

WRITING “THE OTHER”: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE
NARRATIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF KURDISHNESS IN LATE AND EARLY
REPUBLICAN NOVELS

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Thesis Abstract

Neşe Ceren Arseven, “Writing “the Other”: A Comparative Analysis of the Narrative Representations of Kurdishness in Late and Early Republican Novels”

This thesis is about tracing the continuities and ruptures of prevailing tropes in the representations of Kurdishness in early and late Republican period novels. In order to pursue this goal, two novels from each period which would enable to follow the main tropes of representation employed to elaborate the problems deriving from the East and Kurdishness are chosen. These tropes also point towards their authors’ attempt to think through and resolve the Eastern and Kurdish question’s challenges to the Republican project aiming at modernization and national unity.

Following the analysis of these four novels, throughout the thesis, I argue that 1) representations of Kurdishness through mechanisms of othering points towards an orientalist stance. 2) This orientalist stance bears a gendered essence. 3) In an attempt to elaborate the Kurdish-Eastern Question, which is located at the very core of the Republican project these novels also elaborate on the position of the Turkish elite, who is imagined to be in a definitive relation to this Kurdishness and the East. 4) This relationality and mutual construction of Kurdishness/ the East and Turkishness/ the West also signifies how the whereabouts of the Republican project is imagined. Designation of the narrative plots and of the possibility of narrative resolution/closure also point towards their authors’ state of belief in the Republican project as an essentially modernist one, that sets its primary goal as saving its subjects through transforming them into members of the unified, modern nation.

Tez Özeti

Neşe Ceren Arseven, “Öteki”ni Yazmak: Geç ve Erken Dönem Cumhuriyet
Romanlarında Kürtlüğün Edebi Temsillerinin Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

Bu tez erken ve geç Cumhuriyet dönemi romanlarındaki Kürtlük temsilleriyle ilgili hakim olan temaların kopuş ve devamlılıklarını ele almaktadır. Bu amaçla, her dönemden, Doğu ve Kürtlük sorunlarını tartışmak amacıyla yazarlarca kullanılan edebi temsillerdeki temaları etraflıca irdelemeye olanak sağlayan iki roman seçilmiştir. Bu temalar, aynı zamanda, eser yazarlarının modernleşmeyi ve ulusal birliği amaçlayan Cumhuriyetçi tasarıya meydan okuyan Doğu’yu ve Kürt sorununu ele alma biçimlerine ve bu sorunu çözme girişimlerine de ışık tutar.

Tez sürecinde incelediğim bu romanlara dayanarak savunduğum düşünceler şunlardır: 1) Romanlarda “ötekileşme” mekanizması yoluyla ele alınan Kürtlük temsilleri şarkiyatçı bir duruşa işaret eder. 2) Bu şarkiyatçı duruşun toplumsal cinsiyetçi bir özü vardır. 3) Cumhuriyetçi tasarının özünü oluşturan Kürt-Doğu sorununu inceleyen bu romanlar, ayrıca, Kürtlük ve Doğu temalarıyla doğrudan ilişkisi olduğuna inanılan Türk elit sınıfına da mercek tutar. 4) Kürtlük/Doğu, Türklük /Batı kavramlarının karşılıklı inşası ve ilişkileri, Cumhuriyet projesinin ne şekilde düşünüldüğünü de gözler önüne serer. Romanların konusu ve çözüm/kapanış olasılığı, öncelikli hedefi öznelerini bütünleşmiş, modern bir toplumun üyelerine dönüştürerek kurtuluşa taşımak olan Cumhuriyet projesine eser yazarlarının duydukları inancın geçirdiği değişime de ışık tutmaktadır.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about tracing the continuities and ruptures of prevailing tropes in the representations of Kurdishness in early and late Republican period novels. In order to pursue this goal, I chose two novels from each period which I believe would enable me to follow the main tropes employed to elaborate the problems deriving from the East and Kurdishness. These tropes also point towards their authors' attempt to think through and resolve the Eastern and Kurdish question's challenges to the Republican project of modernization and national unity.

The two novels that I selected from the early Republican Period are Halide Edip Adıvar's *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and Esat Mahmut Karakurt's *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*. Both Halide Edip Adıvar and Esat Mahmut Karakurt are politically engaged writers, and they consider the task of ideologically remolding and educating people in line with the Republican project as the principal exercise of their (inseparably political and literary) career. They published a significant corpus of novels and short stories devoted to the consolidation of the new regime and the dissemination of its values; the patriotic hero/heroines of wartime novels were wrapped in didactic overtones and turned into cultural reformers in the Republican prose. The socio-political atmosphere had already inspired a literary manifesto, a new social novel dedicated to the Kemalist synthesis of Turkish culture and Western civilization; but for writers engaged in parliamentary politics, the idea of this new social novel displayed very overtly the project of spiritual engineering.

Halide Edip's *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and Karakurt's *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* can be considered as representative of early Republican prose, deploying typical tropes and images to narrate the Kurdish-Eastern Question. Both novels relay a story of the salvation of Kurdish women and children by Republican elites from İstanbul, and their transformation into "modern, westernized" subjects. Driven by stories of Kurdish women and children being assimilated into Turkishness through marriage and adoption, these two early novels, I suggest, offer a window onto Republican visions and fantasies of nation-building as capable of subsuming ethnic difference into the national whole.

The novels I selected from the late Republican era are Zülfü Livaneli's *Mutluluk*, and Ahmet Altan's *En Uzun Gece*. Livaneli and Altan are White-Turk, male, leftist, politically engaged journalists, who take an active part in the debates regarding the Republican project. They are figures known to be distant from the official discourse regarding the East and Kurdishness. However, in these novels, one can trace significant continuities in their portrayal of the Kurdish characters and of the East with the early Republican period novels.

Both in *Mutluluk*, and in *En Uzun Gece*, honor killings constitute the main setting of the novels. The novels focus especially on the salvation of the Kurdish women and children from a social structure pictured as patriarchal, violent, and archaic, which produces honor killings. The protagonists of both novels are White Turk characters and they are represented as compelled, as if on a quest in search of happiness. Although these protagonists attempt to rescue the Kurdish women and children throughout the novels, they remain unable to save the Kurdish characters and consequently they fail to realize themselves. In other words, the narrative resolution does not occur by the hand of the Turkish characters.

I argue that, these four novels, which reflect the spirit and major characteristics of their eras, provide us with important clues to understand the perceptions and representations of Kurdishness in these periods, and the continuities and ruptures across some eight decades of sociopolitical experience / national life.

In my first and second chapters I will undertake a close reading of the early and late Republican novels respectively. For this purpose, what I will try to do is to expand the contexts of these novels by focusing on the social and political framework of the “Kurdish Question” at each specific historical moment. Then, after providing brief information about the authors’ biographies, I will conduct a preliminary analysis of the novels by focusing on their main characters, as well as on repeated tropes and images in their representations of Kurdishness and ‘the East’.

In my third chapter, I will further analyze these four novels, both separately and in terms of their relationship to one another. To this end I will first analyze the two novels of the early Republican period in terms of their commonalities and differences in the narrative representations of Kurdishness. The aim of this analysis is to reveal the dynamics of imagining the East and Kurdishness characteristic to the early Republican period in which these novels were produced. Following this, I will perform a similar kind of analysis for the two late Republican period novels. And finally, I will conclude the chapter with a section in which I conduct a comparative analysis of all four novels in relationship to one another. With this final attempt, I seek to understand the transformation of Kurdish identity and Turkish Nationalism between the first and the second period novels in order to see what this might say about the literary representations of Kurdishness in these periods.

Following these analyses, throughout the thesis, I argue that 1) representations of Kurdishness through mechanisms of othering points towards an

orientalist stance 2) this orientalist stance bears a gendered essence 3) in an attempt to elaborate the Kurdish-Eastern Question, which is at the very core of the Republican project, these novels also elaborate the position of the Turkish elite, who assumes a definitive relation—a relation defined by the power to define—to Kurdishness and the East. 4) This relationality and mutual construction of Kurdishness/the East and Turkishness/the West also signifies how the whereabouts of the Republican project is imagined. The design of narrative plot and the possibility of narrative resolution/closure also point towards their authors' state of belief in the Republican project as an essentially modernist one, that sets its primary goal as saving its subjects through transforming them into members of the unified, modern nation.

CHAPTER TWO

BUILDING THE NATION, OTHERING THE KURD

This chapter explores two early Republican novels, Halide Edip Adivar's *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and Esat Mahmut Karakurt's *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*. I focus specifically on the representations of Kurdishness in these novels through a close study of their Kurdish characters, and ask: What is the relationship between these novels and their historical context of their creation? What do they tell us about the profound transformations in politics and society in the Early Republican Period, and the effects of nation-making on the so-called Kurdish Question? And what was the role of the novel, and works of art more generally, in making the new social and political form of the national community (with its radical new idea of a bounded territory of one people, one language, and one history) imaginable, even natural and something that could be taken for granted?

In more explicit terms, driving this chapter is a methodology that moves between a) close analysis of the representations of Kurdishness in these novels, and b) broader questions of the transformations at work in the early years of Turkish nation making. At a theoretical level, I assume the relationship between literature and society as one of mutual constitution, which leads me to ask both how the historical conditions impact the ways these authors represent Kurdishness, and how these representations, once they circulated across the new territory of the Turkish nation-state, might have helped that new political subject, the Turkish citizen, to imagine the national form, and specifically, the place of Kurdish identity within that form.

In what follows, after a brief historical review of the Early Republican Period in terms of how the Kurdish Question developed, I offer a biographical sketch of each author before turning to a close study of the Kurdish characters in each novel.

A Historical Review: Development of the Kurdish Question in the Early Republican Period

During the republican period, perception of the Kurds diverged widely among the social engineers of Turkish nationalism. Newspapers of the time present Kurds as “primitive rebels to be assimilated”, at other times “enemies to be destroyed”. Inseparable from the representation of Kurds was a larger political impasse: What to do with the fact of political contestations and frictions that nation-making encountered in the east and southeast? During the first few decades following the foundation of the Republic in 1923, Turkish nationalism perceived the ‘Kurdish question’ either as “a product of incitement by other states” or in terms of “a fatal rivalry between the pre-modern past and the republican present”. During the 1950s and 1960s the ‘Kurdish question’ was mostly seen as the result of tensions between regional and national economies, “a matter of regional backwardness” (Yeğen, 2006: 90). By the 1970s, however, Turkish nationalism began to associate the ‘Kurdish question’ within the broader context of a perceived ‘leftist threat’.

Across these shifting contexts, however, one principle remains consistent: Kurds have always been understood by mainstream Turkish nationalism as “Turks to be” (ibid: 53-4). Moreover, the Kurdish question was never an isolated question, but it has been inseparable from Turkish modernization. “The Kurdish question’s

shifting valences, in other words, correspond to different eras in the story of Turkish modernization” (ibid: 31).

In the wake of the war of Independence, the newly founded Turkish Republic incorporated three main Muslim Ethnic elements. These were Kurds, Lazes and Caucasians. Unlike Kurds, Lazes and Caucasians readily integrated into the Turkish national community and the national market. The historical conditions of politics and economic practice in the Kurdish-majority provinces of the east and southeast, however, were quite different. They had a relative autonomy during the Ottoman period. Hence, they had their sense of distinction in terms of all ethnic markers such as the sense of origin and the language.

“The singularist understandings of polity, language, and history that informed Kemalist nation-making dealt a heavy blow to its goal of an ethnically homogeneous nation-state” (Oran, 1988: 175). The rigidity of the Kemalist ideology, which envisioned the image of a singular ethnicity as the best way to create a sense of a singular national community, led to the denial of Kurdish collective identity. Kemalist nationalism tried to form a national society, through military and police force as much as through the ideological apparatus of the state. Yet, the success of the latter (for instance, the now infamous linguistic and historical theses of the Early Republican Period) remained quite limited. This state of affairs made the use of sheer military power seem unavoidable for national integration. But military measures, in turn, proved to be counterproductive and gave rise to the emergence of ethnic protest movements.

The year 1924 is an important date and symbolizes a critical turning point in relations between the Turkish state apparatus and political dynamics in its Kurdish-majority provinces. The abolition of the caliphate in 1924 undermined the old

concept of the Muslim *umma* which defined community by shared religious belief, and marked the emergence of a Kemalist secular notion of community based on citizenship. The caliphate and Islamic institutions such as sheikhs and sects had been the constitutive elements of Kurdishness. As Kurdish religious and tribal leaders had derived their authority from the sultanate and the caliphate, the abolition of both these institutions removed the bases of their legitimacy. Rather rapidly, the Turkish Republic was outlawing all public manifestations of Kurdish identity. According to Bruinessen, “In Turkey, [...] after the great Kurdish nationalist revolts, a systematic policy aiming at detribalization and the assimilation of the Kurds was adopted. [...] Everything that recalled a separate Kurdish identity was to be abolished: language, clothing and names” (Bruinessen, 1992: 242).

As stated before, the Kemalist regime overtly rejected religion in the public realm and wanted to replace it by a new vision of political belonging. In this endeavor, it used race as the underlying framework for national integration by claiming the Turkishness of all Muslim ethnies. Thus the existence of Muslim ethnies including Kurds, Arabs and Caucasians living within the frontiers of Turkey were rejected at the official level, and the pseudo-scientific Turkish History Thesis was forged in order to claim the Turkishness of these populations in terms of their ethnic origin. In practice, various strategies —forced assimilation, deportation, resettlement, even physical elimination— were carried out with the aim of Turkification and assimilation that is, making the theses of the state a social reality.

Bruinessen goes on to note that “As Kemalist intellectual elites tried to ignore the existence of non-Turkish Muslim ethnies, the Republican Turkish state also denied that the Kurds existed”. According to Yeğen, “from the mid-1920s until the end of 1980s the Turkish state ‘assumed’ that there was no Kurdish element on

Turkish territory” (Yeğen, *ibid*). Whenever the Kurdish question was mentioned in Turkish state discourse, it was always “an issue of political reaction, tribal resistance or regional backwardness but never an ethno-political question”. Kurdish elements that participated in the rebellions were depicted as simply “Kurdish tribes, Kurdish bandits, and Kurdish sheikhs –all the evils of Turkey’s pre-modern past” (Yeğen, 1999: 555) in official discourse.

Between the late 1920s and 1930s, in light of insurgencies, rebellions, and revolts, “the centralization and consolidation of [state] power had been of greatest importance”. “The Turkish state considered the resistance of Kurds in accepting the legitimacy of Turkish national rule as the resistance of pre-modernity, since, according to the logic of modernization and centralization, consolidation of state power was an issue of civilizing the country” (Yeğen, 1999: 563). Thus, Kurdish resistance to the consolidation of state power was reconstituted as ‘the resistance of brigands’ or simply as ‘a question of banditry’. In the process, this discourse removed any legible political claims from this resistance and “read the Kurdish question as something which emerged from the conflict between the modernity of the Republic and the pre-modernity of the Kurdish people” (*ibid*: 563).

Turkishness is constructed as a status that may be achieved by non-Turks, but not by all of them (Yeğen, 2006: 108). Kurds have been considered one of the Muslim peoples of Anatolia that could assimilate to Turkishness (*ibid*: 91). This confidence that Kurds would assimilate to Turkishness suggests that mainstream Turkish nationalism has perceived Kurds as being inside the circle of Turkishness (*ibid*: 73).

Kurds have sometimes been regarded as ‘others’, the enemy, suggesting that the political definition of Turkishness constructed by mainstream Turkish

nationalism has sometimes been broken down. “Loyalty” has been the transcendent principle determining who may be counted within Turkishness (Üstel, 2004: 11-24). The fact that Kurds revolted against the Turkish state proved that their loyalty was not sufficiently reliable. This, on the other hand, resulted in Kurds being perceived as a group of people whose willingness and hence ability to become Turkish was unclear. Consequently, Kurds sometimes encountered such discriminatory citizenship practices as the confiscation of their private property or compulsory resettlement (Yeğen, 2006: 11). This shows that the Turkishness (more than citizenship) of Kurds, or their potential for achieving it, was not that evident to the Turkish state. It also shows that the claim that Turkishness (more than citizenship) has in principal been open to all Muslim people of Anatolia is not as definite as it first appears to be.

Between 1925- 1940 is a period when measures aimed at the eradication of the constitutive elements of Kurdish ethno-national identity by the use of all means of ethnic homogenization on the official plane severed the ties of ethnic Kurds to the emerging Turkish nation-state, and caused a series of rebellions. The most significant of those were the Sheikh Sait rebellion in 1925, the Ağrı rebellion in 1929-30 and the Dersim rebellion in 1937-38. However, surpassing their ethnic emphasis, these rebellions were “reconstituted as representing the Caliphate and the Sultanate” and “the Kurdish movement represented the demand for traditional, religious, reactionary and irrational order of the past which had been abolished by the present –the present representing progress and prosperity” (Yeğen, 1999:561).

In order to understand the character of the Sheikh Said Rebellion, which is described as a “reactionary” and “religious” rebellion within the official discourse, it

is necessary to mention the organization *Azadi* (Freedom). In this way, it will be clear that they came together in the Sheikh Said Rebellion.

Azadi, another name of for the Kurdish Independence Society, was established in 1921 in Erzurum (Olson, 1993: 53, McDowall, 1996: 192). Most of the leaders of *Azadi* were officers in the Turkish army (Olson, 1993: 73). Bruinessen describes these people as “persons, most of who had supported the Kemalist movement and were disappointed”. The purpose of the organization was to establish a Kurdish state (2002: 153). Sheikh Said Rebellion was planned and organized by *Azadi* (Bruinessen, 2002: 160-3). However, the organization kept sheikhs at the front in order to establish a popular and charismatic leadership. As Bruinessen suggests, “as the idea of a Kurdish state had little meaning for broad sections of the society, the leaders had to emphasize religious sentiments” (ibid, p.167). Yet, it would be wrong to argue that Sheikh Said, a *Nakşibendi* sheikh, was only a showpiece leader. He attended the 1924 Congress of *Azadi*, and he stated that the Kurdish policies of the Ankara government were increasingly becoming a threatening one, and he called the participants of the congress to fight for the independence of Kurdistan (Bruinessen, 2003: 412). Although Sheikh Said assumed command of the rebellion, in many places; sheikhs mobilized tribal chieftains, who were their apostles. The rebellions were particularly effective in and around Diyarbakır.

The Sheikh Said Rebellion became a very significant factor in giving Turkish nationalism its ethnocentric character and the Kemalist reforms a much stricter form. Bruinessen adds that this rebellion provided Mustafa Kemal and İsmet Paşa with an opportunity to assume dictatorship-like authority, and that, from this time on, the Kemalist reform program was put into practice in a much swifter manner without taking into consideration the opposition (2002: 123). Yet, the Sheikh Said Rebellion

was not the last rebellion of Kurds against the newly established nation-state and its policies. Another big rebellion, in Ağrı, burst out in 1930.

The Ağrı Rebellion started with the tribe of *Celalis*' rejection of any other authority except its own. Another tribe, *Xoybun*, decided to participate in the rebellion. İhsan Nuri Paşa, together with his men, joined the tribes that were already in rebellion on Ağrı Mountain, and assumed the operational commandship of the rebellion. *Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*, which had previously joined *Xoybun*, and some nationalist intellectuals, such as Memduh Selim, also joined the rebellion (Kutlay, 1997: 200).

On the other hand, during and after the rebellion, the ethnocentric tone of some journals increased so much that sometimes even racist expressions were observed. For example, in an article in *Cumhuriyet*, the rebels were described as follows: "The manifestations of their sentiments and brains, which function with natural instincts just as ordinary animals, show how vulgar, even by reflex reaction, which they think. (...) These men who mix raw meat with a little wheat and eat just in that way have no difference from African savages and cannibals" (quoted from Yıldız, 2001: 243).

Additionally, there are ethnocentric tones present in the discourse of state officials. In the early 1920s, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü stated, in *Milliyet* that "only the Turkish nation has the privilege of demanding ethnic and racial rights in this country. There is no possibility that others demand such rights" (quoted from İsmail Beşikçi, 1998: 2). After the state crushed the rebellion, the statement made by the Turkish Minister of Interior, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt, was the most striking and well-known example of ethnocentric discourse: "Turks are the sole owners and the sole nobles of this country. Those who are not of Turkish origin have only one right: to

serve and be the slaves, without question, of the noble Turkish nation” (quoted from Beşikçi, 1998: 3).

Given the increasingly ethnicized tone surrounding discussions of political contestations in the east and southeast, it would be safe to argue that by the Ağrı Rebellion, which was described by Bruinessen as a continuation of Sheikh Said Rebellion, the aim of rebellion had become a direct rejection of Turkism and the demand of an independent Kurdish state.

Turkish Literature and its “Other”: Kurds

Art and literature are some of the most appropriate spheres for the reproduction of the nationalist symbols, rituals and myths. However, apart from reproducing already existent shared elements of a nationalist movement, art and literature can be spheres of invention and creation for new symbols and new myths. And in some cases, the artistic and literary worksthemselfs can take on the value of nationalist symbols. Turkish nationalism is no an exception. The gradual formation of a national (ist) literature went hand in hand with the development of Turkism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, gaining impetus with the establishment of the Republic in 1923. The particular concerns of Republican nationalist ideology, that is, Westernization, secularization, a national economy, and the creation of a hard-working, patriotic and selfless Republican individual, can be traced across the literary products of the first two decades of the Republic characterized by single-party rule (Köksal, 2005: 63-84).

Right from the beginning, the movement of Westernization had accorded a special role to women’s emancipation as the central question of all social projects,

economic, political and cultural (Kadıoğlu, 1998: 89) as all groups expected the Westernized, thus liberated woman to symbolize in her very being the success of a greater social and cultural project. In tracing back the gendered pillars of the nation-building process (Jayaweardena, 1986; Davis-Anthias, 1989), Enloe demonstrates how men “see women as the community’s or the nation’s most valuable possessions; the principal vehicles for transmitting the whole nation’s values from one generation to the next; bearers of the community future generations –crudely, nationalist wombs; the members of the community vulnerable to defilement and exploitation by oppressive alien rulers; and most susceptible to assimilation” (Enloe, 1989: 54). Yet, not all women are included in the system in the same way. As the concerns of modernity and nation-building coincided in the Turkish context, there was the need to come up with a cultural image for the new Republican woman. What was the cultural repertoire of women’s images available at the time?

For the new expectations of womanhood to thrive in the new public sphere in particular and the imagined community of the nation in general, the distinction between “ the oppressed women of the East” and “ the liberated women of the West” had to be drawn by the male Republican elite as rigidly and impermeably as possible. In order to clarify its message, the new Turkish Republican regime thus Orientalized the East, portraying Kurdish women as oppressed and submissive and then juxtaposing these imagined constructs with the modern, urban, educated Turkish women. The list of such comparisons drawn between the two different types of woman is very long and prolific.

A Biographical Sketch of Two Early Republican Writers:

Halide Edip Adivar and Esat Mahmut Karakurt

It is interesting to note that this new model of womanhood generated by Republican male writers was not only produced by and for men and then imposed upon women. On the contrary, women also were willing participants in this process. Writing with a mission was also crucial for those woman novelists who fully partook in the nation-building process through the pen, always favoring and privileging the nation over gender. Halide Edip Adivar, both as a leading Turkish female writer and a social and political activist, is an outstanding example in this regard. It is in Adivar's persona that we find a flawless combination of the venerated mother and the emancipated daughter of the Turkish Republic.

The literary boom of patriotic heroism, which was outpoured during the war, immersed the social, political and cultural aspects of this profound transformation in moralizing themes, and imaginative writing became a powerful instrument to mobilize the masses for the adoption of the premises of the revolution. It was in such a vibrant atmosphere that new political authorities recognized the power of literary communication and transformed literature into a powerful means of indoctrination. Writers became prominent icons of the multi-leveled transformation process and found a place within the political monopoly of power more visibly than ever before.

In this framework, the task of ideologically remoulding and educating people in line with the revolution found its place in the literary agendas of politically engaged writers such as Halide Edip Adivar and Esat Mahmut Karakurt, becoming the a principal exercise of their political career. They published a significant corpus of novels and short stories devoted to the consolidation of the new regime and the

dissemination of its values; the patriotic hero/heroines of wartime novels were wrapped in didactic overtones and turned into cultural reformers in the Republican novel. The socio-political atmosphere had already inspired a literary manifesto, a new social novel dedicated to the Kemalist synthesis of Turkish culture and Western civilization; but for writers engaged in parliamentary politics, the idea of this new social novel displayed very overtly the project of spiritual engineering.

As the development of modern prose in Turkey coincided with the emergence of nationalism, something of the nationalist rhetoric of that period filtered into prose as well. A good number of literary works dealt with patriotic themes' and novels treated their subjects more often than not in an idealistic and somewhat sentimental manner reminiscent of the tone of political speeches. Not only do these representations reinforce stereotypes of the "primitive". The sentimentality seems geared towards enforcing a sense of racial unity among Turkish people. A poststructuralist reading of nationalist ideologies points out that it is other nations that give meaning to the nation. The outside or difference becomes constitutive of the inside or identity, and the "other", "foreign" and "enemy" nations thus occupy a central role⁹ in national history, state language and nationalist novels. As to be witnessed in the case of all nationalist novels, the most characteristic theme is the exclusion of "the other" with the help of words like "foreign" and enemy. Chinese, Greek, Arabian, Armenian and of course Kurdish people, standing for one another in line with the political and ideological atmosphere of the time, account for the concept of evil in Turkish novel (Türkeş, 2002: 814). Equating domestic enemies with primordial foreign enemies is introduced with the National Literature in Turkey. Accompanied by the Turkish nationalization movement, Greek, Armenian and Jewish people, since they are non-Muslims, and Kurdish people, because of their

ethnic identity, are transformed into ideal others. Following this, novel which is regarded as a means to modernize –liberate- is formulated as a literary sphere in which these political projects of otherization are articulated (Türkeş, 2002: 819).

At a time when Republican ideology was highly fetishized by authors wrapped up in Western attire, for Turkish elites, the image of the Kurd provided fertile grounds for negatively defining their own identity. In *Aksam* newspaper article dated September 1, 1930, Esat Mahmut Karakurt defines Kurdish people as follows:

They may roughly be called savages. They have never been aware of anything within their life spans. All they know are the sky and the rocks. They live just as a young bear does. Kurdish people living in Ağrı are the same. Just try to conceive how savage they are who, like predators, dwell on these craggy rocks even a bear cannot dare to wander. They have not learned what it means to sympathize. They are sanguinary, daring, ferocious and savage... They are very ignominious. In case you are captured, they do not kill you with a bullet. Instead, they first incise your eyes, cut your nose, rip out your nails and then they kill you! They say their women are the same! (Uzun, 2000: 78 cited in Türkeş, 2002).

The dire and brutal physical characteristics of Kurdish people are strongly underscored in the novels. The image of the Kurd as primitive, ignorant, and evil reproduces the image of the Turk as civilized, enlightened, and good. Echoing the logic of European colonization, the fact that there are such races to be dominated justifies the idea that there are some others having a right to disperse their authority (Türkeş, 2002: 821).

Landed aghas, tribal leaders, sheikhs, Kurdish rulers, Kurdish peasants and urban Kurdish nobles are characterized as barbarians in Turkish novels; the effort is not to understand Kurdish culture, but to caricature it through stereotypic images of frightening otherness. By contrast, in the aforementioned novels, the supervisors, mayors, and members of the army and police who oppress Kurdish population

through the unlimited authority they are granted by Ankara regime are elevated to the status of heroes. Considering the fact that characters defining Kurds as an ethnicity can be witnessed in novels displaying the criminal world of the maleficent others, dominant myths like, “brutish, insidious, ignorant Kurds” are reserved for Kurdish characters (Alankuş Kural, 1995: 103).

Having outlined the political and social context of novel writing in the Early Republican Period, I now turn to the biographies of Halide Edip Adivar and Esat Mahmut Karakurt.

Halide Edip Adivar

Halide Edip was born in İstanbul in 1884. Educated by private tutors at the American College for Girls in İstanbul, she became actively engaged in Turkish literary, political, and social movements. She divorced her first husband in 1910 because she rejected the second wife he married after her. She got married again in 1917, to a doctor and Turkish politician, Adnan Adivar. Halide Edip was active in the women's movement prior to the War of Independence, establishing the Society for the Elevation of Women in 1908. She dedicated herself to the improvement of education for Turkish women and to furthering relations between them and the European women. She was also involved in relief efforts for women and their families left hungry and homeless by the war.

An ardent patriot, Halide Edip wrote *Yeni Turan* (1912; “The New Turan”), on the nationalistic Pan-Turkish movement. In *Yeni Turan*, she glorified the common legendary past and the future of the Turkish race. She also played a major role in the Türk Ocağı –a nationalist organization established in 1912 that was designed to raise Turkish educational standards and encourage social and economic progress (and

spread the presuppositions and logics of the nation-state form). This program included delivering public lectures attended by men and women together and considered as a great social innovation in those days. During this period Halide Edip published her famous novel *Handan*, which is about the problems of an educated woman.

After doing educational work in the Ottoman province of Syria, during World War I, Halide Edip and her husband joined the Turkish nationalists and played a vital role in the Turkish War of Liberation in Anatolia. During the war, when there was a shortage of nurses in military hospitals, Halide Edip volunteered to serve and was admitted in the army. She worked not only as a nurse, but also prepared reports and translations from English and organized women's associations to collect money for the army. She was closely associated with Mustafa Kemal and was present with him during many historical moments.

One of her most famous novels, *Ateşten Gömlek* (1922) is about the story of a young woman who works for the liberation of her country and of the two men who love her. From 1925 to 1938 Halide Edip traveled extensively, lecturing in Paris, London, the United States, and India as the country's unofficial spokesman, expounding the establishment of the new Turkish Republic and its modernization efforts to the western public. On her return to İstanbul in 1939, she became professor of English literature at İstanbul University and later on she became a member of the Parliament (1950–54). Among Halide Edip's important novels are *Sinekli Bakkal*, (1936, originally written in English as *The Clown and His Daughter*, 1935) *The Turkish Ordeal* (1928), *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* (1935, 1963), and *Turkey Faces West* (1930), in which she examines the ideological conflicts facing the young Turkish Republic. She also wrote two volumes of memoirs (1926).

Esat Mahmut Karakurt

According to the *Tanzimat'tan Bugüne Edebiyatçılar Ansiklopedisi*, Esat Mahmut Karakurt (1902-1977) was born in İstanbul to a wealthy and well-known family. He is known to be of Kurdish origin. His mother was Fatma Şerife and his father was Urfalı Mahmut Nedim Paşa who was a member of Şura-ı Devlet. After having completed *Kadıköy Sultanisi*, he finished The School of Dentistry in 1924 and The Law School in İstanbul University in 1930. He worked as a lawyer, journalist and Turkish teacher in Galatasaray High School, and served as a member of the Parliament between 1954 –1960 and as a senator in National Assembly between the years 1961 and 1966. Esat Mahmut Karakurt was an influential writer of Turkish literature in the Republican period, especially with his romance, adventure, and spy narratives that reached a large female audience. After he published his first collection of short stories in 1926, Karakurt wrote a total of 16 novels until 1960.

Esat Mahmut Karakurt's first novels were published in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* Newspaper and then his novels, interviews and travel pieces were published in newspapers such as *Akşam*, *İkdam*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Tasvir* and *Yeni Sabah*. Esat Mahmut Karakurt wrote a total of 16 novels from the year 1926 to 1960 whose readers are mostly middle high school students and females (564-565). The name of Esat Mahmut Karakurt is generally mentioned among the popular romance novelists such as Tahsin Berkand, Burhan Cahit Morkaya, Kerime Nadir, Oğuz Özeş and Cahit Uçuk in the Turkish Literature Anthologies. It is not wrong to mention that Karakurt never intended to write so-called high literature and he made use of some elements from his journalism and embedded journalistic materials and nationalistic thoughts in the form of the novel. In all his novels, the main plot is based on the love

between the main male and female characters but these romances differ from each other in their settings. These novels also strongly reflect the nationalist ideology of the Republican times. This ideology appears in the novels clearly in relation to "the others". "The others" in *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* are Kurdish people, just as they are the British people in *Allaha Ismarladık*, the Bulgarians in *Vahşi Bir Kız Sevdim*, the Romanians in *Son Gece*, the Germans in *Ankara Ekspresi*, the Chinese in *Erikler Çiçek Açtı*, and the Russians in *Kadın İsterse*.

This concludes our autobiographical sketch. I now turn to a detailed analysis of the two novels in question, beginning with *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* by Halide Edip Adivar.

Zeyno'nun Oğlu by Halide Edip Adivar

In this section, I briefly outline the plot and characters of the novel by way of context for the close analysis of its Kurdish characters. *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* (Adivar, 1996) was first published in 1928. The main characters of the book are 1) Kurdish Zeyno, a woman who works in the garrisons 2) Hasan Bey who is an army officer, and a 'veteran' of the War of Independence in Diyarbakır 3) Turkish Zeyno, who is the former lover of Hasan Bey and now married to another soldier Muhsin Bey, 4) Ramazan who is Kurdish Zeyno's cousin and at the same time her husband, and finally, 5) child Haso who is born from Zeyno, known as the "Kurdish Peach", as a result of her illegitimate relationship with Hasan Bey. The book is set during Hasan Bey's return to Diyarbakır after many years in 1925, when Sheikh Sait rebellion is about break out. In learning Haso is his son, he marries the Kurdish Zeyno. At this point in the plot, a nationalist morality tale is introduced: "the problem", comments

Sirman, “of setting a good model for the new generation of young Republicans is paramount” (Sirman, 2000: 262).

