THE ALLA FRANCA DANDIES: MODERN INDIVIDUALITY IN
THE LATE 19TH CENTURY OTTOMAN NOVELS

A Ph. D. Dissertation

by
KORHAN MÜHÜRCÜOĞLU

Department of
Political Science and Public Administration
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Ankara
September 2018

To my wife Sıla

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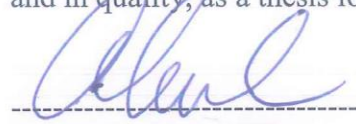of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

THE DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
İHSAN DOĞRAMACI BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
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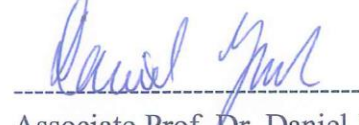

Prof. Dr. Alev Çınar
Supervisor

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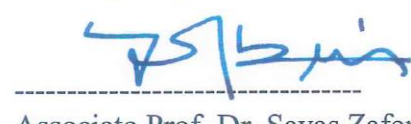

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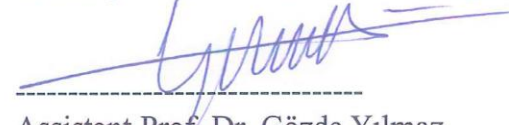

Associate Prof. Dr. Daniel Just
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

Associate Prof. Dr. Savaş Zafer Şahin
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science.

Assistant Prof. Dr. Gözde Yılmaz
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

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Prof. Dr. Halime Demirkan
Director

ABSTRACT

THE ALLA FRANCA DANDIES: MODERN INDIVIDUALITY IN THE LATE
19TH CENTURY OTTOMAN NOVELS

Mühürcüoğlu, Korhan
Ph. D., Department of Political Science and Public Administration
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Alev Çınar

September 2018

The thesis studies the Hamidian regime (1876-1909) of the Ottoman Empire with regard to the relations between Ottoman modernization, Westernization and the proto-individualism that was then taking roots without the concomitant development of capitalism and in the absence of bourgeoisie. To investigate these relations, the thesis concentrates upon the *alla franca* dandy literary figure; a francophile who adores European culture and feels aversion towards the Ottoman/Islamic culture. The *alla franca* dandy owes his existence to Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi* (1876) published as a critique of "false Westernization" and an attempt at circumscribing the limits of proper modernization, balancing the Ottoman/Islamic culture and Western material progress. He was thus born out of the Ottoman intellectuals' ideas of and anxiety over Westernization, who sought to modernize the society without subverting the traditional foundations. As the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures collided, the *alla franca* dandy became the embodiment of "false

Westernization" and served the intellectuals' objective to educate the masses by setting a bad example. However, though the *alla franca* dandy was born to circumscribe the proper limits of modernization, he ironically evolved, through the novels of authors like Ekrem and Gürpınar), to express individualistic attitudes and put forth a modernist critique of the Ottoman/Islamic tradition as the intellectuals' epistemological assumptions eroded and the society's present is questioned and problematized as in need of intervention. Through an analysis of the *alla franca* dandy's development, the thesis tries to bring forth Ottoman modernity's unique nature and individualism's role in it.

Keywords: Alla Franca Dandy, Individualism, Non-Western Modernities, Ottoman Modernization, Westernization.

ÖZET

ALAFRANGA ZÜPPE: GEÇ 19. YÜZYIL OSMANLI ROMANLARINDA
MODERN BİREYCİLİK

Mühürcüoğlu, Korhan
Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü
Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Alev Çınar

Eylül 2018

Tez, Osmanlı Devleti'nin II. Abdülhamit dönemini (1876-1909) Osmanlı toplumunun modernleşmesinin, Batılılaşmasının ve o dönem kapitalist bir sistemin ve burjuvazinin yokluğunda gelişmekte olan bireyciliğin birbirleriyle ilişkisi bakımından incelemektedir. Bu ilişkilere bakarken, tez *alafranga züppe* edebi karakterini incelemektedir; Fransız, Batı hayranı, Osmanlı/İslam kültürüne yabancılaşmış bir züppe. *Alafranga züppe* varlığını Ahmet Mithat'ın "yanlış Batılılaşma" eleştirisi olarak yazdığı ve Osmanlı/İslam kültürüyle Batılı maddi ilerlemeyi sentezleyen makbul bir modernleşmenin sınırlarını çizdiği romanı *Felatun Bey ve Rakım Efendi*'ye (1876) borçludur. Bir diğer ifadeyle, *alafranga züppe* Osmanlı entellektüellerinin Batılışma hakkındaki düşünce ve kaygıları, geleneksel kökenleri yıkmadan modernleşme istekleri neticesinde vücut bulmuştur. Osmanlı/İslam ve Batı kültürleri karşı karşıya geldikçe, *alafranga züppe* "yanlış

Batılılaşmanın" bir ifadesi olarak halkı negatif bir örnekle eğitme gayesine hizmet etmiştir. Ancak, makbul bir modernleşmenin sınırlarını belirlemek için vücut bulmuş olan *alafranga züppe*, Osmanlı entellektüellerinin epistemolojik varsayımları sekteye uğradıkça ve Osmanlı toplumunun şimdiki zamanı problematize edilip eleştirildikçe ironik bir biçimde (Ekrem ve Gürpınar gibi romancılar üzerinden), Osmanlı/İslam kültürünün modernist bir eleştirisi ve bireyci tutumların bir ifadesi haline gelmiştir. Bu anlamda tez, *alafranga züppe* karakterinin bahis konusu evrimi üzerinden Osmanlı modernleşmesinin kendine has özelliklerini ve gelişimini incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alafranga Züppe, Batılı Olmayan Moderniteler, Batılılaşma, Bireycilik, Osmanlı Modernleşmesi.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE *ALLA FRANCA* DANDY[1]

In the *Tanzimat* ("Reforms") period (1839-1876) of the Ottoman Empire, we come across a certain Didon Arif in the Sublime Porte, an official who left to the posterity such an odd soubriquet (*Didon*) as it was his usual practice to address his colleagues with the French phrase "dis donc" ("say there") (Mardin, 2000: 210-1); an eccentric figure whose mannerisms may at first sight seem to be personal idiosyncrasy of a man who was an admirer of the Western civilization. However, in the late 19th Century Ottoman Empire, the likes of Didon Arif, or francophiles, were no rarity. They inhabited and frequented the Europeanized Beyoğlu district of Istanbul and came mostly from the Ottoman bureaucracy, educated in Western-style institutions from Selim III's reign onwards. In the debates over the Ottoman Empire's Westernization, they had been either scapegoats blamed for many unwelcome intrusions from the West or laughingstocks derided for their absurd manner of behavior by the intellectuals who were anxious to respond to Westernization in a

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proper manner, without losing their Ottoman/Islamic culture. It is thus not curious that the francophile had found himself a prominent place within the Ottoman novel as well, as the Ottoman novel of this period was one of the venues in which social problems were discussed and Westernization was naturally a major theme. Ahmet Mithat Efendi was the first to transform that figure into a literary character in his novel *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* ("Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi") of 1876 in which the Felâtun Bey figure appears; the first of all *alla franca*[2] dandies, or francophiles, that were to dominate the Ottoman novel. Ahmet Mithat's Felâtun Bey was soon followed by other *alla franca* dandies; Bihrûz Bey in Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* ("The Carriage Affair," published in 1898) and Meftûn Bey in Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi* ("Quick to Fall in Love," published in 1911). The *alla franca* dandies of these novels were men of vanity and extravagance who foolishly squander their fathers' fortune on the French fashion of the day, amusements, gambling, and on women as they immerse themselves in every imaginable reverie. They admire the Western civilization to the point of mindless imitation and feel almost hatred towards the Ottoman/Islamic culture. They are, for that matter, portrayed as superficial men who even do not have a proper idea of the Western culture they adore in the most nonsensical fashion.

How could one understand the late 19th Century Ottoman modernity as reflected in the *alla franca* dandy figure? What were the problems and dilemmas in this regard? Is it possible to interpret the *alla franca* dandy in a manner that contributes to an understanding of other, non-Western modernities as well? Modernity had taken roots in the Ottoman state under the Hamidian regime as a reaction to an irrefragable fact:

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[2] "*Alla franca*," derived from Italian, means "French-style"; a phrase that is contrasted with "*alla turca*," meaning "Turkish style."

a multi-national and pre-capitalist empire's diminishing existence against the nationalistic, capitalist states of Europe which initiated a global transformation through scientific/technological development in the service of production processes. The late 19th Century Ottoman society, however, was not a passive spectator of its own burial ceremony. The statesmen and intellectuals of the Hamidian regime had seen that the Ottoman *ancien régime* with its epistemological certainties and the *millet* system that compartmentalized the population along ecclesiastical demarcation lines could only accelerate the Ottoman state's weakening. It was thus necessary that a balance between the spirituality of the East (i.e., a local, authentic cultural identity) and the materiality of the West (i.e., a centralized bureaucracy and capitalistic development through scientific progress) should be struck. Such project meant, as Selim Deringil says, unprecedented demands on the society and, consequently, made it inevitable to transform the subjects who consented passively into citizens as active supporters (2011: 11). However, such active support could only be solicited through a harmonizing, unifying ideology that would mobilize the masses spontaneously and not through state violence which would inhibit all effectiveness. The Ottoman state under the Hamidian regime had then attempted at constructing an Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry that would procure reliable, efficient bureaucrats and loyal members of the society. Their active participation would ensure the state's existence against both internal and external crises and pressures. Newspapers, literary works, and attempts at simplifying the Turkish idiom all served the purpose of inculcating the Ottoman/Islamic culture into the reader who were now interpellated individually and not as ethnic groups or religious congregations. Western literary techniques, hybridized with local practices like that of the *meddah* tradition, were seen as effective tools in reaching ever greater segments of the Ottoman public. Ahmet

Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* is thus to be seen as another attempt at instilling the Hamidian regime's proto-citizenry into the reader who was expected to share the Ottoman/Islamic value judgments and social, moral rankings of the novel's protagonist, Rakîm Efendi. The *alla franca* Felâtun Bey, on the other hand, embodied the *other* of the Hamidian regime's proto-citizen and its balanced Westernization, serving as a critique of super-Westernization and cultural alienation. However, as Engin Işın has said, when a certain ideology dominates the construction of citizenship, it is also the political moment in which those dominating value judgements and social, moral rankings are contested from the margins (2002: 275-6). The reformist-minded and Western-oriented intellectuals (especially those gathered around the *Servet-i Fünûn* journal) had already begun to approach the Ottoman/Islamic culture's certainities with suspicion as the Hamidian regime was trying to consolidate its ideological hegemony. These intellectuals could be said to be in an epistemological crisis between the Ottoman/Islamic culture's value judgements and the Western culture's rationalism and secular *weltanschauung*. Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, in this regard, was the product of such epistemological crisis and an expression of the individual's experiences as s/he suffers from that disorientation. Gürpınar's Meftûn Bey consummates that development. Meftûn Bey is neither the proto-citizen of the Hamidian regime with its communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic value judgments like Rakîm Efendi nor just a snob enamoured of the European culture's *façade* like Felâtun Bey. He was not a Bihrûz Bey either, torn between the Ottoman/Islamic and Western epistemologies, disoriented in a state of acute crisis. The last *alla franca* dandy becomes a self-conscious personality who has agency and conducts himself in reference to his own ideas, principles, and desires. He does not consent to the state passively, but rationally and on princples. Meftûn Bey, in this

regard, becomes the embodiment of a political moment in which the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic culture and its proto-citizenship is questioned, criticized and re-evaluated from the margins of individual subjectivity. In a pre-capitalist economic order and in the absence of bourgeois society, the *alla franca* dandy's metamorphosis is thus a testimony for the emergence of a *sui generis*, non-Western modernity in which the birth of the modern subject owes his/her existence to a state of insurrection against a strengthening, authoritarian state. Modernity as problematizing the present and aspiration towards an ideal future had thus found, in the context of late 19th Century Ottoman society, its active element in the future-oriented, modern individual who criticized the present through a critical relation with the state and the prevalent socio-political conditions to realize his/her self. It is a uniqueness and constitutive part of such modernist attitude that alienation in the sense of an aesthetical aloofness from the Ottoman/Islamic culture had functioned as a strategy. In apotheosizing the European culture in aesthetical terms and idealizing its rationalism and liberal individualism, such modernist attitude relied on an utopian vision in its assault on the Hamidian regime's communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry. The late 19th Century Ottoman modernity is thus to be seen as an idiosyncratic form of modernity among many other modernities, born out of local experiences.

How could, then, one situate the *alla franca* dandy within a general debate on modernization, a modernization that branches out into an array of problems from cultural imperialism to identity politics? Or, how could one interpret that figure who mimics a foreign culture that he deems superior? Edward Said, in *Culture and Imperialism*, says that "Never was it the case that the imperial encounter pitted an

active Western intruder against a supine or inert non-Western native; there was *always* some form of active resistance […]" (1994: xii) (Italics in the original). Said, in this manner, reduces the relations between the Western and non-Western societies to a dichotomy of domination and resistance. In such a view, the *alla franca* dandy, seen as a critique of false Westernization, would simply be cultural resistance. Shaden M. Tageldin, as she argues against that position, says that "Understanding cultural imperialism as willful imposition – not attractive proposition – the reigning discourse conceals the undertow of seduction, which often transmits colonial culture" (2011: 7). For Tageldin, cultural imperialism becomes truly effective in an unconscious manner, through what she calls "translational seduction," in which the seducer re-presents itself as seduced in order to better seduce into subjection as in Napoleon's address to the Egyptian people written in Arabic and teeming with Islamic references that poses as admiration for the colonized culture. The colonized culture is thus lured into subjection (Tageldin, 2011: 17).

Tageldin suggests that, between the Western and non-Western societies, there is a relation of seduction as well, not just of domination and resistance. However, though the *alla franca* dandy is another instance of seduction by Western culture, it differs from "translational seduction" that is conceived within colonial relations and power-struggles and acts only towards subjection even though subjection is materialized in a non-violent manner. In the *alla franca* dandy's seduction by the Western culture there is indeed a construction of an aestheticized utopian vision, almost independent from the political and social actualities of that culture, that acts as a liberating and modernizing current within the society. In other words, though Tageldin speaks of "the more counter intuitive and less optimistic possibility that the 'love' extended to

the foreign […] might more deeply colonize than liberate" (2011: 10) I presume that such a possibility of liberation indeed exists despite the fact of an unequal relationship. To say that the Ottoman modernization (seen through the *alla franca* dandy figure) was seduction does not necessarily mean that the essential Western modernity seduced an accidental Ottoman modernization which nevertheless was only a distorted copy, or an imitation of the original model that claims to be universally applicable yet somehow eludes germination outside Europe and leads only to subjection. Though modernization itself is universal, the forms under which it appears are particular and the Ottoman modernization's particularity lies in its unique manner of encounter with the Western culture.

I contend therefore that the *alla franca* dandy character of the late 19th Century Ottoman novel was born out of the Ottoman intellectuals'[3] ideas of and anxiety over Westernization who sought to Westernize the society, but within a certain limit. These intellectuals, though of the opinion that Western political and economic institutions might be adopted, circumscribed the limits of a proper Westernization so as not to subvert the traditional, Ottoman/Islamic foundations of society.[4] The Ottoman state under the Hamidian regime had been then in an attempt at transforming its former subjects into a proto-citizenry, that is, soliciting the active

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[3] By "Ottoman intellectuals," I mean not a well-defined group that endorsed a certain political ideology, but a group that consisted, in broad terms, of men-of-letters who were able to express their opinion to the public, without any reference to various political ideologies that they cherished. Yet, their concern with Westernization brings forth a fundamental commonality that binds that group coherently in their orientation.

[4] I owe the entire statement above to the works of Jale Parla and Nurdan Gürbilek. The idea of anxiety over Westernization, for instance, can be found in Parla's *Babalar ve Oğullar* in which the metaphor of becoming fatherless is expressive of much concerning the Ottoman intellectuals who tried to hold their ground in the face of modernization that threatened to cut off their roots within tradition. Gürbilek's article "Dandies and Originals: Authenticity, Belatedness, and the Turkish Novel," on the other hand, is invaluable with regard to its emphasis on the Ottoman/Turkish intellectuals' attempts to unearth an original Turkish culture in vain as it was (and is) an impossibility in a modern society to preserve an insulated and local originality.

participation of those who formerly gave only their passive consent. That proto-citizenry necessitated the construction of an harmonizing, unifying ideology of Ottoman/Islamic culture as dominant in value judgments and social, moral rankings. The *alla franca* dandy was thus there to show how Westernization should and should not be and acted as an instrument in the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry. However, in tandem with the Hamidian regime's (1876-1909) sociopolitical developments, that is, as the intellectuals withdraw from politics under repressive measures and begin to concentrate upon social matters, that archetypal figure ironically evolved into an awareness of the individual *per se*; the individual as a reference point, according to which the Ottoman/Islamic culture and tradition is questioned, criticized and re-evaluated, despite the fact that the *alla franca* dandy's *raison d'etre* was originally to thwart the anti-traditional currents within the Ottoman society. The *alla franca* dandy thus becomes an expression of insurrection against the Hamidian regime's authoritarianism and its Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry whose communitarian value judgements precludes the possibility of individual liberty. Yet, the *alla franca* dandy's critique of the Ottoman/Islamic culture did not begin as a political or social criticism; it was first a judgement of taste. As the Hamidian period's intellectuals problematized the present, they idealized the Western culture within aesthetical terms as a non-political, non-ideological and autonomous construct, or as the site of a utopian vision. The *alla franca* dandy, seduced by such utopian vision, expresses an aesthetical reaction to the Ottoman/Islamic culture found deficient, through a *dichotomy of beautiful/ugly* that condemns the Ottoman/Islamic culture as ugly and praises the Western culture as beautiful. The traditional values of the Ottoman/Islamic culture, faced with an aesthetical aversion, then came to be eroded and the vacuum created by that erosion

was filled up with the autonomous, utopian individual who is (or, more correctly, who should be) in liberty. Marshall Berman says of the modernity of underdevelopment: "[…] where the process of modernization has not yet come into its own, modernism, where it develops, takes on a fantastic character, because it is forced to nourish itself not on social reality but on fantasies, mirages, dreams" (2010: 235-6). As I regard modernity as a problematizing of the present to arrive at an ideal state of affairs in the future (in Alev Çınar's sense[5]), or as a utopian vision (in Zygmunt Bauman's conception[6]); and as I define individualism as a translocation of truth from the eternal, omnipresent and omnipotent social and political institutions to the individuals themselves as they interpret their own experiences,[7] I contend in this thesis that as we look closely at the three novels named above, we can see modernity had taken roots in the non-Western Ottoman society of the late 19th Century through an historical trajectory that is distinct from its European counterparts, yet ineluctably through an alternative path; a path on which the encounter with the Western culture has created a vision of ideal society and on which individualism has played a prominent role. To substantiate the claim in question, the thesis follows the simple method of analysing all the *alla franca* dandies of the modern Ottoman novel (i.e. Felâtun, Bihrûz and Meftûn Beys) within their development towards individuality across time and in search of reciprocities between the metamorphosis of these

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[5] Çınar defines her conception of modernity briefly as follows: "[…] *modernity* is understood here as an intervention related to bodies, space, and time that constructs their present as corrupt in order to induce a need for transformation toward a better future." (2005: 7-9).

[6] Bauman's idea of utopia expresses what I take to be the modernist attitude in this article, that is, a problematizing of the present and a desire to reach an ideal state of affairs in the future: "To be born, the utopian dream needed two conditions. First, an overwhelming (even if diffuse and as yet inarticulate) feeling that the world was not functioning properly and was unlikely to be set right without a thorough overhaul. Second, the confidence in human potency to rise to the task, a belief that 'we, humans, can do it,' armed as we are with reason which can spy out what is wrong with the world and find out what to use in replacing its diseased parts, as well as an ability to construct the tools and weapons required for grafting such designs onto human reality." (Bauman, 2007: 98).

[7] I discuss my conception of individualism below, in Chapter 2.

characters into an individual and the socio-political developments of the Hamidian regime that manifest parallels.

1.1 The *Alla Franca* Dandy Archetype:

If we look for what is common to all the novels named above, it would be seen that they are the products of Ottoman intellectuals' ideas of and anxiety over Westernization and that they are all satires. The novels are all about Westernization since the Ottoman intelligentsia had assumed the role to educate the masses and addressed what they believed to be the most urgent matter, namely, Westernization and its possible consequences: "In the Tanzimat novel, the author's didactical and interpretative tone of voice constantly intervenes in the narrative" (Parla, 1990: 60). They are all satires as the *alla franca* dandy's example was intended to serve as a social correction mechanism in Bergson's sense of the term, to condemn the lesser evil of snobbism through mockery before it becomes a chronic disease and too serious a matter to be treated in a comical manner. It is worth noting in this regard that before 1876, the year in which Ahmet Mithat Efendi's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* was published, there were not any novels that recognizably have *alla franca* dandy characters. This is not surprising since the Ottoman novel genre itself, in its realistic framework, was not much older than the *alla franca* dandy himself. In the years preceding and following the First World War (1914-18) and the Turkish War of Independence (1919-22), however, the *alla franca* dandy loses comicality and becomes the *alla franca* traitor as Berna Moran has demonstrated (1983: 259-68); a figure that collaborates with the invasion forces and who poses too serious a threat to be taken lightly. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Sodom ve Gomore* ("Sodom and

Gomorrah") of 1928, for instance, depicts Istanbul in the aftermath of its invasion, a city where *alla franca* Turks collaborate with the invasion forces to fill their pockets, figures who have no comicality. The comical *alla franca* dandy figure is, in this regard, the offspring of a more cosmopolitan phase of the Ottoman Empire before the two wars fostered strong nationalistic sentiments.

With regard to the cosmopolitanism of this period, it is worth referring to Nergis Ertürk's conception of the phonocentrism of Turkish language reforms and literary modernity in passing. Ertürk has said that Turkish language reforms were a move towards "a transparent, abstract phonetic writing system," a "one-to-one correspondence between the written word and its signified referent" to eliminate rationally the gap between spoken and written registers of the language to guarantee the suppression of internal differences of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious empire and to ensure a unitary self-identity: "[…] phonocentrism, we must say, is a form of absolutism, in the externalization and elimination of otherness for the sake of an absolutely impossible self-sameness" (2011: 3-31). It is, in other words, an oppressive means of nationalistic identity construction. Following the First World War (and, later, the War of Independence), it seems that the cosmopolitanism in the Ottoman society, which reflected itself in various novels, paves the way for an ideologically more concrete form of literature as in Yakup Kadri's works for instance. However, the *alla franca* dandy figure does not fit into the development Ertürk describes, since there were as yet no clear-cut identities, but only an anxiety concerning the possible course the Ottoman society would take. The *alla franca* dandy figure, in other words, was the product not of certainities, but of uncertainities brough about by Westernization.

It would, therefore, be a mistake to lump all the *alla franca* dandies together, as if they were exact copies of each other, and to treat those characters as a simple variation over the same theme of Westernization gone astray. It is true that whom we call the *alla franca* dandy is a man of appearances, a superficial character. However, that superficiality should not be seen in a superficial manner. Moran, for instance, who otherwise is quite perceptive and who gives us the first elaboration of the figure, takes the *alla franca* dandy's superficiality at its face value as a critique of snobbism in false Westernization, which is valid only with regard to Ahmet Mithat's Felâtun Bey and he misses the individualistic tendencies developing across the three figures. Mardin, on the other hand, whose article on super-westernization is of much value, does not take the *alla franca* dandy figure as any more than a critique of conspicuous consumption that was introduced into the Ottoman economy after the Tanzimat Edict of 1839. For Mardin, conspicuous consumption embodied in the *alla franca* dandy had disrupted the traditional social hierarchies as the Edict guaranteed private property and paved the way for capitalistic development (1974: 412-3). Though Mardin's view of the *alla franca* dandy explains much concerning the disruptive and anti-traditional currents within Ottoman modernization, his conception of that figure is static and relies totally on its disciplinary functions. Jale Parla and Nurdan Gürbilek, among the scholars who paid attention to the *alla franca* dandy figure, stand as exceptions; Parla, as she moves beyond the theme of false Westernization in snobbism and brings forth the epistemological problems of a modernizing society reflected in those foppish characters' falterings and Gürbilek, as she elaborates upon the identity crisis inherent in the figure in question. (I return to these views below.)

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Adding on the works of all those scholars, I draw attention to the gradual development of individualism that is to be seen in the *alla franca* dandy archetype.

Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, which stands at the origin of this development, is an attempt at circumscribing the limits of proper Westernization within the paradigms of the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry; an attempt in which a balance between "the materialism of the West and the spirituality of the East" in Kadıoğlu's words (1996: 180) would be struck to satisfy both the need of change and maintaining order. Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, however, is not concerned with circumscribing a proper Westernization. It rather is an elaboration upon the experience of Westernization itself. Ahmet Mithat condemns his Felâtun Bey's behavior as a moralist and thereby elaborates upon his own ideal of Westernization in a didactic manner. Ekrem, on the other hand, seems to withdraw from the scene and portrays his *alla franca* Bihrûz Bey with the minutest details of his personality, his perplexity in the face of a crumbling *ancien régime* and, though he derides Bihrûz Bey's absurd manner of life, does not condemn him morally.[8] With the publication of *Araba Sevdası*, we therefore see that the individual *per se* gains importance and becomes an object of anxious attention as the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry loses ideological effectiveness in what can be called an epistemological crisis in its collision with the Western culture. *Araba Sevdası*, in this regard, marks the second phase of this development. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi*, which offers us the third and the final step of this development, is a recognition of the individual's importance against tradition. The *alla franca* Meftûn Bey is a man who ruthlessly criticizes the society and the Hamidian regime's

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[8] Gürbilek says that *Araba Sevdası* fails to be a satire as "The writer is no longer the guardian of the true self, since language itself does not work." (2003: 612)

Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry together with its value judgments and rankings inculcated by the state and becomes his author's mouthpiece in disguise.[9]

A few words on the thesis' formal structure would be in place as well: The Introduction will provide a general overview of the Ottoman Empire's modernization and the Ottoman novel's place within that process, with a special emphasis upon the Ottoman modernity's *sui generis* nature. The second chapter provides a theoretical discussion in which the whole thesis will be framed. The third chapter on Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* examines the *alla franca* dandy's birth as a figure that came to the Ottoman literary scene as a critique of superficial, or excessive Westernization. The fourth chapter, which is on Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, studies the metamorphosis of this *alla franca* dandy figure into a more profound expression of the experience of modernity. The fifth chapter, on Hüseyin Rahmi's *Şıpsevdi*, examines the final stage of the *alla franca* dandy figure's mutation. The chapters that separately deal with these three novels, therefore, will present the *alla franca* dandy figure's metamorphosis in time, in connection with the parallel developments in Ottoman modernization. I will, then, conclude the study with a discussion over the possibility of "multiple modernities" with especial regard to the Ottoman modernization.

1.2 The Beginnings of Ottoman Modernization:

We have defined modernity, following Çınar, as problematizing of the present as something deficient, or in need of intervention to reach an ideal society in the future,

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[9] I owe this idea of Meftûn Bey as Gürpınar's disguised mouthpiece to Moran (1983: 147).

an aspiration that may be seen, together with Bauman, as a utopian vision. We have

also said that the gradual development of individualism is an important element in

such modernization (though we have not as yet elaborated upon that particular point).

Zygmunt Bauman says, for instance, that a modern society should be characterized

as the individual's gradual liberation from the constraints imposed by the social

bonds and a sense of "an unprecedented frailty and vulnerability of those

individuals" as the social bonds disappear together with the sense of secuirty they

formerly guaranteed:

> The first was, to follow Castel's terminology, the 'over-evaluation' (*sur-valorisation*) of the individual liberated from the constraints imposed by the dense network of social bonds. But a second departure followed closely after: an unprecedented frailty and vulnerability of those individuals, stripped of the protection which had been matter-of-factly offered in the past by that dense network of social bonds. (Bauman, 2007: 58).

The late 19th Century Ottoman society, likewise, was in a process of disintegrating

tradition and, for that matter, the individual's domain was gradually expanding to the

same extent. Yet, to substantiate such a claim, we should, first and foremost, deal

with the beginnings of the Ottoman modernization experience, from the 18th Century

onwards, without losing touch with the phenomenon of Westernization and consider

how the Ottoman/Islamic cultural foundations were shaken paving the way for the

individual's liberty.

1.3 The Cultural Background of Ottoman Modernization:

The Ottoman *ancien régime* is best explained as a system that was founded upon an

Islamicized Aristotelian body politic in which each organ, or compartment of the

community fulfills some certain functions that belonged specifically and specially to

this group, that is, a system based wholly upon the concept of *nizâm* ("order"). In

such an order, *adalet* ("justice") was the principal means through which the

maintenance of the system was ensured through a proportional distribution of

benefits, rights and duties: "The function of the ruling estates [...] was to maintain the

order as an unalterable tradition by securing to each category of the ruled no less and

no more than it deserved according to its function or station. This was the meaning of

justice."[10] The Ottoman body politic, in this regard, was divided into some certain

classes headed by the *Padişah* ("sultan") who exercised his authority through his

ministers and minions which constituted the *askeri* ("military") class. The *askeri*

class was constituted, in turn, of the administrative *kapıkulu* system ("servants of the

porte," who obeyed the Sultan unconditionally as his slaves and who had no political

or familial ties with the wider community to ensure their submission) and the

yeniçeri corps ("janissaries"). The system financed and maintained itself through the

timar system, that is, through the granting of fief benefices.[11] The *ulema*, or the

religious dignitaries, was a group distinct both from the military and civil estates of

the state. They dealt, on the main, with the interpretation and implementation of the

Sharia ("Islamic jurisprudence") in statecraft and law.

Below the ruling classes, there was, of course, the common people, or the ruled

(*raâya*) constituted mainly of the peasents and artisans of diverse branches. The class

of *raâya*, in turn, was divided into Muslims and non-Muslims: "While the first

constituted a politically amorphous community, the second (Jews and Christians)

were differentiated according to their ecclesiastical affiliations and not according to

their ethnic or national differences) in spiritually autonomous religious communities

called *millets*" (Berkes, 1998: 10-1). The whole system, in other words, was based

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[10] Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 10-11.
[11] Berkes, *The Development*, 14.

on a theological view of the whole macro-cosmos, where the *nizâm* under the *Padişah*'s supervision and protection was directly tied to the world order: "This principle derived from the belief that all the prerogatives and privileges granted to the groups were bestowed by the grace of God for the sake of the happiness and order of the world (*nizâm-ı âlem*)" (Berkes, 1998: 13).

1.4 Westernization and Its Consequences in Political and Cultural Spheres:

In the 18th Century, the Ottoman *nizâm* seemed to be (and indeed was) tumbling down in the face of the European armies' superior capabilities. The consequences were felt, at first, as a shock and there was no reasonable enough response to the developments taking place in Europe as the belief in the Ottoman Empire's superiority over European states persisted in a mythical form. *Lâle Devri* ("the Tulip Era") was a symptom of such a shock. As Berkes says: "The period following the Treaty of Passarovitz (1718) is called the Tulip Era. It was characterized by a great desire to realize peace. The ruler, Ahmed III, and his chief minister, the Sadrazam Ibrahim Paşa, decided to avoid war at all cost. At the same time the Ottoman Turks began to look outside, more particularly to the West, for new inspiration" (Berkes, 1998: 25). Indeed, such "desire to realize peace" was the end of the Ottoman *ancien régime* defined through *gaza* ("holy war"), or *cihad* ("jihad") against the Christian infidels of Europe. It was, in this regard, inescapable that a wholesale re-organization of the state apparatus and policies would ensue.

It is worth noting as well that, besides looking "more particularly to the West," there was a turn towards daily life, that is, towards the secular, or worldly aspects of living as opposed to the thoroughly religious manner of life of the previous centuries: "The most remarkable characteristic of the time was the rise of a spirit of worldliness" (Berkes, 1998: 26). It may be said that the spirit of wordliness Berkes speaks of, which gave greater value to the daily life in its secular aspects, was the beginning of an epoch in which the Ottoman society (at least, the upper-classes) would take the present more seriously and would bear less the problems that plague their daily lives;[12] in other words, problematizing of the present as a condition for modern society might be said to have its foundations in the Tulip Era. The Tulip Era, therefore, was a period in which numerous changes affecting the state apparatus and the wider society were taking place, changes brought about first by the unpleasant contacts with the superior European powers.

