

The Sociable Self: The Search for Identity by Conversation (*Sobbet*).

The Turkish Literary Community and the Problem of Autobiographical Writing*

The connection between memory and autobiographical writing is obvious. From our childhood, all experiences and memories are accumulated and arranged on a self-related matrix that is our autobiographical memory, which gives us the competence to become a self-conscious individual and to narrate a life-story. Our early memories are based on interaction with and narrations of our parents and other members of the family. Memory researchers characterize the family as a memory community, which creates the family-story by conversational memorizing. There is a mutual interchange between the individual autobiographical memory and the communicative memory of the we-group of the family. While talking about the past or common experiences all members of the memory-community contribute to importing settings, background, atmosphere, and fragments of events from other stories into the own life- and family-story. The stories from which these elements are borrowed are a part of the social, cultural, historical, and intertextual material of a scattered memory providing narrative models for the communicative and the autobiographical memory (based on: Welzer 2002).

These introductory remarks are something like a theoretical substructure for my assumption that besides the family, there exist other memory communities who create their history by conversational memorizing. A special type of biographical writing, the often so called literary memoirs (*edebiyat anıları* or *bâturaları*), which have become very popular in Turkish literature since the beginning of the twentieth century, gave me the idea that the community of the intellectuals, poets, writers, journalists, and artists are a memory community like an extended family with several branches, who write their history by conversational memorizing.

My selected bibliography may give an impression of the quantity and variety of books belonging to this genre and show the similarity of titles, which are meaningful enough to prove the close relationship of this community of writers and their protagonists, the heroes of the biographical sketches.¹

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¹ For this reason, I include in my works cited many titles which are not mentioned in the text.

In these memories, the authors do not tell their own life-stories. However, they gather around themselves famous poets, adored teachers, friends, and colleagues talking about meetings, reconstructing conversations and dialogues, and telling anecdotes. The author writes very associative, even if the heading of an article is the name of an individual person. He does not concentrate on this person alone and rarely tries to delve into the inner life of an individual. There is always namedropping, several members of the literary community are present on the scene, and reading these essays as an outsider, you should have ready on hand one of the useful biographical dictionaries² that are a specialty of Turkish literature. Turks like encyclopedias. It seems to me all the writers agree that the most laudable moral quality is sociability.

Before these essays are collected in a book, they are published in newspapers or periodicals, and are exposed continually to the audience of readers and critics. In the first stage of the reception, the “reading community” reacts, and critics discuss the articles in different newspapers and periodicals. Consulting these critical discussions is therefore indispensable for anyone who wants to understand intellectual movements in Turkey. Prominent critics and journalists (*köşe yazarları*) collect these articles and publish them in their anthologies. These books are used as sources for literary history and reflect the intellectual atmosphere of a period and generation, but they also have an autobiographical dimension that shows the personality and worldview of the author. In my bibliography, I have included as an example of this last genre two titles by the humanistic critic and journalist Vedat Günyol (1911-2004), who wrote neither poetry nor novels.

A Turkish writer once drew my attention to the fact that the means of expression for intellectual and literary discourses in Turkey were not treatises in great detail, but rather small articles in newspapers and periodicals. In his opinion, this led to short thinking and a lack of great vision. In my view, however, this kind of thinking is characteristic for an intellectual community which likes permanent conversation by talking and writing. Therefore, the establishment of printing houses and the development of the press in the nineteenth century were very important. The writers gained a kind of autonomy, because they could earn a part of their living by writing for newspapers and periodicals, being that many of them were clerks (*kâtib*) in government offices.

