overview sketched above on literature about Diyarbakır prison, I believe, helps us to see in perspective the novels analysed in detail below and read the novels in the following sections within the framework of the overall widespread image of the city in the 1990s and 2000s.

6.2. Diyarbakır post-1980 in Turkish language literature: Uyurkulak, Karabulut, Samancı

In the following section, I set out to analyse the image of Diyarbakir as it emerges from the work of three authors writing in the Turkish language and, in different fashions, is recognized by the Turkish literary milieu and by the national publishing market. Their representations of the city raise a range of diverse questions that I consider important in order to have a multi-faceted grasp of the overall portrayal of Diyarbakir in the years following the 1980 coup d'état. Furthermore, the three authors are linked to the city in varying ways: Suzan Samancı hails from Diyarbakir, and, as we will see, is esteemed by many a Kurdish writer publishing mostly in Turkish. She has a direct and protracted experience of the life and the events taking place in Diyarbakir during the 1980s and the 1990s. Murat Uyurkulak is a Turkish writer born in the West of Turkey, who developed a special and solid bond with the city, where he spends most of his time, and with the Kurdish political movement. Finally, Özcan Karabulut, who is somehow a foreigner to the city. He looks at it from the perspective of his living place, the capital Ankara, and visits it with a sort of touristic eye. Compared with the other two, Karabulut provides a more external gaze towards Diyarbakır, hence raising a number of interesting questions regarding the perception of the place for a Turkish intellectual (and reader) who is unfamiliar with it.

- 6.2.1 Suzan Samancı

Suzan Samancı belongs to that particular category of Kurdish writers who, for varied reasons, wrote most of their works in Turkish. This context allows her to straddle two literary fields, being recognized as a Kurdish writer but also receiving recognition from the Turkish literary and publishing system; furthermore her books have been translated into various foreign languages. Despite the fact that in 2014 Samancı published her first collection of short stories in her mother tongue, Kurdish, her previous works were written and published in Turkish (and often translated into Kurdish).

She was born in 1962 in a small village in the Diyarbakır province and moved to the city for her studies during her youth. Her literary debut in 1991 and her progressive literary affirmation occurred perhaps during the most violent and difficult years for the city of Diyarbakır. The latter plays a pronounced role in the author's literary imagination; as Yücel has noticed "the fictional world of Suzan Samancı is Diyarbakır, she looks and sees from there" (Yücel 2011, 651). Suzan Samancı's work offers perhaps one of the best literary representations of the gloomy and murderous atmosphere of life in Diyarbakır after the 1980 coup, during the OHAL emergency ruling of the region, in an historical moment during which the confrontation between the PKK guerrillas and the Turkish army was fiercest. Her works tackle coping with trauma and the daily life in a Diyarbakır shrouded by a dark veil of violence. As a local and a Kurd she brings to the attention of Turkish literature a close look at the conditions imposed on Diyarbakır inhabitants; therefore Samancı provides a unique vision to the world of what living – and writing – in Diyarbakır in those years implicated. She provides an "insider" eye to the city (Scalbert-Yücel 2012, 369) and represents accurately the rural-urban dynamics of the region.

Although Suzan Samancı made her debut as a poet, she definitely found literary recognition through the publication of short story collections and later through the publication of novels. As noted above, Samancı straddles the Turkish and Kurdish literary fields, as she writes in Turkish mostly about issues and themes concerning life in the Kurdish regions and especially in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakır.

> Although she is published by a major Turkish publishing house and writing in Turkish, Suzan Samancı is fully integrated within Diyarbakır's literary milieu as well as the Kurdish literary milieu and it is through this self-definition (woman and Kurdish writer, from Diyarbakır, the main Kurdish city) that the door of Turkish literature opens to her. (Scalbert-Yücel 2012, 368).

Most of her work has been translated into Kurdish, while later in her career the author made an effort to master her native language and in 2014 she published her first short story collection in Kurdish: *Ew jin û mêrê bi maskê*. Particularly in her earlier short story collections *Eriyip Gidiyor Gece* (1991), *Reçine Kokuyordu Helin* (1993) and *Suskunun Gölgesinde* (2001), the atmosphere and condition of 1980-90s Diyarbakır is portrayed painstakingly. The themes tackled by the author in these years then merge into her first novel, also set in Diyarbakır, entitled *Korkunun Irmağında* (2004). Her following novel, *Halepçe'den Gelen Sevgili* stretches from the Iraqi Kurdish town of Halabja – location of a genocidal massacre of Kurds by the Iraqi military in 1988 – passes through Diyarbakır and ends up in

Switzerland. It is therefore clear that Diyarbakır, the city where Samancı lived during the crucial years of her life, is the key to understanding her work; indeed, it can be said that Samancı's representations of Diyarbakır are central to understanding, from a literary perspective, the social situation of a city heavily militarized and perturbed by harsh violence.

Suskunun Gölgesinde (In the Shadow of Silence) opens with a short story entitled "Errik Adam" that in its simplicity brings to the fore an intergenerational gap in coping with trauma in the city centre of Diyarbakır. A young couple enjoys the incoming spring in the Anıt Park (The memorial Park, at the centre of which towers a statue of Atatürk), located in Diyarbakır city centre. They seem to be celebrating the joyful optimism of life; nonetheless, their erotic dialogues, the spring, the emergence of life's new energies in Diyarbakır city centre are met with and obstructed by the re-surfacing of trauma. Roland Barthes, discussing the essentially erotic nature of the city in *Semiology of the urban*, understands the city centre as mainly structured and shaped by the young when he says:

> The city, essentially and semantically, is the place of our meeting with the *other*, and it is for this reason that the centre is the gathering place in every city; the city centre is instituted above all by the young people, the adolescents (in Leach 1997, 163).

In Samancı's short story, nonetheless, the "other" for the young couple is the traumatic memory of the previous generation. While they enjoy the sunny day on the grass, a crazy man, who is agitating a lock of hair in his hands and, despite showing his desire to communicate appears to be completely aphasic, approaches them. When they try to offer him plums, as if they were dealing with a savage, two military vehicles pass by with a loud noise. The crazy man reacts screaming crazily and then, again showing the lock of hair to the couple, says: "The children booom! My wife boooom! Dead!" The short story concludes on this note, so that in the space of two pages Samancı efficaciously shows how the city is loaded with traumatic memories, to the point that the beaming spring of a young couple collapses under the weight of the previous generation's pain. The delicate erotic interplay between the young is contrasted by the crazy man's aphasia. In Diyarbakır, the future prospects of the young generation are burdened by the traumatic memory of the elderly.

As a close observer of Diyarbakır life Suzan Samancı has the ability to convey the overall atmosphere of the city especially through the details, which are often sensorial. For instance, in the short stories of *Suskunun Gölgesinde* as well as in the novel *Korkunun Irmağında* the sounds often express the nerve-wracking Turkish military control over the city: omnipresent sounds of police sirens make timid doves fly away (Samancı 2011, 36) and shake to the marrow of parents at home waiting for their sons to come back (38); the sky is constantly occupied by the warplanes' noise (24). Similarly in *Korkunun Irmağında*, the unbearable noise of the sirens intrudes on everyone's mind, as if to follow and catch "forbidden thoughts" (Samancı 2011a, 18) or diverting attention while the characters are reading, trying to find a way to evade their gloomy reality (26). The military vehicles pass continuously on the street shaking the glass of windows (Samancı 2011a, 24) and inhabitants are woken up by tanks, fearing their houses are to be searched by the soldiers (43). In sum, Samancı's portrayal of the Diyarbakır soundscape conveys a sense of siege, an uncanny geography of constant political tension, dominated by the sounds of the Turkish state. In many of her works the city is always more than a simple setting; as noted by Scalbert Yücel, in Samancı's other short story collection *Reçine Kokuyordu Hêlîn* (Hêlîn smelled of Resin, 1993), through sensorial characterizations, Samancı turns the city into an object that conveys a 'local' perspective on the violence that occurred in the times described by the author (Scalbert-Yücel 2012, 368):

> The town – the atmosphere, the river Tigris, the crowded hospital, the buses, the streets – becomes a character in the short story, perhaps more alive than the human characters themselves. (This is perhaps not a coincidence; the Kurdish translation is entitled The City of Death, after one of the short stories of the book.) Smells and tastes also contribute to this atmosphere. At a period when the violence of the war between the Turkish army and the PKK guerrillas was at its peak, the book openly tells stories of killings, military camps, and the destruction of villages, clearly proposing a counter-narrative for these dark events.

The novel *Korkunun Irmağında* opens with an inscription about cities taken from Robert Musil that goes: "Cities, like people, can be recognized by their walk"; this quotation discloses from the beginning Samancı's stylistic strategy of representing Diyarbakır through sensorial – and therefore psychological – details. As sounds frequently convey a feeling of oppression, smells and taste are often the privileged media to convey feelings of nostalgia, as in the short story 'I miss those fragrant watermelons'. The dispossession and loss of the lived environment constitute an important part of Kurdish emotional geography in the 1990s (Scalbert-Yücel 2010; Galip 2015) and Samancı, in tackling the issue, often expresses her characters' longing for the homeland through sensorial elements. Diyarbakır is, in many cases, described as the homeland left behind, regarded through a nostalgic lens, as in "Perili Kent" (Haunted city, Samancı 2011b, 87). Overall, through sensorial depictions, Samancı portrays a city besieged and pervaded by feelings of fear and trauma. The loud sounds evoking the Turkish State overwhelm and compel to silence the local population and its cultural expressions (Samancı 2011a, 12):

> Fear has penetrated you, Mizgin used to say. Our silence was the other face of fear. That fear at night rived on our lips in shape of whisperings. The city was silent. Not a soul around on the cobbled streets. By the sidewalks there were almond trees, and mulberry trees in the wet backyards. When the sun rose, steam rose too from the basalt stones and birds flew and landed on the mulberry trees. Luckily, they were there. Only they perforated that strange silence.[192]

As noted by Suat Baran, in Samancı's work, silence is an element often evoked by the author; it expresses both the fear that causes it, and the "linguistic trauma" inflicted by the ban on the Kurdish language and by the imposed linguistic assimilation towards the Turkish language; silence is therefore the silence imposed on Kurdish language speakers (Baran 2014). The rural-urban divide also contributes to delineating the linguistic question. If the village represents the space in which the Kurdish language is dominant or "natural", the city imposes the linguistic hierarchy applied by the Turkish State. This dynamic emerges from the short story 'Kokulu Karpuzları Özledim' (I miss those fragrant watermelons) in which the narrator speaks about her embarrassment of speaking in Kurdish with her relatives coming from the village, given that in her urban daily life Turkish was the language to which importance was attached (Samancı 2011b, 45); therefore even when compelled by the context to speak in Kurdish the character does it with a "Turkish accent". As Baran notices, in such an episode, representing how "by spoiling Kurdish with Turkish phonetics" provided "prestige", Samancı gives us the understanding of how the [Kurdish] mother language "starts to be colonized" (Baran 2014); in fact, in this context, Kurds do not lose the usage of their native language as a consequence of migrating to foreign lands and countries; they lose it in their own environment, as a consequence of the cultural assimilative policies of the State. In the short story 'Baklakırı At' (Dapple Gray Horse) included in *Suskunun Gölgesinde*, this rural-urban linguistic dynamic is presented in a passage that gathers in just a few sentences the traumatic value of the past, the linguistic imposition of the city, along with a description of Diyarbakır city walls and the Tigris River (Samancı 2011b, 25-26):

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[192] ''Korku içinize işlemiş, diyordu Mizgin. Suskunluğumuz korkunun öbür yüzüydü. Geceleri dirilen korkularımız dudaklarımızda mırıltıya dönüşüyordu. Kent suskundu. Parke taşlı sokaklarında in cin top oynuyordu. Kaldırımlarında badem ağaçları vardı, ıslak avlularında dut. Güneş yükselirken bazalt taşlarından buğu yükselir, tozlu dut ağaçlarına kuşlar inip kalkardı. İyi ki vardılar. O garip suskuyu delen onlardı.''

> The majestic shadow of the castle reflects on the river and seems like widening. The aggressiveness of the past eats me and consumes me. Rafts flow over the river, the villager carry firewood, cheese, and yogurt. Those driving trucks, at their arrival in the city they throw away their tobacco to the fields. The guards cut in front of them. “You are in *town* (In Kurdish in the text) now. Speak Turkish”, they say.[193]

This linguistic dynamic surely reveals the author’s own linguistic scission – common indeed to many other Kurdish writers - of being a Kurdish writer writing in Turkish because she is literarily not able to master her native language. Through the description of Diyarbakır’s sociolinguistic context the author also provides arguments to explain her choice of writing in Turkish since, as noted by Scalbert-Yücel about Kurdish authors similar in this respect to Suzan Samancı, “writing in Turkish was not really a choice (they often did not master Kurdish well enough) but forced. It provokes tension and dissatisfaction” (Scalbert-Yücel 2012, 366).

From Suzan Samancı’s short stories and novels surface references to the elements characterizing the peculiar life in Diyarbakır during the 1980s and 1990s: extrajudicial killings executed near the Tigris River (in "Baklakiri At" Samancı 2011b, 23); the mistrust and suspicion afflicting the population in fear that anybody around them could be a potential agent working for the State (in “Kokulu Karpuzları Özledim”); the evacuation of villages in the surrounding rural areas and the influx into the city of villagers escaping them (as in "Rojin", Samancı 2011b, 75); the daily familiarity with the prison as in *Korkunun Irmağında* where the narrator states: “Prisons were like our second houses. We did not get relief when we were released” (Samancı 2011a, 13); the difficulties of coping with life after a long imprisonment (as in "Pöh Dönek", Samancı 2011b, 121); the yearly celebration of Newroz (in "İtirafçı", Samancı 2011b, 69); the reference to a past when *dengbejs* were free to tell the traditional Kurdish stories of *Mem û Zîn* and Siyabend[194] – which contrast the present silence looming over the city (Ibid. 25); or the Tigris River and the ancient city walls seen as custodian of loves and passions, or at times as the confidant of one’s pains (in "Yasını Tutmayacağım", Samancı 2011b, 55). At the beginning of the novel *Halepçeden Gelen Sevgili* (The lover from Halabja) Diyarbakır is described by the protagonist, a young refugee girl escaped from the Halabja massacre in Iraqi Kurdistan. As she arrives in the city for the first time she depicts it as the city she frequently dreamt of in her childhood (Samancı 2009, 9):

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[193] ‘’Kalenin heybetli gölgesi nehre yansıyor, genişliyor gibi. Geçmiş zamanları kemirgenliği yiyip bitiriyor beni. Nehirde kelekler yüzüyor, çökelek, peynir, yoğurt taşıyor köylüler. Kentin girişinde ceplerindeki tütünü tarlaya savuruyor kamyondakiler. Kolcular yolu kesiyor. ‘Bajére geldiniz, Türkçe konuşun,’ diyorlar.’’

[194] The love story Between Siyabend and Xece is one of the most important in Kurdish folklore.

> We were now in the Diyarbakir that I used to dream about in my childhood. The city-walls, subject of so many songs, were beautiful. Our elders used to say that cities with a castle know both enslavement and courage.[195]

Here, and elsewhere in the novel (see for instance 13), by portraying Diyarbakır as the dream-city of a young girl from Halabja the author seems to stress the symbolical value the city assumes in the eyes of Kurds from all parts of the divided Kurdistan. At the same time, the conflicted and violent life of the city is synthetized by reference to the city walls: the physical feature that shapes the conflicting destiny of the city, consigning it to a history of alternating “enslavements” and rebellions.

Suzan Samancı and Diyarbakır in the 1990s are reciprocally important insofar as one contributes in the understanding of the other. The city is one of the key inspirational elements of Samancı’s literary commitment – at least in the first part of her career – whilst the writings of the author are key instruments for the understanding of Diyarbakır during one of the gloomiest and politically more controversial phases of its recent history. While realistically portraying daily life, Samancı shapes significantly the imaginary form and outlook of contemporary Diyarbakır in the minds of her Turkish, Kurdish and international readers.

- 6.2.2. Murat Uyurkulak

The 12 September coup d’état is almost unanimously considered to be among Turkey’s most atrocious collective traumas. In the history of the country there is clearly a pre- and a post-1980. For different reasons, Diyarbakır in particular can be understood as the epitome of that collective trauma, or at least as one of its most iconic places; as we have seen above Prison N°5 and the tremendous impact of the collectivization of the events that occurred in it, play a great role in this dynamic. The city post-1980 is very much characterized by the physical and symbolic presence of the prison and the progressive stockpiling of memories about it. The jail and its correlated memorization mark out Diyarbakır as a distinctive space of conflict, of repression and resistance, not only for Kurds in the four parts of Kurdistan, but also, for instance, for Turkish leftist intellectuals such as Murat Uyurkulak (1972), a writer born in the Turkish western city of Aydin and who nurtures a peculiar bond with Diyarbakır (Güneşdoğmuş 2006):

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[195] “Çocukken hayal meyal anımsadığım Diyarbakır’daydık. Stranlara konu olan surları gçrkemliydi. Kalesi olan kentler esareti de bilir cesareti de, derdi büyüklerimiz.”

> I spend my life 50% in Diyarbakir, 30% in Istanbul and 20% on the Aegean. So far I couldn't settle down.... But I can say this: I hope that until the end of my life I will have a foot in Diyarbakir, I'll absolutely try to spend a part of the year here. Because Diyarbakir made me fall in love. Not just for political reasons, not only because it is a "resistant city". Just as a city.