Zeyno’nun Oğlu is the sequel of *Kalp Ağrısı*, but this time, the book is not about a love story. The heroes of *Kalp Ağrısı* come together in this novel. Halide Edip gathers the two main characters of *Kalp Ağrısı* in another environment: Diyarbakir, the Kurdish majority urban center in southeastern Turkey, and its surrounding villages. She also organizes the novel around a social problem, and tries to convey something of the social life and political developments in the Kurdish southeastern. The novel is set at a time when a Kurdish rebellion is in preparation (around the mid 1920s). In other words, the context is that of a period when measures aimed at the eradication of the constitutive elements of the Kurdish ethno-national identity by the use of all means of ethnic homogenization on the official plane severed the ties of ethnic Kurds with the emerging Turkish nation-state and caused a series of rebellions I as explained above.

To understand *Zeyno’nun Oğlu*, it helps to understand something of its prequel, *Kalp Ağrısı*. In *Kalp Ağrısı*, Zeyno and Hasan love each other. However, Zeyno’s best friend Azize falls in love with Hasan and when she finds out Hasan’s relationship with Turkish Zeyno she attempts to commit suicide. For that reason, Zeyno convinces Hasan to marry Azize. They get married but Azize dies when giving birth to her child. In *Zeyno’nun Oğlu*, Turkish Zeyno is now married to Muhsin who is also an army officer like Hasan. He is an older man and although Zeyno does not love him as she once loved Hasan, she now feels more secure. Hasan Bey and Muhsin Bey had worked together in Diyarbakır as commander and adjutant years ago and experienced many interesting incidents. Following the death of Azize and the marriage of Zeyno with Muhsin Bey, the two men come together again in

Diyarbakır as colonel and major. At their first presence in Diyarbakır, adjutant Hasan Bey has an affair with the Kurdish Zeyno. In learning of this affair, the jealous fiancé of the girl breaks into the headquarters with the help of Haso working there as a deserter sergeant and at the same time who is the Kurdish Zeyno's cousin. Luckily, Muhsin Bey helps Hasan out. Hasan does not see Kurdish Zeyno again. However Kurdish Zeyno gets pregnant from her affair with the young sergeant Hasan.

Kurdish Zeyno marries her cousin Kurdish Haso in order to protect herself against her fiancé and to find a father to her child. Haso renames himself as Ramazan in order to escape from the authorities, as he broke into the headquarters. Zeyno gives birth to her child in the absence of Ramazan, and calls the son Haso. Ramazan is a violent and cruel man, so in order to protect himself from Ramazan, child Haso turns out to be a creature, "who slips like a fish, runs like a squirrel, climbs like a monkey" and who, so to say, thinks with all his existence. Haso grows up, and becomes a bright and a talented child. A Sheikh, who has been arranging a Kurdish revolt around Diyarbakır, takes Haso under his wings. Thus, Zeyno and her family are charged as custodians of the Sheikh's house in Diyarbakır.

Along the way, Turkish Zeyno decides to go to Diyarbakır to live with her husband Muhsin Bey, who has already been sent there with Hasan Bey, now a Major. And that is how all the characters of the novel come together.

After his arrival to Diyarbakır, Major Hasan discovers that he has a son from his former brief affair with the Kurdish Zeyno. With the help of Zeyno's guidance, he "recognizes his love both for his son and for Zeyno" and he "appreciates the value of his sentiment" (Sirman, 2000: 262). "From now on he was looking at his past with

the solidity of a soldier whose intrepidity was not a material but a moral one” (185).¹ As Sirman points out, “this is his story, a story through which he gains wisdom and maturity by having to accept life as it is: he will not be able to marry [Turkish] Zeyno, whose own appreciation of her husband has also matured, but he will have to marry the mother of his son” (Sirman, 2000: 262). Therefore, Major Hasan and Kurdish Zeyno get married and move to İstanbul. Ramazan dies in an armed struggle.

The novel is mainly set within the Turkishness and Kurdishness dilemma and tension and it can be interpreted as a Turkification story that closes with its accomplishment, thus as a narrative that reaches a resolution, a closure. At the end of the novel, the Turkish soldier marries the Kurdish woman, takes his son under his wings and they all move from Diyarbakır to İstanbul. Within this context, in the following section I will attempt to explore how all these Turkish and Kurdish identities are represented through different characters in the novel *Zeyno’nun Oğlu*.

The Representations of Kurdishness in *Zeyno’nun Oğlu*

In *Zeyno’nun Oğlu*, it is in fact impossible to discuss representations of Kurdishness as separate from Turkishness; rather, the two should be thought of as relational and intertwined. One of the main forms of the representation of Turkishness in the novel appears in Halide Edip’s depiction of modern Turkish women as genuinely nationalist, youthful figures who would bring civilization to a place like Diyarbakır, which is characterized in the novel’s discourse by its lack of civilization. “The modern spirited woman who brings civilization to Diyarbakır”

¹ “Artık yiğitliği maddi değil manevi olan bir asker metanetiyle geçmişine bakıyordu.”

(Adivar, 1996: 46)² is reified in Turkish Zeyno, and Mazlume, daughter of lieutenant colonel Mazlum Bey, who is a colleague of Hasan Bey and Muhsin Bey. Mazlume is the true example of such young nationalists. She is a young university student, who exemplifies the “new youngster type”. Mazlume is a brand-new person. She is depicted as a self-assured, intellectual, decisive and enlightened person. She is believed to have saved herself from the decadence of modernism, and tended towards spontaneity and free thought with the help of her university education. She ponders over everything and, in Adivar’s terms, she is a girl like a library. Mazlume is an exemplar of the modern Turkish urbane woman, who is depicted by Halide Edip in this manner:

Nowadays, urbane Turkish girls have a delicate face, they are frail and belligerent. Most of them have deep green eyes, an impulsive attitude; they are often alert and sometimes cynic as a manner of speaking. Though they are elegant, when they get dressed they are keeping it simple. When they are thinking about something they have a little bent for exaggeration, a temper with a tendency to sensation and illusion, but, in spite of all these things, they are more liberated, less arrogant, spoiled in a seductive way and much more special than the contemporary young men. If these girls are the most intellectual and enlightened persons of the new Turkey, in the meantime, the same girls are the symbol of the nation and the most realistic figures of the country (Adivar, 1996: 26-27).³

However, what Mazlume represents for Halide Edip appears in stark contrast to what Mesture Hanım, Mazlume’s mother, symbolizes. Mesture Hanım is an uneducated woman, who sees “being modern” as nothing but a form of ornamentation, such as knowing how to dance and to dress smartly. She arrives to Diyarbakır with fantasies

² “Diyarbakır’a uygarlık götüren yeni ruhlu bir kadın.”

³ “Şimdi, şehirli Türk kızı hep böyle ince yüzlü, narin yapılı, sinirliydi. Çoğunun gözleri derin ve yeşil, tavırları atılgan, konuşmaları uyanık ve bazen alaycı idi. Kıyafetleri zarif ve basit, düşünceleri azıcık mübalağaya, mizaçları heyecana, hülyaya eğilimli olmakla beraber zamanların genç erkeğinden daha fazla özgür, daha az ukalâ ve çekici bir surette şımarık ve hususi idiler. Yeni Türkiye’de en ileri açık düşünceli öge bu genç kızlarsa, aynı kızlar memleketin en ulusal, en gerçek örnekleri gibi görünüyorlardı.”

to change the city, which she defines as “a desert” (Adıvar, 1996: 34), into one that contains a civilized society, to eliminate old and obsolete mentalities and outlooks:

Once she gets there she would blank out “the outdated thoughts, foggy minds” and establish a new modern society of men and women, serving them tea, letting them play bridge and poker, making them dance fashionably and finally would become the queen of the new modern life in Diyarbakır. She was bringing a gramophone with her. And if the high society she established succeeds, then, they will bring a jazz band from İstanbul. Perhaps, if a major comes to Diyarbakır she would start with arranging a ball, making the inhabitants of the city experience the highest blessing of the civilization (Adıvar, 1996: 40).⁴

Mazlume does not approve of her mother’s superficial attitudes and she criticizes her attempts to imitate those people whom Mesture Hanım considers as “modern”. In agreement with Mazlume’s feelings about her mother, Halide Edip portrays Mesture Hanım as a parody of the civilizer, self perceived as the bringer of civilization to an underdeveloped, uncivilized and primitive people. Mesture Hanım seems to be the “white”, who carries truth to savages; her major mission is “to wake Diyarbakır up” (Adıvar, 1996: 139). By conveying the essential symbols, signifying the superficiality of what is considered as Western civilization – such as tea parties and poker games, gramophone, jazz band and dance balls – she believes that she is going to be an initiator of a new mode of social life.

On the other hand, the Turkish character who is to bring “true” civilization to Diyarbakır is Turkish Zeyno. In fact, she is one of the main characters of the novel. However, her character is not depicted in detail. Although we know that she has

⁴ “Gider gitmez bir defa “köhne ve örümcekli” düşünceleri kaldıracak, kendi etrafında kadınlı erkekli asrî bir cemiyet toplayacak, çaylar verecek, briç ve poker oynatacak, dansı moda haline sokacak, Diyarbakır’da yeni hayatın bir çeşit kraliçesi olacaktı. Giderken gramafon götürüyordu. Fakat kuracağı sosyete başarı gösterirse, İstanbul’dan bir cazbant getireceklerdi. Belki büyüklerinden biri Diyarbakır’a gelirse onun şerefine bir balo ile başlayarak balo gibi uygarlığın en yüksek nimetini de Diyarbakır’a tattıracaktı.”

several commonalities with the people coming from İstanbul, we also witness that she always remains passive. Zeyno is, for Muhsin Bey, a quite different person whose tastes have advanced more than any other people. In fact, Turkish Zeyno is completely different from both Mesture Hanım and her society. Living in an environment in which she cannot truly find her personality reflected, she devotes herself to Haso, the child of her former lover, and she endeavors for his education. Thus, she soon becomes his ‘mentor’ and she attributes herself the role of a ‘bridge’ in Haso’s life.

We will take care of you, help you in your lectures and be your friend. Won’t you like to love us? If that Zeyno is your real mother then that woman can be your mentor, won’t you like that Haso? (Adivar, 1996: 180)⁵ Haso sees himself like a bridge between the past and the future in the kid’s life (ibid: 221).⁶

Turkish Zeyno aspires to be a bridge between not only Haso’s past and future but also between the East and the West. At this point, the bridge metaphor is quite important. As Ahıska puts it, "The West" has been contrasted to "the East" in a continuous negotiation between the two constructs. "The West" has either been celebrated as a "model" to be followed or exorcised as a threat to "indigenous" national values” (Ahıska, 2003: 353). Here, Turkish Zeyno equates East with the past and backwardness while identifying the West with the future and progress. “Turkey, which has been labeled by both outsiders and insiders as a bridge between the East and the West, has an ambivalent relation not only to the geographical sites of the East and the West, but also to their temporal signification: namely, backwardness and progress” (ibid).

⁵ “Biz, senin derslerine bakar; senin arkadaşın oluruz. Sen de bizi biraz sevmek istemez misin? O Zeyno asıl annense, bu Zeyno da fikir annen olsun, olmaz mı, Haso?”

⁶ “Haso çocuğun hayatında kendimi onu geçmişten geleceğe geçiren bir çeşit köprü gibi görüyordu.”

Moreover, people coming from İstanbul are characterized as the carrier of light in child Haso's life. "The citizens of İstanbul choose an easy and open minded way even if he doesn't understand the topic, providing that the light of sensibility be filtered in the child's darkling mind" (Adıvar, 1996: 173).⁷ The metaphor of light was quite prevalent in the colonial discourse. In keeping with their "civilizing mission", the "enlightened" colonial societies were bent on eradicating the savage customs and ignorance of the colonized peoples. This constitutes the ideological framework for the colonizers to appropriate their mission. That is exactly what happens in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu*. People coming from İstanbul had a deep enthusiasm for the spread of Western 'light' to the 'darkness' of the East.

Throughout the novel, people coming from İstanbul and Kurdish people are bluntly contrasted. The story's oppositions are in line with the colonizer's traditional rhetoric. As Abdul JanMohammed (1988) explains, "the colonial mentality is dominated by a Manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and savagery, superiority and inferiority, intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object"(4). In *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* the category of 'Kurdish women' is reified in Kurdish Zeyno. The epithet that the army officers used to refer to her indeed encapsulates perfectly the magnitude of discrimination. She is called the "Kurdish Peach" among the soldiers because of her beauty. "The girl; who was known as the "Kurdish Peach", between the officers, because of her mature and colored beauty" (Adıvar, 1996: 47)⁸ is "fetishized". She is turned into "an object" and then "eroticized, invested with sexual energy, power and desire" (Hall, 2002: 266). According to Allen (1984), the historical inventory of derogatory names for

⁷ "İstanbullular, anlayamadığı konularda da, arada bir, kolay ve açık yola sapıyorlar, çocuğun karanlıkta bekleyen beynine bir anlayış ışığı salıyorlardı."

⁸ "Olgun ve renkli güzelliğiyle subaylar arasında o zaman "Kürt Şeftalisi" adını alan bu genç kız."

women of ethnic out groups displays, in intensified form, the strains of traditional male sex roles -and subsequent aggression- both in ethnic and gender relations. Epithets for ethnic women derogate both sexual and ethnic roles. The words are aimed disproportionately at women of racial minorities; stereotype physical differences between ethnic groups; and make derogatory sexual allusions, often using food and animal metaphors. Other nation's women, especially those who have been racialized or otherwise othered, are depicted as exotic, licentious, tempting, dangerous and inferior by the help of these derogatory names and epithets. All of this comes together in the symbol of the peach, which has erotic associations in Turkish culture. Peach is a symbol of female genitals, and hence it represents a young woman's sexuality and reproductivity. Thus, the peach metaphor serves to complement and complete the oversexed image of Kurdish Zeyno in the readers' mind. "Zeyno didn't want to get clear of her bonds of love like the primitive women who smooth away their passionate temper; just the opposite, she is tied to those bonds with the delight and obstinacy of a slave... She wasn't thinking about getting herself killed but (perhaps on account of) the young aide, she was suffering for being away from him" (Adivar, 1996: 48-9).⁹

Kurdish Zeyno is ceaselessly degraded throughout the novel. She is nothing but a mother and therefore her motherly instinct is strongly underscored. "When the conversation comes up to Haso she [Kurdish Zeyno] becomes relaxed and in spite of her primitive and confused mind, her incorrect pronunciation and lack of vocabulary, she was telling the miserable story of his life with sincerity, in a fluent and fascinating way, even making the wife of the commander become filled with

⁹ "İlkel kadınların ateşli huyları gibi gönül bağlarından kurtulmak istemeyen, o bağlara bir esir zevkiyle, inadiyle bağlanan Zeyno[...] kendisini öldürmeleri tehlikesinden çok, genç yaveri düşünüyor, ondan ayrılmanın ıstıرابıyla yanıyordu."

curiosity” (Adivar, 1996: 155).¹⁰ An important concept Ahıska develops related to Occidentalism which is ‘absent women’ can be a useful concept in framing Kurdish Zeyno’s portrayal within the novel. This concept characterizes the female characters who are robbed of their subjectivity. While women’s active participation in public life was considered essential to becoming a more civilized society, they were constructed first of all as ‘the mothers of the nation’ whose sexuality and desires should have a secondary place. It was argued that women should become Western without imitating Western women in terms of sexuality and feminism. In this respect, women, Ahıska argues, were treated as the guardians of traditional virtues and they represented the idea of ‘changing without changing’, which also summarizes the essence of the Occidentalist fantasy of the Turkish elite (Ahıska, 2005).

Halide Edip often stresses Kurdish Zeyno’s submissive character by resembling her to several animals throughout the novel. Zeyno is docile and submissive like a sheep: (ibid: 55) “Despite her passion and fervency of her age she was docile and obedient like a sheep. Maybe she was a simple, even naïve and silly woman who thinks it is natural to work for others and be commanded by them” (ibid: 49)¹¹ Zeyno meets her husband; quietly and unyieldingly, he curses and beats her, almost to the point of suffocating her; but there is no rebellion on the part of Zeyno. “Just like the animals, who get confused, bewildered and lose consciousness when they have to face a natural disaster even without understanding what is going on, she fell flat on her face” (ibid: 52–3).¹² Or, “She will be Haso’s; she will be his, his

¹⁰ “[Kürt Zeyno] Lakırdı Haso’ya değinince açılıyor, çetrefil, ilkel beyninin, karışık telaffuzu ve kelimesi kıt dilinin karşılığına rağmen zavallı hayatını, komutanın karısını çok merakla dinlemeye sürükleyen bir içtenlikle anlatıyordu.”

¹¹ “Zeyno gençliğinin ateşine, tutkusuna rağmen, çevresine bir koyun kadar uyan, yumuşak başlı bir yaratıktı. O başkaları hesabına çalışmayı, herkes tarafından emredilmeyi tabii bulan, saf, belki de bön bir kadındı.”

¹² “Tıpkı anlayamadıkları doğal afetler karşısında şaşırان ve kendilerinden geçen hayvanlar gibi, yüzükoyun kapandı.”

possession; he would love her, kill her, treat her as he pleases, just like a sheep or a cow destined to be one of his goods”(ibid: 54).¹³ Or, in another part of the book, when she sees Turkish Zeyno, “with the bitterness of the shedding tears a moment ago his black eyes were still burning and shining brightly with docility, then those eyes met Zeyno with an animal joy”(ibid: 234).¹⁴ “Discursive animality, serving to desubjectivate certain humans by attributing them animal characteristics, emerges precisely in relation to ideologies and practices of race, gender, and sexuality and situates human persons specifically as raced and gendered subjects” (Allen, 1984). Describing colonized people as animals who lack the ability to reason is a long-standing tradition in colonial texts. “The distinction drawn between civilized humans and uncivilized animals, stimulates an additional form of stereotyping: the attribution of 'animality' to humans. By definition, if humanity carries with it certain qualities, then those human beings not exhibiting such qualities are considered sub-human or semi-animal” (Allen, 1984). It is in this light that Halide Edip’s description of Kurdish people as "savages" who "live like an animal” should be understood. The category of animal serves Halide Edip as a way of articulating the drastic difference that had appeared between modern Turks and savage Kurds whom they encounter throughout the novel. Kurdish people are mainly described in bestial terms. In its own way, the world of Halide Edip’s fiction also registers the troubling legacy of this pattern.

Another representation of Kurdishness throughout the novel appears in the form of Kurdish men, often depicted as a threat or troublemaker. Here, gender difference between the Kurdish men and Kurdish women gets translated into the way

¹³ “Zeyno Haso ’nun olacaktı; Haso ’nun malı; seveceği, öldüreceği, yaşatacağı; kısacası istediğini yapabileceği, bir koyun gibi, inek gibi alınyazısına sahip olduğu malı!”

¹⁴ “biraz önce akan yaşların acılığıyla hâlâ yanan, parlayan uysal, siyah gözleri bir hayvan sevinciyle Zeyno ’yu karşıladı.”

these two groups are contrasted to one another in terms of their dangerousness, passivity and cunningness. In line with this general approach of the novel towards Kurdish men, a character described with bestial adjectives is Ramazan, Kurdish Zeyno's brutal husband and child Haso's stepfather. Ramazan is known as "an idle, imperious, rabid and ungrateful dog" (Adivar, 1996: 79),¹⁵ and "a rowdy who became famous with his harshness and cruelty" (ibid: 47).¹⁶ He continuously beats Zeyno and Haso; he is cruel and even sadistic.

He was reproving the women severely, admonishing them for not taming this puppy (Haso), with eyes melting poor Zeyno's heart and with a real delight he was explaining how he is going to lick him into shape, make him a man, discipline him just like a dog standing on its hind legs he saw in İstanbul in a place where acrobats perform. And just to prove his ability to train he was telling stories, smacking his lips, about the military service he made as a sergeant; how he defeated the others, crushed everyone's brains, praising and dramatizing himself. He had a disgusting, loathsome disease; finding pleasure in torment called "sadism" by the Frankish people (Adivar, 1996: 72-73).¹⁷

He is described as such a violent man that "If [Kurdish] Zeyno casts sidelong glances at somebody else he will chop her head off with an axe, cut her meat to pieces and feed the dogs with it" (ibid: 53-54).¹⁸ He is also indolent, he makes Kurdish Zeyno work and he continues to torture her while she is working. "Almost every day Ramazan comes along with Zeyno to the fields. But every time he goes he sits next to the other side of the fosse, leaning against a tree, smoking a long pipe and cursing

¹⁵ "tembel, zorba, bir kudurmuş ve nankör köpek"

¹⁶ "sertliği, zulmü ile ün salmış bir kabadayı"

¹⁷ "Bu köpek yavrusuna (Haso) terbiye veremedikleri için kadınları azarlıyor, gözlerinde zavallı Zeyno'nun kalbini su gibi eriten bakışlarla, gerçek bir zevkle bu yezit oğlanın nasıl pasturmasını çıkaracağını, nasıl mum gibi adam edeceğini, İstanbul'da vaktiyle bir cambazhanede susta dururken gördüğü bir köpek yavrusu kadar onu nasıl söz dinler ve terbiyeli yapacağını anlatıyordu. Bu terbiye etmek yeteneğini ispat için çavuş olduğu zaman askerde nasıl dayak attığını, kafalarını yardığını, daha neler yaptığını övünerek, böbürlene böbürlene ağzını şapırdada şapırdada anlatıyordu. Onun, Frenklerin "sadizm" dedikleri, eziyet etmekten zevk alan bir çeşit iğrenç hastalığı vardı."

¹⁸ "[Kürt] Zeyno, gözüünün ucuyla bir tarafa bakarsa kafasını balta ile yaracak, etini parça edip köpeklere verecekti."

her, yelling at her, setting upon her, kicking her and even sticking the sharp end of the goad she uses for the bullocks in her back after taking it from her hands, and in this way, forces her to work whenever she stops” (Adivar, 1996: 92).¹⁹ Ramazan, who is portrayed as a cruel and bestial man throughout the novel is just once depicted in a positive way. This is when he was related to the Turkish army as a sergeant.

In fact every man who is a sergeant in the Turkish army certainly has an ability to protect and conduct ascendant to his environment in Anatolia. If he is clever enough then he certainly has the courage, bravado, physical power or astuteness to get what he wants. They always talk about the world, politics, and high class rumors with authority and surely it doesn't matter where they are, they can be in quarters or even in a rustic coffee house. If the one they are talking to is a soldier, he cannot reply, but if they are with the village people, the sergeant definitely has more personal and general information about the world (Adivar, 1996: 55).²⁰

Only when Ramazan is a part of the Turkish army as a sergeant does Halide Edip attributes this primitive man glowing qualities. She continues, saying “If you add his physical appearance to his talents, his autocratic, blazing eyes you can easily understand why they didn't treat him with distance as they usually do the outsiders who come to stay in the village” (ibid: 56).²¹

Ramazan is the constitutive outside of the army officer Hasan just as Kurdish Zeyno's is Turkish Zeyno's constitutive outside. Their being each other's

¹⁹ “Ramazan, hemen her gün Zeyno ile beraber tarlaya geliyordu. Fakat her geldiği zaman, tarlanın öbür ucundaki hendeğin başında, arkasını bir ağaca verip oturuyor, çubuk içiyor, kadın durdukça söverek, bağırarak, bazen de üzerine yürüyüp tekmeleyerek, hatta öküzleri dürttüğü övündireyi Zeyno'nun elinden alıp sivri ucunu kadının sırtına batırarak işe sürüyordu.”

²⁰ “Aslında Türk ordusunda çavuş olabilen her erkeğin mutlaka Anadolu ülkesinde çevresine üstün, maddi manevi komuta ve yönetme becerikliliği vardır. Doğuştan zekâsı çok ise, mutlaka yürekliliği, gösterisi, dediğini zorla, kahırla yaptırabilecek ya pazı, ya da kurnazlık yeteneği taşır. Onlar, ister kışlada, ister köy kahvesinde olsun dünya olaylarından, siyasetten, yüksek dedikodudan yetki ile söz eder. Kendisini dinleyen askerse, onlara söz düşmez, köy halkı ise, mutlaka çavuşun onlardan fazla kişisel ve genel dünya bilgileri vardır.”

²¹ “Bütün bu yeteneklere Ramazan'ın yakışıklı vücudu, zorba, keskin gözleri de eklenince bir köye dışardan yerleşmek için gelenlerin uğradığı soğuk davranışa Ramazan'ın neden uğramadığı anlaşıldı.”

“constitutive outside” is emphasized by Halide Edip’s choice in naming her characters. The mirroring in the characters’ names strengthens their opposition and underlines their being each other’s constitutive outside. Ramazan, before changing his name for purposes of disguise, is called Haso. His real name, the Kurdified version of the name “Hasan” implies his being the mirror image of colonel Hasan, the real father of child Haso. Read in this regard, child Haso’s name, given to him by his mother after his real father “Hasan” also signifies his problematic identity within this equation. Kurdish Zeyno calls his son “Haso” after his Turkish father Hasan.

This point requires attention since the child Haso’s name is like his Turkish father Hasan, but not quite. By naming her son the Kurdified version of his father’s name, Kurdish Zeyno both marks and disguises her son’s real identity. The name “Hasan” translated into Kurdish as “Haso” helps the child to pass as his step father’s son, as “Haso” is also the real name of Ramazan. In that sense, the puzzle posed by the novel in terms of child Haso’s identity can also be read as a translation puzzle. When his name is translated into Turkish, child Haso’s real identity is revealed. Similarly, the entire novel revolves around child Haso’s reappropriation into Turkishness by way of conversion. When he is converted into Turkishness, the translation is completed, and the resolution is reached by child Haso’s surpassing the translation by transforming into an exemplary Young Turk; freed from both names (neither Haso nor Hasan) by becoming “Zeyno’s Son”.

As opposed to the clearer binary opposition employed in Halide Edip’s play on the names “Hasan” and “Haso”, Turkish Zeyno and Kurdish Zeyno share the same name. Contrary to what she does with her male characters, Halide Edip does not distinguish her heroines via their names. Neither in *Kalp Ağrısı*, nor in *Zeyno’nun Oğlu* is Turkish Zeyno called “Zeynep”. Although they are portrayed as each other’s

constitutive outside in the novel, this points to the more inherently complicated quality of the women's identity, one which cannot be reduced to the binary opposition of the names.

Ramazan and Hasan's different qualities both in terms of physical appearance and personality are opposed in the novel. This time Kurdish Zeyno compares his cruel husband to the love of her youth:

The dreams which are puzzling Zeyno's mind are not about the this ivy-like hairy chest, mixed in muscles of this neck thick as a log, this black forelock falling under the quilted turban towards his dark skinned forehead, the body of this primitive man; Ramazan filling the room with the smell of tobacco and attar of roses but the pictures of the various secret moments lived with civilized Hasan and his facial expression: his burnt like bronze neck and chest, his kindness and whiteness just like a child; his chestnut colored hair was soft like silk and every time she touches his hands she feels and remembers the fresh smell of blossomed clovers (Adivar, 1996: 53).²²

Similar to the constitutive nature of the ethnic difference (i.e. Turkishness-Kurdishness) in Halide Edip's construction of her female characters, the difference of ethnicity plays an essential role in the constitution of the male characters throughout the novel. Hence, just like the way being Kurdish or Turkish defines the type of femininity embodied by different female characters of the novel, being Kurdish or Turkish defines the type of masculinity the male characters occupy. These different types of masculinity become apparent in the author's description of Hasan, a model of the perfect Turkish army officer, when compared to the description of Ramazan. As opposed to Ramazan, Halide Edip portrays Hasan as "the valiant sergeant of the army which broke the world record of heroism and bravery" (Adivar,

²² "Zeyno'nun kafasını kurcalayan hayaller; bu açık göğsünden sarmaşık gibi kıllar fışkıran, boynundaki adaleleri ağaç kütükleri gibi birbirine karışan, siyah perçemleri kavuğunun altından esmer alnına dökülen, tütün, gülyağı kokusuyla odaya yerleşen ilkel Ramazan'a karşılık; ince, medeni Hasan'ın yüzü ve onunla geçen çeşitli, gizli dakikaların değişik resimleriydi: Onun tunç gibi yanmış boynunun yarısı ve göğsü, bir çocuk kadar beyaz ve nazikti; kestane rengi saçları ipek gibi yumuşaktı, elini ve değdirildiği zaman kokusu taze yeni açmış yonca tarlalarını hatırlardı."

1996: 185).²³ For Kurdish Zeyno, Hasan is superhuman. “For her Hasan is the man who she can easily give herself in, live beneath his knees; he is absolutely the superhuman” (ibid: 49).²⁴ Both as a person who belongs to an ‘inferior race’, and as a woman Kurdish Zeyno wants nothing but to obey this superhuman till the end of her life.

Another character, a Kurdish Sheikh – Sheikh (M...) – who opposes the Turkish National Struggle, and holds influence over the local people, also has a significant place in the novel. This character can be interpreted as another constitutive outside of Hasan. The sheikhs were important figures in Kurdish politics and they had the power and the legitimacy among Kurdish tribes (Bruinessen, 1992: 105). We can easily understand this by looking at the fact that most Kurdish rebellions were led by Kurdish sheikhs. The role played by sheikhs in nationalist and military movements was so important that “for Kurds nationalism and religion became intertwined from the beginning” (Tucker, in Olson, 1989: xvii). “The remarkable role of the religious figures and elements in the ethno-political resistance of the Kurds indicates that sheikhs, *tarikats* and *tekiyyes* had all been the constitutive components of the social space wherein Kurdishness is constituted” (Yeğen, 1996: 220). The role of the sheikhs in the politics was such that Halide Edip depicts a powerful sheikh as an important character in *Zeyno’nun Oğlu*.

Though he seems to abandon his former Kurdish cause in witnessing the Sakarya Victory, the Sheikh in fact arranges a Kurdish revolt around Diyarbakır. When child Haso comes before the Sheikh for the first time, he understands the people’s attentiveness towards the Sheikh. After his talk with the Sheikh, Haso child

²³ “dünyada yiğitlik rekorunu yapmış bir ordunun yürekli subayı”

²⁴ “Hasan, onun için, isteklerine boyun eğilir, ölünceye kadar ayaklarının altında yaşanır, insaniüstü bir erkekti.”

sensed why they appreciated Sheikh even more than the most mighty and strong ruler. “While he was talking with the Sheikh, even though this childlike and plain race nearly worships the lord, Haso child sensed why they appreciated the Sheikh even more than the most vigorous and powered lord, in this country of feudalism” (Adıvar, 1996: 114).²⁵

After the Sheikh takes Haso under his wings, he starts to lecture him on religion and God. Haso is attached to the Sheikh “who has that distant and childish expression in his face peculiar to people with a strong faith in something”. “It is the dangerous characteristics of people with overpowering strength, religion or reason that gets people attached in such a way to them” (Adıvar, 1996: 147). In the novel, one of the major aims of the Sheikh is to show Haso the real face of the Turks. “He tried to add nationality to his religious thoughts and thus wanted to explain that the Kurdish people are God created human beings and Turkish people are the ones whom God will punish” (Adıvar, 1996: 158).²⁶ At this point, the narrator, which can be interpreted as Halide Edip’s own voice, interrupts the flow of the narrative and she explains the Sheikh’s hidden motive, which she interprets as a ‘misdeed’.

“Sheikh (M...) wanted him to break into the Commander’s house, find out what is going on and let him know the truth. Haso finds this inappropriate, understands that the Sheikh wants to harm the Commander intuitively and feels uncomfortable about that” (ibid: 158-159).²⁷ The Sheikh also lectures Haso about the army officers; “Bit by bit he starts to talk about the officers; explaining their cruelty, mercilessness and

²⁵ “Bu derebeylik diyarında, beylerine sanki tapınan bu yalın ve çocuk ruhlu ırka, Şeyh (M...) in neden en kuvvetli ve güçlü beyden daha sevgili olduğunu Haso çocuk konuşmadan sezdi.”

²⁶ “Bu din duyguları yanına Şeyh, bir de milliyet duygusu sokmaya kalkışmış, ona Kürtlerin Allahın kulları ve Türklerin Allahın cezalandırılacağı yaratıklar olduğunu anlatmak istemişti.”

²⁷ “Şeyhin istediği şey komutanın evine sokulup olana biteni öğrenerek kendine haber vermesiydi. Haso, bunun hoş bir şey olmadığını, Şeyh (M...)’nin komutanın evine bir fenalık istediğini seziyor ve içinden memnun olmuyordu.”

godlessness” (ibid: 119).²⁸ Sheikh’s main target seems to be Hasan and he talks to Haso about him. “Slowly, filling his heart with disbelief and doubt, he made him become suspicious about Hasan. He was the worst of all the quarters; tyrannizes the people, maltreats them, desires all the girls and wives; he is the sinner. At first child Haso insisted on loving him and could not take his mind of that officer who played the ominous and mysterious role in his mother’s life” (ibid: 240).²⁹ “Almost every day, the Sheikh repeats the story of Mr. Hasan and Haso’s mother, grinding his teeth, staring at him with his black and bloodshot eyes and wants him to learn by heart the vicious things he had done to his mother, as he desires to drum the cruelty of Hasan into the child’s head” (ibid: 256).³⁰ The Sheikh is defined as “the prophet of rebellion and destruction” and he tries to affect Haso.

“Nowadays, the Sheikh tries to inject the fever of the storm into the veins of Haso, whom he is preparing just like a prophet of rebellion and destruction. He forgets that Haso is a nine year old boy and talks about dreams filled with blood, fire, and excitement, and consequently arousing dreadful storms in his heart” (ibid: 255-6).³¹ He is described as an evil person who abuses a child’s trust and innocent feelings.

In the first place Sheikh explained in detail that the inhabitants of İstanbul are sinners, cruel and vicious people and God employed him to eradicate them.