Two of the oldest magazines which were very important for the formation of the modern literary community were *Tercüman-i Hakikat* and *Servet-i Fünun*. Ahmet İhsan (Tokgöz) (1868-1942), the editor of *Servet-i Fünun* (founded in 1891), published his memoirs under the title *Matbuat Hatıralarım* (My Press Memoirs) in his own magazine in the years 1930-31 and collected them soon afterwards in two

² See Yalçın 2001. This is one of the best encyclopaedias and includes a list of previous encyclopaedias that served as sources.

volumes. He tells the story of his first encounter with the admired novelist and editor of *Tercüman-i Hakikat*, Ahmet Midhat (1844-1912). As a young student of the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye*, he translated articles from French magazines and sent them to Ahmet Midhat for publication. However, initially he did not dare to visit the office of *Tercüman-i Hakikat*, and Ahmet Midhat did not know who the translator was. Ahmet İhsan was very proud when he saw that his articles had been printed and strolled along the Babiâli Street to see Ahmet Midhat with his long black beard passing by. One day he had entered the office's building but was still hesitating whether or not to knock on the door of the office when Ahmet Midhat suddenly came out and caught him and approached him: "Who are you?" – "I am Ahmet İhsan" – "So you are the translator of the articles. Where did you learn your French?" This first encounter of a young ambitious adept with an admired author signifies something like an initiation rite and it is a narrative model for autobiographical writing. In this case, the encounter had great consequences, because Ahmet İhsan became an influential figure in the formative period of the modern Turkish literary community. His memoirs published in serial form are mainly concerned with the literary community of the *Servet-i Fünun/Edebiyat-i Cedide* writers, but one also finds a deeper autobiographical dimension because he goes back to his childhood and describes how early he set himself the ambitious life-goal to establish a printing house and to publish books. He was a strong-willed personality and got it his own way. Ahmet Midhat liked him due to his determination and industriousness and encouraged him (see Tokgöz 1993: 36f).

In the offices of printing houses and newspapers, and at the street corners and in the bookshops of Babiâli (*Bizim Yokuş*) and Cağaloğlu, it was always possible to encounter well-known writers and young enthusiasts. All the restaurants, tea-rooms, and coffeehouses in Beyazıt, and especially in the Western Levantine quarter of Istanbul in Beyoğlu/Pera, the Gardenbar at Tepebaşı, the cafes Lebon and Markiz in the Grand Rue de Pera (later on İstiklal Caddesi), and the wine-bars, like Lambo in the Balıkpazarı near the Çiçek Pasajı, the old famous hotels Pera Palas, Tokatliyan, and Park Oteli, and many others became meeting places for the literary community. Of course, the popularity of the places changed over time and generations, as groups with different ideological positions preferred different places. Some were transfigured by the communicative memory and became mythical places (see for instance Mehmed Kemal 1985: 219, 222).

Many of the well-known literary figures held their own *sobbet*-circles in their *konaks*, houses, and apartments. In a way, these *sobbet*-parties can be regarded as secularized sufi-meetings. The respected host took the place of the sheikh of a Sufi-order. Tefik Fikret's (1867-1915) private house on the hill near Rumeli Hisarı, called Aşiyân, became a place of pilgrimage for all the young poets, who adored this charismatic figure of high moral standing. Yakup Kadri called this exaggerated adoration of the poet later *Fikretperestlik* (see Karaosmanoğlu 1946 : 18f.; 1969: 269-293). Taha Toros (born 1912), who as a literary enthusiast visited

as many *sobbet*-circles as possible, describes the Monday meetings in the old *konak* of İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal (1870-1957) in Beyazıt as conversations about literature and art of the highest standards. The meeting-salon was always crowded with visitors. There was a special seating plan and order and the host did not take notice of young unknown obtrusive persons, who had to sit on uncomfortable stools near the door (Toros 1992: 36-48). Toros found a similar situation at the Friday-meetings in the great apartment in the Maçka Palas, where the eminent poet Abdülhak Hâmit (Tarhan) (1852-1937) resided at the end of his life at the public's expense (Toros 1992: 49-62). Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889-1974) noticed in his memoirs that Hâmit himself didn't like talking much, preferring instead to listen to the conversations of his guests and avoided questions about literary topics (Karaosmanoğlu 1969: 261-264).