The high social impact of the coup-d'état in Turkey's life made possible the appearance of a wave of novels written to recollect, recount and re-elaborate the social and political legacy of the military putsch. The corpus has been defined as "coup d'état novels" (Bayraktar 2004). For Bayraktar, "these novels disclose the difficulties of life within and after personal and collective experiences of extreme conditions of violence and oppression, caused by political distress and extreme poverty" (Bayraktar 2004, 106). If a first generation of novelists who tackled such issues had chosen mainly a realistic style, pertinent to the transmission of the 'facts', a younger generation tested the literary media on the terrain of its possibility for representing and communicating trauma; and that is also the case for Murat Uyurkulak, (Bayraktar 2004; Adak 2008).

Uyurkulak's first novel *Tol*, *Bir Intikam romanı (Revenge. A novel about Vengeance,* 2002*)* is perhaps one of the most important Turkish novels of the 2000s and undoubtedly one of the post-1980 coup d'état novels of utmost interest. When it appeared in 2002 the author was "hailed as one of the most promising young novelists in Turkey […] especially for his depiction of the particular theme of 'remembrance of things past' at a time when the country's greatest defect was diagnosed, by its own intellectuals, as a collective amnesia" (Gürle 2007, 128). The book has been selected by the *Radikal* newspaper's literary insert – *Kitap*- as the best Turkish novel of the 2000s and it has been translated into foreign languages such as English (2008), French (2010) and Italian (2016). Uyurkulak was nine years old when the coup happened; that event has had a huge impact on his personal and political formation. As the author has declared: “In the people’s eyes there was hope and excitement. In one night everything ended. After that our lives were a nightmare. Migrations and exiles started. People went lost or thrown in jail” (Serttürk 2011). Uyurkulak has tackled this legacy of the coup in *Tol*. In this novel Diyarbakır performs a very important role. As noted above, the author himself seems to have a particular kind of affection for the city (Yücel 2011, 662); he lived for three years in Diyarbakır where according to his words “[he has] seen the oppression of a people, witnessed racism; that for [him] was a turning point” (Serttürk 2011). It is therefore interesting to look at Uyurkulak, and the use of Diyarbakır in his work, a little more closely.

The novel *Tol* tackles “intergenerational dynamics of violence and trauma” (Bayraktar 2004, 106); namely, the difficulties of an individual, Yusuf, in coping with the political trauma of his father’s generation: marked by the 1980 coup. However, while focusing on an individual, the novel also tackles the issue of the de-politicization of younger generations in Turkey after 1980; the rise of neoliberal policies that turned away from politics a generation lured by the consumerist flashes of an opening neoliberal economy. The sentence that opens the novel, “Once the Revolution was possible and beautiful” unleashes a landscape of political nostalgia. The core of the novel comprises the conversations between Yusuf, a depressed proof-reader in his thirties, and Şair, a poet and friend of Yusuf‘s father. The two sit in the same compartment on a train journey from Istanbul to Diyarbakır; this linear development is alternated with the stories that Şair presents to Yusuf, which recount the traumatic crushing of the previous generation’s revolutionary dream in 1980. In the words of Bayraktar (Bayraktar 2004, 131):

> Linear movement is constructed in Yusuf and Şair's train trip to Diyarbakir through which Yusuf reads the personal histories of revolutionaries written by them. The stories of old revolutionaries create a circular movement reexamining various layers of the past.

While the train moves towards the south-east, from Istanbul to Diyarbakır, the reader is presented with the troublesome intergenerational transmission of the trauma generated by the coup; the strife to reconnect the generations is here exemplified by Yusuf’s attempt to recompose the jigsaw of his father’s life, through the dispersed clues available in the stories offered to him by Şair. However, as Erdağ Göknar rightly notices, the geographical framework delineated by the train journey towards Diyarbakır is not accidental or inconsequential, but actually plays a major role in conveying Murat Uyurkulak's message: "[these] two cities representing the opposing poles of modern Turkish schizophrenia: modernity and oppression/dispossession" (Göknar 2008, 500); and, additionally, they represent the attractions of a materialistic life-style and the undismayed clinging to a socio-political fight. The peculiarly relevant role of Diyarbakır in this novel is principally that of being the destination, both physical and metaphorical, of the novel. Diyarbakır is openly described as a city where Kurds live (Yücel 2011, 666), and the Kurds themselves are repeatedly described by Uyurkulak as the real heirs of the socio-political legacy of the pre-1980 generation (Uyurkulak 2002, 221 - 252). Diyarbakır stands as the geographical icon representing the place where the revolutionary aspirations of the generation of Yusuf's father can be revitalized and 'avenged' – the Kurdish word that gives that title to the novel, "tol" (which in fact means "revenge"). In *Tol*, the city of Diyarbakır is not – apart from one brief exception - described in detail; but nonetheless it is a crucial geographical symbol that activates a specific pattern of political and social conceptualizations; it is the target of the linear development of the novel; it is the point in space to which the novel constantly reaches out.

Yusuf moves unconsciously towards Diyarbakır both to thwart his socio-political subalternity with a renewed enthusiasm in a revolutionary political alternative, and to follow the footprints of his father, whom he never really gets to know. The geographical and physical encounter with the city provides a conjunction with the previous generation's history, both on the personal and social level; a conjunction that harbours the prospect for a reinvigorated political destiny. It seems plausible that what the author is hinting at is actually the union of the Turks and Kurds' struggle in an internationalist spirit; Uyurkulak seems to be saying that with Diyarbakır, namely with the Kurds, lay the only possibility for the Turkish younger generation to awaken politically and avenge the 1980 trauma inflicted by the Sate. In the folders that Şair submits to Yusuf are the nebulous coordinates of the political activity of Yusuf's father. One in particular connects him to Diyarbakır; in that chapter entitled "Centimeters" the city is described in some detail and features its most iconic spots: the view of the Tigris river from above the city walls, the Great Mosque, the Four-footed minaret and the maze of the alleyways. But above all, through that chapter Yusuf slowly understands that his father decided to move to Diyarbakır in order to join the Kurdish insurgency; the city

is described by Yusuf's father as the only place "still able to excite him" (Uyurkulak 2002, 253-254).
While Yusuf and Şair travel south-eastward from Istanbul to Diyarbakır, they read in the papers that a revolution is blowing up the country; bombs destroy State buildings in Ankara and throughout all Turkey. The progressive advance of the train towards Diyarbakır corresponds with a climax in the revolutionary activities. Finally, when the two protagonists actually arrive in Diyarbakır, they learn from the radio that revolutions have started all around the world. Moving to Diyarbakır means nearing the 'Revolution' with which the novel opens. The novel concludes with the train arriving at Diyarbakır station and a young, local boy joyfully and loudly announcing that the revolution has entered 'Amed' (Uyurkulak 2002, 262). Quite interestingly, with its very last line, the novel closes on the Kurdish name of the city (elsewhere in the novel it always called by the Turkish name 'Diyarbakır') celebrating it as the place to reconnect the dispersed intergenerational threads of the revolution. The arrival in the city reties the linear and the circular development of the book, electing the place as a symbol of rebirth of the generation defeated by the coup. In Uyurkulak's *Tol* Diyarbakır emerges as the only place in Turkey where it still seems possible to imagine a future, post-1980, and where the individual and collective, existential and political scattering may be overtaken through collaboration with the Kurdish movement.

During his three-year stay in Diyarbakır, Uyurkulak wrote his second novel *Har*. *Bir Kiyamet Romanı* (Wrath. A novel about doomsday, 2006), which is inspired by the author's experiences of the Kurdish regions and tackles questions of political tension, racism and ethnicity (Gürle 2007). As the author has declared in an interview, the two novels are deeply connected by their political nature, insofar as they resonate with the author's perceptions on two key historical-political issues of Turkey (Uyurkulak and Altunok 2006):

> I wanted to write about two issues of the shady and gruesome history of this country that shook me profoundly. The first about which I wrote in *Tol* is the tragic adventure of the left in the last half century […] the second is the problem that this country lives with the Kurds and the denegation of them and other minorities that it has constructed through its official history.

In *Har*, an allegorical novel, Uyurkulak transposes Turkey's ethnic and socio-political dynamics to an imaginary country; nonetheless, the allegory is deliberately simple and the reality it conceals emerges easily, perhaps with even more efficacy. According to Gürle, the novel criticizes the ideological foundation of the Turkish concept of "unified nation, where unity implies uniformity because it cannot stand the presence of the "other," fearing that it might challenge the validity of its own ground" (Gürle 2007, 127). *Har* is a novel that looks at the Turkish State and Turkish society through the prism of the author's three-year experience in Diyarbakır, perhaps one of the cities in which Turkey's political and ethnic tensions become more patent and discernible. In this novel the author has the chance to bring the reader closer to what the State produces and represents as the "other", that should be assimilated or repressed. Again with Gürle's words:

> As a politically charged novel, *Har* bases its central issues on the question of "otherness," and its story focuses on the relationship between an authority that tends to totalize all meaning and that which is silenced by that authority (Gurle 2007, 128).

In *Har's* allegorical world, the geography of Turkey is concealed in a satirical use of city and place names: Diyarbakır is called Surlukent, which translates to a quite evident "walled-town". Meltem Gürle has convincingly read such an allegorical topography through the lens of the Baktinian category of the "carnivalesque", or that literary process that subverts through humor and irony established and dominant narratives and representations. In *Har*, the detachment from reality allowed by the allegory paves the way for the representation of a range of subversive forces; the irony that runs through the novel, even when it represents the dramatic events of Turkey's recent history, becomes a means of resistance available to the victim, the mad, the destitute, and the powerless, against authority and its predominant narrative. Turkey is represented as a country called 'Netamiye', a word modelled on "netameli" which means "ominous, accident-prone, sinister"; it is depicted as a country in continuous conflict with the Xirbos (the Kurds) and persecuted by the memories of unsettled conflicts with the Caciks (the Greeks) and the Topiks (the Armenians)[196]. *Har* is therefore a novel that, through the expedient of allegorical and ironic geography, finds ways to expose the absurdities of the State official rhetoric and the dynamics of oppression and dispossession it entails for the Kurdish regions. In an interview Uyurkulak stated that:

> The reality of the powerful and the oppressed belong to different worlds. For instance, while

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[196] See Gürle: "Kurds, Armenians, and Greeks are humorously dubbed Xirbos, Topiks and Caciks in the novel. Xirbo is a Kurdish word, which urban Turks derogatively use while referring to provincial Kurds, and Topik and Cacik are names derived from two popular dishes that are commonly known to have Armenian and Greek origins, respectively", (Gürle 2007, 130, footnote 19).

> the ones who make decisions about our destinies in Ankara still refrain from mentioning the word “Kurd”, in Diyarbakır, Van or Hakkari every 21 of March millions of people fill the squares with all the features that define a people, with their colours, their own words, their songs. […] On the one hand, people that still consider Kurds as “mountain Turks”, and on the other hand cities in which the political party that represents that people take average 70 per cent of the votes (Uyurkulak and Altunok 2006).

Surlukent, alias Diyarbakır, appears in this allegorical landscape through the account of Crooked N°5, himself a Xirbo (a Kurd). The Crooked are a group of misfits who are not able to remember their names but are tormented by memories of their past. They try to make sense of their world by printing copies of pirate books, fake money, or shooting films. In section four of the third chapter they tell about their personal histories: one tells about his village being burnt, someone else tells about the military gathering and deporting the Topicks (read Armenians), another tells of people shot at on a mere suspicion of being a terrorist. Finally, the crooked N° 5 tells his own story (Uyurkulak 2006, 193). He is from a village in the province of Cile (alias Cizre) and tells about the military evacuation of his village following which he takes refuge in downtown Cile. There the city is full of soldiers and police, and conflict with the local population is peaking. He and his family set off to find shelter in Surlukent in an uncle’s old house in Içsur (namely Suriçi, the old-town); there he falls in love with Guzel, his cousin, with whom he walks in “the narrow streets, eternally looking for some sunlight” while the city resonates with “police sirens” (195). While he tries to force his cousin to kiss him, a man is killed nearby; the streets are described as “so narrow that they are filled by the blood” (195) but large enough to host the military panzers sent by the State (196). One day his uncle is arrested because “he cursed the capital city” (namely Ankara, the symbol of the Turkish central power); he is brought to Surlukent’s jail - “which usually they call ‘heaven’” (196), is Crooked N° 5’s ironic comment. Diyarbakır, similar to the rest of the Kurdish region, is therefore depicted as occupied and managed with violence by the Turkish military.

It is important to remember here that the novel *Har* is dedicated to two innocent victims of Turkey’s violent environment, a feature that helps decode the allegory provided by Uyurkulak and relate the content of the book to the piercing reality of Turkish society: one is Ali Serkan Eroğlu, a nineteen-year-old allegedly hung by the police in 1997 in the Aegean University of Izmir after refusing to work as an agent; the other is Uğur Kaymaz a twelve-year-old killed alongside his father in the Kurdish town of Kızıltepe, by thirteen bullets fired by four police officers, in 2004. The latter has a statue dedicated to him in the heart of Diyarbakır that, as noted by the editors of the project *Memorialize Turkey* "has been crucial in establishing his name in the minds of local residents as a symbol of unjust state practices" and "increase awareness of human rights violations caused by state terror and to protest systematic impunity granted to security forces in Turkey" ("Memorialize Turkey" 2016).[197]

In sum, Diyarbakır is a place that takes on a very pronounced position in Uyurkulak's literary imagination. The author seldom provides a detailed description of the city, but holds it as a key symbolical element in his political and ethical "reckoning with Turkey's history" (Güneşdoğmuş 2006) represented by the two novels *Tol* and *Har*. In the first novel, Diyarbakır is the geographical and political objective of the entire novel, whilst in the second, the city represents the place from where the author had the chance to experience and elaborate literarily Turkey's Kurdish question and the condition of every other minority squashed by the State official narrative.

- 6.2.3. Özcan Karabulut's *Amida Eğer sana gelemezsem*

Amida eğer sana gelemezsem (Amida, if I can't come to you, 2008) is the first novel of Özcan Karabulut (born 1958), who is otherwise known in Turkey and abroad for his short stories. Diyarbakır, the Turkish southeast and the socio-cultural problems that afflict it, might be considered among the main themes of his writing. He can be seen as one of "the [Turkish] writers engaged with the Kurdish case" (Alakom 2010, 144). In his work Diyarbakır is seen as the setting in which the Kurdish issue-related social problems are more naturally traceable. The city has been the scene of one of Karabulut's short stories: *Gece, Bir Otelin Odasında* (Night in a Hotel Room, Karabulut 2002) and is the central location of *Amida, eğer sana gelemezsem* almost to the point of being one of the main characters of the novel, which was awarded the 'Yunus Nadi Novel Prize'. Özcan Karabulut describes himself as coming from within the 78's generation, namely from the generation whose political ambitions were dashed by the 1980 coup; his literature, he says, has a political vocation (Pınarcı 2007). This book represents the first attempt of Karabulut, recognized widely as a short-story writer, to measure himself within the novel form. With the use of postmodern techniques, the protagonist Arat, a literary persona of the author, travelling to the city of Diyarbakır finds the inspiration for writing a novel (Karabulut 2008: 104). Towards the end of the book, when the Karabulut's actual novel and the fictional novel, written by the protagonist Arat, are coming to an end, Arat concludes: "writing the novel looks like sitting and trying to build anew Diyarbakir's city-walls through words" (Karabulut 2008: 273): therefore, the city and the literary endeavour are here closely intertwined.

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[197] The monument has raised a debate within Turkey public opinion. *Memorialize Turkey* remembers: "Municipal efforts to memorialize the murder of Uğur Kaymaz were viewed as extensions of these political campaigns that defamed the integrity of the Turkish state. In 2011, the chief prosecutor of Diyarbakır sued Mayor Abdullah Demirbaş, on behalf of the Kayapınar Municipality, for wasting state resources, referring to 2,292 Turkish Lira expended by the municipality for the memorial. The chief prosecutor also requested a three-year prison term for Demirbaş for praising a criminal. Thus there is no guarantee that this memorial site will continue to exist." Hence Uyurkulak's dedication to Uğur Kaymaz has to be read as a personal intervention within this debate.

It is especially interesting to look at the depictions of the city presented in this novel because, through the semi-autobiographic protagonist, the author introduces the perspective of someone who comes to the city for the first time and does not have any kind of previous link with the place, except what he could have learned through the media. Arat, the protagonist of the novel, develops national and international projects for solving the problem of child-labour. He is considered an expert in his sector and travels frequently around the world. At the beginning of the novel he is required to move for three months to Diyarbakır, to direct a project aimed at increasing child schooling and thwarting child labour.

> He does not know the region and he has never been to Diyarbakir. However he has notion of the poverty, the child-labour, the women suicides, the honour-killings and the events happened in the infamous prison (Karabulut 2008: 25).[198]

He has learned about these problems from "TV images". At the start, Diyarbakır is portrayed as a place affected by social and economic problems, and divulgated as such through the media. Nonetheless, the city holds a special attraction for Arat, who has newly divorced from his wife. The city is immediately presented as holding promises of love. Following a widespread legend, while researching the city before the trip, Arat discovers that the ancient name of the city, Amida, was the name of a queen ruling it at the time of the prophet Jonah. Since that time the city continued to be known as the "City of the woman". After reading the legend, Arat decides that Amida will be the nickname of the romance he is looking for in the city. As it was in Halide Edib Adıvar's novels, the erotic is intertwined with the political and relationships between characters to conceal/reveal power relations (Jameson 1986; Lazarus 2011).

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[198] ''Bölgeyi bilmiyor, Diyarbakır'a gitmişliği yok. Ama yoksulluk, çocuk işçiler, çatışmalar, kadın intiharları, töre cinayetleri, ünlü cezaevinde yaşananlar hakkında bilgisi var.''