²⁸ “yavaş yavaş subaylardan söz açmaya başladı. Onların kıyıcı ve dinsiz olduklarını söylüyordu.”

²⁹ “Yavaş yavaş Hasan’a karşı çocuğun kafasına kuşku ve zehir akıtmaya başladı. O, karargâhın en fena subayı, halka zulmeden, herkesin karısına, kızına dadanan günahkâr bir adamdı. Bu aşılardan ilk döneminde Hasan’ı sevmekte ısrarla devam eden Haso çocuk (...) anasının hayatında o uğursuz ve esrarlı rolü oynayan subayı düşünmekten kendini alamıyordu.”

³⁰ “Şeyh, dişlerini gıcırdatarak, kanlanan siyah gözlerini çocuğun gözlerine dikerek Hasan Bey’in vaktiyle anasına yaptığı fenalığı her gün ezberletmek istiyormuş, kafasına mıhlamak istiyormuş gibi, tekrar ediyordu. Şeyh anlatırken çocuğun anasına ait utanç ve acı verici anıları canlanıyor, yavaş yavaş Şeyhin elinde uysal bir alet olacağı gibi görünüyordu.”

³¹ “Şeyh bugünlerde ayaklanma ve yok etmenin bir peygemberi gibi hazırlanmakta olduğu fırtınanın hummasını Haso’nun damarlarına aşılamaya çalışıyordu. Şeyh, karşısındakinin dokuz yaşında bir çocuk olduğunu unutuyor; ateş, kan ve heyecan dolu rüyalarından söz ediyor; çocuğun hayalinde korkunç fırtınalara uyandırıyor.”

He was clarifying all these things by using such old and complicated stories that the child was listening to him as if he were narrating a fairy tale. Sheikh compares the inhabitants of İstanbul to the people of the Lut tribe and tells weird instances of their lives. To abolish this modern Lut tribe Mr. Hasan, the commander of the assault troop has to be killed. However, he can not be killed in the arena. It was planned to trap him one night and hit him from the back and this could only be done with the information they will get from the child (ibid: 256).³²

In the novel, Sheikh appears as a demonic figure. His negative thoughts about Turks and his desire to destroy them are covertly criticized. His plan to defeat the Turks is likened to daydreams and fairytales, and in this sense, their realization is portrayed as absolutely impossible. Sheikh (M...)’s approach to child Haso is also criticized and contrasted to those of the Turks. Turkish Zeyno’s feelings toward Haso are genuine, and they remain devoid of self interest. As opposed to that, the Sheikh is sordid and he wants to influence Haso in order to realize his own irrational and evil plans. He is a malignant, wicked and corrupt Kurdish man as opposed to the “heroic” Turkish soldier Hasan or “virtuous” Turkish Zeyno. He belongs to the world of villainy, if not to the devil, in his argument against the Turkish people and soldiers. He is portrayed as the source of wickedness and crime and the cause of his struggle is not even mentioned in the text. In effect, no matter what he does or thinks, he is an evil monster in the dominant discourse simply by virtue of being the “Other”.

The Sheikh’s men, who are also Kurdish, are widely described as the evil others in the novel. Even at first sight, their otherness is obvious. Their clothes,

³² “Şeyh, ilkin İstanbulluların zalim, günahkâr ve fena insanlar olduklarını, bunları yeryüzünden kaldırmak için Tanrı’nın kendisini memur ettiğini uzun uzadıya anlatmıştı. Bunu o kadar eski ve karışık hikayelerle açıklıyordu ki; çocuk, Şeyhin anlattıklarını tıpkı masal diye dinliyordu. Şeyh, özellikle İstanbulluları “Kavm-i Lût”a benzetiyor; hayatlarından tuhaf misaller alıyordu. Bu asrî “Kavm-i Lût”u ortadan kaldırmak için hücum taburu komutanı Hasan Bey’i öldürmek gerekti. Hasan Bey, hem de meydanda öldürülemezdi. Bir gece, pusuya düşürmek, arkasından vurmak tasarlanmıştı ve bu pusuyu ancak çocuktan alacakları bilgiye göre kuracaklardı.”

beyond their simple function, construct a meaning and carry a message. They can be read as a language. These men's external appearance, their posture and gestures are always in excess. They are depicted as very tall and gallant, their behaviors are exaggerated and they are exorbitant. "That day three Kurdish cavaliers who were wearing multicolored baggy trousers, big quilted turbans and riding horses ornamented with bright fringes came to the village" (Adıvar, 1996: 106).³³ "As the tails and heads of the horses and the fringes of their costumes billowed with splendor and elation roosters and geese ran away fluttering their wings" (ibid: 109).³⁴ "The tall, majestically posed, colorfully dressed, bright black eyed Kurdish people's hearts, which receive the power, the intelligence and the proficiency with such an excitement, overflow with taste and got huge plaudits when they saw the child" (ibid.: 100-101).³⁵ They are described as a homogeneous community, their differences are erased and they are reduced into one single category from an orientalist perspective. The excess in their attitude, which is explained by their "nature", makes them unpredictable, and hence Haso is afraid of them.

His unfamiliarity with those people, who reminded him of Ramazan with the exorbitance and the exuberance of their behaviors, starts to increase like a streak of lightning. (...) Now, those inconstant men, whose eyes, faces and words always symbolize effusiveness, and whose state of mind can easily change from the highest and noble position to vulgar rage, were taking the trust he hardly obtained towards life, out of his hands. He reached the determination that those attractive and cordial men can easily leave behind the compassion and kindness and start to behave with a dangerous cruelty just like Ramazan (ibid: 113).³⁶

³³ "O gün, köye renk renk şalvarlı, koca koca kavuklu ve parıl parıl saçaklı takımlı atlar üzerinde üç Kürt süvari gelmişti."

³⁴ "Takımların püskülleri atların kuyrukları kafaları ve ayrı bir görkem ve gururla dalgalandıkça horozlar ve kazlar çırpınarak kaçıştılar."

³⁵ "Renk renk esvaplarıyla iri boylu, heybetli pozlu, ateşli siyah gözlü Kürtler'in(...) çocuğa karşı ırklarının güç, zekâ ve ustalığı aşırı bir heyecanla karşılayan kalpleri coşkunun bir beğeniyle taşmıştı."

³⁶ "Davranışlarının aşırılığı ve ateşiyle Ramazan'ı hatırlatan bu insanlara karşı yabancılık duygusu hızla artmaya başladı. (...) Şimdi bu gözleri, yüzleri ve sözleri durmadan bir taşkınlık anlatan, en soylu ve yüksek bir durumdan, birdenbire en kaba öfkeye düşebilen değişken tabiatlı adamlar hayata

The central character of the novel is Haso, the child of Kurdish Zeyno, as the title suggests. He is different and he is depicted in such a way that he does not carry the defects of the ‘Kurdish race’. Haso is conceived after a one-time sexual encounter between a Kurdish woman and a Turkish man. This fact, however, is concealed when Haso’s mother immediately marries to a Kurdish man, Ramazan, and it is assumed that the child is his—an assumption made possible because he is also Kurdish. Even for his Kurdish mother, his prowess inherited from his Turkish father is a potential sign of superiority. “That boy; Haso is not an ordinary child!” (Adivar, 1996: 46).³⁷ The Turkish blood in him differentiates Haso from other Kurdish children and everybody sees his ‘positive otherness’ right from the beginning. “Nobody can harm him; that boy has pride and vanity which provides him superiority to his poor habitat. He looks like the youngster of a thoughtful kind, more than the passionate one. I wonder whether his father was a Turkish man” (ibid: 183).³⁸ “The child’s cheek lines, which were losing their circularity and lying down to his chin in a charming way as he grows, the sharp and distinctive curves of his mouth, and, in spite of big nostrils, his smooth little nose was completely different than the children’s in his village, the brightness of his honey-colored eyes resembles precisely the children of the gentlewomen of İstanbul that were carried from the dock of Harem” (ibid: 64).³⁹ “He doesn’t look like the (K...) village children who were carried in arms with dirty

karşı zorla elde edebildiği güveni elinden alıyorlardı. Bu çekici ve sıcak adamların en ince şefkatten, iyilikten, Ramazan kadar tehlikeli bir zulme geçivereceklerini, (...) tayin etmeye başlamıştı.”

³⁷ “Bu Haso, sıradan bir çocuk değil!”

³⁸ “O çocukta belkemiği eğilmek bilmeyen, yoksul çevresinin çok üstünden bakan bir gurur ve onur vardı. Çocuk, ateşli olmaktan çok, düşünceli bir cinsin yavrusuna benziyordu. Acaba babası Türk müydü?”

³⁹ “Çocuğun büyüdüğü yuvarlaklığını kaybederek sevimli bir biçimde çenesine doğru inen yanak çizgileri, ağzının keskin ve özel kıvrımları, biraz kanatları açık, fakat köyün çocuklarından bütün bütün başka olan düzgün küçük burnu, bal rengi ayırık gözlerinin parlaklığı tamamiyle Harem iskelesinden taşıdığı İstanbul’un kibar kadınlarının çocuklarını andırıyordu.”

faces and eyes encrusted with sleep [...] his own mother has an air of the kids of İstanbul when she was little” (ibid: 200).⁴⁰ In the case of Haso, beauty is used as a metaphor for inherent nobility which implies civility, goodness and most importantly a superiority that comes with his Turkish blood. This suggests that Haso is an ideal, a symbol of the new Turkish youth who, is hoped to remain untouched by the influence of those among whom he lives -the Kurdish people - on his way to build the future of a modern and civilized Turkey.

Haso seems to be the only reason of the other characters’ existence in the novel. He stands out from the crowd and the crowd wants nothing but to rescue him from his Kurdish stepfather’s cruelty and his life’s misery. “This child; Haso is the one and only protagonist of the Diyarbakır scene. I believe that the march and the scenery of our lives were made and prepared for this kid. I feel like an invisible hand is pulling our strings, making our movements, though, for most of us, the whole play revolves around him” (Adıvar, 1996: 206).⁴¹ Everybody loves the child and they all hate his Kurdish father Ramazan. “Everybody has affection for this charming face, feels compassion to this quiet and clever boy, but, on the contrary, vengeance and rancour for cruel and awful Ramazan who tortures him whenever he finds an excuse” (ibid: 195).⁴² Throughout the novel, the main project seems to be to rescue Haso from the primitive land in which he was born. “The inhabitants of the first habitat he was in couldn’t comprehend the obstacles which were separating the primitive human being and don’t know how to explain this and maybe that is the reason why

⁴⁰ “Çapaklı gözleri, kirli yüzleriyle kucakta dolaştırılan (K...) köyünün çocuklarına hiç benzemiyordu [...] anasının kendisi çocukken İstanbul çocuğuna benzettiğini anlattı.”

⁴¹ “Bu Haso çocuk, Diyarbakır sahnesinin tek kahramanı. Hayatımızın yürüyüşü, dekoru bu çocuk için hazırlandığına, yapıldığına inanıyorum. Sanki gizli bir el, arkamızdan iplerimizi çekiyor, bizi oynatıyor, fakat bütün oyun, çoğumuz için bu çocuğun çevresinde toplanıyor.”

⁴² “Hepsinin bu tatlı yüzü, sessiz, akıllı çocuğa sevgileri, fakat her bahane ile çocuğa eziyet eden sert ve korkunç Ramazan’a öc ve hınçları vardı.”

Haso's little brain could not assimilate all those things easily" (ibid: 158).⁴³ "In the village universe where Haso grew up the children and the grown ups seems so similar on account of apprehension and isolation, yet so far on in their lives. And the world of child's mind was separated from the world of the grown ups by a clearly demarcated line. The children were subordinate class to the elders" (ibid: 173).⁴⁴

Haso, who lives in "an environment where men are dominant as roosters and bulls" (Adivar, 1996: 54), is portrayed as a supernatural creature thanks to his Turkish father Hasan's genes. "Child Haso, with his refreshingly extraordinary nature, was an astonishing "Hasan" for those primitive peasants. He felt the admiration of a fowl which blunders out a chicken from the egg of an eagle. The difference of this "Hasan" kid was so natural, just like the flying of the nestling when it grows" (ibid. 94).⁴⁵ Although Haso is a part of the Kurdish community, he is at the same time separate from it, due to his origins. He has been raised by his Kurdish mother and his Kurdish step-father, but he has not been assimilated and his inherent superiority is apparent. His inherent nobility sets him apart from those Kurds around him and manifests itself in his extraordinary beauty and talents. He possesses all the positive qualities of the Turks and all he needs is a proper education in order to become complete. The ones who will provide him with this education, and thus will save him, undoubtedly appear as the Turkish characters in the novel.

⁴³ "Haso'nun ilk çevresi çok ilkel, insanoğullarını birbirinden ayıran engelleri kavrayamayan, bunu anlatmayı bilmeyen bir çevreydi ve belki Haso'nun küçük beyni onun için bu noktayı kolaylıkla sindiremiyordu."

⁴⁴ "Haso'nun yetiştiği köy âleminde, anlayış ve yalnızlık bakımından çocuklarla büyükler ne kadar birbirlerine benziyorlarsa, hayatları da birbirinden o kadar uzak ve çocuk dünyasıyla büyük dünyası da birbirinden o kadar kesin bir sınırla ayrılmıştı. Çocuklar orada büyüklerin buyruğuna boyun eğen bir sınıftı."

⁴⁵ "Haso çocuk yeniden doğan olağanüstülüğüyle bu ilkel köylülere parmak ısırtan bir "Hasan"dı. İçinde kartal yumurtasından piliç çıkaran bir kümes tavuğunun hayranlığı uyanmıştı. Kartal yavrusunun tavuk kümesinden bir gün uçmasını nasıl olağan buluyorsa "Hasan" yavrusunun bu köylülerden başka bir şey olmasını da o kadar olağan buluyordu."

A villager called Şaban, who helps Kurdish Zeyno in the absence of Ramazan, and who acts like the father of Haso is the first of these saviors. Şaban, who has previously lived in İstanbul is a benign modest person who "is full of affection" and "fear of God". The suffering and forbearance of Kurdish Zeyno "awaken in him the care and fondness each Turk cherishes against weak people" (Adivar, 1996: 82). Despite the Kurdish blood in his veins, he is overall a good person (perhaps because he lived among Turks? Is that the implication?)

“Şaban, the grandfather was from a Turkish family who immigrated from Kemah to (K...) village and has the quietness and the kindness of the eastern Turkish people –despite his blood ties to the ardent Kurdish people in part of his mother. He has the benignity of the powerful men, in both the moral and material sense, for small and weak things with the ability to patronize” (ibid: 59).⁴⁶

Another important Turkish character who works for Haso’s good is Turkish Zeyno. Zeyno believes that Haso has a sophisticated, mature character. For Zeyno, he is an enduring child with a mind more realistic than the people evaluating life with the help of the knowledge they gathered from books. Haso rises in silence when Zeyno and Muhsin Bey demand to adopt him. “...Not having a word on himself, being passed to like an animal or a commodity, being a toy in the hands of powerful people; never to have stability and independence in his life were what infuriated him most” (Adivar, 1996: 179). However, Zeyno and her husband are not willing to separate him from his mother. All they wish is to love him, to take care of his lessons and to be loved by him. Zeyno is to be “her intellectual mother” who would care for child Haso in a complementary fashion along with the love and care he gets from his

⁴⁶ “Şaban, büyükbabası, Kemah’dan (K...) köyüne göçmüş bir Türk ailesindendi ve doğu Türklerinin sessizliğini, tatlılığını -ana tarafından ateşli bir Kürt kanı almış olmasına rağmen- tabiatında muhafaza etmiş, küçük ve zayıf şeylere maddi, manevi kuvvetli erkeklerin hissettiği şefkatle, himaye dolu bir adamdı.”

biological mother, Kurdish Zeyno. In that sense, Turkish Zeyno's main responsibility is to guide Haso in his intellectual progress, something Kurdish Zeyno is incapable of providing for him.

Haso's "identity" is constantly in flux. He is both a racial hybrid and a cultural hybrid. Eventually, the Turkish people around Haso want him to gain power by adopting a single identity (Turkishness) and suppressing the other aspects of himself (Kurdishness).

Significantly, the "lessons" about identity that Haso learns come mainly from the Turkish characters he interacts with. He compares Turkish and Kurdish and he feels closer to Turkish because of its harmony. "Just like the Arabic language which is totally different from the hilarity of the Kurdish language and the endearing, smooth sound of Turkish, it was moving him emotionally with its harmony" (Adıvar, 1996: 121).⁴⁷ Consequently, his accent changes, and this is presented as an achievement. His ability to successfully embody the identity of a Turkish man comes directly from the knowledge he gained from the Turks, from the opportunity of being exposed to the people coming from İstanbul. "Despite the incomprehensibility and the great dissimilarity of the citizens of İstanbul, except for Uncle Şaban, he had never met somebody whom he could play and become friends with in the world of the "grown ups". [...] The citizens of İstanbul choose an easy and open minded way even if they don't understand the topic, providing the light of sensibility be filtered in the child's darkling mind" (ibid: 173).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ "Kürtçenin şamatasından, Türkçenin sevimli ve yumuşak seslerinden çok başka olan Arapça kadar âhengiyle ona yepyeni bir duygu veriyordu."

⁴⁸ "İstanbulluların anlaşılmaz ve yüksek başlıklarına rağmen -Şaban amca dışında- Haso bu kadar arkadaş olabileceği, beraber oynayabileceği yaratıklara "büyükler" sınıfında henüz rastlamamıştı. [...] İstanbullular, anlayamadığı konularda da, arada bir, kolay ve açık yola sapıyorlar, çocuğun karanlıkta bekleyen beynine bir anlayış ışığı salıyorlardı."

Haso's Kurdish identity is in conflict with his Turkish identity and he suffers from this conflict. Only when the Sheikh's men sing Kurdish songs containing his mother's name does he feels as one of them.

When they are singing "Hey Zeyno, hey Zeyno..." Child Haso unties his colored cotton kerchief; becomes a part of them and dances about with joy until loses consciousness. Haso child loves the Kurdish language only when he is calling his mothers beautiful name. In spite of being with and one of them, he suffers the difficulties of being a stranger to the Kurdish people and merely on that time he feels like he is one of them; it is the one and only time he feels the union down to the last grain of his small body (Adıvar, 1996: 120).⁴⁹

The only Kurd he has ever loved is his mother Zeyno and when he compares Turks and Kurds in his mind; he says that he feels closer to Turks.

Until now there were only two people he loved, two living creatures which symbolized the meaning of love; the Turkish Şaban and his mother Kurdish Zeyno. That is exactly the reason why he never thought about separating people by race; like Turkish and Kurdish. However, he regards the passionate behavior of the Kurdish people, the clamor they make and their inconsistent state of mind, as something foreign, and conversely, he assimilates the stagnant and monotype attitude of uncle Şaban and the Turkish people in (K...) village. Just because he is devoted to his mother that national ambience, in an extraordinary way, makes him feel closer to the Kurdish people, burns him from the inside and drags him along (ibid: 120).⁵⁰

Although it is the fact of racial hybridity that initially dislocates Haso from the comforts of his formerly assumed identity, the novel very quickly puts Haso in the

⁴⁹ "Hey Zeyno, hey Zeyno..."yu söyledikleri zaman Haso çocuk da başındaki yemeniyi çözüyor; aralarına karışıyor; o da kendinden geçinceye kadar tepiniyordu. Haso çocuk, Kürtçeyi yalnız anasının güzel adının, güzel havasında seviyordu. Yalnız o zaman, aralarında ve onlardan olduğu halde yabancı kaldığı Kürtlere küçük vücudunun zerrelere kadar giden birlik duyuyordu."

⁵⁰ "Şimdiye kadar Haso çocuğun hayatında sevilen iki insan, sevgi anlatan iki varlık, Türk Şaban'la anası Kürt Zeyno olmuştu. Bunun için Kürt ve Türk diye şimdiye kadar insanları ayırmayı hiç düşünmemişti. Yalnız huy bakımından Kürtlerin ateşli tavırlarını, gürültülerini, çabuk değişen hallerini yadırgıyordu; Şaban amcanın ve (K...) köyündeki birkaç Türk'ün daha durgun ve tek örnek tavırlarını benimsiyordu. Sırf anasına bağlandığı için bu ulusal hava onu Kürtlere tuhaf bir şekilde yaklaştırıyor; içini kavuruyor, onu sürüklüyordu."

position of a perfect representative of his new identity. His father announces to Haso that he is going to be a Turkish soldier one day. “One day you will become a Turkish soldier too” (Adivar, 1996: 197).⁵¹ Even more, he is going to be an exemplary Turkish nationalist.

At the end of the book, Haso who has been rescued from his former, inappropriate Kurdish identity is named as one of the young Turks who will build Turkey’s future. “There is always a primordial struggle between those building up and those destroying, between good and bad” “Everything beautiful, good and positive is the material to build up the future... They are, indeed, modern in all periods. They are to build up the future, create the art of the future, provide the work of heart and mind together. They are to initiate their works with the help of science, experience and power not comparable with any former period” (ibid: 313). The exemplary woman, in this sense, will be Mazlume, while the exemplary man will be child Haso, “the son of Zeyno”.

In the process of his successful embodiment of Turkishness as his sole identity, child Haso transforms into “Zeyno’s son” echoing the novel’s title. Reflections of his Kurdishness – the language, the songs, forms of behavior associated with Kurdish existence – within Haso prevent him from having a completely individualized singular identity. At the very end, in Haso’s final incarnation in the novel, he is left nameless. He is referred to without the most basic signification of identity – his name. In that sense, child Haso, as the epiphenomenal young Turk endowed with the mission of building Turkey’s future is ripped off his Kurdish identity that complicates his position within the nation. In the attempt to smooth out his hybridity causing his ambiguous relationship to the nation, Adivar in

⁵¹ “*Sen de bir gün Türk askeri olacaksın.*”

the end leaves the son of Zeyno nameless. Child Haso becomes “Zeyno’s son”. The cost of child Haso’s transformation to become a young Turk is to lose his name, “Haso” – the Kurdish way of saying Hasan – that carries connotations related to his Kurdishness.

Finally, we can argue that *Zeyno’nun Oğlu* is about the salvation of Haso and his mother Kurdish Zeyno. All the elements related to Kurdishness are expelled from the scene. The cruel and savage stepfather of Haso, Kurdish Ramazan, dies. He is such a hated person that Halide Edip kills him twice. That is to say, Ramazan dies in an armed conflict and his corpse is depicted in detail.

In his furious black eyes gazing at the sky, he has frozen bitter smile. His eagle-like nose seems warped on one side. His long moustache, still preserving its old majesty, is hanging down to his cheeks. The heartbeat Zeyno had listened to as an ultimate duty, stopped with the little blood it was shedding. Ramazan is not an April typhoon, a tormenter, an instrument which makes the others suffer anymore. He is nothing but a dead man now. Zeyno releases his hands, extends them next to his body. With her fingertips she closes his rebellious, insistent, rudeeyes which were still staring at the sky as if he was cursing to it and to the Creation or challenging them (Adivar, 1996: 297).⁵²

However, ten pages later in Zeynep’s letter it is said that he deserves the death penalty because of his crime. “Zeyno’s husband Ramazan will pay the price with his head for being the bloodthirsty ringleader of a mutiny” (ibid: 306).⁵³ Ramazan who poses a threat for the Turkish state and modernization is killed twice by Halide Edip. Halide Edip who forgets he is already dead wants him to be punished also by the state and the court.

⁵² “Göge dikilen azgın, siyah gözlerin içinde donmuş, acı bir gülüş var. Kartal burnu bir tarafa çarpılmış gibi. Uzun bıyıkları eski heybetiyle yanaklarına sarkıyor. Zeyno’nun son bir görev olarak dinlediği kalb, etrafına pek az kan sızdırarak durmuş. Ramazan artık nisan tayfunlarından, azap ve işkence vermek için dünyaya gelen zulüm aletlerinden biri değildir. O, yalnızca bir ölüdür. Zeyno, onun ellerini yanına uzatıyor. Hâlâ başkaldırıcı, direnici, hâlâ kaba, göklere ve hilkate küfreden gibi, meydan okur gibi bakan ölü gözleri parmaklarıyla kapatıyor.”

⁵³ “Zeyno’nun kocası Ramazan, bir ayaklanmanın kanlı elebaşlarından olduğu için cezasını mutlaka kafasıyla ödeyecektir.”

After Ramazan's death, Kurdish Zeyno marries a Turkish army officer Hasan who is the real father of his son. Thus, Haso reacquires his true Turkish father and consequently a confirmed Turkish identity. In the meantime, he also acquires a Turkish mother, Turkish Zeyno, who is willing to be his mentor, his intellectual mother. They all move from Diyarbakır to İstanbul (from the East to West). As a result of these complementary developments, the salvation of child Haso is successfully accomplished:

Ramazan is dead. Haso child has two mothers. Nobody is hurting him anymore. Mr. Hasan; The commander of the assault troop! Don't you know him? He is a powerful man, who can dare to cast unfriendly looks at his son? (ibid: 298).⁵⁴ In foreign countries, nobody will pursue his son to cover him with mud, ran after him with stones, not a soul can torture him anymore. The poor woman with the head scarf will not beg for mercy in this merciless world. From now on they are living in the port of Harem, in a sunny house, staring at the deep blue sea. Hasan is rescued from the insistent torture of his sin which was confusing his mind. Now, he stretches his arms, draws his sword, he is the immortal guardian and the watchman to the security and peace of his son and woman. Nobody can hurt them anymore (ibid: 299).⁵⁵

All the remnants of the archaic and nomadic system and its "savage" components are left behind. A crack, a breach in history occurred and when everything has settled down, we see that it took along all the Kurdish elements which constitute an obstacle to Turkish modernization: "The eastern typhoon of humankind terrorized Diyarbakır. Being one of the people, who were trying to extinguish this

⁵⁴ "Ramazan öldü. Haso çocuğun iki anası var, Haso çocuğu kimse incitmiyor. Haso çocuğun babası da var. Hücum taburu kumandanı Hasan Bey! Tanımıyor musun? Kuvvetli bir adam, onun çocuğuna kim yan bakar?"

⁵⁵ "Çocuğunu yabancı illerde taşla, çamurla eziyet ve işkence ile artık kimse kovalamayacak; başı yazma örtülü zavallı kadın, çocuğu için kıyıcı dünyadan acıma dilenmeyecek. Artık Harem iskelesinde güneşli bir evde, mavi denize bakarak yaşıyorlar. Dimağını mahşere çeviren günahının ısrarlı işkencesinden kurtulan Hasan, kollarını germiş; kılıcını çekmiş, çocuğunun ve kadının emniyet ve huzuruna ölümsüz bir nöbetçi ve koruyucu olmuş. Kimse artık onları incitemez."

huge and dreadful fire in this tyranny, for the first time, reminded me of you. And finally our world was calmed down as before” (ibid: 300).⁵⁶

Mary Douglas (1966) argues whatever is ‘out of place’ is considered as polluted, dangerous and taboo. Negative feelings cluster around it. It must be symbolically excluded if the ‘purity’ of the culture is to be restored. The feminist theorist, Julia Kristeva, calls such expelled or excluded groups, ‘abjected’ (from the Latin meaning, literally, ‘thrown out’) (Kristeva, 1982 cited in Hall, 1997: 258). In line with those arguments, we can say that in Halide Edip’s novel the resolution of the Kurdish question personified in child Haso’s identity dilemmas becomes possible through the exclusion of ‘the abjected’ Kurdishness of child Haso to restore his purity. Kurdishness, which is considered as dangerous and pollutant to Turkishness, is expelled and abjected in *Zeyno’nun Oğlu* to maintain the national purity.

Dağları Bekleyen Kız by Esat Mahmut Karakurt

In *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*, (Karakurt, 1980) first published in 1928, Kurdish people are again represented as bestial, savage and evil, while, on the other hand, a Turkish soldier is depicted as handsome, brave and virtuous (Türkeş, 2002: 821). *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* is about a love affair during the war between the razing rebels on Ağrı Mountain and the brave Turkish army. The rebellion is only a simple adventure element to deepen the grief of the rapidly growing love affair between the Turkish officer, named Adnan, who wanders the mountains in disguise to destroy the Kurds and a rebel Kurdish girl. Eventually, the gallant officer “domesticates” this savage

⁵⁶ “Doğunun insanlık tayfını Diyarbakır’ın üstünden geldi, geçti. Gelip geçtiği sürece büyük ve korkunç bir yangını söndürmekle uğraşanlar arasında bulunmak, bana ilk defa seni savlaklattı. Sonunda dünyamız, eskisi gibi yatıştı.”

girl and the Kurdish girl dogs his footsteps with the fidelity of a slave, which clearly displays the master-slave imagination of the author on the two nations in question.

First-degree lieutenant Adnan Bey is sent to East Anatolian to succeed Nuri Bey, who was killed a week ago. Military operations against brigands in a province of Karaköse village (one of the former names of Ağrı) near Ağrı Mountain continue. A Kurdish brigand known as the Savage Girl is a dauntless sharpshooter who has even killed a few Turkish soldiers, including an engaged man called Sermet in his flight over the city. Sermet's fiancée Nerime has hardly recovered.

A few days after his arrival, Adnan Bey conducts a military operation in order to detect the whereabouts of the brigands and to find out their depots. Adnan Bey commands the military operation conducted with the participation of a fleet. Adnan Bey gets off his plane at the lieu of brigands and stays there until he gathers enough information. In brigand attire, Adnan Bey gets off the plane soon to meet two brigands. They guide him to their leaders. In his way to the headquarters of the brigands, Adnan Bey comes across a man in military attire, namely Sergeant Ahmet. Taking him for a brigand, Adnan Bey insults Sergeant Ahmet. In learning that he is not one of the brigands, Adnan Bey takes information from him. When captured by the brigands, Sergeant Ahmet assures them that he had run away from the army to be one of them. He leaves Adnan Bey to meet him tomorrow after telling him that he knows the whereabouts of the headquarters, depot, machine guns and cannons and he can seize the maps. However, he does not show up the next day. Just when Adnan Bey decides to order his fleet to progress, he hears a woman commanding him not to move. This is the most dangerous brigand known as the Savage Girl whose name is Zeynep. Taking him for one of his soldiers, the Savage Girl asks Adnan Bey to enter the cave and affirms that the war planes are about to start bombing. When Adnan

enters the cave, the girl asks him to prepare the machine guns to counter fire. Soon, Adnan pulls himself upright and draws his gun. He commands her to get away from the machine guns and enter the cave. Losing her bearing, the girl does what she is asked for. Inside the cave, she tries to break free from him. In return, Adnan Bey deals a blow at her chin. Seeing blood flowing out her temple, Adnan Bey feels pity for the first time for her. He puts some snow on her head. He sees something in this brigand girl that he is supposed to kill. The girl says that her name is Zeynep who took to the mountains after being abandoned by the man she loved. Adnan Bey also conveys a love affair he has experienced. Their relationship progresses soon. Zeynep tells all she knows about the brigands. She even handles the maps displaying the location of the brigands. They spend the night together. Next day, Adnan Bey goes to find the fleet, promising her to come back. The brigands detect the location of Zeynep. Learning that she handed off the maps to Adnan Bey and what happened between them, the sheikh father of Zeynep and the brigands decide to kill Zeynep.

Adnan Bey conducts a second operation against the brigands and seizes some alive some dead. Zeynep is among those seized alive. The love of Zeynep and Adnan Bey is thus made public. Consequently, Adnan Bey is accused of various charges. However, when it is seen that Zeynep denounced the brigands, he is acquitted. Zeynep is judged by the court. She also clears herself of the crime. Zeynep and Adnan Bey get married and move to İstanbul.

As opposed to Halide Edip's direct employment of the word "Kurdish" to define her characters in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu*, Esat Mahmut Karakurt in his *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* addresses his Kurdish characters who participate in the rebellion as 'şaki'. This is a term widely used for the people who have an active part in the rebellions between 1923 and 1938 and the meaning of this word is brigand. This word has other connotations and it also means bandit, sinful, merciless and damnable. Throughout the novel, Karakurt never uses the word Kurd while addressing Kurdish people. The only word he employs is brigand. This usage can be seen as an apparition of Yeğen's argument related to the official discourse on Kurdish identity: "From the mid-1920s until the end of the 1980s the Turkish state 'assumed' that there was no Kurdish element on Turkish territory" (Yeğen, 1999: 555). In parallel with the dominant state discourse, Karakurt undermines the ethno-political aspects of the rebellion and for him "the Kurdish resisters were not Kurds with an ethno-political cause, but simply Kurdish tribes, Kurdish bandits, Kurdish sheiks –all the evils of Turkey's pre-modern past" (Yeğen, 1999: 555). "The Turkish state considered the resistance of Kurds to the consolidation of state power as the resistance of pre-modernity, since, according to the logic of modernization and centralization, consolidation of state power was an issue of civilizing the country" (Yeğen, 1999: 563). Thus, the Kurdish resistance to the consolidation of state power is reconstituted as 'the resistance of brigands' or simply as 'a question of banditry'. By doing so, this discourse removed the Kurdishness of this resistance and "read the Kurdish question as something which emerged from the conflict between the modernity of the Republic and the pre-modernity of the Kurdish people" (Yeğen, 1999: 563).

Between the late 1920s and the late 1930s various revolts and two large-scale Kurdish rebellions took place. According to Yeğen, “this discourse of banditry was especially popular during the Kurdish rebellion in 1930 and the papers were full of reports about ‘how the brigands are being destroyed’” (Yeğen, 1999: 564). Karakurt deploys such a discourse throughout his novel *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*. He reduces the Kurdish issue to a question of banditry, without pronouncing the name of the ‘Kurds’ and therefore he undermines the ethno-political aspect of the issue. As the question is reduced to a simple resistance of the brigands, it becomes quite easy to take sides. Consequently, Karakurt, who excludes the ethno-political dimension of the problem, invites his readers to hate these sinful bandits. In this sense, when the Kurdish question is reconstituted as an issue of tribal resistance and banditry, it becomes easier to legitimize the state’s armed struggle against the bandits. In other words, the narrative calls us to become party to the action and to support the political project of building a modern, secular and central nation-state, the necessary condition of which was the exclusion of pre-modern banditry.