One of the well-known sociable people (*boşsobbetler*) was the poet Yahya Kemal Beyatlı (1884-1958). He became a famous poet and writer without having published a single book during his lifetime, but he was a frequent visitor of the *sobbet*-parties and wrote for magazines and newspapers. Yahya Kemal's example seems to give reasonable evidence for the supposition that the *sobbet*-community kept alive the oral tradition of the Ottoman past. Unpublished poems recited at a *sobbet*-party were memorized by the participants. Yahya Kemal, who had been asked by his young friend Baki Süha Ediboğlu (1915-1972) to write his memoirs, answered: "*Batılı yazar doğulu konuşur*" (The Western people write the Eastern people talk; Ediboğlu 1968: 3). And in a letter to Faruk Nafiz (Çamlıbel) (1898-1973), he wrote: "*Şiir yazı olmadığı için baki kalacaktır*" (Because poetry belongs to the oral tradition, it will exist forever).³ At the end of his life Yahya Kemal lived in the legendary Parkhotel at Gümüşsuyu and received his admirers on the balcony or in the hotel bar.

Thus the members of the literary community spent their entire lifetime in conversation and writing their daily column (*köşe*) or article for the newspapers. Often they wrote on tables in restaurants or coffeehouses. One can hardly imagine that there was any time left for loneliness and introspection. The sociable self finds its identity by asserting its position in the *sobbet*-society and cultivating the communicative memory at the expense of its individual autobiographical memory. The career of a writer becomes visible through the changing of places in the seating order, starting from the uncomfortable stool next to the door, moving to the comfortable chair next to the host and finally reaching the pinnacle of the development by sitting in the center of his own *sobbet*-circle.

Even outsiders like the productive novelist Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar (1864-1944), a queer fish who used to live the whole year in his summerhouse on Heybeli Ada, very seldom visited the printing house in Cağaloğlu, and invited only a few friends to visit him, were a part of the literary community. Hüseyin Rahmi

³ See *Kitaplık* 6, Aralık 2003, 86 ("In a letter to Faruk Nafiz," 11 Eylül 1926).

published his novels first in serial form in newspapers and communicated with his friends and readers by letters and with his colleagues by the medium of the press. He was an ardent polemicist and got into harsh disputes with his critics.⁴ The men of letters were not really complaisant people. Their competitive spirit stirred up many animosities and hostilities in the literary community.

After the Young Turkish revolution of 1908, literary magazines and newspapers sprang up like mushrooms and became more and more assembly points for writers and mouthpieces of different poetological and ideological positions. There were violent debates about language reform, the advantages of *Osmanlıca* or simplified Turkish (*öz Türkçe*), discussions about the classical Ottoman Poetry (*Divan Edebiyatı*), the poetical forms, rhyme and rhythm, the *aruz* and *bece* metre, and so on. Under the Young Turks, Turkish national consciousness and feeling was cultivated and propagated by the *Türk Ocağı* (The Turkish Hearth) and its magazine. In this club, cultural events where women were allowed to take part and even to speak publicly were organized (see Glassen 1999: 86f.; Glassen 2000: 46). The outstanding female figure of this time was the novelist Halide Edib (Adıvar) (1884-1964), who engaged herself by writing articles that promoted the education of girls and women's rights (see Glassen 2002: 350-369). The *Türk Ocağı* became a public place where women writers could meet their male colleagues. Later on there was the Alay Köşkü in the Gülhane Park, where the *Güzel Sanatlar Birliği* (Association of Fine Arts) organized meetings, and where artists and writers of both sexes talked about their productions (see Alevok 1971: 341, 355).