The Tulip Era was thus *seemingly* a period of passivity in which laxity in established tradition and morals was the most conspicious feature. Yet, the cultural changes were to be felt at still deeper levels, such as in language. Even in the late 18th Century, Westernizing currents within the state (and, thus, within the Ottoman upper-class families) were already there, making their way unperceptively but effectively into cultural change. The borrowing of French words, for instance, testifies to this cultural change through language. Hanioğlu gives some samples: "words such as *avance* (avans), *civil* (sivil), *console* (konsol), *journal* (curnal), *manteau* (manto), *physiologique* (fizyolojik/fizyolociaî), and *politique* (politik), became commonplace in Ottoman usage" (2008: 34). Even though there was no need for borrowing in the

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[12] Berkes even says that "The period displayed certain features which might have been the signs of a renaissance had they been accompanied by favourable material conditions." (1998: 26).

presence of perfectly equivalent words, the bent on adopting French words maintained itself: "[…] *commission/komisyon* (hey'et), *docteur/doktor* (tabib), *dépôt/depo* (anbar), *dualiste/dualist* (süna'î), *économie/ekonomi* (iktisad), and *police/polis* (zabtiye, inzibat)" (Hanioğlu, 2008: 34). Those borrowings from French were different in nature from what Tageldin names "translational seduction," in which the colonizer's seeming admiration for the colonized culture becomes a trap, a trap into which, out of a desire to re-gain the lost sovereignty in the colonizer's mediated image, the colonized culture falls. In the 18th Century Ottoman cultural life, we see a different case in which the Ottoman/Islamic culture is not seduced by his own image in the colonizing power (as its past self), but directly by the colonizing power's unmediated image itself.

There was the parallel development of *risale* ("epistle") writing as well, works written by the Ottoman statesmen and diplomats on mission to European capitals and for the manifest purpose of informing the Sublime Porte concerning the possible routes for political, military and economic reform. The tradition which begun with the writings, for instance, of Koçi Bey and Çelebi Mehmed in the early 18th Century continued well into the middle of the 19th Century with statesman like Mustafa Sâmi (Berkes, 1998: 129). These *risale*s, on the main, accelerated the import of Western ideas first into the Ottoman state apparatus and then into the upper-class Ottoman families.

From around the last quarter of the 18th Century onwards, the Ottoman ruling classes, especially under the reigns of Selim III (r. 1789-1807) and Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839), "[…] began to realize that their assumptions were no longer absolute truths"

(Berkes, 1998: 25) and more importantly problematized the present for the first time. It was felt that merely to import military technology would not remedy the problems of a state that became politically and economically unstable: "Modernization, it was felt, would require a thoroughgoing examination of the basic traditional institutions themselves" (Berkes, 1998: 71). The epoch that begins with Selim III's accession to the Ottoman throne is thus to be described not by passivity or inactivity, but, rather, with an effort in coming to terms with the problems of the Empire in a conscious way, though it did not always end up successfuly. The greatest and surest indicator of the epoch's predilection towards modernization was its problematization of the present as something which is not it ought to be, that is, as deficient or undesirable. As Çınar states in relation to the modernization projects of the early Republican era and the 1990's of Turkey, the urge towards modernization can be defined through such a common element as the problematization of the present: "[...] the common element in these projects is the specific attitude toward society, its present and future, that constructs the present as deficient and in need of remedial intervention that will transform it toward the future" (2005:7). In the late 18th Century and afterwards, reformist attitudes were, without doubt, varied considerably. Among the Young Ottomans, for instance, figures like Mehmed Bey, Halil Şerif and Mustafa Fazıl "represented those most attuned to the liberal ideal of progress through emancipation from all remnants of a bygone age" (Mardin, 2000: 78-9). On the other hand, those Young Ottomans who gathered around Namık Kemal were "immersed in the stream of liberal Western ideas" such as "liberty" and "the nation," advocated "reason in the solution of political problems" and yet had a romantic vision of the Ottoman Empire's past glories and achievements, maintaining a balance between reform and tradition (Mardin, 2000, 79). Even though they varied, all the Ottoman intellectuals

of the 18th and 19th Centuries thus believed in the necessity of change in one form or another. However, it should be noted as well that, at that time, the individual's place and importance in any reformist project has not as yet been sufficiently recognized even by the reformist Young Ottomans who defended liberty and a parliamentarian system of representation. As Mardin says: "What the Young Ottomans did not realize was that there existed an organic bond between the political institutions advocated by a philosopher like Locke and the individualistic conceptions which lay behind them" (2000: 401). The importance of the individual, as it will be seen, would be recognized towards the end of the 19th Century.

The political, bureaucratic, and military reforms of Selim III's reign were made their presence felt, though quite slowly, in the daily life of the Ottoman upper-classes as well. (It should be born in mind that Westernization, at first, was a class-based phenomenon and concerned, on the main, the Ottoman upper-class families.) The *Frenk* ("European") manners in daily life, that first surfaced in the Tulip Era of the first quarter of the 18th Century, became more manifest and marked during Selim III's reformist rule: "During the eighteen years of Selim's reign, the European way of life came a little closer to the Turks. Many of the unconscious changes in the Turkish mind, which were expressed concretely only later, may be said to have their beginnings in this period" (Berkes, 1998: 77-8). The Westernizing influences in daily life accelerated under the reign of Mahmud II. It is worth noting that Mahmud II himself had lad the way in transforming the Ottoman daily life:

> Mahmud initiated the acceptance of Western attire, and certain social practices relating to etiquette, taste, and the like. He became an enemy of long beards; he declared war against the traditional Turkish saddles and style of riding; he appeared before the people and became a public orator and ribbon cutter; he caused his ministers to sit in his presence; he went on steamer trips; he bagan to learn French; he imported European musicians and concert

> masters; he is reported to have ordered samples of European headgear with a view toward recapping his troops or, perhaps, even popularizing these among his people. His own example was followed by some. The turbans, ample trousers, old-fashioned shoes, and decorative paraphernalia were dropped, beards were shortened or shaven completely, European pants were adopted (Berkes, 1998: 122).

Hanioğlu's account of household goods such as furniture and utensils owned by the wealthy classes like government officials and merchants across time illustrates the development of European manners and fashions in more concrete terms (2008, 27-33). Hanioğlu's archival study shows that still in the beginning of the 19th Century, the Ottoman high-classes did not own Western-style furniture or utensils; yet, with time, they had become the standard belongings of such families.

The impact of Westernization in social life was not merely limited to the domestic utensils of the Ottoman upper echelons, or to European fashion. Especially under Mahmud II's rule, with the establishment of Western-style military academies, Western ideas came to affect the Ottoman intelligentsia and members of upper-class families thoroughly. Berkes, for instance, cites the memories of an Englishman, MacFarlane, who visited the School of Medicine in 1847, at a time when Mahmud II's reform policies, especially in the educational system, made themselves manifest indisputably. MacFarlane, in the face of such a transformation, speaks of the establishment amazedly:

> We were invited into an elegant saloon, set apart for the use of the doctors and the young Turks their assistants. A book was lying open on the divan. I took it up. It was a copy of a recent Paris edition of the Atheists's manual, *"Système de la Nature"*, with the name of the Baron d'Holbach on the title-page as the author. The volume had evidently been much used; many of the striking passages had been marked, and especially those which mathematically demonstrated the absurdity of believing in the immortality of the soul.[13]

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[13] Quoted in Berkes (1998: 116-8).

MacFarlane's memories might thus be indicative of that, from around the middle of the 19th Century, the reform projects of Selim III and Mahmud II had begun to alter the Ottoman upper-class' world-view in a dramatic way, though it cannot be said that the change affected the whole segments of the Ottoman elites. Yet, it may be said that the reforms (especially in the educational system) had called into being an urban class consisted of the Ottoman state officials, notables, and intelligentsia who displayed a bifurcated identity torn between the values of the Ottoman *ancien régime* and Westernization, a split that may even be observed in a single person's character: "This meant, in terms of education, that many individuals were going to develop a culturally split personality or a personality with a dual culture [...]" (Berkes, 1998: 109). Such a bifurcated culture constituted one of the core issues of the Ottoman modernization process and made itself felt through a series of reforms and counter-reforms depending on the political circumstances. Hanioğlu, in a similar vein, says: "Initial Ottoman responses to the challenges of a new era produced duality in every field [...]" (2008: 53). Besides, there was no conception of natural law to attune the Ottoman/Islamic morals to Western rationalism: "Was the movement of every particle of the universe motivated by the will of God to move it at that very instance, or did the hand of God set the universe in motion once and for all just as it would wind a clock?" (Mardin, 2000: 84 and 84-7). In other words; was it possible to posit a scientific law, or a political principle without rioting against the God's will? It was difficult to answer the question. This duality, as it will be seen, had become one of the most important features of the Ottoman modernization process.

The reign of Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909), known as *Kızıl Sultan* ("the Red Sultan") by the reformist-minded of the period and his opponents in the Empire and elsewhere

for his autocratic, suppressive, and reactionary rule, was the time which especially concerns the subject-matter of this study since modernization had ironically came to be felt in culture most intensely during this period. The Hamidian period, though characterized as a reaction towards Westernization, paradoxically excelled all the previous reform periods with regard to the prevalence of Western ideas in intellectual circles and manners in daily life. The Hamidian regime is thus to be seen, on the one hand, as a period of the re-invention of tradition: "Under the sultan's aegis, Ottoman tradition underwent a concerted process of re-invention" (Hanioğlu, 2008: 127-8). The 600th anniversary of the Ottoman state's foundation, for instance, was celebrated with "enormous pomp and ceremony," Osman Bey's (the founding father of the Ottoman Empire) father Ertuğrul Bey's tomb was re-discovered and renovated, etc., all of which were to serve the purpose of dealing with the rapid transformations within the Ottoman culture: "It was almost inevitable that an age of transformative reform, wholesale abandonment of old practices, and centralization of a once-loose confederation, should spark a hurried, sometimes artificial process of forming new traditions to replace those lost" (Hanioğlu, 2008: 126). Yet, on the other hand and as was said, the Hamidian regime was a period of rapid modernization as well. A state that trusted in suspicious records of cadastrates in levying taxes and contacted its population most tangibly in occasional conscriptions could not be effective enough in dealing with the ascending power of European capitalist states. The invention of tradition that Hanioğlu speaks of was thus a part of the greater project of constructing a harmonizing, unifying ideology. The Ottoman state under Hamidian regime, as was said before in reference to Deringil, had sought for such an ideology in an Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry, in an attempt at transforming its former subjects who passively consented to active participants in bureaucracy and

social life. Interpellating the population not as ethnic or religious communities, but individually as citizens was thus an enormous change that upset the traditional, hierarchical social order. Such change necessitated, first and foremost, an extensive schooling system across a wide empire. It was thus ironical that attempts at strengthening the state apparatus through fashioning a citizenry had increased the momentum of Western ideas' infiltration. As Berkes says: "It is an irony that a system designed to isolate the mind from change and innovation coincided with the most devastating infiltration of the prohibited ideas" (1998: 276). As Hanioğlu remarks, the Hamidian regime saw the spread of most irreligious currents of opinion within the intellectual circles despite its reactionary and Islamicizing zeal: "Among the many ironies of the Hamidian regime, one of the most striking is certainly the triumph of materialist ideas under the most pious sultan of late Ottoman history" (2008: 138). Besides, in the Hamidian period, the circulation of Western ideas and fashions was not limited to the Ottoman upper-classes. With the help of a growing reading public, those ideas and fashions found a wider currency. Namık Kemal, for instance, attests to an expanding reading public in one of his letters written in 1882:

> Namık Kemal noted the expansion as early as 1882 in a letter analyzing the inevitability of Westernization; he showed it as proof of progress in literature 'since the rise of the idea of progress among us.' Compared with the Tanzimat period, he said, not only the number of papers but also the number of their readers had increased. In a decade even the number of women reading newspapers 'increased a hundred times' (Berkes, 1998: 278-9).

It should not be thought, however, that the upsurge of Western ideas and manners was the result of negligence on the part of the Hamidian regime; on the contrary, Abdülhamid II had put to use every possbile means to preclude the dissemination of such "dangerous" ideas and manners that might be corrosive of the Hamidian regime's project of Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry. Hanioğlu says: "The mechanism of censorship developed during this period was one of the strictest in

modern times" (2008: 125-6). As it will be seen, such measures had resulted in unintended consequences for the Ottoman modernization.

1.5 The Modern Ottoman Literature and Its Place Within Modernization:

The Hamidian regime, through the instruments of censorship, imprisonment, or expatriation, had obliged the Ottoman intelligentsia to leave even remotely political subject-matters aside and to divert their attention towards cultural matters as such, or towards scientific publications which were expected to attract the least suspicion of the meticulous censors:

> One of the consequences of Hamid's suppression of political preoccupations was to force the intellectuals to focus upon non-political, cultural questions that had been lost sight of during the constitutional controversies. By severing the cultural questions from the political-religious questions, the Hamidian regime unknowingly encouraged focusing upon cultural matters as such (Berkes, 1998: 289).

The Ottoman intelligentsia's turn towards cultural matters marks a crucial, and quite a critical point within the Ottoman modernization. Though the intelligentsia's turn away from politics, constitutional debates, discussions over fundamental rights and freedoms etc. might seem to be a weakening, or regression of modernization, it had provoked unintended consequences, opened up new vistas, and created possibilities for a subtler modernization process. The journalism of the Hamidian regime, through censorship and otherwise through self-censorship, had drifted apart from politics as newspapers and journals had lost their *raison d'être* of informing the reader about political events and circumstances; yet, they began to concentrate, as was said, on cultural matters of great significance such as pre-arranged marriages, a discussion whose influence on the Ottoman society had proved to be considerable. Besides

newspapers and journals, the Ottoman literature of the Hamidian regime had become

another venue through which cultural matters had began to be treated effectively as

the Ottoman intelligentsia had tried to find alternative ways in dealing with cultural

problems of the empire. There were, in this regard, three principal avenues in which

the intelligentsia of the Hamidian regime had managed to express their views

concerning cultural matters as they withdrew from politics: newspapers and journals

of various groups, literary works, and the *salons* of prominent upper-class Ottoman

families as sites of cultural debate. The Ottoman literature, among those sites of

cultural debate, had become the most prominent and productive field in which

various subject-matters pertaining to the Ottoman culture were taken into

consideration. The Young Ottomans' third exile, for instance, is illustrative of the

extent to which literary works could influence the Ottoman society:

> The event which precipitated the third exile of the Young Ottomans,
> however, was somewhat unexpected. [...] later, on April I, 1873, a play
> written by Kemal was performed. The subject of the play was the defense by
> the Turks of the fortress of Silistria during the Turko-Russian War. [...] The
> whole theatre rocked with shouts "Long live Kemal!" (Mardin, 2000: 66-7).

As an example, this incident shows that the Ottoman literary works, within a short

period, had started to occupy a prominent place in their capacity to manipulate public

opinion to a considerable extent.

Indeed, Ottoman literature was in a course of profound transition from the traditional

and esoteric *divân* literature of the palace that appealed only to a few select, to the

Western-style works of the prominent intellectuals who aspired to educate the masses

through utilizing the more effective means provided by modern literary techniques.

There was, in this regard, already a thrust towards modernization in Ottoman

literature beginning with the 19th Century, which made possible the discussion of

cultural matters in the Hamidian era, previously an impossibility within the *divân*

tradition that used a pompous and redundant language, *Osmanlıca* ("Ottoman"), and produced a literature suffused with symbols and dealing mostly with mystical love. A move away from the *divân* tradition become gradually more marked when, for instance, Mahmud II's translation bureau had become an effective apparatus in propagating Western ideas within the upper-class of the empire. The works of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Fénélon, Fontenelle, and Volney were especially in demand and widely circulated (Berkes, 1998: 199). Throughout the Tanzimat period, interest in translations had shifted from scientific, technical, and military publications to literary works (Berkes, 1998: 109). For instance, Yusuf Kamil Paşa's translation of Fénelon's *Aventures de Télémaque* into Turkish in 1862, a criticism of absolutist regime in disguise, had become a testimony for the upper-class Ottomans' interest in Western literary works as it was widely-read and greatly in demand (Hanioğlu, 2008: 95-6). All these translations, therefore, had much assissted the Hamidian regime's intellectuals to find models as they concentrated on cultural matters. In 1839, Hanioğlu documents, the year in which Mahmud II died, there was just a single European work in the possession of the Ottoman high officials: a map of Europe. Yet, translations of Western works had begun to dominate the scene in a short span of time: "Similar holdings of a decade later, however, contain thousands of books in European languages as well as numerous translations, demonstrating the generational gap in the response to Westernization" (Hanioğlu, 2008: 63-4). These translations, then, provided the beginnings of the Ottoman literature's transformation, whose later development was decisively determined by Ottoman journalistic activities.

Ottoman journalism can be said to have the greatest impact over the later development of Ottoman literature. İbrahim Şinasi (1826-1871), who is regarded as

the first modern writer, had done revolutionary work in this field. In 1860, together with his friend Agâh Efendi, Şinasi began the publication of the first privately owned Turkish newspaper, *Tercüman-ı Ahval*, to be followed by *Tasvir-i Efkâr* when the former ceased publication after six months. In *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, Şinasi concentrated on political as well as literary matters and defended the simplification of the journalistic language to reach a larger segment of the Ottoman society. Şinasi's urge towards a dynamic Turkish idiom in journalism was followed almost unanimously: "In the 1860s practically the entire corps of Turkey's progressive intellectuals was involved in journalism and collectively they searched for clarity of expression often echoing one another's remarks" (Evin, 1983: 48-9). The bent towards a much simpler Turkish in journalism was revolutionary in that it succeeded in forming a public taste for reading in the Ottoman upper-class. Mardin states, in this regard, that Ottoman journalism had first formed a direct contact between the intellectuals and the masses, a "feeling of intimacy" between the two poles. More importantly for literary developments, the journalistic activities of this period had witnessed the advent of a realism that aided the import of Western novel genre into the Ottoman literary productions. Mardin says concerning another result of Ottoman journalism: "[...] the second was the minimum of realism that had to infuse any literary product that explained factual occurrences [...]" (2000: 262-3). Throughout the Hamidian regime, a simplified Turkish idiom had found itself pretty much established both within journalism and literary production, enabling the Ottoman intelligentsia to reach the masses as they concentrated upon cultural matters that interest the Ottoman society.

The novel had thus become a possibility for the Ottoman intelligentsia who were anxious both to reach a larger segment of the society and to utilize more effective

tools in spreading their ideas concerning social change. In the beginning, the novel was seen as a reflection of Western scientific progress within literature and, for that matter, superior in technique. The popularity of Zola's positivist novels, in this sense, is not surprising and can be testified to in the accounts given of the novel's essence by figures like Halit Ziya: "'The path of realism consists of the description of the material and spiritual basing them on observation and experiment.'"[14] Observation and experiment, which were deemed to be the essence of Western scientific progress and superiority, were also to provide the basis for the Ottoman novel concerned with the problems of social change in a period of rapid transformation. As Ahmet Ö. Evin says in this regard: "Like dramatic literature, the novel too was seen as a testament of the achievements of the age; and like science and technology it was considered to be an integral part of the modern civilization to be emulated" (1983: 16). Yet, the Ottoman intelligentsia's enthusiasm for the novel was not, naturally, confined merely to scientific curiosity in literature. They needed, first and foremost, a medium through which to educate the masses and, on the main, to save the Ottoman society from social, cultural, and moral ruin in the face of a devastating process of modernization. In other words: "Literature was to be a medium for social mobilization" (Evin, 1983: 11-2). The novel, therefore, was seen to have a didactic function, especially in the minds of prominent Young Ottomans such as Namık Kemal. In Kemal's opinion, art was for society's sake, and any breach of that fundamental principle in literature was to be seen as a snobbish aloofness from the problems and evils that beset the society. The sway of positivist ideas over the Ottoman novel and the intelligentsia's bent towards a didactic literary genre had therefore resulted in contradictions and a *sui generis* Ottoman novel. There came into

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[14] Quoted in Evin (1983: 138).

being, on the one hand, a gradually more realistic novel; yet, on the other hand, especially the Young Ottoman intellectuals' urge towards educating the masses has resulted in more ideological works lacking in artistic and novelistic quality as they sacrificed both the novelistic form and content to indoctrination. However, the Hamidian regime's censorship had served to bring the Ottoman novel's proclivity towards cultural matters and its realistic inclinations to the surface as the Ottoman intelligentsia began to observe the society at large: "In the changed political climate of the post-Tanzimat period, the intelligentsia began to avoid active involvement in politics and the novel came to be concerned with the social rather than the political aspects of Turkish life" (Evin, 1983: 79). The Ottoman novel of the Hamidian regime, then, gradually became a venue in which the *experience* of modernity, rather than the political and institutional problems of Westernization, had attained a prominent place. Yet, the Ottoman intelligentsia's interest in the experience of modernity is too amorphous to be explained in simple terms, and follows a devious path in which there occurred quite subtle developments, as it will be seen in the following pages.[15]

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[15] It is not fortuitous that the late nineteenth-century Ottoman society saw both the advent of the novel and the first glimmerings of a national consciousness. So, it deserves a few more words before we proceed any further. As Benedict Anderson has shown, the novel was an agent in developing and sustaining modern imagined communities, that is, nations. The literary works before the birth of the novel had a conception of time as "a simultaneity of past and future in an instantaneous present." This was, in other words, a Messianic time in Walter Benjamin's words, a time in which events take place within a theological aura, as eternal occurrences. The realist novel, on the other hand, has a totally different conception of time:
"What has come to take the place of the mediaeval conception of simultaneity-along-time is, to borrow again from Benjamin, an idea of 'homogeneous, empty time,' in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (Anderson, 2006: 23-4).
Such a conception of time enabled the novel, Anderson argues, to depict imagined communities whose members share a "homogeneous, empty time" as they are immersed in their daily activities. From around the middle of the nineteenth-century onwards, Young Ottomans like Namık Kemal were giving expression to their ideas of nationhood and it was no mere coincidence that these intellectuals were also industrious men-of-letters who, through their newspaper articles and novels, contributed each day to the birth of that imagined community of Turkish Ottoman nationalism. But, what concerns us is more the experience of modernity in the Ottoman novel than its gradual transformation towards a nationalistic genre. So, we might return to our subject-matter.

The experience of modernity, though it is and was felt in many different fashions depending on the historical contingencies of particular cultures, may be said to beget the nearly universal sense of disorientation in the face of rapidly changing cultural, social, and political reality. Yet, it would be senseless if the experience of modernity is seen just as a feeling of disorientation, as it entails, at the same time, a certain will towards change which sets the modern consciousness apart from reactionary tendencies that insist upon the resuscitation of the old order of things. Berman's picture of the modern individual is thus worth noting: "They are moved at once by a will to change – to transform both themselves and their world – and by a terror of disorientation and disintegration, of life falling apart" (2010: 13). The modern Ottoman novel of the Hamidian regime is a perfect expression of the tensions of such an experience of modernity, which was, on the one hand, progressive and modernist in its zeal towards novel forms of expression and, on the other hand, anxious in his defense of the moral, social, and political values of the Ottoman *ancient régime* which were on the brink of dissolution as they met with the ideas and fashions of the West: "To be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction" (Berman, 2010: 13-4). In the modern Ottoman novel, the whole experience of modernity, with its anxieties, paradoxes, and aspirations was, quite interestingly, embodied in a literary character that dominated the whole Ottoman novel across the Hamidian regime; namely, the *alla franca* dandy figure.

1.6 The *Utopian Individualism* of Ottoman Modernization:

Though the *alla franca* dandy first showed up in *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, Ahmed Midhat's treatment of the superficial, snobbish Felâtun Bey was indeed

superficial as his novel gave priority to the plot rather than to character development. Ahmed Midhat's primary concern was with demonstrating the truth of his political position as a defender of the Hamidian regime's communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry and its value judgements and social, moral rankings. The novel, in this regard, lacks in artistic value as it narrates a series of events that clearly manifest the underlying propagandistic tendency. The *alla franca* dandy's true development, indeed, begins with the publication of Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, in which the *alla franca* Bihrûz Bey was portrayed with the minutest details of his character, his fears, and his passions, as Ekrem had displayed Bihrûz Bey's experience of Westernization and the epistemological crisis that ensues to the reader who thus gains an intimacy with Bihrûz Bey and, perhaps, with his/her own sense of disorientation. As Moran says: "To understand is to forgive" (Moran, 1983: 318).[16] Yet, to have a firmer grasp of *Araba Sevdası*'s importance both in the *alla franca* dandy's mutation and in the Ottoman modernization, we should, before going any further, take the Hamidian regime's political and social context into consideration with especial regard to the Hamidian intellectual's position against the regime and within the society at large.

Most members of the Ottoman intelligentsia under the Hamidian regime, and especially those who were radically reformist and Western-oriented, had become pretty much marginalized during that period as they faced with severe measures of repression, censorship, and, more importantly, the rise of the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry whose dominant value judgments occluded their attempts at further reformation and Westernization. Yet, their experience of such an isolation was not merely confined to an apathy in political matters; as they were the

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[16] My translation.

representatives of a reformist movement, who aspired nothing less than becoming the heroes of a revolutionary epoch that will change the whole face of the Ottoman state and society, their marginalization had resulted in a profound sense of frustration and alienation from the Ottoman society at large. The beginnings of this process, indeed, can be said to have taken root under Selim III's reign and to have further developed throughout Mahmud II's reformist period. The reforms of Selim III's and especially Mahmud II's reigns had called into being a considerable bureaucratic apparatus, whose members had received a Western-style education expected to contribute to their aspirations for climbing up the ladders of social hierarchies, or of saving the empire from ruins. This, as Şerif Mardin has succinctly put it, has effected a "rise in the level of expectations" (2000: 124). This "rise in the level of expectations" did not remain limited only to the bureaucracy, since the Ottoman bureaucrat of this period was pretty much a jack-of-all-trades and busied himself with matters of politics, of journalism and literature, etc. Mardin, in this regard, says: "In the nineteenth century there began to appear with increasing frequency in Turkish literary circles a type of intellectual already well known in Europe. This type was the *litterateur* of humble origins and modest means but of unlimited ambitions" (2000: 124). These *litterateurs'* "unlimited ambitions," for instance of the Young Ottomans, might be seen in their derogatory use of the words such as *bey zâde* ("son of bey") or *kibar zâde* ("son of a refined person") to deride some of the younger generation bureaucrats of the Sublime Porte who had managed to secure those government posts via their parental cliques (Mardin, 2000: 123). For the Young Ottomans, they were the ones who deserved such positions instead of those foppish sons of the higher-classes. The repression and censorship of the Hamidian regime, its unconditional request that all the subjects of the empire should bow to the Sultan's imperative, and

its autocratic rule had thus frustrated the Ottoman intelligentsia's "unlimited ambitions," as they found themselves cut off from politics and lost their chances for becoming the saviors of the empire. They even become melancholic and had decisively withdrawn themselves from the political life of the empire. Berkes, for instance, gives us a gloomy account of the Hamidian regime's intellectuals, and of their great disillusionment in the face of the political realities:

> Most of the Hamidian intellectuals, politically inhibited, saw their surroudings darkly and the future as hopeless. They believed that there was nothing upon which to rely. Some turned to God as a final refuge. Others became sodden with melancholy, pessimism, and the denial of social values. Some committed suicide while some committed moral suicide in opportunism. (1998: 274)

The frustration of their "unlimited ambitions" had resulted in even a more remarkable consequence than their bent over cultural matters as such: namely, the first glimmerings of an awareness of the individual's worth within an environment that has become both oppressive and alienating. Indeed, from around the middle of the 19th Century onwards, Ottoman intellectuals such as Sadık Rifat Paşa (b. 1807; d. 1857) were beginning to draw attention to the subjects of the empire themselves, rather than just considering the Ottoman state's problems. For Sadık Rifat Paşa, there emerged, after the Napoleonic Wars, a new "system" that he called "civilization," which was based on peaceful relations and commerce between the states and in which the "well-being of all the subjects" was considered of paramount importance: "This new conception, he continued, started from the premise that a state flourished whenever its subjects were provided with the opportunity to reap to the fullest extent the fruit of their daily labor" (Mardin, 2000: 179-80). Though Sadık Rifat Paşa's interest in the well-being of the subject seems to serve, in the end, the state itself which was expected to flourish through an increase in its subject's conditions, there seems to glimmer an awareness of the individual's worth within his conception of an

ideal state and society. As was said, the Hamidian regime's pressures over the Ottoman intelligentsia had contributed to the development of an awareness of the individual's worth within the society, as the intellectuals felt gradually more frustrated.

They might even be said to be moved towards individualistic ideas through their becoming gradually more apolitical. The Ottoman intelligentsia of the Hamidian regime was not adherent of any political ideology whatsoever in a conscious, or comprehensive manner. Even the most radically reformist-minded, Western-oriented representatives of the intelligentsia were quite far from having any elaborate understanding of what Westernization actually means in their discussions with the more conservative segments of the intelligentsia. Berkes, in this regard, implies that such an unawareness, or naïvaté had marked the whole intellectual endeavors of this period, be it political matters, philosophical disputes, or literary discussions: "The Turkish intellectuals produced neither a genuine materialism in philosophy, realism or naturalism in literature, nor socialism in politics" (1998: 295). Yet, this does not mean that the Ottoman intelligentsia had produced nothing of significance.[17] Berkes, for instance, says in passing that the best term that is expressive of the Hamidian regime's intelligentsia was "utopian individualism," a remark that Berkes has not elaborated upon in a satisfactory manner, though his remark is significant for an understanding of the Ottoman intelligentsia of this period and their proto-individualism. Berkes claims: "When these nineteenth-century European rays of thoughts passed through the mental prism cut by Abdülhamid, they produced an ideology for which the term utopian individualism is the most appropriate" (1998:

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[17] Berkes's claim that there was "no realism or naturalism in literature" is exaggerated.

295). Berkes, though he does not define the concept directly, says that it was first occurred within literary circles: "Utopian individualism was the ideology of the emergent literary school that came to be known as *Edebiyat-ı Cedide* ("the New Literature") and was formed by the literary critics, poets, and novelists who, in 1896, gathered around the literary review *Servet-i Funûn*" (1998: 295).

The *Servet-i Fünûn* literature's "utopian individualism" was not the fruit of the Young Ottoman political thought, but of the movement's idealization of the Western civilization; yet, the *Servet-i Fünûn* novelists' utopian view of the Western civilization was not formulated in political terms. It was almost aesthetical. Their conception of the West was rather a projection of their own aspirations, and pretty much a product of their alienated imagination detached from the political realities. The *Servet-i Fünûn* novelists, as was said, were cut off from political matters and, thus, their works were truly apolitical in content. These novelists, for instance, had parted company with the Young Ottomans such as Ahmed Midhat who cherished Ottoman/Islamic values and tradition, and assumed an educative role before the masses as they wrote propagandistic works. The *Servet-i Fünûn* literature's idealization of the Western civilization, therefore, was apolitical in that they tended to look past the political problems of the Western societies. For the movement, the Western civilization represented a perfection, or a flawless progress towards perfection: "They aspired for the life of the European *individual* in which material comfort, scientific progress, and individual liberty reigned – not for a society criticized for its class inequalities, its crimes and prostitution, its greedy money-makers and exploited proletariat" (Berkes, 1998: 295). It can be said that their utopian view of the West was a reaction against their politically and socially

underdeveloped environment and, thus, political in essence; yet, they idealized the West to such an extent that they lost contact with the political realities. It is, for this reason, not a mere coincidence that they embraced both "utopian individualism" and the principle of *l'art pour l'art*. As the *Servet-i Fünûn* novelists like Ekrem moved away from politics, they had gradually become more alienated from the society in which they lived. This has resulted, for these novelists, in a much more acute consciousness of the individual's experience in the face of modernization as they introspectively concentrated on their own experience of alienation. Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, in which the *alla franca* Bihrûz Bey manifests his thoughts, aspirations, and anxieties starkly, was thus the product of the *Servet-i Fünûn* literature that achieved a certain consciousness of the individual's existence in modernity. On the other hand, as they saw the West as the exact opposite of the decaying Ottoman/Islamic culture, they idealized the West to the point of making it an object to be aesthetically contemplated: "The Westernists' admiration for the Western civilization was similar to the love of a sensitive youth for a beautiful, unknown woman. They did not cry for the preservation of the past; there was nothing worthwhile in it; they longed only for life filled with beauty" (Berkes, 1998: 297). The Ottoman intelligentsia of the Hamidian regime, and especially the *Servet-i Fünûn* novelists, had thus brought off a transformation of their experience of alienation into a consciousness of the individual's worth against the society's restrictive and stagnant traditionalism. What made their individualism "utopian," on the other hand, was their aesthetical attitude before the Western civilization, beautifying the West to make it appear flawless in their own eyes. *Servet-i Fünûn*'s "utopian individualism," in this sense, was to later become a true ideology as it ceased to be visible, though that ideology was not formulated in political terms in the beginning, but aesthetically. Ekrem's *Araba*

Sevdası, therefore, owes its existence and character to such an "utopian individualism" prevalent in the *Servet-i Fünûn* literature of this period.