The savagery of the place where the events unfold is seen as having such strong affinities with the savagery of its inhabitants, so much so that the former come to be seen as the source of the latter. “But what a savage place is this!” (Karakurt, 1980: 48)⁵⁷ “Not only are the inhabitants but also the air that blows in this place is uncivilized” (ibid: 10).⁵⁸ In the meantime, a temporal backwardness of the land is inscribed through these lines: “This Medieval town with houses made of manure, muddy and narrow streets in which even a mule can hardly go by” (ibid: 5).⁵⁹ “The mountains have a dirty color with the blend of snow and mud, like the walls of old

⁵⁷ “Fakat burası ne vahşi yer!”

⁵⁸ *Buranın yalnız insanları değil, havası da vahşi*”

⁵⁹ “Gübrede yapılmış evleri, bir katırın güçlüğüle geçebileceği kadar dar ve çamurlu sokaklarıyla bu Ortaçağ kasabası”

palaces; they ascend into the plane, demonic sky” (ibid: 48).⁶⁰ “Leading through those holes you reach to the mysterious city situated under the annular... The city of the prehistoric inhabitants...” (ibid: 113).⁶¹ This is what Anne McClintock calls *anachronistic space*, “a trope that gathered full administrative authority as a technology of surveillance” (McClintock, 1995: 30). According to this trope, colonized people are believed to exist “in a permanently anterior time” instead of inhabiting history proper “within the geographic space of the modern empire as anachronistic humans, atavistic, irrational, bereft of human agency-the living embodiment of the ‘archaic primitive’” (ibid). Here, Karakurt figures the Eastern region of Turkey as “inhabiting not simply a different geographical space but a different temporal zone, surviving anachronistically within the time of history” (ibid: 41). Both the land (East) and its inhabitants (Kurds) are considered to be out of time in modernity, belated to civilization and backward. In “Turkish experience, the notion of ‘the East’ operates as a generic construct, inscribed in dualistic opposition to the dominant order at multiple layers – geographically remote, backward, unchanging, pre-capitalist, tribal, simultaneously untamed and rebellious” (Öncü: 7). The ‘backwardness’ of the East and of the Kurdish people, continuously produced and reproduced in juxtaposition to the ‘developed’ West and thus a “colonial discourse” within the territories of the same country deployed by Turkish “modernizing elite”.

Now we are in a wealthy Turkish city with the boundaries reaching out to the Mediterranean coast. The spring is coming... In that beautiful part of Turkey, spring means the whole youth, love and life. Lemon trees fill the overshadowed roads with orange trees and the peasant girls heading for the cotton fields. Peasant girls, Turkish girls... The most liberal, beautiful and the

⁶⁰ “Dağlar, karla çamurun birleşmesinden hâsıl olmuş kirli bir renk içinde, eski saray duvarları gibi, dümdüz ve demolik semalara doğru yükseliyordu”

⁶¹ “Bu deliklerden, yuvarlağın altındaki esrarengiz şehre giriliyor... Tarihten önce yaşayanların şehrine...”

cleanest girls of the world... In the moonlight nights of that heavenly city, the coasts, which outshine the whole Mediterranean, bring together all the incomparable beauty of the creation around its own existence. The Mediterranean Turkish girls growing up, under the orange trees, peering through the moonlight, doesn't know what agony means. Those are the places of desire (Karakurt, 1980:144–5).⁶²

Karakurt calls a city situated on the Mediterranean West coast of Turkey “the Turkish city”, and the people who inhabits in this city are “Turkish girls” for him. Moreover, he describes this “Turkish city” and “Turkish girls” in a way to contrast it sharply to the East region and the Kurdish people who live there. When talking about the former, all the adjectives he employs are positive, full of light and energy. Turkish girls are the most liberated, the cleanest and the most beautiful girls in the world and they do not even know the meaning of suffering. On the contrary, ‘The East’ is depicted as “an exceptional territory”, a kind of unsettled, grim space. “Its symbolic geography marks the ‘outside’ of the nation, at the margins”. It is “a semi-real, semi-imaginary geography” contrasted with ‘the West’ which is ‘the place of love’, light and life. (Öncü: 1). In line with this representation, “Traveling in the direction of ‘the East,’ means moving backwards in time, towards a distant past fraught by ethnic cleansings and sectarian violence – which refuse to go away in the present” (ibid). In that sense, Karakurt’s representation of the East and the West as contradictory to one another replicates the Orientalist discourse related to the split of the modern Turk.

⁶² “Şimdi hudutları, Akdeniz sahillerine kadar uzanan güzel zengin bir Türk şehrinde bulunuyoruz. Bahar yaklaşıyor... Türkiye’nin bu güzel parçasında, bahar bütün bir gençlik, bütün bir aşk ve hayat demektir. Limon, portakal ağaçlarının gölgelediği yolları, pamuk tarlalarına giden köylü kızları dolduruyor... Köylü kızları, Türk kızları... Dünyanın en hür, en temiz, güzel kızları... Mehtaplı gecelerde bu cennet vatanın, Akdeniz’e gölge veren sahilleri, yaradılışın eşsiz güzelliklerini, kendi nefsinde toplamıştır. Portakal ağaçlarının altında, ayın ışığını seyredirken büyüyen Akdenizli Türk kızları, ıstırapın manasını bilmezler buralarda. Bu yerler sevda yerleridir.”

Similar to Adıvar's writing, the equation of the Kurdish characters to various animals is widespread in Karakurt's novel, and they are used to reduce those characters to a nonhuman category. "Female dog" (Karakurt, 1980: 62)⁶³ "a gigantic, an elephantine thing" (ibid: 61)⁶⁴ "a wild chamois" (ibid: 78)⁶⁵ "untamed and hungry animals wandering around the mountains" (ibid: 82)⁶⁶ "wild animals" (ibid: 112)⁶⁷ "a herd of small and large wolves" (ibid: 114)⁶⁸ are some examples of these animalistic definitions. This "racial pathetic fallacy" (JanMohamed, 1988: 32) attempts to place the native in a subhuman category somewhere between Turks and wild animals. For this mode of perception, Kurds are evil primarily because of their otherness, because of their difference from Turks. The formulaic devices are designed to reinforce the otherness; constant reiteration of the Kurdish characters' subhuman image facilitates the maintenance or increase of the distance between the Turkish characters and the Kurdish "others". Characterization based on these formulas results in a feature typical of racial romance: the Kurdish characters are stereotypes.

As Northrop Fry puts it, "romance avoids the ambiguities of ordinary life where everything is a mixture of good and bad, and where it is difficult to take sides or believe that people are consistent patterns of virtue or vice" (Fry, 1976:50). Another typical feature of romance is "the domination of the text by a single, highly subjective and monolithic viewpoint" (Fry, 1976: 304-5). According to Jameson (1975) romance flourishes in transitional periods when society is torn, when the alternatives are grasped as hostile but unrelated worlds, and when the social order is

⁶³ "Dişi kopek"

⁶⁴ "kocaman, dana gibi bir şey"

⁶⁵ "vahşi dağ keçisi"

⁶⁶ "dağlarda gezen aç ve yabani hayvanlar"

⁶⁷ "vahşi hayvanlar"

⁶⁸ "irili ufaklı bir kurt sürüsü"

in the process of being undermined and destroyed by other nascent movements. Following the foundation of the new Republic, as the nation-state made its way through and the process of modernization accelerated, the society was able to fulfill all these conditions for romance writers. Following this line of thought, I argue that Esat Mahmut Karakurt's novel *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* which is about a love affair between a Kurdish girl and a Turkish soldier can be read as a romance.

We can understand Esat Mahmut Karakurt's novel as romance better if we take into account what Frantz Fanon (1968) calls the Manichean⁶⁹ structure of colonial society. Only then can we see that the allegory that lurks behind Karakurt's romance is essentially the same as the one that defines such a society: it is the allegory of white and black, of civilization and savagery, of superiority and inferiority, of good and evil, of the elect and the damned, of the self and the other. Throughout the novel Turkish characters, especially Turkish soldier Adnan is praised. He is a) good looking, "The young officer, combing his chestnut coloured hair, trimmed around his chestnut colored eyes, back with his fingers, gets two steps closer to the Commander" "A dark-skinned, tall, handsome young man" (Karakurt, 1980: 10)⁷⁰ b) courageous, "You are such a courageous man, Mr. Adnan!" (ibid: 43)⁷¹ c) benign, "Now I found out that you are such a good person Mr. Adnan" (ibid: 80)⁷² d) refined, "Truly you are a gentleman. Nobody can be politer to his slave" (ibid: 79)⁷³ and lastly e) heroic, as we see in a letter he writes to his mother "Mummy, your one and only son is here, be sure of that, well you know the heroes of

⁶⁹ Manicheanism is a term employed for the binary structure of imperial ideology.

⁷⁰ "Genç subay, kestane renkli gözlerinin üzerine düşen, kestane renkli saçlarını, eliyle arkaya iterek, kumandana doğru iki adım yaklaşıyor" "Esmer, uzun boylu yakışıklı bir delikanlı"

⁷¹ "Çok cesur bir adamsınız siz Adnan Bey!"

⁷² "Adnan bey siz çok iyi bir insanmısınız meğer"

⁷³ "Hakikaten "centilmen"mişsiniz. İnsan esirine ancak bu kadar nezaket gösterebilir."

the continents, now, he is like one of them” (ibid: 110).⁷⁴ The process of praising the Turks is of course accompanied by the portrayal of Kurds as wild, hyperemotional, uncontrolled, bloodthirsty, cruel savages. Thus by rendering them as directly antithetical to the civilized Turkish characters, Karakurt produces an almost perfect racial romance in *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*. Kurdish brigands, Kurdish Sheikh and his man and the Sheikh’s daughter Zeynep are depicted as the very embodiment of evilness. The adjectives that Karakurt uses to describe the brigands are “rabid” (ibid: 6),⁷⁵ “foreigners, miserable bastards” (ibid: 19),⁷⁶ “weird” (ibid: 27),⁷⁷ “ignorant” (ibid),⁷⁸ “cursed” (ibid: 29),⁷⁹ “stateless, treacherous” (ibid:31),⁸⁰ “a looter regiment with the sacks on their shoulders” (ibid).⁸¹

I hate being a human just because of them. Nobody has ever seen such brutality, injustice and infamy. Even when they are killing somebody, they only think about the bullet money. They neither accept nor respect religious faith; even lack belief in God. They don’t believe in anything. You surely see; they only have underpants down to their legs and a conical hat made of felt. From dusk till dawn they are searching for somebody to kill on the mountains God created. Raw meat and crushed wheat is all they eat. They all have five or ten wives. Even the chokers of the small girls are present in them. They neither accept dwelling nor have respect for the land. They don’t have a conscience either. They live in the depths of the earth they dug, in the caverns and the far ends of the rocks. Not only did they never do their military service but have no admiration for the country. There is only one thing they respect. The only thing they worship, pay attention to is their sheik. What he wants is what he gets immediately. Like I said; they are not human. They are such creatures, even naming them is arduous (ibid: 63).⁸²

⁷⁴ “Anneciğim, senin biricik oğlun burada emin ol, hani kitalardaki kahramanlar yok mu, onlar gibi oldu şimdi”

⁷⁵ “kudurmuş”

⁷⁶ “yabancı, sefil herifler”

⁷⁷ “acayip”

⁷⁸ “cahil”

⁷⁹ “mel’un”

⁸⁰ “vatansızlar, hainler”

⁸¹ “sırtları çuvallı çapulcu alayı”

⁸² “İnsan bunların arasında insanlığından nefret ediyor. Vahşiliğin, insafsızlığın, alçaklığın bu derecesini görülmemiştir. Adama öldürürken, karşısındakinin hayatını değil, yakacakları kurşunun parasını düşünüyorlar. Ne din var, ne iman var, ne Allah... Hiçbir şeye inandıkları yok. İşte görüyorsunuz: ayaklarında bir don, kafalarında bir keçe külah. Allahın dağlarında sabahtan akşama kadar, öldürecek adam arayıp duruyorlar. Yedikleri bir parça çiğ etle bulgur. Hepsinin beş, on karısı

In this quotation, we can easily detect the common points between the essential elements Karakurt deploys to define the Kurds and the dominant discourse of his era related to the Kurdish question. After the proclamation of the Republic, Kurdish question was considered to be “the remnant of the old order” and “the demand for the traditional, religious, reactionary and irrational order of the past which had been abolished by the present” (Yeğen, 1999: 561). Here, Kurds’ being cruel savages, their lack of faith and patriotism and their living conditions, even their nutritional habits and their clothing are deeply and even racistly criticized by the author. The feudal and patriarchal system that the Kurds are thought to live in and the importance of the Sheikh for the Kurds, are the two main points that require attention of this quotation as they are considered to be the major threats and obstacles to the modernizing and civilizing mission of the Turkish state. Karakurt, who treats the Kurdish question simply as a matter of tribal and religious resistance, deploys a quite similar discourse to that of the Turkish State’s official discourse and his attitude can simply be called racist.

In the novel, Zeynep is depicted as a woman menacing the man. She is the most daunting bandit in the eyes of the Turkish Army. At the beginning of the book, we learn that there is a woman bandit who lives in the mountains and the stories of her became legend. She is a dangerous, sharpshooter woman known by everyone. Karakurt uses several defamatory words for her such as: “broad” (Karakurt, 1980: 22),⁸³ “overly well-known atrocious girl” (ibid: 25),⁸⁴ “miserable prostitute” (ibid:

var. Hâlâ içlerinde kız çocuklarını boğanlar mevcut. Ne ev, ne yer, ne de vicdan tanırırlar. Toprağın dibinde kazdıkları oyuklarda, mağaralarda, kaya diplerinde yaşarlar. Ne askerlik bilirler, ne vatan. Yalnız bir şey! Taptıkları, tanıdıkları her şeyleri şeyhtir. O ne emrederse derhal o olur. Dedim ya, bunlar insan değildir. Bunlar öyle bir nevi mahlûklardır ki, isim vermek bile müşkül...”

⁸³ “karı”

29)⁸⁵ “the prostitute who is the worst enemy of the pilots, the biggest whore of all” (ibid: 61),⁸⁶ “the loathsome stateless female” (ibid: 75)⁸⁷ and even “harlot” (ibid: 115).⁸⁸ When they first meet, the main male character of the book, sergeant Ahmet acts hostile to Zeynep, the so-called Savage Girl. He talks to her in a derogatory and condescending manner as she is regarded as a dangerous enemy who has killed several Turkish soldiers. He knows that he is supposed to kill her but something obstructs him in the execution of his duty. As he learns the Savage Girl’s story, he starts to feel pity for her and she slowly becomes Zeynep leaving her epithet in the past.

In explaining the reasons of her being a brigand, Zeynep expresses her regrets and consequently, Zeynep and Adnan’s relationship progresses rapidly. They fall in love, Zeynep tells all she knows about the brigands. She even gives the maps displaying the location of the brigands saying that “Mr. Adnan, sometimes, even the female hyenas are taken with an invisible power and can become tame. Here; the information you want” (ibid: 89).⁸⁹ Zeynep uses the word ‘taming’ for the process that she is willing to experience and as soon as she says these words handing the maps to Adnan, she finds a totally different man in front of her. Adnan who has talked to her in a derogatory manner before, now says “Zeynep, such a great person you are!” (ibid: 91).⁹⁰ Next day, Adnan Bey goes to find out the fleet by promising her to come back. The brigands detect the lieu of Zeynep. Learning that she handled the maps to Adnan Bey and what happened between them, they decide to kill

⁸⁴ “mahut vahşi kız”

⁸⁵ “sefil kahpe”

⁸⁶ “tayyarecilerin en büyük düşmanı olan kahpe, kahpelerin kahpesi”

⁸⁷ “vatansız iğrenç dişi”

⁸⁸ “orospu”

⁸⁹ “Adnan Bey, bazen dişi sırtlanlar bile bir anda görünmeyen bir kuvvetin tesirine kapılıp, ehlileşebilirler. Alınız işte istediğiniz malumat”

⁹⁰ “Zeynep sen ne iyisin!”

Zeynep. “All eyes turned to Zeynep; giving her an appraising glances. Looking at her with a fixed gaze just like a herd of small and large wolves which are about to tear a sheep to pieces” (ibid: 114).⁹¹

At this point, the Sheikh is depicted as a violent man who beats his daughter and swears at her. “He was furious and his fury was so immense and so intense, making him grumble. He wants to jump out of the cedar, take her by the scruff of the neck, hold her hair tightly and has a desire to chastise her. Then, suddenly the sheik jumps out of his place feeling the passion of an elderly tiger. He punches her in the face with his fist; Whore, still talking about all these things in front of me unblushingly” (ibid).⁹² Hereupon, Zeynep blames her father because of her being a brigand: “You hit me in the weakest part and took me here dad. You ruined me just like you have ruined yourself!” (ibid: 115).⁹³ She also loads Adnan Bey with praises and defends him against her father by saying “He is such an honorable, such a nice man; a praiseworthy Turkish soldier!” (ibid: 115).⁹⁴ Karakurt makes Zeynep call his father as brigand and he reveals his thoughts related to ‘Kurdish Question’ from her mouth:

From first till last, you came to the places where even the eagles and the wolves have fear to wander in search of adventure. You were planning to establish a government on these mountains... Well, but with which organization, ascendance or authority? For God’s sake, what if they stated “Take all your ominous mountains and let’s see how you establish your government” and leave you all alone, what were you going to do? Like starving mules left out in the snow, you would certainly try to gnaw on bones of each other... You, all of you, and especially me and you dad, we are all going to suffer heavily because of this betrayal. You will grieve for the

⁹¹ “Bütün gözler Zeynep’e dönmüştür. Yiyecekmiş gibi bakıyorlar. İrili ufaklı bir kurt sürüsü, parçalanacak bir koyun bulmuşlar sanki orada.”

⁹² “Hiddetli, hem de öyle hiddetli ki. Homurdanıyor. Sedirden fırlayıp kızın yakasına yapışmak, saçlarını parmaklarına geçirerek, onu yerden yere çalmak istiyor. Şeyh, birdenbire yerinden fırlıyor, ihtiyar bir kaplan hırsıyla kızın üzerine atılıyor. Yüzüne bir yumruk indiriyor. Kaltak utanmadan karşımda hâlâ neler söylüyor.”

⁹³ “beni en zayıf yerimden yakalayıp buraya getirdin baba. Kendin gibi beni de mahvettin!”

⁹⁴ “çok namuslu, çok iyi bir adam, namuslu bir türk askeri”

people who are torn to pieces in the midst of the rocks... Empty your pockets! You are afraid and ashamed, aren't you? Because your pockets are full of English money. Throw away the mask! Let the intention arise. You, we, all of us... We are nothing but a looter, atrocious robber. You, the head of a bandit gang and me, your daughter... Behold dad! In spite of me he wanted to take me in, take me away from all. In other words, he wanted the daughter of a looter, traitor, and raider. I might be dishonest and unvirtuous though not for laying in his arms, but for being a lousy, ungrateful traitor. Just for being your daughter I am destined to be dishonorable (ibid: 115–6).⁹⁵

As I stated before, Karakurt reconstitutes the Kurdish resistance as a simple matter of banditry by ignoring its ethno-political aspect. In his opinion, to form an independent Kurdish state is nothing but a mere fantasy of these bandits. Furthermore, in the excerpt above, Karakurt echoes a dominant discourse related to the Kurdish question. In the first few decades following the foundation of the Republic in 1923, Turkish nationalism perceived the 'Kurdish question' as a foreign product, a threat mainly incited by other states to weaken the country. Kurdish question is widely reconstituted as a matter of unrest caused by foreign prompting (*ecnebi kışkırtması*) and within this discourse the Kurdish people are seen as a foreign pawn (*ecnebi piyonu*) (Yeğen, 2006:132). Following this line of thought, Karakurt highlights the incitement and financial support of Britain by saying “your pockets are full of English money”.

⁹⁵ Kartalların, kurtların bile dolaşmaya korktuğu bu yerlerde hepiniz baştanbaşa hepiniz, macera aramaya geldiniz. Bu dağlarda mı devlet kuracaktınız... Hangi teşkilat, hangi nüfuz, hangi salahiyetinizle... Bir gün kızıp da size maazallah “Alın bu uğursuz dağlarınızı, kurun bakalım devletinizi” deyip başınızdan çekilseydiler, ne yapardınız? Karın üstünde aç kalmış katırlar gibi, birbirlerinizi yemeye kalkardınız... Siz hepiniz, hepimiz ve bilhassa sen ve ben baba, bu hainliğin acısını pek ağır çekeceğiz. Kayaların arasında bin bir parça olacak insanların günahını sen çekeceksin baba... Hepiniz çıkarın ceplerinizi dışına bakayım! Korkarsınız, utanırsınız değil mi? Çünkü ağzına kadar İngiliz lirası doludur. Atın yüzünüzdeki maskeleri! Maksudınız anlaşılsın. Siz, biz, hepimiz birer çapulcu, birer adi hırsızdan başka bir şey değiliz. Sen bir eşkiya çetesinin reisi, ben de kızın... İşte baba o, bana rağmen beni alıp da götürmek istedi. Yani, bir çapulcunun, bir vatan haininin, bir hırsızın kızını... Baba ben namussuzluğu, onun kolları arasında bulunmaktan değil, alçak, nankör bir vatan haini olmaktan alıyorum. Senin kızın olduğum için namussuzluk damgasını alımda taşıyorum.”

At the end of the novel, Karakurt violently punishes all the unruly Kurdish characters. “The father of Zeynep and all his men were killed” (ibid: 122).⁹⁶ Adnan is promoted to the rank of captain because of his heroic actions. In the novel, Esat Mahmut Karakurt considers the indecency of Zeynep as the fault of the men or the society. “Don’t blame it on the woman; if you want a responsibility for the sins you must look for the one who pushes her into wrongdoing” (ibid: 152).⁹⁷ This idea is revealed in the court setting. Zeynep, who is being judged for her crime, says that she is remorseful and that she is inveigled. Adnan also defends her at the court with a long speech by saying that the military operation succeeded only by the help of Zeynep and he almost declares her a hero. “You can not take her from me! This woman, sacrificing the lives of her own father and brother lead the whole army to the victory. She avoided hundreds of mothers shedding tears. She suffered deeply and is still putting up with the worst pain of the world” (ibid: 140).⁹⁸ “That woman who was feeling the biggest pain of the world in front of you, not only handled her gun in but also urged all the armed to get they just desert. With this reality, which appears to be a good one, and the clearness of the law, I demand you to let her go immediately and not holding her responsible for what happened” (ibid: 160).⁹⁹

Finally, Zeynep is not found guilty and is released. Karakurt, who uses several negative adjectives for Zeynep from the beginning of the novel, gradually changes his attitude towards her as she changes sides. From an antagonistic, racist attitude the narrator moves to a neutral and even positive stance similar to that of

⁹⁶ “Zeynep’in babası ve bütün adamları tamamen öldürülmüştür.”

⁹⁷ “Günahı kadında değil, kadını o hale sokanda arayınız.”

⁹⁸ “Onu elimden alamazsınız! Bu kadın kendi hayatını, babasının, kardeşinin hayatını feda ederek, bütün bir orduyu zafere götürdü. Bugün yüzlerce ananın gözyaşı dökmesine mani oldu. Dünyanın en büyük kahrını, azabını çekti ve çekiyor.”

⁹⁹ “Huzurunuzda acıların, kahrınların, azapların en büyüğünü çeken bu kadın yalnız silahını teslim etmekle kalmamış, eli silahlıları da, cezalarını çekmeğe sevk etmiştir. Bu güzel görünen hakikat ve kanunun açıklığı karşısında, onu derhal serbest bırakarak hakkında ademî mesuliyet kararı vermenizi talep ediyorum.”

some Turkish protagonists in the novel. Zeynep becomes “docile, good and innocent” (Karakurt, 1980: 125),¹⁰⁰ “courageous” (ibid: 159)¹⁰¹ “more beautiful than anyone else and is the best person that somebody can know ” (ibid: 161).¹⁰² In line with this shift, Karakurt’s description of Zeynep’s physical appearance also displays a radical break from his former description of her. In describing Zeynep, Adnan says: “With the long and curly eyelashes surrounding a pair of blue eyes, she was looking at me and possibly sparkling in the warmest and the most beautiful way I have ever seen. The ringlets of her chestnut-colored silk hair were flowing freely down around the nape of the neck. An opaque color, a neat and small nose. Like the two leaves of poppy, thin and red lips and above them two marvelous eyes” (ibid: 146)¹⁰³

At the end of the book Zeynep and Adnan get married and they move to İstanbul. The novel that starts on a foggy and rainy dark autumn night at Karaköse, Ağrı (East of Turkey) closes on a moonlit summer night at Kalamış (West of Turkey). Adnan and Zeynep are depicted as far away from chaos both geographically and temporally. The removal of the Kurdish Sheikh and brigands, who are considered as obstacles to modernization of Turkey, restores the society to its pure state of Manichean opposition and equilibrium between good and evil. Zeynep who has crossed over during the course of the events, is made Turkish by the bond of marriage and is also brought to İstanbul from Ağrı. As a woman, she is presented as a victim in need of saving of a Turkish man. The book, which can be read as the

¹⁰⁰ “uysal, iyi ve masum”

¹⁰¹ “mert”

¹⁰² “herkesten daha güzel, daha iyi”

¹⁰³ “Uzun, kıvrıkcık kirpiklerinin çevrelediği bir çift lacivert göz, dünyanın belki en güzel, en sıcak ışıklarını dağıtarak, bana bakıyordu. Koyu kestane renginde gayet tatlı kıvrımlarla boynunun üstüne dökülmüş ipek saçları vardı. Mat bir renk, muntazam ve küçük bir burun. Bir gelinciğin, iki yaprağı gibi, ince ve kırmızı dudaklar ve bunların üzerinde şahane iki göz.”

rescue project of ‘the girl who is watching the mountains’ as the title suggest,
concludes with success, with ‘a happy ending’.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HAUNTED NATION: KURDS AS THE OTHERS IN 2000s

This chapter is about representations of Kurdishness in Zülfü Livaneli's novel *Mutluluk* and Ahmet Altan's novel *En Uzun Gece*. These two novels, which reflect the spirit and major characteristics of 2000s, provide us with important clues to understand the perceptions and representations of the Kurdishness in this period. For this purpose, what I will try to do in this chapter will be first to look at the era by focusing on "Kurdish Question" in order to contextualize my study on the representations of Kurdishness. After brief information about the authors' biographies, I will do a close reading of the Kurdish characters and the representations of 'the East' in those two novels. With this attempt, I will try to understand the transformation of Kurdish identity and Turkish Nationalism between the first and the second period novels in order to see what this might say about the literary representations of Kurdishness in the novels written in this period.

A Historical Review: Development of the Kurdish Question in the Late Republican Period

By 1979, Turkey was on the verge of political anarchy, with sharp increases in the number of assassinations and street clashes claiming many civilian lives. In 1980 the military intervened with a claim to restore law and order for the third time in the Republic's history. The military coup of 1980 left a political void by outlawing all political parties and establishing martial law. The Kurdish cities and provinces of

eastern Turkey were greatly affected by the military coup and the subsequent violent crackdown of communist and nationalist activities.

The constitution drafted by the military in 1982 further contributed to the unrest of the period by explicitly approving provisions that significantly strengthened cultural and political suppression in the Kurdish provinces of the southeast. In 1983, a similarly controversial law was passed by the military. According the law, it was forbidden to express, diffuse or publish opinions in any language other than the official language of the state. The mother tongue of Turkish citizens was Turkish. The law put the prohibition, which was in practice into writing. The institutionalization of violence and repression occurred at the beginning of the 1980s and it provoked violent clashes in 1984 between the military and PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party; Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan), headed by its founder Abdullah Öcalan. The PKK acted as the spokesman for disenfranchised Kurds across the country, who desired greater freedoms.

The ongoing conflict between armed Kurdish dissidents and the Turkish military escalated into a full-fledged war in August 1984 and reached its peak in the 1990s. During this period, the “engagement of some members of the Kurdish movement in an armed struggle against the Turkish army set the public agenda in Turkey. The suppression of the armed struggle was considered the continuation of the nation-state” (Koğacıoğlu, 2007: 19).

The beginning of the 1990s in Turkey was marked by intensified violence in the southeast region. As the events unfolded, “the ravages of escalating violence in the militarized zones continued to penetrate the social and cultural fabric of daily life in large cities. Most immediately, the flood of destitute refugees from the war zones assumed mass proportions” (Öncü, 5).

At the same time, “the blowing winds of neo-liberalism in the transnational arena (for all its shortcomings) have undermined Statist discourses of progress and development through centralized government initiatives” (Öncü, 2). In this period, the power of the developmentalist state was tested politically, culturally and financially. Novel actors and modes of intervention surfaced and with this emergence, a new form of governance delivering the characteristics of the old and new regimes occurred (Koğacıoğlu, 2007: 12). In this new neoliberal order, a new understanding of governmentality took the place of sovereignty and created governable spaces and subjects.

The neoliberal order brought the implementation of a new social background on which economy functions smoothly and dynamically and the consolidation of a new citizenry capable of protecting its rights. These changes arise in a period when the power of supranational actors increased. For instance, both the IMF, a guarantor of a smooth functioning economy, and the EU push to determine everyday lives of citizens as well as the changing structure and organization of the state (Koğacıoğlu, 2007: 13). In the same vein, we observe the appearance of civil society organizations as powerful actors. Alongside old civil society organizations like trade-unions and cooperative initiatives, new civil society organizations became increasingly visible. These new civil society organizations, with their semi-professional, semi-political stance, work in the areas that were previously occupied by the developmentalist state (Can, 2007: 98). In this context, public commentary, as well as academic research, has focused on the conditions of internally displaced Kurds, who were deported from their villages, and ethnic tensions generated by their arrival on the margins of large cities. “In addition, numerous NGOs, foreign and domestic, have been mobilized in the effort to ‘normalize’ civil life in ‘the East’” (Öncü, 8).

In 1999, with Öcalan's capture, the PKK declared a cease-fire and demanded the state to take democratic measures to recognize and protect the rights of Kurds. However, in Kurdish cities many people known to have links with the PKK continued to be murdered by unknown forces in "extrajudicial killings". Many Kurdish people have also been tortured, imprisoned and subjected to discriminatory practices of all sorts (in gaining employment, housing, etc).

By the end of the 1990s, Turkish nationalism, which had long endeavored to create a monolingual and homogeneous political community out of the Muslim peoples of Anatolia, encountered something intolerable: that "there is in fact a second territorial-linguistic community alongside the Turks in Turkey", and that decades of Turkification has not put an end to this. A new idea of Turkishness has emerged: "a Turkishness open only to ethnic Turks and to those who have assimilated into Turkishness, and closed to all non-Muslims and to those Muslims who have resisted Turkification" (Yeğen, 2006: 91).

As a result of developments arising from Turkey's candidacy to the EU and the issues of democratization something already unbearable for Turkish nationalism has made itself more visible: the fact that the Kurds are not assimilated into Turkishness and that as such they have become a second territorial-linguistic community in the country. In this light, Turkish nationalism is likely to give up its commitment to a political definition of Turkishness, at least in assessing the status of the Kurdish citizens of the Republic. To put in other way, according to Yeğen, Turkish nationalism has lost confidence in its own dictum that Kurds are future-Turks (Yeğen, 2006). It can be argued that this lack of faith in the Kurds' ability to assimilate was brought about as a result of the Kurds' growing claims related to Kurdishness, and the opening up of parallel fields of activity in which these claims

can be operated and be heard. Claims related to the existence of Kurdishness as a cultural and political entity distinct from Turkishness found their appearance in everyday life within cultural, intellectual and political fields.

During 1990s, although the armed struggle reached its peak and the Kurdish question continued to be a problematic issue in the political field Kurdish existence started to become increasingly visible in the cultural field by means of a range of cultural production: literature, music, cuisine, and TV series. Kurdishness was increasingly visible in everyday life. Öncü, for instance, treats the entrance of a genre she calls 'Eastern serials' into the public circulation as one of the most significant mediums of Kurdish visibility: "Eastern serials entered public circulation at a moment of political uncertainty and ambivalence, resonating in cross-reference with a diversity of other emissions – journalistic commentary, advertisements, popular films, music markets – which rendered Kurdish ethnicity an increasingly visible (and marketable) difference" (Öncü, 17). As a result of these developments, "'the East' has now become an immanently marketable commodity, offered in a dizzying array of glittering images, sounds, and goods" (Öncü, 28). Mutually feeding off each other and into each other, commercial television, advertising, popular journalism, cinema and literature have become major agents in the production of 'the East' and 'Eastern-ness' for consumption. "What cuts across these different fields of cultural production, and brings them together, are the stereotypes which make Kurdish *difference* so profitable to begin with"(ibid). It's not so easy as to say, as some people do, that the increasing visibility of Kurdishness is necessarily positive. It is not if it means the re-inscription of the same themes (backwardness, the oppressed passive woman, the tyrant animalist male, the huge family ignorant of modern birth

control, etc.) that continue to justify the semi-colonial relationship of the state to the east.