After 1908, more and more young women became literary enthusiasts enthralled with reading Halide Edib's novels and ambitious to become writers themselves. They published their articles, stories, and novels in newspapers and magazines, sometimes under (male) pen-names. The Babiâli, the quarter where the printing houses and the offices of the newspapers were concentrated, was a male-dominated world, and the integration of women writers in the literary community was a painful process. Halide Edib tells in her *Memoirs* that she – even though writing for a long time successfully for the newspaper *Tanin* – never set eyes on its editor, the adored poet Tevfik Fikret, because “I was not emancipated enough to go to the newspaper offices” (Adıvar 1926: 263). Sabiha Sertel (1898-1968) who, together with her husband Zekeriya Sertel (1890-1980), would later on play an important role in the history of the Turkish press as editor of the magazine *Resimli Ay* and the left wing oriented newspaper *Tan*, was as a young wife not permitted by her husband to attend the editorial conferences in their own house. Halide Edib participated in these conferences dressed in her black chador. Only when Zekeriya was arrested by the Allied occupation forces (1919), Sabiha seized the opportunity and was able to continue the publication of the critical magazine *Büyük Mecmua* during his absence (see Sertel 1987: 24-33).

⁴ See Sevengil 1944: 68-102, *Münakaşalarım*.

The exiting escape of the Turkish women from the segregated harem and their appearance in public began during the time of the Young Turks and was stimulated in the early Republican era. Their male colleagues were unaccustomed to mixing with unveiled Turkish-Muslim women, and if these ladies were young and attractive, they could hardly fend off proposals of marriage or flattering compliments, and sometimes they felt that they were being pestered and molested. This was not at all conducive to establishing normal, informal gender relations. Of course many of the young women writers enjoyed the admiration, but they had to stick to firm moral principles and sometimes entered quickly into marriage to become more respected in public. Step by step they got used to submitting their final manuscripts in the newspaper offices of Babiâli personally and became known to many of their colleagues, but for a long time there were very few women writers taking part in the literary *sobbet*-circles in public restaurants and cafés. The relatively free gender relations changed the emotional life of both sexes. Arranged marriages fell out of fashion and superficial flirtations and ardent love stories with all their complications became widespread in Turkish society. Women writers experienced the new lifestyle and were predestined to concentrate their novels on love stories. Many of them became very popular and their readers bombarded them with letters. These novels, which were produced quite quickly and published in serial form, may not have been of the highest literary quality, but they were badly needed. They contributed to the establishment of new social moral values in close communication between writers and readers.⁵ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's initiative for their emancipation made most of the educated women of the first Republican generation strong Kemalists and Turkish patriots (see Glassen 2002 b).

In 1918, Ruşen Eşref (Ünaydın) (1892-1959), who with his famous literary interviews collected under the title *Diyorlar Ki...* (They told me, that...) created a new genre of *sobbet*-literature, visited the victor of Anafartalar, the then young and fairly unknown officer, for an interview (see Ünaydın 1954). This was Mustafa Kemal's first contact with the literary community, and this meeting remained not without serious consequences. During the War of Independence, famous writers came to his headquarters in Ankara, among them Halide Edib and Yakup Kadri. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal was on friendly terms with many of the old literary elite of Istanbul, who came to Ankara, giving him support in building a national Turkish ideology or as members of the Grand National Assembly. There were also many frequently visited cafes and restaurants in Ankara, but the most prominent meeting-place and *sobbet*-circle for Turkish intellectuals in the new capital was the *sofra*, the dinner

⁵ For the experiences of women writers see the memoirs of Alevok 1971; Kür 1985; Uçuk 2003a and 2003b; Zorlutuna 1977.

table of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.⁶ It seems he enjoyed the company of writers, sometimes at the expense of his old war comrades. Many of the writers shuttled between the new capital Ankara and the old beloved Istanbul.