Therefore, at the beginning Karabulut's protagonist approaches the city through two main perspectives: the first, regarding the troubled social conditions of the place that require his skilled intervention; and secondly, the erotic attraction that the place seems to promise. Arguably, these two dynamics echo the representations of the city given in Halide Edip Adivar's novels in the first half of the 20th century: there, a soldier came to implement the modernizing reforms of the newly founded Turkish Republic and save the city from savagery, eventually engaging in an affair with a Kurdish girl, married to a conservative and oppressive man (see Chapter Two). Here, in Karabulut's work, produced almost a century later, a social worker, imbued with humanistic values, comes to the city to rescue its youth from its destitute socio-economic conditions, eventually to fall in love with Dilşa, a Kurdish, veiled and religious girl, married to another man. The resemblance of the two plots is indicative of a certain approach toward the city; the intersecting dynamics of interethnic erotic relations and social change brought about by someone coming from the West of Turkey (Arat hails from the capital, Ankara) suggests the intricacies of the relationship between Turkey and its inner-Orient Diyarbakır: "where unfathomable mysteries dwell and cruel and barbaric scenes are staged" (Alloula 1986: 3).

Arat, is someone who believes in social justice and brotherhood among peoples; he is much aware of the violence that torments Diyarbakır, the infamous events of the prison, the restrictions enforced through the OHAL (Governorship of Region in state of Emergency) and the ban on the Kurdish language. He is a person involved in politics and sympathetic to the cause of the oppressed. He comes to the city to improve the social conditions of working children, implementing projects aimed at enrolling them in boarding schools. However, in this respect the city will surprise him for two reasons: firstly because the violence exercised over the children and the violent atmosphere looming over the city exceed his expectations, and secondly because of the scepticism with which the local society receives his passionate humanistic impetus, against all his expectations. The journey to Diyarbakır and the encounter with the local society compel Arat to confront not only the social issues related to child labour, but also to ask some open questions about his country and his identity, compelling him to a reckoning with his conscience.

As he will later learn from Dilşa, the locals receive Arat as “a man of the State” (111), someone who enforces assimilation of the Kurdish population by enrolling their youth in a Turkish-only speaking educational system that denies Kurdish identity. They look at him as someone who tries to take away their children, to turn girls into prostitutes and boys into soldiers (111). Therefore, from the start, Arat needs to prove the sincerity of his efforts in front of a social environment that perceives him as a foreigner and an intruder on behalf of the State. In a confrontation with two local Kurdish intellectuals, Arat finds himself accused of being the “typical leftist Turk” who stood aside, talking of human rights and against violence while, as one of the two accuses him: “In the Kurdish regions hundreds of people were killed, hundreds more tortured. We are those who experienced war, blood, and death. What did you do, apart from sitting in your pavilions and pontificate?” (146)[199]. In sum in Diyarbakir, despite being within the borders of his own country, Turkey, Arat feels as foreign as he had in other countries:

> In Harlem I was white, in Turin I was an Arab, and in Bucharest I was a Turk. In Diyarbakir instead I can’t please the police with my Turkishness, neither I can explain to Kurds that I am not the man of the state. […] In these lands where one nationalism feeds the other there is no role left for a ‘romantic marginal’ like me apart from being a small minority (Karabulut 2008: 149).[200]

Arat’s approach towards the Kurdish problem is symptomatic of an approach of the Turkish left and of the transformation of the discourse about the Kurdish problem in Turkey in general after the 2000s. The framework that supports the interpretation of the problem is one of acceptance of Turkey’s cultural diversity; however, such diversity is structured and arranged on the base of an ethnic hierarchy, in which Turkishness is implicitly and unquestionably on the top (Scalbert-Yücel 2015; Öncü 2011). The Kurdish issue is regarded generally as a security problem therefore both the violence of the State and that of the guerrilla is equally condemned, with no distinction. When Arat discusses the question with Dilşa he makes the following remarks: “There are oppressed people in many places around the world. Certainly, it is right to fight against injustice and oppression. However we should dislike those who kill and turn the world into a blood lake” (Karabulut 2008: 179).[201] Here implicitly Arat deprives the Kurdish armed struggle of any legitimacy; immediately after Dilşa concedes that as she once visited Istanbul and found it beautiful, she “would not consent to any solution that would separate Kurds from Istanbul” (179).[202] The solution for Arat (who obviously articulates the political thought of the author) lies in “peoples’ brotherhood”, however this approach, in a context in which equal rights are not recognized, conceals an ethnic hierarchy, where a minority culture has somehow to surrender in the arms of the dominant culture; and this is made much clearer by the intersection of this theme with the love-affair between Arat and Dilşa, as it was in the novels of Halide Edib Adıvar.

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[199] ‘‘Bu bölgede yüzlerce insan öldürüldü. Yüzlercesi de işkenceden geçirildi. Savaşı, kanı, ölümü yaşayan biziz. Siz ne yaptınız? Sırça köşklerinizde oturup ahkam kesmekten başka’’.

[200] ‘‘Harlem’de beyazdım, Torino’da Arap, Bükreş’te Türk. Diyarbakır’da ise polise Türklüğümü beğendiremiyorum, Kürtlere devletin adamı olmadığımı anlatamıyorum. Bir milliyetçiliğin ötekini beslediği topraklarda benim gibi ‘romantik marjinaller’e küçük bir azınlığa dönüşmekten başka bir yol kalmıyor.’’

Despite the self-evident historical differences, both Adıvar and Karabulut look at the Kurdish question through the lens of socio-economic conditions, where the issue stems from the impoverished state of the regions, with Diyarbakır taken as the best example. In this approach, such an impoverished condition it is best fought through education and schooling, but not much is said about the right of education in the mother tongue; hence what is being talked about here is a Turkish – assimilative – education. From this perspective, social development – thus the solution - comes embodied in educated characters hailing from western cities; the solution is therefore “the evolution of the East towards modernity” (Scalbert-Yücel 2015: 131).

In this context, the treatment reserved for the language divide has an important role in the novel. As a person who is trying to enhance child schooling, Arat becomes aware of the locals’ request for education in the mother tongue, although he falls short of addressing it properly. Despite the fact that it could have been a major theme of the novel, given the main topic and that in Turkey the issue has become a very debated subject, education in the mother tongue is dealt with very superficially. A tolerant and open-minded Turk, Arat does not have anything against the Kurdish language, but he fails to address the institutional and constitutional problem of the educational system, despite it being the focus of his job. For the protagonist, the language is mainly a source of exotic attraction. In a largely Kurdish-speaking region, having to deal with poor, often non-educated social classes, he needs a translator, and it is often Dilşa translating for him; on the lips of the woman, Kurdish contributes to an aura of mystery and erotic fascination: "the conversation was flowing in two languages and Arat was receiving an unusual pleasure from her language, her voice, her Kurdish that was supplying the woman's beauty"[203] (Karabulut 2008: 79; see also 200). Throughout the novel the Kurdish language emerges only occasionally, as an intimate jargon through which Dilşa expresses her feelings for Arat: as for instance when the two lovers seem close to end their relationship and Dilşa leaves saying "Ez ji te hez dikim" ("I love you" in Kurdish, 157); or when, in a moment of tension the local society poses a threat to their love affair, Dilşa says in Kurdish "Qurbana te bim", literally "I would sacrifice myself for you", and the protagonist comments: "she says these words whispering in her Kurdish accent with such a beautiful voice that was not necessary knowing Kurdish to understand what she said" (200); or when Arat remembers the magic of listening to her talking in Kurdish and being addressed as "hêja", "dear", 299). In a similar way, in a passage of Adıvar's *Kalp Ağrısı*, the Turkish soldier Hasan had his appetites aroused by the "different accent" of the Kurdish girls he later on impregnates (see Chapter 3).

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[201] ‘’Dünyanın birçok yerinde ezilen halklar var. Haksızlığa, zulme karşı elbette mücadele edilmeli. Ama öldürenlerle, dünyayı kan gölüne çevirenlerle bir derdimiz olmalı.’’
[202] ‘’Kürtleri İstanbul’dan koparacak hiçbir çözüme evet demem.’’

Diyarbakır is a prominent character of the novel. It is presented by Karabulut as a city wounded by decades of violence and afflicted by various social problems: "Through the working children Diyarbakır exposes her wounds to the whole world" (Karabulut 2008: 58). Nonetheless, it is also presented to the Turkish reader as a city rich in culture and history; the author mentions the recurring canon of intellectuals related to Diyarbakır: Gökalp, Karakoç, Tarancı, Arif, but also including Kurdish intellectuals such as Musa Anter and Armenian writer Mığırdiç Margosyan. However, the most-mentioned figure is that of Gaffar Okkan, the police commander who is unusually famous for being loved by sections of the local population; through his figure Karabulut aims at stressing the possibilities of pacific brotherhood between the Turkish State and Diyarbakır:

> Diyarbakır has not forgotten the people detained and tortured in its infamous prison. Diyarbakır has not forgotten its poets, writers and thinkers. Diyarbakir has not forgot Gaffar

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[203] ''Konuşmaları iki dilde sürüp gidiyor ve kadının güzelliği tamamlayan dilinden, sesinden, Kürtçesinden farklı bir tat alıyor Arat.''

> and the other governors. Their names have been given to schools, boulevards and sport facilities (Karabulut 2008: 61).[204]

A few pages later the concept is reiterated, stressing the connection of Diyarbakır's urban space with the Turkish state:

> He knew already before coming to Diyarbakır that in that city schools and other places were given names after the civil servants who served there. He asks how many schools carry names of governors and he is told that six schools do so. […] Moreover, almost twenty schools bear names of soldiers, teachers or police officer fallen martyrs. Every name, every martyr shows the situation in which the city has fallen in the last twenty years. One can say many things about the city only looking at schools' names. Cities made out of martyrs; it is a shame (Karabulut 2008: 84).[205]

Violence, death and gloomy atmospheres are predominant in the novel; the overall characterization of Diyarbakır is one of grief and a Freudian death-drive, as the city seems to be driven by an impulse for self-destruction, which is in Freud's view "an impediment to civilization" (Freud 2016, 310); the intervention of the protagonist can therefore be interpreted as a civilizational mission, one aimed at reversing that pulsion. However, what is striking in *Amida, eğer sana gelemezsem*, is the powerful way in which the violence/death theme is entangled with its opposite, the love-theme. Interestingly, throughout the novel, the city-theme is very much intertwined with the erotic, starting with the nickname by which Arat calls his lover Dilşa: Amida. While the plot develops a discourse about the city – its social environment, its identity, etc. – a discourse about gender moves hand-in-hand. When Dilşa asks Arat's thoughts about Diyarbakir he replies:

> 'It is a very intriguing city. […] This is the city of violence and the city against violence. There is a bitter tranquillity and a sweet disquietude in this city', he goes on. 'There is always a

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[204] ''Diyarbakır, hapishanesini, işkenceden geçen insanlarını unutmamış. Diyarbakır, şairlerini, yazarlarını, düşünce adamlarını unutmamış. Diyarbakır, Gaffar'ını da, valilerini de unutmamış. Adlarını okullara, caddelere, spor mekanlarına vermiş.''

[205] ''Okullara ve daha pek çok yere, bu kentte görev yapmış kamu görevlilerinin adlarının verildiğini Diyarbakır'a gelmeden biliyordu. Başkan'a Diyarbakır'a görev yapmış valilerin adlarını taşıyan okul sayısını soruyor. Başkan altı okul sayıyor. Ayrıca, yirmiye yakın şehit askerin, öğretmenin veya polisin adını taşıyan okul varmış Diyarbakır'da. Her ad, her şehit kentin son yirmi yılda geldiği nokatyı gözler önünde seriyor. Insan yalnızca okul adlarına bakıp Diyarbakır hakkında çok şey söyleyebilir. Şehitlerden kentler; yazık, çok yazık.''

> chance for surprises and miracles in Diyarbakir. This city does not let you go. Either you go after her or she comes after you. On one hand it is like a naughty child, on the other hand is a wounded mother. If we look at how it provokes people it is definitely a feminine city' (Karabulut 2008: 82).[206]

Since the beginning of his trip to Diyarbakır, Arat braces up to falling in love and selects in advance the nickname he wants to assign to his romance: Amida, as mentioned above an old name of the city of Diyarbakır; getting ready to travel to the city, "not an ordinary place as many other" he dreams of being "in one of the narrow alleyways and meet Amida and spontaneously fall in love" (26). As has been said, Arat falls in love reciprocally with Dilşa: a Kurd, a veiled and most of all a married mother of three. A secular-minded citizen of the world, used to travelling abroad and meeting different people, Arat sees in Dilşa a believer, a veiled and married woman, something very different and far from himself; but also charming. An orientalist attraction towards what is prohibited and distant pervades Arat's infatuation for Dilşa, who is later in the novel defined as "a mysterious woman from the southeast" (264) (on the concept of "East" in the Turkish context see: Scalbert-Yücel 2015; Girard and Scalbert-Yücel 2015; Turgut and Orhon 2003; Öncü 2011; Öktem 2004).

What makes her particularly mysterious in Arat's eyes is the headscarf. At fırst Arat feels he might be "insufficient in understanding the world of a woman wearing a headscarf" (99), or at least he feels that the negotiation of the erotic attraction with a veiled woman entails a different lexicon. The veil is a central trope of Orientalist literature and has become a public issue in Turkey, especially after the 1980 coup d'état and increasingly in the second half of the 1990s. In the representations of the veiled woman, the sexual and the political become inextricable in Orientalist literature: "The veil is one of those tropes through which Western fantasies of penetration into the mysteries of the Orient and access to the interiority of the other are fantasmatically achieved" (Yeğenoğlu 1998: 39). In Turkey, the veil is a very debated object, particularly after the military coup of 1980 and the consequent constitution of 1982. With the words of Kejanlioğlu and Taş:

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[206] ''Çok etkileyici bir kent. Bu kent şiddetin ve karşı şiddetin kenti. Bir acı huzur, bir tatlı huzursuzluk var bu kentte. Diyarbakır'da sürprizlere ve mucizelere her zaman yer var. Bu kent yakanızı bırakmıyor sizin. Ya siz onun peşine takılıyorsunuz ya da o sizin peşinize düşüyor. Bir yanıyla yaramaz bir çocuk Diyarbakır, bir yanıyla yaralı bir ana. İnsanı kışkırttığına bakılırsa, kesinlikle dişil bir kent.''

> Since the 1980s, the struggle between different political groups has been carried out through the debate over women's bodies and dress and so far each political group still continues to define its identity via the types of outfit that women should wear (Kejanlioğlu and Taş 2009: 427).

Karabulut brings his protagonist - and the like-minded reader - to question his certainties and positions about the veil. Dilşa describes the veil for her as a religious duty, but also as a shield protecting her from the gaze of men in a conservative society (130); therefore here the author reiterates associations of the veil with ignorance, conservatism, provincialism, and, in the end, male domination over the women's body. Later in the novel Dilşa, on a trip to Istanbul, takes off the veil and dresses up in a much more "western" outfit (276); this contributes to making Dilşa's use of the veil context-related, therefore something closely inherent to Diyarbakır. When Arat sees Dilşa without a headscarf and dressed differently, he confronts the "provincial girl" he had known before with Keriman Halis, the –unveiled - Turkish woman chosen as Miss Universe in the 1930s (276).

Dilşa is married, therefore, if their relationship is exposed the consequences, repeatedly suggested by the author, might be tragic. Increasingly in the novel, as the love affair becomes more serious and complicated, the author intensifies distinctions aimed at geographically isolating Diyarbakır while at the same time characterizing it for its moral and sexual conservatism: "Diyarbakır is a place where murderers are carried on for reasons of honour or because of the weigh of tradition" (Karabulut 2008:119); "Here women can't divorce easily; especially if your marriage was arranged you need to be prepared to face death; whereas the man does not need to divorce; he can take a second or a third wife" (Karabulut 2008: 217). Hearing a local tale, ending with the death of two lovers, Arat concludes "No story ends up happily here" (Karabulut 2008: 225); Dilşa remarks that "here almost every family has a woman struck by honour punishment. We also had it" (Karabulut 2008: 235); "everything in Diyarbakir is lived in a very tough way. Here there is a very thin line between living and dying. For a woman death is often salvation" (174); other characters tend to underline the same, saying: "Diyarbakır is a conservative place" (258); "Be careful here is Diyarbakır" (259); "These are the streets of Diyarbakır, not any other normal city" (281); Diyarbakır is a "criminal city" (225), "one of the most dangerous cities in the world" (226). Through these assertions the sexual and the political intertwine, and the constraints exercised by the local society over sentimental relationships contribute significantly to the overall characterization of the city. When pondering such aspects, the protagonist reconsiders his previous feminine characterization of the city and speculates: “Diyarbakır is an unmerciful city for lovers, a city that threatens lovers. Diyarbakır consists of a crowd of males and of its pitch-black walls. In his eyes Diyarbakır is gloomy and dark” (Karabulut 2008: 230). And shortly after:

> Perhaps, what makes Diyarbakır different from the other cities he knows and makes it unique is this: on the one hand, is a wounded feminine city, revealing the poetry, the love, the madness one has inside; on the other hand, awakening one’s anger, lunacy and rebellion, it is a proud male. […] Cruel on one side, merciful on the other, in both cases an exciting city (Karabulut 2008: 239).[207]

In this context the veil constitutes also a powerful object of erotic fascination. Here the veiled woman, so strongly associated with the city, stands as a metaphor of the inaccessibility and attractiveness of Diyarbakır. Amida and the city represent for Arat, for the writer and the Turkish reader, an ‘erotic’ journey towards the other, the different, and the unknown. However this journey is hindered – and perhaps paradoxically made more attractive - by the conservative, patriarchal and violent local society.