In addition to what Öncü argues about the Eastern serials, one can also talk about other forms of visibility taking place in parallel domains. For instance, there is the popularization of Kurdish music via certain groups such as Kardeş Türküler, or singers such as Aynur, the wide circulation they obtain through their use in popular Turkish movies such as Yılmaz Erdoğan's *Vizontele* (2001) and Yavuz Turgul's *Gönül Yarası* (2005) enhanced this visibility. Another form of visibility that Kurdishness obtain within this latter period appears in the form of the popularization of certain forms of body ornament and accessorizing associated with the region such as tattoos, make-up, jewelry and scarves that became increasingly fashionable both among the TV and media persona and the wider public. The appropriation of facial tattoos, originally signifying the wearers' position within the feudal system (*aşiret*) prevailing in the East became highly popular, especially after the release of Eastern serials, among performers such as Gülay and Zara, and TV persona such as Hülya Avşar. Similarly, different forms of head binding with *poşu*, used in music videos and TV shows, wearing of jewelry and make-up signifying the Eastern aesthetic forms, such as *hızma* and *sürme* renders Kurdishness an everyday visibility people see on the screen, in magazines and newspapers, or in shop windows. As a result of these developments, body markers that function as cultural signifiers within their own regional context enter into circulation as fashion symbols within the West.

In addition to the accelerating visibility of Kurdishness in the cultural field through its fashionization and commodification, other more institutionalized developments also happened in the intellectual and political realm. The *Kürt Enstitüsü* was founded in 1992 in İstanbul, and began work on a range of projects

related to the Kurdish language such as language instruction, the publication of Kurdish-Turkish dictionaries, Kurdish history, and folklore. Other cultural organizations intent on teaching Kurdish language and Kurdish history and culture, such as *Mezopotamya Kültür Merkezi*, have also emerged in recent years. By and large, these institutions and their work, operating under severe legal and financial constraints, have had an impact, albeit limited, on the resurgence of Kurdish culture and visibility.

Legal challenges also came in the early 1990s, challenging the official state discourse's negation of the existence of Kurds. In 1991, law 2932 of 1982 Constitution was amended to make possible the private use of languages other than Turkish. This law also enabled, although indirectly, publications in Kurdish. Kurds within Turkey started to publish and to write on their history, language and culture. New publishing houses were founded. They not only published in Kurdish but also published in Turkish many documents and studies on the Kurds. The role of these publishing houses is fundamental to understanding the rise of publications concerning the Kurds in Turkey. This act of writing helped to affirm the existence of a Kurds as a distinct identity within the national domain.

A wide range of associations and foundations, from human rights associations to business associations, became involved in discussing the issue and its solution. Along these lines, the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (*Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı*) and the Human Rights Association (*İnsan Hakları Derneği*) were to pick up the Kurdish issue. The turn of the century was marked by the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan (in February 1999) and, officially, by the abrogation of the state of emergency in the southeastern regions, completed in 2002. On a regional scale, Turkey is engaged more strongly in the process of European integration, which

pushes the country towards an acknowledgment of its Kurdish population and more specifically, pushes the state to prove its commitment to securing cultural rights and economic development in the southeast. This situation gives rise to more opportunities to conduct research more freely and to speak more openly on the issue. Yet, even with the amendment of the aforementioned law, other legal measures are used to censure Kurdish publication sources if the state so wishes; things are better, perhaps, but not optimal. Nevertheless, since the 1990s there has been a growing interest among Turkish scholars on topic related to the Kurdish question and Kurdishness.

Turkish Literature in 2000s: Novel Without a Mission?

In 1990s and 2000s, the Turkish novel has developed into what we can call “contemporary narrative”. In this period a post-modernist literature which privileged fragmented discourse, discontinuity, fantasy and multiplicity emerged. Some well-known writers such as Orhan Pamuk and Elif Şafak produced novels, which surpass the established dichotomies of the traditional novel, and wrote politically engaged novels. It is not only works of well-established Turkish writers that contribute to the recent developments in fiction but many Kurdish origin writers also produced various significant works. A number of contemporary fictionists like Mehmet Uzun, Suzan Samancı and Murak Uyrkulak received widespread notice with their works.

Although the genre of the “village novels” became extinct in this period, the literary interest in Anatolia and in the subaltern continues to operate in narrations. In this vein, we can argue that the focus on people of different ethnic backgrounds such as Armenians and Kurds still dominates the literary agenda. In addition to that,

different from the production of post-modernist works, some writers still produce didactic novels. Zülfü Livaneli and Ahmet Altan are writers who can be interpreted in this light and their novels can be categorized as ideologically functional novels. *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece* have both a clear socio-political standing and their authors are fictionists who write with a moral in mind. Their relevance to my work lies in this attitude of theirs.

In order to trace the ruptures and the continuities of the representations of Kurdishness in the literature of the Republican period and contemporary literature, I will analyze the literary works of these two writers, who write with a mission similar to the first period novelists Halide Edip Adivar and Esat Mahmut Karakurt. I now turn to their novels, *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece* which I see as very typical representations of the “Kurdish Question” as perceived within this period. However, first of all, I will briefly review the biographies of their authors, Zülfü Livaneli and Ahmet Altan.

A Biographical Sketch of Two Late Republican Writers:

Zülfü Livaneli and Ahmet Altan

Zülfü Livaneli

Ömer Zülfü Livaneli was born in Iğın, Turkey in 1946. He is a Turkish folk musician (singer and composer), a novelist, newspaper columnist and a film director who has been highly popular in Turkey. He is also a prominent left-wing and liberal politician and was a member of the Turkish parliament for one term.

After being held under military detention for three months during the coup of March 12th, 1971, he had to leave Turkey and flee to Sweden. After Stockholm, he lived in Paris and Athens, and he returned to Turkey in 1984. Being one of the foremost defenders of Turkish-Greek friendship, in 1986, he founded the Greek-Turkish Friendship Committee together with the Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis. In 1995, he was appointed as a Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO in recognition of his contributions to world peace. He still continues to work on UNESCO's Culture of Peace programs worldwide. In the 2002 Turkish elections, Livaneli was elected to the National Assembly of Turkey as the Deputy for İstanbul for the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP). In 2005, Livaneli resigned from the CHP in protest at "CHP's non-democratic and authoritarian system of politics". During CHP's 2005 congress he ran for the party's leadership, and had to step out from the race after seeing the results of the first stage of voting, as he had suffered a heavy loss. Despite his resignation, Livaneli continued to serve in the National Assembly as an independent MP until the end of that term. He was not elected again in 2007. He has been writing editorials for different Turkish daily newspapers since 1989.

His first novel *The Eunuch of Constantinople* (1996), his second novel *One Cat One Man One Death* (2001) and a collection of his stories titled *A Child in Purgatory* (1978) have been published in foreign languages. His third novel *Mutluluk*, published in 2002, is of the number one best-sellers in Turkey. *Mutluluk* made 44 editions and is recently adapted to cinema in Turkey. Livaneli's latest novel *Leyla's House* was published in Turkey in May 2006; as of today it's in its 45th edition.

Ahmet Altan

Ahmet Altan was born in 1950 in Ankara. He attended the İstanbul Kültür College (1970) and graduated from İstanbul University, Faculty of Economics in 1981. After working as a proof-reader at the Bilgi Publishing House, and as a correspondent for the American Associated Press News Agency, he started to work in the newspaper *Hürriyet*. He served at the service of foreign news. He worked as a columnist in the newspapers *Milliyet* and *Yeni Yüzyıl*, and as a producer and a presenter on private televisions. He has published eight novels and four collections of essays. As the son of a well known leftist politician and writer Çetin Altan, Ahmet Altan defines himself quite progressive, and he is persecuted by the courts for the articles he published in the Turkish press. All the Turkish newspapers have stopped publishing his articles since he wrote in *Milliyet* on April 17, 1995, a column titled “Atakurd” -- in which he speculates about the flip-side of the Republican project. The article asks the question about how Turkish people would react if they were living in a country called “Kurdiye”, ruled by the dogmas of a founding father called “Atakurd”, which prohibits the use of the Turkish language and represses all attempts of Turkish separatism, burning the houses of the Turkish peasants and torturing the Turkish “terrorists”. Because of this piece of political fiction, he got dismissed from *Milliyet* and he was sentenced to a suspended term of one year and a half in jail for having incited people to mutual enmity through discrimination against races and regions. Altan was also accused of "collaborating with the Kurdistan Workers' Party" (PKK) by publishing and criticizing a confidential army document (headed "Andıç") in 1998 in two articles.

Mutluluk by Zülfü Livaneli

The heroine of Zülfü Livaneli's *Mutluluk* is Meryem, a fifteen-year-old girl who lives in a rural village on the shores of Lake Van in Eastern Turkey. Her simple life changes dramatically after her uncle, a sheikh in a dervish order, rapes her. When she is found after the assault, it is apparent that something has happened to her, but Meryem will tell no one the name of her attacker. The village now considers her defiled, a disgrace to her family and in need of punishment. After the death of Meryem's mother during in childbirth some time earlier; Meryem's father remarries and he pays little attention to her. He is quiet and withdrawn, and dominated by his brother - the brother who is both Meryem's rapist and her jailer. She is locked in a dark barn for several days while the family decides on her fate. After being left alone for days, she comes to the painful realization that her family expects her to hang herself with a length of rope left on the dirt floor. But she is defiant. When she insists on living, a cousin, Cemal, is given the task of taking her to İstanbul and dispatching her there. Meryem is told that she will be taken to İstanbul, a shining city she envisions as located just over the nearest mountain. Many girls from her village have "gone to İstanbul", and she assumes it must be a wonderful place since not one has yet returned. Those girls, in fact, appear to be the victims of "honor killings".

The uncle's son, Cemal, is a 25-year-old soldier off fighting the Kurds. When Cemal's military service is over, he comes home to his village as a hero with nothing to do, and finds his cousin in trouble. His father, who had violated Meryem, charges Cemal with the task of executing his cousin's punishment. As he and Meryem begin their journey, they proceed through the marketplace where the townspeople have gathered, some weeping and others mocking her.

Then, the novel takes us to the cosmopolitan city of İstanbul, where women are hardly ever seen wearing the veil and often frequent the many posh restaurants and clubs. In İstanbul, a Harvard-educated sociology professor named İrfan, in his 40s, lives an “elite” life. Author of many books, İrfan hosts a radio show, and seems to enjoy success and jet-set freedom. He is married to a wealthy woman, Aysel, and lives a rich life. He is readily recognized in public because he is often on TV analyzing current events. He feels, however, that his life is a sham and that his observations are never original. He thinks to himself that he is “an Easterner when around Westerners and a Westerner when around Easterners” (Livaneli, 2005:19).¹⁰⁴ One day, he decides to take off and learn about himself. He rebels against the routine of his soulless life, deciding to leave his wealthy wife and İstanbul. He rents a yacht and sets sail on the Aegean all alone.

On the other side of the story, Cemal’s conscience won’t let him go through with it and he decides not to kill Meryem. Without knowing where they are headed, the two take off, fleeing because of the family imperative that they have violated. On the way they meet professor İrfan, who is fed up with bourgeois values and the phoniness of the big-city life. They join him on a trip in his boat along the coast of the Aegean Sea. This trip changes all of them but especially Meryem. During the journey, with the help of İrfan, she gets rid of her scarf; she starts to wear “modern” clothes, improves her reading and writing skills and learns to read maps. At the end of the novel, Cemal learns from İrfan that the rapist of Meryem is his own father. They have a big fight. After the quarrel, İrfan decides to go to İzmir to live with his mother a more humble life. Before he leaves, he gives all his money to Meryem. Meryem hands half of the money to Cemal in order to get rid of him and chooses to

¹⁰⁴ “Şarkta yaşayan bir garplı ya da kendisine garp dünyası kurmuş bir şarklı gibi karşılıyordu hayatı.”

live with a family that is also from the East. She starts to work with them at their pan cake store (*gözlemeci*) planning to marry their son Mehmet Ali with the hope of beginning a new life.

Representations of Kurdishness in *Mutluluk*

Different from İrfan's, Meryem's voyage toward 'happiness' doesn't begin as a deliberate choice. She is forcibly dragged to this journey after having experienced a life-changing event such as rape. At the beginning of the novel, the rules of the world that Meryem lives in and the woman's place in this world are depicted in detail. This is a patriarchal world where the 'moral codes' (*töreler*) are more important than everything. In the novel, these moral codes are defined as unchanging, imperious and as if they reign over 'the East'.

In *Mutluluk*, 'the East' is portrayed as a land where rational thought comes to an abrupt end, only to be substituted instead by a distinct set of patriarchal and religious values and ideas as the main cultural signifier in social and individual life. The author describes this break between the modern and non-modern mainly through portraying the women's place as inferiors within the society: "After the prayers of sunset, the women of the house would spread a cloth on the floor and serve dinner to the men and wait on them. Only they had been fed and the table cleared away could the women gather in the kitchen to eat the leftovers. If any of them talked or lingered too long over their food, Meryem's uncle would become angry. According to his understanding of religion, eating could be an act of sensuality. One ate in order to

live. It was a duty to be carried out in the least possible time” (Livaneli, 2006:13).¹⁰⁵

In such a patriarchal society, predetermined societal roles restrict what women can do, be, and act. Women are destined to be passive, meek, and submissive. They are also expected to strive for acceptance, and be more reserved and chaste. “According to Meryem’s uncle, all human beings were sinners but women were especially accursed. To be born a woman was punishment enough in itself. Women were devils, dirty and dangerous. Like their forerunners, Eve, all of them got men into trouble. Get them constantly with child and regularly give them a good hiding, for they are a disgrace to mankind. Meryem had heard this continually as she was growing up, and so she hated being a woman. She could cry out bitterly, ‘Dear God, why did you make me a woman?’ and constantly question it – until she was up to her neck in sin” (ibid: 8).¹⁰⁶ “They were human, and she was a transgressor. It was considered proper for her to cover herself and hide away, to serve others, and to be punished. This was the way things were. She was now one of these creatures called women, for whose transgression the world was doomed” (ibid: 9).¹⁰⁷ Two clear messages in these words are that women are untrustworthy and that they are dispensable. This hostility and disregard towards women is depicted as a major characteristic of the patriarchal ‘world of the East’. “In the village, women were not allowed to talk in the presence of men or eat with them. They had to hide their natural needs and conceal their

¹⁰⁵ *Akşam namazından sonra yere kurulan ve kadınların hizmet ettiği sofrada sadece erkekler yemek yiyor, bu arada kadınlar ayakta bekliyor, onların yemeği bittikten sonra sofradan arta kalanları götürdükleri mutfakta yemeye başlıyorlardı. Amca, yemek sırasında konuşulmasına ve yemeğin uzatılmasına çok kızardı. Onun din anlayışına göre yemek de bir çeşit bedeni zevkti, bu yüzden, ölmek için yapılması zorunlu olan bu iş, mümkün olduğu kadar kısa sürede bitirilmeliydi”*

¹⁰⁶ *“Amcasına göre insanların hepsi günahkârdı ama kadınlar iyice cehennemlikti. Bu dünyaya kadın olarak gelmek, cezalandırılmak için yeterliydi. Kadın şeytandı, pisti, tehlikeliydi, Havva anamız gibi, adamların başını derde sokardı; karnından sıpayı, sırtından sopayı eksik etmemek gerekirdi; çünkü onlar, insan soyunun yüz karasıydı. Meryem bunları duya duya büyüdüğü için dişli olmaktan nefret eder ve, “Allahım, beni niye kadın olarak yarattın?” diyerek kendisini boğazına kadar günaha sokacak sorular sorardı”*

¹⁰⁷ *“Onlar insandı, kendisi ise suçlu. Saklanması, örtünmesi, hizmet etmesi, ceza görmesi gerekiyordu; bunun başka türlü olması mümkün değildi. Dünya “kadın” denilen pis mahluklar yüzünden felakete sürüklenmişti”*

pregnancies. When a new bride got pregnant, she tried to keep it as a secret, though her mother-in-law would probably guess her condition from her growing appetite for pickles or pomegranate syrup. The girl had to continue working until the last day of her pregnancy without crying or complaining. When the labor pains started, the midwife would be summoned to do her job with minimum fuss” (ibid: 123).¹⁰⁸ In the world of the East women are praised for humility and discouraged in expressing any kind of strong sentiment. Girls are expected to remain quiet and composed: “I have been locked in that hole so many times! I was blamed for everything I did: Don’t laugh loudly, Meryem; don’t flirt, Meryem; you’re grown up now, Meryem; don’t play with boys!’ By command of her uncle, the bearded patriarch of the village, her family had stopped sending her to school after the first grade. It would be immoral for a girl to sit beside a boy, he decreed” (ibid: 98).¹⁰⁹

In the novel, Meryem is represented as ‘a helpless victim’ who obeys the commands of the patriarchal society. She embodies the patriarchal ideals of women. She is described as innocent, defenseless and helpless due to her dominating sheikh uncle, who is also her rapist. Due to patriarchal society’s focus on motherhood and chastity, women cannot acquire honor after it is lost. After the rape, according to the dominant patriarchal belief of women’s value being equivalent to their purity, Meryem becomes ‘tainted’ in the eyes of others. A mark has been placed on her once clean record of chastity. While her father and uncle discuss her future, Meryem says

¹⁰⁸ “(Kadınlar) erkeklerin yanında konuşamaz, yemek yiyemez, tuvalete gittiğini belli edemez, hatta gebeliklerini bile saklardı. Bir kız bir eve gelin gidip de hamile kaldı mı, bu ayıbı aylarca herkesten gizlerdi ve kayınvalidesi, ancak kızın turşu ve nar ekşisine aşırı düşkünlük göstermesi gibi belirtilerden anlayabilirdi durumu. Kız son gününe kadar sesini çıkarmadan, yakınmadan çalışmaya devam eder ve saati gelince eve gelen ebe, sessiz sedasız doğumu gerçekleştirirdi.”

¹⁰⁹ “Beni öyle çok izbeye kapatıldılar ki zaten! Ne yapsam suçtu: Yüksek sesle gülme Meryem, öyle kırıtma Meryem, artık büyüdüün, oğlan çocuklarıyla oynama Meryem, onlarla aynı okula gidemezsin Meryem. [...] Meryem’i ilkokul birinci sınıftan sonra okuldan almışlardı. Çünkü kara sakallarıyla herkesi korkutan amcası, ergenliği gelen bir kızın oğlan çocuklarıyla yan yana oturmasını, “zina” olarak görüyordu.”

nothing. Instead of identifying her rapist's, Meryem waits quietly as things are decided for her. She possesses a passive vulnerability, which is expressed through silence. Her salvation is not dependent upon her own behavior. It is dependent upon the male perception of her behavior. "It all depended on the head of the family, her uncle" (ibid: 11).¹¹⁰ This portrays the oppressive aspect of the Eastern/Kurdish patriarchal society based on gender segregation.

After a couple of days, finally Meryem's decision is taken by her family council. As she doesn't commit suicide, she is to be brought to İstanbul and killed there. This execution is charged to her cousin Cemal who has just finished his military service. In *Mutluluk*, Cemal is portrayed as a man who is proud of serving his country in the military. Military service is the major constitutive element of his character and it is as if he became someone, an individual after serving in the army. Military life is brutal, but Cemal takes pride in what he does. During his military service, Cemal fights against Kurdish guerilla in the mountains and he experiences all sorts of ghastly events. The military's practice of burning villages and forcing villagers to evacuate their houses, the 'PKK militants' murdering of civilians and his growing hatred towards PKK guerillas are things he gets used to. He dismisses his relationship with his childhood friend Memo, for now Memo fights for the PKK; just he dismisses his relation to Meryem, two people whom he grew up playing with. He strongly hates his childhood friend calling him "a bastard, murderer, and traitor" (Livaneli, 2006: 63).¹¹¹ "Cemal hoped that Memo and the rest of the guerillas would soon fall into the ambush and all die at the same instant. Memo was no longer a friend but a ruthless, bloodthirsty enemy intent only on slaughtering Cemal and his comrades. Cemal hated Memo more than any other terrorist and wanted him

¹¹⁰ "Her şey evin reisi olan amcasının kararına bağlıydı."

¹¹¹ "Köpek!" diye tısladı Cemal, "Azgın, kudurmuş, arkadaş katili, nankör köpek!"

punished” (ibid: 62-3). Memo is “cunning, ruthless, a fox” (ibid: 66).¹¹² When Memo chooses to fight against the state, Cemal’s feelings change completely towards his childhood friend. According to him, Memo, once his best friend, now deserves to die as a guerilla, since he is an enemy of the state. Cemal’s ceaseless desire to kill Memo and his venom towards him can be interpreted as a sign of his devotion to his duty, which is to protect the nation. Memo’s Kurdishness, which didn’t pose any problem in their relation until he joins the guerilla forces, now becomes the thing which separates them.

In the novel, Cemal is also portrayed as a quick-tempered man who shows deference to his father’s verdict. Beside his role as the protector of his nation, he is willing to be the protector of their family honor. The Sheikh says: “This girl is guilty in the sight of both God and man. If the bitch doesn’t wag its tail, the dog doesn’t follow... who knows what else she’s been up to on the sly? You know what the custom (*töre*) is, and it’s up to you to get things right” (Livaneli, 2006: 82).¹¹³ According to him, to kill someone was “a simple thing” because a human being was “a creature that took only a second to die” (ibid: 83).¹¹⁴ “Meryem had to be done away with, and he was the one chosen to do it. That was all. It was nothing to make a great song and dance over” (ibid).¹¹⁵ Cemal is depicted as a man who embraces the moral codes and customs. “He pitied the girl for a minute, but everyone knew that customs are customs and had to be followed. Meryem had no chance to survive. Even if her father forgave her, and the sheikh did not interfere, she still could not

¹¹² “Eşek Memo, ahlaksız Memo, tilki Memo!”

¹¹³ “Bu kız hem Allah indinde hem de kul gözünde suçludur. Kancık it kuyruk sallamazsa, erkek it arkasında dolanmaz. Kimbilir tenhalarda neler yaptı ki başına bunlar geldi. Törelerimiz iyi bilirsın. Bu pisliği temizlemek sana düşüyor.”

¹¹⁴ “insan dediğin nedir ki zaten. Bir saniyede ölüverirdi.”

¹¹⁵ “Küçük Meryem’in öldürülmesi gerekiyormuş, bu işi de onun yapması uygun görülmüş. Tamamdı o zaman. Bu işte öyle büyütülecek bir şey yoktu ki.”

live. Even if everyone in the village came together to forgive her, she couldn't be saved" (ibid).¹¹⁶ Here, in Cemal's words, moral codes and customs transform to something above the people, a transcendent principle which dominates the existence of all. For him, honor as a fundamental part of 'Eastern culture's centuries-old moral landscape, and are to be protected at all costs. Meryem was "a soiled, sinful woman, who had discredited his family" and should be dead. "His family couldn't survive such shame. For centuries, this crime had been dealt this way. This was God's will. It was his father's will. No one could defy God's rules" (ibid: 176).¹¹⁷ She was a "vile creature, bitch, disgraceful, disgusting, filthy, sinful thing!" (ibid).¹¹⁸

With all these thoughts in mind, Cemal brings Meryem to İstanbul. In İstanbul, they find one of their cousins Yakup who has migrated to İstanbul long ago. When Yakup asks the reason of their being in İstanbul, Cemal tells him that "while he was serving in the military, Meryem had been defiled. She had to be gotten rid of in order to cleanse the family honor" (ibid: 161).¹¹⁹ Thereupon Yakup says: "Just like the other poor girls... I know that when you live in the village, it seems like the right thing to do" (ibid).¹²⁰ But for him there is nothing right about killing someone. Furthermore, he himself had escaped from the "thick heads" of his villagers who are "unable to comprehend this" (ibid).¹²¹ "In fact, he had promised himself that he would never go back to live among those ignorant people. They had no idea of life

¹¹⁶ "Töre töreydi, herkes bilirdi bunu. Talihsiz kızmış diye düşündü ama Meryem'in yaşamasına imkan yoktu. Babası bağışlasa, amcası sesini çıkarmasaydı bile artık kız yaşayamazdı. Bütün kasaba birleşip affetseler yine olmazdı."

¹¹⁷ "bir kadındı, hem de lekelenmiş, boğazına kadar günaha batmış, ailesinin yüzünü yere indirmiş, isimlerini beş paralık etmiş, babasını ve amcasını rezil etmiş bir kadın. Aile bu utançla yaşayamazdı ve asırlardan beri bu işin kuralı konmuş, cezası belirlenmişti. Allah'ın isteğiydi bu; babasının belirttiği gibi Allah'ın kurallarına karşı gelinemezdi."

¹¹⁸ "rezil, aşağılık mahluk, manyak orospu, kepaze, iğrenç, kirli, günaha batmış"

¹¹⁹ "kendisi askerdeyken Meryem'in kirlenmiş olduğunu, ve törelere göre ortadan kaldırılması için ailenin karar aldığını"

¹²⁰ "Daha önce gariban kızlar gibi desene!" dedi. "Biliyorum, oralardan bakınca bu iş çok doğru görünüyor."

¹²¹ "Memlekettekilere bunu anlatmak zordu; onların köhne, geri kalmış kafalarına bunları sokamazdın."

outside of their small town” (ibid).¹²² Although his brother’s words seem reasonable to him, Cemal decides to take Meryem to a deserted viaduct and to fulfill his duty first thing in the morning. However, on the viaduct, Cemal’s conscience doesn’t let him to kill this childlike girl and he decides not to kill Meryem at the cost of transgressing the moral codes that he accepted without questioning.

Breaking the patriarchal law, Cemal and Meryem start to escape. With the help of a friend whom Cemal knows from military service, they find a job in a fish farm on the Aegean coast. And there they meet İrfan. In the novel, İrfan and his wife Aysel’s high class life is portrayed by their lifestyle and the venues they frequent: “They often ate out, preferring trendy gourmet restaurants favored by fashionable İstanbul society. Some of the restaurants were not that much different from those he visited with his wife every year in New York. Lately, they had been going to Changa, a fusion restaurant with minimalist décor. Paper Moon used to be a popular spot, but the Kurudal’s circle did not frequent in much anymore, claiming it had become ‘too crowded and too common’. They rarely went to the Bosphorus fish restaurants either, favoring sashimi and sushi over traditional bluefish and turbot” (Livaneli, 2005:18).¹²³ For İrfan, İstanbul with its “dismal shantytowns, home to millions of migrants from Anatolia” is inhabited by the people from every walk of

¹²² “Ama ahdetmişti, o karanlık kafalı insanların topraklarına bir daha dönmeyecekti. Oradakiler aptaldı, dünyanın dışındaydı, hayatı bilmiyorlardı.”

¹²³ “Akşam yemeklerini genellikle dışarda yiyorlardı: İstanbul’da son zamanlarda açılan güzel lokantalardan birinde toplanıyorlardı artık. Ya fusion mutfağında başarılı olan minimalist döşenmiş Changa’yı, ya “gourmet yemekte üstüne olmayan Down Town’ı ya da Circus’u seçiyorlardı. Bir ara Paper Moon çok rağbet görüyordu ama çevreleri, “artık oranın ayağa düştüğünü, herkesin oraya gittiği”ni söyleyerek başka yerlere yönelmişti. Eskiden çok sık gittikleri, Boğaziçi’ndeki balık lokantalarına daha ender uğruyorlardı. Şehri kaplayan Japon lokantaları yüzünden hepsi sashimi ile suşiyi, lüfer ve kalkan ızgaraya tercih ediyorlardı artık.”

life; “rich and poor, refined and coarse” (ibid: 19)¹²⁴ and İrfan himself is “one of the most learned, most esteemed, and most successful of its inhabitants” (ibid).¹²⁵

With all his qualities and tastes, Livaneli depicts İrfan and his wife Aysel as perfect exemplars of ‘White Turk’ identity. “The terms ‘White Turk’ or ‘Euro Turk’ emerged in the early 1990s, and were first used by left-wing journalists in Turkey as a critical term to describe the lifestyles or the political affiliations of the new middle classes. Social class -specifically, a bourgeois class- identity is central to the formation of ‘white Turk’ identity” (Sedef Arat-Koç, 2007:37). It is also a highly culturalized notion of class that demarcates the lines of inclusion and exclusion. “White” status requires urban—preferably Istanbulite—as well as “modern” and “Western” identities” (ibid). The White Turks mainly belong to upper or middle strata; they have bodies in good shape and polite manners.

While İrfan’s reified tastes like classical music, sushi and wine as well as his economic status make him an ideal ‘White Turk’, they also separate him from “dark crowds of the shantytowns”. One of the most striking examples regarding his discriminatory attitude toward ‘black Turks,’ is his thoughts on ‘*Arabesk*’. In a taxi, when the driver who is “a skinny youngster with a thin moustache and who must have come from the east” (Livaneli, 2006: 70)¹²⁶ plays arabesque at full volume, İrfan thinks that “this urban kitsch music had no harmony”. According to İrfan,

Arabesque symbolized the country’s decadence. The music was not genuine like the blues, the fado, the tango, or the rembetiko, all of which expressed a cry of oppression. Arabesque –the music of migration to the big city- was not outcry of a wounded man but whimpering of one pretending to be injured. [...] Their music reflected the unreliability of the Middle East. It was a

¹²⁴ “Şehri kuşatan milyonlarca Anadolu’lu göçmenin kaçak ve çirkin yapılarla dolu mahalleleri ile [...] her cins insanın harman olduğu, zengin ile yoksulun, rafine ile barbarın bir arada yaşadığı bir şehirdi.”

¹²⁵ “ bu şehirdeki en başarılı, en saygın, en bilgili ve en incelmış insanlardan biriydi.”

¹²⁶ “Kavruk, ince bıyıklı, doğudan kente göçmüş olan”

deception, a lie, and an example of how the weak were trampled on as they bowed hypocritically in front of the powerful (ibid).¹²⁷

In fact, these lines reflect Livaneli's own ideas related to Arabesque and its relation to identity question. In one of his articles, he writes: "In every country there are popular music trends, lower cultures and even widespread lack of good tastes however, for the musical evaluation in that countries, the "slat" is put to the highest not to the lowest. The subject Turkish intellectuals are discussing because of the arabesk trend is not music, rather it is the identity problem of a country placed between east and west and unable to integrate anyone of them. Arabesk is always emphasizing our eastern identity, the attitude of our people for traditional and the gulf between this and our intellectual tend towards west since the Tanzimat period... There is the dominance of the southeast at every section of the life of Turkish people from moustache to kitchen, from accent to thinking manner, to the relationship between man and woman" (Livaneli, in Güngör, 1993: 11-2). Although, İrfan seems happy living his extraordinarily rich and luxurious 'White Turk' life, one night he wakes up and finds himself in a panic attack. In fact, what suffocates him is his 'White Turkishness': "His 'successful life' was utterly insignificant. He was shit, and his friends were, too. The places they frequented were shit, as well. İstanbul itself was a rubbish heap [...] It was full of ignorance and filth. And the restaurants of fetid areas, his alleged friends thought they had become members of the elite just because they paid hundreds of dollars for a bill that included carpaccio, pesto,

¹²⁷ "Ülkedeki çürümenin en büyük göstergesini bu müzik olduğuna emindi. Blues, fado, tango, rebetika gibi bir eziliş feryadı değildi bu müzik türü; onlarla arasında bir içtenlik farkı vardı. Adına arabesk denilen, bu kente göç müziği, yaralı bir adamın haykırışı değil, yaralanmış taklidi yapan bir adamın sahte çılgınlığıydı. (...) Bu seste Ortadoğu'ya özgü bir kaypaklık, bir kandırmaca, bir yalan, güçsüz olanı ezme, güçlüünün önünde ise el etek öperek riyakârca eğilme demek olan bi yaşam üslubu vardı."

sashimi, or other dishes with foreign names. He could bear neither his surroundings nor his life of imitation anymore” (Livaneli, 2006: 47).¹²⁸ That is how he decides to change his life and to set sail in search of ‘happiness’.

In the course of his search for happiness, İrfan encounters Cemal and Meryem. We learn that İrfan in fact has always wanted to go to the East; because he plans to write a book on Eastern Anatolia. However, he cannot fulfill his plan because of the war in the East of Turkey: “At first, he doubted that the villages had really been burned down and depopulated, but later accepted this fact when he saw it mentioned in the supervisory reports of the prime ministry. Unfortunately, the struggle against terrorism was carried out in similar ways all over the world. Although it would have been better had this devastation not taken place, every state had the legitimate right to protect itself against armed rebellion” (ibid: 70).¹²⁹ İrfan doesn’t believe that the villages are burnt down and depopulated unless it is confirmed by a state institution. After naming the Kurdish struggle as ‘terrorism’ and ‘rebellion’, he says that he finds the state’s violence legitimate. In this sense, İrfan echoes the dominant discourses related to the Kurdish issue. Considering that there is a “bloody war in the east”, İrfan has always thought that it would be impossible to go there. “In spite of having been to many foreign countries, he would probably die before seeing the eastern part of his own” (Livaneli, 2006: 168).¹³⁰ ‘Luckily’ Cemal

¹²⁸ “Son derece başarılı sayılan yaşamı, aslında koskoca bir hiçti; sıfıra sıfır elde var sıfır! Bektan bir adamdı kendisi, çevresi de bektandı, İstanbul da [...] cinayet, cehalet, pislik ve görgüsüzlük dolu bu şehirde bektandı. Ve bu kokan semtlerdeki lüks lokantaların, yüzlerce dolar ödenerek kalkılan masalarına dizilmiş carpacciolar, pestolar, saşimiler ve bu yabancı isimli yemekleri yedikleri zaman kendilerini elit hisseden insanlar, yani çevresi fena halde içini daraltmaya başlamıştı.”