A few more words on such utopianism may be in place before we go any further. Indeed, as Bauman says, utopias themselves, of whatever kind they are, were the upshots of modern consciousness. Like modernist projects, they spring from a dissatisfaction from the present social and political conditions and express a will to reach towards an ideal future. Utopias, in this sense, imply a belief in the modern man's ability to effectuate change as well, as modern consciousness itself expresses a belief in man's capacity to change the environment around himself:

> To be born, the utopian dream needed two conditions. First, an overwhelming (even if diffuse and as yet inarticulate) feeling that the world was not functioning properly and was unlikely to be set right without a thorough overhaul. Second, the confidence in human potency to rise to the task, a belief that 'we, humans, can do it,' armed as we are with reason which can spy out what is wrong with the world and find out what to use in replacing its diseased parts, as well as an ability to construct the tools and weapons required for grafting such designs onto human reality. (Bauman, 2007: 98)

The *Servet-i Fünûn* novelists' utopian individualism, in this sense, is the product of a modern consciousness that saw the individual's present condition under the Hamidian regime as bleak and aspired towards the utopia of Western civilization where individuals were thought to thrive freely. The Hamidian intellectual's utopia, in other words, was a real place on the world map: Europe. This implies that, even though they were dissatisfied with the present conditions and aspired towards a change, they were not quite confident in their own capacity to effectuate a change and their utopia assumed the character of a flight, which might be seen as a crooked utopia (Bauman, 2007: 104).

Hüseyin Rahmi's Meftûn Bey in *Şıpsevdi*, if we follow the process we have been discussing to its final stage, represents the last step in the *alla franca* dandy's metamorphosis. Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* may be said to have paved the way for Hüseyin Rahmi's work as Ekrem had brought the individual off to the scene as he concentrated on the experience of modernity. Hüseyin Rahmi, as he went way ahead than the others, has come to represent Ottoman "man's emancipation from his self-incurred immaturity" (to use Kant's famous words) in tradition and thus introduced *critique* into the Ottoman literature. His *Şıpsevdi*, in this sense, portrays an Ottoman society in which moral decay affects everyone, whether this person be a Westernist or a conservative. Against such a society, Meftûn Bey criticizes the whole Ottoman society's foundations and makes the individual, through his critique, the reference point of all modern, liberal values. This, evidently, points out toward the development of a *sui generis* Ottoman modernity that traced, as was said in the beginning, a different historical trajectory then its Western counterparts. To understand Ottoman modernity in this regard, we should also discuss how there can be multiple modernities rather than a Modernity with a capital letter.

1.7 Ottoman Modernity as a *Sui Generis* Development:

The essential question to which this study addresses itself is whether modernity is something monolithic, singular and thus universal in its form or, on the contrary, something plural in its nature that does not have determinate conditions, manifesting itself through diverse phenomena across different cultures and periods. It has become an antiquated question, though answers that can possibly be given has not yet been exhausted.

The question can be answered with two broadly outlined approaches to the problem of non-Western modernities: on the one hand, historicist and Eurocentric theories that conceptualize modernity as something singular and thus universal in its form, though it originates in a specific locality, i.e. the Renaissance Europe or the Europe of the 18th Century Enlightenment. Their conception of non-Western modernities is thus a series of adaptations, borrowings, replacements from (and, perhaps, outright imitations of) the European culture within political, cultural and economic spheres. Such historicist and Eurocentric theories of modernity necessarily conceived within a linear-path model, a path at the end of which there comes modern, national-states with capitalist economies and bourgeois societies. Niyazi Berkes, for instance, sees the late 19th Century Ottoman modernization as part of a political transition from an Islamic, theological foundation towards a secular and rational, namely, Weberian bureaucracy and, for that matter, mainly concentrates upon institutional changes introduced by reformist sultans like Selim III and Mahmud II: changes in the state apparatus implementing a re-organization of judicial, legislative and executive branches, in the educational system and, last but not the least, in the military structure. Berkes views the transition as a development that traces a linear path, from traditional, Islamic, theological political and social structures towards a rational system in which liberal and democratic ideals gradually gains the upper hand. It is worth noting that, for Berkes, such transition necessarily subjects itself to universally applicable and valid principles like secularism, without which any attempt at modernization would be stifled under the onslaught of traditional classes who have a vested interest in the maintenance of the *status quo*. As the European civilization is a model that represents the transition from a traditional, theological and hierarchical

polity to a secular, rational and scientific political and social organization, adopting the principles, values and institutions of that civilization is both necessary and beneficial in a non-Western society's modernization. Though Berkes occasionally refers to cultural changes as well, such references are mainly related to the elite, high-class Ottoman bureaucrats' changing opininons and the broader patterns of cultural change within the society are absent from his work, except as the derivative outcomes of institutional changes introduced, for example, into the primary education system. Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, in the second volume of their *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, study Ottoman modernization in a similar vein, concentrating mainly upon the institutional changes and their consequences in the political sphere. Bernard Lewis, perhaps one of the most well-known representatives of the classical modernization theory, treats non-Western societies' modernization in like manner, as the copying of a European model which is construed as a linear path along which political, social and economic institutions are adopted verbatim by non-Western societies in their attempt at modernization. Though classical modernization theorists like Berkes and Shaw ascribe agency to the non-Western society, Lewis's non-Western societies have no agencies of their own and only act as the playthings of history, a history dominated by the European civilization's principles and values.

On the other hand and contesting the hypothesis put forth by historicist, Eurocentric theories, there are alternative or multiple modernities approaches that conceptualize modernity as something plural and manifesting itself in many *sui generis* forms depending on the local cultures. Selim Deringil, for instance, studies how the Ottoman Empire under Hamidian regime had managed to transfrom the passive

subjects into active supporters of the state while not losing legitimacy as Abdülhamid II's policies demanded considerable efforts from the public: "[…] just as the state was permeating levels of society it had never reached before, making unprecedented demands on its people, it created new strains on society, leading to what Jürgen Habermas has called a 'legitimacy crisis' or 'legitimation deficit'" (2011: 9). As the Ottoman statesmen under Hamidian regime relied on public support to sustain the state's existence, they opened up new channels of communication between the state and its public through new forms of symbolism and ideological legitimation. This has resulted, in Deringil's view, in the emergence of modern forms of political and social organization. Hanioğlu, in a similar vein, studies the Ottoman state's reactions to the risk of the Empire's dissolution and mainly concentrates on external challenges as an instigator of modernization. Though Hanioğlu's emphasis is on external pressure as a source of change, he claims that there emerged "a uniquely Ottoman version of modernity" (2008: 3) in consequence: "[…] it was a complex process of acculturation, in which Western ideas, manners, and institutions were selectively adopted, and evolved into different forms set in a different context" (2008: 4). Scholars like Deringil and Hanioğlu, in this regard, moves beyond the linear path model and concentrates on unique acculturation processes in Ottoman modernization.

As was said, such views can be variously called as multiple or alternative modernities approach that works with conceptions like adaptation and hybridity to refer to the myriad processes of modernization in non-Western societies. Nilüfer Göle, for instance in her "Global Expectations, Local Experiences: Non-Western Modernities," sees the problem of non-Western modernities through her conception

of "extra modernity." Though the word "extra" seems to be somewhat ambiguous, Göle's conception of modernity is evidently pluralist and claims that each society, whether Western or non-Western, develops its own, *sui generis* form of modernization and Göle sees such modernization processes as inescapable. For Göle, the problem of non-Western modernities should not be seen through a linear path perspective which depicts historical time as a stable and adamantine procession towards the universally applicable model of French civilization. Non-Western modernities, through such a perspective, are to be seen as unfolding in "co-eval" time which indeed means ruling out the time dimension from consideration and concentrating rather upon local cultural adaptations and experimentations. With the introduction of concepts like *extra modernity* and *co-eval time*, Göle contributes vastly to the scholarly shift of attention from political/institutional changes to cultural ones that affect the manner of life of a society. In her *Modern Mahrem: Medeniyet ve Örtünme* for instance, Göle studies how religious Muslim women in Turkey can both maintain a highly symbolic and traditional/Islamic practice as veiling and, at the same time, propose a feminist critique of the Islamic patriarchal social system that restricts women within determinate limits, subjugating them to the role of pious mother. For Göle, such Islamist feminists transgress the boundaries of classical conceptions of modernity and testifies to the presence of *sui generis* modernities. Alev Çınar, with reference to the concept of *hybridity*, approaches the problem of non-Western modernities in like manner and argues for a plurality of modernities that develop out of local adaptations and experimentations. Modernity, in Çınar's view, is fundamentally a problematizing of the present as something deficient and in need of intervention to reach a better future, an attitude that is common even for political parties that are seemingly as remote from each other as the Republican

People's Party of 1930s and the Welfare Party of 1990s. For Çınar, even though such political parties may differ in many matters of method and policy, or of what is to be preserved and promoted in a society and what is not, they share the fundamental attitude of finding the present problematical and aspiring towards a better future. It is natural, therefore, that Western classical music, for instance, with its universally accepted aesthetic value would be metamorphosed through a contact with local musical practices, giving birth to novel, hybrid forms as the local artists try to find solutions to their unique concerns. Such a stance, which I share, argues that each culture inescapably gravitates towards forms of modernity, but shaped under different historical trajectories.[18]

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[18] On the individual level, I therefore regard modernity as a certain attitude, as Gaonkar has formulated, as one's relation to his/her self and to the present in an attempt at self-realization. (Gaonkar, 2001: 1-23).

CHAPTER 2

MODERNIZATION AND INDIVIDUALISM IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY OTTOMAN SOCIETY

Göle's metaphor of the Trojan Horse, I believe, is of much value in appreciating the late 19th Century Ottoman modernization. Göle says: "[…] change in tastes is not innocent. Fashion, ephemerality, superficiality, beyond their relation to outer appearances, function as a Trojan Horse and carry the exaltation of a new civilization, a new life-style and a code of conduct along with themselves."[19] It is possible, in this metaphor, to see what the *alla franca* dandy indeed was, or for what the *alla franca* dandy did stand: a modernization that had an aesthetic nature *and* which was, at the same time, a seduction by the Western culture. For want of a better term, we may call that phenomenon as the *aesthetic modernization of seduction*. The *alla franca* dandy figure of the modern Ottoman novel, as it will be seen in the following three chapters, was an expression of an alternative, *sui generis* modernity. He first served the purpose of circumscribing the proper limits of Westernization;

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[19] *"Ancak zevk değişimi de masum değildir. Moda, gelip geçicilik, yüzeysellik, dış görünüşün ötesinde bir truva atı işlevi görerek yeni bir medeniyet, yeni bir yaşam tarzı ve davranış biçimlerinin yüceltilmesini beraberinde taşımaktadır."* (Göle, 1991: 94). The translation is mine.

yet, the *alla franca* dandy had ironically become a critique of the Ottoman/Islamic culture itself and begun to function contrary to its original *raison d'être*: paving the way for the individual *per se* and defending her/him against the society's stifling tradition. In the path that led to the individual, an aesthetic attitude and a certain kind of relation with the Western culture were essential features. It would be of avail, therefore, to dwell on the nature of such modernization and individualism before we deal with the *alla franca* dandy figure in detail and draw a few general propositions in an attempt to understand the late 19th Century Ottoman modernity in a theoretical framework. We may first consider the aesthetic nature of that modernization and, then, its nature as seduction, keeping the birth of individualism in mind as we proceed.

2.1 Aesthetic Modernization:

What is, then, aesthetic modernization? *Aesthetic modernization is modernization through a judgment of taste.* There are two terms in the formulation: "modernity" and "judgment of taste" which need to be defined as well. Modernity, on the one hand, is here taken to mean a problematizing of the present as something deficient, something in need of intervention *and* a desire to reach an ideal future. To borrow from Çınar once again: "[…] *modernity* is understood here as an intervention related to bodies, space, and time that constructs their present as corrupt in order to induce a need for transformation toward a better future" (2005: 7-9). "Judgment of taste," on the other hand, is a value judgment that appraises an object (artistic or not, artificial or natural) as something beautiful or ugly with regard to the established norms and practices of a culture, or of an institution (such as the established norms and practices

of a certain style in painting). When it is said that judgment of taste pertains to an appraisal of an object concerning its beauty or ugliness, it is necessary to define further, though somewhat loosely, the concept of beauty itself. Beauty may be defined, within the scope of this thesis, as Stendhal once defined it: as "*une promesse de bonheur,*" (Agamben, 1994: 1-2) that is, as a promise of happiness. Defined in such terms, beauty tallies well with the conception of modernity as a problematizing of the present as something deficient and a desire to reach an ideal in the future. Beauty, likewise, promises happiness for the future, which evidently implies, at the same time, a discontent with the present. *Aesthetic modernization is then, in more precise terms, a modernization through a judgment of taste that condemns the present as something deficient and ugly and aspires for the future that would be ideal and beautiful.* It is, thus, a utopian vision as well. Aesthetic modernization, in this regard, manifests itself not, for instance, in some political re-organization of the state apparatus, but "superficially," that is, through a series of changes that affect the surface of the society profoundly yet imperceptibly; changes in attire, one's gait in public, fashion, in short, in what should be called as outer appearances. Superficiality, in this regard, is a symptom: the symptom of a discontent with the present of the society, a discontent that functions through *a dichotomy of beautiful/ugly* that condemns the problematic present as something ugly and apotheosizes the future ideal as something beautiful in itself. In other words, superficiality is thus the mirror-image of a judgment of taste that reflects its discontent with the present back on the whole surface of the society. It is, in this sense, a flight from the political, social and economic realities of the present, a flight to the ideal and utopic vision of the future.

Aesthetic modernization *appears* to be non-political as it is a utopian vision. The utopian vision of aesthetic modernization is, as was said, an idealization that apotheosizes the future as something consummate or perfect and, at the same time, beautiful. Such an attitude of aesthetic modernity regards the future ideal as a work-of-art, or, to put it in more precise terms, as an autonomous sphere. The autonomy of that ideal has nothing but its own harmony as its measure and norm to judge. In other words; everything within the grasp of such an attitude finds itself *within* an isolated entity. The harmony of relations between the totality and its constituent parts, like a well-ordered body politic in which every segment of the society fulfils a certain set of tasks without strife or discontent, a society in which the pursuit of one's self-interest is the same with the pursuit of the general well-being of the wider society. It is worth noting that, in such harmonious society, there would be no politics, if we define politics as a power struggle between various contending parties to control, allocate and distribute the scarce resources of material and social benefit. In a harmonious, ideal society, the problem of power struggle would be solved *ipso facto* with the identity of individual and common interests. If one reads, for instance, Huxley's *Brave New World* not as a dystopia but as a utopian vision (as some commentators claimed it to be possible[20]), then, the Alphas, Betas, etc. would be seen as sharing a common goal, a goal that is an individual goal at the same time. It would be said that, a perfect harmony in society and individual liberty are at odds. In More's *Utopia*, for instance, there is no such thing as "private sphere" for the individuals as the Utopians have even their meals together in perfectly ordered dining halls to be found in each dwelling unit and see solitary activities with the utmost suspicion imaginable. This is a fact that draws our attention to the actual, or

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[20] See David Bradshaw's introduction to the novel, where he suggests that it is possible to read *Brave New World* as a utopia as well, in the light of Huxley's own personal convictions (Huxley, 2007: xvii-xxvii).

political nature of such utopian visions, though they appear to be non-political constructs. Peter Bürger, in his interpretation of the Marxian critique of ideology, says that an ideology is not merely something false; an ideology is, rather, a contradiction which racks a truth about political or social reality and a falsity, thus a distortion, an upside-down vision of reality (1984: 6-10). In the late 19th Century, some of the Ottoman intellectuals (i.e. those who gathered around the *Servet-i Fünûn* journal and who endorsed the *l'art pour l'art* principle; on the main, Western-oriented camp) was at fault in believing that their idealization of the Western culture was something non-ideological, or non-political. They did not realize that their idealization was the natural outcome of a flight from the present conditions of the Ottoman Empire found to be deficient and even repellent in aesthetical terms; in other words, a political gesture. As Jusdanis says: "When culture ceases being visible, no longer a construct to be fought over but an ideology concealing its operations, it functions aesthetically" (1991: 81-2). Aesthetic modernization is, in this regard, an ideology that functions all the more effectively as it appears as something given, or non-political.

2.2 The Place of the Individual Within Modernization:

Modernity as problematizing of the present as something deficient, or in need of intervention and a desire to reach an ideal society in the future, however, cannot be differentiated from totalitarian projects *without* individualism. Any political ideology bent on regulating the daily-life even in its most trifling details, or any totalitarian regime with a negative attitude towards the present (e.g. ethnic diversity seen to be a source of strife and, thus, an impediment to national progress) and an idealization of

the future society (e.g. an ethnically homogeneous population), would be "modern" in such formulation. Ingsoc in Orwell's *1984* and The World State in Huxley's *Brave New World*, for instance, are totally intolerant regimes towards *any* sign of individualism, that is, any symptom of deviation from the totalitarian vision of the state that regulates the entire social life with regard to an unalterable set of principles and, for that matter, crushes the individual's resistance with any means possible (either through violent means as in Orwell's *1984*, or through the pleasure principle exploited to the point of emotional impoverishment as in Huxley's *Brave New World*.) Even utopias like Plato's *Republic*, or More's *Utopia* would probably be intolerable by modern standards as they do not allow for individual idiosyncracies, banishing, for instance, certain musical styles from the city on the grounds that they do not conform to the cherished ideal.[21] The conception of modernity proposed above, therefore, would be incomplete if we leave individualism outside. This necessitates that we should define individualism in its essential terms, though not in disregard for the context of late 19th Century Ottoman modernization.

A Eurocentric and historicist account whose secular, abstract and homogeneous historical time unfolds along a linear-path, sees the modern capitalist state and its legal subject as proprietor as the necessary conditions for individualism to emerge. As such developments (i.e., the capitalist state and its bourgeoisie) would be homogenizing, unifying forces in such an account, individualism can be seen only as a universal concept applicable, with more or less success depending on the level of

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[21] Surely, one may argue that the totalitarian regimes of the 20th Century (like the National Socialism of Germany in 1930's and 1940's) are modern phenomena, impossible without a certain advancement in science and technologies (e.g. eugenics seen as a science), or without the collapse of traditional morals (e.g. Christianity's weakening power in organizing the social life of individuals) and, thus, it would be possible to conclude that something "modern" is not, in itself and by necessity, is something good or desirable. Without delving into such discussion, I would like to state that throughout the thesis, I take "modernity" as something normatively good, that is, as the pursuit for a well-ordered and just society.

capitalistic development, to all the societies, Western or non-Western. However, in such a schema, modernity and individualism as universals are always European in origin: "Historicism is what made modernity or capitalism look not simply global but rather as something that became global *over time*, by originating in one place (Europe) and then spreading outside it" (Chakrabarty, 2000: 7). However, "the waiting room of history," as Dipesh Chakrabarty calls it, is not a place in which equal rights and opportunities are recognized for everyone. The universalist values and institutions of Europe, as Samir Amin has said, could not be recognized as such (i.e., as universals) without imperialism and colonialism: "Simultaneously, [with scientific development in the service of capitalistic production and the emergence of bourgeois, democratic institutions] Europe becomes conscious of the universal scope of its civilization, henceforth capable of conquering the world" (2009: 151).

The Eurocentric and historicist narrative of modernity affects non-Western academia as well, which works with the universally applicable methods, concepts and, more importantly, normative value judgements of the Western scholar. The Western academia's superior position in conferences, lectures, curricula and publications of every kind is tangibly evident in a non-Western academician's reading list: "Third-world historians feel a need to refer to works in European history, historians of Europe do not feel any need to reciprocate" (Chakrabarty, 2000: 28). There is no reciprocity since the monopoly of historical meta-narratives and essentialist, universal social laws belong to the Western academia and not to non-Western scholars whose non-secular, irrational local histories are deemed unable to dominate history in any meaningful manner, relegated to the status of the remnants of an *ancien régime*. This compels the non-Western academia to work with Western,

universalistic conceptions as such universalistic narratives have the ability to eradicate the undesirable, non-Western past of their societies and imaginatively integrate their local histories with the global, universal and Eurocentric meta-narrative of capitalism. As Chakrabarty says: "This is the desire on the part of the subject of political modernity both to create the past as amenable to objectification and to be at the same time free of this object called 'history'" (2000: 244). It is not possible to understand the late 19th Century Ottoman modernity and its relation with a nascent, proto-individualism out of context and relying totally on Eurocentric conceptions; yet, it is equally an impossibility to discard Western thought. The project of provincializing Europe, in this respect, is "the task of exploring how this thought – which is now everybody's heritage and which affect us all – may be renewed from and for the margins" (Chakrabarty, 2000: 16). This thesis, therefore, is an attempt at renewing thought about modernity and its relation with individualism from the margins of late 19th Century Ottoman context, without purposefully ignoring the heavy influence of Westernization.

A critique of Eurocentric concepts of individualism may begin with the classical formulations of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690), Bentham's *Principals of Morals and Legislation* (1789) and Mill's *On Liberty* (1859). Locke believed that the principal end of political power is to constitute a common-wealth out of a state of nature in which everybody's *property* (understood as one's own body and the products of his hands) would be guaranteed as all the subjects would forego their unlimited freedom they had prior to the institution of the state and its laws: "*Political power*, then, I take to be a *right* of making laws […] for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community,

in the execution of such laws […] and all this only for the public good" (Locke, 1980: 8). Distinct from Hobbes' state in *Leviathan* which sanctifies an absolute monarchy that herds the flocks of mankind who are, by nature, irrational and ill-intended in their selfishness, Locke's state is constituted with the objective of securing the property (i.e., one's own body and the products of his labour) of individual subjects who are able to act rationally. Locke's formulation of the common-wealth and the individual subject as proprietor, therefore, assumes a bourgeois society. Locke's legal subject as proprietor and a rationalist in calculations of self-interest, in other words, is a bourgeois whose interests are identical with the state's, a state that no longer functions within a divinely ordained social order.

Bentham's principle of utility, in its universal applicability to every domain of social and political life and (at least potentially) to all societies, similarly necessitates a capitalistic economy and its legal subject as proprietor: "The community is a fictitious *body*, composed of the individual persons who are considered as constituting as it were its *members*. The interest of the community then is, what? – the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it" (Bentham, 2003: 9). There are, in other words, no aristocratic families, ecclesiastical communities or guilds that represent the collective interest of certain socio-political groups that contend for the support of the state. There are, instead, "members" or "individual persons" whose interests collectively consititue the "fictitious" community's interest. What is, then, an individual person's interest? Bentham says that "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*." (Bentham, 2003: 8). Whatever augments one's pleasurable feelings is, then, good and whatever causes pain is bad. Bentham elsewhere says, as he compares the game of

push-pin and poetry in terms of utility, that "Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of push-pin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either" (2003: 94) The game of push-pin, music, poetry, or going to the church for mass and investing in profitable bonds in the stock-market are thus indistinguishable, or exchangeable in terms of utility. Such an assumption can be possible only within a bourgeois society in which exchange-value equalizes everything as the common denominator. Bentham's concept of the individual, therefore, necessarily assumes a capitalist economy with a public/private domain distinction and, for that matter, would not be of much use when applied to the late 19th Century Ottoman society's proto-individualism.

When Mill published *On Liberty* in 1859, the capitalist state of Europe were mature enough with their flourishing civil societies in comparison with Locke's England of the late 17th Century and, therefore, the contradictions of capitalist, bourgeois societies could be theoretically elaborated. Mill's account of individualism and liberty are thus more competent in dealing with many questions pertaining to modernity. Mill's *On Liberty* is concerned with the fundamental question of "the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual" (2003: 151). To determine the nature and limits of such power, Mill proposed two principles as inviolable: first, an individual's intrinsic value and, second, self-protection as the society's sole legitimate pretense in meddling with an individual's actions. Mill says: "Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign" (2003: 158). And: "[…] the sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection" (Mill, 2003: 158). Mill's intrusive and gregarious

society is thus a bourgeois society with democratic institutions and in which public opinion or "the tyranny of the majority" might become more oppressive and stifling than any other form of oppression. Mill says that liberty, in pre-capitalist states "meant protection against the tyranny of the political rulers" (2003, 151). The tyranny in question was perpetrated by a state that levied taxes, occasionally enrolled peasants into military service and persecuted some religious creeds. The struggle for liberty was, therefore, between the state apparatus and its subjects over not to be oppressed *above a certain degree*. However, with capitalistic development, it was thought to be much better that "the various magistrates of the state should be their tenants or delegates, revocable at their pleasure" (Mill, 2003: 152). The people, i.e. the nation should thus become identical with the state and "there was no fear of its tyrannizing over itself" (Mill, 2003: 153). The bourgeois society's or public opinion's tyranny is therefore no less oppressive than a religious society's persecution of its members and Mill's ideal society could only be established through individual liberty secured against such attacks. Mill deserves to be quoted at length:

> Protection, therefore, against the tyranny of the magistrate is not enough; there needs protection also against the tyranny of the prevailing opinion and feeling, against the tendency of society to impose, by other means than, civil penalties, its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct on those who dissent from them; to fetter the development and, if possible, prevent the formation of any individuality not in harmony with its ways, and compel all characters to fashion themselves upon the model of its own. There is a limit to the legitimate interference of collective opinion with individual independence and to find that limit, and maintain it against encroachment, is as indispensable to a good condition of human affairs as protection against political despotism. (2003: 154)

Though Mill's ideas concerning the individual and his liberty are Eurocentric in their assumption of capitalist, bourgeois society together with democratic institutions, the might nonetheless furnish an analytic tool in an analysis of the late 19th Century Ottoman proto-individualism with the necessary readjustments. Mill's Eurocentric

view of individualism, in other words, should be qualified to consider the possibility of non-bourgeois individualities that can be encountered in non-Western societies.

Throughout the Hamidian regime (1876-1909), the Ottoman state was on the defensive against the ascending power of European states and there was a search for a proper reaction against modernity. A state that levied taxes and occasionally enrolled its peasants into military service could not be seen as an apparatus competent enough in dealing with such problems. Active participation on the part of the subjects had thus become a *sine qua non*. However, to mobilize an Anatolian peasant for whom the state is embodied in the occasional sight of the Ottoman tax-collector for active support, the state had to fashion citizens (sometimes *ex nihilo*) and make an unprecedented demand: "not passive obedience but conformity to a unilaterally proclaimed normative order" (Deringil, 2011: 11). Selim Deringil, in this regard, says that "However, just as the state was permeating levels of society it had never reached before, making unprecedented demands on its people, it created new strains on society, leading to what Jürgen Habermas has called a 'legitimacy crisis' or 'legitimation deficit'" (2011: 9). That legitimation deficit has indeed surpassed even the Hamidian bureaucrats' expectations as Muslims themselves appeared to be not Islamized enough: "In May 1899, the şeyhülislam's office in Istanbul ordered preachers (*va'iz*) to be sent to the district of Mihalıçık near Ankara because 'It has come to his Imperial Majesty's attention that the people of this place are completely ignorant of the *Şeriat* and the *Sunna*'" (Deringil, 2011: 77). The Hamidian regime filled that legitimation deficit by inculcating Hanefi Islam and the (multi-ethnic) Ottoman identity in society as the elements of a cohesive ideology. As Deringil says: "What was occurring was nothing less than a move towards conceiving a loyal

population as a proto-citizenry" (2011: 171). It is not reasonable to conceive the Hamidian regime's proto-citizens as modern individuals in Mill's terms, that is, as sovereign over their body and mind. Hamidian proto-citizenry was not the product of a bourgeois society in which the individual is in a state of insurrection against the state authorities or the tyranny of the majority; it was, on the contrary, a project of the Hamidian regime itself and these proto-citizens were expected to be docile, mallable Ottoman subjects who give priority to the community and always act in the interests of the state. The individual in his/her liberty and the citizen are therefore need not to be the same under all circumstances. Indeed, not just the identification of the bourgeois individual in Mill's terms and the citizen, but any universally applicable and essentialist conception of citizenship is untenable as the question of who counts as "the" citizen is a contentious one. As Engin F. Işın says: "When social groups succeed in inculcating their own virtues as dominant, citizenship is constituted as an expression and embodiment of those virtues against others who lack them." (2002: 275). Citizenship is possible, therefore, when a particularity becomes the universal point-of-view, seen as something natural, perennial and not something arbitrary or contingent (Işın, 2002: 275-6). However, the moment when the dominant citizenship is established, there also begins politics as struggle for recognition for the marginalized, inferiorized segments of the society: "Becoming political is that moment when a rank established between the superior versus inferior, high versus low, black versus white, noble versus base, good versus evil, is reversed, transvalued, and redefined, and the ways of being political are rethought" (Işın, 2002: 276). The Hamidian regime's proto-citizens as the capillary veins (to borrow from Foucault) of Hanefi Islamic/Ottoman identity were intended to constitute the dominant ideology; yet, as it will be seen, the ideological construct in question did not remain

unchallenged. The *alla franca* dandy's metamorphosis, in this regard, is crucial in understanding how individualism, the Hamidian regime's project of proto-citizenry, modernity and Westernization are all interrelated and in understanding what made Ottoman modernity and individualism something unique, inexplicable with Eurocentric conceptions.

Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* is to be read as the literary embodiment of the Hamidian regime's proto-citizenship. Rakîm Efendi, the perfect Ottoman gentleman, represents all the value judgments and rankings of Hanefi Islamic/Ottoman identity. Felâtun Bey's snobbism and false Westernization are therefore clearly devised to strengthen such ideology. As Rakîm Efendi's superior morals is emphasized, the Hamidian proto-citizen's views begin to appear as natural, perennial and not arbitrary. However, in Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, we see that the Hamidian regime's and his communitarian moral values become suspicious as their naturalness erode in the face of an epistemological crisis between Ottoman/Islamic and Western *weltanschauungs*. Bihrûz Bey's disorientation, in other words, do not allow the Hamidian proto-citizen to take a firm hold of his personality and Bihrûz Bey flees into a romantic, aestheticized world beyond the reach of any Ottoman/Islamic certainities. Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi* and his *alla franca* Meftûn Bey, on the other hand, marks the moment when politics begins as a contestation against the dominant ideology of the Hamidian regime's proto-citizen. Meftûn Bey questions, criticizes and re-evaluates the fundamentals of Ottoman/Islamic culture and starts a riot against the state's interference in the individual's life, sovereign over his/her body and mind. The *alla franca* dandy's metamorphosis is thus consummated with

the individual in his/her liberty. (All the moments of this metamorphosis are to be found in the following chapters 3, 4 and 5.)

Individualism, in this regard, can and should be construed in a non-Eurocentric manner in the context of the late 19th Century Ottoman modernization. Though, for instance, Mill's bourgeois individual cannot be explanatory in this context, the image of individual as sovereign over his/her body and mind might be re-interpreted from the margins of Ottoman modernity, bringing forth a novel conception of individualism which ignores neither Western theories nor non-Western, Ottoman experiences. It was said, in the introductory chapter, that individualism is the translocation of truth from omnipresent, omnipotent social and political institutions to individuals themselves as they interpret their own experiences. It can now be added that individualism is one's sovereignty over his/her body and mind (however ambigious such sovereignty is) and its condition of possibility is a state of insurrection against any kind of authorities that meddle with his/her manner of living in an unjustifiable way. For Mill's bourgeois individual, it was public opinion; for the Ottoman proto-individual (embodied in the Meftûn Bey figure), it was a state that tries to inculcate a certain form of citizenship into his subjectivity. Individualism, in other words, is possible outside of a bourgeois society as well and can take roots as a political strategy of "not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them'" (Foucault, 2007: 44).