Arat awakens emancipatory dynamics in Dilşa. With him she finds the opportunity to revolt secretly against the constriction of her imposed marriage and rediscover her womanliness. As she declares, her husband does not make her feel like a woman (116). With Arat she has the possibility to “come back to herself” (191) and experience her body fully and for the first time. The first sex scene between Arat and Amida is very telling about the nature of the interpenetration the author creates between the woman and the city, with implicit cultural and political associations. When they are about to reach the climax of their intercourse, the author writes as follows:

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[207] ‘’Diyarbakır’ı bildiği kentlerden ayıran, onu biricik yapan şöyle bir şey galiba; bir yanıyla, insanın içindeki edebiyatı, aşkı, çılgınlığı açığa çıkaran yaralı dişil bir kent; öteki yanıyla, insanın içindeki öfkeyi, deliliği, başkaldırıyı uyandıran, gururlu bir eril. Bir yüzüyle acımasız, bir yüzüyle sevecen, ama her iki yüzüyle de heyecan veren bir kent.’’

> He was entering the castle form the same direction of the Arab Commander Halid Bin Velid[208], getting ready to conquer Diyarbakır's walls. His wailings were adding to Amida's until they shivered violently. Another secret was added to Diyarbakır's walls. (Karabulut 2008: 189).[209]

Amida is quick to comment: "This must be what they call 'orgasm'" (Karabulut 2008: 189). Arat's sexual 'conquest' of the 'other' coincides with Dilşa's liberation from the boundaries of the gendered role assigned to her by her society. Shortly after the intercourse, Dilşa realizes how impossible it is for her to be free in Diyarbakır and how her emancipation is tied to Arat: "This city is narrow to me. You'll go one day and then I will suffocate in Diyarbakır" (191). As the novel progresses the pressure of Dilşa's family, and that of Diyarbakır's society and moral customs generally, become overwhelming for their relationship. Eventually, the novel concludes with Arat leaving the city to return to his home in Ankara and Dilşa committing suicide.

Quite similar to Halide Edip Adıvar's novels, Karabulut's *Amida eğer sana gelemezsem*, offers depictions of Diyarbakır as a city highly attractive but also inexorably repressed by violence, backwardness and patriarchal moral values. The possibility of social and sexual emancipation comes embodied in characters coming from the West of Turkey. In Karabulut's novel, Arat brings to Diyarbakır both the possibility of ameliorating the social condition of the children through schooling and education, and the possibility of sexual emancipation for Dilşa, very similar to Adivar's *Zeyno'nun oğlu* where the local Kurdish girl, Zeyno, was rescued by the Turkish soldier Hasan and eventually brought to live in Istanbul. A significant difference between the two novels is in the ending: Adıvar suggested a positive conclusion, with Zeyno moving to Istanbul; here Dilşa dies in Diyarbakır due to the impossibility of living her love totally. However, Karabulut seems to be firmly on Adıvar's track regarding a certain gaze towards Diyarbakır: the gaze of the centre towards the periphery; the gaze of modernity towards backwardness; the gaze of the power towards its internal Orient; in other words, the assimilative gaze of a self-perceived higher culture towards a lesser one.

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[208] Khalid Ibn al-Walid was a companio of the prophet Muhammad. He is famous for his military achievements, and it was under his command that the Arabian peninsual was united under the single unity of the Caliphate in the 7th century.

[209] ''Arap komutan Halid Bin Velid suyolundan kaleye giriyor, Diyarbakır Surları'nı fethetmeye hazırlanıyor. Amida'nın iniltilerine Arat'ın iniltileri katılıyor, şiddetli bir titremeyle geliyorlar. Diyarbakır'ın surlarına yeni bir sır ekleniyor.''

3. “Our biggest city”: three examples of post-1980 Amed in Kurdish literature: Uzun, Cewerî, Husên.

In the previous section I have analysed the representations of Diyarbakır produced by three authors writing in Turkish, who differed significantly in terms of their relationship with the city, the scope and the readership of their literary work, and their nearness or distance from the Kurdish cultural horizon. In the following section I will analyse three works written in Kurdish by three writers who also have different degrees of attachment to the city, even though the three novels were written in Sweden or France. Mehmed Uzun spent his early life in Diyarbakır and returned to it only a few years before dying (2007), after a decades-long exile. Nonetheless, as we will see, Diyarbakır is central to his literary work; moreover, as his literary work is considered crucial to the contemporary resurrection of Kurdish letters, the city plays a very important role also in the latter. Therefore, younger authors such as Firat Cewerî and Fawaz Husên had to reckon somehow with the role that Uzun, the founder of Kurdish literature, had chosen for that city. Cewerî, born in Derik, a town in Mardin province not far from Diyarbakır, has spent much of his life in Sweden but nurtures close ties with Diyarbakır, especially on account of his literary activity and recognition. Fawaz Husên, however, was born in the Syrian part of Kurdistan, in Amude, and is somehow a stranger to the city: he perceives all the weight of its symbolical value in the field he moves in – Kurdish literature – but has been able to visit Diyarbakır only later in life. What I will argue in this section is that, for these authors writing in Kurdish, there is an unavoidable symbolical load attached to the city of Diyarbakır: for them it is called Amed. Given Mehmed Uzun’s investment in the city, the two later writers, in tackling the city in their novels, are somehow compelled to reckon with it; they also tackle issues related to Diyarbakır/Amed in the light of the huge representative characteristic that it has in the framework of Kurdish culture. If for Uzun it is the capital of Kurdistan and the key literary city of Kurdish literature, Cewerî and Husên years later seem compelled to measure the exactness of those statements, while setting their novels in the city of Diyarbakır, here called in Kurdish, Amed.

- 6.3.1. Mehmed Uzun's *Tu*

Tu (You, 1985) is the first novel of Mehmed Uzun, the writer who is widely considered as the pioneer of the contemporary Kurdish novel (Allison and Ahmadzadeh 2007; Bodur 2009). He was among the first who, in the 1980s, while in exile in Sweden, strove to use Kurmanji for the lengthy form of a novel as a means of political engagement (Scalbert-Yücel 2006). Until his death in 2007 he wrote eight novels in that language, and produced several essays and memoirs in the Turkish language. Here I would like to focus only on his first, partially autobiographic, novel *Tu,* in which both the imprisonment and the symbolical centrality of Diyarbakır in the Kurdish imaginary are prominent. Şeyhmus Diken, who has called Uzun he who "built the skeleton and the memory of Kurdish literature from his exile in Sweden'' (Diken 2016a), has noted in a recent article, in the novel *Tu* Diyarbakır is "practically the main character; the plot has been constructed upon Diyarbakır and things that happened in the city" (Diken 2016b).

Written in an obsessive second person singular (tu), *Tu* tells the story of the protagonist's life in Diyarbakır prison. The story is conveyed to the reader through the artifice of the protagonist speaking to an insect in his segregation cell – a direct metaphor about the segregation and the silence imposed on Kurdishness. Two aspects of the novel are of particular interest here: the depictions of the life in the prison and the lengthy descriptions of the city of Diyarbakır, which promote the city as an essential symbolical feature of Kurdish literature. As *Tu* might be considered the first contemporary Kurdish novel, arguably the novelistic and fictional Kurdish discourse at its outset situates Diyarbakır at the centre of Kurdish imaginary, despite the novel being written in exile in Sweden. As the author himself has declared in an interview "in my novel *Tu* Diyarbakır is widely represented. On can say that that novel is the novel of Diyarbakır" (Laleş, Diken, and Mîrxan 2006).

The novel presents a very clear-cut divide, between Kurdish victims and Turkish perpetrators: a strict dichotomy that reflects what Alparslan Nas has defined as Uzun's "hierarchies of culpability and victimhood" (Nas 2013: 178). At this stage of his career the Kurdish issue is firmly understood as a colonial occupation of the Kurdish lands by the Turkish State. Early in the novel, Uzun introduces a description of the 'ritualities' of the city as an exemplification of the perceived colonial occupation by the Turkish state and the resistance of the Kurdish local inhabitants. The author gives a clear fictional image of what

Christopher Houston has called “Kemalist animation of the city” (Houston 2005), in describing how on certain days of the year, the streets and squares were filled with military officers in uniform, police, teachers and civil servants, along with students who were made to chant slogans like “Glory to our great and heroic leader” (obviously Atatürk) or “Shall live forever our proud Republic” (Uzun 2005: 20). The protagonist describes how the Kurdish youth would dismantle those rituals through the derisive potential of secret irony and hidden laughs among each other; however he admits that publicly they were “forced to bow neck in front of that rubbish” despite the fact that “that proud Republic of theirs was built at the price of the disintegration of our homeland” (Uzun 2005: 20). Nonetheless, at least once a year, every 21st of March, in the day of Newroz, the local inhabitants could celebrate a ritual of their own, characterising the urban space through an alternative narrative: “Every 21st of March the fire of Kaveh the Blacksmith would rise from the city-walls’ dungeons. In spite of the orders, the prohibitions, the defence of the unity of the Republic, the fires of Newroz would shine over our city”[210] (Uzun 2005: 20). In the space of a page the city is portrayed as a battleground of conflicting identities, performed through public rituals; we see concisely represented the perceived spatial occupation and the anti-colonial pride through the description of opposing nationalist celebrations. The city is described as a place of continuous spatial contestation and the very urban body shows signs of this battle:

> In your city there was an ancient castle. The castle has always been there. According to the experts it was left there by the Roman settlements. Since then a flag has always fluttered on its walls. Sometimes its was your flag, but most of the time the flags of strangers. Therefore the ancient castle is wounded (Uzun 2005: 20).[211]

Interestingly, the walls, possibly the oldest feature of the city, are presented as the essence of the place. While the walls bear the marks of the kingdoms and powers that occupied the city through history, Uzun represents a new contemporary kind of written appropriation of the walls. Immediately after the passage quoted above, the protagonist tells how someone – an anonymous spokesperson for the entire city - used to write something in white chalk over the black walls; the authorities kept erasing it with black paint. The ancient roman city walls thus are a spatial surface of struggle; a page onto which alternates the expression and the denial of certain political messages. That sentence in white chalk read: “in the West, electricity and roads; in the East, gendarmes and military outposts” (Uzun 2005: 22). It is the voicing of the protest against the colonial occupation, framed in terms of Easterners vs. Westerners that we saw emerging in the “Eastern Meeting” in the late 1960s (Gündoğan 2011) and in the movement lead by Mehdi Zana (Zana 2012; G. Dorronsoro and Watts 2009).

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[210] ‘‘Lê dîsan jî di her 21’ê adarê de agirê Kawayê hesinker li ser bircên keleha we geş dibû. Di gel ferman, qedexe û parastina yekîtî û tevayiya komara serbilind, dîsan ji agirên Newrozê li ser bajarê we diçirûsîn.’’

[211] ‘‘Bajarê we xwediyê keleheke qehîm bû. Keleha we her hebû. Li gor rîspiyên bajêr, ew ji dema bicihbûna Romên antîk mabû. Ji wê rojê pê ve alek her li ser bircên wê li ba dibû. Carina ala we û piraniya carn alên biyaniyan. Keleha we ya qehîm birîndar bû.’’

After this introduction on the conflicting urban space, the protagonist goes on to tell the story of his arrest (due to ownership of “forbidden books”). He reaffirms in passing how the city is invaded and occupied by “devils” ('şeytan', Uzun 2005: 34) and how he is “tied by their chains and fetters, in miserable Diyarbakır” (Uzun 2005: 65).
However, it is only with chapter seven that Diyarbakır comes to the fore with its entire symbolical load. The whole chapter (14 pages) is a long celebration of the city, of its ambiguity, its subaltern condition, and its potential value for Kurdish culture. Here Mehmed Uzun clearly states that Diyarbakır is – or should be - the capital city of Kurdistan. Therefore, with the resurgence of the Kurdish contemporary novel, Diyarbakır has neatly acquired a fundamental role. I believe it is worth focusing in detail on the discourse about the city put forward in this chapter by Uzun in the mid-1980s; a discourse destined to have a great circulation and influence in Kurdish contemporary culture.

The lengthy description of the city is again voiced through the rhetorical artifice of the protagonist talking to the insect in the dark of his confinement:

> Do you know where we are now, dear insect? How would you know it [...] Here is Diyarbakır, insect, Diyarbakır. We are beneath Diyarbakır’s earth, in the strangers’ prison. Diyarbakır…insect. Do you see Diyarbakır? It is the beauty of our homeland and the pain of our hearts. It is both our hope for life and the stitch in our minds. It is a strange city, ancient and magnificent. It is voice, it is colour, it is light, it is sorrow, and beauty. It is confused. Everything is intermingled and hard to comprehend. It gives you life and it kills you. It loves and it hates. It is faithful and helpful, but jealous and mean at the same time (Uzun 2005: 98).[212]

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[212] ‘’Tu dizanî em li kû derê ne? Tu dê çawan bizanibî? … Ev der Diyarbekir e, kezê, Diyarbekir. Em di bin axa Diyarbekrê de, di zindana biyaniyan de ne. Diyarbekir… Kezê, ev Diyarbekir heye, ha ev Diyarbekir, xweşiya welatê me, jana dile me ye. Hêviya jiyana me, êşa mêjiyê me ye. Bajarekî ecêb

At once the physical embodiment of Turkish oppression and the symbol of Kurdish identity, Diyarbakır is wrapped in ambiguities and contradictions. It is the place where the prison, locus of the annihilation of the Kurdish identity, is situated, but it is also the object of desire: “it is because of their love for [Diyarbakır] that young boys and girls are killed or imprisoned” (Uzun 2005: 98). The city is used as a concept that concentrates the opposites: it is both a metonym of the Kurdish identity and of the overbearing Turkish nationalist discourse:

> Diyarbakır is strange, my insect, very strange. The unity of opposites takes place there, the dispute and the hostility. It is the city of dreams. There is everything in it. Old and new, good and bad, beauty and ugliness, humanity and savagery, effort and indolence. Love and anger, happiness and sadness […] (Uzun 2005: 103).[213]

In a long list of possible definitions, the city is described as a red rose that inebriates with its scent and hurts with its thorns (Uzun 2005: 99). It is a city in love with freedom but always condemned by “foreigners” to be subjugated. It is quite remarkably: “Our biggest city. The capital city of a violated homeland and of an oppressed people”[214] (Uzun 2005: 99).
Following an inventory of such lyrical and political definitions of the city, the protagonist begins to tell the history of the place highlighting repeatedly the negative influence of foreigners who constantly broke the peace of the city. The “classical” Kurdish sentiment of being besieged by inimical powers famously voiced by Ehmedê Xanî in *Mem û Zîn* is rephrased here positing Diyarbakır as the victim of this situation: “for many times bullying foreigners have broke through its gates: from Basra, from the Black Sea, from the Mediterranean and from Istanbul. Turks, Arabs and Persians have selected it as their seat”[215] (Uzun 2005: 101). The history of the city seems like a long theory of invasions: from the time they came with sword and shield to the present where they come with tanks and fighter jets (Uzun 2005: 103).

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e. Kevn û bi hûner e. Deng e, reng e, ronahî ye, jan e, xweşî ye. Tevlihev e. Her tiştê wê di nav hev de ye. Wê fahm kirin dijwar e. Hem divejîne, hem dikuje. Hem hez dike, hem hêrs dibe. Hem dilsoz û alîkar û hem pexîl û çavteng e.’’

[213] ‘’Diyarbekir ecêb e kêzê, pir ecêb e. Yekbûn û yekgirtiya dijîtî, berberî û dijimahiyan e. Bajarê xewnan e. Her tişt tê de heye. Kev û nû, rindî û xirabî, xweşî û gemarî, merivahî û barbarî, xebat û sûtalî. Evîn û rik, kefxweşî û xem…’’

[214] ‘’Ew bajarê me yê herî mezin e. Serbajar, paytextê welatekî binpê û xelkekî bindest e.’’

[215] ‘’Xerîbên çavsor bi dehan caran xwe ji deriyên wê daxistine hundir. Ji Basrayê, ji Behra Reş, ji Behra Spî, ji Stenbolê daketine Diyarbekrê. Tirk, ereb û eceman ew ji xwe re kirine qonax.’’

The protagonist briefly recounts the episode of the 1925 Sheikh Said rebellion, as one of the most important historical events that happened in the city for Kurdish nationalism. He says that it is in Diyarbakır that the order to hang the Sheikh with his 51 fellows was taken. Tellingly, the following passage suggests a profound communion of the urban and the natural environment with Kurdish nationalism:

> Together with Sheikh Said 51 leaders of the homeland were hanged.
> Diyarbakır cried. Cried the earth and the weeds, the mountains and the rocks. The moaning of the Tigris Rivers spread all around. The birds cried. The Homeland cried. People cried. One more time, fire had fallen in the hearth of the city, the hearth of the Homeland. 51 fellows and their leader were hanged on its land. (Uzun 2005: 105).[216]

As it is clearly shown by this passage, for Uzun the landscape and the city are in a sort of natural correspondence with Kurdish identity. The reasons for the place's sorrows, of its problems and afflictions are only to be found in the military occupation of the Turkish Republic - "they are here since more or less a century" (Uzun 2005: 106) - and the inability to accept Kurdish culture. The city is forced to live in "silence, to eat, drink, speak, love and walk in silence" because of the ban on their language and culture (Uzun 2005: 106). The foreigners, namely the military personnel, the police, the civil servants and their families are depicted as completely severed from the life of the city ("they do not mingle with the city"), as happened in many other colonial contexts. This aspect of the colonial separation, reminds us of the disconnection between the "civilized" State personnel and the "savage" local population represented fifty years earlier in the novels of Halide Edib Adıvar, analysed in Chapter Two. Reversing the perspective, here Uzun presents the local Kurds as authentic and legitimate dwellers whereas the Turkish apparatus' members are foreign occupiers. Nonetheless, the latter have the upper hand and are the visible, while the local Kurds are an "invisible" population:

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[216] ‘’Tevî Sêx Seîdê rîspî 51 bîrewer û pêîewayên welêt bi dar ve kirin. Diyarbekir giriya. Der û ber, çiya û zinar giriyan. Xûşîna dengê Dîclê hawîrdor girt. Teyr giriyan. Welat giriya. Meriv giriyan. Careke din agir kete dilê bajêr, dilê bajêr dilê welêt. 51 lawên wê yên mêrxas û bîrewer li ser erda wê, hatin bi dar ve kirin.’’