¹²⁹ “önceleri köylerin boşaltılıp yakıldığı iddialarını kuşkuyla karşılamış ama sonra bu gerçeğin Başbakanlık Denetleme Kurulu raporlarında da yer aldığını görünce, işin doğru olduğuna inanmıştı. Bunun üzerine, “Ne yazık ki dünyanın her yerinde terör mücadelesi ancak öyle yöntemlerle yapılabilir, diye düşünmüştü ve, “Keşke olmasaydı ama her devletin, kendisini silahlı kalkışmaya karşı koruma hakkı meşru sayılmalı,” demişti

¹³⁰ “Doğu’da kanlı bir savaş vardı ve daha yıllarca oraya gidebileceğini hiç sanmıyordu. Dünyada birçok ülkeyi görmüştü ama Türkiye’nin Doğu bölgelerini görmeden ölecekti.”

and Meryem, “two people from Eastern Anatolia” start to work on the boat. “İrfan had not been able to go there, but the *atmosphere* of the east, which was a necessary part of his book, had come to him” (ibid: 215).¹³¹ With a highly orientalist perspective, İrfan thinks that Cemal and Meryem would provide the necessary exotic setting for his book. And in return, İrfan would provide Meryem with necessary means to make her adapt to a ‘western’ life.

It is significant that much of İrfan’s attention focuses not so much on the male representative of the east, Cemal, but on Meryem, the female. In his seminal study of colonialism as a practice of reorganizing space and bodies and reframing the world, a process inseparably material and mental, Timothy Mitchell argues that “a woman is both a ‘locus of the country’s backwardness’ and a sphere of transformation to be reconstituted and raised up onto the plane of enlightened rationality”, (Mitchell, 1991:127) Echoing the logic of colonial Egypt, in *Mutluluk* İrfan’s project to change Meryem from an ‘easterner’ girl to a ‘modern’ woman by focuses, predictably, on the highly charged piece of clothing, the head scarf.

In due course, Meryem finds that in the world of West, there is “something different from her own” world (that is the world of East), “a freedom atmosphere, full of life and joy” (Livaneli, 2006: 216).¹³² “In this environment full of new and charming things” (ibid: 217)¹³³, Meryem decides to “take the first step in testing her desire to belong to this new way of life” (ibid: 218)¹³⁴ and she loosens the knot of her scarf. She lets the wind finish the job she has started but unfortunately, the wind takes the scarf and plasters it to the rudder. At this point, İrfan takes the scarf and

¹³¹ “İşin bir başka ilginç yönü de, karşısına Doğuluların çıkmış olmasıydı. Kendisi Doğu Anadolu’ya gidemiyordu ama kitabı için gerekli olan Doğulu atmosfer bu gençlerle teknesine gelmişti.”

¹³² “Kendisinininkinden çok farklı, rahat, özgür, yaşam dolu, eğlenceli bir şeyler.”

¹³³ “bu yeni ve hoş şeyler atmosferinde”

¹³⁴ “Yeni hayatında adım adım ilerlemesini sağlayacak iradenin ilk büyük çıkışını yapacaktı.”

releases it into the wind by saying: “Why do you cover your head? You have beautiful hair. Let it breathe” (ibid).¹³⁵ By the help of İrfan, Meryem is finally a girl without a headscarf. “Later, one by one, she would shed the rest of her clothes –the faded cotton dress, the black plastic shoes that now seemed so out of place” (ibid).¹³⁶ İrfan frees both Meryem and Cemal from their “odd-looking clothes” (ibid: 223).¹³⁷ He takes the girl to the market in Bodrum to buy some new things; cotton t-shirts, white pants, jeans shorts, bathing suits and Nike trainers. Her appearance change and the next thing to transform is her mind.

To this end, the professor who discovered that Meryem has difficulty reading begins to tutor her. He also teaches Meryem about seamanship and reading maps. She is an intelligent girl, who grasps new information much faster than Cemal: “Meryem had become one of those girls she had so longed to resemble. She felt indebted to the professor for everything, especially for releasing her from the scarf” (Livaneli, 2006: 224).¹³⁸ “A miracle” takes place for her, “a miracle that had always been reserved for others, never for her” (ibid: 224).¹³⁹ According to Meryem, İrfan is a miracle for her, a holy man, Hızır, “who helps people only if they really are in desperate positions” (ibid: 224).¹⁴⁰ İrfan, on the other hand regards “the experiences of the past weeks as a sociological experiment” (ibid: 225).¹⁴¹ He gets fascinated by

¹³⁵ “Bunu niye takıyorsun ki? diye sordu. Ne güzel saçların var. Bırak hava alsınlar.”

¹³⁶ “Daha sonra sıra öbürlerine de gelirdi nasıl olsa. Mavi çiçekleri solmuş bileklerine kadar inen pazen entarisi, çirkin siyah lastikleri hiç uymuyordu oraya.”

¹³⁷ “o acayip giysiler”

¹³⁸ “o çok özendiği kızlardan biri olup çıkıvermişti. Bunun için profesöre minnet duyuyordu; zaten kendisini daha önce de başörtüsünden kurtarmıştı.”

¹³⁹ “o hep başkalarına olan ve kendisine görünmeyen mucizelerden biri”

¹⁴⁰ “kul sıkışmayınca Hızır yetişmezdi.”

¹⁴¹ “Son haftalarda yaşadıkları, bir sosyoloji deneyine dönüşmüştü.”

“the human ability to adapt to new conditions” (ibid)¹⁴² and he admires “human beings’ ability to get used to good things” (ibid: 226).¹⁴³

Although Meryem gets used to her new, ‘westernized’ life, when she makes acquaintance with a family, who are also from Eastern Turkey, she feels at home for the first time. Despite İrfan’s being good to her, Meryem actually feels nervous and uncomfortable when she is near him. However, when she is with the family from the east, she feels “at home, as if she was in her own part of the world” (ibid: 259).¹⁴⁴ When Meryem wants to help the mother of the family to cook pancakes, the woman offers her some new clothes which remind her of her old home-town: “She was amazed at how comfortable she felt in these clothes” (ibid: 260).¹⁴⁵ With these clothes, “she had caught a whiff of her hometown” (ibid).¹⁴⁶ “The clothes she had struggled so hard to get rid of now seemed to embrace her like old friends” (ibid).¹⁴⁷ From now on, “she would never give up wearing new clothes, which would always give her a sense of freedom, but it would be pleasant to wear her old ones from time to time” (ibid).¹⁴⁸ Wearing those clothes is not the only change in Meryem: “As soon as she stepped into the family’s garden, she felt secure. She spoke without embarrassment, and even her accent smacked of the east again” (ibid: 260).¹⁴⁹ At the end of the book, Meryem chooses to live with this Easterner family, to marry their son whom she likes and to continue baking pancakes. By performing her ‘Easterner’

¹⁴² “insanoğlunun çevresine uyum yeteneğine”

¹⁴³ “insanoğlunun iyi şeylere çabuk alışmasına”

¹⁴⁴ “doğulu ailenin yanında ise kendini müthiş rahat hissediyordu. Sanki Ege kıyılarında değil de memleketindeydi, ailesinin yanındaydı”

¹⁴⁵ “bunları giydiği anda içine yayılan ferahlığa kendisi de şaşıtı.”

¹⁴⁶ “memleket kokusu yükselmmişti.”

¹⁴⁷ “Kurtulmak için onca mücadele verdiği giysiler şimdi onu sarıp sarmalayan eski bir dosta dönüşmüşlerdi.”

¹⁴⁸ “Yeni giysilerinden hiçbir zaman vazgeçmeyecek ve ömür boyunca bu ferahlatıcı şeyleri giyecekti ama arada sırada şalvarı ayağına geçirmesi de hiç fena olmuyordu doğrusu.”

¹⁴⁹ “Meryem o bahçeye adımını attığı anda rahatlıyor, değişiyor ve kendisini güvende hissediyordu. Şivesi bile eski günlerdeki gibi oluyordu.”

identity in a Western locale, Meryem, in a sense, incorporates the long awaited and sought after East-West synthesis in her own biography. Although İrfan initiates her transformation, her final incarnation occurs within this Easterner family by her deliberate choice.

En Uzun Gece by Ahmet Altan

En Uzun Gece opens in the Eastern Turkey when Yelda, the major character of the novel, joins an international research group founded by the European Union convened to investigate honor killings. This group is composed of a Spanish social anthropologist Leopold, a German psychiatrist Gunter, an English doctor Amy, a French behavioral researcher Jacques, an Italian sociologist Beatrice, an intendant Taner and finally Rojda and Zerrin, who help them with their relations with people. Although the aim of this research is explained in the novel as an effort “to understand how women are treated in this society and to reveal the sociological reasons of honor killings” (Altan, 2005: 39),¹⁵⁰ except two visits to the villages, this ‘expert team’ does nothing in the name of research. Yelda, who is an economist educated in the United States, decides to join this group not only to explore the sociological dynamics of honor killings, but also to escape from her problematic love affair with Selim. Selim is a history professor in a university also educated in the United States. Although Yelda goes to ‘the East’ in order to be away from Selim, they always speak on the phone and Selim learns everything happening around Yelda.

During her stay in the region, Yelda befriends a Turkish soldier whose name is Cafer and also has a brief love affair with Taner, the attendant. But more

¹⁵⁰ “*bu toplumda kadınlara nasıl davranıldığını, töre cinayetlerinin sosyolojik nedenlerini anlamak*”

importantly, she meets a twelve year old boy whose name is Heja, and his mother. She loves Heja so much that she convinces Selim to take Heja and his mother with her when she returns to İstanbul. However, the course of the events changes dramatically when Heja gets killed in an anonymous attack. Selim who learns about the incident on the phone decides to go to the region in order to support Yelda and to take her to İstanbul with him; but he himself also gets killed with a bullet of obscure origin in the car on his way to the region.

Representation of Kurdishness in *En Uzun Gece*

As I mentioned earlier, the protagonist of the novel is Yelda. Yelda is depicted as a hardworking and ambitious woman. After graduating from American College, she goes to the United States with a scholarship to study Economics. She graduated with an honors degree. Then she gets her PhD in Social Psychology and becomes a lecturer in the same university. She is defined as “the free, powerful, skeptic woman of the Western world” (Altan, 2005: 109).¹⁵¹ Furthermore,

Her God-given privileges, beauty, intelligence, diligence, composure, talent of understanding all the themes which she normally knows nothing about, her ability to cast a spell on people with her unshakeable trust which can not be weakened by any title, location or fortune turns into an Olympus goddess like arrogance and even if she has the intelligence to hide this self-enthusiasm, which was growing day by day since her childhood, it was spreading over her soul and creating her biggest weakness (ibid: 21).¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ “Batılı dünyanın özgür, güçlü, kuşkucu kadını”

¹⁵² “daha doğuştan kendisine bağışlanmış bütün olumlu ayrıcalıkları, güzelliği, zekâsı, çalışkanlığı, soğukkanlılığı, kendisine en yabancı konuları bile süratle kavrama yetisi, hiçbir unvan, makam, servet karşısında sarsılmayan güveniyle insanları etkileme gücü onun ruhunun derinliklerinde ancak Olimpos tanrıçalarında rastlanabilecek bir kendini beğenmişliğe dönüyor, bunu saklamasını sağlayacak bir zekâsı olmasına rağmen kendine duyduğu hayranlık gizlendiği yerde çocukluğundan beri her gün biraz daha büyüyerek bütün ruhunu sarıyor ve onun en büyük zaafını oluşturuyordu.”

Similar to Yelda, Altan describes Selim, the other protagonist of his novel as follows:

Selim was the son of a diplomat, so grew up while he was traveling from one country to another. He visited lots of different countries like Peru, Mongolia, Bolivia and Guinea, each of which had nothing to do with the other; learned so many extraordinary and weird things about the life, accustomed to try different cuisines, drink several liquors, to be treated differently, and as a result, a snobbery interpenetrated into his personality which comes from underestimating the people who have no idea about all these things. For carrying this snobbery as if it was a plate that only the wise people could see which was hung over the entrance door of a elite clubhouse, it gives him a seductive flavor just like a sweet-scented spice that was added to a good meal (ibid: 48).¹⁵³

In *En Uzun Gece*, Yelda and Selim are depicted as perfect exemplars of ‘White Turkishness’. They are illustrated as urban, well-educated, white, tall, and beautiful/handsome. In addition, as exclusion of and contempt for backward and uncivilized people is an important characteristic of ‘White Turkishness’, their conceit, snobbism and narcissism make them perfect ‘White Turks’. They are represented as westerners who differentiate themselves from Kurdish characters and ‘the East’ is anonymous with backwardness, patriarchy and danger for them.

In *En Uzun Gece*, the narrative is located in the southeast Turkey – in Uçurumköy, a village of Mardin, which is re-named as Civeleksu by the state. It is a “half-emptied, dark village surrounded by mountains” (Altan, 2005: 25)¹⁵⁴ and in this grim village what gives relief to Yelda is their office, which reminds her of the United States; “all of those reminded her of her first days of college in United States. She was as if she came to another country in this abandoned, dark village and she

¹⁵³ Selim, “diplomat çocuğuydu, Peru, Moğolistan, Boliviya, Gine gibi birbirine hiç benzemeyen ülkelerde dolaşarak büyümüş, hayatla ilgili çok tuhaf, alışılmamış bilgiler biriktirmiş, değişik mutfaklara, değişik içkilere, değişik davranış biçimlerine alışmış, bunları bilmeyen diğer insanlara karşı gizli bir küçümseme beslemesinden kaynaklanan bir züppelik de kişiliğine sinmişti. Bu züppeliğini seçkin bir kulübün kapısına asılmış küçük bir plaket gibi ancak bilenlerin görebileceği bir zarafetle taşıdığından, züppeliği iyi bir yemeğe konmuş güzel kokulu bir baharat gibi onun kişiliğine çekici bir tat katıyordu.”

¹⁵⁴ “yarı yarıya terkedilmiş, dağlarla çevrili karanlık köy”

was familiar with this country, she felt secure” (ibid: 22).¹⁵⁵ Yelda is so ‘westernized’ that only when her environment resembles the office to America she feels safe.

In the novel, the East is delineated as an exotic, mysterious, culturally different and backward place, as “a devouring abyss” (Spurr, 1993:95). The centrality of space and landscape manifests itself in *En Uzun Gece* right after the opening of the narrative, as Altan unveils his sense of Eastern landscapes. The first thing he takes in is the trope of awe. The ‘imposing wilderness’, to borrow from Neumann’s (1998) title, takes its place in Altan’s consciousness in *En Uzun Gece*:

The branches which were bended over them with all their splendor, the lilac-colored darkish arbor, the great silence which was letting them hear nothing but the tires crushing the sand with a delicate crackle, were subsiding them into a magical sea in which they were meant to spend the rest of their lives; making everything smaller, even themselves, come down and moving them away from the life they had just a moment ago, putting a long distance. They felt an eminent power as if they were in a sanctuary (Altan, 2005: 84).¹⁵⁶

This rhetoric of awe serves several purposes. As Noyes (1992:182) put it, “Colonial discourse must construct a boundless, featureless, homogenous space which may serve as the stage upon which colonial desire may produce its fantasies”. The vast, silent and incalculable surroundings of the region were used to mark the primitiveness and backwardness as in all colonial narratives. As Rebecca Stein (2003) notes, it is “the sign of a place outside time and history, waiting, indeed beckoning, for Western intervention and development”.

¹⁵⁵ “bütün bunlar ona Amerika’daki üniversitenin ilk günlerini hatırlatıyordu. Terk edilmiş karanlık köyün içinde başka bir ülkeye gelmiş gibiydi ve bu ülkeyi tanıyordu, kendini güvende hissetmişti”

¹⁵⁶ “Bütün görkemiyle onların üstüne doğru eğilen dağlar, içine girdikleri eflatunumsu koyu gölgelik, yumuşak bir çırtıyla kumları ezen lastiklerin sesinden başka sesin duyulmadığı büyük sessizlik sanki onları bundan sonra bütün hayatlarını içinde geçirecekleri sihirli bir denizin dibine doğru çekiyor, kendileri dahil her şey küçülüyor, önemsizleşiyor, bir dakika önceki hayatlarıyla aralarına geniş bir mesafe giriyordu. Bir mabede girmiş gibi çevrelerinde yüce bir gücü hissediyorlardı.”

Ahmet Altan's Turkish characters are depicted as if they do not just seek otherness; but primitiveness while traveling toward the East. They want to enter an "anachronistic space", to imagine that in traveling to a far away and exotic location, they have also traveled to an earlier point in the history of civilization.

"When they were walking around the town, suddenly the time changed; they belonged to another epoch and that fast journey in time pulled Yelda away from the daily reality. They were wandering in another century; a past centenary" (ibid: 245).¹⁵⁷ "When they were walking around those streets, they felt like not only their bodies but also their souls leapt over the threshold time" (ibid: 246).¹⁵⁸

Once again, it becomes clear that these eastern locales represent "anachronistic space" for them:

They were flying over an amber-colored dusty world. The church and chapel ruins, dating back thousands of years, which were situated over the slopes of the earthen red peaks, devastated walls, caves with window-like holes, the stairs that were carved into the rocks, the straight roofed adobe houses which were located under them with an incapability of being understood the time they regarded, the past or today, deep canyons, oleaster trees whose leaves were covered with dust and bodies bended in process of senescence were flowing under them. Just to return back from this journey she felt like she had to try for thousands of years, millions of ages, and she was becoming a stranger to her own life, being estranged from herself (ibid: 5).¹⁵⁹ As they entered the garden a moist chill from another century, just like the trees, that felt like no season could change, embraced them; it had a savor of grass, olive and old soil. For a moment they thought that a Byzantium bishop, wearing a redbud colored long cloak, would appear talking to a Byzantium officer wearing gold-mounted eagle figured sandals and silver helmet; the garden,

¹⁵⁷ "Şehrin sokaklarında dolaşmaya başladıklarında birden zaman değişti, başka bir çağa geçtiler ve zamanın içindeki bu hızlı yolculuk Yelda'yı günün gerçeklerinden koparıverdi. Geçmiş yüzyıllardan birinin içinde geziyorlardı."

¹⁵⁸ "Bu sokaklarda dolaşırken onların ruhları da zamanın eşiğinden atlayıp bir başka çağa geçmiş gibiydi."

¹⁵⁹ "Kehribar rengi tozlu bir dünyanın üstünde uçuyorlardı. Kil kırmızısı tepelerin yamaçlarındaki binlerce yıl önceden kalma kilise harabeleri, yıkık duvarlar, duvarlarına pencere biçimi delikler açılmış mağaralar, kayalara oyularak yapılmış basamaklar, bunların altına yerleşmiş ve bugüne mi yoksa geçmişe mi ait olduğu anlaşılamayan düz damlı kerpiç evler, derin vadiler, yaprakları tozlanmış, gövdeleri ihtiyarlıktan eğilmiş iğde ağaçları hızla akıyordu altlarından. Bu yolculuktan geri dönebilmek için sanki yüzlerce yıl harcaması, çağları aşması gerekiyormuş gibi hissediyor, bütün hayatından ve kendinden uzaklaşıyordu."

was taking them back to the forgotten times, as if it was a door leading them through the fantasies (ibid: 89).¹⁶⁰

In the novel, which takes place in “the world of East”, “the land is also described as ‘harsh’ and ‘unforgiving’, and associated with the ‘unyielding moral codes’ of Eastern people. So the ruggedness/harshness of the land is repeatedly verbalized, not to underscore the inner strength of individuals, who are capable of surviving in it (as the typical hero of the Western), but to emphasize the necessity of communal codes based upon tribal loyalty, and the perils of violating them. The moral codes of Eastern people are as merciless and ruthless, as the natural landscape itself” (Öncü, 12-3). “The mountains are barbarizing you, just like they do to everyone else. In this uncivilized geography all the emotions stumble and lose their natural course” (Altan, 2005: 188).¹⁶¹

In *En Uzun Gece*, designed to illustrate the feudal and patriarchal system still dominating in the region by using a highly debated issue such as honor killings, Altan finds a means of narrating the unrest and the insecurity of the region. In the novel, the main actors of the narrative are Turkish people, rather than the Kurds living in the region. Altan does include the Kurdish people in his narrative, but they are never individualized and developed as characters. They are, rather, narrative agents whose actions move the stories forward and develop the authenticity and exoticism of the story’s setting. In the novel, Kurdish men are represented as people

¹⁶⁰ “Bahçeye girdiklerinde, ağaçlar gibi başka bir yüzyıldan kalmış, hiçbir mevsimle değişmeyeceği duygusu uyandıran nemli bir serinlik onları usulca içine aldı, çimen, zeytin ve eski toprak kokuyordu, bir an ağaçların arasından erguvan rengi harmaniyelerini giymiş bir Bizans piskoposunun, sandallarında altın kakmalı kartal dövmeleri olan gümüş tolgalı bir Bizans subayıyla konuşarak çıkacağını sandılar, bahçe hayallere açılan bir kapı gibi onları unutulmuş zamanlara doğru çekiyordu.”

¹⁶¹ “Dağlar herkes gibi seni de yabanileştiriyor. Bu vahşi coğrafyada neredeyse bütün duygular sapıyor, doğal mecralarının dışında akıyordu.”

who stand guard over the moral codes related honor and they continuously verbalize something called “our moral codes” (*bizim törelerimiz*) which are based upon the gender hierarchies of a patriarchal order. “They define a communal “us,” which threatens to disintegrate unless its moral codes are vigilantly upheld and protected” (Öncü, 14-5).

In one of the villages they have visited what the agha of the village says to them is an appropriate example for such a verbalization. He says:

Women are the men’s treasure, backbone of the family; thus, if you touch your women your family will collapse... Will you ever forgive the demolisher? All in all, the daughter is entrusted to the father’s safekeeping, one must always take special care of something entrusted to him; God puts her in the care of the father and he is responsible from the daughter just until he gives her away to the real owner, to her husband. [...] In my opinion, the man whose daughter or wife is besmirched and stained has to kill the sullying first, not the woman, and then commit suicide... What kind of a man is he? What kind of a man would walk around with his head up, posing like a good husband, after his women are stained; his child is harmed? We don’t appreciate it. God forbid, not in our village... We know nothing about shooting a woman (Altan, 2005: 91–2).¹⁶²

Or similarly when Yelda and Taner talk to a man who has killed his sister after she is believed to have "shamed" her family by rejecting an arranged marriage, and for choosing her partner, he similarly gives the definition of “moral codes” by saying: “The daughter is the reputation and honor of a family. When she runs away she destroys the honor of the family. Her desire for independence would shame her family. You can’t even show your face. [...] She is your life and soul... You took the life of your life and soul... But what could you do, it was your destiny; it is the fate;

¹⁶² “Kadın erkeğin hazinesi, ailenin direği, kadınına dokunurlarsa ailen çöker... Aileni çökerteni affeder misin? Hakeza, kız evlat, Allah'ın babaya bir emaneti, sen onu asıl sahibine, erine verene kadar o emanetten mesulsün.[...] lakin kadınına kızına dokunulan bir adam, bana sorarsan, kadını kızını değil, önce dokunanı, sonra da kendini vurmali... O nasıl bir erkek olmalı ki, kadınına kızma dokunulduktan sonra, evladına kıydıktan sonra ben bir erim diye başı dik dolaşabilsin? Biz bilmeyiz böyle şeyler, Allah da göstermesin, bizim köyümüzde olmaz. Kadın vurmak bilmeyiz biz...”

she is a daughter and has to die, you are man and you have to kill” (ibid: 228).¹⁶³ When they meet another agha after the honor killing of a girl who has raped by “terrorists”, the agha is described as a man who defends the moral codes. He says: “A woman has nothing except her honor; her virginity. A woman who is dishonored, who loses her virginity would give nothing but shame. She is killed for honor; the boy cleaned the stained reputation of the family” (ibid: 178).¹⁶⁴ Or an old men says; “This kind of stuff happens everywhere and it happened here too. It was an affair of honor. To clean one’s reputation is not a crime, there is no need to be ashamed of” (ibid: 261).¹⁶⁵

As the Kurdish men are depicted in blind deference to moral codes and traditional values, Kurdish women are described as voiceless and obedient. In the novel, during one village visit, Kurdish women’s place in the tribal and patriarchal ‘world of the East’ is narrated by Ahmet Altan. When Yelda does not see any women among the Kurdish men who are lined according to their rank within the tribe, she asks “Where are the women? I can’t see any woman around”¹⁶⁶ the answer is significant and telling: “They are at the back” (ibid: 43).¹⁶⁷ Within the patriarchal ‘world of the East’ they are at the back of the stage both literally and metaphorically.

In *En Uzun Gece*, the most important Kurdish character is certainly Heja. When they meet for the first time, Yelda learns the tragic story of his family. We are told that Heja’s mother had four sons. Two of them get killed in the mountains when they were fighting against Turkish army. One of her sons also gets killed in an

¹⁶³ “Kız evin namusu... Kaçtı mı, evin namusu gider. İnsan içine çıkamazsın.[...] O senin canın... Canının canını almışsın... Ama ne yapacaksın, yazan böyle yazmış yazgını, o kızdır ölecek, sen erkeksin öldüreceksin.”

¹⁶⁴ “Bir kadının namusundan başka neyi var? Namusunu kaybeden kız ailesine utançtan başka ne verir ki? Çocuk, ailesinin utancını temizledi.”

¹⁶⁵ “Oldu burada birseyler. Namus davasıdır, namusu korumanın ayıbı yok”

¹⁶⁶ “Hanımlar nerede? Hiç hanım göremiyorum etrafta.”

¹⁶⁷ “Onlar arkadalar.”

extrajudicial killing and after this event Heja's mother stops talking. She never says a word from then on. Altan reifies Kurdish women's voicelessness in Heja's mother.

However, these Kurdish women change their attitude while talking about honor crimes. They are depicted as the ones who provide real information whereas men are defined as nothing but mere liars.

The women will explain it all, said Jacques, men will *lie*. While I am listening to their lies, you will talk to the women and find out the truth. We've got an advantage here; most of those people, especially the men, don't name it as a crime; it is a crime for us but not for them. That is why they will explain their reasons. They will not give us any specific information about these incidents, *they will lie* but they will give us a clue about the man's behavior. In fact, I hope that women would be straight forward with us (ibid: 39-40).¹⁶⁸ Or; They are nothing but mere liars; let me tell you the truth. The father takes the bride price; in this village they pay a sum to the bride side for marriage. Indeed, he sells his daughter as if he was selling merchandise. The young villagers don't have money, how on earth would they find so much money... The landowner's son or the old man has the money. And the landowner's son would marry a landowner's daughter, so the peasant girls are left to elderly villagers. A young girl... A lively, restless person... She will boil over like a kettle. What would she do with an old man; soon she will fall for a young one and runaway... Those people would find them and would shoot them... And in the end, with the pride in their eyes, they would name it 'honor killing' (ibid: 261).¹⁶⁹

Although the claim of researchers is to make a sociological investigation, their interpretations related to 'honor killings' are shallow and it is as if they echo dominant discourses. In a dialogue, the researchers say:

So why on earth would those men take women's loyalty as an affair of honor... They steal, murder, lie, cheat on everybody, violate another's rights, crawl to the vigorous. But when it comes to woman their masculinity and

¹⁶⁸ "Kadınlar anlatacak, dedi Jacques, erkekler yalan söyleyecek. Ben erkeklerle konuşup yalanlarını dinlerken siz kadınlarla konuşup gerçekleri öğreneceksiniz. Bizim buradaki avantajımız şu, o insanların, özellikle de erkeklerin çoğu bizim suç olarak gördüğümüz davranışı suç olarak görmüyorlar, onun için bu cinayetlerin nedenlerini daha kolay anlatırlar. Herhangi bir olayla ilgili somut bilgi vermezler, yalan söylerler ama genel erkek davranışı hakkında ipuçları vereceklerdir. Kadınların daha açık sözlü davranacaklarını umut ediyorum doğrusu."

¹⁶⁹ "bunlar yalancidir, ben size işin aslını söyleyeyim. Başlık parası alır kızın babası burada. Mal gibi satar yani... Köylünün gencinde para olmaz, nereden olsun... Para ya ağa oğlunda ya ihtiyardadır. Ağa oğlu ağa kızı alır. Köyün kızı köyün ihtiyarına kalır. Kız genç... İçi fıkırdar, semaver gibi kaynar, eti soğumuş ihtiyarı netsin, gönünü bir gence kaptırır, kaçar... Bunlar da onları bulup vurur... Sonra da kasıla kasıla namus davası derler"

their reputation comes back to their minds. These things happen not only in this town but also in the whole of the country. How come they think they can clean up their wretchedness, their immorality? How on earth could they believe in that? (ibid: 40)¹⁷⁰ It is like a ritual, a festival of sacrifices... It reminds me of the ritual human sacrifice which is practiced in old religions. Before the murder, they organize a family council, have a cup of coffee, make decisions and prepare for the ritual... To be forgiven of all their sins they spill the blood of the one they love... They purify with the slaughter, depurate the soul (ibid: 40-1).¹⁷¹ Do these people really feel this way? Zerrin said ‘No’; ‘it is just a cover-up, a wrap to overlap and cover the entire the immorality... They murder to sweep the depravity under the carpet... Nobody questions the robbery, thuggery and the decadence, if you kill your unfaithful women... It seems like everybody made a secret agreement about committing ‘honor killing’... Kill your daughter or wife, and then, we will tolerate all your sins... If somebody doesn’t kill the guilty daughter they will put him under a ban, humiliate him for the fear of violating the feudal agreement and letting all the sins come into open. Using the disloyalty of woman as an excuse, men curtain off their immorality just to behave in amoral (ibid: 41).¹⁷²

In the novel, Kurdish women are described as trapped in a traditional culture, family tyranny and a grinding gender inequality. The previous ‘honor killing’ representations show Kurdish women as passive victims of patriarchal system of the East and deserving liberation. In this sense, they fit quite neatly into dominant discourses related to the “Kurdish Question”. However, the only victims of the East

¹⁷⁰ “Neden bu erkekler kadın sadakatinden başka hiçbir konuyu namus meselesi saymıyor? Hırsızlık yapıyorlar, cinayet işliyorlar, yalan söylüyorlar, aldatıyorlar, başkasının hakkına tecavüz ediyorlar, kendilerinden güçlüler karşısında yaltaklanıyorlar ama erkeklikleri ve namusları sadece kadın konusunda akıllarına geliyor. Ayrıca bu sadece bu bölgede değil neredeyse bütün ülkede böyle. Zavallılıklarını, ahlaksızlıklarını kadın kanıyla temizleyebileceklerine onları inandıran ne?”

¹⁷¹ “Sanki bir tür kurban ayini gibi... Eski dinlerdeki tanrılara kurban sunma ayinlerini andırıyor biraz bu davranışları... Cinayetten önce aile meclisi toplanıyor, kahveler içiliyor, ortak karar alınıyor, ayine hep birlikte hazırlanıyorlar sanki... Bütün günahlarından affedilmeleri için sevdikleri birinin kanını döküyorlar... Döktükleri kanla arınıyorlar, ruhları temizleniyor...”

¹⁷² “Böyle mi hissediyorlar acaba?”

Zerrin hayır, dedi, böyle hissetmiyorlar, bir ayine de benzemiyor... Bu bir kılıf, bütün ahlaksızlıkların üstünü örten bir örtü... Bu cinayetleri diğer ahlaksızlıklarını gizlemek için işliyorlar... Sadakatsiz olduğuna inanılan kızını ya da karını öldürürsen artık bir daha kimse senin hırsızlığını, katillliğini, ahlaksızlığını sorgulamaz... Herkes bu konuda gizli bir anlaşma yapmış gibidir, kızını ya da karını öldür, diğer suçlarını hoş görelim... Eğer birisi, köyün ortaklaşa suçladığı kızını öldürmezse, o zaman onu bütün köy aforoz eder, aşağılar çünkü bu feodal anlaşma bozulmuş olur, herkesin diğer suçları ortaya çıkar. Erkekler özgürce ahlaksızlık yapabilmek için kadınların sadakatinden bir ahlak perdesi örüyorlar ahlaksızlıklarının önüne”.

are not women. On the contrary, for Yelda the real victim, the person who deserves to be saved most is Heja, the little Kurdish boy.

Yelda is deeply moved by Heja's story and she feels pity for him. However, Heja seems resigned to his fate and expresses this fact with a Kurdish proverb. He says: "the male lamb is ready for slaughter" (ibid: 78).¹⁷³ The explanation of this saying is given by Altan: "Man is born to be dead" or "They have to die in a war. It signifies that the real man knows he has to die" (ibid).¹⁷⁴ Heja's resigned character is seen as the sign of "that feudal decency which will surprise her when she finds out in the manners of all the people who lives in that area" (ibid).¹⁷⁵ In other words, his Kurdish culture, and the rules of the land where he lives in commands him resignation. Thereupon, Yelda feels an irrepressible desire to lift Heja out of the rut and take him to İstanbul. With the motherly instinct that she feels for the very first time, she wants to hug him but more importantly "she felt like she can dedicate herself to this big eyed boy she has just met and work until her last breath just to provide him a comfortable life" (ibid).¹⁷⁶ She thinks: "I shall take him out, run away from here and start a new life with him" (ibid: 79).¹⁷⁷ When Yelda shares her thoughts with Selim, he also supports her.