Such attitude on the part of the individual against any infringing authorities might be read through Berlin's conception of liberty as well. An individual, for Berlin, wants

to be in liberty for the greater purpose of realizing his/her self and thus does not admit of any intervention in his/her manner of living. Individualism, in Berlin's conception, can be defined negatively and positively, though they complement each other. Negatively: "I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no man or body of men interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can act unobstructed by others" (Berlin, 2002: 15-6). Positively: "The 'positive' sense of the word 'liberty' derives from the wish on the part of the individual to be his own master. […] I wish, above all, to be conscious of myself as a thinking, willing, active being, bearing responsibility for my choices and able to explain them by references to my own ideas and purposes" (Berlin, 2002: 22-3). Individualism, in this regard, is what makes a society, not totalitarian, but modern as it ensures liberty. The late 19th Century Ottoman intellectuals, though they had not any lucid conception of individualism, or of individual liberty for that matter, nonetheless aspired to achieve individual liberty in these terms, an aspiration that can be seen in their cherished ideal of *hürriyet* ("liberty"), an amorphous yet effective word. It would be seen that the *alla franca* dandy figure's mutation through time testifies to a predilection towards such individualism. It is thus necessary that we should consider individualism as a psychological orientation as well to see how the late 19th Century Ottoman intellectuals were inclined to have an individualistic attitude against the constraining norms of tradition.

It is worth noting that the vanguards of such modernization can only be individuals in their own autonomy as isolated, self-enclosed personalities who act as they see fit, as they interpret their own experiences with regard to their own value judgments. Individualism, in this regard (i.e. psychologically), is defined following Georg

Simmel: "[…] the quest of the individual is for his self, for a fixed and unambiguous point of reference" (1971: 222-3). Simmel adds that the "fixed and unambigious point of reference" is to be found only in the individuals themselves as tradition, together with its communitarian ties as sources of identiy, crumble away or lose control over the subjects: "[…] that he can no longer find it anywhere outside himself" (1971: 222-3). It is, in other words, a translocation of truth from the omnipotent and eternal (thus, ahistorical) social and political institutions to the individuals themselves as they interpret their own experiences. However, such re-valuation of values is possible only within a critical attitude. It necessitates, as was said, a state of insurrection against any infringing authorities. Foucault's words that neatly paraphrases the essential question of such critical attitude in political terms are worth quoting again: "'how not to be governed like that, by that, in the name of those principles, with such and such an objective in mind and by means of such procedures, not like that, not for that, not by them'" (2007: 44). The individual's critical attitude is, then, a re-valuation of values that acts negatively and even destructively in the face of the society's present which is deemed undesirable with regard to its traditional norms and values, political and social structure, paving the way for the individual to gain and maintain his/her liberty. Individualism, in this regard, is one's quest for the self in a critical attitude. It would be seen that the *alla franca* dandy figure of the modern Ottoman novel manifests a dawning consciousness of individalism which feeds itself on a critical attitude against the Ottoman/Islamic culture of the Hamidian regime's proto-citizen, an attitude that found its best reflection in Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi*, in the Meftûn Bey figure.

Işın says that, when the dominant ideology of citizenship (together with its value judgements and rankings) are questioned, criticized and re-evaluated from the margins, such politics can be conducted by means of many different strategies and Işın speaks of alienation as a certain method in such struggle. By means of such a strategy of alienation, a marginal group moves beyond the reach of dominant value judgements and rankings, beckoning them as alien. Gürpınar's Meftûn Bey, in his aesthetical aloofness from the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenship, relies on such a strategy to contest the dominant ideology, thus asserting his own autonomous individuality. The autonomous nature of aesthetic modernization, in this manner, finds a reflexion in individual autonomy. Aesthetic modernization, as a judgment of taste, can only act negatively, or destructively as it condemns the society's present as something deficient, in need of intervention and ugly. Such modernization, in other words, is a critique that attacks the culture (i.e. the Ottoman/Islamic culture in this instance) to pave the way for an alternative, an alternative that opens the way for the individual *per se*. Gürpınar's Meftûn Bey, as a nihilist, poses as a devilish figure that destroys the morality of mores to make it possible for the individual to act egoistically, that is, in harmony with his/her own nature that rests on indubitable, rational laws and not on the hypocritical claims of the communitarian ethics of the Ottoman/Islamic culture. Aesthetic modernization is thus necessarily an individualization as well.

2.3 Modernization of Seduction:

What, then, is modernization of seduction? To complete our account of the aesthetic modernization of seduction, we also need to explain what "seduction" is. I take the

word "seduction" in the sense Tageldin has defined it within the practices of what she calls "translational mobilization of affect," or "translational seduction." Such seduction refers, as was said, to the colonial state's manipulative ability in re-presenting itself as seduced by the colonized society's cultural superiority, with the intention to colonize more efficiently; a manipulation that rests on addressing the colonized culture in their own language, praising their cultural heritage as they translate their works into the colonical language etc.:

> On the threshold between domination and resistance, a power that diverts both steals in. The colonizing text that wields this power mobilizes affect – the attachment of the colonized to themselves, which in politicohistorical terms is also an attachment to their lost sovereignty – to strategically re-present the colonizer as the most flattering "likeness" of the colonized. Such a translational mobilization of affect lures the colonized into *loving the colonizer as they would themselves* and thus into embracing the very power that all too often they are imagined merely to "resist." (Tageldin, 2011: 17)

For Tageldin, therefore, the relation between the Western and non-Western societies cannot be reduced merely to a relation of subjugation/resistance. There is a relation of seduction as well. In the late 19th Century Ottoman society, likewise, it is possible to see a seduction by the Western culture, though, in this instance, that seduction is not to be conceived within a colonial power struggle. It was the result, indeed, of an idealization of the Western culture as a utopia.

Berkes' term "utopian individualism" that he coined to refer to the *Servet-i Fünûn* intellectuals' Western-oriented aspirations, as it was discussed at length above, is quite useful in understanding such aesthetic modernization by seduction: "They aspired for the life of the European *individual* in which material comfort, scientific progress, and individual liberty reigned – not for a society criticized for its class inequalities, its crimes and prostitution, its greedy money-makers and exploited proletariat" (Berkes, 1998: 295). Utopian individualism was thus a discontent with

the present conditions of the late 19th Century Ottoman society which lacked what Europe had: "material comfort, scientific progress, and individual liberty." It was, at the same time, the product of a judgment of taste that found the Western culture beautiful in itself, regarding that culture in a kind of awe-inspiring contemplation: "Westernists' admiration for the Western civilization was similar to the love of a sensitive youth for a beautiful, unknown woman" (Berkes, 1998: 297). It was this harmonious vision of an idealized Europe that seduced the Ottoman intellectuals of the late 19th Century.

It may be said that, like every utopia, the utopian individualism of the Ottoman intellectuals who gathered around the *Servet-i Fünûn* journal was something unreal. Those who read Thomas More's *Utopia* will recall that the ingenuous meaning of the word "utopia" is derived from the juxtaposition of two Greek words: *ou* ("not") and *topos* ("place"): a place that exists nowhere (More, 2012: 132). The utopian individualism of *Servet-i Fünûn* intellectuals, likewise, had envisaged a Europe that indeed exists nowhere but in their imagination. The Neverland of those intellectuals was, in a sense, an actual place: Europe, a place contemporaneous with the late 19th Century Ottoman Empire, yet not contemporaneous as well. It is not contemporaneous since the Western monopoly over the universal, eternal values and on scientific, rational knowledge dragged Europe out of time, suspended the Western culture in a kind of purgatory in which those luminous values became Socratic *ideas* that are perfect and timeless. Thus, being out of time, Europe becomes a utopia, a Neverland, that is, a non-existent place for the utopian individualist of the late 19th Century.

2.4 The *Alla Franca* Dandy as the Product of Aesthetic Modernization of Seduction:

It would be seen, in the light of the above discussion, that the *alla franca* dandy of the modern Ottoman novel was (or, more correctly, came to be) the embodiment of such aesthetic modernization of seduction. The *alla franca* dandy is a man of extravagance and vanity, a *sui generis* personality in all his eccentricity; who condemns his own culture (i.e. the Ottoman/Islamic culture) as something ugly and worships the Western culture as something beautiful; in other words, a product of a period of modernization in which the present of the Ottoman society was condemned as deficient and in need of intervention to reach an ideal in the future, an ideal inspired by the Western culture's harmonious image.

Frantz Fanon, in *Black Skin, White Masks*, says that the Antillean, "whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave," suffers from an inferiority complex and, in his "epidermalization" of that disorder, expresses a desire to be White: "The black man wants to be white" (2008: xiii, 2-3). His aesthetic judgment of his own culture and Europe, likewise, is tainted with the inferiority complex that he suffers from: "I espouse white culture, white beauty, white whiteness" (Fanon, 2008: 45). The *alla franca* dandy, in a similar vein, who belongs to the Ottoman/Islamic culture wants to be a European; yet, he only becomes a snob alienated from his own culture, or a "man without content," to use Agamben's words, who is "condemned to depend on something other than himself" (1994: 22-4) and, thus, who finds himself "in the paradoxical condition of having to find his own essence precisely in the inessential, his content in what is mere form" (1994: 54). As

Agamben's modern artist who have lost her/his creative spirit and entrapped within an aesthetics defined through the spectator's snobbish critique, the *alla franca* dandy depends not on his local Ottoman/Islamic culture to find his essence, but on the Western culture's externals, that is, on its form which he deems beautiful. However, though Fanon's Antillean and the *alla franca* dandy have the same alienated attitude toward their own cultures, the analogy between them is far from being complete. Fanon's Antillean wavers between denying his very own skin colour out of an inferiority complex and a fall into a mythical past out of national hatred. The *alla franca* dandy, on the other hand, utilizes his Western-oriented outlook and the resulting alienation as a strategy to question, criticize and re-evaluate the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry, thus asserting his individual autonomy. His alienation, in other words, becomes the instigator of a *sui generis* modernity in the end.

The *alla franca* dandy, in this regard, is a kind of avant-gardist personality, whose riot against the society becomes the first steps of a unuqie form of modernity. Indeed, Yakup Kadri's sense of his own snobbism is a good example how such snobbism becomes a revolt against tradition that stifles individuals and a gesture of modern consciousness. Şerif Mardin gives us the following quotation from Yakup Kadri's *Diary of a Nonconformist* (1913-14) written, as Mardin says, in a sense of isolation from the Ottoman society: "This Nervous Person is quite close to me. He lives together with me, in my house. Among the family his only name is 'fop'. What is a 'fop'? You know a person somewhat strange, somewhat flighty, a person who is not like anyone else is called a 'fop'. All of the meaning of this word is in its sound. Somewhat plebian but very clear..." (1974: 414-5) As Mardin argues, the reason for

Yakup Kadri's self-identification "with the noncomformist who was a variant of the Bihruz Bey type" is to be seen in another piece in which he despises the Ottoman "little tradition" and culture:

> In this stagnant air, none of the atoms which are moved by a musical sound, in these squares none of which are adorned by a figure, in these streets the dust and the mud of which we daily brave, in the faces of these people whose ears are deaf to any pleasantness, whose eyes are blind to any beauty, who squat at night in coffee houses with their colored printed nightgowns across the tube of a gramaphone which vomits belly-dance tunes, I find the seeds of their sickness.[22]

Mardin's commentary on the passage is worth quoting in its entirety:

> By sickness Yakub Kadri means here the lack of creativity of Turkish writers. In many other passages of his, Yakub Kadri tears down the narrow mindedness, authoritarian control and pleasure seeking of the Ottoman masses and middle classes. One of his stories, for example, tells of a Turk who wears a hat as a gesture of defiance and is beaten up by local hoodlums. In Yakub Kadri's stories it becomes clear that what in earlier works appears as a critique of over-Westernization at its deepest level is simply social control applied against those who transgress the norms of the community. This is somewhat different than identifying the culture clash as one between the religiously inclined and the secular as is often done in Turkey. (1974: 414-5)

The *alla franca* dandy is thus a man who revolts against tradition, a revolt that begins with the outer appearances, paving the way for a modern consciousness that holds the individual in the highest esteem.

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[22] Quoted in Mardin (1974: 414-5).

CHAPTER 3

AHMET MITHAT'S HAMIDIAN PROTO-CITIZEN AND ITS

OTHER

Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* (1876) is a story of two Ottoman

gentlemen who, in the Istanbul of 1870's, trod quite different paths of life.[23] Felâtun

Bey is, as every *alla franca* dandy, a man of pomposity and extravagance, born into a

well-to-do family; a bodacious spendthrift who squanders his father's fortune in the

most astounding ways, on clothing, trips to the famous summer resorts etc.; who, in

short, begins life under favourable conditions. Yet, under his father Mustafa Merakî

Efendi's[24] cankerous influence, who is himself an enthusiast of everything

fashionable, Felâtun Bey grows up as a superficial man whose sole end is to beat up

his fellows in everything that pertains to conspicious consumption, luxury, and

fashion attesting, in his eyes, to a superior station in life. Felatûn Bey is an idler with

no intellectual capacities and no proper education who passes his time in coffee-

houses, restaurants, etc., or with his French mistress who bleeds Felâtun Bey dry.

Rakîm Efendi, on the other hand, is an assiduous man of industry (pretty much like

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[23] Publishing houses, even today, represent these two figures in contrasting manners on the cover pages, that is, in the contrast of *alla franca* and *alla turca* fashion in their attire. [See Figure 1 below]
[24] "*Merakî*," in Turkish, means who is "curious," an allusion to the character's venture into things that should not perhaps be wondered at or known at all. The word "meraklı" ["curious"] still has, interestingly enough, some negative connotations today.

Ahmet Mithat himself) who was born into a poor family and left orphan at an early age. His nanny, selling handicrafts to raise and to contribute to his education, raises him as an honest man who, solely by his own efforts, manages to earn money and keep a modest household. He learns Ottoman as well as French, reads considerably, finds a suitable job as translator in one of the administrative posts and, in the end, becomes an esteemed man-of-letters who is able to support and sustain his household in which he brings even a slave girl (who will later become his wife.) Indeed, the two gentlemen's stories rarely intersect throughout the book, except for a few scenes where they meet on the street, or in a mutual friend's house. When they happen to coincide, Felâtun Bey begins at once to boast of his comforts and despises Rakîm Efendi's frugality as something insipid, while Rakîm Efendi tries to advise him against the possible consequences of his manner of life. In the end, as Felâtun Bey goes bankrupt and flees to a distant government post in one of the Mediterranean islands, Rakîm Efendi turns out to be right and Felâtun Bey promises his friend to amend his ways and become a beneficial man serving his motherland.

The novel, in this regard, may be likened to a pamphlet (though much extended) that conveys its political message in a story of black-and-white characters designed to win the public over; an admonition to the dangers the Ottoman/Islamic culture faces in the society's susceptibility to Western ideas and manners. Felâtun Bey is thus there to haunt public imagination, an effigy for the enthusiastic Westernists and snobs of Beyoğlu who would tread the Ottoman/Islamic culture under foot with no pangs of conscience. To understand how the *alla franca* dandy was born, we should therefore first look at the political circumstances in which Ahmet Mithat created the character and what was his conception of Westernization. We may begin, for the

purpose, with his attempt at introducing the novel genre to the Ottoman public as a search for a proper means to preach his political position to the masses who had remained, until that time, insulated in their quite restricted social milieu.

3.1 A Synthesis: The Modern Ottoman Novel:

With the publication of *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, Ahmet Mithat predicted the imminence of a times in which nothing would stand still any more. As the pages of his book were passing through the printing machine, a series of stupendous and dazzling changes were underway with the same speed as the machine that prints the outcome of these experiences on paper; the promulgation of the *Kânûn-i Esâsî* (the first Ottoman constitution) in 1876, debates on the liberty of expression, the first experiments on parliamentarianism and many others. Ahmet Mithat, an industrious novelist, publisher, and an intellectual with as high an ambition as to educate and direct the masses was a figure, in such a tumult, to show how these times was to become a burden over all the intellectuals whose established opinions were losing ground. Yet, what was by far the most obtrusive thing pertained to the surface of society, that is, to its externals; changes in fashion, one's gait, manner of speech etc. They were disconcerting as it was not easy to police such developments that appear to be fleeting phenomena, yet felt to be the symptoms of a deeper current within the society. The tight grip of the Ottoman/Islamic culture over the subjects was loosening, though the manner in which it affected the society eluded clear explanation. Ahmet Mithat felt that individuals, slowly yet magnetically, were seduced by the gleam of Western ideas and manners, falling prey to them unawares. It was thus not striking that Ahmet Mithat's guiding principle was to rescue the

society from the impending threat of identity loss, a task that he assumed like a father who acted with the consciousness of always being in the right before one's children. What is to be done was clear enough; to fight against the amorphous but surely malignant changes across the society. Yet, the method with which the society would be kept on track was a question. Surely, Ahmet Mithat was conscious that the late 19th Century Ottoman Empire was not entirely free from the need for change. Though the Ottoman/Islamic culture should be defended, a few novelties must be introduced.

Ahmet Mithat, in this respect, was an apologist of the Hamidian regime's project of Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry and had seen a balance between tradition and change as the best of the possible worlds: a synthesis between the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures whose parameters are clearly and rigidly defined. Kadıoğlu's summary account of Ahmet Mithat's views, of his wish to strike a balance between "the spirituality of the East and the materiality of the West," as was said, is well put in explaining his conception of what the Westernization of the Ottoman society should be. Even a glance through *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* shows us that Ahmet Mithat's ideas on Westernization were attached, not exactly to a binary opposition, but to a balance, or a compromise between the Ottoman/Islamic and the Western cultures, which were conceived of as more or less monolithic entities. If there is any insoluble antinomy, it resides not in pitting the Ottoman/Islamic culture against the Western culture as irreducible contraries, but in the absence or the presence of a transgression where one's (and the society's) identity is concerned. There is not, in this formulation, a downright opposition, an enmity in the face of an alien culture, but rather a desire to import certain benefits, or what might be called innovations that

pertain only to technical and economic matters while it keeps the Ottoman/Islamic culture intact. Westernization in these terms was rather a commerce. If there need be, a few things, beneficial by virtue of their easing the improvement of the state and social life, could be imported without any or much harm done to the morals. For instance, Rakîm Efendi speaks French, makes translations from that language, and even replies courteously to his *alla franca* friend Felâtun Bey with expressions like "*Bon vuayaj mon ami!*" though he does not approve of his manner of life. He has the acquintance of an English family and frequents their house as much as Felâtun Bey. None of these, however, impairs his proud consciousness of his Ottoman/Islamic identity. The Ottoman/Islamic culture is, in this schema, something consummate as it relies on the immutable laws of Islam and needs no improvement. However, this does not mean that Ahmet Mithat was repugnant to the idea of improving, though slightly, the "spirituality of the East." He sensed clearly that it has become necessary to change some archaic cultural practices to become able, in the first place, to borrow those "beneficial things" from the West. In the late 19th Century, the Ottoman society was still agrarian; besides, the *kul* system did not allow the military class to amass their salaries and channel them to entrepreneurial activities until the promulgation of the Tanzimat Edict (1839) guaranteeing the right to own private property. A few corporations that were operating at the time were largely owned by non-Muslim *millets* such as Orthodox Greeks and Armenians, and, for these reasons, the emergence of a Muslim/Turkish bourgeoisie was, in plain terms, an impossibility. *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, in this regard, stands a little awkward as its hero, Rakîm Efendi, was depicted as an entrepreneur, even though a "modest" one; he resembles, more or less, a peti-bourgeoisie. Ahmet Mithat knew that, "the spirituality of the East," that is, the moral superiority of the Ottoman culture would not be

enough in giving birth to his desired subjects who would rake together both moral worth and material success in their persons. Material success was, therefore, of elementary importance. He fabricated Rakîm Efendi in this fashion; a model to be emulated by the Hamidan regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizen. Besides the myth of the *alla franca* dandy, then, there stands another one; the myth of the true Ottoman gentleman, who is a true entrepreneur studying strenously for the well-being of his fatherland. Ahmet Mithat was no Daniel Defoe, and Rakîm Efendi has not the acute consciousness of a Robinson Crusoe; but, he was still well aware of the "invisible hand" that had already begun to sway over the world. This meant, for Ahmet Mithat, that he should give consent to the fact that the Ottoman society should integrate itself into the European capitalistic system to maintain its existence. It is only by recognizing this fact that we can understand Rakîm Efendi. Rakîm Efendi, to be the Ottoman gentleman as he is, had to find his own self through a path that leads both to a recognition of "the materiality of the West" and to the Ottoman/Islamic culture and morality.

However, at the time of his *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*'s publication, there were considerable obstacles that precluded Ahmet Mithat's yearning to guide and educate the masses in an effective way. Literacy was low even in Istanbul. The instituion of public opinion was not as robust as it was desired to be and the literary genres of the former times, like the *Divân* poetry of the Palace's high-culture, were not capable of transmitting political ideas in a fashion that could be understood by the everyman. Even the extant publishers operating at the time in Istanbul were owned mainly by the members of non-Muslim *millets* of the Empire, a fact that further complicated the

problem of reaching the public in a desired way. These meant, for Ahmet Mithat, that he should find a way to reach the public effectively.

If modernity, defined as the "construction of the present as deficient" (Çınar, 2005: 7) and an attempt at "transformation for a better future," (Çınar, 2005: 9) is a fear of disorientation as well, it would then be possible to see modernity as a synthesis of tradition and change, or of the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures in this context. Ahmet Mithat, in a desire to keep the Ottoman/Islamic culture intact, also expressed a will to change and combined tradition and change, that is, the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures and thus found the solution to the problem of reaching the masses: a synthesis of the *meddah* tradition with the Western novel genre in its realistic framework. The *meddah* tradition, which relies on the imitiation, or parody of archetypical figures like the Greek, the Armenian, the Jew etc. within everyday scenes of urban settings to entertain audiences gathered in coffee-houses and to suggest a few moral lessons for the benefit of the public was effective in conveying political message in simple terms.[25] Though distorted within the Western novel genre's realistic framework, vestiges of the oral *meddah* tradition may be seen in Ahmet Mithat's penchant for addressing the reader directly, asking and replying to questions. He, for instance, asks whether we (the reader) know what kind of a man Felâtun Bey's father was as he introduces Mustafa Merakî Efendi: "Our Mustafa Merakî Efendi was an *alla franca* kind of man. Do you know, besides, of which *alla franca* kind he was? Were not there those *alla francas*, fifteen or twenty years ago, in Istanbul? He was, you see, one of those."[26] As he answers his own question, Ahmet

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[25] See, for the effects of the *meddah* tradition on the Tanzimat novel: Parla (1990: 60) and Evin (1983: 32-3, 55).

[26] *"Bizim Mustafa Merakî Efendi alafranga-meşrep bir adam idi. Hem de hangi alafranga-meşreplerden bilir misiniz? Hani ya bundan on beş, yirmi sene evvel İstanbul'da alafranga-meşrepler*

Mithat, in a *meddah*-like fashion, directs the reader along a certain path that leads to the moral of the story. The *meddah* tradition was especially favorable with regard to its disciplinary function: "[…] ridicule has a universal role in the maintenance of social order" (Billig, 2005: 201-2). To condemn his *alla franca* Felâtun Bey and to better educate the masses, Ahmet Mithat thus relies on satire. The *alla franca* dandies in Ahmet Mithat were parodied above all through their (excessively) Westernized manner of behaving and speaking, that is, through their incongruous behaviour which do not tally with the daily codes of conduct of the Ottoman social life. The odd language they speak (a "Turkish-French"), their Westernized attire and manner of behaving, or their haughtiness in the face of "backward Turks" all served for the purpose of ridiculing those characters and, for that matter, to combat this tendency in the society. Vladimir Propp, in a similar vein, says that the reason why humorous and satrical literature is very popular in Russia is that they serve for the correction of social problems: "Our society supports them because they represent satirically all the flaws of our daily life that we have not eliminated but that art helps us eradicate" (2009: 149). Ahmet Mithat tried to do a similar thing, that is, the correction of the social problems within society caused, in this case, by Westernization. The importance Felâtun Bey gives to his outward appearance, to his attire etc., for instance, drags him into many comical scenes. When invited to an *alla franca* party, Felâtun Bey (with a desire to dance with the woman he likes, named Margrit) goes off to the dance floor with enthusiasm; however, at that moment, he is (unfortunately) not conscious of the "snare" set by his tight pants against himself: "Truthfully, Felâtun dances well. He dances without ever bending, like a stick, since the pants he wears are quite thin and does not allow him very much. During the

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yok mu idi? İşte onlardan." (Ahmet Midhat Efendi, 2014: 26-7). All the translations from this work are mine.

dance, as he stepped on Margrit's foot, and as he at once tried to pull himself

together, a riping sound is heard from his behind."*27* What is worth noting in this

particular example is that the "tight pants" Felâtun Bey wears is not an ordinary one;

it is a fashionable type of pants, fashionable, of course, among the *alla franca*

dandies of Istanbul. This Western-style cloth almost offers an obstacle to conforming

to the Ottoman way of walking, moving the body etc., thus bringing its owner into

comical scenes, where he becomes the victim of excessive Westernization. As Ahmet

Mithat thus mocks and condemns his Felâtun Bey, his comical figure serves the

purpose of correcting the problems inherent in the late 19th Century Ottoman society,

whose Westernization is seen to be an endless source of disintegrating elements. To

guard the Ottoman/Islamic culture against Western ideas and manners,

embarrassment as an unconscious, psychological defence mechanism was thus seen

by Ahmet Mithat to be the best possible means. The *meddah* tradition, as mockery of

deviant social behaviour, that is, of imitation of the Western manners was effective in

this corrective sense as well.28

On the other hand, the Western novel genre, in its realistic framework, was befitting

to re-structure the themes, plots and characters provided by the *meddah* tradition and

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27 "*Vakıa Felâtun'un dans edişine söz yoktur. Zaten ayağında bumbar gibi bir pantolon olup, pantolonun dahi adem-i müsaadesine mebni* [izin vermeyişinden dolayı] *asla eğilmeyerek mum gibi dans eder idi. Ancak oyun arasında nasılsa kazaen Margrit'in ayağına basmakla beraber derhal kendisini toplamak için bir hareket etmesini müteakip* [takiben] *arka tarafından bir cayırtıdır hissolundu.*" (Ahmet Midhat Efendi, 2014: 80).

28 It is worth noting that "to mock" and "to imitate" were signified by the same verb ("*taklit etmek*") which changed meaning with inflection; however, with the foundation of the Turkish republic, the verb loses its implication of mockery. This shows that, during the late 19th Century, imitation was still regarded as something embarrassing: "The humanist Nurullah Ataç, for instance, approached the issue philologically by studying changes in the use of the verb *taklit etmek*. He argued that in the past, the verb had had two distinct meanings: used with the dative case (*bir kimseye taklit etmek*), it meant 'to imitate,' while used with the accusative case (*bir kimseyi taklit etmek*), it meant 'to mock.' In the course of the Europeanization reforms, he pointed out that *taklit etmek* had not only ceased to be used with the dative case; it had also lost the meaning 'to mock.' Ataç's philological exercise gives us an indication that after the establishment of the Turkish Republic, imitating the European was disassociated from subversive mockery." (Konuk, 2010: 70).

to offer the public accounts of the social problems that the late 19th Century Ottoman society faces. It was, in other words, a balance between the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures, between tradition and change in a desirable direction. Ahmet Ö. Evin says, in this connection, that

> The early popular novelists, looking for a synthesis of Western civilization and Turkish culture, borrowed elements from the *meddah* stories that reflected Turkish cultural values and placed them within the framework of the novel, a genre whose form for them represented an achievement of Western civilization (1983: 32).

The Western novel genre, in its realistic form, therefore provided a suitable means to reach the masses in an effective manner to successfully convey political messages since the framework in question, with regard to its semblance of reporting real events, was powerful enough to attract the reader's attention.

"The framework of the novel" that Evin speaks of is, as was said, the realistic novel of 19th Century Europe. Realism in that literature, as Auerbach says, was a description of ordinary individual experiences within a contemporary, shared social milieu and time, a time that is not static or absolute as in Walter Benjamin's "messianic time" but seen in its historical development (Konuk, 2010: 181-9). It should be noted, however, that Ahmet Mithat's realism does not concern itself with the individual character, but is formal in nature. (That step towards the ordinary individual's experiences will be taken with the publication of Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*.) In other words, Ahmet Mithat's *alla franca* Felâtun Bey is not as yet an individual character, but a figure in a satire that functions as a social correction mechanism. A brief detour on that point would be of avail.

3.2 Convincing the Public: Ahmet Mithat's Realism:

Ahmet Ö. Evin, in his *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, sees the interest in the Western novel genre as a steady march towards the "triumph of realism," that is, as a gradual refinement of the Turkish novel as novelists were coming closer to an understanding of the individual's importance. Realism triumphs when the archaic literary traditions such as fables and epic tales, in which the time and the place of the events are not specified, fade away together with their archetypical characters. Ahmet Mithat's works, in his view and insofar as they are the first examples of this development, are seen as part of this shift of attention towards realism, though faltering at times under the influence of the classical *Divân* tradition. His *Müşâhedât* in which he draws on a real conversation of a group of women he eavesdropped, in this regard, is seen as an illustration of this transition. Evin, in this schema, sees the history of the Turkish novel genre as a gradual attempt at getting rid of the classical tradition, as he draws a chronology of works not in regard to their publication dates, but with respect to their literary merit as they approach realism in a satisfactory manner or not. In such a chronology, *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, for instance, comes later than Namık Kemal's still romantic work *İntibah*; yet, it precedes much Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* though the latter novel was published just two years later than Ahmet Mithat's work. Though it is true that the Turkish novel gradually shifted towards realism and individual character analysis, this move towards realism is not to be deemed sufficient in explaining Ahmet Mithat's works and their connection with the debates over Westernization. Adopting such a perspective would be to isolate literary developments from the politics of the time, and Ahmet Mithat's interest was indeed in this latter concern which gave shape to all his writings.

Ian Watt says that what made possible the modern, that is, realistic novel was, in the first place, the development of individualism. For the daily lives of ordinary men to become of interest enough to occupy that society's literature, the society at large must experience a transformation where the individual *per se*, is of importance irrespective of its social, political allegience: "It posits a whole society mainly governed by the idea of every individual's intrinsic independence both from other individuals and from that multifarious allegience to past modes of thought and action denoted by the word 'tradition' – a force that is always social, not individual" (Watt, 1957: 60). If realism is to be understood in this sense of giving prominent place to the individual, Ahmet Mithat cannot properly be seen as a realist. Ahmet Mithat was not *principally* interested in the novel *per se*; but, as we have said, in the novel *as* an instrument in the education of the Ottoman society, lest they fall into errors in a turbulent time. For him, realism was desirable not to account for the individual's experiences realistically, but to draw the public's attention on his own political and social ideas as realism is much more effective in attracting the public's attention since the time and the place of the events are specified in these works in an alluring manner. This "alluring" tinge was the actual reason why novelists like Ahmet Mithat gave much importance to this genre. The Western novel genre in its realistic framework was important because of its potential as an effective means in the political education of the masses. In this sense, what was important was not the individual *per se*, but the wider public that needed guidance.

3.3 The *Alla Franca* Felâtun Bey as a Symbol for False Westernization:

Ahmet Mithat's realism was thus politically motivated and he saw realism as an efficacious technique in better convincing the reader of the validity of the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry that he cherished. Ahmet Mithat, as he depicts the milieu in which the events take place, tries to hide his ideological motivation as someting factual, or taken-for-granted, which needs only to be pointed or hinted at by Ahmet Mithat to be fully revealed to the reader.[29] It was Ahmet Mithat's strategy, therefore, to rely on what might best be seen as *formal realism*, though not on a realism in essentail terms, i.e. with regard to the content of his novels and individual character analysis. Formal realism can be desribed broadly as *mimesis* in prose writing, that is, verisimilitude in the depiction of events or protagonists:[30] "Formal realism is only a mode of presentation, and it is therefore ethically neutral [...]" (Finn, 1981: 117). As Watt says, formal realism does not necessarily bring about realism in regard to the content and Ahmet Mithat's realism does not pass beyond that formality. The content of his novels and short stories, therefore, has not thrown off the yoke of former traditions of Ottoman literature in which fables and epics are full of archetypical protagonists that exist in atemporal worlds. Ahmet Mithat's works (especially *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* which is heavily fraught with political anxieties) should therefore be seen rather as formally

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[29] It is true that, because of his authorial and frequent interventions into the story, this effect of matter-of-factness becomes crippled to a considerable degree in Ahmet Mithat. Yet, as it can be seen from his aversion to art for art's sake, Ahmet Mithat was always in favour of an educative novel whose realism only serves that end in view.