> Just like the city, its dwellers are also divided in two parts. One part lives outside [the city-walls] and it is visible; the other part instead lives inside [the city-walls] and it is invisible, (Uzun 2005: 106).[217]

In sum, in Uzun's words, Diyarbakır is a city filled with contradictions and crossed by several demarcation lines; it shows them also through its architectural features: "the thousand-year-old city-walls stands in front of the ultra-modern looking Turkish military camp, staring at each other like two eternal enemies''[218] (Uzun 2005: 103). Spatial and temporal contradictions emerge through the architectural aspect of the city: the walls' rootedness and authenticity (standing for Kurdish culture considered as the local) confronts the modernity and unrelatedness of the military camp, which has, in addition, implicitly violent connotations. On a similar note:

> Old streets and neighbourhoods laying next to rows of apartment complexes look like sisters who never met each other after birth; the wide, regular and tidy boulevards and the poky and confused old streets remind of a painter that draws again one of his old paintings (Uzun 2005: 103).[219]

The urban design and the shape of the city are configurations of conflicting identities, temporalities and ways of life. In particular, as a telling exemplification of the spatial occupation, the protagonist describes in detail the huge area of the city occupied by military camps, an area that begins just outside the old city walls and seems to direct "tanks and cannons' barrels towards the city". That area is described as a "wound in the heart of Diyarbakır; […] an area that turns Diyarbakır into a prison […] and that is the cause of grief for the women of the city; the cause of the silence and dumbness of the city's children"[220] (Uzun 2005: 104).

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[217] ''Her tiştê bajêr û rûniştevanên wê, bi du alî ne. Aliyêk ber bi derve ku dixuye û aliyek ji ber bi hundir, ku naxuye.''

[218] ''Sûrên wê yên hezar salan û ordîgeha Tirkan ku pir modern e, wekî du dijminên roja axîretê, di nîveka Diyarbekrê de , li hev dinêhêrin.''

[219] ''Tax û kolanên kevn û rêzên apartimanên nû, wekî du xwişkên ku ji roja ji dayîkbûnê û bi vir de hevûdu nedîtina, dixûyên. Kolanên nû yên bi dûzan, fireh û plankirî û ew kuçên kevn ên pir teng û tev li hev wekî tabloke pir kevn ku ji aliyê wênekêşî nûjen ve carek din çêbûyî, dixuyên.''

[220] ''di dilê Diyarbekrê de kuleke mezin e…Siûda bajêr ji vê navçê zindan bûye. Qehra ku hatiye û li ser çavên jinên bajêr veniştiye, ji vê navçê ye. Sedemê bêdengî û laliya zarokên bajêr ji vê navçê ye.''

If Diyarbakır is the image of a city turned into a prison, where its local inhabitants are prevented from publicly living their identity, the prison in turn becomes a mirror of society and particularly of the specific segment of society that the State sets out to annihilate and deny; as the protagonist highlights after some time behind the bars: "this prison resembles the social mosaic of your homeland" (Uzun 2005: 127). The ethnic variety, the forbidden languages, the freedom of political thought and exchange banned outside becomes possible and patent inside the prison. There gather Kurds, Armenians, Alevis, and leftist Turks who are deprived of the possibility of political organization outside. Through his fictional work, Uzun confirms and describes what many commentators, former inmates and analysts alike had to say about the prison in Diyarbakır: namely, that, contrary to the wish of the Turkish State, it allowed the organization of a structured Kurdish movement of resistance. In the words of former inmate Selim Dindar (quoted in Zeydanlıoglu 2009: 8):

> Had it not been for the barbarity in the prison, the Kurdish question would not have emerged so soon. They made militants out of people in the Diyarbakır prison. Almost 80 percent of these people went to the mountains [took up arms].

While the prison epitomizes the repressive policies of the Turkish State, showing the essence of the homogenizing project applied through the use of violence, torture, forcible assimilation practices (Zeydanlıoğlu 2009; Yaprak Yıldız 2016), it also becomes a place of learning, awareness and organization for a movement of resistance. As the protagonist puts it, the prison "becomes a social university" (Uzun 2005: 125). Planned to be the place of eradication of oppositional political currents and of obliteration of unaccepted identities, the prison instead turns into a stepping-stone for the antagonists' mobilization. Recounted, elaborated, and shared through the literary media – among others - the violent season following the 1980s finds in the prison both the exposure of the State's tacit assimilational goals and the source of a narrative of pride and dignity in resistance. As Uzun said about his own experience: "[in prison] I met the tradition of the oral Kurdish narratives. Furthermore, I had the chance to read the world literature translated into Turkish. When people are locked inside they generally read a lot, and I have done so. Obviously, everything in Kurdish was forbidden there, but in some way it was still available to us" (Uzun 2010: 145).

The protagonist of *Tu*, incarcerated for owning forbidden books, finds in the prison the authors of those books in flesh and blood and is able to learn directly from their mouths.

When a fellow inmate introduces the protagonist to the social environment of the jail a few days after entering the prison, he is told as follows:

> Look around. All these prisoners are famous people. For sure you must have heard the name of some of them. In our homeland there are no persons more important or greater than these. They all work on politics, society, culture, and literature. All of them, in various ways, have stood still in front of repression. […] Look, those sitting at the table at our left are the president and the committees of the Kurdish Youth Movement. […] Those two people who came in now are both doctors. The tallest is the secretary of the Turkish Workers Party. […] That guy sitting on his own…he was the first to write with the Kurdish alphabet in Turkey and he translated *Mem û Zîn* in Turkish.[221] […] That tall guy, he is the uncle of us all. He does not know Turkish at all. The guy next to him instead is Turkish and does not know Kurdish…He is a sociologist.[222] He wrote two books on the social life of Kurds and that's why he was thrown here (Uzun 2005: 123).[223]

Hence, whilst the open space of Diyarbakır is turned by the State into a prison in which only the Turkish language, rituals and culture are legitimate, the prison somehow becomes a hidden refuge where, while facing the assimilational policies of the State in all its bare violence, the prisoners also find the space to raise their ethnic awareness and build up a network of relations that will lay the foundation of the anticolonial movement to come. In *Tu,* Uzun shows how, in the political season opened by the 1980 coup-d'état, Diyarbakır becomes an unavoidable central element of Kurdish culture in Turkey and abroad. One of the main reasons that makes Diyarbakır so crucial is the presence of the prison, and the vast amount of collective and social memory produced around it. The prison represents a scar in the body of Kurdish social memory; however, that scar is even more aching as it is inflicted at the heart of a city that is perceived as quintessentially representative of the Kurdish geographical and imaginary homeland.

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[221] Most probably here the author is referring to Mehmet Emin Bozarslan (1935), Kurdish writer and linguist. He was jailed twice during the 1970s upon accusation of separatism for his publication of books on Kurdish language. He was the first to translate the Ehmede Xani's Mem u Zin into Modern Turkish in 1968.

[222] Here we may discern the figure of İsmail Beşikçi.

[223] ''–Binihêre, binihêre der û dora xwe. Ev girtiyên hane hemû navdar in. Lî ser van, kesên girîngtir û şexsiyetên mezintir tüne li welatê me. Hemû di warê siyaset, civat, kultur û edebiyatê de xwedî xebat in. Hemûyan –her yek bi şêweyê xwe – li dijî zordarî rawestîne… Binihêri, ew kesên kul i masa kêleka me ya çepê rûniştie, serok û endamên komita navendî ya Komela Xortên Kurdan in… Binihêre, di destê wî yê dirêj de du lib şamik hene, ew herdu kes jî doxtor in…Ew ê dirêj sekretere Partiya Karkerên Tirkiyê. Binihêre ew kesê ku bi tena sere xwe runiştiye… ew kesê ku cara yekemin li Tirkiyê elfeba kurdî nivîsand û destana Mem û Zînû wergerand Tirkî, ew e… Ew ê direêj, apê me hemûyan e apê girtîxanê yê. Ew qet bi tirkî nizane. Îcar ew kesê din kul i ba wî ye, Tirk e û qet bi kurdî nizane… Sosyolog e. Li ser kurdan û dan û standinên wan ên civakî du kîtab nivîsîne. Ji ber vê yeke jî, ew ji uniwersîtê girtin, avêtin girtîxanê.''

The novel belongs to an early season of the writer's career, in which, as Alparslan notes "Uzun solely focused on the strict boundaries of two distinct poles of the colonial divide, consisting of Turks and Kurds" (Nas 2013: 177). Later in his career, the writer will reach more nuanced positions, detaching himself from the PKK breed of Kurdish nationalism and will "engage to a critical interrogation towards nationalist perceptions of his community" (Nas 2013: 178). However, Diyarbakır will remain a key theme of his literary work and his life, as it is testified by his choice of returning to the city when he was diagnosed with a lethal cancer. Diyarbakır is at the core of Uzun's endeavour of constructing a "urban" – hence modern – Kurdish literature (Diken 2016b). As he declares in an interview released shortly before his death:

> In my life and in my writing Diyarbekir has always had a very important place. As you know, I started writing and became a Kurdish novelist in exile. Writing in exile is very difficult. During that period of time in which I was building up my writing, Diyarbakir has always been with me. […] At that time Diyarbakir has been my strength and my force that allowed me to resist to the difficulties and problems of the exile and, on the other hand, that allowed me to structure my writing (Laleş, Diken, and Mîrxan 2006).

Here Uzun confesses the personal relevance the city holds in his eyes, but going much further than that, later in the interview he expands on the importance of the place and articulates a discourse about literature, the city and the specific situation of Kurdish literature:

> The city has a very central role in modern literature. Modern literature, and especially modern novel has been built around urbanism. In other words, the history of urbanism and that of the modern novel are one and the same. […] Now, all the world famous writers have built a relation with their environs and their city (Laleş, Diken, and Mîrxan 2006).

He gives the examples of Victor Hugo, Thomas Mann, and James Joyce as writers who were able to build innovative and powerful novels, also thanks to their deep correlation with the city in which they lived or wrote about. However, coming to the case of Kurdish literature he states the following (Laleş, Diken, and Mîrxan 2006):

> Unfortunately in our literature we haven't yet made our cities immortal. We haven't described

> them; we haven't told their history, we have not made them a lively force that could have transformed us in world writers. […] Now for me Diyarbakır is that kind of city. I have always written about Diyarbakır, from my first novel until today. Both in my novels and in my essays there is Diyarbakır. […] In our literature we should put forward the city and urbanism.

We can conclude that in Uzun's literary and political engagement, which signals concurrently the beginning of the "renaissance" (Uzun 2010: 305) or the "spring" (Erbay 2012: 13) of Kurdish literature, Diyarbakır is seen as the Kurds' predominant political centre, the prime scene of their cultural and spatial struggle and eventually as the essential urban-literary symbol through which the Kurdish letters may rise again and inaugurate its modern journey. Furthermore, Uzun here put forward Diyarbakır as a city that Kurds should construct through literature.

- 6.3.2. Firat Cewerî's *Ez ê yekî bikujim* and *Lehî.*

Together with Mehmed Uzun, Firat Cewerî might be considered among the "contemporary classics" of Kurdish literature (Scalbert-Yücel 2006, 42). He produced his work in exile, in Sweden, but nonetheless devoted great attention to depictions of the Kurdish society "at home". In 1992 he launched the journal "*Nûdem*", and a publishing house by the same name, with the intention of editing a journal devoted to artistic and literary issues, independently from any political influence, until then very burdensome in the field of Kurdish literature and arts (Scalbert-Yücel 2006: 28). In 2003 he edited one of the main anthologies of Kurdish literature that since the mid-1990s and in the 2000s shaped and animated the debate and the 'renaissance' of Kurdish literature: the *Anthology of Kurdish Short Stories: 1856-2003* (Cewerî 2003). Several of his novels are translated into Turkish and therefore his discourse on Kurdish society has a circulation and visibility also in the Turkish public sphere. In general, distancing himself from radical political discourses, Cewerî seems to position himself in a balanced space of 'literariness' that also allows him access to the Turkish literary field; as Scalbert-Yücel has noted, connecting the author to a broader tendency in contemporary Kurdish literature: "A move toward themes more accessible and more conformable to the tastes of a Turkish readership is also noticeable" (Scalbert-Yücel 2012: 365). In Cewerî's books the city of Diyarbakır, though seldom mentioned overtly, is of high importance. In this section I will analyse the overall image of the city emerging from two of his novels, *Ez ê yekî bikujim* (I will kill someone, 2008) and the follow-up *Lehî* (Lehi, 2011). Both works present substantial depictions of the city of Diyarbakır.

Ez ê yekî bikujim is a novel divided into two parts, each of which is narrated in the first person singular by a character: Temo, for the first half, and the Writer (a character) who reconstructs the life-story of Diana in the second half. *Lehî*, the follow-up to *Ez ê yekî bikujim*, alternates chapters in which Temo and Diana tell their own different but stranded stories. Both characters repeatedly offer to the reader their perception of the city in which they live, which the reader can easily argue is Diyarbakır, although its name is never mentioned.

Cewerî collocates his characters in contemporary times, after the heavy-handed oppressive season of the 1980 military coup-d'état and the 1984 PKK-led Kurdish insurgency. Despite this, *Ez ê yekî bikujim* and *Lehî* are not prison-novels, but the prison element, as I will argue, plays a very prominent role in the description of the city and of the Kurdish society at large. In a sense, we can start reading *Ez ê yekî bikujim* where *Tu* ends; with this I mean that, while in *Tu* we see the main character producing his imaginations and nationalist dreams about Diyarbakir from the enclosed space of the prison during the repressive period of the 1980s, in *Ez ê yekî bikujim* we listen to the descriptions about the city provided by a character who spent most of his life in that very same prison and who, after being released, is now wandering in Diyarbakır's streets, offering a portrayal of the city's condition after the constraining period of the 1980s and mid 1990s.

The novel starts with Temo waking-up in his bed, exhausted after a nightmare. In his disturbed sleep, imagination and the unnerving space of the city intermingled with one another, as Temo declares right at page one: "It comes to my mind that during the night I got up several times, walked away from my bed and joined the clamour of the city; but when I opened my eyes I saw myself in my bed turning around on one side and then the other" (Cewerî 2008: 15). In his terrifying nightmare Temo heard a voice that made a premonition; everything Temo heard from that voice previously in his life became true; this time it says: "Today you will kill someone" (Cewerî 2008: 16). Hence, after this powerful and abrupt start, the first half of the novel consists of Temo strolling around in Diyarbakır seeking someone to kill, in a city he can barely recognize and in which he feels alien. Urban change is in fact a key element in Cewerî's novels, taken into account here.

It is immediately clear that Temo is moved by feelings of hatred, irritation and grudge towards his community, and particularly towards the city that has changed so much during his long imprisonment and that, above all, ignores him. Introducing himself, Temo presents the prison as a watershed in his life, an event that detached him from his community: “some say that before the incarceration I was another person” (Ceweri̊ 2008: 16). Temo is an outsider, a person excluded from his society, from his friends and from his city by reason of fifteen years spent in prison: “It is true that I also lived in this city, but my eyes never went out into the city from those four walls. I did not witness the blossoming of the youth of this city, I did not see the city growing, for fifteen years I was not part of the construction and rise of this city” (Ceweri̊ 2008: 20). Temo remarks repeatedly his detachment from the city in which he is now looking for someone to kill; resentment towards the community from which he feels excluded is a sentiment that deeply characterizes Temo. In fact, Joanna Bochenska has noted that “*Firat Ceweri’s Ez e Yeki Bikujim*, is quite a convincing analysis of the human state of resentment and hatred” (Bocheńska 2014: 44); and indeed resentment for the changes brought about by modernist/capitalist development and might be seen as one of the major sentiments of our times (Mishra 2017). Here Ceweri̊ directs his character’s resentment towards the socio-political community embodied by the city. In the following passage, worth quoting at length, Temo clearly expresses how the main object of his resentment is actually the city as a whole:

> Undoubtedly many things have changed in this city. They have changed even the name of the city. Some of them use the old name of the city to show off, as a sign of heroism, but the cowards live under the shadow of the city’s heroism. When in prison “red skewers” were attached under our legs and we were cauterized, when the voice of our cries were going out the bars where were the cowards who use the new city’s name. Now you who use the name of the city to show off and cultivate envy as an art, you and everyone else must know that is the result of our resistance.
> After fifteen years of imprisonment I see myself a stranger in this city. It has been a month since I was released and this city did not welcome me. Didn’t I struggle for the liberation of this city? We would liberate the city from its condition, clean it from all the ravage and dirtiness and then finally live as brothers.
> Where is all this? It is not a concern for this city and its dwellers. When they pass by in front of me they only look at the stain on my trousers and walk away. They do not know that I crushed my head on concrete walls for their freedom, that the voice of my lament under the

> torturers' claws went out from the bars, and that I slept for fifteen years between four walls. Maybe they know it but they don't care. I could kill the entire city, despite I have not hurt an ant so far, and I would not feel pity. (31)[224]

It is quite clear that Temo is criticizing here his own Kurdish community, also referring to the use of the name "Amed" as a superficial act of opposition to the State, embodied in the official name of the city, Diyarbakır. More precisely, the author seems to be criticizing a specific political understanding of the Kurdish issue as embedded symbolically in the city of Diyarbakır and produced in the city by the pro-Kurdish municipality. As said above, the first half of the novel consists of Temo's tour in Diyarbakır, during which he measures and realizes the distance that has materialised between him and the place in which he lives. He continuously stresses the fifteen-year break in the prison as a time that withheld him from integrating with the place. That period of time he thought was a sacrifice for the city's good goes, in fact, largely unacknowledged by the city itself. Hence, the protagonist's resentment and aggressiveness.