Istanbul kept its traditional position as the center of the Turkish press. Most of the popular newspapers and magazines stayed in the old capital. The liberal and left wing oriented writers gathered around Sabiha and Zekeriya Sertel and their *Resimli Ay* magazine. Nâzım Hikmet (1902-1963), who had studied in Moscow and was influenced by Majakowskij, led a press campaign against the old generation of poets, like Abdülhak Hâmit, and published a series of articles in *Resimli Ay* under the headline, "Let's break the idols into pieces." Abdülhak Hâmit, who referred to as, "The great genius and the eminent poet," invited the young rebel for dinner, and Nâzım Hikmet was impressed by the old poet's intellectual vividness and his understanding towards the new generation.⁷ Abdülhak Hâmit survived these attacks and became a highly respected member of the parliament and inaugurated a session of the Grand National Assembly in Ankara as president by seniority (see Ayda 1984: 9).

Afterwards Nâzım Hikmet himself became an idol for the younger generation. He spent many long years in Anatolian prisons where he carried on writing and translating and even published under pseudonyms. While in prison, his conversation with his colleagues continued and through his criticisms he influenced the development of two well-known Turkish prose writers who were in prison with him: Kemal Tahir and Orhan Kemal (see Glassen 1991). Literature was always a dangerous business. Banishment, exile, and imprisonment were common experiences of Turkish writers not only during the Ottoman period, but also in the Republic, when the fear of anti-Kemalist, reactionary uprising and the infiltration of communist ideas produced strange effects. When Nâzım Hikmet was released after twelve years of imprisonment in July 1950, he remained under strict surveillance. He managed to leave Turkey and lived from 1951 on in the Soviet Union, always longing for his beloved homeland. His works were banned for a long time and it was dangerous to read his poems, but he nevertheless became a symbol of identification for the Turkish leftists who never elaborated their own ideology. Nâzım Hikmet was absent in prison and in exile, but he was always present in his secretly read and sung poems, and in the anecdotes and memories of the literary community in Turkey.

It seems quite obvious and is worth mentioning in our context that in Turkey, political ideologies were for the most part not created and imposed by individual philosophers or leaders, but rather developed and promoted by groups of companions or friends in *sobbet*-circles. Even the so-called "Kemalism," still an irides-

⁶ See Ayda 1984. Her father Sadri Maksudi was very often present at the *sofra*. She tells many anecdotes, for instance: 25-27. Glassen 1999: 86.

⁷ Sertel 1987: 79-131 (about the *Resimli Ay* affairs).

cent term for ideas propagated by Atatürk and his followers of various shades, has never been a unified whole and a clear construct of ideas produced by the leader's brainwork alone, but was developed in discussions and debates.

For this thesis I will give three examples: First, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, one of the most honest "Kemalists," saw clearly that ten years after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the task to transform the national enthusiasm of the period of the war of liberation into revolutionary social engagement of the intellectuals and the common people had failed. Therefore, he took the initiative and published together with a group of friends the monthly political magazine *Kadro* (Cadre) (1932-1934). They tried to strengthen the national Kemalist revolution (*inkılap*) by discussing and defining its ideology and principles and constructing a cultural identity based on a new understanding of Westernization and Turkish nationalism according to Mustafa Kemal's still thriving spirit (see *Kadro* 1932-1934; Glassen 1999: 88).

Second, more than ten years later a group of Turkish intellectuals debated and elaborated another variety of Kemalism, the so-called "Turkish humanism" or "Blue Anatolian humanism" (*Türk Hümanizmi*, *Mavi Anadolu Hümanizmi*). They discussed a new conception of history: In their view, the Turks who came from Central Asia and settled in Anatolia hundreds of years before had in the meantime fused fully in the melting pot of Anatolia with the people who had lived there before. Therefore, they claimed that the Turks were the legal heirs of the ancient Greek civilization and proposed they should take over and cultivate this heritage on which the modern Western civilization and science was based. To be an Anatolian meant for them being predestined and responsible for going back to pure Greek sources before these were mixed with Christian elements in Western civilization and finding a path that was their own.⁸