[30] Watt might be quoted here at lenght: "The narrative method whereby the novel embodies this circumstantial view of life may be called its formal realism; formal, because the term realism does not here refer to any special literary doctrine or purpose, but only to a set of narrative procedures which are so commonly found together in the novel, and so rarely in other literary genres, that they may be regarded as typical of the form itself. [...] the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms" (Watt, 1957: 32).

realistic, but contextually allegoric texts.[31] *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms* gives the following account of the term *allegory*: "It is often defined as an 'extended metaphor' in which characters, actions and scenery are systematically symbolic, referring to spiritual, political, psychological confrontations..." and the heroes are conceived of as proxies for the reader.[32] This symbolical nature of Ahmet Mithat's novels and short stories can best be understood from their "proxy" heroes, and the *alla franca* dandy Felâtun Bey is one of those symbolical characters. In other words, an *alla franca* dandy like Ahmet Mithat's Felâtun Bey should never be taken as an individual character on its own right, but as referring to wider political, moral circumstances of the Ottoman modernization project.

The allegorical nature of Ahmet Mithat's works shows as well that, contrary to the Western examples of the same genre, they were heavily relying on a tradition which was desired to be protected from the possible harms that might be caused by Westernization. *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* is quite idiosyncratic in that it still shares the features of literary genres previous to the novel: "Previous literary forms had reflected the general tendency of their cultures to make conformity to traditional practice the major test of truth [...]" (Watt, 1957: 13). What was the "test of truth" for Ahmet Mithat? It was the Ottoman/Islamic culture together with its dogmatic assumptions concerning, for instance, the place of religion in both public and private spheres of life and which does not easily permit changes which may be introduced into either of these realms. Jale Parla, in this connection, says: "*Tanzimat*'s worldview was, naturally, the one in which the Ottoman culture and norms were

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[31] Jale Parla, as well, shares this opinion: "The most determinative feature of the Tanzimat novel was its closeness to allegory rather than to the novel genre." (Parla, 1990: 60). My translation.

[32] "Allegory." *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. 2006.

dominant"[33] (1990: 12-3). Insofar as Ahmet Mithat's realism was confined within the reaches of just formal realism and was not concerned with the realistic depiction of individual characters, the content of his writings became more allegoric and more concerned with the traditional values that were desired to be preserved. (The move towards the analysis of individual characters, as was said, would be taken with Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, whose publication marks a turning-point, that is, the ironic development of the *alla franca* dandy archetype.)

This has also meant that Ahmet Mithat had to adopt, not an indifferent attitude before his protagonists' behaviours, but a quite authoritative tone of voice. Novelists like Ahmet Mithat, therefore, had not refrained from any occasion in which they can praise, or condemn their characters' deeds with respect to their moral worth. They frequently interrupted their narrative so as to say, in the voice of the author, a few things, be it a fatherly admonition or a lecturing of the most boring type, so as to ensure that their readers get the right moral lessons and avoid the pitfalls of that transition period. When, for instance, Ahmet Mithat speaks of officials who work day-and-night for their fatherland, he intervenes at once to praise such men and condemn their antithesis, i.e. Felâtun Bey: "You know such diligent men! Our Felâtun Bey was not one of those. Why bother?"[34] Down from Namık Kemal to Ahmet Mithat's time, this is almost a *sine qua non* of the Ottoman novel, i.e. the novelist as the educator of masses, or the novel as a "guide for the perplexed" from

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[33] My translation.
[34] The full passage runs thus: "Böyle erbab-ı gayreti *[gayretli kişileri]* tanırsınız ya! Bizim Felâtun Beyefendi bunlardan değil idi. Nesine lâzım? Ayda lâakal *[en azından]* yirmi bin kuruş iradı *[geliri]* olan bir babanın bir tek oğlu olup kendisi ise muhakemat-ı feylesofanesini *[filozofça düşüncelerini]* gerçekten Eflâtunlardan daha dakik *[ince]* bulmakla âlemde yirmi bin kuruş iradı *[geliri]* olan adamın başka hiçbir şeye ihtiyacı kalmayacağını hükmetmiş ve fazl u kemalini *[fazilet ve olgunluğunu]* ise kendisi beğenmiş olduğundan cuma günü mutlaka bir seyir mahalline *[yerine]* gidip cumartesi ise dünkü yorgunluğu çıkarır ve pazar günü seyir mahalleri daha alafranga olduğundan gitmemezlik edemez." (Ahmet Mithat Efendi, 2014: 28-9).

where the subjects of the Empire might learn the proper code of conduct in the face of Westernization.[35] Yet, it should not be thought that this authoritarian tendency on the part of the Tanzimat novelists was merely limited to the utilization of the author's own voice. As their realism was limited by their formal features and as the moral of the story gained prominence, their plots gained prominence over against the individual characters. Watt makes an interesting remark concerning Henry Fielding's novel *Tom Jones*, which is relevant for our purposes here: "*Tom Jones*, then, would seem to exemplify a principle of considerable significance for the novel form in general: *namely, that the importance of the plot is in inverse proportion to that of character*" (Watt, 1957: 279) (Emphasis added). The same principle may well be applied to Ahmet Mithat's novels. Ahmet Mithat, as was said, was not *primarily* interested in the daily lives of his individual characters, but in the general plot so as to convey his moralistic ideas and intentions to the reader. In such a novel, then, the plot does not unfold itself according to the individual characters' natural traits, dispositions etc., but in tandem with a pre-conceived moral idea, whose expression generally requires the characters to be rather lifeless, archetypical figures, or playthings in the hands of destiny. Finn, as he examines the early Turkish novel, refers to the same property of those narratives: "The events which transpire serve principally to delineate the natures and desires of the main characters. Character development does not occur at this nascent stage" (1981: 2). In other words, the characters do not develop and only their natures and desires are stated and made clear since the real intention is to offer them as examples, either good or bad, to be emulated or eschewed. The protagonist, in such a narrative, first encounters a moral problem, dilemma etc. and, then, this problem is resolved through the revelation of

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[35] For a discussion of this authoritative voice, see: Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar.*

the moral idea. Yet, the word "resolved" should not confuse us. The resolution is provided *for the reader*, and not for the characters. If an *alla franca* dandy such as Felâtun Bey is seen ruined in the end, this would be fair enough as it happily enables the author to give vent to his moral ideas, which he expects to be emulated by the reader by virtue of its intimidating, fearful quality.

3.4 The *Alla Franca* Felâtun Bey as the *Other* of Proper Westernization:

Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi is, then, to be read bearing its allegorical nature in mind, in which both the protagonists, Felâtun Bey and Rakîm Efendi, function as proxies for the reader. In other words, its allegorical nature should always be seen as coinciding with its political motive. Such a reading enables us to grasp Ahmet Mithat's political rationale in writing this novel and his views concerning Westernization. The *alla franca* dandy Felâtun Bey is therefore not to be taken in his own right, i.e. as an individual character, but as a "proxy" which symbolizes a certain segment of the late 19th Century Ottoman society. This implies that the *alla franca* dandy was out there in Ahmet Mithat's novels for a certain purpose, that is, to condition the public with regard to the limits of a proper Westernization and to circumvent the danger of cultural, moral degeneration which is seen inherent in the materialistic stance of the Western culture. This was an attempt, as Ayşe Kadıoğlu has said, at reconciling "the spirituality of the East and the materiality of the West," an attempt in which the *moral* superiority of Ottoman culture was not ever doubted.[36] Under the hegemony of the Ottoman norms, Westernization was perceived in a very

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[36] See, for this conception of "the spirituality of the East and the materiality of the West": Kadıoğlu (1996: 177-193).

limited sense, i.e. as adopting a few beneficial things which pertained to technical innovations in political institutions and production processes: "These authors were in agreement that, under the absolute dominance of the Ottoman culture, a few Westernist innovations could be assimilated without trouble and that this might be beneficial" (Parla, 1990: 12-3). Any attempt that exceeds these limits, for Ahmet Mithat, was an unbecoming transgression of the Ottoman/Islamic cultural norms and practices which must be preserved at any cost, lest the Empire fall to pieces. The *alla franca* dandy owes its existence solely to this danger of transgression. Or, more precisely, the *alla franca* dandy is that transgression itself, the embodiment of a Westernization that surpasses the proper limits and becomes "false." In other words, the *alla franca* dandy Felâtun Bey was born as the "other" of a Westernization that was strictly regulated by the value judgments and social, moral rankings of the Hamidian regime's proto-citizenry.

Ayşe Öncü's account of the myth of the *Istanbullu* ("Istanbulite") may serve to illustrate the above point.[37] Öncü sees the Istanbulite as a construct, i.e. as a myth that served the purpose of building and re-building the ideal of Turkish middle-class. This was done, in Öncü's view, through the unjustified presence of immigrants, *magandas* ("bullies"), etc., who, with their negative qualities, enabled an *othering* process. This othering, in turn, served to re-establish the Istanbulite's identity reflectively and on a firmer ground. As she studies cartoons that parody, for example, the immigrants like *hacıağas* (rich Anatolian merchants, but poor in cultural capital), Öncü says: "On the one hand, the immigrant operates as a repository of negative attributes, through whom the refinements and distinctions of being an Istanbulite is

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[37] For the myth of *Istanbullu*, see: Öncü (1999: 95-119).

reflexively understood" (1999: 97). The *alla franca* dadny Felâtun Bey, indeed, was the first of those "repositories of negative attributes," that is, the first *other* of the Ottoman/Turkish modernization. In this regard, it is not fortuitous that the dandy figure served a similar purpose in the late 19th Century Istanbul like the immigrants of the 1940s, where the Westernization process threatened to delegitimize the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry.

The *alla franca* Felâtun Bey as the *other* of Hamidian regime's proto-citizen is thus the negative, antithetical figure of dichotomies: moral/immoral, egotistic/altruistic (i.e. communitarian) etc. The most remarkable dichotomy, however, was the dichotomy of beautiful/ugly which is seen in Felâtun Bey's aloofness from his own culture in aesthetical terms, such as his hatred of the traditional *mahalle* ("neighborhood") with its dilapitated wooden *konaks* ("mansions") compared with the charming and Europeanized Beyoğlu district of Istanbul where the stone buildings become a feast for the eyes. The dichotomy of beautiful/ugly is an anomaly in one's perception, owing to which what belongs to the Ottoman/Islamic culture is condemned offhandedly as ugly in aesthetical terms, and what is not-Ottoman, that is, what belongs to the Western culture is fatuously praised for its gleaming beauty. Felâtun Bey's attitude, however, should not be mistaken for a sort of art connoisseurship, by whose embittered reflections the stone buildings in Beyoğlu with their Neo-Classical or Neo-Gothic *façades* and friezes are praised and the inartistic wooden *konaks* of the traditional *mahalles* were flouted, adding a few lamentations about the Ottomans' lack of artistic merit to this show of sophistication. This dichotomy rather reflects a deeper crisis where one's aesthetical perception indeed gives vent to his alienation from the traditional Ottoman/Islamic culture, a perception

which, for Ahmet Mithat, owes its existence to false Westernization. The dichotomy of beautiful/ugly, therefore, should be defined as the manifestation of cultural alienation in aesthetical terms where one finds his own culture ugly and the West beautiful, where his ideal of perfect society resides. This aversion from what is traditional, and thus what is ugly, expresses itself in various ways: one's attire and gait, the restaurants where one dines, the preffered nationality of one's lackeys (they should not be Arabs, but Frenchs etc.), an obsession with speaking French even with man-of-the-street, and the like are all instances of this alienation that expresses itself in aesthetical terms. Felâtun Bey's father Mustafa Merakî Efendi, as he moves to Tophane (a district near Europeanized Beyoğlu), sacks his Arab lackeys and hires Greeks and Armenians instead: "Now, in such a neighborhood, in such a house, could an *alla franca* man fill up his household with Arabs? Especially, as his *alla franca* guests frequents the house, it was evidently a necessity to hire Greek or Armenian lackeys to serve them."[38] It is worh noting that, sacking the Arab lackeys is not nationalistic arrogance; on the contrary, it should rather be seen as against the common practice among the wealthier classes of Istanbul. Mustafa Merakî Efendi finds Arab servants repelling as he associates them with the traditional *mahalle*, who are, for that matter, devoid of eloquence and not fit for service among *alla franca* guests who would despise their ineloquence and the host's lack of manners. This aloofness from the customary Ottoman/Islamic life-style in aesthetical terms shades off into a desire to imitate art, or aesthetically desirable things in real life. Felâtun Bey, then, becomes the expression of an alienation both from the society and from

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[38] "*Şimdi böyle bir semtte, böyle bir hanede, bu kadar alafranga olan bir adam artık hanesine Arap çorap doldurur mu? Bahusus ki [Özellikle] aralıkta bir alafranga dostları dahi gelmekte olduğundan bunlar meyanında [arasında] hizmet etmek için Rum ve Ermeni hizmetçilere ihtiyacı derkârdır [bellidir]*" (Ahmet Midhat Efendi, 2014: 26-7).

reality, as it can be seen from his obsessive interest in his outer appearance. As

Ahmet Mithat describes his appearance, he says:

> Let us tell that much that, he owned several hundreds of those pictures, painted on cardboards, that you can see in Beyoğlu's tailor shops showing the fashions of the day, and Felâtun Bey, one of these pictures in hand, would study them, before the cheval glass, until he could bring out a perfect similarity between his own appearance and these pictures.[39]

Shuning the customary Ottoman/Islamic life-style, on the grounds that it is ugly,

becomes entrenched into the wider fact of one's alienation from the society, and this

is seen as well in the *alla franca* Felâtun Bey's flight from reality as well. The *alla*

franca Felâtun Bey's *otherness* is thus emphasized most strongly in his aesthetical

aloofness from the Ottoman/Islamic culture and in his idealization of the Western

culture as something beautiful, ever distancing him from the desired model citizen of

the Hamidian regime.

The *alla franca* dandy Felâtun Bey is thus an interpellative gesture that marks the

other and serves to construct the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizen

which thereby appears as something natural, taken-for-granted. Though Rakîm

Efendi's meritorious deeds are referred to as constitutive of the Hamidian proto-

citizen, the encomium to Rakîm Efendi's personality remains on the level of personal

peculiarities and hides, to the point of invisibility, his maleness, his race, etc., that is,

those social and political subjectivities that are constitutive of Rakîm Efendi's public

personality. Çınar, in this connection, says that modernizing projects such as the

Kemalist reforms of the 1920's, or the Islamist movement of the 1990's establish the

public person through interpellative gestures carried out in the public sphere where

the bodies become subjected to particular identities. In a similar vein, Felâtun Bey's

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[39] "*Şu kadar diyelim ki, hani ya Beyoğlu'nda elbiseci ve terzi dükkânlarında modaları göstermek için mukavvalar üzerinde birçok resimler vardır ya! İşte bunlardan birkaç yüz tanesi Felâtun Beyde mevcut olup elinde resim, endam [boy] aynasının karşısına geçer ve kendisini resme benzetinceye kadar mutlaka çalışırdı.*" (Ahmet Midhat Efendi, 2014: 31-2).

marking as the other of Rakîm Efendi serves to establish Rakîm Efendi's unmarked public person who, with the help of the printing press, interpellates the reading public to re-construct their subjectivities along the lines demarcated by the Hamidian regime's communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizen and its value judgments and social, moral rankings.

This means that Felâtun Bey has to be seen in relation to his antagonist, the true Ottoman gentleman, Rakîm Efendi, and this necessitates as well that we study the cherished values of desired subjects, in opposition to whom this dandy figure has found its place in the Ottoman literature of the late 19th Century. This, then, would bring the wider context of the Ottoman modernization to the fore. As Nükhet Sirman says in regard to Halide Edip Adıvar's *ouvre*, novels always served the purpose of identity-, or subject-formation, and the modern Ottoman novel of this period is no different in this regard (2000: 251). What were, then, those values, or whose values those were that had been so ardently defended through this absolute other?

When Rakîm Efendi arranges for a short trip and picnic for his houshold, he invites his friend and mistress Yozefino as well. Early in the morning, they sail with a boat across the Bosphorus and settle in a calm quarter where they make breakfast. Yozefino, as if she was enchanted, begins to praise the nature around and the Ottomans who know to see such beauties: "By jove, I'am very pleased now. Rakîm, should I tell you the truth? Turks are, in any case, better than Europeans!"[40] Following that enthusiastic praise for the Turks' manner of living, Yozefino complains about the monotonous and insipid social life in Europe, and the insincerity

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[40] "*Vallahi pek hoşuma gidiyor. Rakım sana doğruyu söyleyeyim mi? Türklerin her hâli Avrupa'nın her hâlinden iyi!*" (Ahmet Midhat Efendi, 2014: 127-8).

reigning among the Europeans. The scene in question attests to Ahmet Mithat's

views of the Ottoman/Islamic culture's superiority against the Western culture in

moral terms. Moral superiority is, in this respect, the essence of the Hamidian

regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizentry that Ahmet Mithat cherished together with

its value judgments; communitarianism, an active support for the state, Islam as the

basis of individual, moral conduct, love of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious

fatherland in which Hanefi Turks determine the dominant values, and a certain level

of integration with the global capitalist order not to allow the triumph of Western

materialism.

Şerif Mardin, in one of his articles, tries to bring the rationale behind the *alla franca*

dandy's fabrication to the fore through a sociological analysis based on the Ottoman

class structure. Mardin argues that the new consumption regime, which was

instituted by the 1839 Tanzimat Edict guaranteeing the right to own private property,

had caused a considerable dissent within the Ottoman society as it disrupted the

hierarchical structure. There was, in this regard, a dispute whether the communitarian

values of the Ottoman society had been jeopardized or not. We may quote Mardin at

length:

> In the nineteenth century, traditionalist and relatively deprived bureaucrats
> singled out Western consumption patterns as alien to the system. The lower
> classes saw in Westernization a subverting of the traditional mechanism of
> reciprocity and the social control it allowed. Not only was consumption of the
> Western type alien, but it quite clearly broke the solidarity of the community.
> Conspicious consumption of a type made possible by a market economy
> appeared as heavily fraught with consequences for the individual in terms of a
> rake's progress, and also as a denial of the economic basis of community, as
> an escape from the controls of their tight, cozy set of mutual interactions.
> (1974: 429-30).

The passage explains well what those values valorized through the *alla franca*

dandy's otherness were: the values of the community, as opposed to the individual's

own value judgments. This is not surprising since the Ottoman intellectuals like Ahmet Mithat, were concerned with the state of affairs in which the traditional values of the community were on the brink of total disintegration in the face of Westernization. An *alla franca* dandy is always someone who is capricious, eccentric, idiosyncratic in all his behaviour and, thus, individualistic, a fact which makes him an enemy of the communitarian values. This meant, for Ahmet Mithat, an identity loss, and led him to the creation of the *alla franca* dandy as the embodiment of this cultural rootlessness.

To conclude this chapter; Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* is the first truly conscious attempt at dealing with the late 19th Century Ottoman society's Westernization. Ahmet Mithat was well aware that the Westernizing elites, but also the other contending groups in the discussion (such as Islamists) were discontent with the present conditions of the Empire and pointed out to the society's lagging behind the Western societies in terms of military capabilities, economic power etc. The "defamation" of the present, therefore, created an urge towards an ideal society, which was formulated in various manners by different groups contending to re-build the Ottoman society and, for that matter, its subjectivity. For Ahmet Mithat, that was a proper Westernization, expressed in Kadıoğlu's succinct formula of a "balance between the spirituality of the East and the materiality of the West." Ahmet Mithat's position, in this regard, was modernist in its problematization of the present as deficient and its aspiration towards an ideal society balanced between the Ottoman/Islamic and the Western cultures. However, Ahmet Mithat's modernism does not carry the full implications of the "defaming" of the present that problematizes the Ottoman cultural practices and institutions to the degree of drifting

towards a critical and individualistic stance. His *alla franca* dandy Felâtun Bey, indeed, is a reaction towards such an attitude that moves away towards individualism and he sees Felâtun Bey's aloofness from the Ottoman culture in aesthetical terms as the greatest obstacle against his cherished view of proper balance. For Ahmet Mithat, such an aesthetical aversion, by crystallizing (or, ideologizing) the West as an ideal, conflict-free model, has functioned as a "Trojan Horse" that served the dissolution of the traditional Ottoman/Islamic culture. Yet, beginning with the publication of Ekrem's *Araba Sevdsası*, we see that the Ottoman intellectuals were moving towards an individualistic and critical stance against the Ottoman/Islamic culture within a modernist attitude.
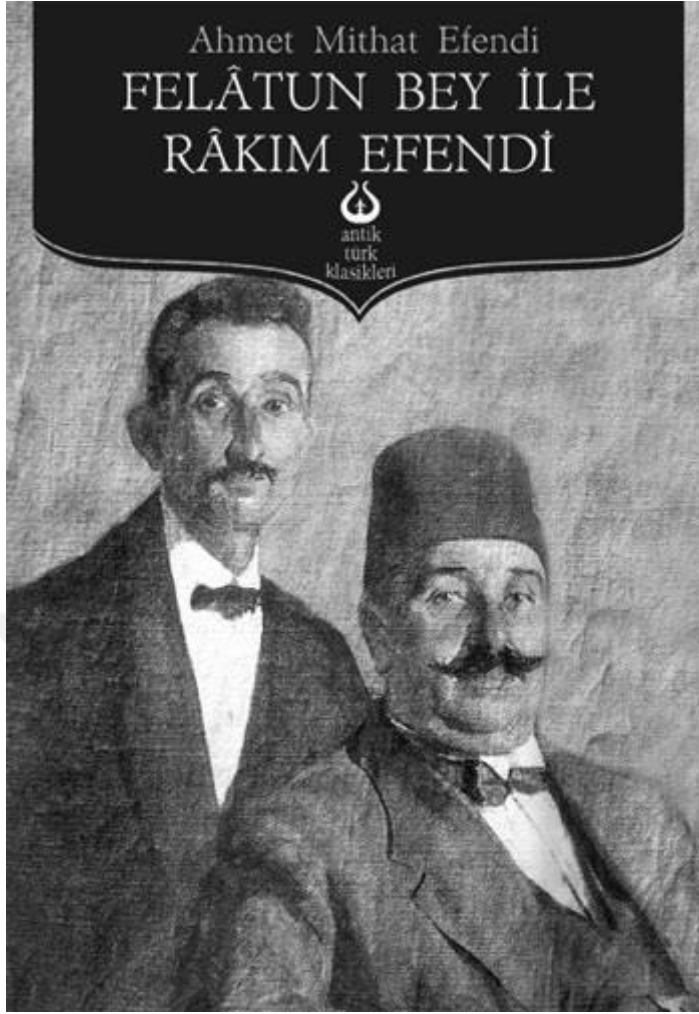
Figure 1.) The front cover of a recent edition of *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, published by Antik Türk Klasikleri. In the front, we see Rakîm Efendi sitting in his Westernized attire which yet protects his Ottoman/Islamic identity with his *fez*. However, it is worth noting that both the figures are in Western attires and what distinguishes them are nuances like the style of moustache, headgear, and the cut of their frock coats.

CHAPTER 4

THE DIFFICULT BIRTH OF THE INDIVIDUAL

When Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* was published, in 1898, after the manuscript had laid dormant on Ekrem's desk for years,[41] the Ottoman society had witnessed the beginning of a new phase of modern consciousness, quite different from the self-confident world of Ahmet Mithat's sober morality, and which was teeming with enormous possibilities that was not confined with the task of limiting and circumscribing Westernization so as to eschew a possible degeneration in cultural and political terms. This is the reason why, when it was published, the novel (together with its author) had attracted so much attention, an attention that was not very symphatetic. *Araba Sevdası*, in this regard, should not be seen simply as another novel with an *alla franca* dandy figure to condemn false Westernization, a novel whose political message is self-assured.

Araba Sevdası takes place in Istanbul, a restless city where the local culture meets with the European ideas and life style. Bihrûz Bey, the novel's hero, is another *alla franca* dandy, a man who leads a life of extravagance, takes stringent care of his

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[41] Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem wrote *Araba Sevdası* in 1889, but the book waited approximately 10 years to be published.

looks, does violence to himself to pose as a true European, and who is, again, a bodacious spendthrift. He was the son of an Ottoman pasha, that is, he belongs to an upper-class family of administrators: "The magnificent Bihrûz Bey is the son of the deceased (...) Pasha of the old *viziers*."[42] The story begins as Bihrûz Bey, with his mother, moves to the Çamlıca district of the capital where he would spend his summer. He passes his time by making, with his beloved *lando* (a horse-drawn carriage), trips to the famous Çamlıca Public Garden; speaks a chimerical, *sui generis* language of "Turkish-French" with men-of-the-street such as tailors; despises Turkishness as backwardness and adores European culture in the most nonsensical manner. In one of his strolls around Çamlıca Public Garden, Bihrûz Bey meets with a woman, Perîveş Hanım, whom he mistakes for a lady from upper-classes (who is, in fact, a woman of ill-repute), and he at once pursues this woman to arrange for a *rendezvous*. He writes a love-letter to the woman (which is never read) and begins to lose his sense of reality as he imitates, in his love, the romantic novels he read with his French tutor Mösyö Piyer. He hears the false news of his beloved Perîveş Hanım's death, sinks into despair and begins to lead a secluded life. In the final scene, Bihrûz Bey meets once again with Perîveş Hanım (whom he thought to be dead), and the revelation of her true identity shatters his whole world of illusion. He leaves the scene in a hurry, utterly embarrassed, saying only "Pardon!"

4.1 *Araba Sevdası*'s Realism: Its Cultural Implications:

As the famous Turkish novelist, essayist, and literary critic A. H. Tanpınar remarked, Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* is to be seen as the first truly realistic novel in Turkish

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[42] *"Muhteşem Bihrûz Bey kudema-yı vüzeradan müteveffa (...) Paşanın mahdumudur."* (Ekrem, 2014: 53). All the translations from this work are mine.

literature, way ahead, in this regard, of the previous works who were still under the influence of the *meddah* tradition, or of the role of mass educator adopted by authors like Namık Kemal and Ahmet Mithat. However, *Araba Sevdası*'s realism has wider implications than a change in literary technique. Its political neutrality is a symptom of the political and cultural changes of the Hamidian regime.

Ekrem, unlike Ahmet Mithat, does not rely on his authorial voice, withdraws from the scene and allows Bihrûz Bey to come into life more fully. Such a gesture of distancing has a political significance. Ekrem does not interfere in the text to praise or condemn his characters' manner of life for the manifest purpose of elaborating a certain *weltanschauung*. Ekrem, in this sense, renounces his role as the educator of the masses. J. Parla says, about Tanzimat novelists, that "they were all authoritarian children, who had to assume tutelage themselves in their search for a lost father."[43] Ahmet Mithat suits well into this account; he was the father of the fatherless victims of Westernization. Ekrem differs from Ahmet Mithat in this crucial point, of not assuming a tutelary, hegemonic position before the masses. His greatest interest was not in finding the lost father, but in this state of fatherlessness itself. This was, first and foremost, a modernist attitude in the face of social and political problems, rather than an authoritarian, traditional gesture in the face of Westernization. *Araba Sevdası*, in this regard, is not a piece of ideological indoctrination, but an attempt at capturing the experience of modernity itself; the problems, contradictions, and turmoils coming out of a process of rapid change.

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[43] *"Bu muhafazakâr ilişkinin oğulları ilk romancılarımızdır ve hepsi de kaybedilmiş bir baba arayışı içinde kendileri vesayet üstlenmek zorunda kalmış otoriter çoçuklardır."* (Parla, 1990: 20-1).

Ekrem's realism, paradoxically, is a kind of flight from the realities of the Hamidian regime (1876-1909), renowned for its paranoid sensitivity to and repression of any political activism. Ekrem had thus tried, like many others, to stand aloof from the politics of the day and, therefore, his novels concentrated mainly on social matters *per se*, without any touch upon the politics. Evin, for instance, says that "In the changed political climate of the post-Tanzimat period, the intelligentsia began to avoid active involvement in politics and the novel came to be concerned with the social rather than the political aspects of Turkish life" (1983: 79). It is true that Ahmet Mithat, despite the suffocating air lingering over the Ottoman intelligentsia, felt free to touch, in his writings, on political matters as well. However, it should not be forgotten that Ahmet Mithat was an apologist of the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry and in good terms with the Sublime Porte. Any critical stance before the regime, however, was enough to send one to jails and the pessimism of those critical personalities had the result of detaching them from any real contact with the politics. Berkes, in a similar vein, expresses the outcome of the Hamidian regime's repressive measures taken to counterbalance political unrest within Istanbul: "By severing the cultural questions from the political-religious questions, the Hamidian regime unknowingly encouraged focusing upon cultural matters as such" (1998: 289). Isaiah Berlin gives a quite succinct description of such an attitude of flight from the chagrin of political reality which he calls "the retreat into the inner citadel." For Berlin, if the desired object (whatever it is) seems unattainable, then, one strategically contracts the domain of his desires and retreats, as it were, into his inner self where nothing can harm him: "I have withdrawn into myself; there, and there alone, I am secure" (2002: 182). Ekrem's flight from the Hamidian regime and his apolitical novels (especially *Araba Sevdası*) should thus to

be seen as a retreat into the inner citadel. This retreat into the inner citadel was the first step towards any serious realization of the individual's importance in the Ottoman cultural modernization.

As the Ottoman intelligentsia retreated before the Hamidian regime, Ekrem kept up with the trend towards more emphasis on social matters and this, as was said above, has led to the realization of the individual's problems in the Ottoman society. In *Araba Sevdası*, for instance, except the ferry scene in which Bihrûz Bey reads *Courier d'Orient*, a newspaper published by Jean Pietri and which was close to the Young Ottomans, one never sees an instance that has direct political references or even overtones. (Ekrem, 2014: 167-8). The novel, in this regard, is totally apolitical; yet, this apolitical treatment has the consequence of directing the attention towards Bihrûz Bey's very personality itself. Ekrem, therefore, as he moved away from politics, approached the individual *per se*, realizing realism in novel as Auerbach has defined it; "[…] telling the stories of individuals living in the same time in similar environments" (Konuk, 2010: 182). Ekrem's stream-of-consciousness method, with which he illustrates Bihrûz Bey's thoughts in all their vividness and confusion in a life-like manner, testifies to this fact that he endorsed realism in novel where the primary objective is to analyze the individual *per se* and not ideologizing in any sense.[44] Scholars like Moran and Evin even claim that the method in question was first utilized by Ekrem in the whole Europe: "[...] if indeed the novel was initially written in 1886, Ekrem was the first to discover this technique commonly believed to have been invented by Eduard Dujardin and employed for the first time in his *Les Lauriers sont coupés* (1887)" (Evin, 1983: 170-1). Whoever is the first "inventor" of

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[44] The first scholar to draw attention to Ekrem's stream-of-consciouness technique was Moran (1983: 84).

this method, it is evident that Ekrem was quite conscious of the importance of individual in the novel genre. As Moran has stated: "What interests Recaizade Ekrem is not just Bihruz Bey's apparel, or his hum and haw of French which are the common features of the dandy figure, but his mentality, world-view, and interior life" (1983: 80). Ekrem thus portrayed the Ottoman society's cultural confusion within Westernization process in his Bihrûz Bey with whom the late 19th Century Ottoman reader shares the very same social milieu, time and problems. But, what were these experiences and problems? For the answer, we should look at the epistemological crisis faced by the late 19th Century Ottoman society.