Temo sees in the city more than an element of disappointment but, above all, the resentment he feels stems from the fact that the place is not what he imagined it would be after years of struggle, after years of sacrifice for the city. His bitterness is directed towards the downfalls of the struggle, towards the radical social and cultural changes, towards the signs of the process of assimilation to Turkish culture and therefore towards the failure of the Kurdish cultural resilience. However, two aspects, in particular, in his eyes represent clearly this failure and widen the fracture between the protagonist and the city: first, the linguistic assimilation, and second, the behaviour and overall condition of women. Two aspects that exemplify, to Temo, how the social and cultural struggle has gone wrong: linguistic assimilation proves the failure of the Kurdish cultural struggle, whilst the sexual objectification of the women, in concurrence with a general neoliberal and consumerist development of the city, marks the deficiency of the socio-political struggle – the very reason he suffered fifteen years of prison and disconnection from the community. The following two quotations help us understand how the main character Temo (and perhaps the author Cewerî along with him) stigmatizes assimilation to Turkish culture exemplified by the forgoing of the Kurdish language:

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[224] ''Bêguman liv î bajarî gelek tişt hatine guhertin. Navê bajêr jî guherandine. Hinan ji wan navê bajêr ê bere li xwe jî kirine. Ev nav ji xwe re kirine nişana mêrxasiyê. Lê tirsonek di siya mêrxasiya bajêr de dijîn. Gava li girtîgehê şîşên sor bi bine lingên me ve dîzelîqandîn û em dax dikirin, gava denge nalînên me di ikafelekan re derdiket, tirsonekên kul i ser guhertina navê bajêr dijîn, li ku bûn gelo? Bila ew niha navê vî bajarî li xwe bikin û dexsê wek hunerekê bibinin, lê divê hûn û her kes bizanibin ku ev encama berxwedana me ye.

Piştî panzdeh salên hepse, ez xwe xerîbê vî bajarî dibinim. Ev mehek e ez hatime berdan, vî bajarî tu xwedîtî li in nekiriye. Qaşo ez ji bo rizgariya vî bajarî rabûbûm, me ê ev bajar ji vê rewşê rizgar bikira, me ê ew ji hemû xerabî û qirêjiyan pak bikira û em ê te de weke biran bijiyana.

Ka? Qet ne xema bajêr û bajariyan e. Gava ew di ber min re dibuhurin, ew tenê çavên xwe bera lekeya pantorê min diin û dimeşin. Ew nizanim ku ji bo azadiya wan serê min li dîwarên betonî ketiye, dengê barebara min di nava pençen îşkencekaran de di felekan re derketiye. Ez panzdeh slan din ava çar dîwran de razame. Dibe jî dizanin, lê ji xwe re nakin xem. Min bikarîbûya bajar bikuşta, digel ku heta niha min gêrikek jî neêşandiye, min ê texsîr nekira.''

> I went out searching for someone to kill, but I don't know where I am. At times you would say that I left this city, went into another time and then came back. You would say that I am not among my people, but that I moved to another region. It is true. Now in this city the sounds of my language barely reach my ears. And I say to myself, God how is possible that this people forgot that language so quickly.[225] (37)

In this city none but villagers and poor people speak in Kurdish; Kurdish language has fallen from the mouth of the "gentry". Those who show off with the name of the city and are proud of it do not give a damn for the language of the city.[226] (52).

Through Temo's views Cewerî articulates a critique of Diyarbakir's society. In particular, the critique towards linguistic assimilation is strengthened and highlighted by the author through paratexts: the presentation in footnotes of Kurdish translations of dialogue pronounced in Turkish (or at times in a version of 'Turkified' Kurdish) by some characters, allows Cewerî to hint to his readership his views on the poor conditions of Kurds in mastering their own language (Scalbert-Yücel 2013: 262). As is clear from the passages above, the city does not resonate in accordance with Kurdish identity; on the contrary, in Temo's perspective, it surrendered to the overarching power of the Turkish language, therefore his struggle and the sacrifice of fifteen years seems to have proven ineffective in this regard.

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[225] ''Ez ji bo kuştina yekî derketime, lê nizanim li ku me. Carina tu dibêjî qey ji vî bajarî firiyame, çûme demeke din û dîsa lê vegeriyame. Tu dibêjî qey ne di nava miletê xwe de me, lê min xwe li devereke din daniye. Rast e jî. Niha li bajarê min dengê zimanê min nayê guhên min. Ez di hundirê xwe de dibêjim, Xwedêyo, çawa vî miletî evqasî zû ev ziman ji bîr kir.''

[226] ''Li vî bajarî, ji bilî gundî û feqîran kes bi kurdî napeyive û zimanê kurdî ji devê 'efendiyan' derketiye. Ên ku navê vî bajarî li xwe kirine û xwe bi navê bajêr qure dikin jî pênc peran bi zimanê vî bajarî nadin.''

In addition to the linguistic representation of the city, the other aspect that often attracts Temo's attention is gender relations and above all the condition of women. This view is one pushing the protagonist towards the perception that the city and times have changed, and that his political struggle has been futile:

> This city for whose freedom we rebelled fifteen years ago, now, fifteen years after, sells its own girls in a very overt manner for the satisfaction of its appetites.
> Did something like that happen also before? Yes, okay, there were brothels, but I never went. For fear of being tempted I did not even pass in front of it. Actually, when we would have liberated the country and this ancient city with it, we would have the brothels abolished. We would give honour to women. They would take the highest place in our society and none would harass them, only because they are women.[227] (33)

The gendered critique of Diyarbakır society will be much stronger in the second part of the novel, in which the story of Diana is told. However, Temo, in the first half, sets the tone of the gendered representations of the environment of Diyarbakır. During his wandering in the city Temo notices the 'relaxed' clothing of young women; he enters in a lingerie shop and is surprised by the owner praying in the middle of underwear, alluding to sex, (47) and finally is bewildered by a young couple's display of affection in a public café (49). The overall change in attitude towards sexual behaviours and the objectification of the women, whose liberation was one of the most crucial goals of the armed struggle, set forth Temo's disconnection from Diyarbakır.

The city has changed, it is ridden by social problems such as segregation between classes, and after all seems projected towards a future of neoliberal development in which little space is left for old customs and traditions. In the following two passages these arguments are made very clear. The first quote regards mainly the exposition of the social problems affecting the city, of which Temo has not much of a clue since he spent most of his life in prison. At the same time, the passage poses an interesting relation between the concept of "dwelling in the city" and the concept of "modern times"; concepts that are further developed in the second passage. While in the street Temo has a discussion with some passers-by and he is told by one of them:

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[227] ''Ev bajarê ku berî bi panzdeh salane m ji bo rizgariya wî rabêbên, niha, piştî panzdeh salan êdî bi awayekî eşkere ji bo têrkirina zikê xwe keçên xwe difiroşe. Gelo berê jî li vî bajarî tiştên wilo hebûn? Belê, hebûn, kerxane jî hebûn, lê ez qet neçûmê. Ji tirsa ku hinek ê ji min şikê bikin, ez di ber re jî derbas nedibûm. Jixwe gava me welat û bi welêt re ev bajarê qedîm rizgar bikira, me ê kerxane jî rakira. Me ê rûmet bida jinê. Jin ê di civata me de li cihê herî bilind bûya, kesî ê ji bo ku ew tenê jin e, nikarîbûya zilm lê bikira.''

> It is clear that you don't live in this city and you don't know the problems of this city; you don't know in what condition are the dwellers, the children, the girls and women of this city. You don't know in what kind of hell they live. Didn't you hear that thousands of villagers who had their villages burnt took refuge in this city. […] I'm sorry but you do not live in this time. (41).[228]

Shortly after, while wandering casually in the city in search of a candidate victim for his murder, Temo comes across a huge, modern looking building he had never seen before. It is a shopping mall called "Galerya" (this is one of the main tangible elements that allows us to read "the city" of *Ez e Yeki Bikujim* as Diyarbakır) and through its physical presence Temo has one further grasp of his spatial and temporal disconnection from the life of the city and of "the times":

> I do not know the city, it is not like it used to be, the inhabitants have changed. Their outfit has changed; the buildings are not like before. The colour and the aspect of everything have been changed.
>
> [He enters the big building he has not seen before and steps onto the escalator]
>
> I immediately understand that my society is moving quickly towards urbanity. I understand that we are getting free of that monotonous rural life and moving towards a modern life. (46)[229]

Here Cewerî refers to the drastic change of the lived environments in Kurdish society in the last decades and at the swift urbanization processes, driven both by economic and military factors. These passages should be read in the context of the significant hostility for the urban environment expressed by important Kurdish poets (Scalbert-Yücel 2010) and the contextual literary exaltation of rural life (see the discussion about the "rural idyll" in O'Shea

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[228] ''-Diyar e tu li vî bajarî najî, tu bi derdê vî bajarî nizanî; tu nizanî şêniyên vî bajarî, zarokên vî bajarî, keç û jinên vî bajarî di çi rewşê de ne. Tu nizanî bê ew di çi cehenemê de ne. Ma haya tê jê nine ku bi hezaran gundiyên ku gundên wan hatine şewitandin xwe li vî bajarî girtine. Pismam, li qisûrê menêre, tu ne vê demê de dijî.''

[229] ''Lê bajêr nas nakim, bajar ne wek bajarê berê ye, şêniyên wê guherî ne. Lixwekirina wan hatiye guhertin, avahî ne wek berê ne. Berî panzdeh salan, ne mirov wilo bûn, ne jî avahî. Reng û rûçîkên her tiştî hatiye guhertin. […] Tavilê têdigihîjim ku civata me bi lez ber bi bajarvaniyê ve diçe. Fêhm dikim ku em xwe ji jiyana gundîtiyê ya yekcûre rizgar dikin û dikevin cîhana modern.''

2004). According to this interpretation of the lived environment, in the eyes of Temo the drastic social changes pushed Kurds towards the experience of "modernity" in the urban space and towards all its downfalls: the relaxation of customs, the cultural homogenization in favour of the economically-led culture, and the forgoing of the specificities of Kurdish identity. The character realizes that the city is becoming touristic (44), therefore is connecting to fluxes of capital and markets that alter the behaviour and system of values of the people, segregating Kurdish-speaking lower classes from the assimilated and Turkish-speaking middle-class. In sum, in Temo's politicized views, the identity of the place is altered and the city pitched towards "Turkish-modern life", betraying decades of struggle and fight. In his view, the corruption of modern life is proven mainly, as said above, by neglecting the Kurdish language and through the objectification of the woman. However, his only chance of redemption from the condition of seclusion and disconnection from his society comes through an outsider like him, someone who feels overwhelmed by the city's society, and who is experiencing the same disappointment at the downfalls of the Kurdish political struggle and all the contradictions of Diyarbakır society's attitude towards women: Diana, a former PKK-guerrilla, and now a prostitute in Diyarbakır.

Sitting in a café, Temo notices a group of girls and shortly after a pimp addresses him. The scene of Temo's encounter with the pimp and then with Diana is telling of the link constructed by the author between the development of the city and the sexual availability of the group of girls:

> -This city is booming, are you from here?
> Although speaking in Turkish he uses the politicized name of the city. (67)[230]

The discourse regarding prostitution and the commodification of the women's body intertwines significantly with the social conditions of the city. Clearly, prostitution is seen as a sign simultaneously of the decadence and of the 'modernization' of the city; but also is regarded as a despicable contradiction of a conservative society that revolves concepts of honour and purity around the women's bodies:

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[230] ''-Bajar êdî mezin bûye, ma tu ji vir î? Dîgel ku ew bi tirkî vê pirse j imin dike jî, ew navê bajêr ê niha î polîtîk dibêje.''

> Not for life experiences, but thanks to the novels and stories I had read, I understood that […] those women are bargaining and selling their bodies, in this city that has become a cemetery for hundreds of girls for reasons of honour. (67)[231]

The encounter with Diana and the consequent embryonic beginning of a romantic infatuation with her, seems to represent the only possibility for Temo of retrieving a connection with his environment and his society after years of reclusion. Unfortunately for him, shortly after meeting Diana, a car runs over Temo and the first half of *Ez ê yekî bikujim* comes to an end. In the second half of the novel, in which the Writer (Nivîskar) leads the narration, the story of Diana is told. In this half, the depictions of the city substantially diminish in number although they do not change in tone. The Writer is a Kurdish intellectual who lives in Sweden and comes back to Diyarbakır after many years, after having established himself as a renowned Kurdish author (it is not hard to recognize an overt persona of Firat Cewerî). He left the city in a time when "speaking in Kurdish was forbidden", and comes back to present his Kurdish books to his readers. Cewerî here highlights the largely improved legal condition of the Kurdish language in Turkey, despite the remarks made in the previous section by Temo on the diglossia of the city and on the overall predominance of the Turkish language in the public space, which undermine any optimistic interpretation.

After meeting Diana, the Writer has her tell him the story of her life; Diana agrees to tell it, on condition that the Writer provides support to help her escape the city and settle in Sweden. Hence, repeatedly through Diana's eyes, Diyarbakır is seen as a "hell" from which she wants to be freed. Diana is a Kurdish girl from a rural village, who after contesting her father over an arranged marriage, flees to Germany with the rest of her family. There, pent-up in the house because of the will of her conservative father, Diana slowly begins to become politically radicalized through the intervention of the European structure of the PKK. After a while she decides to join the guerrilla warfare and return to her homeland as a fighter. In her first operation she is captured by the military and eventually ends up in the hands of the Turkish secret police, by whom she's pushed to work in the prostitution market. Similar to Temo, the ambitions of liberation of the city and the dream of being recognized by its community as a heroine turn into a sorrowful disappointment:

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[231] ''Ne ji tecrubeyên jiyanê, bi xêra roman û çîrokên kum in xwendine, fêhm dikim ku…van jinên bedew bazar dike û liv î bajarê ku ji ber namûsê ji sedan keç û jinan re bûye goristan, difiroşe.''

> This ancient city has become a hell for me. This city I once wanted to liberate, now consumes me, makes me suffer. This city I once thought I would return in as a heroin, now turned me into a whore. The city whose honour I wanted to liberate from beneath the strangers' boots, now tramples on my honour.[232] (107)

Similar views of the city are expressed by Diana in *Lehî*, the follow-up novel, in which Cewerî tells the story of Diana's escape from Diyarbakir thanks to the timely intervention of the Writer. In a moment of relaxation in the house of her rescuer, Diana measures the difference between the Diyarbakır she had imagined at the time she joined the guerrillas and the real one that left tangible wounds on her body:

> At that moment I forgot all the bad experiences I had in this city and moved with my mind to the time in which I used to dream about it. At that time the city was ancient in my memory, sacred in my heart, and beautiful in my mind. This city which I would have returned to with a pure spirit, run through it with clean feelings and then we would have run together towards and reach the civilizations of the world…Instead I drown up to my throat in the dirtiness of the city. The city that was the scope of my freedom became my prison. When I was to break the chains of servitude, those chains imprisoned me and my dignity went under the soles of the inconsequent people of this city. (Cewerî 2014, 21). [233]

For Diana the whole city is like a huge prison (43) and fleeing from it is the only way for her to reach some tranquillity (59); Diana joined the guerrillas in order to liberate herself and her femininity from the tentacles of a conservative and coercive father; she also joined it with the dream of rescuing a city that stood in her mind as a symbol of her ethnic identity. As a result the city turns out for her to be the place of humiliation of her femininity.

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[232] ''Ev bajarê qedîm li min bûye dojeh. Ev bajarê ku ez demekê li dû rizgarkirina wî bûm, niha min dixwe, êşê bi min dide kişandin. Ev bajarê ku min bawer dikir ez ê rojekê mîna qehremanekê lê vegerim, niha lê bûme qehpik. Bajarê ku min dixwest rûmeta wî ji bin postalên biyaniyan rizgar bikim, niha rûmeta min lê di bin lingan de ye.''

[233] ''Di wê kêliyê de min hemû serpêhatiyên xwe ên kirêt ên liv î bajarî ji bîr kirin û derbasî dema xeyalkirina vî bajarî bûm. Ew dema ku ev bajar di bîra min de qedîm, di dile min de pîroz û di sere min de spehî bû. Ev bajarê ku ez ê bi giyanekî pak lê vegeriyama, bi pakî lê bibeziyama û me ê xwe bi bazdan bigihanda medeniyetên diniyayê. Lê, ez heta qirikê di pirrika vî bajarî de mabûm. Ev bajarê ku armanca azadiya min bû, bûbû zindana min. Ev devera kum in ê zincîrên koledariyê lê biqetandana, ez bi wan zincîrana ve hatibûm girêdan û rûmeta in ketibû bin pêlavên mirovên temenkurt ên vî bajarî.''