Third, not only secularized, Westernized Turkish intellectuals who wanted to get rid of their "Oriental mentality" searched for models and conceptions of a national identity by discussions with friends, but there were also groups who wanted to preserve and modernize Islamic Turkish traditions and to find out modern intellectual dimensions of mysticism (*tasavvuf*). In November 1951, four young (modern-dressed) women writers called together in the Istanbul quarter of Fatih a literary meeting and presented a book about their spiritual leader Ken'an Rifâi under the title "Ken'an Rifâi and Muslim belief in the light of the twentieth century." This meeting aroused great interest and was celebrated by critics in different newspapers as an intellectual event. Cevdet Perin (1914-1994) even guessed that now the materialistic period of the Republic was over and a new

⁸ See Kranz 1997. To this group belonged Halikarnas Balıkcısı (Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı) (1890-1973), Sabahattin Eyuboğlu (1908-1973), and Azra Erhat (1915-1982). About Azra Erhat's *Memoirs*, see Glassen 2002b: 242-254. Vedat Günyol was a good friend of Eyuboğlu and Erhat. This group of Turkish humanists was involved in many activities (*Köy Enstitüleri*, *Tercüme Bürosu*, *Mavi Yolculuk*).

stage was reached in which the spiritual meaning of the Turkish revolution was announced.⁹

These three different ideological concepts elaborated by small intellectual circles had the common goal of solving the conflict between Westernization and Turkish (Islamic) national tradition.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a new genre of prose-fiction was imported from the West: the novel.¹⁰ The novel was understood by the Turkish writers of the Tanzimat-era, who were at the same time the outstanding reformers, as a mirror of reality and a medium to propagate Western ideas and values and to criticize Ottoman society. Westernization thereafter became the most important issue discussed by the Ottoman-Turkish intellectuals and as well the main topic of Turkish novels. Social and cultural tensions caused by Westernization were personified in characters that adhered to the Oriental tradition or were influenced in a positive or negative way by Western ideas, behavior, and fashion.

The first productive and popular Turkish novelist was Ahmet Midhat, who saw his mission in popular education. He published his novel *Felâtnun Bey ve Râkım Efendi* in 1876, the year of the proclamation of the first constitution. In the same year, *İntibah veya Sergüzeşt-i Ali Bey* (The Rude Awakening or the Adventures of Ali Bey) by Namık Kemal came out, and both writers had just returned from exile. Ali Bey is the sentimental romantic lover and Felâtnun Bey the lazy over-Westernized dandy. Both types became very popular and were often imitated in literature and reality. However, with Râkım Efendi, the moralist didactic Ahmet Midhat created a rather unique character in Turkish literature. Râkım was from a humble social background and made a career for himself thanks to his self-discipline and industriousness. To reach his goal of economic success and social advancement, Râkım consciously and successfully uses these Western values which lie in stark contrast to the Ottoman lifestyle of lucky laziness and ease (*keyif, buzur*¹¹). He never wastes his time with gossip, like Felâtnun Bey does. His daytime functions like a clockwork mechanism; he walks around for seventeen hours, eager to learn as much as possible of Western sciences and languages and always prepared to earn money by teaching and translating. But he never neglects his Ottoman Islamic education; he even learns Persian in order to read the ghazals of Hafiz. He is generous and pleasant; everybody likes him, both his old black nurse and the English family Ziklas, to the daughters of whom he teaches Ottoman Turkish. He also successfully controls his love affairs and emotions. He

⁹ See Yardım 2003, 97-101. These four young writers were: Nezihe Araz (b.1923), Safiye Erol (1900-1964), Sâmiha Ayverdi (1905-1993), and Sofi Huri (? a Syrian Christian). Together with Nihad Sâmi Banarlı (1907-1974), they met always on Tuesdays and translated in three years the first volume of Mevlana's *Mesnevi*; see Yardım 2003: 100, 121. On Sâmiha Ayverdi, see Kaner 1998 and Glassen 2002a: 381-386.