4.2 Epistemologic Crisis in the Late 19th Century Ottoman Society:

Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, before anything else, is a novel about the problems of Westernization. The first thing that Ekrem noticed and dwelt upon is thus the cultural confusion that defines the late 19th Century Ottoman society. The novel's protagonist, Bihrûz Bey, in this sense, appears as the Ottoman society's caricaturized embodiment. Yet, the confusion that Ekrem thought ruining the Ottoman society was not, strictly speaking, something pertaining to the morals. It rather was a confusion that deranged cognition itself. In other words, Ekrem's concern was epistemological and not moralistic. He, unlike Ahmet Mithat, did not regard Western culture as morally degenerating. Where Ahmet Mithat saw a balance between "the spirituality of the East and the materiality of the West," Ekrem rather saw a clash of two incongruous ways of thinking. Jale Parla, about *Araba Sevdası*, says:

> It seems that, with that novel, the presence of two incompatible epistemological systems was recognized for the first time and the possible confusion that might result from that duality was pointed out. Besides, *Araba Sevdası* is a textual questioning of these two opposing epistemological

> systems and a negation of the idea that these systems can exist side by side. (1990, 121)

Ekrem did not see such incongruity, contrary to Ahmet Mithat, as something that might be reconciled through the implementation of right policies. For Ekrem, this incongruity between the Ottoman/Islamic and Western epistemologies is something inevitable. *Araba Sevdası* is thus not to be seen, as Kadıoğlu does, as a simple satire on dandyism, or, as Tanpınar does, a tasteless and superficial satire as it lacks authenticity. Instead, *Araba Sevdası* should be seen, in tandem with the above quotation, as a novel that narrates the experience of cultural confusion and crisis within Westernization.

Indeed, Daryush Shayegan's *Cultural Schizophrenia* would be of much avail within the debate as it concentrates on that specific problem of epistemological collision between two cultures that have incongruous political, cultural and epistemological assumptions. Shayegan defines the post-revolutionary Iran of 1980's as a society in which consciousness is *mutilated*. What Shayegan says can be appreciated as the critique of Ahmet Mithat's position vis-à-vis the Western culture, that is, of the view that sees the import of technique without the epistemological changes that underlie those products as something both possible and desirable: "As a final illusion, we formed the conviction that it would be possible to be selective with the nature of the things we were obtaining: to separate the wheat from the chaff, to choose technology and firearms while heroically ruling out the subversive, laicizing ideas which lay behind them" (Shayegan, 1997: 16). This is what Kadıoğlu's words ("the spirituality of the East and the materiality of the West") point out in Ahmet Mithat's novels: a desire to retain the Ottoman/Islamic culture while eschewing, by all means, the demoralizing influence of the Western culture. Shayegan thinks that any synthesis of

the two cultures (the Eastern and the Western) is, by necessity, fradulent since any culture is a unity of "spiritual" and "material" elements and the Islamic societies fatuously tried to "separate the wheat from the chaff." In this critique of, what might be called, Mithatian view of Westernization, Shayegan says that such an attempt at synthesis between the two epistemologies (the dogmatic Eastern and the rationalist Western) cannot become other than a *grafting* by which concepts such as democracy (which born out of totally incongruous genealogies) are lumped together in a manner that distorts the concepts themselves, emptying them of their true meaning. Such a *grafting*, then, occurs within a mutual distortion of the two epistemologies that are inconsistent: "In the long run, of course, the two paradigms can only deform one another mutually: modernity is denatured by Tradition, while Tradition is subjected to the stresses of modernity" (Shayegan, 1997: 59). Though the Islamic Republic of Iran presents a *sui generis* case, some Turkish scholars as well hold similar opinions concerning the irreducibility of the two cultures. Gürbilek, for instance, says: "Hence the double deformation: the local self will cause the foreign ideal to appear as a deformed one, while the foreign ideal has already deformed that local self" (2003: 603). Gürbilek, in her interpretation of the attempt at finding "the true self," says that it is impossible to eschew such dilemmas and contradictions. Shayegan's notably pessimistic views of Islamic modernity as something chimerical owes much of its jaundice to his experience of the Iranain Revolution of 1979; yet, Shayegan's views nonetheless is of value in understanding Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* in more precise terms.

Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* is the story of a man, Bihrûz Bey, who suffers from an acute crisis of, what Shayegan would call, mutilated consciousness: a consciousness torn

between two cultures which do not admit of any meaningful synthesis. His father hires for Bihrûz Bey private tutors to teach him various subjects as well as Ottoman and French (French being the privileged course in the cirrculum) though he never reaches any maturity in any of the subjects. When, for instance, Bihrûz Bey tries to commit to paper his feelings toward his beloved Perîveş Hanım (who is, in fact, an ill-reputed woman of lewdness and lowly life) he carries the reader to the heights of black comedy. To append a poem to his love-letter, Bihrûz Bey opens the poet Vâsıf's *Divân* and, in one of his poems, comes upon the word "*siyeh-çerde.*" He first thinks that the word must be French; but, then, decides that Vâsıf could not possibly know French and searches, this time, *Lügat-i Osmaniye* (Ottoman Dictionary) for the word's definition. As he cannot find the word there as well, thinks that the word must nevertheless be French and returns to the French dictionary "*Biyanki*." Unable to find the word (and thus exasperated), he again changes his mind and searches for the Turkish dictionary "*Redhavz"* (*Redhouse*) and, in the end, mistakes a similar word for the word he actually looks for. He eventually decides that the word must mean "a blonde." When Bihrûz Bey at last signs off the love-letter, he at once goes off to Çamlıca Public Garden to wait for Perîveş Hanım and throws the letter into the lady's landau as she passes by. He waits, for a couple of days, for Perîveş Hanım to meet him on the spot he specified in the letter. The lady, however, never comes and Bihrûz Bey begins to suspect that there is perhaps something wrong with his letter. He inquires after the word's ("*siyeh-çerde*") meaning in the office and learns to his astonishment that he used a most inconvenient word to be said to a decent woman:

> Bihrûz Bey: What have you understood from "Bir siyeh-çerde civandır?"
> Nâim Efendi: Does not that mean a handsome young man, with a dark coloured face?
> Bihrûz Bey: Who?
> Nâim Efendi: How do I know? We should ask the deceased Vâsıf for that...
> (Ekrem, 2014: 178-80).

Bihrûz Bey, as a man of mutilated consciousness and torn between incongruent epistemologies, even loses his mastery over his mother tongue. It is not simply that he is unable to give vent to his emotions, but that he *grafts* a romantic conception of love unto a reality that does not admit of any such thing. Shayegan asks: "How does a person adapt to a world in which two such different models are facing each other, without running the risk of falling into absurd behaviour?" (1997: 50) If we think of the Bihrûz Bey satire, it might be thought that Ekrem's reply would be that such an adaptation "without running the risk of falling into absurd behaviour" is simply an illusion as is demonstrated by Bihrûz Bey's absurd story. Parla, in a similar vein, says in her preface to *Araba Sevdası* that the novel is "about nothingness" which even negates its own claims, where everything becomes absurd.

As Mardin says, Bihrûz Bey is "culturally between two stools" (1974: 407-8). In other words, between two epistemologies. This, however, does not mean that *Araba Sevdası* is a novel about superficial, or failed modernization. Though such a claim would be contrary to all firmly rooted opinion favoured even by figures like A. H. Tanpınar, we should be cautious not to accept *Araba Sevdası* simply as another *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. It is a fact that non-Western societies, as they confront modernization, expose a fear of losing their authentic cultural identity and a propensity to condemn everything of Western origin as rootlessness and superficiality. That attitude affected the reception of Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* as well and left to us a distorted picture of the novel. Gürbilek, for instance, summarizes Tanpınar's position in the following manner: "Recaizade Ekrem is unable to tell us about 'inwardly felt emotions' and a spontaneous experience" (2003: 606). Tanpınar, thus, criticizes and judges of *Araba Sevdası* through his interpretation of the novel's

protagonist Bihrûz Bey, a mistake that blinds him to the actual implications of the novel. Yet, as is said above, to grasp the modernist attitude in Ekrem's work, we should deal rather with the novel *itself* and what it tries to present to the reader.

Ekrem was therefore conscious of the fact that, where the Ottoman/Islamic culture meets the Western culture, any claim to authenticity (i.e. localness) is an illusion: "the local self will cause the foreign ideal to appear as a deformed one, while the foreign ideal has already deformed that local self" (Gürbilek, 2003: 603). Indeed, as Ahmet Mithat strives to instill the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic citizen embodied in Rakîm Efendi's figure into the reader, his work begins to linger over the externals of his character and becomes, contrary to his own intentions, studided, strained and, thus, inauthentic. Ekrem, as he renounces such claims to cultural authenticity, pores over the individual and his experiences, breaks into his characters, and gives us a more authentic character. In other words, Ekrem sees the crisis of Westernization, not as inauthenticity, but as an opportunity to transform literature into a means of introspection into the individual and his authentic experience within a modernizing society.

4.3 Grafting or Hybridity?

Shayegan's view of non-Western modernization and his concept of *grafting* which occupies an essential place in his arguments can be considered, together with Alev Çınar's conception of *hybridity*, to clarify the above discussion.

Shayegan's *grafting* is almost an aesthetical concept, a judgement of taste that perceives of any synthesis between the Eastern and the Western cultures as something tasteless, as *kitsch*, that is: as "*bringing everything into line with the categorical ideal of existence*" (Shayegan, 1997: 92-3). This "categorical ideal of existence," or the "totalitarian *kitsch*" (a phrase borrowed from Milan Kundera) functions as an oppressive apparatus that reduces everything into the official ideology, and thus breeds ugliness insofar as the appropriation of the Western culture forcefully lumps together the two cultures that are essentially incompatible and whose uninion can only give birth to anomalies. Shayegan goes as far as to suggest that even Mercedes-Benz automobiles, which are both stately and elegant in their "home country" Germany, become *kitsch* objects when they are driven by Iranian taxi-drivers who decorate their interiors with products from their own culture such as colourful laceworks. Shayegan says: "Grafting is an – often unconscious – operation to bring together two unconnected worlds and integrate them into the coherent whole of a body of knowledge" (1997: 76). This "bringing together," for him, is to "obscure the absence of isomorphism" and which "have no counterpart in reality." It is, in short, a hollow discourse. (Shayegan, 1997: 76). *Grafting*, in other words, is an *ad hoc* formula to piece up the holes in a culture's fabric which, in actuality, should better be thrown into the dustbin of history or, at most, be relegated to the status of cultural heritage. Shayegan's *grafting*, in this regard, is to be seen rooted in the classical arguments of modernization theory that takes Westernization as synonymous with cultural modernization. In such a scheme, then, it is a normative necessity that the Eastern/Islamic cultures should metamorphose themselves into something substantially different by appropriating, for instance, Western social and political institutions such as secularism and rationalism.

Çınar, on the other hand, gives a more optimistic account of cultural synthesis. Çınar says that non-Western modernities (and the Turkish modernization experience) should rather be seen as "creative adaptation." It is "a unique in-between, hybrid modernity *à la Turca*" (Çınar, 2005: 15). Or: "a creative innovation," (Çınar, 2005: 15) "an innovative, hybrid adaptation tailored to the particularities of local sociopolitical practices" (Çınar, 2005: 16). Çınar, in this sense, is of the opinion that a synthesis between the Eastern and the Western cultures is both possible and desirable as it bears the potential of bringing forth novel cultural forms that work their way towards modernization. Çınar's idea of *hybridity*, thus, passes beyond classical arguments of modernization theory and adopts the multiple modernities appraoch.

If we read Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* in the light of these concepts to see whether the Ottoman modernization is something grafted or hybrid in the intelligentsia's mind, it would be noticed that the novel has to be considered on two levels: that is, we should consider the novel, first, formally, i.e. with regard to the style and to the events that transpire from the beginning to the end in a *superficial* manner and, later, with regard to the content, or with regard to the meaning of the novel. If read formally and superficially, *Araba Sevdası* would naturally seem to be a story of *grafting* in which an Ottoman/Islamic subjet succumbs to absurd behaviour out of his inability to reconcile two quite distinct epistemological assumptions that are represented by the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures. Bihrûz Bey's manner of life would thus appear as something *kitsch* that forcefully and unjustifiably brings two incompatible cultures together in his own personality. When, for instance, Bihrûz Bey tries his

hand in translating a poem (by a French poet) to append it to his love-letter to Perîveş Hanım, he comes across a curious line and scribbles a translation of that phrase in the most awkward fashion: *"'Kelime şeyi resmetmeye borçlu ise'"* which means, more or less, "if the word has to paint the thing," and which appears, to him, nonsensical (Ekrem, 2014: 111-2). His translation of a French poem into Turkish, then, without knowing that the line refers to a problem in linguistics and epistemology, results in a forceful lumping together of two cultures that are not compatible. If read superficially, thus, it would appear that the Ottoman modernization experience is nothing more than a *kitsch* that results only in absurdities and ugliness.

If read, on the other hand, with regard to its *content*, or with regard to its *meaning*, Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* would become a completly different novel that would re-adjust our understanding of the Ottoman modernization experience. Bihrûz Bey's absurd story, then, would become an expression of Ekrem's consciousness that the Ottoman modernization has resulted in a state of crisis in which epistemological certainities of the Ottoman *ancien regime* have disappeared. Ekrem thus finds himself almost compelled to take an interest in the individual *per se* and his experiences in the face of modernization, where individuals' acute awareness of uncertainity would later become the beginning of a modernist attitude. If we consider Çınar's idea of *hybridity*, as an "in-between" consciousness, then, it would be seen that Bihrûz Bey's is not merely a comic story, but the narrative of an "in-between" consciousness where the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures, though resulting in a crisis, eventually leads to a modernist attitude.

4.4 The Bihrûz Bey Satire:

Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* is not simply a satire on superficial Westernization. *Araba Sevdası* concentrates upon the individual *per se*, though in a comical manner, to show how the absurdities born out of the Ottoman/Islamic and Western epistemologies' collision were abolishing meaning and transforming the social life into a comedy. It is, in other words, a comedy of the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citienry's trials and tribulations in which it tries to establish itself against many incongruities. We may, in this regard, consider the Bihrûz Bey satire so as to understand its nature and potential to contribute to an understanding of individual experience in modernization.

Bihrûz Bey, as the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures face and contradict each other, finds himself slowly immersed in illusions of every kind that severes his ties with the realities of the Ottoman society. He speaks an idiosyncratic "Turkish-French" with the man-in-the-street, takes trips to Çamlıca Public Garden as if he was strolling in the gardens of Versailles, and frequents the tailor shops of Beyoğlu in pursuit of the latest *alla franca* fashion of the day. Such extravagance leads him to fall into many comical situations and Bihrûz Bey's absurdity thus forms the essence of the whole story. When, for instance, Bihrûz Bey waits for his beloved Perîveş Hanım at Çamlıca Public Garden in vain (for some misunderstanding), he gets a little nervous and intends on wreaking his anger on the waiters around. Yet, Bihrûz Bey's *alla franca* manners does not permit even his anger to be lofty and imposing:

> He took his cane and slowly climbed up the second terrace. He standed at the edge. He was fancying that a waiter would come running and bring him a chair. It did not happen. He waited for a while more, but again there was no body coming. He, then, shouted at the waiters: '*Garson!*' Upon hearing this,

some of the people present began to ridicule him, each one of them, one or two times, shouting '*Garson! Garson!*' by exactly imitating his manner of speaking.[45]

Ahmet Mithat's ideal of balance in which the Hamidian regime's proto-citizen would absorb both the Ottoman/Islamic value judgments and Western entrepreneurial leanings in a harmonious manner seems to fail in this instance. There rather is a man whose exposure to the collision of the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures result only in disorientation that shatters one's relations with the society around. Even to communicate with one's fellow citizens becomes an impossibility. There is, in other words, no adaptation but mechanical imitation that devastates one's cognitive capacities. It is tempting to refer to Bergson in passing as his ideas about laughter tallies perfectly well with the scene in question. Bergson says: "The attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine" (1980: 79). Bergons means that if someone acts mechanically, he would, then, appear unable to adapt himself to the milieu in which he lives, which would provoke laughter. In like manner, the Bihrûz Bey satire rests on such an incongruity between the protagonist and the Ottoman society. The whole Bihrûz Bey satire is, in this regard, about one's impotence in adapting oneself to a modernization process that operates in contradictory ways.

However, the Bihrûz Bey satire differs from Ahmet Mithat's in essentials as Ekrem's writing does not manifest a well-defined normative world-view within which to condemn Bihrûz Bey's absurd behaviour as Westernization led astray. Ekrem, as he drew himself off the narrative and had forsaken the role of father who would be

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[45] *"Bastonunu aldı, ağır ağır ikinci sedde çıktı. Kenarda ayak üzerinde durdu. Zannediyordu ki kahveci koşarak bir sandalye getirecek de beyefendiye arz edecek. Öyle bir koşan olmadı. Biraz daha muntazır oldu, yine kimse gelmedi. O zaman 'Garson!' diye kahvecilere doğru bağırınca seyircilerin alaycılarından bazıları Bihrûz Bey'i zevke alıp her biri birer ikişer defa kahveciyi çağırmak bahanesiyle tıpkı beyin edasını takliden 'Garson!. Garson!.' diye bağırdılar!."* (Ekrem, 2014: 155).

expected to interpret and judge his characters' manner of life in moralistic terms, came closer to Bihrûz Bey's experiences within a turbulent society. We see, for instance, that Felâtun Bey in the end repents his sins when he bids farewell to Istanbul and to his friend Rakîm Efendi, telling that, from that moment on, he will work "truthfully and sincerely" to pay his debts and to live frugally: "I kicked up my heels, acted childishly, and made a great blunder. Yet, I implore you to be sure that I will work truthfully and sincerely there and will be content with my wage."[46] Felâtun Bey's voyage to a government post in a Mediterranean island is thus a journey in which he finally finds out the truth defined within the paradigms of the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry that prioritizes not individual but communitarian values. He now becomes aware of the importance of a frugal life which will contribute to his motherland. The Felâtun Bey satire, in other words, ends with a revelation in which Felâtun Bey's bankruptcy functions almost like a *deux ex machina* which brings an abrupt end to his foppish manner of life. Rakîm Efendi hereby becomes the embodiment of a moralistic view that canonizes the communitarian values of the Ottoman society, a personality who should be emulated by the readers themselves as even Felâtun Bey himself admits of his moral superiority. The Felâtun Bey satire, by dint of a morality that was supposed to represent *the* truth, puts an insuperable distance between Felâtun Bey and the reader so as to transform the satire into a social correction mechanism. Such a distance, in the end, prevents any understanding of the individual *per se* and his experiences in the face of a rapid modernization process.

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[46] *"Sefahet ettim [Eğlenceye daldım], çocukluk ettim, her haltı yedim. Ama memur olduğum yerde maaşımla kanaat ederek sıdk u ihlasla [doğruluk ve samimiyetle] çalışacağıma emin olmanı rica ederim"* (Ahmet Midhat Efendi, 2014: 195-6).

Araba Sevdası, however, does not rest on such moralistic views. The Bihrûz Bey satire, in this regard, does not function as a social correction mechanism that puts a distance between the protagonist Bihrûz Bey and the reader. Ekrem, as he brings Bihrûz Bey to the fore, paves the way for a genuine understanding of an individual's *sui generis* experiences in a modernizing society. When, for instance, Bihrûz Bey learns in the end that Perîveş Hanım was indeed a woman of lowly morality (she was a prostitute), there falls no *deus ex machina* onto the stage floor to cure Bihrûz Bey of his snobbism. There is, thus, no revelation, either of a morality supposed to represent *the* truth or of a reality that was eventually recognized. On the contrary, as his romantic and imaginary vision of life has shattered, Bihrûz Bey leaves the scene at once in shame and utter confusion. Seeing a *landau* approaching, he finds a pretext to run away: "Oh my! There a *landau* comes... Pardon me!"[47] In this regard, *Araba Sevdası* ends in utter confusion in which there are no certainities, no truth, or no morailty that firmly orders the world. Yet, such a confusion has the brilliant effect of concentrating the readers attention on Bihrûz Bey's individual experiences in the face of modernity, which is indeed the genuine source of the confusion in question. The Bihrûz Bey satire, in this sense, is not a mockery that expresses contempt for the *alla franca* dandy Bihrûz Bey, but a satire that brings the readers into a close contact with the protagonist which enables a firmer grasp of the realities behind Bihrûz Bey's visionary manner of life.

The Bihrûz Bey satire is not, then, moralistic in any sense; but, on the contrary, presents almost an *amoral* mockery in which what is of concern is rather the absurdities caused by modernization instead of moral problems. This is evident in the

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[47] *"Aman! Bir lando geliyor.. pardon!."* (Ekrem, 2014: 303)

fact that Bihrûz Bey's snobbism never becomes a testimony for his self-interested behaviour as is the case with Felâtun Bey whose extravagances can only be explained through egotism.[48] While Felâtun Bey is the victim of his egoistic snobbism,[49] Bihrûz Bey is a victim of the society, his self-inccured immaturity, his escapism, and his imaginary vision of life that makes him vulnerable both to his own faults and to the others' malicious and egoistic intentions. *Araba Sevdası*, in this regard, is not a satire on the *alla franca* dandy who does not comply with the Hamidian regime's communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizen and its value judgements out of snobbish egoism. It rather is a satire on the impossibility of such an enterprise in which the collision of the Ottoman/Islamic and Western epistemologies create not a synthesis, a balanced Westernization, but a crisis of disorientation.

It is, thus, not surprising that Ekrem as an avant-garde who espoused *l'art pour l'art* principle in his literary works was accused of being an *alla franca* dandy himself. Ekrem was the founder of the *Servet-i Fünun* ("The Treasure of Sciences") journal dedicated, first, to the task of giving encyclopaedic knowledge concerning the sciences to the public. The journal, then, was turned into a literary journal, and was a site at which most of the literary polemics of the day found its place. *Servet-i Fünun*'s stance within those literary discussions can be best expressed by the famous motto "art for art's sake," a motto which had raised considerable dissidence among

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[48] Moran says: "The characters that represent real life in the novel are those who find Bihrûz Bey somewhat crank and exploit his naivity, people who are more selfish, more calculating and safeguard their interests more in comparison with him." (Moran, 1983: 86).

[49] Ahmet Mithat defines Felâtun Bey as a man "[...] whose self-confidence – that is, in the colloquial, whose vanity – was great [...]" ("[...] *kendi hakkında hüsn-i itimadı – yani ıstılah-ı avamca kibri – dahi berkemal* [...]" (Ahmet Midhat Efendi, 2014: 30).

the Ottoman literati, especially for Ahmet Mithat who believed in the purely

educational role of literature. Gürbilek says:

> At the time he was one of the few writers adhering to the principle of 'art for art's sake,' which was taken by his contemporaries as a self-indulgent, extravagant, and hence snobbish endeavour, since the supporters of 'art for art's sake' were accused of not taking literature as a medium for social mobilization and of sacrificing meaning to art. (2003: 614)

Ekrem was accused of being snobbish by later writers as well, such as Yahya Kemal:

"*Ekrem Bey is just another Bihruz, that is all!*" (1997: 290) Indeed, it is tempting to

compare Ekrem with Bihrûz Bey in this regard, though biographical inferences in a

study of an author's work might not be of much avail. For instance, Mardin says the

following to depict how Bihrûz Bey was a man in utter cultural confusion:

> Bihruz's father had wanted him to learn Arabic and Persian as well as French, since the latter was required in the better official posts. But Bihruz, whose father had never controlled his laziness, is culturally between two stools. He has not gone through the soul-searing Ottoman classical education, but neither does he know anything about Western humanities. (1974: 407-8)

In other words, Bihruz Bey received an education that was self-negating for the most

part. Learning, on the one hand, Arabic and Persian and, on the other, French

together with the whole carload of ideological assumptions these languages carry

along would inevitably result in a cultural confusion and, in the very least, a bad

educational background. If we turn to Ekrem himself, we will notice that his fate as

well was not very different from his own product Bihrûz Bey. Ahmet Hamdi

Tanpınar, in his article in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, notes down the following remarks

concerning Ekrem's early life:

> Ekrem Bey was one of those who were brought up in the second period, i.e. after 1839. Even from Ziya Pasha's and Şinasi's days onwards, the era of those people begins who were educated in the new schools, instead of receiving a medrese education. As they were lacking the long-drawn out education that gives the principles of the old knowledge and literature, they could not properly benefit from Western knowledge as well.[50] (Tanpınar, 2014: 251)

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[50] My translation.

It is thus not surprising that Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* was not a satire on the *alla franca* dandy's snobbish, non-complaint behavior against the Hamidian regime's proto-citizen as he himself suffered, like his Bihrûz Bey, from the epistemological incongruities resulting from an attempt at synthesizing the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures. Ekrem, in other words, did not believe in Ahmet Mithat's ideal of a balance between "the spirituality of the East and the materiality of the West" and was accused, like his protagonist, of being an *alla franca* dandy himself in his inability to comply with the Hamidian proto-citizen's neatly ordered value judgments.

4.5 The Dichotomy of Beautiful/Ugly in *Araba Sevdası*:

Araba Sevdası is, as was said, an expression of the cultural chaos of modernization in which the epistemological certainities of the Ottoman/Islamic culture has vanished into the blue for many in the Ottoman intelligentsia, if not for the masses. Ekrem, as he brought forth the Bihrûz Bey figure to the fore almost in isolation, was able to show how his protagonist was lost in such cultural vacuum. Ekrem, thus, carried off the difficult task of emphasizing the importance of the individual within modernization experience. Yet, Bihrûz Bey's crisis in such cultural vacuum and his alienation from the Ottoman/Islamic society becomes symptomatic in his aloofness from the society in aesthetical terms, i.e. as he condemns everything related to the Ottoman/Islamic culture as ugly while praising, to the point of apotheosis, everything related to the Western culture as beautiful.

In *Araba Sevdası*, it is not quite likely to chance upon anything that is not affected by Bihrûz Bey's *alla franca* and foppish life-style, that is, by his judgment of taste and

his aesthetical aversion from the Ottoman/Islamic culture at large. From his daily life

to his opinions concerning the Turkish poets, Bihrûz Bey's aesthetical aversion

functions as the *modus operandi* of his manner of life in which everything is touched

and tinged by his taste that condemns everything Ottoman/Islamic as ugly and

emblazons everything Western as beautiful. His attitude affects, first and foremost,

his appearance and manner of speech that easily makes Bihrûz Bey a stranger in the

society. Ekrem, for instance, says:

> When he was in provinces, his greatest (and only) pleasure was to stroll
> across the streets on horseback, wearing laced garments and followed by
> couples of servants from behind. When he came to Istanbul, he was keen on
> three things: first, driving carriages; second, being more pompous than all the
> *alla franca* gentlemen; and third, speaking with barbers, shoemakers, tailors,
> and waiters in French.[51]

Bihrûz Bey is thus held out to the reader as a man of pomposity, whose "greatest

(and only) pleasure" is to show himself off on horseback, on the streets in *alla franca*

garments, and who takes especial pride in his "knowledge" of the French language.

Indeed, Ekrem almost puts forth a definition for Bihrûz Bey's character: "Wherever

Bihrûz Bey goes, wherever he is, his intention is not to see while being seen, but only

to be seen."[52] Yet, Ekrem's words does not mean that Bihrûz Bey is just an

ostentatios show pony. When, for instance, Bihrûz Bey meets Perîveş Hanım in

Çamlıca Public Garden, he thinks in a singular, quite bizzare manner, where Turkish

and French are intermingled in an odd fashion: "What a *bote* [beauty] is this?.. She

appears like the sun from afar… dazzling the eyes. Shones like the moon when

looked at closely, and one wants to gaze upon her more and more! How *poetik*

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[51] *"Vilayetlerde bulunduğu zaman en büyük zevki – sırmalı esvap içinde, midilli veya at üzerinde, arkasında çifte çifte uşaklarla sokak sokak gezip dolaşmaktan ibaret olan bu beyin İstanbul'a geldikten sonra merakı üç şeye masruf oldu ki birincisi araba kullanmak; ikincisi alafranga beylerin hepsinden daha süslü gezmek; üçüncüsü de berberler, kunduracılar, terziler ve gazinolardaki "garson"larla Fransızca konuşmak idi."* (Ekrem, 2014: 54).
[52] *"Bihrûz Bey her nereye gitse, her nerede bulunsa maksadı görünmekle beraber görmek değil, yalnız görünmek idi."* (Ekrem, 2014: 55).

[poetic] a *bote* [beauty]!"[53] Bihrûz Bey's dandyism is thus not merely ostentation. His most intimate thoughts show no hypocritical attitude, but, on the contrary, a genuine and even passionate desire to speak and think in French to sanctify an important moment of his life, a language which he finds beautiful *in itself*. When his enthusiasm soars to the heights of poetic inspiration, he remembers, not an Ottoman poet, but Lamartine: "Lamartin! You had to see this! How poetic a tableau it was to write five hundred *ver* [verses] of the brightest in five minutes!.."[54] In this regard, *Araba Sevdası*'s interpretation as a novel of "superficial Westernization" aspired from the ostentatious behaviour in the elite circles of Istanbul becomes much less feasible.

Yet, Bihrûz Bey's unfavourable judgement of the Ottoman/Islamic culture, which he deems tasteless, that is, his aesthetic aversion is best seen both in his attitude against the Turkish language and poets, and in his bent on dramatizing the events that he experiences. When Bihrûz Bey begins to write his love-letter to Perîveş Hanım, fantasising about the coming days, he finds his lines unsatisfactory at first:

> Though he found a few sentences in the beginning and towards the middle to his liking as he plagiarised them from *Nuvel Eloiz*, and though he liked his allusion in the sentence "I could not figure out its reason," he nevertheless found the letter's *ansambl* [ensemble] quite *komün* [common], highly *fad* [faded], excessively *ensipid* [insipid] and inconvenient to deliver. He, then, attributed the letter's charmless writing to the Turkish language's inadequacy and returned, after he grumbled about that for a while, to *Novel Eloiz*.[55]

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[53] *"Bu nasıl* bote*?.. Uzaktan güneş gibi görünüyor.. gözleri kamaştırıyordu. Yakından ay gibi parlıyor da insanın baktıkça bakacağı geliyor! Ne kadar* poetik *bir* bote*!"* (Ekrem, 2014: 73).

[54] *"Lamartin!. Gelip de bu hâli görmeliydin!. Beş dakika içinde en parlaklarından beş yüz ver yazmak için ne şairane bir [tablo] idi!.."* (Ekrem, 2014: 73-5).

[55] *"Baş tarafındaki birkaç cümleyi, ortalarındaki bir iki lakırtıyı [Nuvel Eloiz]den çarpmış olduğu için fena bulmadı ve kendi mahsul-i karihası olan sözlerden: 'sebebini mümkünü yok keşfedemedim' cümlesindeki telmihi beğendi ise de mektubun ansamblını pek komün, ziyadesiyle fad, aşırı ensipid gördüğünden tebyiz ve takdimini tensib edemedi. O zaman mektubun yazılışındaki letafetsizliği lisan-ı Türkînin kifayetsizliğine hamlederek biraz söylendikten sonra tekrar [Nuvel Eloiz]i aldı."* (Ekrem, 2014: 106-7).

Bihrûz Bey's ignorance of and lack of mastery over the Ottoman Turkish is here not relevant, since what matters is not the facts, but Bihrûz Bey's strong aversion in the face of the Ottoman/Islamic culture. For Bihrûz Bey, the Ottoman/Islamic culture is abjectly sterile as it is reflected in the Turkish language's ineptitude in producing even a single poet worthy of respect for his artistic merits: "Ah! There has not come a decent poet from Turks..."[56] Worse, it is *en face* impossible to sing poetry in Turkish: "Bihrûz Bey has heard *alla franca* gentlemen like him saying that there is no real poet raised from amongst Turks because there can be no poetry in Turkish."[57] When Bihrûz Bey reads some Ottoman/Turkish poets, he finds their work positively ugly: "What does it mean, why to bring such ugly talk into *poezi*?.. [poetry] Safî Bey is right: Was not he saying that there is no *poezi* [poetry] in Turkish and there cannot be poets among Turks? *İl a rezon*! [He is right]"[58] Bihrûz Bey's dandyism, as was said time and again, is not merely a passion for Europen-style fashion to outdo his friends in the elite circles of Istanbul. It reflects a profounder aversion against the Ottoman/Islamic culture itself.