Henceforth, Yelda gives her full energy to Heja's development. First, she takes care of his physical well-being: "Your face looks so pale, and you have dark circles under your eyes. Don't you sleep well? You are nothing but skin and bones

¹⁷³ "erkek kuzu kesimlidir"

¹⁷⁴ "erkeklerin ölmek için doğduğunu ya da erkeklerin bir savaşta ölmesi gerektiğini söylüyor. Erkek adam ölmesi gerektiğini bilir gibi bir anlamı var"

¹⁷⁵ "bölgedeki birçok insanda gördüğünde çok şaşırtacak olan o feodal terbiyeyle büyümesi"

¹⁷⁶ "daha biraz önce tanıdığı bu koca gözlü oğlana bütün hayatını adayabileceğini, ona iyi bir gelecek sağlayabilmek için bütün varlığıyla uğraşabileceğini hissediyordu"

¹⁷⁷ "Onu alıp hemen buradan gitsem, onunla bir hayat kursam."

my baby. Don't you eat well? Do you eat meat?" (ibid: 130).¹⁷⁸ Also "Yelda asked Amy to examine Heja and Amy made the consultation as if she was doing it against his will" (ibid: 274).¹⁷⁹ She develops an attachment to Heja in a very short period and his future becomes the main issue for her. She wants him to go to good schools and to receive a better education and the first step of it is of course literacy. Yelda starts to teach him to read and write and Selim is willing to teach him English. "I will teach him English", said Selim. Yelda said: 'Wait; let him learn to speak proper Turkish first'. Then, 'I will teach him English and you will teach Turkish' told Selim excitedly. Subsequently Yelda added: 'And my poor baby will runaway with suffocation'" (ibid: 291).¹⁸⁰ Besides educating him, she also continuously talks about İstanbul, the sea and the future awaiting for him. "Yelda was teaching him the letters; telling him about İstanbul, the sea and the steamboat" (ibid: 274).¹⁸¹ However, Heja is not alone in life and when he tells Yelda that he would not leave Mardin without his mother, she accepts to take her with them with a good grace.

But what is the reason for her commitment to save Heja and his mother? Ahmet Altan gives the answer of this question in the novel as: "People, who can not deal with the real tragedies they are suffering, sometimes find a remedy in recovering somebody else's pain" (ibid: 131).¹⁸² In fact, Selim and Yelda consider Heja as a cause to restore their problematic relationship. He is "their new dream", (ibid:

¹⁷⁸ "Senin yüzün çok solgun, bak gözlerinin altı da morarmış. Uyku uymuyor musun sen? Sen zayıfsın kuzu. İyi beslenmiyor musun sen? Et yiyor musun?"

¹⁷⁹ "Yelda Amy'den Heja'yı muayene etmesini istemişti, Amy de neredeyse zorla Heja'yı muayene etmişti."

¹⁸⁰ "Ben ona İngilizce öğretirim, dedi Selim. Yelda, dur, önce doğru dürüst bir Türkçe öğrensin, dedi. Bunun üstüne Selim, sen Türkçe öğret, ben İngilizce öğreteyim deyince, zavallı kuzucuğum da bunalıp kaçsın sonra diye ekledi Yelda."

¹⁸¹ "Yelda ona harfleri öğretiyordu, İstanbul'u, denizi, vapurları anlatıyordu."

¹⁸² "çektikleri büyük acılardan kurtulamayan insanların bazen çareyi bir başkasını kurtarmakta, bir başkasının acısını dindirmekte bulması"

290)¹⁸³ “a magical purgatory which will rest them in their way from hell to heaven”, (ibid: 291)¹⁸⁴ “a bridge which will carry them to the future” (ibid: 301).¹⁸⁵

Later in the novel, Yelda and Selim’s plan regarding the future, changes dramatically with a tragic event that destroys their bridge to the future. Heja is found dead in the river. When Yelda asks about the reason of his death, her friend lieutenant Cafer says: “They were in doubt about him; they thought he was a courier” (ibid: 296).¹⁸⁶ Against Yelda’s accusatory manner, Cafer takes an oath upon his honor and assures Yelda by saying: “None of the military officer’s would do something like that Yelda... None of them would kill a child” (ibid).¹⁸⁷ According to Cafer, Yelda should blame “the ones who use such a young boy as a courier”¹⁸⁸ (that is the guerillas) rather than blaming the military. Here, with Cafer’s words, Altan refers to the counter guerillas¹⁸⁹ without uttering its name. Moreover, with Heja’s death, Ahmet Altan echoes Uğur Kaymaz’s death, another twelve year old boy who was killed by the police in Mardin, Kızıltepe.¹⁹⁰ Later in the novel, Altan makes reference to this event. “The report he has read two months ago, which was about a twelve year old boy who got shot seventeen times in a raid, now, turns into a reality about his life” (ibid: 305).¹⁹¹ In the novel, the political aspect of Heja’s death is not

¹⁸³ “onların yeni masalı”

¹⁸⁴ “onları cehennemden cennete giden yolda dinlendirecek büyüğü bir araf gibiydi”

¹⁸⁵ “Selim’le kendisini geleceğe taşıyacak bir köprü”

¹⁸⁶ “Çocuğun kuryelik yaptığından kuşkuluyorlardı.”

¹⁸⁷ “Hiçbir üniformalı subay yapmaz bunu Yelda... Bir çocuğu öldürmez.”

¹⁸⁸ “o yaşta bir çocuğu kurye olarak kullananlar”

¹⁸⁹ The “counter guerilla” which is a military establishment outside the chain of command of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) and an extra-state organization within the state, is thought to be responsible for several extrajudicial killings in the region.

¹⁹⁰ On November 21, security forces shot dead Ahmet Kaymaz, a villager displaced from KöprülÜ village in Mardin province, and his twelve-year-old son Uğur Kaymaz who were suspected of being “terrorists”. The provincial governor issued a statement that “two terrorists have been captured dead following a clash. However, there was no evidence to suggest that Kaymaz and his son had been involved in an armed clash with security forces. 12 year-old Uğur received thirteen bullet wounds to his body and hands and his father Ahmet was shot four times.

¹⁹¹ “Daha iki ay önce okuduğı, Mardin’de on iki yaşında bir çocuğun bir baskında on yedi kurşunla vurularak öldürüldüğü haberi şimdi onun hayatında bir gerçek olarak belirliyordu.”

discussed thoroughly. Instead, its impact on Yelda and Selim's life is emphasized.

Without Heja their future becomes as dark as 'the world of East'.

The only tie between them and the future, the only thing which was creating them a common future, converting all the filthy visions of the past into a unique and luminous light and illuminating their future with it just like a prism was Heja and with his death, Selim and Yelda's hopes of getting back together died too. They have lost the only child who could be the mediator between Selim's personality, which was hardened like a stone with the desires of his heart, and his wounded ego which will never permit him to dream. [...] There was no future without Heja (ibid: 306).¹⁹²

After Heja's death, Selim decides to go to the village to commiserate and to take Yelda with him. Selim and Yelda meet at the airport but on their way to the village, Selim is shot. The readers are not told neither about the identity of the shooter nor the reason of his murder. In my opinion, Ahmet Altan kills Selim in order to emphasize the hazardous characteristic of 'the world of East'. In other words, Selim's death contributes to the establishment of aforementioned "rhetoric of negation" and to 'the East's construction as a "death zone" in the reader's mind.

Throughout the novel, although Ahmet Altan touches lightly on subjects like extrajudicial killings, forced evacuation of the villages: "This village was evacuated, all the peasants were gone and they let them come back only very recently" (ibid: 10);¹⁹³ the Turkification of the village names: "All village names are like this, they have changed the Kurdish name and renamed them in such a strange way" (ibid:

¹⁹² "Onları geleceğe bağlayan, onlara ortak bir gelecek yaratan, geçmişin bütün kirli görüntülerini bir prizma gibi tek ve parlak bir ışığa çevirip geleceklarını o ışıkla aydınlatan Heja'nın ölümü [Selim'in] Yelda'yla yeniden bir araya gelebilme ümitlerini de öldürmüş gibiydi. [Selim'in] yüreğinin istekleriyle, sertleşip bir taş gibi katılaşmış kişiliğinin, hiçbir hayale izin vermeyen yaralı egosunun çatışmasında tek uzlaştırıcı olabilecek çocuğu da kaybetmişlerdi. [...] Heja'sız bir gelecekten konuşamazlardı."

¹⁹³ "bu köy boşaltılmış, köylüler gitmiş, daha yeni dönmelerine izin verildi"

38);¹⁹⁴ village guard system and thousands of people's being killed in the region, he never discusses them in depth. These issues remain as elements used in order to complete the picture of 'the world of East' that Altan tries to depict as the background of the love affair. They all remain insignificant compared to the intensity of Yelda and Selim's relational dilemmas.

Ahmet Altan's novel *En Uzun Gece* is a good example of how a distant corner of the country, "the East", is perceived by the people living in the West. The environment into which the researchers arrive is portrayed as unknown and dangerous, and one can easily get lost in its vast space. The new surroundings are not only unfamiliar, but also menacing. By contrasting the setting with the West, a clear distinction between center and periphery is made. Further on, we see that the Kurdish people are not treated as equal to the researchers; they are rather inferior to them. There is a plenty of evidence in *En Uzun Gece* showing that the 'Westerners' superiority was obvious, thus pushing the Kurdish people aside to the margin.

¹⁹⁴ "bütün köy isimleri böyle burada, hepsinin Kürtçe adını değiştirip böyle garip isimler verdiler"

CHAPTER FOUR

LOOSE ENDS, LOST FAITHS: REPUBLICAN PROJECT UNDER QUESTION

Following the previous two chapters, which sought to perform close reading of the four novels central to my thesis, this chapter aims to further analyze these novels both separately and in terms of their relationship to one another. To this end I will first analyze the two novels of the early Republican period in terms of their commonalities and differences in the narrative representations of Kurdishness. I believe that this analysis will reveal the dynamics of imagining the East and Kurdishness characteristic to the early Republican period in which these novels are produced. Following this, I will perform a similar kind of analysis for the two late Republican period novels. Finally, I will conclude the chapter with a section in which I analyze all four novels in relationship to one another, in order to see the ruptures and continuities in the main tropes of representation of Kurdishness and of the East prevalent in all novels that become traceable in light of a cross-reading of the novels and their periods.

Representations of Kurdishness in the Two Novels of the Early Republican

Period: *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*

Halide Edip Adivar's novel *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and Esat Mahmut Karakurt's novel *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* are two important novels of the Early Republican period that both deal with the "Kurdish Question." Both of these novels are set in Eastern parts of Turkey (Diyarbakır and Ağrı) when Kurdish rebellions are about to break out, and

both end in the West (İstanbul). The two rebellions narrated in the novels are the Sheikh Said Rebellion (roughly 1925) and Ağrı Rebellion (roughly 1930). In the novels, a heroic mission is ascribed to the novel's male, Turkish soldiers, who are described as upright, perfect, flawless individuals. The constitutive outside of these characters are rebellious Kurdish men who are depicted as the source of absolute evil. At the same time, Kurdish women take the role in these novels of the victim in need of protection and rescue. In both novels, Turkish women are also featured with a mission as equally positive as that of the Turkish men, but this time less about bravery and military action, and more about a motherly, fostering role of civilizing and educating Kurdish characters into modern subjects.

Both novels' language and the adjectives employed to describe the Kurds can, without exaggeration, be called racist. Rescuing Kurdish women and children from the ascribed savagery of the East and of Kurdish men via marriage, and bringing them to the West for rehabilitation is the major trope of these novels. In the end, the rescue missions are accomplished, the Turkish soldier marries the Kurdish woman and they all move to İstanbul, to a place both spatially and temporally far away from the East's presumed backwardness. Thus both narratives reach a resolution. This is a point that requires close attention, because both novels are written in a period when the newly established Turkish nation-state was trying to form an ethnically homogenous and centralized state populated by loyal, self-sacrificing citizens. As part of the broader national project of building the image of a powerful, omnipotent, all-encompassing nation-state, the nationalist elite and the writers of the age made use of the soldier figure (who represents the state) and produced narratives that close with a narrative resolution that draws the story safely into the narrative fold of the nation. The assimilation of different ethnic entities in the process of building the

Turkish nation-state is echoed in these novels through the incorporation of Kurdish women and children into the national body of Turkishness via marriage and education. On the other hand, ‘dangerous others’, the ones thought to pose a threat to the state and to Turkish modernization, are expelled from the scene again by the heroic actions of the soldier figure. The ones that are incapable of assimilating to Turkishness (that is the ones who proved their disloyalty by rallying against the state) are subjected to discriminatory citizenship practices--as happened in history. As Üstel points out, “loyalty” at once becomes the transcendent principle determining who may be counted within Turkishness. Thus the power of the nation-state, reified in the Turkish soldier figure, is emphasized. The nation-state’s promise to save, to transform its citizens, and its commitment to progress are reiterated as the underline messages of these novels.

Alongside the affirmation of the Republican project is the strong denial of the legitimacy—or even the mere existence—of political claims in the east. Consequently, in *Zeyno’nun Oğlu* and in *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*, the Kurdish Question is depicted simply as a matter of banditry, a depiction that echoes official state discourse of the era. Both Adivar and Karakurt in undermining the ethno-political aspect of the issue, depict Kurdish women as helpless victims of ‘custom’ and ‘tradition’ that characters are portrayed as blindly adhering to in the locality they live in (East), and Kurdish men as savage rebels who are incapable of assimilating to Turkishness. It is not a stretch to say that such representations open up intervention as a possibility for the state, the most important mission of which is seen to bring civilization and modernity to its citizens (and this link between representation and the justification for intervention is hardly a matter of the past). The necessity of military interventions and discriminatory practices, which link the imaginative space

of the novel to real political process, and in so doing, push us to question the usefulness of thinking of imagination and reality, the mental and the material, as separate in the space of sociopolitical practice (see Mitchell 2002: 19-53), are illustrated in the sensual space of prose and their reality seems to be proven through these literary representations.

Throughout the first period novels, Kurds as the ultimate other are represented in two distinct ways. First is the *other* as victim in need - often a Kurdish woman who is saved by a Turkish man, usually an army officer. The savior is allowed to play the hero's role in the novel, since nationalist literature in need of dramaturgy often looks for heroes and "good Samaritans". Second is the *other* as a problem or as a threat: often a Kurdish man representing cultural backwardness, who is seen as a criminal and who encounters difficulties in integration. To put it in another way, one can say that the dominant discourse defines Kurds as: either as "those that should be saved from the hands of the negative other and normalized", or, in the event that this is not possible, as "those to be exposed, denounced and penalized" and "to be further marginalized" according to the crime they have committed or have a potential to commit (Alankuş-Kural, 1995: 95).

According to Stuart Hall "identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. It is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its *constitutive outside* that the positive meaning of any term –and thus its 'identity'- can be constructed" (Derrida, 1981; Laclau, 1990; Butler, 1993, cited in Hall, 2002: 5). In her novel *Zeyno'nun Oğlu*, Halide Edip tries to construct Kurdish Zeyno as the modern Turkish woman's other. As Sirman puts it "Kurdish Zeyno, the peasant woman [...] serves as the constitutive outside of modern Turkish female subjectivity" (Sirman, 2000: 267).

Halide Edip opposes Kurdish Zeyno who is “an uneducated woman, whose devotion to her son and his father is a product of her motherly instincts rather than her mind”, to modern, Turkish Zeyno, who “sets the example of the new proper femininity through restraint, reflexivity, duty and compassion” (ibid: 263).

People, who are in any way significantly different from the majority – ‘them’ rather than ‘us’ - are frequently exposed to a *binary* form of representation. “They seem to be represented through sharply opposed; polarized, binary extremes – good/bad, civilized/primitive, ugly/excessively attractive, repelling-because different/compelling-because-strange-and-exotic. And they are often required to be *both things at the same time!*” (Hall, 1997: 229, emphasis in original).

Similarly, in Esat Mahmut Karakurt’s *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* the difference between the depiction of Zeynep before and after her “taming” points to the binary difference between “our” women and “theirs.” Through her taming by way of self reflection and cooperation with the Turkish army, those characteristics defining the constitutive outside of the Turkish identity are exorcised out of the “savage girl” of the mountains. Saved from the other within, Zeynep becomes normalized, gets married to a Turkish army officer, moves to İstanbul, and becomes one of “us”.

However, the matter of otherization by constituting binary oppositions and “constitutive outsides” is complicated by the introduction of hybridity in the narrative. Homi Bhabha (1994) charts the hybrid subject as a split and mobile subject, located in ‘third space’: an ‘in-between space’ that disrupts binary oppositions between ‘self’ and ‘other’ (38). In that sense, hybridity inherits ambivalence, thus a possibility for resistance in itself. Child Haso, in Adivar’s novel *Zeyno’nun Oğlu* appears as the personification of the hybrid subject. The novel chooses to resolve the disruptions introduced by child Haso’s hybridity, to the binary

oppositions of Kurdishness and Turkishness, by way of him suppressing other parts of himself to perform a single identity in the end. Halide Edip makes child Haso deny his undeserved Kurdish identity and closes the possibility of resistance originating from hybridity. Haso perfectly embodies the Turkishness- Kurdishness tension that he inherits at birth.

In addition to being the cultural hybrid, child Haso also appears as the racial mimic man. In *Location of Culture*, Bhabha states that in the colonial situation mimicry emerges "as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (19). The mimic man, the nonwhite native, does not "re-present" but rather repeats and imitates the discursive effects of colonial (or racist) discourse; mimicry is an effect of colonial discourse. On the one hand, the colonizer demands that the other approximate, through mimesis, the norms of the colonizing power, norms associated with whiteness (20). On the other hand, in order to continuously naturalize, justify, and authorize his power, the colonizer must constantly maintain the difference between himself, as a white man, and the other. In other words, colonial discourse moves between the recognition of cultural and racial difference and its disavowal. According to Bhabha, there is an ambivalence, a difference, at the "origins" of colonial discourse's authority. By rearticulating colonial "presence in terms of its otherness, that which it disavows," the mimic man can potentially disrupt the self-grounding assumptions of whiteness (and colonialism itself), disclosing the way in which otherness always inheres in presence. Mimicry is a hybrid site and can lay bare the way in which the colonial presence "is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (21).

However, in the case of child Haso, mimicry is neither a flawed identity imposed on the colonized nor a strategy of anti-colonial resistance. Halide Edip makes use of the hybridity of child Haso, which complicates the distinction between Kurds and Turks, only as something that needs to be surpassed, in order to maintain the reformed control of the centralized nation-state. "The urchin mimic man embodies symbolic ambiguity not to subvert [...] authority but to enhance it" (McClintock, 1995: 70).

Similar to the mimic man and the concept of mimicry, another theme that complicates the neat cut definitions of "us" and "them," the "normal" and its "constitutive outside," is the existence of characters in Halide Edip's novel who fall into the category of what Chakrabarty calls the "split subject". Chakrabarty (1992) explains how the subject of Indian history articulates itself through a double bind: "On the one hand, it is both the subject and the object of modernity, because it stands for an assumed unity called the 'Indian people' that is always split into two- a modernizing elite and a yet to be modernized peasantry. As such a split subject, however, it speaks from within a meta-narrative that celebrates the nation state; and of this meta-narrative the theoretical subject can only be a hyperreal "Europe," a "Europe" constructed by the tales that both imperialism and nationalism have told the colonized" (18).

The first seventy years of the Turkish novel, up to the 1950s, according to Moran, deals mainly with westernization, with modernization or with what we can call the East-West problematic that the country came face to face with. Chatterjee notes that anti-colonial nationalism created its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society and this, in turn, required the division of the world of social institutions and practices into two distinct spheres:

The material is the domain of the ‘outside’ , of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology -- a domain where the West has proved its superiority and the East had succumbed. In this domain, then, western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, was an ‘inner’ domain bearing the ‘essential’ marks of cultural identity. The greater one’ s success in imitating Western skills in the material domain therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one’s spiritual culture (Chatterjee, 1986: 941).

Although Turkey had not been colonized, right from the beginning, this particular feature of anti-colonial nationalism was also implicit in the process of Turkish modernization. Accordingly, the basic point that preoccupied the Turkish elite was the question of where and how to draw the boundaries of Westernization /modernization. It is not a coincidence that the first Other of Turkish novels is “ the dandy” , the effeminate over-Westernized Ottoman young male (Brummett, 1998: 83). In the novels of the age explored, when Turkish men became over-Westernized they lost their true essence and manhood and cultural spirit becoming effeminate. When women became over-Westernized they wallowed in materialist greed (Moran, 1977), and eventually lost their chastity and virginity (Finn, 2001: 547). Overall over-Westernization was interpreted as a menace leading to the demasculinization of the culture and feminization of the Ottoman youngster at a time when the society itself was going through profound transformation. The writings of the cultural elite of this era mirrored the main issues of the time (Timur, 1991) and a severe anxiety triggered by this notion of loss, turning them into ‘micro’ fathers within and above the fictive worlds they constructed vis-a-vis their readers (Parla, 1998; Yaraman, 2001).

In light of these discussions we see that Halide Edip, in her novel, uses two meta-narratives in order to create a third self-meta-narrative. First meta-narrative is a Westerner meta-narrative created by using hyperreal Europe. Second is the meta-

narrative of Kurdishness which the Republican elite inherit from the Ottomans, only to later translate it into racist terms. For Halide Edip, there are two different Europes, two different types of Westernization. One type is reified in Mesture Hanım who is westernized simply by imitating the West, which is the reason of her corrupt and impure state. The second type is reified in Mazlume and child Haso. By using these two types of meta-narratives, Halide Edip constructs a third meta-narrative between East and West. This meta-narrative is “İstanbulluk”, which is both within and outside of East and West.

The term “split subject” employed by Chakrabarty gains a different form in the construction of “İstanbulluk”. What Halide Edip suggests is to be neither Easterner nor Westerner; but to be “İstanbulu”. To put in another way, the split subject should remain faithful to his/her essence while correcting the defects of this essence with westernization and at the same time he/she should not totally be a westerner. This subject thus becomes modern, westernized, but also a hybrid. Turning to the first group under the leadership of Mesture Hanım, one can see the ridiculous positions both men and women are assuming simply to be considered “Westernized”. There are many criticisms against the Western world in the novel, and the main character who raises these critiques is Saffet, known to be one of the oldest members of *Türk Ocağı* – a well-known nationalist association. Based on the theories of some Western thinkers, Saffet envisages that Western civilization is bound to collapse. Saffet explains the features of a Turkish patriot as follows:

For me, a good nationalist is the man who doesn't hide himself abjectly, put the mask of other nations on his face. I think he is the Turkish man who defends himself, adapting the new form of the world and in this novelty, being an example for the others with his mind and soul, dignity and confidence at the same time. Would you like to see those examples? Here

they are; one of them is Mrs. Mazlume and the other; Haso child whose eyes are shining with the God-given talent.¹⁹⁵ (Adivar, 1996: 227)

“İstanbulu” Zeyno is an exemplar of such a subject as Mazlume. On the contrary, Kurdish Zeyno symbolizes an archaic, uncivilized, nomadic system. Kurdish Zeyno--who is opposed to the modern, Turkish Zeyno—is a hyperreal representation, as she is a constitutive part of the Kurdishness meta-narrative created by “İstanbulu” Halide Edip. What Halide Edip proposes is an authentic subject, who belongs to the category of “İstanbulu”. The reason for this subject’s being caught in this category is the fear from the undesired aspects of both the West and the East.

As opposed to the complications of hybridity, mimicry and split subject to the narratives of “otherization” and “constitutive outside” that we trace in Halide Edip Adivar’s novel *Zeyno’nun Oğlu*, Esat Mahmut Karakurt’s novel *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* appears as a more intact narrative devoid of such complications underlining the blurred zones in-between Turkishness and Kurdishness.

Representations of Kurdishness in the Two Novels of the Late Republican Period: *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece* as Sites of Othering

In *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece*, two significant novels of the late Republican period, we trace three major forms of “othering” towards Kurdish characters and Kurdishness. First is the Turkish characters’ depiction as ‘White Turks’ and the deployment of ‘White Turk’ discourse more generally. Second is, honor killings’ being framed as a matter of Eastern (thus Kurdish) tradition and the deployment of

¹⁹⁵ “İyi bir Türk ulus severi, bence, başka ulusların yüzünü ucuz bir maske halinde suratına takmayan adamdır. Bence o, kendi yüzünü koruyan, fakat dünyanın yeni gidişinde, insanlığa aklı ile, kalbi ile, ağırbaşlılığı ve güveni ile örnek olan Türk’tür. O örnekleri görmek istiyor musun? İşte, biri Mazlûme Hanım, biri de Tanrı’nın vergisini gözlerinde taşıyan Haso çocuk”.

the “discourse of tradition” more generally. Third is the spatial demarcation of the East as a symbolic geography located in the margins, marking the ‘outside’ of the nation.

The emergence of ‘White Turk’ discourse, which stands at the basis of the formation of Turkish protagonists in both *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece*, can be traced to the late 1990s. This period corresponds to Turkey’s full-scale immersion in capitalist globalization and the implementation of neoliberal policies. “White Turk” ideology combines neoliberalism, pro-“Westernism,” and culturalism—specifically, neo-Orientalism in its approach to Turkish society” (Arat-Koç, 2007: 40). According to Arat-Koç, “neoliberalism dates to the post-1980 period in Turkey, i.e. the period following the last military coup that Turkey experienced. Orientalism, on the other hand, has a long history in the country, dating at least to the early Republican period in the 1920s, if not to the late Ottoman era. Orientalism has for a long time been common sense in most Turkish intellectuals’ understanding of Turkish society and the nature of its problems. In defining the specificity of a “White Turk” discourse, it is important to remember that the “old” element of Orientalism gains new meanings and dimensions as it articulates with neoliberalism” (ibid: 40).

According to Arat-Koç, “as an identity, “White Turkishness” involves two complementary and inseparable dimensions of identification and differentiation. First, it involves material connections to Europe and the United States as well as an identification with a certain conception of “the West”—as both the center and the standard of “civilization,” and also as the center of global capitalism. Second, it involves differentiation and distancing of self from the “others”, those who seem to be standing in the way of connecting with “the West.” What makes this differentiation and distancing distinct from the earlier Orientalist and elitist

discourses in Turkey is that the “white Turk” discourse takes an explicitly arrogant and aggressive approach toward the “other Turks” who do not belong in their vision of the new, modern Turkey” (Arat-Koç, 2007: 40).

This new modern, Turkish identity is defined as “Euro Turk” by its supporters and “White Turk” by its critics, with reference to its elitism. This new image of Turkish man generally illustrated as urban and well-educated is based on the exclusion of and contempt for backward and uncivilized people. The ideal physique of the “White Turk” has been defined as blond, “modern-looking” and well-groomed and without moustache (Bali 2002; Kozanoğlu 1995).

The first person who introduced the concept of “Euro/White” Turks and its opposite “Black” Turks was Çetin Altan, Ahmet Altan’s father who is a well known columnist and a controversial figure Turkish political-intellectual circles. He compared the ‘white’ and ‘black’ Turks and defined ‘white’ Turks as people who have higher economic means and cultural capital and who are assimilated into Western culture. On the other hand, Black Turks or *maganda* are people, who usually have a moustache, who live in respect of *alaturka* norms, who are ill-mannered and do not pay attention to (high) culture (Altan, 1992). According to Öncü, (2000) a few years ago the word *maganda* was used to describe people who have migrated from the villages to cities and were not able to “adjust”. This name was given to them by the people who have the hegemonic power to define and describe the “ideal modern individual”. By these kinds of definitions, the borders between civilized and vulgar, high and low are drawn and everyday life operates within such distinctions.

In the 1990s “the whole framework in which “self” and “other” and “friend” and “foe” were defined, changed. “Culture” became the basis on which notions of

“self” and “other” were defined. Kurds, challenging the homogenous conception of modern Turkish identity, were declared as enemies” (Arat-Koç, 2007: 43).

Moreover, the particular construction of civilized bodies has to do with the nature of the Kemalist project of Westernizations. The Turkish modernization project aiming at Westernization created “the other” from inside by putting the Western figure at the centre of modernity discourse (Yumul, 2000).

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed massive rural-urban migration in Turkey caused in large part by the armed conflict between Turkish military forces and PKK as well as, in smaller part, by neoliberalism’s upheaval of the economies of the countryside, processes which, in certain parts of the east and southeast, overlapped and compounded one another. In this period, there was an intensification of migration as a result of changes in the economy as well as the armed conflict and forced evacuation of the Kurdish villages in the East. The motive of changing and transforming people who do not fit in the image of modern Turkey, was replaced with hate against these crowds as a result of regarding these crowds as hopeless, and these feelings strongly expressed by newspaper columnists. “Some well-known columnists in the major newspapers began to articulate increasingly aggressive anti-migrant discourses for the urban middle classes “scandalized” by the “contamination” of their “white”, modern Turkey by people from other cultures” (Arat-Koç, 2007: 44).¹⁹⁶ The migrants started to be seen as “the dark crowds” or “the

¹⁹⁶ The existence of “dark crowds” in the city was disturbing for urban elites because they were threatening their established order. The articles of Mine Kırıkkanat, a well known columnist within the mainstream media, can be regarded as examples of such an elite approach towards the issue. The racist and exclusionary tone of such an elite discourse is expressed in the form of hatred towards the people she considers as not belonging to the city in her newspaper articles. In one of them she writes; “I also get angry when I watch people who had seized the state area and fuck up to our, your drinking water with their sewerage system, struggling desperately on the floor when their illegal electric wires were cut. It is not our duty to clean their dirt, to pay the electricity of the televole program they are watching, to feed their children, which they made for ‘government to look after them’ and left to the streets. But this state forced them to migrate. And this democracy gave them the right to vote, to

dark masses”, as hordes “invading,” rather than assimilating to, the “civilized” spaces of a “world-class” city such as İstanbul (Ayata 2002; Bali 2000; 2002; Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001; Kurtuluş 2003; Öncü 2000).

“As they distanced themselves from “the Other Turkey” both spatially and ideologically, the new middle classes found themselves in more direct contact with “the West” (Arat-Koç, 2007: 45). As they themselves found certain forms of belonging in “the West” more of a reality than merely a dream, an emerging “white Turk” class saw some groups (which they identified as the “dark masses,” the “ignorant masses,” the peasants, the mustached ones, Easterners) as standing in the way of Turkey achieving European identity and status. They not only conspicuously displayed their wealth; but also created a public discourse about the significance of social capital generated by expensive lifestyles and tastes (Bali 2000; 2001; 2002; Kozanoğlu 1992; Kozanoğlu 1993; Mert 1998).

To sum up, “White Turk” discourse is often nationalist, especially in relation to the treatment of minorities in Turkey (Bora 1995). “White Turk” ideology is neoliberal. “It identifies neoliberalism as the only realistic and progressive approach to the economy. Neoliberalism is seen by “White Turks” as the route that can carry Turkey to the First World. “White Turk” ideology takes an Orientalist and culturally racist position against non-“white Turks.” It tends to blame Turkey’s exclusion from Europe and “the West” on the “other Turks” who present a backward and uncivilized image of Turkey to “the West” (Arat-Koç, 2007: 47).

choose the politician of the cities where they settled without permission and the areas they had seized. They chose these politicians and they protected them and we the citizens who are respectful to the laws were defeated. They are the products of this democracy, this democracy is theirs. Unfortunately we share the bitter end” (Kırıkkanat 2001a. For similar approaches also see Kırıkkanat 1998, 2001b, 2002).

In *En Uzun Gece* and *Mutluluk*, Kurdish identity is constructed as “the other” of ideal modern Turkishness. As the significant differentiating characteristics of ideal modern individual are physical appearance, education level, tastes and urbanity, the Kurdish people are represented as patriarchal, uneducated, ill-mannered and violent. Throughout the novels, the ‘White Turk’ and Kurdish characters are opposed. At this point, the figure of “Kurdish woman” harkens to the exoticism of a distant culture (that is Kurdish culture) and place (‘the East’) and it suggests an irrationality that is contrasted with the supposed order and superiority of ‘the West’. Kurdish people, regarded as one of the main obstacles to the way of Westernization of Turkey, are depicted as ‘dark crowds’ doing harm to the modernization project.

The second site of othering that we come across in the second period novels is the deployment of the discourse of tradition, particularly related to honor crimes. *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece* are two novels written in a period when the issue of honor crimes was becoming increasingly visible; honor crimes indeed became a focus bordering on obsession for many TV and print journalists, within Turkey and abroad. Emergent agents claim to produce professional knowledge on honor crimes by relating the issue of honor crimes with the concept of tradition. In contemporary Turkey, the context in which the honor crimes are attributed meaning is determined by various institutions such as the Turkish state, the European Union, political parties of various sorts, national and transnational markets, national and international media, and feminist and human rights organizations. These institutions and organizations frame honor crimes as primarily caused by tradition, alternately called “codes of honor”, or more broadly, “culture”.

In Turkey, for instance, an equally popular name for honor crimes is “crimes of tradition.” When violence against women is framed as a matter of “tradition”, a

distinction is established between traditions—which are seen to be native, timeless, and unchanging and people who have this tradition. Traditions, especially traditions of the “other,” are considered static cultural features that are not easy to understand fully. These traditions are also presumed to be resistant to change. With the utterance of tradition, questions of violence against women and of the violation of their most basic rights fade away without being seriously addressed. This is what Koğacioğlu (2007) calls “the tradition effect”.

Saba Mahmood defines discourses of tradition as the tendency to establish relations between the actors’ identities and practices. With identity and temporality, the fragmented issues and facts are totalized and named. A group’s past, present and future are somehow bound together, and this tie appears as the main source of difference between this group and another. Furthermore, within this tangled manifestation, the debated practices become the most significant distinction between the two groups in question (Koğacioğlu, 2007: 5). As Koğacioğlu argues, the knowledge and information about honor crimes revolves around an assumption, and a belief. The assumption is that “there” is a group of people for whom a consistent and monolithic tradition exists independent of their everyday lives. The belief is that traditions resist social change. The discourse of tradition creates a category of “them”. In the novels, this category of “them” is used to refer to Kurdish people or Southeasterners (Koğacioğlu, 2007: 4). As many newspaper article on honor crimes indicates, “they” (here the Kurds) in our collective imagination live through traditions; and honor crimes are a component of their tradition The discourse of tradition by crafting a sense of belonging produces an affinity within people who own this tradition. It makes them stable and homogenous. By doing this, the people

who live with these traditions are distinguished from the rest, who discuss those living within the traditions (Koğacıoğlu, 2007: 4-5).