¹⁰ For the development of the novel in Turkey, see Mardin 1974 and Evin 1983.

¹¹ About *buzur* mentality, see Glassen 1987.

doesn't slavishly imitate Western customs, behavior and fashion. He only acquires what is useful to fulfill his life plan; he is a utilitarian. Râkım seems to be a happy man, a balanced character. In his soul the elements of the different value systems don't come into conflict as Yakup Kadri observes they do in the case of Abdülhak Hâmit. Yakup Kadri calls Hâmit an Oriental in complete Western forms in whose soul the contradictions cause a permanent struggle and produce a chaos as if being just before the creation of a new world (see Karaosmanoğlu 1969: 264f.).

This conflict occurs in the souls of the Westernized intellectuals in various forms and with different intensity. One expects there to exist plenty of autobiographies showing how different individuals cope in their lives with this mental struggle to find their own identity. But the social and mental effects of Westernization on the individual are more sensibly and concretely elaborated in the characters of novels than in autobiographical writing. Ahmet Midhat has exposed this problem in the ideal, maybe utopian, character of Râkım Efendi, who found his own way in utilitarianism. Râkım never became a role model, neither in literature nor in reality. It was Ahmet Cemil, the hero of Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's (1866-1945) novel *Mai ve Siyah*, published in serial form in *Servet-i Fünun* in the years 1896-97, who personified the prototype of the literary community of *Servet-i Fünun* and the literary movement of Edebiyat-i Cedide. The Ahmet Cemil type is the young poet and writer educated in the Westernized schools of the Tanzimat period with the ambition to create a new modern style of poetry and literature on the lines of Western trends, in a great work in a purified expressive Turkish language. But he fails due to the social conditions and his personal fate. He becomes disillusioned and soon contents himself with writing for magazines and translating light French fiction to earn his living. This type of the Ottoman-Turkish intellectual had many descendents in the following generations.

There was a late awakening of ethnic consciousness of the Ottoman Turks. The Ottoman Turk was "a composite being" as Halide Edib calls it in her *Memoirs* (see Adıvar 1926: 322; Glassen 2000: 45f.) and he was an Ottoman citizen like all the non-Turkish ethnic elements in the Ottoman Empire. The search for ethnic identity of the Ottoman Turks began in the meetings of the Türk Ocağı because non-Turkish elements after the Young Turkish revolution more and more looked after their own national and political interests and during World War I collaborated with the foreign allies. In the War of Independence Ankara, the small provincial town in the center of Anatolia, became the headquarters of Gazi Mustafa Kemal and a national symbol for the patriotic intellectuals in the occupied city of Istanbul. On their way to Ankara,¹² they discovered their homeland Anatolia and the native people for the first time. In Mustafa Kemal's vision of a modern Turkey both developments – Westernization and Turkification – were

¹² See Glassen 1991: 129-131 (about the national road (*vatan yolu*) from İnebolu to Ankara).

equally important for the construction of a national identity. He needed the help of the intellectuals as mediators and propagandists of his ideas. As I pointed out before, Yakup Kadri, formerly an outstanding figure of the literary community in Istanbul, became one of the most committed patriotic Kemalists. In his novel *Yaban* (1932),¹³ he provides one of the few self-narrations of critical introspection in Turkish literature. The framework story is negligible: A member of “the commission for the investigation of war atrocities” finds in the ruins of a central Anatolian village an exercise book with the diary of the young officer Ahmet Celâl, who had fought at the Dardanelles and lost his right arm. He had left the Ottoman capital during the occupation by the Allied Forces and taken refuge in the village of his orderly. In his diary he gives a very personal and subjective account of his daily experiences, his feelings, and his state of mind. He is deeply disturbed, because he feels the mutual strangeness of the Istanbulite educated citizens and their compatriots, the Anatolian people. In the novel, Ahmet Celâl is the first person narrator, but it is Yakup Kadri’s own voice speaking. The novel has a clear autobiographical dimension. By analyzing the mental state of Ahmet Celâl, the author succeeded in diagnosing a common mental disease of the Turkish patriotic intellectuals. I would say, Ahmet Celâl is the frustrated Ahmet Cemil type. As the reception shows, *Yaban* was a very successful novel. Two years later, in his novel *Ankara*, Yakup Kadri tried to create in the figure of journalist and writer (his alter ego), Neşet Sabit, a strong character, who succeeds in overcoming the frustration and keeps his patriotic enthusiasm and becomes a good Kemalist. But this novel has a utopian dimension and was never really successful in Turkey (see Glassen 2000: 52-54).