Overall, in the two novels Firat Cewerî offers a rather negative portrait of the city of Diyarbakır, whose name he never mentions in *Ez ê yekî bikujim* and *Lehî*. His critique of the city moves from the standpoint of an active actor of Kurdish culture, and the parameters through which he looks at the city are those of the correspondence of the place to the culture of its inhabitants. Through his novels he seems to say that the suffering in prisons and the armed struggle against the Turkish State proved to be useless, perhaps even harmful, because they were not coordinated with a serious appropriation of one's own identity: the linguistic assimilation and negligence towards Kurdish language are demonstrations of these points. However, although at first sight one might think that Cewerî questions the centrality of the city for the Kurdish cultural imagination, it might be argued that the reverse is precisely the case. Perhaps, the uncomforting relation with Diyarbakır stems from the fact that the reality does not match up with the symbolical expectations of the narrative that concerns it. Whereas Diyarbakır should be the – political and literary - "capital" of the Kurdish people – as claimed in *Tu* by Mehmed Uzun – it happens to be this people's biggest social prison; the embodiment of this people's failure in improving their status. Cewerî's critique seems to accuse the city of not being up to the role the Kurdish cultural aspirations assign to it. The blame however is not so much on the colonial occupation of the Turkish military and the assimilational policies of the Turkish State, but rather on the behaviour of the city's inhabitants who do not commit enough for the protection of their culture and language, and who are corrupted by a combination of materialistic and consumerist temptations of "modernity", with the "traditional" and conservative attitude towards the woman's body.

Perhaps it is worth clarifying that Cewerî's work in itself might well deserve a deeper thematic and textual analysis; his novels are available for a stratified reading that would evaluate the variety of themes and issues reaised by his literature. This is perhaps where the limits and limitations of geocriticism come into play (see the Introduction); as the focus of my analysis is Diyarbakır and the way it is portrayed in Cewerî's literature, other important literary, poetic and technical aspects have been necessarily left aside.

- 6.3.3. Fawaz Husên, *Heftiyeke dirêj li Amedê*

A recent Kurdish novel written by a Kurdish writer living in diaspora, tackles exemplarily the image of Amed in the Kurdish imaginary, along with its social, political and cultural situation: Fawaz Husên's, *Heftiyeke dirêj li Amedê* (A long week in Amed, 2015), is a novel that, similar to Firat Ceweri̇̂'s previously examined works, goes beyond the superficial notion of Amed as the capital of Kurdistan, to question its partiality and its contradictions. The city is chosen as a privileged location to examine the status of the Kurds in Turkey, the shortcomings of their revolt and the presumed hypocrisies of the movement that led it. Beyond the title, the centrality of Amed in this book is declared by the author in the foreword, where he says that, whilst all the events contained in the book are the result of his imagination (Husên 2015, 9):

> Amed only is completely real and it is the main character: Amed with its walls and bastions, the question of the Kurds and Kurdistan's existence or non-existence, Amed with its scorching summers and the helicopters always flying over the sky, with its Ten-eyed bridge and the Tigris River that after the Hevsel gardens takes a miraculous turn (9).[234]

The second character of the novel is actually another city, situated in Syrian Kurdistan, from where Husên, as well as his protagonist Ferzend, actually hails: Amûd. In the words of Fawaz Husên *Heftiyeke dirêj li Amedê* "is a novel about Amed, Amûd and hope", playing with the similarity of the three words in Kurdish: Amed, Amûd, and ûmîd (hope, Husên 2015, 9). The two cities structure a geographical background that synthetizes the divided geography of Kurdistan while reinforcing the perception of the Kurdish imagined community as divided and stranded by artificial borders. Amûd is the birthplace of both the author and the protagonist, the site of childhood-related nostalgia, while Amed functions as the fulcrum of the imagined national community, standing for both the Kurds' pride and their present misery. Between the two cities runs a sealed border. Therefore, the emotional geography constructed by Husên trespasses on established frontiers and connects Amed, the centre, with the other parts of the imagined greater Kurdistan.

The book tells the story of Ferzend, a Kurd who left his hometown Amûd in Syrian or Western Kurdistan to settle in Paris twenty-five years earlier. The novel is set in our contemporary times, while the Syrian Civil War is on-going (2011-), the Rojava Revolution is developing (2012-)[235] and the border between Syria and Turkey (the border dividing North from West

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[234] ''Tenê Amed rastiya rasteqîn û lehengê serekîn e, Ameda bi beden û bircên kevnare, bi pirsa kurd û Kurdistanê û man û nemanê, bi germa havînan û helîkopterên hergav di asimanan de, bi Pira Dehderî û çemê Dicleyê ku li jêra bexçeyên Hewselê çiveke xwedayî dide xwe.''

[235] The word "Rojava" in Kurdish means "West" and it commonly designates the Syrian part of the imagined Greater Kurdistan (O'Shea 2004). Since 2012, Rojava (later renamed Democratic Federation of Northern Syria) is a de facto autonomous federal region within the Syrian borders, constituted by three cantons (Afrin, Kobane, Jazira). The PYD (Partiya Yekitiya Demokrat – The

Kurdistan) is closed. Ferzend, a newsagent in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés district of Paris, is very aware of the situation in his homeland, which he follows closely. We meet him while travelling from Paris to Istanbul and from there to Amed, where, according to his plans, he will spend a few hours visiting the famous city before moving southward to the border to watch at night the lights of his beloved Amûd shining from a hill just over the border. As in his childhood, he stood in Amûd looking towards the northern, and to him vetoed, part of Kurdistan: he now wants to view his birthplace, which in turn is now closed-off to him, from the north (Husên 2015, 44):

> As I have watched from Amude for 25 years North Kurdistan and the Kurdish mountains, now I want to watch for a whole night my city from the Mardin plain. [236]

Rather than being a merely nostalgic ritual, watching Amûd from the hills of Turkish Kurdistan (hence reversing the perspective of his youth) is for Ferzend a way of putting together pieces of his imagined homeland's jigsaw. However, before gaining sight of Amûd, a "long week in Amed" awaits Ferzend, a week in a city that seems to exemplify and synthetize all the many problems of the Kurdish people.

Ferzend clearly arrives in Amed full of expectations. Although he has never visited the city before, he is influenced by the hugely representative fame the city holds among the Kurdish national community. When the aeroplane is preparing for landing in Amed airport, Ferzend remarks: "it was the first time for me to set foot on the soil of the capital of northern Kurdistan" (Husên 2015, 38). Walking in the streets of Amed for Ferzend is like being physically in a place he had been before, imaginatively, hundreds of times. In fact, these are his sensations when going out for the first time in the streets: "What can I say? For the euphoria of being in the capital of Kurdistan I felt drunken and inebriated, and I was persuaded to be fallen in a world of legends" (Husên 2015, 42). The symbolical value somehow foreruns the city itself and the friction between imagery and reality creates a sense of euphoria. However, imagery quickly vanishes and reality soon follows, showing that it cannot match that symbolical value.

Democratic Union Party), the leading political force in this revolution, is considered as closely related to the PKK and akin to its political ideology. The autonomization of Rojava is considered to had had a significant influence of the new intensification of clashes among the Turkish military and Kurdish forces linked to the PKK.

[236] ''Çawa ku min bîst û pênc salan ji Amûdê gelek caran li bakur û li çiyayên Kurdistanê dinihêrî, ez aniha dixwazim şeveke komple li başûr, li bajarê xwe yê di deşta Mêrdînê de temaşe bikim.''

Ferzend arrives in the city in the middle of one of its notorious, suffocating summers; a local welcomes him saying “if there is God’s hell, it can’t be hotter that the summer of this city” (Husên 2015, 39); this meteorological condition –stressed repeatedly through the book - contributes to representing Amed as a place somehow afflicted. And indeed, in the course of the events, locals introduce Ferzend to a list of social problems afflicting the city. One of the first is the perceived danger linked to criminality that brings about the notion of the corruption of Kurds produced by Turkish State domination. Ferzend is introduced to these themes and issues by the fortuitous encounter with Stêre, a girl who is not properly able to manage the Kurdish language and confuses it with Turkish words – as I will show, the linguistic dimension of Amed’s urban environment is a very important element of critique by Husên, as it was in Cewerî. Recognizing him as foreign to the city, Stêre warns him that the district he is walking by – Sur, the old-city - might be dangerous because of drug-addicted guys who may rob him off his camera and valuable belongings. However, when Ferzend considers not wondering in those streets, the girls reassures him that by being a Kurd, and not a simple foreigner, he could gain their trust just by pronouncing a few Kurdish words. Kurdish identity functions as a protection even in the most dangerous neighbourhoods of the city. “Below the sky”, the girl concludes, “none is more tender-hearted than us Kurds […] you are a Kurd in a Kurdish city, nothing bad will happen to you. Actually you should feel sorry for these people” (Husên 2015, 44). The fear of criminality is turned into compassion for the desperate economic conditions of his compatriots.

Ferzend is at once an insider and an outsider in Amed. He is a Kurd, and that makes him feel ‘at home’ in the city, while also giving him some degree of protection; at the same time he is a tourist visiting Amed for the first time, attracted by the city’s postcard-like peculiarities (as for example the breakfast or the main historical and touristic spots (Husên 2015, 41). This position confers on him the ability to look at the city from a critical distance, while also sharing in an empathic way the sorrowful burden carried by the Kurdish people. In the words of Stêre:

> Kurdistan is like a beheaded rooster […] This city has become the capital of hypocrisy, she continued. You foreigner, you should be quick in recognizing friends. The hand you shook in

> the morning might stab you in your back by the nightfall in a lonely street. Actually that's not even a Kurdish habit, but they have learned it from Persians and Turks (Husên 2015, 45).[237]

As it appears in Stêre's statement, the corruption acquired by the city and its Kurdish inhabitants is external, caused by their contact with Turks and Persians. Furthermore, the condition of the city is explained by the dramatic demographical changes that occurred in the city by reason of the Turkish State's repressive policies in the Kurdish rural areas (Husên 2015, 46):

> You will see the poverty and the destitution of the city. I only give you an advice, do not believe too easily to people. All the conversations about politics turn the most humble people in a wild beast. Most of the people are villagers, they have settled in the city and its environs because of desperation not long ago.[238]

In Husên's pages, desperation seems a temperament particularly akin to Amed. Finally, Stêre invites Ferzend to avoid a detached and touristic tour of the city, suggesting rather that he try to intermingle with the people to grasp the condition of his people and see an inventory of their misfortunes (Husên 2015, 47):

> If you climb up the walls and watch the people from above, you will stay afar from their reality and see them small. And them, if they dare lifting up their heads in the scorching summer, you'll be for them like a mirage. Go and see with your own eyes how in this place all the issues and aspects of misery are combined together and what happened to Kurds lately.[239]

This passage states quite clearly one of the aims of the novel, namely that of showing the "misery of the Kurdish people" that emblematically combines and gathers in the city of Amed. The city is "representative" of Kurds, both because it is one of their crucial symbols and because it presents the repertoire of all their misfortunes. During his stay, Ferzend discerns in Amed a series of problems afflicting the Kurds and several signs of their cultural and politically miserable conditions. Therefore, Amed, what is imaginatively conceived as the capital of Kurdistan, becomes emblematic of the Kurds' condition of political and economic subjectivity. When he is about to leave the city Ferzend summarizes that perception in a telling sentence: "At least, if it was not the capital of Kurdistan, it was the centre of the Kurds' troubles and wounds and the address of extraordinary encounters" (Husên 2015, 79). Nonetheless, if a capital city is supposed to be representative of a country and a nation, Amed, a sort of non-capital-city, becomes perfectly representative of the Kurds, being a people without a country, and consequently stricken by a range of troubles.

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[237] ''Kurdistan dîkek e ku mirovekî bê îman sere wî jê kiriye… Ev bajar bûye paytexta dek û dolaban, wê domand. Biyaniyo, bila hay ate ji dostaniyên zû hebe! Destê ku di danê sibehê de silavê dide te dikare bi ketina şevê re li kolanek bê kes li bendî te bimîne û kêrekê di pişta de biçikîne. Ev bi rastî ne xuyê kurdan e lê wan ew ji ecem û osmaniyan wergirtiye.''

[238] ''Tu ê bibînî çiqas xizanî û malweranî li vî bajarî hene! Ez ê şîretekê li te bikim zû bi zû baweriya xwe li ser xelkê nede. Hemû musîbet ji ber sere siyasetê ye ku ew mirovên herî sade dike lawirên dirinde.''

[239] ''Eger tu hilkişî ser pişta dîwaran û ji bilindahiyê li microvan temaşe bikî, tu ê ji rastiya wan dûr bikevî û wan piçûk bibînî. Ew jî, eger di qiçîna havînê de ceger bikin sere xwe bilind bikin, tu ê ji wan re bibî serab û rewrewk. Here, tu ê li wê derê bi çavên sere xwe bibînî çawan hemû mijar û babetên malweraniyê ketine ser hev û çi di demên dawîn de bi sere kurdan hatiye.''

At the beginning of a chapter, natural and human features are summoned to give the reader a grasp of the harsh condition that the city's inhabitants constantly face (Husên 2015, 63):

> Two things, two components above all occupy and share among themselves Amed's sky and air. The first, are the military helicopters that at every time fly very low and slowly over our heads […] showing to us Kurds our misery. The second is the scorching sun that since the morning pours a flood of braces and torches over locals and visitors. Both things, the political and the natural, show us their power and skills, together benumbing the body and the soul of the city. The rumble of jets, the birds' chirpings and the voices of dengbejs intermingle. The infernal heat dries out the city's nerves and pushes our feelings towards consummation and a whirlwind of confusion.[240]

The helicopters are a reminder of the Kurds' political subjugation whilst the natural heat of the summer seems to be part of a fatal and unfortunate destiny that deprives Kurds of any energy of resilience.

Undoubtedly, one of the key issues in Amed that attracts the attention of Fawaz Husên, is the degree of the Kurds' linguistic assimilation into the Turkish language. As we have seen before, it is one of the main elements of criticism also in Firat Cewerî. Both Kurdish writers, who made the effort of cultivating their mother tongue in diaspora – therefore in a context separated from the motherland, but also from its social problems and therefore relatively more privileged – are astonished at the Kurds' poor level of mastering the language and their proclivity to use the Turkish language instead. Similarly to Cewerî, here the blame is on the Turkish assimilational policies as well as on the Kurdish subservience to those policies. These are the words of Ferzend (Husên 2015, 50):

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[240] ''Du tiştan, du hêmanên bêyî pêşbaz asiman û bayê Amedê zeft kiribûn û di nav xwe de parve dikirin. Yekem. Helîkopterên ertêşê bûn ku her gav û her kêlî bi zanebûn pir nizm û bi giranî di ser serê me re difiriyan… malweranî nîşanî çavên me kurdan didan. Duyem, sêla rojê bû ku ji heştê danê sibehê sêlavên ji bizot û perengan bi ser niştecih û rêwiyan dirijandin. Herdu hêmanan, siyasî û xwezayî, hêz û hinera xwe nîşanî me didan û bi hev re giyan û bedena bajêr ditevizandin. Gure gura balefiran çîve çîva çûkan û kilamên denbêjan ditemirandin. Germa dojehê jî damarên bajêr ziwa dikirin û hestên me didan ber derziyên pûçkirinê û gerînekên gêjbûnê.''

> Okay, it was Amed, the capital of Northern Kurdistan, but Kurdish language was forgotten and Kurds were quickly giving up chatting and calling among themselves in their language. Because of Ankara or Amed politicians, Kurdish language is about to disappear, shrinks and faces oblivion; it was resounding only from music tapes.[241]

While strolling to visit the Great Mosque and other historical buildings, Ferzend arrives at the Hasan Pasha Inn, one of the main touristic places in the city, where he approaches a middle-aged man intent on writing something in a notebook. He addresses him, asking in Kurdish what he is writing in the notebook, but the man replies something incomprehensible in Turkish. Nonetheless, "since [he] was in the heart of the capital of Kurdistan" (Husên 2015, 68) Ferzend keeps on talking to the man in Kurdish, who switches to Kurdish only when he understands that Ferzend knows very little Turkish. He explains that he is a sociologist and a historian who is writing in the notebook the social changes he observes. Then Ferzend asks why he writes his thoughts and observations in Turkish. The man's reply is indicative of a musing the author articulates around language, assimilation and socio-economic conditions: "Kurdish is the language of peasants and illiterate people" (Husên 2015, 69). In this reply is stigmatized the attitude of some intellectuals who look at Kurdish as a language essentially linked to rural life, whilst the urban and modern environment requires an adequately developed language; a conviction that, starting from Ziya Gökalp's theories, runs deep among many Turkish and Kurdish intellectuals. A few hours before meeting the sociologist in the Hasan Pasha Inn, Ferzend had a chat with a seed-selling boy who could speak perfectly in his Kurdish mother language and had ambitions for himself and his people, but was unfortunately forced by poverty to sell seeds or clean shoes in the streets, like many other young people in Amed: "There are thousands of children working in this heat. Amed is full of us. Some of them paint shoes, some sell bottles of cold water in front of the four gates of the old city" (Husên 2015, 65). While presenting child-labour as one of the problems of the Kurdish-speaking lower-class youth in the city, by contrasting it immediately with the episode of the Kurdish intellectual who neglects his mother-tongue to assimilate himself with Turkish, Fawaz Husên directs a criticism to the Kurdish ruling class: the lack of policies meant to fight poverty and, perhaps above all, the lack of policies meant to protect and foster the use of Kurdish language in Amed. In the eyes of Ferzend, a persona of the author, the city is losing its Kurdish identity (Husên 2015, 69):

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[241] ''Erê Amed paytexta Kurdistana Bakur bû, lê zimanê kurdî lê efyon bû û zû bi zû kurdan li xwe danetanîn bi zimanê xwe deng bikin. Ji ber meqeresiya siyasetmadarên Enqereyê û yên Amedê, zimanê kurdî hema xwe diqurnisand, piçûk dikir, li ber windabûnê bû û tene ji deve teyb û kasetan derdiket.''