So far, we have seen that Bihrûz Bey's distance from the Ottoman/Islamic culture rests on a judgement of taste that deems what belongs to that culture as ugly. However, besides such a negative attitude against the Ottoman/Islamic culture, Bihrûz Bey's aesthetical aversion from his own society expresses a subtler gesture in the cultural vacuum he faces within modernization: a gesture of flight, both from the realities and from the Ottoman society itself in which he lives. In the Bihrûz Bey figure, we see a bent on dramatizing life, i.e. to aestheticize the events that befall

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[56] *"Ah! Türklerde adam gibi bir şair gelmemiş ki, [...]"* (Ekrem, 2014: 112-3).
[57] *"Bihrûz Bey Türklerde adam gibi şair yetişmediğini ve çünkü Türkçede şiir söylenemeyeceğini yine kendisi gibi alafranga beylerden işitmiş, [...] idi."* (Ekrem, 2014: 113).
[58] *"Ne demek olacak sanki, böyle çirkin lakırdıları niçin* poezi*ye sokmalı?.. Safî Bey'in hakkı var: Türkçede* poezi *yoktur.. Türklerde şair olamaz.. demiyor muydu?.. İl a rezon!"* (Ekrem, 2014: 118-9).

one, or to imitate art in one's behaviours. Finn, for instance, perceptively says: "Like Emma Bovary, who was also physically distant from Parisian culture, he views the novels he reads as accurate depictions of reality and extrapolates his responses from them, producing the curious state of life imitating art" (1984: 68-9). Bihrûz Bey, when he returns to his mansion, eagerly seeks his French mentor Mösyö Piyer to tell him the day's events, that is, his coincidence with Perîveş Hanım so as to listen the same events from his mentor's mouth, who would adorn the events with artistic expressions. He would then become the hero of a poetic romance: "Bihrûz Bey, as he would listen to these words, would be honoured and delighted as he would think himself the hero of this beautiful and poetic romance."[59] It might even be said that Ekrem's portrayal of Bihrûz Bey's character finds its true meaning only in this light, that is, when we think of his propensity to dramatize his life: "Wherever Bihrûz Bey goes, wherever he is, his intention is not to see while being seen, but only to be seen." As if he was an actor who gives an artistic performance, Bihrûz Bey's final cause is not to live, but to act. Even when his joy rises out to the heights of enthusiasm to make him sing a song, what Bihrûz Bey sings is a part from the French opera *La belle Hélène* ("The Beautiful Helen"), repeating the sounds "*lel lele lel lele, lel lele lel lel.*" (Ekrem, 2014: 110-1). Quite interestingly, we coincide with this same attitude in the story of another *dandy*, namely, in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In a conversation, Lord Henry (a devilish mentor/seducer) says to Dorian Gray (an extravagant dandy, who have set "youtful beauty" as his singular purpose in life):

> "[...] It often happens that the real tragedies of life occur in such an inartistic manner that they hurt us by their crude violence, their absolute incoherence, their absurd want of meaning, their entire lack of style. [...] Sometimes, however, a tragedy that possesses artistic elements of beauty crosses our

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[59] *"Bihrûz Bey de bunları dinledikçe bu güzel, bu şairane romanın kahramanı bizzat kendisi olduğunu düşünerek mesut ve müftehir olacak idi."* (Ekrem, 2014: 96-7).

lives. If these elements of beauty are real, the whole thing simply appeals to our sense of dramatic effect. Suddenly we find that we are no longer the actors, but the spectators of the play. Or rather we are both. We watch ourselves, and the mere wonder of the spectacle enthralls us. [...]" (Wilde, 2012: 110).

Bihrûz Bey's story, in a similar fashion, is a flight from the "absolute incoherence" and "want of meaning" that defines the late 19th Century Ottoman society in which modernization has caused the collapse of the epistemological certainities of the Ottoman/Islamic culture.

A friend of Bihrûz Bey's, Keşfî Bey (himself a dandy), gives us a perfect example of this subtle relation in which Bihrûz Bey's flight from the realities, his alienation from the Ottoman society, and the *l'art pour l'art* principle that Ekrem had endorsed may be seen as interconnected. Ekrem introduces Keşfî Bey as a man who is raised by his parents as a liar; yet, his lies, as we learn, are white lies:

> Keşfî Bey does not tell lies with the purpose of doing anyone harm. Yet, he also does not think whether his lies would harm anybody in consequence or not. His interest, his pleasure consists only of telling lies. For this reason, his colleagues and relatives call him "Forty Lies," "*Mantör*," or "*Farsör* Keşfî Bey." From this, Keşfî Bey does not take offence. Some of them even encourages him, saying: "As you are such an ingenious person in telling lies, you should be a novelist or, at least, a poet to make good use of this talent." From this, Keşfî Bey becomes much contended![60]

Keşfî Bey is a "mantör", a "farsör" who fabricates lies of every kind; but, as Ekrem says, his intention is not to do harm. Keşfî Bey is not portrayed as a man in the expectation of procuring some egoistic benefits through forging those lies. He just takes pleasure in his fabrications: "His interest, his pleasure consists only of telling lies."[61] It is worth noting that Ekrem, in Keşfî Bey's characer, strangely draws a

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[60] "*Keşfî Bey yalanı kimseye mazarrat vermek fikriyle söylemez. Fakat söylediği yalanların neticesi bir kimse için muzır olup olmayacağını da düşünmez. Onun merakı, zevki yalnız yalan söylemekten ibarettir. Onun içindir ki kalem refikleri ile sair ehibbası kendisini "Kırk yalan veya **mantör** veyahut **farsör** Keşfî Bey" diye yad ederler. Buna da Keşfî Bey gücenip darılmaz. Bazıları ise: "Mademki yalan uydurmakta bu kadar meharetin var, bunu hüsn-i istimal etmiş olmak için romancı veya hiç olmazsa şair ol!" diye takdir ve tergibde bulunurlar. Bundan da Keşfî Bey memnun olur!.*" (Ekrem, 2014: 205).*

[61] "*Onun merakı, zevki yalnız yalan söylemekten ibarettir.*" (Ekrem, 2014: 205).

parallel between lying and a predisposition to writing novels or poems, i.e. to art. Indeed, Wilde in an article entitled "The Decay of Lying: An Observation" makes a similar point. In this dialogue between two persons (Vivian and Cyril), Wilde explicates upon his views on the (much debated) doctrine of "art for art's sake." Vivian and Cyril discusses the worth of the modern literature, which is (basically) characterized through the realism of form and the subject-matter. This realism of form and subject-matter in the modern literature (as Wilde discusses it) amounts to a kind of democratization in literature and art. Realsim, in this regard, is seen as the result of the pressure exerted by the masses on artists, with a desire to see their own, daily lives as the subject-matter of modern art. In this regard, realism amounts to a shift towards a concern with the problems of those masses; their working conditions, their *petit* tragedies etc. However, Wilde fiercely disputes against such a realism in art. Wilde says:

> The only beautiful things, as somebody once said, are the things that do not concern us. As long as a thing is useful or necessary to us, or affects us in any way, either for pain or for pleasure, or appeals strongly to our sympathies, or is a vital part of the environment in which we live, it is outside the proper sphere of art. To art's subject-matter we should be more or less indifferent. (2007: 927).

He continues: "[...] and if something cannot be done to check, or at least to modify, our monstrous worship of facts, art will become sterile, and beauty will pass away from the land" (Wilde, 2007: 924). For Wilde, art can be possible only through untrutfulness: "The only form of lying that is absolutely beyond reproach is lying for its own sake, and the highest development of this is, as we have already pointed out, lying in art" (2007: 942). He continues: "The final revelation is that lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of art" (Wilde, 2007: 943). It thus might be said that Bihrûz Bey's alienation from the Ottoman society as an *alla franca* dandy, his crisis in the face of the epistemological uncertainites of a modernization

process, and his bent on dramatizing the everyday life all points out to his desire to escape from the realities which he achieves through an aestheticization of his life, an attempt that finds expression in his aesthetical aloofness from the Ottoman/Islamic culture under which he leads an uncertain and strenuous life.

Bihrûz Bey is the dawn of individual consciousness in the modern Ottoman literature, a consciousness that awakens with the experience of cultural confusion. He is, in this regard, an expression of a *sui generis* modernity, a modernity of hybridity rather than grafting in Shayegan's sense of the term; he is a man who is lost in cultural confusion, yet whose absurdity becomes a step towards sanity; wavering between the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures as their epistemological assumptions contradict one another and blur the firm distinction between reality and apperanace, truth and untruth, local and universal, resulting in a modernist attitude of skepticism and consciousness of uncertainity and anxiety; a man who condemns the Ottoman/Islamic culture as something ugly in a judgment of taste; a man who apotheosizes the Western culture as an ideal, as almost a work-of-art to be aesthetically contemplated in its beauty; a man whose utopian vision portrays the Western culture as a non-political, free-of-conflict sphere in which the individual is in liberty, bringing forth an attitude that problematizes the present as something ickily deficient and in need of intervention to reach a better, beautiful future. The *alla franca* dandy Bihrûz Bey thus becomes alienation incarnate, and symbolizes the difficult birth of the individual in utter confusion, a confusion whose intricacies refers us back to a modernization process in which the individual's experiences and his consciousness of herself/himself occupies the center stage.

Figure 2.) Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem. (Source: Finn, R. P. (1981). *The Early Turkish Novel: 1872-1900.* Istanbul: The ISIS Press.)
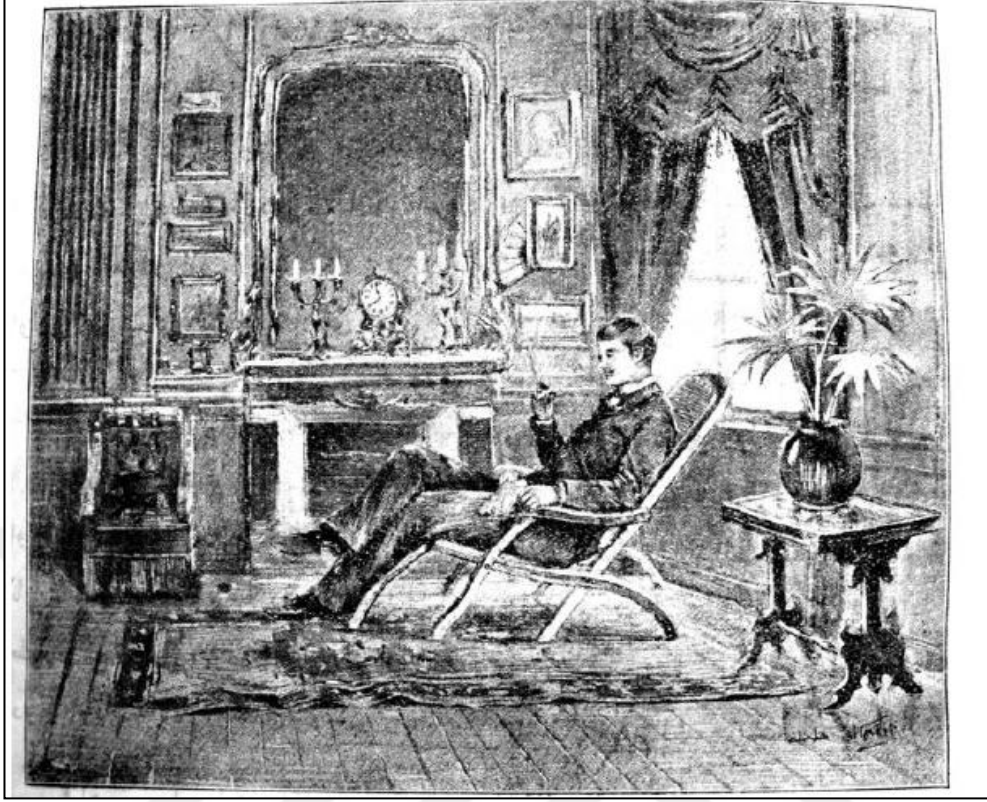
Figure 3.) An illustration in *Araba Sevdası*, depicting Bihrûz Bey. (Source: Ekrem, R. M. (2014). *Araba Sevdası (Eleştirel Basım).* İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 88.)

CHAPTER 5

INDIVIDUAL AGAINST TRADITION

False hair, Burckhardt says, was much in demand in the Renaissance Italy (1995: 240). To wear false hair was a way to eschew the nature's dicta that moulds individual complexions without much variation and, in many instances it seems, heedless of personal preferences. It was, above all, a way to distinguish oneself from the rest of society. (Even when the rest wears the same wig since it is disposable.) The passion for false hair was not something fortuitous within the Renaissance society where the feudal *ancien régime* was crumbling away, loosening the shackles that constrict individuals. It was a society in which the individual's *virtù* (in its Machiavellian sense of prowess) was held in the highest esteem, irrespective of the society's moral value judgments. Burckhardt says that "the demeanour of individuals, and all the higher forms of social intercourse, became ends pursued with a deliberate and artistic purpose" (1995: 238). *False* hair's "falsity" is thus nothing but resistance to nature's and society's limits on the part of individuals who desired to re-shape their own fate as they saw fit. It is, therefore, reasonable to say that individualism and a "falsity" in outward appearance are companions in any radical

cultural change. A similar state of affairs, I presume, can be seen in the late 19th Century Ottoman society as well, in which individualism had taken roots amid discussions of superficiality.

Yet, I suggest that Gürpınar's *alla franca* dandy Meftûn Bey should be seen as an expression of a *sui generis* modernization, and not as a critique of superficial, false Westernization as it might appear to be at the first sight. It was a modernization that questioned and destructively criticized the Ottoman/Islamic tradition through a critical attitude; a critique, on the one hand, as a judgment of taste that sees a dichotomy of beautiful/ugly whenever it directs its attention to tradition, that condemns the Ottoman/Islamic tradition as ugly and praises the West as beautiful in its revolt against the culture of the present in outward appearances; and, on the other hand, a critique that regards the Ottoman/Islamic tradition and its ethical convictions as unreason as they disregard humankind's nature, a nature that can only be apprehended through rationalism; a modernization that paved the way for a future individualism as it eroded the tradition and which, for that matter, *appeared* superficial in its destructive relation with tradition that was once the roots of one's identity. In short, a radical cultural change in which "falsity" in appearances and individualism went hand in hand.

Modernity, to draw analogy from Michelangelo's claim about the sculptor, is like an *individual* statue carved out from the crude block of marble that we may clumsily liken to the ossified tradition of a society to which the sculptor applies his *critical* tools, his chisel etc. for that end. As the block of marble, that is, tradition falls to pieces under the critical chisel of the artist, individual, that is, the figure emerges out

of that solid material. Modernity is, in this regard, a critical attitude against the ossified tradition of a society that constricts individuals, that is, a move towards individual liberty.[62] I define individualism, to repeat, as the translocation of truth from omnipresent and eternal (thus, ahistorical) social institutions to the individuals themselves as they interpret their own experiences. Yet, it is worth noting that modernity is an ideal as well, as the individual statue might be expected to reflect an ideal. As Alev Çınar says, modernity is a "construction of the present as deficient" (2005: 7) and an attempt at a "transformation for a better future," (2005: 9) a future in which the critical individual would be in liberty.[63]

5.1 The *Alla Franca* Meftûn Bey:

Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi* begins as Meftûn Bey returns to Istanbul from Paris, the site of pilgrimage for the *alla franca* dandies. Meftûn Bey's return, however, is not a simple homecoming. Meftûn Bey's return is rather an act of colonization, a *mission civilisatrice* to transform his Ottoman/Islamic household into a Westernized family in which French etiquette rules would reshape their manner of life. Meftûn Bey immediately sets off to spread the ideas he acquired during his stay in Paris, reads some European works aloud in reading sessions to the members of his household and

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[62] I understand critique as I interpret Foucault's view, that is, as a negative, destructive relation with the present (of a society, of a branch of knowledge and with their "truths") for the practice of liberty. Foucault says that "after all, critique only exists in relation to something other than itself: it is an instrument, a means for a future or a truth that it will not know nor happen to be, it oversees a domain it would want to police and is unable to regulate." (Foucault, 2007: 42).

[63] Bauman's idea of utopia is of much avail in understanding the above conception of modernity as a problematizing of the present to reach an *ideal* in the future: "To be born, the utopian dream needed two conditions. First, an overwhelming (even if diffuse and as yet inarticulate) feeling that the world was not functioning properly and was unlikely to be set right without a thorough overhaul. Second, the confidence in human potency to rise to the task, a belief that 'we, humans, can do it,' armed as we are with reason which can spy out what is wrong with the world and find out what to use in replacing its diseased parts, as well as an ability to construct the tools and weapons required for grafting such designs onto human reality" (2007: 98).

tries to teach them French etiquette rules, much to his family's astonishment. He

even drags his family members into the most fabulous follies and absurd scenes in

this pursuit. For instance, in his toils to fashion an *alla franca* life, Meftûn Bey

compels even his grandmother Şekure Hanım to get his share of *alla franca*

cleanliness:

> The wretched woman, at one occasion, as she could not get herself rid of his grandson's urges, took away half an *okka* [a weight unit] flour, inside a pouch, to the public baths with her. As she was rubbing her head with this flour, the flour at once softened so as to create a cap of dough around her head, and this new way of cleaning developed a great interest in other women around: 'Miss, is there an illness? What is that stuff that you doub to your head? We have seen black caps made out of tar worn by those people whose heads are full of abscesses, but never coincided with such a white one.' That day, as she listened to such impertinent questions, this made her almost cry out of shame.[64]

He even writes a book for that end:

> Was it not possible to teach French forms of politeness as a science? Meftûn thought on that matter a lot because he was in great pains to teach the French way of life to his family; but, never the less, there have been no satisfactory consequences. After a long deliberation, he decided on writing a book to achieve this difficult task. At first, he called this book *Savoir-Vivre applique*.[65]

However, in time, Meftûn Bey begins to face difficulties to reach the manner of life

he seeks for as his financial means gradually weaken. He, then, schemes to dupe his

neighbor Kasım Efendi, a tight-fisted miser who lives a sordid and solitary life

within a traditional Ottoman family that clings to the most archaic Islamic life-style.

Meftûn Bey calculates that, by marrying Kasım Efendi's daughter, he may inherit a

fortune from the old man who, as he predicts, lives on borrowed time. Meftûn Bey, at

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[64] *"Biçare kadın, torununun icbarından kurtulamayarak bir defa kağıt derunında, hamama yarım okka un götürmüş. Bununla saçlarını ovalarken dakik yumuşayarak hatunun başında hamurdan bir takke peyda olmuş, bu tarz-ı nevin tetahhur diğer kadınların merakını celp ederek: 'Hanım, illet mi var? Başına sürdüğün o nedir öyle? Başı çıbanlılara giydirirler ziftten siyah takke gördük, ama hiç böyle beyazına tesadüf etmedikti.' nev'inden birtakım na-beca suallere uğramış, zavallı o günü mahcubiyetinden adeta ağlamaklı olmuştu."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 53-4). All the translations from this work are mine.
[65] *"Muaşeret-i Frenkanenin usul-i mahsusaya tevfiken bir fen şeklinde talim ve taallümü kabil değil midir? Meftun, bu hususta çok düşündü. Çünkü efrad-ı ailesine alafrangalığı talim için pek sıkıntı çekiyor, mucib-i hoşnudi semerat da iktitaf edemiyordu. Tefekkürat-ı medideden sonra bu emr-i müşkilin teshil-i talim ve tahsili sadedinde bir eser yazmaya karar verdi. Bu kitabın ismine evvela* Savoir-Vivre applique *dedi."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 55).

once, invites Kasım Efendi to his home to declare his intention for marrying his daughter. Though Meftûn Bey expects a reprimand, Kasım Efendi accepts the former's proposal to his astonishment as the latter finds in such a proposal an opportunity to cut off the expenses he makes for his daughter's livelihood. Following the marriage, Meftûn Bey waits in vain for a while for Kasım Efendi's death. However, his expectations comes to naught as Kasım Efendi shows no signs of terminal illness. Meftûn Bey, then, plots another plan to usurp Kasım Efendi's money, this time by choosing Kasım Efendi's son Mahir (who, by that time, becomes his brother-in-law) as his accomplice whom he acclimatizes to Istanbul's *alla franca* circles to corrupt his morals. Meftûn Bey goads (with the help of a mistress who, in fact, is another accomplice of Meftûn Bey's) his brother-in-law to steal some bills from Kasım Efendi's strongbox, with which scheme his brother-in-law complies. After a while, the crime committed by the two brothers-in-law comes into light, leading to a scandal. Kasım Efendi's son, who surrenders himself to the pangs of conscience, commits suicide and Meftûn Bey flees at once to Paris to save himself.

5.2 The Meftûn Bey Satire:

Şıpsevdi is, before anything else, a satire. However, it is not merely a satire on the social incongruity, of the disharmonious co-habitation of the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures and epistemologies within the late 19th Century Ottoman society. It rather is a satire unfolding in two distinct levels. On the one hand, Gürpınar was conscious of the fact that Westernization of the Ottoman society had become a stage on which many comical scenes are acted out as people had found themselves at a loss within the uncertainty of Westernization. As the solid ground of tradition swayed to

and fro and crumbled, and as the *alla franca* manners penetrated even the capillary vessels of the Ottoman society, people had become oddities within their social milieu: "[...] any *feature* or *oddity* that distinguishes a person from his or her environment can make that person funny" (Propp, 2009: 40). Even the simplest rules of social decorum are spoiled as the Western manners of life begin to distort local practices and customs. For instance, Meftûn Bey cautions his lackey Şaban Ağa not to allow guests in who come at night in *alla turca* fashion:

> For instance, if a neighbour was to come, wearing his night gown, to see Meftûn Bey, Şaban Ağa was to send such visitors (with Damascene sweaters or *gezi kür*ks[66]) not conforming to "etiquette" rules away politely with the direct translation of the French phrase *'Méftun Bey n'est pas visible pour vous,'* meaning 'Meftun Bey is not visible for you.' Şaban did not himself pretty much know the meaning of this phrase that he sometimes addressed to guests. The gentleman instructed him to say so, and he executed this task accordingly. Some of the guests, upon hearing those cold words, could not hide their surprises: 'The gentleman is not visible? *Sübhanallah*, did Meftûn become invisible? Did he disappear into the air, into vapour? Or, amongst nymphs?'[67]

The literal and, thus, meaningless translation of a French phrase into Turkish makes all fall into a comical scene; Meftûn Bey himself, his lackey Şaban Ağa who utters the words "Meftûn Bey is not visible for you" by rote without any understanding of what the phrase actually means, and his guests who could not interpret the true meaning of those words and leave the house in utter astonishment. In such a scene in which any sensible communication is precluded by cultural disorientation, no one escapes from becoming a prey for ridicule. The Meftûn Bey satire, in this regard, is different from both the Felâtun and Bihrûz Bey satires in which the *alla franca*

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[66] A kind of fur.
[67] *"Mesela, Meftun Bey'le görüşmeye gecelik entarisiyle komşudan bir misafir gelirse böyle 'etiket' haricinde Şam hırkası veya gezi kürkle arz-ı endam eden züvvarı, Méftun Bey n'est pas visible pour vous, ibare-i Franseviyesinin tercüme-i harfiyesi olan "Meftun Bey sizin için meri değildir" cümlesiyle bil-istiskal kapıdan savardı. Şaban, gelenlerin bir kısmına sarf ettiği bu cümlenin ne demek olduğunu kendi de pek bilmezdi. Beyefendi, onu kendine öyle talim etmişti. O da ustasından aldığı gibi satarak ifa-yı vazife ederdi. Bu cümle-i istiskaliyesine uğrayan misafirlerden bazıları şaşırarak: "Beyefendi meri değil midir?.. Sübhanallah Meftun'un cismi latifleşti mi? Buhara, havaya mı tahavvül etti? Yoksa periler mi karıştı?" cevabıyla beyan-ı istigrabdan kendilerini alamazlardı."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 51-2).

dandy figure was the sole object of ridicule, either as a fop in pursuit of marrymaking or as an absent-minded victim of a bifurcated culture. With the Mefûn Bey satire, for the first time, what is comical is not only the Westernized snob in his absurdity, but the whole Ottoman society of the late 19th Century in which communication is not an easy matter to cope with.

Yet, on the other hand and at a deeper level, it is a satire on the incongruity between the universal and eternal truths of reason and the untruth of tradition that poses as omnipresent and eternal, but which can only be a shackle to liberty. What is comical in Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi* is, therefore, not only those figures who are unable to communicate with each other, but what is unreasonable as well. (I will return to that point below.) The stratified nature of Meftûn Bey satire can be seen in Gürpınar's preface to *Şıpsevdi* in which he grapples with the task of clarifying his intentions in writing the novel: "Some thought that I have written this novel to criticize *alla franca*s. This is a great misinterpretation and mistake. We should distinguish between dandyism, on the one hand, and love of truth and progression, on the other, in being an *alla franca*."[68] Gürpınar is, then, to be seen as endorsing and defending a "love of truth and progression" in "being an *alla franca*" even though he mocks and condemns the *alla franca* dandies of Beyoğlu who do not have even an inkling of Western rationalism that Gürpınar held in the highest esteem. *Şıpsevdi*, in this regard, is a satire on the social incongruity of the Ottoman/Islamic and Western cultures and, *at the same time*, a satire on the incongruities between reason and tradition.

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[68] *"Bazılarınca bu romanı, alafrangalığı tezyif maksadıyla yazdığım zannolunuyormuş. Bu büyük bir su-i zehab ve hata-yı mahzdır. Alafrangalığa tebaiyetteki züppelikle hakikat ve terakki-perestliği birbirinden ayırmak lazım gelir."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 3).

However, it is worth noting as well that Mefûn Bey has two roles to play within this satire. He is, at the same time, an object of ridicule and a cynic; an irrational, *alla franca* dandy who is enamoured of the European culture's *façade* and a man who has a philosophical mind-set in pursuit of the truth about social life. Indeed, when he becomes cynical, Gürpınar's *alla franca* Meftûn Bey is there to serve the author himself as his mouthpiece, as Berna Moran has put it aptly, when an opportunity arises for Gürpınar to express his own opinions on social matters and, surely, against the grain. As Gürpınar says:

> Is Meftûn a madman who is taken ill by the illness of being a francophile? No. As we will see, this is not the case either... It is a more reasonable idea that he is unstable in his mind, as he has moments when he shows off a sound reason, as in the case of malaria attacks.[69]

It was quite natural for Gürpınar to act in that manner since he was writing under the weight of the Hamidian regime's censorship and oppressive measures taken against any kind of dissension from the ideals and value judgements of its communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry. Moran explains that ambiguity in Gürpınar's writings well:

> There are a few reasons for this ambiguity in Gürpınar's novels. One of these reasons is that he makes Meftûn in *Şıpsevdi*, or in his many other novels generally ruffians or unreliable new-generation persons, or, as in *Deli Filozof* ("The Mad Philosopher") those seen as madmen express his very own opinions and he tries not to show with whom he is taking sides. It is not difficult to understand why he does this. He finds the expression of progressivist views that are contrary to the public opinion by the author himself dangerous. 'To protect his pen from the enemy, the author makes madmen speak on his behalf instead of respectable characters who cannot be expected to say such things, as the author takes refuge in some social or ethical concern.' (1983: 147)

Indeed, there is quite an interesting parallel here between what Gürpınar thinks of his outcasts and Erasmus in *The Prasie of Folly*, where he says that fools might speak of the truth without being noticed or without giving offence: "But my fools, on the other

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[69] *"Meftun, da'-ül-efrenc-perestiye müptela bir mecnun mudur? Hayır! Göreceğiz ki o da değil... Bazı mahdut zamanlarda huşyari anları görülmesine nazaran seyrek nöbetli sıtma gibi aklı gelir gider takımdan olması akvadır"* (Gürpınar, 2008: 13).

hand, have a marvelous faculty of giving pleasure not only when they speak the truth but even when they utter open reproaches, so that the very same statement which would have cost a wiseman his life causes unbelievable pleasure if spoken by a fool" (2003: 56). Under the autocratic and oppressive reign of Abdülhamit II, Gürpınar could not dare to give vent openly to his ideas concerning the society's morals. In this regard, Meftûn Bey, "as he has moments when he shows off a sound reason," sometimes begins to speak with such lucidity and fairness of judgment that, at such moments, he unmistakably becomes Gürpınar's mouthpiece and, in this manner, we discern that the true object of ridicule in Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi* makes itself manifest in Meftûn Bey's moments of lucid reasoning. What, then, Meftûn Bey mocks and condemns exactly at those moments when *reason* comes to him?

To begin with, what makes the Meftûn Bey satire unique is the *amoral* nature of the satire in which neither the *alla franca* nor the *alla turca*, that is, Ottoman/Islamic *weltanschauung*s possess a culturally superior and laudable position, a position from whose heights a morality can grant itself the right to mock what contradicts and resists its privileges. The Meftûn Bey and Kamil Efendi houses, for instance, which represent two quite different moralities and life-styles, appear to be equally immoral as the claims of cultural superiority of both the families come to naught in all their hypocrisy. While Meftûn Bey cheats his wife with whom he married out of greed, his wife (who, at first, solemnly condemns such *alla franca* corruption of morals through the perspective of Ottoman/Islamic values) cuckolds her husband in her turn, at the first opportunity. We should bear in mind that *Şıpsevdi*, therefore, does not mock a certain morality from the superior position of an alternative morality, that is, the Ottoman/Islamic morality through the perspective of Western morals, or vice versa.

To repeat: What, then, Meftûn Bey mocks and condemns in his moments of lucidity, that is, when *reason* comes to him? The Meftûn Bey satire was thought-out to serve as a social correction mechanism. Theories that see humour as a social correction mechanism tend to stress humour's bent on imposing the society's idealized norms and values upon individuals who might try to eschew them. Michael Billig, for instance, says that "[…] the prospect of ridicule and embarrassment protects the codes of daily behaviour, ensuring much routine conformity with social order" (2005: 201-2). Humour, as a social correction mechanism, then has the society's idealized cultural norms and moral values as its measure in its corrective grip over the individuals. Gürpınar's satire, however, does not rely on the Ottoman society's cultural and moral values as its measure for social correction. Gürpınar's measure for his satire, that is, for his social correction mechanism, was none other than the Western civilization's rationalism which he believes would be the ideal norm of the society *in the future*. Throughout his life, Gürpınar wrote many novels like *Gulyabani* ("The Bug-bear") to enlighten the society and advise the reader against superstitious beliefs and behaviours that carry nothing but ruinous ignorance along themselves. He first builds up a mysterious and horrifying story in which the society's superstitious fears find a place, like ghosts, bug-bears, or djinns, within a series of events that seem inexplicable except with supernatural and otherworldly causes. He, then, unmasks those bogeys to show off what they are indeed, that is, to show that these are all too human figures and what appears, at the first sight, to be inexplicable becomes quite simple to understand in the light of reason. Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi*, in this regard, is a satire on superstitions, ignorance, and folly of the Ottoman *ancien regime* as well, as it is a satire on snobbism. In *Şıpsevdi*, there is

conducted a war against the ghostly morals of the society. As Gürpınar mocks the late 19th Century Ottoman society that smacks of rot, corruption, opportunism, superstition, and ignorance, he therefore mocks it through the superior perspective of Western rationalism that epitomizes humanity's perfection and the luminous rigor of science. As Gürpınar says: "The Western civilization has become a torch of awakening for us. From now on, it will be our leader in progress as well."[70] For Gürpınar, the Western civilization symbolizes an ideal to be sought after and emulated. The ideal Gürpınar had in mind was not different from Ekrem's idealization of the Western culture; the Western culture as a non-political, free-of-conflict domain, autonomous in its universalistic values and principles as those values and principles pose as the final ends of the mankind and refer to nothing but themselves; a site of utopian vision in which beauty and (especially for Gürpınar) rationalism, and individual liberty reigns. Gürpınar claims even that "we" learned to think from the West: "We learned to think, to write novels, and the love of liberty from them."[71] Gürpınar, in this regard, is to be seen on the Western-oriented camp of reformism in the Ottoman Empire that found a leading figure in Şinasi who "is unanimously considered by historians of Turkish intellectual history the first outstanding advocate of Europeanization in the Ottoman Empire" (Mardin, 2000: 256). As Şerif Mardin says: "[…] according to Şinasi, the most important gift bestowed on human beings was the gift of reason" (2000: 266-7). For Gürpınar, likewise, reason is to be held in the highest esteem. Thus, what Meftûn Bey mocks and condemns in his moments of lucidity is nothing besides the hollow claims of morality that hold individuals in thrall to unreason. To substantiate the claim, we

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[70] *"Garp medeniyeti bize bir meşale-i intibah oldu. Bundan sonra da pişva-yı terakkimiz olacaktır."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 4).

[71] *"Düşünmeyi, böyle roman mevzularında gezinmeyi, sevda-yı hürriyeti onlardan öğrendik."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 5).

should take a closer look at *Şıpsevdi*, at the passages in which Mefûn Bey expresses his opinions over moral subject matters.