The intellectuals in Ankara were homesick for Istanbul and many of them returned for good or shuttled between the new and the old capital as often as possible. In the semi-autobiographical novels *Asmalı Mescit 74*, published in 1933, by Fikret Adil (1901-1973) and *İçimizdeki Şeytan* (The Devil Within Us), published in 1940, by Sabahattin Ali (1907-1948), the literary scene of the time is depicted more or less realistically, showing that the Istanbulite *sobbet*-society in the early period of the Republic indulged in an unconcerned Bohemian lifestyle. The national enthusiasm of the War of Independence was not strong and long-lasting enough to create a national identity in a new man (*yeni adam, yeni insan*), a mentally stable individual who had the discipline and energy to build a strong Turkey belonging to the Western civilization as Mustafa Kemal had called for. On the contrary, disappointment, rootlessness, and confusion in the minds of the intellectuals prevailed. Vedat Günyol, who belonged to the circle of Turkish humanists around Sabahattin Eyuboğlu, called them *yarı aydınlar* (half-educated) and *bölmeli kafaları* (divided minds) (see Günyol 1976: 21, 55). The heroes of outstanding

¹³ See Naci 1971: 28: “Aydınlarımız arasında *Yaban*’ı okunmayan yok gibidir... Aydınlarımız da Ahmet Celâl gibidirler.” (There was nearly not one intellectual amongst us who did not read *Yaban*... Our intellectuals were like Ahmet Celâl.)

novels, such as *Bir Tereddüdüin Romanı* (The Novel of a Hesitating Character, 1933) by Peyami Safa (1899-1961), *Utanmaz Adam* (The Shameless Man, 1934) by Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *İçimizdeki Şeytan, Huzur* (Peace of Mind, 1949) by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962) *Aylak Adam* (The Idle Man, 1959) by Yusuf Atılgan (1921-1981), and *Tutunamayanlar* (The Losers, 1970) by Oğuz Atay (1934-1977) show a tendency towards unstable, split, and self-alienated characters.

It seems strange that Oğuz Atay, whose novel *Tutunamayanlar* is still very popular in the postmodern generation, in his last novel *Bir Bilim Adamının Romanı* (The Novel of a Scientist, 1975) presents in his hero Mustafa İnan a perfect character who succeeds in harmonizing in his mind and behavior Oriental and Western values. Mustafa İnan, who as a professor at İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi was a teacher of Oğuz Atay, died in 1967 in a hospital in Freiburg. This means the novel is a biography based on documents and conversational memorizing with the widow Jale İnan. And it seems remarkable that the structure of the whole novel is conversational. The development of the character of the hero is presented in a long dialogue between a middle-aged lecturer – a colleague of the deceased – and a young student. Mustafa İnan is shown as a sociable, self disciplined individual who founded a scientific school in Turkey by teaching his students in permanent conversation. In his character is harmonized the Oriental capacity for communicative sociability with the Western discipline for work. Thus, Mustafa İnan is a character, who found his identity in sociability and conversation. While Oğuz Atay called his book a novel (*roman*), it is the biographical novel of a scientist, not a poet or a writer, and as far as I can see, the character of the hero has no autobiographical dimensions as “The Losers” do.

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