> I have been in this city for a few days and it has nothing that makes it resembles the capital of Kurdistan. One can't find five people who are able to speak in their mother language. Do you write down this evident contradiction in your great notebook, my friend?[242]

The city's linguistic assimilation is repeatedly deplored by Ferzend – therefore by the author – throughout the novel, especially in comparison with the protagonist/author's effort to retain his native language in exile: "nobody in this city gives a damn for that Kurdish language that I strived for in my years in Paris" (Husên 2015, 87; see also 144). Such issue is one of the main points that questions, in the eyes of Husên, the image of Amed as capital of Kurdistan; the inhabitants' negligence of their own language for the author is a reality that interferes patently with the imaginative value of the city. Ferzend interestingly evokes the latter through a flashback that recalls his childhood years in Amûd.

During a walk in Amed, Ferzend goes down to the ten-eyed bridge and sees images of his 25 years of life in the Middle East flowing over the waters of the Tigris as if in a film (Husên 2015, 52). In particular, accounting for the reasons that made him leave his homeland for Paris, he focuses on the outburst of armed conflict in Kurdistan in the 1980s and the consequent polarization of the society. He recalls the politicization of Rojava Kurdistan, when militants from the PKK movement used to cross the border, fleeing from the Turkish army. Ferzend critically recounts the politicization of his mother, an uneducated woman who was made to memorize some slogans and political sentences by "The Movement" (aka the PKK). He becomes estranged, especially when his mother starts to call him "comrade" ("heval", Husên 2015, 58), from hence, in his perception, political values overtake in hierarchy familial and domestic relationships. The mobilisation of the Kurdish population in Syria is represented by Husên as a top-down process, imposed on illiterates and villagers, such as his mother, by an armed political elite. However, it is interesting here to see how, in the imagined political geography of Ferzend's mother, as represented by Husên, the culmination of Kurdistan's liberation is incarnated by a Newroz celebration in Amed (Husên 2015, 58):

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[242] ''Ez ji çend rojan li vî bajarî me û tiştekî wî û paytexta Kurdistanê bi hev re tune. Mirov nikare pênc kesan lê peyda bike ku ji qîm û reza xwe bi zimanê xwe yê zikmakî deng dikin. Ma tee v nakokiya beloq di qeraseya deftera xwe de nivîsiye, qerdaş?''

> Thanks to our Leader, we are living our most important and special times. And you'll see, next year we will all go to Amed, the capital city of liberated and united Kurdistan to celebrate Newroz there.[243]

Later on, similarly describing the politicization of a family of villagers eventually displaced to Amed, Husên represents as a final and exemplar hope the "celebration of the Newroz in Amed, the capital of liberated Kurdistan" (Husên 2015, 133; 135). By contrasting the present misfortunes of Kurds and Kurdish identity in Amed with the great expectations generated in the people by "the Movement", Husên criticizes the inconsistencies of those expectations and promises. That final and liberating Newroz celebration in the city never took place, rather the city is described by the protagonist as "Amed, broken wings" (Husên 2015, 96). The heat and the misery of the city give the author the chance to equate Amed with hell: "Since the day I arrived in Amed, I developed the conviction that if there was a hell its heat wouldn't be hotter than inside the city-walls and the pain of those convicted wouldn't be stronger than that of this city's pitiable people" (Husên 2015, 144). Hence, the 'long week in Amed' is an opportunity (for Ferzend, Fawaz Husên and the reader along with him) to fully grasp the grim condition of the Kurds and the vanishing of their political dream (Husên 2015, 121):

> If a week before someone told me that I'd feel so many powerful feelings in such a short time in Amed, I wouldn't believe and would have said, "oh, come on…" But […] in the middle of that city I was like in the middle of a people's misery, my own people's misery. […] I saw with my eyes what happened to my nation and how in the last thirty years the Kurdish society in Turkey was shocked and upset.[244]

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[243] ''Bi saya Serok, em demên herî girîng û taybet dijîn û tu ê bibînî, heval! Sala tê, em ê hemû herin Newrozê li Amedê, li paytexta Kurdistana rizgar û yekbûyî li dar bixin.''

[244] ''Eger yekî berî heftiyekê ji min re bigota ku ewçend hîsên xurt ê li Amedê li ba min di demek ewçend kurt de peyda bibûn, min ê bawer nekira û bigota ''de here lo!'' Ez bi hemû ruh û giyanê xwe li bajarê kevnare di nava malweraniya miletekî, miletê xwe de bûm. Min bi çavên xwe didît çi bi serê miletê min hatibû û çawan di wan sîh salên dawîn de civaka me kurdan li Tirkiyê serobino hev bûbû.''

As gradually becomes clear, a political message underlies the entire novel and the author’s representation of the city. The target of Fawaz Husên’s critique, besides the Turkish State, the archenemy of the Kurds, is mainly the PKK (called “The Movement”), identified as the reason for the city’s - and extensively of the Kurds’ – situation in Turkey. In this respect, the author’s criticism is very similar to that of Firat Cewerî and is conveyed by Fawaz Husên mainly through three episodes in the book: the first, already mentioned, when Ferzend recalls the process of politicization and indoctrination of his own mother in Syrian Kurdistan (Husên 2015, 52-61); the second, when, in a sort of phantasmagoria, he enters a huge cave inside Amed city-walls where he meets KaraYildiz, a woman who knows everything about everyone in the city and whose words embody the perspective of the PKK and the affiliated Kurdish political parties (Husên 2015, 87-95); thirdly, in a sequence overtly recalling Carlo Collodi’s *Pinocchio*, in a long conversation between Ferzend and a Kurdish-speaking cricket (Husên 2015, 144-153). The argument of such critique is that “the movement” influenced thousands of Kurdish youth, who went into the mountains, abandoning education, to take up arms, imposing on their own families a huge human sacrifice, or often being subjected to imprisonment and torture (see Husên 2015, 147, 152); that the movement has mimicked – or simply reversed - the ideological authoritarian and hierarchical structures of the Turkish State and particularly of the Kemalist mentality (see Husên 2015, 89, 147). Furthermore, the author criticizes the movement’s forgoing of the Kurdish dream of independence to accept a political condition of a “Common Homeland and a democratic Nation” with the Turks ("Ortak Vatan ve Demokratik Ulus," in Turkish in the text, Husên 2015, 91, 94). Husên here stigmatizes the ideological turn, that brought the PKK from a nationalist and secessionist struggle towards a different political aspiration, based on federalism and the recognition of human, cultural and civic rights. Especially, because this process is seen as favouring the negligence of the Kurds’ cultural and linguistic specificities; and is therefore a process paving the way for further assimilation into the Turkish State. The deplorable conditions of Amed in the depiction of Husên are both an emotional cry to his readers calling for empathic identification with the poor living conditions of Kurds in a place that is ideally recognized as Kurdistan’s capital, and at the same time a patent demonstration of the failure of the movement’s strategy over the previous thirty years’ of armed struggle. Amed, both positively and negatively, becomes the emblem of the Kurds. Amidst the criticism of the movement it is reiterated that the aim of the liberation movement was that of “celebrating Newroz in Amed and raise the green, red and yellow flag to the wind of liberty” (Husên 2015, 147).

To conclude, Ferzend in Amed feels “at home” (170), because the city’s intrinsic Kurdishness resonates with his own. From Amed, he envisions images of his childhood; he reconnects at least two parts of his imagined and divided community. A strong imaginative and emotional bond connects him, inasmuch as he is a Kurd, to Amed. Nonetheless, in Amed Ferzend has the chance to look closely at the Kurds’ present destitution. The harsh description of the city, and the depiction of the Kurds’ social and cultural subjectivity, are represented as realities that are to be contrasted with the high imaginative position the city holds.

6.4. Conclusion

In this chapter I have analysed the images and depictions of the city of Diyarbakir presented by six authors: Suzan Samancı, Murat Uyurkulak, Özcan Karabulut, Mehmed Uzun, Firat Cewerî and Fawaz Husên. All of them produced significant and sizeable descriptions of the city, which has had a profound effect in their work. The representations of the city offered by these authors give a multifocal and multifaceted conceptualization of Diyarbakır in the period following the military coup d’état until today. Since that crucial date, the city has become the key urban location of confrontation between the State and the Kurdish population in the Kurdish regions of Turkey. The military prison represents a central “witness site” of this epoch, as testified by the large corpus of fictional memoirs and essays concerning it.

An exhaustive and complete overview of all the works written about Diyarbakır after 1980 is clearly beyond the scope of this chapter. However, I consider that the six authors here taken into account facilitate discussion of the most important themes regarding this city, as portrayed, reflected and expressed by literature in the Turkish and Kurdish languages. In fact, the literary works analysed in depth in this chapter are divided by language. The first three authors write mainly in the Turkish language, whereas the second three write or wrote primarily in the Kurdish language. Despite the fact that the Kurdish and Turkish literary fields present “blurred boundaries” and a degree of overlapping, the reasoning about the city seems differentiated according to the linguistic divide. In effect, the depictions of the city provided by authors such as Karabulut and Uyurkulak are imagined in dialectics with a Turkish cultural, political, and literary horizon, despite the relative degree of empathy the authors express with the Kurdish imagination. On the other hand, Suzan Samancı provides the perspective of a Turkish-writing Kurdish author who has a direct and deep knowledge of the city and its way of life. Her work, almost systematically translated into Kurdish, straddles the two fields and, while presenting the city to a Turkish readership, speaks also to the local community.

However, the three authors writing in Kurdish - Uzun, Cewerî and Husên - reflect upon the city from a significantly different standpoint: in fact, they look at Diyarbakır/Amed as a foundational symbol of their imagined community: they depict it and at times criticize it according to that. Since a primary and constitutional writer such as Mehmed Uzun recognized that any modern literature must have an urban nature, and that the urban soul of modern Kurdish literature must be found in Diyarbakır, he compelled successive writers to reckon with these expectations. It must be added that those expectations were, perhaps, heightened by the distance from the city of the authors who read Uzun in their literary formation. That distance contributed to widening the gap between reality and the writers' imaginations about the city. Furthermore, those two authors seem to have developed an ideological opposition to the PKK and the political movement that administered Diyarbakır from 1999 until 2016, and tried to transform the city according to a Kurdish symbolical imagination (Gambetti 2010) that perhaps was not enough in the eyes of Cewerî and Husên, for the reasons analysed earlier in this chapter.

Furthermore, as it also emerged in other chapters, the city-theme intertwines significantly with themes related to gender. In this chapter, in particular, that entanglement has appeared substantially in the work of Karabulut and Cewerî. In both, Diyarbakır is portrayed as a city unfriendly – to say the least – to women's freedom. It is characterised as a city overwhelmed by sexist social relationships, violence to women and social control over their bodies. In Karabulut, we see this theme developed along lines already observed in Turkish literature, especially in the novels of Halide Edip Adıvar, as discussed in Chapter Two. In Karabulut, the woman Dilşa becomes a symbol for the city and its subjectivity to a backward culture. The encounter with a 'Turkish' male represents an opportunity for emancipation and liberation; in this context, the Kurdish identity is something that makes the woman more attractive for Arat, but is also unmistakably submissive to his cultural superiority. In Cewerî, the issue of gender is principally mobilized to represent the corruption of the city, the contradictions of the Kurdish liberation movement and of its political counterpart that administered the city. Diyarbakır is portrayed as a city that does not respect women's dignity, not only for reasons linked with the traditional and backward society, but also for purposes related to the neoliberal and "modern" development of the city, that contributes to the objectification of the woman's body.

Overall, in this chapter I have tried to offer a composite image of the city for the period following 1980. That date marks a watershed in Turkish and Kurdish history. Furthermore, it marks a breakpoint in the history of the city that became a fundamental space of physical and imaginary confrontation between not only the local population and the State, but also the entire Kurdish community and the Turkish State.

7. Conclusion

Images of the city of Diyarbakır have incessantly proliferated during the writing of this dissertation. A city is not a fixed object, but rather is more akin to a living being, with its evolutionary path, its continuous redefinition, expansion, contraction. Despite looking still in its place, a city actually moves: as Baudelaire reminded us, the shape of a city changes faster than the soul of a human. This assumption is even more valid for the images the city projects and produces. The position of a specific city changes continuously in the cultural horizon. Therefore, this dissertation is far from being a complete and comprehensive repository of all the literary images produced by and of Diyarbakır. Despite the large number of voices and authors summoned in this work, many have been left aside. A complete literary guide to Diyarbakır exceeds the possibility of a doctoral dissertation, and is necessarily an incomplete work when the city object of the study is continuing to produce and inspire representations. During the years that it took to write the work I present here, dramatic and significant events took place in Diyarbakır and one may wonder that these latest events hail new important literary endeavours that will tell and reflect the new images of the city that political powers and cultural actors are implying with their current actions. Hence, this work will be always open to potential integrations, improvements, additions. This dissertation has followed a chronological trajectory. Starting from the first written account of the place we nowadays call Diyarbakır, it has gone up until 2015, date of publishing of the latest novel analysed in this doctoral research. Therefore, keeping on following the chronological trajectory, more literary corpuses concerning Diyarbakır might be collected in order to understand the evolution of the city in ways that are presently beyond our reach.

The scope of this dissertation was to inspect the specific inputs of inspiration that Diyarbakır, in its many historical phases, has suggested to writers. Despite the peculiar combination of natural and architectural forms that somehow tell a particular story, we have seen how the actual features might be mobilized, activated and played with in many different ways by writers responding to their peculiar cultural and political imaginary. In literature there are as many Diyarbakirs as its representations. There might be recurring patterns, similarities, coincidences, but in the end each writer has his/her own Diyarbakır to tell. Or better, each writer mobilizes in their literary work the symbol of Diyarbakır in different ways in order to convey their own human specificity, their own message. However, this plurality of voices may under certain circumstances be organized in choirs. In other words, in structuring the dissertation, providing the distribution of sources in coherent corpuses, I have used criteria related to genre, to themes, to ideological temperament, or to a specific historical, political and cultural season.

In each chapter of this dissertation, I decided to use a different *filter* to look at the city. Travel literature is concerned with postcard images and snapshots of the city, sometimes nuanced with orientalist tunes. The Turkish nationalism of the early twentieth century used the city to articulate its political, moral and cultural discourse. The filter of memory in recent years produces a certain image of the place coloured by nostalgia, which at the same time outdistances the object in time, but drags it closely on the emotional level. The lyrical approach of poetry exalts the emotional affection and sense of belonging, but it does so also to conceal a political and geographical cartography of the city. The works of fiction analysed in the last chapter reflect the plurality of discourses about the city in the last decades, which are also at stake presently.

What emerges from all the examples studied is undoubtedly the image of a contested city. The accounts of siege in the Roman Times are still echoing in the Twentieth century. Beyond any doubt, Diyarbakır is a city marked by the scar of conflict and its literary representations are there to testify for it, as much as its imposing city-walls. The clash of the Roman and the Safavid Empires are echoed in the nineteenth century by the clangor of the clash between the Republic of Turkey and the local Kurdish population. In its chronological unfolding, this dissertation delineates some key moments of this clash, through their influence in the literary sources: the Sheikh Said rebellion in 1925, that closely followed the establishment of the Turkish Republic, and the 1980 military coup-d'état, that follows and quashes the experiment of Mehdi Zana as first Kurdish mayor of Diyarbakır.

However, beyond the precise momentous dates of clash, this dissertation aims at enlightening also the daily dimension of the conflict, played in the space of the city – as much as in the space of its literary descriptions. Authors such as Mehmed Uzun and Fawaz Husên, Suzan Samancı and Yılmaz Odabaşı for example represent ways in which the conflict between the Turkish Republic and the Kurdish population in Diyarbakır is embodied in the space of the city, in its daily relations, in its convivialities, in its very sense-scape made of perceptions, sounds and sights. Şeyhmus Diken shows us how the clash is also played through memory and representation of the past, through the cultural urban planning of the city aimed at showing or obliterating some memories instead of others. Also, authors like Uyurkulak and Karabulut or Matur gives us some impressions of the conflict as it is crystallized in the city space, while at the same time they offer us two distant cultural interpretations of the city of Diyarbakır from a Turkish point of view, as it is seen from Ankara or Istanbul in other words. Their work is implicitly in dialogue with the tradition of Turkish Literature, hence with the works of authors such as Halide Edib and Karaosmanoğlu who in the first half of the Twentieth century have provided in their literary work substantial descriptions of Diyarbakır in order to define its relation to the newly founded Turkish State.

As stated in the Introduction of this work, this research has focused almost entirely on literary representations of the city. As the possibility of fieldwork research was precluded, the entire issue of the interplay between the fictional space and the real lived space of the city of Diyarbakır has necessarily been left outside. Potentially, this research could have explored the role that literature, in its larger meaning, plays in the shaping of the present-day Diyarbakır. The discussion of how political and cultural actors mobilize literature and literary representations to present to its inhabitants and to foreigners a certain image of the city has left been aside, as potentially the object of future research so that I might be able to return again to this city and the literary world it is continuing to generate.

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