Here, it is necessary to draw attention to a discussion taking place within the Turkish language to refer to the murdering of women in terms of which both *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece* elaborate the Kurdish question. Two alternative terms used to refer to these murders are “namus cinayetleri” and “töre cinayetleri”. The preference of “namus cinayetleri” over “töre cinayetleri” in defining these incidents points towards a conscious choice of not regionalizing this traditional act, i.e. not portraying the killing of women for reasons related to honor as a distinct attribute of societies inhabiting the eastern regions of Anatolia. As opposed to that, the usage of “töre cinayetleri” in referring to those killings stresses the connotations related to the assumed regional – thus ethnic – specificity of those acts. Furthermore, the difference between the words “gelenek” and “töre” that gets lost in the translation of the term as “crimes of tradition” in English language underlines the perceived basis of the crimes as generating distinctively from the East. As opposed to the word “gelenek” that denotes the concept of tradition as belonging to a rural that is located in a generic – neutral – geography, the word “töre” signifies the traditions of a specific rural located in the East, populated by people of a specific ethnicity – the Kurds. As such, those crimes become a sociological aspect of the Kurdish culture, and of the Kurdish society. We come across a similar argument in Sirman’s article “Akrabalık, Siyaset ve Sevgi: Sömürge-Sonrası Koşullarda Namus –Türkiye Örneği”. According to Sirman, “in the context of Turkey, the relegation of honor crimes to the regions of the country where tribal structures have not been dislodged is signaled through the use of the term “töre cinayeti” to refer these crimes” (Sirman, 2004: 41).

The representations of honor crimes in *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece* reproduce existing dichotomous understandings of “the East” and “the West” that presume essentialized identities in a hierarchical way. The single, clear fact about the honor crimes in these novels is their origin: Eastern or Southeastern Turkey. Since honor killings are thought to be most prevalent in the Southeast, the authors collapse the two. In this way, they contribute to the mainstream view that honor crimes are a phenomenon contained in the Southeast, a view held by people of various political orientations. Such dichotomies, collapsing time and space in an orientalist fashion, are dominant in the literary portrayals of honor crimes. They posit an essential “East” and “West,” “Middle East” and “Europe”, past and present, tradition and modernity. “East,” “past”, and “tradition” are collapsed into each other only to be opposed to a union of “West”, present, and modernity.

To single out the Southeast implies that honor crimes are primarily a Kurdish phenomenon, as the area is populated primarily by Kurds. Such a portrayal amounts to the stigmatization of Kurds, a process that is already very much under way due to the past armed conflicts between the Kurdish guerilla forces and the Turkish military, with the ensuing forced migration and poverty of Kurds. Here we see the ethnicization of the tradition effect: honor crimes attributed to the traditions of an already disadvantaged ethnic group and its region. This enables other parts of the country to be imagined as somehow immune to the problem.

The novels that I analyze reproduce the mainstream Turkish nationalist and statist view that honor crimes are traditions on their way to obsolescence, thanks to the modernizing project of the nation-state. Such representations seem to run parallel to the national view of the issue as contained in the Southeast. This, in turn, works to

reconstitute the intact European and/or “Western self”, depending on the ways in which the dichotomies are aligned.

In this way, the authors practice a mode of representation that is comfortable for the reader; the issue is made to seem comfortably exotic, having nothing to do with the reader’s experiences. The appeal of the representations on honor crimes is that of cultural difference in which difference bears the mark of violence. The reader can then have a voyeuristic access to a sexualized violence and at the same time enjoy the ensuing feeling of moral and cultural superiority.

The third form of othering that we come across in the novels of Ahmet Altan and Zülfü Livaneli directed towards Kurdishness happens through a specific spatial demarcation of the East that locates the region as marginal, distinct from the West, yet at the very core of “Turkey’s (our) self-consciously crafted Western identity” (Öncü, 32). Similar to what Anne McClintock has noted, the spatial demarcation in *En Uzun Gece* is governed by an implicit temporal narrative about progress and backwardness. “The East” is constructed as an “anachronistic space”, primitive and archaic, populated by people whose traditions and patriarchal system are markers of their backward status. In parallel with the everyday Turkish experience, in *En Uzun Gece*, “the notion of ‘the East’ operates as a generic construct, inscribed in dualistic opposition to the dominant order at multiple layers – geographically remote, backward, unchanging, pre-capitalist, tribal, simultaneously untamed and rebellious”(Öncü, 7).

Simultaneously, the “East’s symbolic geography marks the ‘outside’ of the nation, at the margins” (Öncü, 1). Altan emphasizes this by saying: “That deserted village which was situated near the cliff sometimes seems like it was at the edge of

the world and would fall down all of a sudden” (Altan, 2005: 146).¹⁹⁷ Along with being at the margin, ‘the East’ is described as a land of permanent insecurity where danger patrols. The region is uncanny: “His low grumble, which was resounding with echoes between the walls of this desolated village, recalled the inauspiciousness of the place and brought back the possibility of the bad things that can happen at any moment” (ibid: 28).¹⁹⁸ It is described as “a dark and dangerous inferno in which they fire the guns and unknown killers murder people with reasons that nobody can ever understand”¹⁹⁹ and “an entirely unfamiliar universe, full of nightmares, hazards and threat of death stalking around” (ibid: 305-6).²⁰⁰

Besides being dangerous and uncanny, ‘the East’ is depicted as a locality which has its own internal logic impossible to understand by foreigners. “It is not a world we can get a grip on; everything which seems comprehensible is totally different. It is not something you can understand neither with logic nor intelligence” (ibid: 309).²⁰¹ Lack of order—in fact, what is implied is the lack of rational order—is also another important characteristic of this region. “In this place life had no rhythm, no order” (ibid: 184).²⁰² Here, we encounter a “rhetorical strategy of negation” (Spurr, 1993: 92) which is particularly important in modernist literary representations of colonialism. In the novel, Ahmet Altan deploys a discourse in which Kurdish people are “systematically represented in terms of negation and absence –absence of order, of limits, of civilization” (ibid: 96). The deeper implication of this rhetorical

¹⁹⁷ “Uçurumun hemen yanındaki bu ıssız köy ona bazen dünyanın ucundaymış ve birden aşağıya düşecekmiş duygusu veriyordu.”

¹⁹⁸ “ıssız köyün duvarlarında yankılanan homurtusu da ona tekin bir bölgede olmadığını, burada her an korkunç olaylar olabileceğini hatırlatmıştı.”

¹⁹⁹ “silahların patladığı, kimliği belirsiz katillerin insanları kimsenin bilemeyeceği nedenlerle öldürdüğü, karanlık ve tehlikeli bir cehennem”

²⁰⁰ “kâbusların, tehlikelerin, ölüm tehditlerinin kol gezdiği kendisine tümüyle yabancı bir âlem.”

²⁰¹ “Bizim anlayabileceğimiz bir dünya değil bu, orada anlaşılan her şey farklı. Akılla ya da mantıkla anlaşılabilecek bir şey değil.”

²⁰² “Hayatın bir ritmi, bir düzeni yoktu burada.”

strategy lies in the fact that it establishes ‘the East’ as a place without social order, a locality of chaos. Altan’s consistent reiteration of danger, chaos and incomprehensibility lies in a tradition, which attempts to civilize ‘the East’ of the country. As mentioned before, the negation of Kurdish culture, and the view of violence as something inherent in the Kurdish character is predominant from the Early Republican period and is used as an excuse of assimilationist policies.

This trope of negation finds its utmost form within the novel with ‘the East’s depiction as a land of death. Yelda who says “as if I were in the isles of the blest” (ibid: 300)²⁰³ realizes that “at the edge of that cliff, they were so close to death yet so far from the life” (ibid: 299).²⁰⁴ Death, the ultimate absence and negation, dominates this land “Lots of people died here and they still die. There is a death balance in this place. In every place life has its own rules, but here death rules; regulation of death is all we have in here. We don’t know these rules” (ibid: 186)²⁰⁵ and the terrifying encounter with death inspires horror in the imaginations of the outsiders.

How normal death seems to them,’ said Jacques. ‘It looks like death never confuses them... How accustomed they are! Seeing as how for years, people only die in here,’ said Zerrin, ‘they even forgot what life is. [...]’ For the first time death is within reach, and again, for the first time, he understood how easily a person can die in this quarter; he was horrified of keeping a secret in a geography like this, finding out the hidden side of a murder. He was afraid of getting shot just like the others and could not get rid of this feeling. He couldn’t stop thinking about the face of that murdered girl, the hostility in those men’s eyes and the people who secretly told the truth. Now, he understands what kind of a place he is in (ibid: 182).²⁰⁶ It was like they were

²⁰³ “sanki ölümler âlemindeyim”

²⁰⁴ “o uçuşumun kenarında hayata ne kadar uzak, ölüme ne kadar yakın olduklarını”

²⁰⁵ “Burada çok insan öldü, dedi, hâlâ da ölüyor. Burada bir ölüm dengesi var. Her yerde hayatın kuralları vardır, burada ise ölümün kuralları hâkimdir. Bizim bilmediğimiz kurallar bunlar.”

²⁰⁶ “Ölümü ne kadar doğal karşılıyorlar, dedi Jacques.! Ölüm onları hiç şaşırtmıyor sanki... Ne kadar da alışkınlar. Buralarda insanlar çoktandır sadece ölüyor, dedi Zerrin, hayatın ne olduğunu bile unuttular[...] ilk kez ölümü bu kadar yakından görmüş, buralarda insanların çok rahat ölebileceğim anlamış, böyle bir coğrafyada bir sırta sahip olmanın, bir cinayetin içyüzünü öğrenmenin dehşetine kapılmıştı. Birisi ona da ateş edecekmış hissini içinden atamıyordu. Öldürülen kızın yüzü, adamların bakışlarındaki düşmanlık, gizlice kendisine gerçekleri fısıldayanlar aklından çıkmıyordu. Nasıl bir yere gelmiş olduğunu şimdi anlıyordu.”

playing a game without knowing the rules and that morning they learned by heart that death is a common punishment in this game (ibid: 183).²⁰⁷

Death strolls around like a living creature in ‘the East’ “Like all the rest of the villagers, they were feeling the presence of death; strolling around like a living creature” (ibid: 300).²⁰⁸ In this way, ‘the East’ serves in *En Uzun Gece* as the spatial projection of the dangerous death zone at the heart of modern Turkey.

It is important to note that when compared not only to Ahmet Altan’s *En Uzun Gece*, but also to the first period novels, Zülfü Livaneli’s *Mutluluk* stands out as the only novel which is not set in Eastern Anatolia. Despite this, the Easterner characters of the novel Meryem and Cemal bring the cultural and spatial characteristics of the East with them. The spatial and cultural configuration of the East as anachronistic, primitive and archaic haunts the Easterners even when they are far away from there. Hence, even though the setting of the novel is not the East, the spatial configuration of the East and of Eastern culture as distinct from the West can still be traced in Zülfü Livaneli’s narrative.

As a result, in the novels written in the 2000s, novel actors and notions of the neoliberal order such as civil society, wealth, and research projects appear on the scene. The protagonists of the second period novels are ‘White Turk’ characters and they are represented as compelled, driven as if by something outside themselves in search of happiness. Although the rescue trope is still prevalent, unlike the Turkish characters of the novels of the first period, the protagonists of the second period remain unable to save the Kurdish characters. The narrative resolution does not occur by the hand of the ‘White Turk’ characters. It is now difficult to take sides while

²⁰⁷ “Kurallarını bilmedikleri bir oyuna katılmış gibiydiler ve bu oyunda ölümün sık rastlanan bir ceza olduğu o sabah akıllarına güçlü bir biçimde kazanmıştı.”

²⁰⁸ “Bütün köy gibi onlar da ölümün canlı bir varlık gibi oralarda dolaştığını hissediyorlardı.”

reading the book since subjects like unresolved political assassinations, honor killings and state violence emerge.

It is significant that the ‘White Turk’ characters of Ahmet Altan, rather than seeing themselves as a bridge to carry Heja to the future, charge Heja herself with the mission of building the future. In parallel with their self-centered, White Turkish personalities, they consider themselves as the center of the world and they dream of ‘civilizing’ a Kurdish boy which they will also benefit from. If we think of Halide Edip Adıvar’s Turkish Zeyno, who attempts to educate and thus save Kurdish Haso just for the sake of her country’s best interests, we can say that Ahmet Altan’s characters differ sharply from her with their self-centeredness. To put in another way, we can say that the selfless elites of the early Republican period give their place to selfish White Turks in the 2000s.

Both novels deal with an over-debated issue which is ‘honor killings’. They otherize Kurdish people living in Eastern Turkey by deploying the ‘discourse of tradition’. “Crafted on the basis of preponderant definitions and images within the dominant culture”, Kurdish ethnicity is depicted as “a bounded and recognizably distinct identity” (Öncü, 28).

In the novels, ‘the East’ is described as a locality where feudal and patriarchal relations still dominate and ‘honor codes’ are the main *raison d’être*. ‘The East’ is not only uncanny and dangerous but also distant both in time and space. “Like all ‘symbolic geographies,’ it is a product of power relations, simultaneously ‘real’ and ‘imagined.’ It was mapped through repeated historical encounters that were/are part of Turkey’s march towards progress and Modernity. It stands both ‘outside’ Turkey’s (our) self-consciously crafted Western identity, and also ‘inside’ its very core” (ibid, 32).

Detecting the Main Tropes of Representation: Relational Analysis of the Ruptures and Continuities in the Early and Late Republican Novels

At this point, I would like to analyze my two period novels in relationship to one another, in order to reveal the main tropes of representation that I detect cross cutting these four literary works. I believe that tracing the ruptures and continuities within the tropes for thinking about the East in those two novels will enable us to chart out the ways of thinking about the East during the early and late republican periods.

First of all, it is necessary to point out that, despite the ruptures we come across within the tropes of the representation of the East and of Kurdishness, the Turkishness and Kurdishness dilemma continues to be a widely discussed topic within Turkish political and cultural realms and literature continues to be an important medium through which this subject is discussed. What is more important to see is that despite the ruptures we come across within the tropes of representation of Kurdishness and the East, the four tropes I will elaborate below still continue to serve as the main mediums to discuss this issue. These tropes are: Elaboration of the Kurdish/Eastern question through issues related to women and children; discussion of the East and its meaning for the nation in terms of an exclusive space/locality and temporality that nevertheless needs to be included; the position of the author as a Turkish elite who through the novel elaborates his/her relationship to the East and to Kurdishness; and the construction of Kurdishness that inhabit this space and temporality as an ethnic/social identity bearing significant relationship to the definition of Turkish national unity.

The first common trope between the two period novels is the deployment of protectionist discourses regarding Kurdish children and the rescue/salvation

paradigm regarding Kurdish women. In *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and *En Uzun Gece*, the main plot of the novels is based on the protection and assimilation of the Kurdish children, namely Haso and Heja. On the other hand, *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* and *Mutluluk* are two novels in which the rescue and salvation of the Kurdish women is the main problematic around which the events unfold. Despite the continuity we detect throughout these four novels, the rupture between the two periods appears in terms of whether the protection of the child or the rescue of women succeeds or not.

Looking at two novels that dwell on the rescue of the Kurdish child, we see that at the end of Halide Edip's *Zeyno'nun Oğlu*, the protection of child Haso is successfully maintained and the narrative reaches a closure through this success whereas in Ahmet Altan's *En Uzun Gece*, the Kurdish child Heja, whom the Turkish protagonists of the novel try to protect, dies at the end of the novel, thus leaving the narrative without a resolution.

Similarly, in Esat Mahmut Karakurt's *Dağları Bekleyen Kız*, the salvation of the Kurdish woman Zeynep occurs via her marriage to a Turkish army officer Adnan whereas in Zülfü Livaneli's *Mutluluk*, although the Turkish protagonist of the novel İrfan helps Meryem's transformation, her final salvation fails to occur by his hand.

At this point, what I will attempt to do is to trace the protectionist discourses related Kurdish children in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and *En Uzun Gece*. What I intend to foreground is the construction of particular narratives about child Haso and Heja in which "childhood comes to signify the endangered purity of the nation" (Mankekar, 1997: 29). According to Jo-Ann Wallace, who studies the circulation of the figure of the child in colonialist texts and post-colonial theory, childhood is a discourse marked by a contradiction: "'the child' represents potential or futurity, both of which need protected spaces in which to flourish, and a subjectivity and corporeality in

need of discipline” (Wallace, 1994: 173). “Childhood offers both an explanatory *and* emancipatory potential. That is, it enables the writer to examine a trope and an apparatus of colonization –the schooling of ‘the child’- and to imagine a future condition of empowerment” (Wallace, 1994: 183).

Looking from this point of view, we see that in both *Zeyno’nun Oğlu* and *En Uzun Gece*, childhood symbolizes an essential innocence that transcends politics and culture. “Unlike adults, children have to be ‘owned’ by the nation because they are ‘incomplete’ political actors. Children cannot be fully functioning subjects of the nation until they reach certain age and they obtain certain education; conversely, it is significant that those who are held to be in need of protection (‘victimized’ women, the poor or the illiterate) are often portrayed as children” (Mankekar, 1997: 52-3).

In both novels, childhood is constructed as “the space of purity and innocence that the nation is morally bound to protect” (Mankekar, 1997: 40). This construction of childhood is evident from the manner in which child Haso’s and Heja’s helplessness and innocence is repeatedly emphasized. The children’s innocence is reinforced in “discourses of victimology that inscribed them helpless” (ibid). As they become “the object of protection and infantilizing discourses”, they are “robbed of all agencies and of subjectivity” (ibid: 41-2).

Furthermore, these protectionist discourses “emphasize that children are ‘our’ shared resource for the future and thus it is ‘our’ common responsibility actively to protect them. Perhaps the ease with which children are so readily appropriated by the state emerges from the way in which they are positioned in the very construction of the national community. For, at the same time that nations construct a ‘shared’ past, they also envision the *telos* of a ‘common’ future” (Mankekar, 1997: 53).

We can better understand the rupture related to deployment of the discourse of childhood in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and in *En Uzun Gece*, only when we place it in the socio-historical conjuncture in which it occurred. *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* was written in the late 1920s and early 1930s, in a period characterized by the escalation of communal tension between Turkish state and Kurdish community in the east and southeast parts of Turkey, the rise of Kurdish nationalism, and the increasing intrusion of the Turkish state into different aspects of civil life: this was a conjuncture marked by the hegemonic deployment of exclusionary discourse of nationalism that sought to create increasingly rigid, gendered subject positions for men and women, and imposed a unified identity on all citizens.

On the other hand, in *En Uzun Gece*, written in 2000s, the meaning of providing protection to Heja has widely diverged from the significance of protectionist discourses related Haso in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu*. As a novel written in the neoliberal period, *En Uzun Gece* reflects the fear, anxiety and uncertainty of the era in which the novel is produced. Instead of being protected and saved, Heja is killed leaving unanswered questions behind him. In a period written when the East is conceived as a geography marked by violence, Ahmet Altan's Kurdish child character Heja reifies the dangerous and menacing characteristic of the East in his body. In addition, the inability of his protection in a way reflects the second period novels' 'White Turk' characters' incapability of transforming the people whom they consider as 'others'—that is, the failure of the Republican project/fantasy of incorporation and assimilation.

As for rescue and salvation trope, one can argue that there is a continuity regarding its deployment but there is a difference regarding its success. In recent years, feminist critics of colonial and nationalist discourses have pointed to instances

wherein women have become sites or symbols in struggles over political power and identity. For instance, in her work on nineteenth-century debates on sati (the practice of widow burning) in Bengal, Lata Mani argues that, in the discourses articulated by colonial authorities and the indigenous elite, women are “neither subjects nor objects, but rather the ground of the discourse on sati. They are themselves marginal to the debate” (1998: 117).

The rhetoric of protection of Kurdish women from Kurdish men is prevalent in *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* and *Mutluluk*. How Kurdish men treat their women is the main problematic in the novels. The rhetoric of saving Kurdish women and children from Kurdish men sounds a lot like British colonial discourse pertaining to the practice of sati –widow burning- practiced in India in the nineteenth century. Gayatri Spivak has interpreted the discourse on sati articulated by the colonial state as a “case” of “White men saving brown women from brown men” (Spivak, 1991: 297). Pathak and Sunder Rajan note that the discourses of protecting Muslim women from Muslim men was also an important component of the Shahbano controversy (1992: 263). From the narrative of Shahbano they describe “the formation of a discontinuous female subjectivity in response to the displacement of the Muslim woman question onto several discourses. These discourses are marked, and unified, by the assumption of an ideology of protection” (Rajan, 1992:562). “To be framed by a certain kind of discourse is to be objectified as the “other,” represented without characteristic features of the “subject,” sensibility and/or volition” (Rajan, 1992: 563). “The several discourses attend to only one or the other dimension of Shahbano’s identity, the dominant consciousness tends to homogenize the subaltern subject for its purposes: here as that which is to be ‘protected’” (ibid: 565).

As pointed out by Pathak and Sunder Rajan in their analysis, protectionist arguments constructed by the state and by national and community elites with reference to subordinated subjects are often implicated in a will to power. “‘Protection’ can confer upon the protector the right to interfere in areas hitherto out of bounds for the state and can erase the authority to speak and silence victims; or it can serve as a camouflage for power politics. An alliance is formed between protector and protected against a common opponent from whom the danger is perceived and protection offered or sought, and this alliance tends to efface the will to power exercised by the protector. Thus the term conceals the opposition between protector and protected, a hierarchical position that assigns higher value to the first term: strong/weak, man/woman, majority/minority, state/individual” (Rajan, 1992: 566).

The preposition of “Turkish men are saving Kurdish women from Kurdish men” invokes the stereotypes of the Kurdish woman as invariably destitute and powerless and the Kurdish male as patriarchal, barbaric and callous. This scenario clears the way for Turkish intervention and ensures its dominance. The real exigencies of power struggles are successfully down-played in this deployment of the ideology of protection.

The second prevalent trope that I detect in all four novels that I analyzed is the discussion of the East and its meaning for the nation in terms of an exclusive space/locality and temporality that nevertheless needs to be included. Throughout the novels, the East is depicted as a locality situated both spatially and temporally far way from the West. In all of the novels, the East and one of its major characteristics, Kurdishness, are portrayed as entities which pose certain treats in specific periods due to their being out of time and of place. The East, imagined as containing the

signs of backwardness, distance, anachronism and primitiveness --in short, all the things that the modern Republic needs to overcome and leave behind— pose a certain threat to the Republican project. However, both the East and Kurdishness also symbolize and promise a certain degree of wholeness for the ‘Westernized’ urban elites in the event that they are successfully incorporated into the national unity. This premise is particularly significant to the Turkish elite who have always had problematic relations with the rest of the country since the foundation of the Republic. In that sense, it is necessary to analyze this trope together with the third common trope that prevail in all of the four the novels that I study: The position of the author and the protagonist as Turkish elites who through the novel elaborate their relationship to the East and to Kurdishness, in an effort to make sense of themselves as the actor of the inclusion/exclusion that the East is subjected to.

Although both the authors and the protagonists of the four novels that I studied are Westernized elites of the country who consider their superiority over the Easterners (namely, Kurds) as an absolute fact, a second look at how this relation of superiority and inferiority functions reveals that this relationship is not as clear cut as it might seem. This is a problematic waiting to be resolved since, if the elites were considering themselves as certainly being superior to the rest of the country and as complete without the adhesion of the Easternness to their identity, the Kurdish/Eastern question simply would not prevail.

The foundation of the Republic, its effort to discover and construct a unified, undifferentiated “nation” and its discourse on westernization and civilization generated a new interest in the problems of the people living in Anatolia. However, this interest functioned as a tool to disseminate the ideology and values of the Republic to the East and Southeast regions. This effort to reach out and discover the

East reflects the Republican elite's perception of itself bearing a "civilizing mission". On the one hand, as representing purity and honesty the East had positive connotations; while on the other hand, it was seen as an exotic, mysterious, culturally different and backward place in need of the enlightened intervention of elites.

Within this discourse, the East is formulated as a place that must be emancipated, civilized and modernized reflecting an "Occidental" tendency, as Meltem Ahiska (2003) calls it. According to Ahiska, the imagining of the Turkish national identity and the fantasy of "the West" that was constructed in this process can be conceptualized with the term "Occidentalism". Occidentalism points to how an imagined Western gaze is operative in the production and reproduction of a Turkish national discourse and a national self. Within this discourse, the East or the Orient is represented as a "backward" locality, defined by a "lack". This "lack," projected onto the people or the nation, is compensated with concepts and techniques borrowed from the West which "[have] either been celebrated as a model to be followed or exorcised as a threat to indigenous national values" in defining Turkish identity (ibid: 353). The dilemma caused by the coexistence of admiration and hostility towards the West forms a constitutive part of the national identity.

In a similar fashion, this Occidental fantasy of imagining a "lack" also can be found in the divisions between cities, regions, gendered identities, social classes, ethnicities and different religions (Ahiska, 2005: 46). Within this framework, the privileged side of the duality dominates over the unprivileged side. The dominant part of every duality creates its own subaltern and attributes to it a "lack" that would legitimize the dominant's rule over it. This "constitutive lack" appears at the center of every identity. If we are to return to the discourses related to the East again, it can be argued that the East appears as a backward place that must be enlightened by the

Republican elite. Here, the Western gaze is absorbed within the nation and reflected upon the nation's "other—that is, the East and Kurdish people living within this geography. The East/West divide is reproduced, imagined and reflected in the opposition between the East and the West. The hostility/admiration or desire and hate relationship also is reproduced, as mentioned above.

Throughout the novels, in line with the Republican social imaginary of an already-modern and always-modernizing state, the Kurdish people are the "others" that have to be transformed, civilized, and educated before they can be admitted to the ranks of the enlightened citizens. The solution of this 'problem' is derivative of their casting as those who are yet to be civilized and as a population that should be transformed along the pre-determined criteria of the Republican modern middle class.

Finally, the fourth common trope that I would like to draw attention to is related to the construction of Kurdishness inhabiting the space and temporality that the East signifies as an ethnic/social identity bearing significant relationship to the definition of Turkish national unity. As I already stated above for the depiction of the East as the bearer of a temporal/spatial negativity that is constitutive to the rest of the nation, yet that needs to be incorporated to reach the national unity, Kurdishness as a form of identity that inhabits this temporal/spatial existence also stands at the margins of the Turkish identity, which lingers in between exclusion and inclusion. What is important to note here is that in the early and late period Republican novels, the construction of Kurdish identity is imagined in two different ways, and these two different ways in the end determine the way in which those identities function in the imagination of the success of national unity as the quintessential Republican project.

Throughout the first period novels, the difference posited by Kurdishness is defined as an almost biological one inscribed into the bodies of Kurdish characters. Kurdish characters' (especially male Kurdish characters') depiction with bestial and animalistic adjectives, excessive body gestures, hyper-emotionality and cruelties are some of the points used by first period authors to highlight Kurdishness' inherent difference from Turkishness. On the contrary, in the second period novels, the difference between Kurdishness and Turkishness is narrated in terms of a cultural distinction. Kurdish people's living within a feudal and patriarchal system that overemphasizes honor codes is highlighted to contrast them to the 'White Turk' characters, who are portrayed as urban, well-educated, refined, and wealthy.

These two different forms of outlining the Kurdish difference from Turkishness introduces an essential contradiction that is implanted within the general plot of their respective narratives. Despite the depiction of Kurdishness as an almost biological/physiological essence inscribed into the bodies of their Kurdish characters, both Halide Edip Adivar's *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* and Esat Mahmut Karakurt's *Dağları Bekleyen Kız* come to an end with a resolution that becomes possible with the success of their Kurdish characters' assimilation into Turkishness. Contrary to that, in the second period novels, Zülfü Livaneli's *Mutluluk* and Ahmet Altan's *En Uzun Gece*, even though the difference between Turkishness and Kurdishness is articulated in terms of cultural distinction, which can be thought as more prone to change and reconfiguration, the narratives do not reach closure and the redemption of the Kurdish or Eastern characters fail to occur. The essential contradiction becomes visible here since in the first period novels despite their biologically determined difference from Turkish characters, Kurdish characters' admission into Turkishness is deemed possible via marriage. However in the second period novels, although the

boundary between Turkishness and Kurdishness is depicted as a cultural one, the transgression of this boundary fails to occur.

When thought in relationship to the general Republican project of maintaining a national unity, the rupture between the early and the late period novels that we see in terms of the success/failure of the Kurdish characters' assimilation into Turkishness through their transformation points to a more general loss of faith in the promise of the Republican project to save its elements by way of their transformation. In that sense, the failure of the Kurdish characters' acquisition of Turkishness in the late period novels—although their difference from the realm that they are trying to be acquitted into is defined in more supple terms, favorable to pliancy—points to both their protagonists' and their authors' loss of faith in the success of the Republican project. This also reveals an important point related to a shift in Republican elites' relationship to the project of national unity and salvation, of which they are imagined as both owner and product.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In light of the analysis of the four novels that I studied throughout this thesis, it becomes possible to argue that the tropes of otherization, which I traced through their continuities and ruptures, appear as the main mediums of representation used to configure both the East as a spatio-temporal entity and Kurdishness as a socio-political, cultural identity inhabiting this entity. These narratives of otherization revolve around gendered tropes and tropes of infantilization as well as temporal and spatial demarcations of Kurdishness and its distance from the rest of the nation. This otherization configures what it represents both at the outside of the national unity, by being its constitutive outside, and at the very core of it, for the aspired unity can only be reached through the incorporation of the nation's constitutive outside. What I want to emphasize about this otherization is that as much as being a treatise about Kurdishness that depicts it as the constitutive outside of Turkishness, this narrative strategy should also be seen as a treatise related to Turkishness that will constitute itself via its relationship to Kurdishness. Bearing this in mind, it becomes possible to say these four novels should also be read as narratives about the Republican project aiming for the Turkish modernization via nation building and national unity, mainly because they chart out where Kurdishness and the East stand vis a vis this national project and its premises.

In tracing the plot and the resolution of the narratives in the early Republican period novels, we see the possibility of the Republican project's success. The success of the Turkish protagonists' mission to transform and save the Kurdish women and children reveals the faith of the novels' authors' in the Republican project. Invested

in this belief, both of the early Republican period novels chart out the road map designating how the target of the Republican project is to be reached: Rescuing the women and assimilating the children through transforming them into unproblematic entities for the unified nation.

Following that, the late Republican period novels can be read as the stories of protagonists who are the products of the Republican project, whose arrival was promised by the early period novelists. However, in both novels of the latter period, these promised actors appear as extremely unhappy. This unhappiness arises from the fact that the promised modernization imagined in the form of reaching wholeness via incorporation of the other of the modern – the East – now proves to be impossible. This impossibility, which differentiates the latter period novels from the former, becomes more apparent when Adivar's child Haso and Livaneli's Meryem and their respective rescue missions are explored in comparison to one another.

The possibility of child Haso's rescue is based on his inherent proximity to Turkishness, one that is signaled by the author when she writes about the child's comfort with the Turkish language. Contrary to that, the impossibility of Meryem's rescue is implied by Altan's depiction of her discomfort with the Western/modern way of being. As opposed to child Haso's feelings towards arriving the West, told in terms of some sort of homecoming, Meryem decides that she feels closer to her essence when she is with the family from the East. In the hope of finding the East in the West, Meryem chooses to marry the son of the Eastern family, and not her designated savior İrfan. When compared to the early period novels, it becomes clear that in the novels of the late Republican period, the possibility of successfully integrating the East (more specifically, the Eastern subject) on the way to becoming a modern, unified nation ceases to exist.

Following the impossibility of successfully integrating the East, hopes for a genuine, authentic modernization also fail. Saffet's description of a successfully modernized subject, in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu*, as someone who does not wear the mask points towards the ultimate goal of the Turkish modernization project. However, with the failure to integrate the East, which would ground the nation's modernization, the only possible way to become modern emerges as a superficial acquisition. While in *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* the aspired modernization portrayed in the persona of Mazlume and child Haso exists to challenge Mesture Hanım's false modernization, in *Mutluluk* and *En Uzun Gece* we come across no alternatives to the modernization that İrfan and Yelda represent, which bring them nothing but despair, alienation, and exasperation.

The loss of faith in the Republican project and the meaning of this loss both for the imagination of the East and of the self-conception of Turkish elites, which we arrive as a result of the analysis of these novels, urge us to ask further questions, although their answers remain beyond the scope of this thesis.²⁰⁹ How does the loss of faith in the Republican project and the disappointment/disillusionment of Republican elites, as key "structures of feeling" towards this project, inform political

²⁰⁹ Sirman's approach may be illuminating in the way to understand Republican elites' loss of faith in the Republican project. According to Sirman, "the dominant narrative setting out the content of the Turkish nation is destabilized and the context at the end of 1990s spelled a story of loss. Corruption, ethnic and religious claims to identity, inflationary pressures, and the increase in the poverty in metropolises (largely as a result of forced migrations) have all been operative in creating a sense of loss. This sense of loss, especially acute among long standing middle-classes, become crystallized around a notion of a national ethos that informs an individual conduct guided by morality, as well as around a sense of purpose that the responsibility of building a new nation that imparted to them" (Sirman, 2006: 35-6).

practice? How does the shifting relationship between the Republican project and the elites affect the configuration of Turkishness and its limits? How do all these factors effect/transform the representations of the Republican project? Can any form of resistance be imagined arising from the closure of the belief in modernity and the cease of its promises, once foreseen as certain? Are there any other literary works speaking from outside of the canon that can challenge these narratives? What other forms of reading can be possible through following the non-canonical works? What kind of a dialogical relationship exists between Kurdish novels and the novels that I analyzed?

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