5.3 Meftûn Bey's Attack on Morality:

In *Şıpsevdi*, neither wisdom nor vice belongs essentially and wholly to a single character, or to a certain *weltanshauung* that can claim an indisputable monopoly on ethics (or, for that matter, on wickedness.) Gürpınar, in this regard, would not see, in Ayşe Kadıoğlu's words, a proper balance between "the materialism of the West and the spirituality of the East" (1996: 180) (cherished, for instance, by Ahmet Mithat) as something convincing. The East is not pure spirituality and a symbol for moral purity (thus, it does not bring political superiority itself); the West, on the other hand, is not the Islamic *dar'ül harb* ("war zone") where only wickedness is to be found. Wisdom and vice, morality and wickedness are the traits (or, fantasies) of human beings who stigmatize their natural inclinations. Meftûn Bey, therefore, is not a man possessed of the devil, or he is as possessed as Kasım Efendi is. As Gürpınar's satire mocks and condemns, with equal strength, both moralities embodied respectively in Meftûn Bey's and Kasım Efendi's persons, *Şıpsevdi* becomes a satire on the morality of mores, that is, *a satire on the hypocritical claims of tradition over morality in general*. Gürpınar's *Şıpsevdi*, in this sense, becomes a root and branch confrontation with any moralities, traditions, or *weltanschauung*s that ignores the luminous light of reason, that limits the individual and subjugates him to a certain, circumscribed manner of life. For instance, some of the books that Meftûn Bey reads off to his family include ideas concerning women's sexual liberty, and his sister Lebibe Hanım is, of course, one of those who attend the reading sessions. When Meftûn Bey and his

brother Naci figures out that Lebibe was in fact involved in some "degrading" act of sexual liberty, they summon Lebibe to their presence at once to investigate whether she was really guilty of the offence they were suspicious of. In the end, their worries come true; however, Lebibe's reaction to the accusation of adultery is unconventional and unheard of. Lebibe defends herself not by disclaiming the charge, but as she argues for her own case by directly quoting his brother Meftûn Bey's very own words:

> Love is a powerful emotion that nature bestowed upon human beings for the continuation of generations. The satisfaction of this need in an illegitimate manner is, as it were, an amorous triumph for men, whereas, for women, an unforgivable disgrace. If the matter can be thought through impartially, there would be seen men's injustice. That injustice reigns in the East in a greater magnitude than in the West. Murders, debaucheries, illegitimate relations, murders of conscience, ventured by single, unmarried men to satisfy their lascivious urges are all considered permissible under the name of "entertainment." No one is astonished in the face of that state of affairs, let alone condemning it. Woman's surrender of herself, at the very least, to the urges in matters of love is deemed to be the greatest murder. If women had been in a superior position on that matter, no one would hear of the word "adulterous" in the world and all humanity would be at ease.[72]

In Meftûn Bey's words on sexual liberty, a critique of both the Ottoman/Islamic and Western morals can be found, though the West is deemed to be less guilty of unjustly subjecting women to unnatural principles that act contrary to nature, or to the nature of human beings for whom sexuality, for women as well as for men, is a fact and a necessity. Indeed, such a stance is reminiscent of Rousseau's views in his discourses on inequality and elsewhere where he deems society as the origin of moral corruption and inequality as men leave their innocence behind as they form communities and begin to speak of moral creeds (Rousseau, 2009). Gürpınar, in a similar vein, sees

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[72] *"Aşk idame-i nesl için tabiatın insanlara taslit ettiği bir hiss-i şediddir. Bu hissin na-meşru surette tatmini erkekler için adeta bir nev' zafer-i âşıkane, kadınlar için ise affolunmaz bir yüz karasıdır. Mesele bitarafane tamik edilirse bu hükümde nev'-i ricalin büyük bir haksızlığı görülür. Bu haksızlık şarkta, garpta daha büyük bir mikyasta hüküm sürüyor. Müteehhil, bekâr her erkeğin teskin-i hevesat-ı şehvaniye için göze aldığı cinnetler, sefahatler, na-meşru muhabbetler, vicdani cinayetler hep eğlence namı altında adeta mübah addedilecek birer suret-i telakki görüyor. Tayib değil bu hale taaccüb etmek bile kimsenin aklına gelmiyor. Kadınların sevda hususunda en ufak bir hevese tabiyetleri a'zam cinayattan addolunuyor. Bu emirdeki galebe aksi yani kadınlarda ola idi dünya fuhuşane namı işitilmez, bütün insaniyet rahat ederdi..."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 240-1).

society as the origin of men's hypocrisy and always brings nature into relief as the harbinger of unspoiled truth. When, for instance, Meftûn Bey accidentally witnesses his lackey Şaban Ağa's and his cook-woman Zarafet Abla's quite intimate moments (that is, as they make love), he thinks of nature's great powers and its truthfulness, in contradistinction to society's untruthfulness:

> Nature is such an effective force that it subjugates all to its laws. Who are now carousing, talking, exclaiming, yelling, dancing, making love, kissing each other here are not Zarafet and Şaban, but that natural force itself. As Schopenhauer has said, in the bodies, veins, and blood of these lovers, there are the seeds of generations of the mankind. […] This is the whole truth which people call, poetically or vulgarly, "debauchery," "womanizing," "love," and many other names. […] Whatever the ethical philosophers say, this force that makes Şaban and Zarafet to fall in love with each other, and compels them to such frenzies is sovereign in the world, despite the counsels of pedants. […] He who strives to oppose the laws of nature is exhausted in vain. [73]

In Gürpınar, therefore, nature appears always as the seat of truth, while society is the seat of untruth, lies, and hypocrisy. Such an attack on the hollow claims of morals and traditions, thus, becomes the ground for the individual to unfold himself irrespective of the tradition that subjugates individuals to unnatural and, thus, unreasonable constraints.

Meftûn Bey's ideas on egoism are another instance in which he wages war on the hollow assumptions of morality. Meftûn Bey, a few years after he has fled to Paris, sends a letter to his brother Raci and sister Lebibe to defend his own case against the family's accusations:

> Greetings brother!

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[73] *"Tabiat öyle bir müessir-i şediddir ki icabat-ı kanuniyesine cümleyi münkad eder. Şimdi burada içen, söyleyen, çağıran, bağıran, oynayan, sevişen, öpüşen Zarafet'le Şaban, değil işte bu kuvve-i tabiiyedir. Şopenhaver'in dediği gibi bu muaşıkların vücutlarında, damarlarında, kanlarında ensal-i beşeriye tohumları var. […] Âlemin, hovardalık, zen-perestlik, çapkınlık, muaşaka, sevda, - edibane, amiyane – daha türlü nam ile yad ettikleri hakikat işte bundan ibarettir. […] Ahlakiyun-ı hukema her ne derse desin Şaban'la Zarafet'i birbirine dil-dade ve böyle cinnetlere sevk eden bu kuvvet bütün nasayih-i ukalaya rağmen fermanferma-yı âlem olmaktadır. […] Kavanin-i tabiata karşı gelmekle uğraşan, beyhude yorulur."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 193-4).

[…] Are you still cursing me, from the moment we departed to this day? You are being unjust to me… You have not understood human beings and humanity properly… Those who do not take pains in the pursuit of that great truth, who do not gain such difficult verities of life through bitter experiences, who bring forth some groundless ideas of lofty morals, slowly become mournful, and disturbed throughout their lives as the emptiness of their assumptions and hopes come to light. To understand the truth, to cast off vain hopes… This is sagacity. Beyond that it is all hamartia and foolishness. The flocks of mankind are always the victim of that hamartia and foolishness. Here it is the key for life's theory! […] A man always passionately tries to tread the weak under foot to reach the upper-strata. That false justice of the mankind is concocted to keep the fools in subjection. […] In this world, egotism reigns before everything else. Everyone acts according to his egotism. As one individual's egotistic acts will clash with another's same intentions, there emerges the need to establish justice and laws. […] Both of us are men who succumb to their egotism, as the philosopher has described. You seem to believe in lofty morality, and deceive yourself as you strive to see yourself to belong to that coterie. I, on the other hand, show myself as I am, my nature as a human being, without fear and garnish. Who is right, then? […]

Your brother Meftûn[74] (Gürpınar, 2008: 468-73)

The letter is lucid and compelling in its reasoning and comes as an epiphany at the very end, reconciling the family members with truthfulness. As Meftûn Bey's brother Raci reads and, then, hands it over to his sister Lebibe, they seem to judge things better than they do before and forgive their brother with justice, admitting, as Meftûn Bey seems to request, that their *alla franca* brother is less a hypocrite than those who say they act out of moral scruples and principles. Raci says:

As I was reading the letter I thought that I am sitting face-to-face with my brother Meftûn… That philosophy, that reason, and these ideas again… He has not changed. One of the ancient sages says that he has learnt morality from immoral men… We, on the other hand, learn morals from him. Owing to him, we learn the truths of life and of philosophy in their various manifestations.[75]

The *alla franca* Meftûn Bey, in that moment of reconciliation, becomes transformed into a sage who, though not always perhaps but on important moments, "shows off a sound reason" and his brother and sister learn from him the nature of morals and

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[74] For the full letter in its original form, see Appendix.

[75] "'Bu mektubu okurken kendimi Meftun ağabeyimle karşı karşıya oturuyorum zannettim… Yine o felsefe, yine o akıl, yine o fikir… Hiç değişmemiş… Hükema-yı kadimeden biri, ahlakı ahlaksızlardan öğrendiğini söylüyor… İşte biz de 'moral' dersini bundan alıyoruz. Sayesinde hikmet-i hayat ve felsefenin türlü cilvelerini görüyoruz.'" (Gürpınar, 2008: 474).

humanity. As Meftûn Bey says in the letter that human beings are in essence egoists, he comes to formulate and openly profess an individualistic attitude over against the society's tradition and morals. As egoism becomes an incontestable fact of human nature, the society's tradition and morals are revealed as what they indeed are, that is, as unnatural constraints imposed upon the individuals and defended hypocritically to maintain a politically and socially unjust order. Nature itself, on the other hand, with its insurmountable force and naked truthfulness as it finds expression in an individual's egoism becomes the foundation of a sound social order that rests, not on an Ottoman/Islamic tradition for instance, but on rational laws and principles; a social order in which the individual *per se* has the utmost importance and is the harbinger of truth as he submits egoistically to his/her natural desires and interests that feed on indomitable natural laws. It is, in other words, a thoroughly rationalistic and individualist social order.[76]

Meftûn Bey's individualism can be said to have a critical attitude in Foucault's sense of the term, which exists only negatively, as disruption. Foucault's idea of critique tallies perfectly well with Meftûn Bey's individualism, as Meftûn Bey does not preach some future morals or political and social order, but only reflects a dissatisfaction with the present irrational conditions of the society that he deems rotten and hypocritical, that is, a modern attitude that problematize the present as something deficient and in need of intervention to arrive at a future that he does not know of in any sense whatsoever. As Meftûn Bey chatters about his philosophical

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[76] It is worth noting as well that Meftûn Bey does not mention Islam in any connection, though it is evident that his wholesale attack on morals in general includes the Islamic religion as well. Under the reign of Abdülhamit II, it is quite understandable that Gürpınar did not risk mentioning Islam by name in order not to attract hostile attention.

ideas, he even seems to be conscious of his critical stance that acts destructively, when he names himself a nihilist:

> May I tell you what I am? I am such a thing that my philosophy[77] will be in demand only a century later. As decadism and symbolism fade away, from their farthest light, another philosophy will glisten. Do you know what it will be called? Let me give a name to it by mixing Turkish and French... Sir, it will be called *"hiçizm"* [i.e., nihilism]. Because, a sick man tries to cure himself... Why? To become sick again and die after a while... What drags people from a folly to another is their fatuity in understanding this nothingness.[78]

Meftûn Bey's *hiçizm*, i.e. his nihilism should be seen as a weariness, a nausea in the face of social reality that he wants to topple down to make room for an alternative future. It is worth noting that Meftûn Bey's *hiçizm* resembles some avant-gardist ideas and principles. Within Russian futurism, for instance, a group of artists had called themselves "*nichevoki,*" that is, "the nothing-ists," a word that resonates well with *hiçizm* in meaning (Poggioli, 1968: 62). Such "nothingism," indeed, is an attitude shared by many modern, avant-garde art movements. Renato Poggioli says that the avant-gardist artist "[…] finds joy not merely in the inebriation of movement, but even more in the act of beating down barriers, razing obstacles, destroying whatever stands in its way" (1968: 26). Poggioli defines that attitude as "nihilism," or "the nihilistic moment," in which the artist provokes, scandalizes and assaults on the society's culture and morals for the sake of that antagonism itself. The avant-gardist artist thus believes that from the ruins of the society's corrupt state, there would emerge a future much more desirable, though the artist himself does not have a concrete consciousness of what that future would be like.

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[77] "*Meslek-i müntesibe-i edebiyem*" literally means "my vocation as a man of letters." As the phrase means, on the main, a general outlook on life, I translated the phrase as "my philosopy."

[78] *"[...] Ben neyim size söyleyeyim mi? Ben öyle bir şeyim ki meslek-i müntesibe-i edebiyem bundan ancak bir asır sonra revac-yab olabilecektir. 'Dekadizm', 'sembolizm' sönerken bunların şua-yı vapesininden diğer bir meslek şule-bar olacaktır. Bunun ismine ne denecek bilir misiniz? Haydi Türkçeyi Fransızca ile karıştırarak buna bir nam vereyim... Efendim buna 'hiçizm' denecektir. Çünkü hastalanan bir insan kendini tedavi ile uğraşır... Niçin? Bir müddet sonra yine hastalanıp ölmek için... İnsanları belahetten belahete sevk eden şey netice-i kârdaki bu hiçliği derk edebilmekteki gabavetleridir."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 61-2).

5.4 The Dichotomy of Beautiful/Ugly:

Meftûn Bey's *hiçizm*, that is, his negative and destructive attitude against the society and its traditions finds reflection in his snobbish aloofness from the Ottoman/Islamic culture in aesthetical terms as well. The dichotomy of beautiful/ugly, the hallmark of an *alla franca* dandy's personality, perfectly overlaps, in Meftûn Bey's person, with his critical stance that assaults society's givens. His idolarty of whatever is Western as beautiful in itself and his aversion from the Ottoman/Islamic culture as something ugly are inseparable from his persistent critique of the society's tradition and morals. Meftûn Bey's aesthetical stance affects even his palatal delight. He orders, for instance, his cook-woman Zarafet Abla to prepare only French meals, though that causes much trouble for Zarafet Abla who cannot even pronounce the names of those meals she is supposed to cook: "For instance, he strives, for hours, to teach the cook-woman Zarafet Abla French-style meals like *Potage aux pointes d'Aspérges, Homard a la Bordelaise, Volaille demi-deuil, Bœuf froid en gelée.*"[79] Yet, it is not a simple taste for the French cuisine; he hates the traditional Ottoman/Turkish meals, out of a snobbish aversion: "The foods that he forsweared eating: *İşkembe çorbası, nohutlu yahni, patlıcan dolması, un helvası, bulamaç, pekmezli muhallebi, piruhi, Tatar böreği* etc."[80] Meftûn Bey thinks also that the Ottoman/Turkish culture is sterile and there cannot be any "originality" in such a culture: "Not admiting an

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[79] *"Mesela aşçı Zarafet Abla'ya:* Potage aux pointes d'Aspérges, Homard a la Bordelaise, Volaille demi-deuil, Bœuf froid en gelée *kabilinden alafranga yemekler pişirtmek için saatlerle tarifatta bulunuyor…"* (Gürpınar, 2008: 49-50).

[80] *"Ekline tövbe ettiği yemekler:* İşkembe çorbası, nohutlu yahni, patlıcan dolması, un helvası, bulamaç, pekmezli muhallebi, piruhi, Tatar böreği*, ila ahirihi…"* (Gürpınar, 2008: 58).

idiosyncratic Turkish originality and belittling those who claim such a thing."[81] He

even does not read Ottoman/Turkish works: "The books that he abstain from reading:

Evliya Çelebi Itineraries, Turkish grammar, Ottoman literature, national novels..."[82]

Meftûn Bey's assault on the Ottoman/Islamic culture and morality thus finds

reflection in his riot against that culture in outer appearances, which appears as

superficiality and snobbism in his aloofness and alienation. When Meftûn Bey goes

off to the streets, with his *alla franca* garments, or when one listens to his grandiose

lectures about matters of morality, love, chastity etc., or when one enters into his

saloon, he disrupts, in a compelling manner and forcefully, the prevalent social

conventions. When his sister Lebibe Hanım listens to his brother Meftûn Bey's ideas

of chastity, for instance, a simple exposure to such ideas leads Lebibe Hanım to a

moral laxity. Meftûn Bey's anti-moralism and his aesthetical aloofness from the

Ottoman/Islamic culture, in this regard, becomes intertwined, leading to a critical

attitude over against the society and its tradition and morals; in other words,

individualism.

Meftûn Bey is thus an expression of a *sui generis* modern individuality that had

taken roots in a different pattern than its European instances in the absence of a

capitalist economy and bourgeois society, yet inescapably within the late 19th

Century Ottoman society. It was a reaction against and a critique of the Hamidian

regime's communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry together with its value

judgments and moral, social rankings that pushed any individuality to the margins as

a threat against a harmonizing, unifying ideology. It was, at the same time, a

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[81] *"Türklük mahsusatıyla mütemeyyiz bir 'orijinalite'yi kabul etmemek, böyle bir iddiada bulunanları adi görmek."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 59).
[82] *"Kıraatından tevahhuş ettiği eserler: Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi, Kavaid-i Türkiye, sarf, nahv, edebiyat-ı Osmaniye... Milli romanlar..."* (Gürpınar, 2008: 58).

judgment of taste that condemned that culture as ugly in a revolt of outer appearances, in a revolt that topples the extremities of that culture to make room for the individual's self-expression; and, a critique of morals that are deemed unnatural and unreasonable, a critique that paved the way for the individual's liberty. Meftûn Bey's aesthetical aloofness and enmity against the hypocritical morals of society thus marked a political moment in which the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizen was questioned, criticized and re-evaluated from the margins of individual subjectivity. Meftûn Bey, in this regard, was neither a passively consenting subject of the Ottoman *ancien régime* nor a Hamidian citizen who prioritizes the state's interests above the individual's. If he consents, his consent is based on rational principles and his own value judgements. Modernity in the late 19th Century Ottoman society, therefore, condemned the present in its ugliness and unreason to arrive at an ideal future that would bring the individual forth in her/his liberty. It should be said that as modernization goes on, what was an oddity in the beginning becomes the norm and as tradition withers away in one way or another, the individual comes to fill that vacuum. As Goerg Simmel says, the dandy always leads the masses in the path of change: "He leads the way, but all travel the same road. Representing as he does the most recently conquered heights of public taste, he seems to be marching at the head of the general procession."[83] The *alla franca* Meftûn Bey, likewise, leads the way towards individualism and the rest follows him.

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[83] Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 305.

Figure 4.) A photograph of Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar. (https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/sanat/sokagi-

edebiyata-tasiyan-yazar-huseyin-rahmi-

gurpinar,07qEd658KUSS7dwDRgUD7g/Gzk0wSq9WEq2fHMlBs9LRg, retrieved on 06.09.2018)

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Izmir Devlet Tiyatrosu ("Izmir State Theatre") staged, in 2008-2009 season, an adaptation of Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, by the dramaturge Türel Ezici and directed by Levent Suner; a play in two acts and quite colorful in its combination of diverse theatrical techniques.[84] The play is worthy of notice as Ahmet Mithat himself becomes a character in the play, as the director who heatedly prompts his players as they forget their lines or hesitate about what to do next. Felâtun and Rakîm Efendis, unlike the novel, do not act their roles in rigidity, that is, with regard to a moral lesson from which there is no question of deviation. Indeed, Ahmet Mithat Efendi goes mad in his vain attempts at disciplinizing his players and making them conform to the script; yet, the players, not listening to Ahmet Mithat Efendi's admonitions, deviate from their prescribed roles, utter sentences that are not to be found in the original text and begin to act as if they all had their own agendas in the

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[84] I had a chance to see the play later, in 2016 when *Devlet Tiyatroları* ("State Theaters") staged the play in Ankara as well.

play, agendas that they should pursue by themselves. When Rakîm Efendi, as a true Ottoman gentleman, founds himself entrapped in a love triangle, there is no easy reconciliation and even a murder is committed out of jealousy, an event that is surely not to be found in the original novel. As the murder is committed, a terrible uproar ensues and all the characters begin to move to and fro in chaos and in pursuit of some personal interest, despite Ahmet Mithat Efendi's efforts to suppress the razzle-dazzle. The play, in other words, is worthy of notice as it portrays the players not as lifeless stage-props whose sole function is to convey a certain moral lecture, but as individuals who all had their own aspirations which might not tally well with Ahmet Mithat Efendi's wishes.

The *alla franca* dandy's metamorphosis from Ahmet Mithat's Felâtun to Gürpınar's Meftûn Bey, as I suggested throughout the thesis, displays a similar development: the birth of the individual in a modernizing society. The *alla franca* Felâtun Bey was born, indeed, as Ahmet Mithat's mouthpiece: to show how Westernization goes astray and becomes something noxious for the Ottoman/Islamic culture's well-being, working his way into the disintegration of the Ottoman tradition with his superficial, snobbish, and cankerous manner of life, trampling down the morals of the society in pursuit of every imaginable pleasure. Ahmet Mithat was an apologist of the Hamidian regime's communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizen with its value-judgments and social, moral rankings that were intolerant towards any symptoms of deviation from the cherished ideal. The ideal was a balance between "the spirituality of the East" (i.e. a local, authentic identity) and "the materiality of the West" (i.e. scientific/technical progress in the service of a capitalistic economy) and such an

ideal necessitates that the citizens would prioritize the state's interests in the face both of internal and external crises and pressures of modernization. The *alla franca* dandy's *raison d'être* was thus, at least at the beginning, to thwart the possibility of the Ottoman/Islamic culture's prospective disintegration under the heavy weight of Western ideas through circumscribing, in this fashion, the proper limits of such Westernization. In other words, a balance that will ensure the Ottoman society's modernization without the risk of identity loss that the late 19th Century Ottoman intelligentsia (especially the Young Ottomans) feared much. Felâtun Bey was simply the *other* of that proper, or true modernization.

However, Ekrem's Bihrûz Bey as an *alla franca* dandy, though not differing from Felâtun Bey in externals, becomes the embodiment of a dawning consciousness of the individual's importance as he suffers from rapid and dazzling cultural changes and becomes utterly disoriented. In *Araba Sevdası*, the Hamidian regime's Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry and its epistemological certainties concerning the dominant value judgments and social, moral rankings becomes suspicious as the desired synthesis between the local, authentic Ottoman/Islamic identity and Western scientific, rationalist *weltanschauung* could not materialize in a concrete manner. Ekrem sees such a synthesis only as an incongruity through which even one's cognitive capacities becomes impaired as s/he suffers from disorientation and epistemological crisis. Ekrem, as he renounces the fatherly role of the Tanzimat novelists that came before him, thus portrays his Bihrûz Bey's unique personality and we see, in the Bihrûz Bey figure, the individual's own experiences and agonies within a modernizing society in which, in Shayegan's words, a mutilated

consciousness, or a cognitive crisis impairs one's perception of the reality itself, ruining the Ottoman/Islamic edifice together with its unquestioned truths and paving the way for terrifying uncertainities. *Araba Sevdası*, in this regard, gives us an account of the epistemological crisis within a bifurcated culture, an inevitable loss of identity. As Rousseau has famously said that thinking man is a depraved animal, Bihrûz Bey's depravity, likewise, brings his individual existence to the fore.

Gürpınar's Meftûn Bey, the last of the *alla francas*, becomes nonetheless a self-conscious man and, in this sense, consummates the *alla franca* dandy's metamorphosis. Meftûn Bey is the embodiment of a modern individuality in the late 19th Century Ottoman society and in the absence of capitalistic development and a bourgeois society together with its democratic institutions and its flourishing civil society. His individuality had taken roots within a critical stance against the Ottoman state itself under the Hamidian regime whose communitarian, Ottoman/Islamic proto-citizenry prioritized only the consolidation of authority and stigmatized any deviation from the model of synthesis between the local, authentic identity and a certain degree of capitalistic development. The *alla franca* Meftûn Bey was thus an expression of a political moment in which the harmonizing, unifying ideology that pushed the individual to the margins was questioned, criticized and re-evalutated from the margins of individual subjectivity. The *alla franca* Meftûn Bey, in his aesthetical aloofness from the Ottoman/Islamic culture and his enmity against the hypocritical morals was therefore neither a passively consenting subject nor a Hamidian proto-citizen that would sacrifice his own benefits for the well-being of the Ottoman state. If Meftûn Bey consents, he consents as a rational agent who acts in

accordance with his own experiences and value judgments. The *alla franca* dandy thus ironically evolves, from being the mouthpiece of the Ottoman/Islamic culture's traditional values and morals, into a critique of that very culture. Meftûn Bey, in other words, becomes the embodiment of a modernist attitude that questions, criticizes and re-evaluates the Ottoman/Islamic culture and in his *sui generis* personality paves the way for individualism.

The *alla franca* dandy was, in this regard, born as the offspring of the late 19th Century Ottoman intellectuals' anxiety over Westernization and evolved into an expression of the modernist attitude that problematized the present as something deficient, or in need of intervention to reach, in the future, an ideal society in which the individual would be at liberty. The problematizing of the present as something deficient or in need of intervention manifested itself in what we have called the aesthetic modernization of seduction, a modernization in which the present not only condemned as something deficient but also as something ugly and in which the Western culture was apotheosized as an ideal for the future society in its harmonious and beautiful nature; a modernization in which the West acted as a Trojan Horse and seduced the late 19th Century Ottoman society and intellectuals by its individual liberty, luminous rationality and humanistic values, offering a utopian vision contemplated as a work-of-art. It was, in short, an alternative, *sui generis* modernity that followed a different historical trajectory from its European counterparts, but ineluctably towards individual liberty.

Through following the *alla franca dandy*'s metamorphosis, the thesis therefore contributes to the literature on Ottoman modernization with its emphasis on the gradual development of individualistic tendencies in the Ottoman upper-classes as the instigators of a *sui generis* form of modernity. So far, the development of such individualistic tendencies were either totally absent or treated in a sweeping manner in the literature in question. However, there are many possible courses for future studies if the further implications of the thesis which are not elaborated upon should come under consideration. It is, for instance, possible to study right-wing, ultra-nationalistic, conservative and even fundamentalist writers who dealt with the general theme of snobbism in Ottoman/Turkish modernization for a fuller understanding of the fault lines of the ongoing modernization process in modern Turkey. It is possible, on the other hand, to study the Ottoman intellectuals or bureaucrats themselves who led lives that are seen snobbish like Didon Arif (e.g. Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan) by their critics to have a fuller understanding of the Western-oriented camps' ideals, aspirations and political formulations that affected the Ottoman/Turkish modernization attempts in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Last but not the least, one should concentrate on the daily lives of ordinary Ottomans as they experienced a rapid Westernization process to see how far the Ottoman high-classes and their ideals reflected the changes across the society. As a final word, it should be said that snobbmism is an integral part of any modernization and should not be treated superficially as is mostly done, but should be seen in its deep implications concerning the changes in any modern society.

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APPENDIX: MEFTÛN BEY'S LETTER FROM PARIS:

Meftûn Bey's letter from Paris to his family, I believe, is of some interest as it gives us the *alla franca* dandy's development in its consummation, that is, as it describes an individual's opinions concerning tradition, morals and society in contradistinction to his own aspirations as an individual. I thus put the whole letter below, as an important passage in sheding light on the *alla franca* dandy figure.

Bir yaz sabahı Raci, Erenköyü'ndeki hanelerinin bahçesinde kahve içiyor, Lebibe Hanım gazete mütalaa ediyor, hemşire ve birader-zadeleri Ali Hüsrev ile Neval Şarik, iki çocuk, kumlar üzerinde oynuyorlardı. Posta müvezzii bir mektup getirdi. Zarf Türkçe, Fransızca 'adres' ile Paris damgasını haviydi. Raci, mektubun Meftun'dan olduğunu anladı. Yüreği oynadı. Çünkü saat-i gaybubetinden beri biraderinden bir haber yoktu. Nefretle memzuc bir halecanla zarfı açtı. Çıkan mektup şöyle başlıyordu:
"Merhaba birader!
"İki senelik bir iftirak-ı medid aleyhimdeki hiddet ve gayzınızı mübeddel-i sükûn etmiştir mülahazasıyla bu mektubu tahrire cesaret aldım. Şu satırlara temasla, nefretiniz vehleten teceddüt ederek elleriniz titremeye başladı mı? Dakikaten iftirakımızdan beri arkamdan hâlâ mı lanet-han olmadasınız? Haksızsınız, haksız… Siz insanları, insanlığı layıkıyla anlayamamışsınız… Bu büyük hakikatin istiknahı hususunda yorulmayanlar, amik, acı tecrübelerle vasıl-ı gavamız-ı hayat olmayanlar, beni nev'lerinden bazı iyiliklere intizar edenler, ulviyet-i ahlak gibi bazı mevhumata vücut verenler, yavaş yavaş her zanlarının butlanı, ümitlerinin boşluğu tebeyyün ettikçe meyus olurlar, madam-el-hayat rahatsız yaşarlar… Hakikati anlamak, boş ümitleri kalpten çıkarmak… İşte ariflik budur… Bundan ötesi hep gaflettir. Hamakattır. Güruh-ı beşer hep bu gaflet ve hamakatın zebunu, kurbanıdır. İşte hayatın nazariye-i miftahı! Bütün insanlar kendilerinden daha ahmaklarının zararına tesis-i refah ve tevsi-i maaş etmek kaide-i iğfalkârisiyle yaşıyorlar… Ministro, tacir, iradcı, edip, şair, hekim, feylesof her kim olursa olsun refah-ı hayata nail olmuş bulunanlar mükellef sofralarının başına oturdukları zaman etrafta ne kadar aç, muhtac-ı nan sefiller olduğunu akla bile getirmeksizin teskin-i iştihaya sığınıyorlar… Çünkü sefalet-i beşeriye… Bu bir mesele-i müebbededir. Şimdiye kadar halledilememiş ve edilemiyor… Bunu zihne getirerek ihlal-i iştihaya ne mana var? İnsanlar servet ve cahın anahtarlını elde edinceye kadar rahim, şefik, hamiyet-perver olurlar… Ondan sonra kendileri için 'sefalet' na-kabil-i tedavi bir maraz-ı beşerive rahm ü rikkat gibi şeyler müzmin birer sinir hastalığı menzilesine iner… Avrupa'da, şurada burada tehvin-i zaruret- beşeriye namına verilen müsamereler, balolar, erbab-ı

servetin, işsiz, güçsüz zengin kadınların can sıkıntısına karşı icat ettikleri bir nev' eğlencedir. İnsaniyetperverlik değil…

"İnsan daima kendinden zayıfını çiğneyip, tepeleyip üst tabakaya tırmanmak hırs ve gayretindedir. O sahte adalet-i beşeriye, humekâyı taht-ı itaatte tutmak için tertip olunmuştur. Daima, daima altta kalanın canı çıksın kaidesi hüküm-fermadır. Fakat bazen altta kalanlar pek bunalıyorlar. O zaman demir kafeslerini çâk eden hayvanat-ı müfterise gibi gözlerini kan bürüyor. Kükreyerek, sahte adaletin bütün haillerini kırarak su-i idare mahbesinden dışarı fırlıyorlar…

"İşte o zaman hükümdarlar tahtlarından tekerleniyor, her şey alt üst oluyor, kan gövdeyi götürüyor… Zengin fukaraya karışıyor. Herkes hamiyetperver oluyor…

"Bu dünyada her şeyden evvel hüküm süren hodbinliktir. Herkes kendi hodbinisine nazaran tanzim-i ef'al yolunu arar. Bir ferdin hodbiniyle tatbik-i hareketi diğerinin aynı emeline muhalif düşeceği için tesis-i adalet ve kavanine lüzum hissolunuyor. İnsanlardan biri 'kendi' hodbinisini kanun tanıtmaya zaman ve zemini müsait buldukça daima her hakikati çiğner… Milyonlarca halkı keyif ve istibdadına esir etmekten çekinmez.

"Büyük feylesoflardan biri bakınız bu sadedde ne diyor:

"Hodbinlik tabiaten bihaddir. Bir insan suret-i mutlakada ve ila-nihaye muhafaza-i mevcudiyet etmek, azade-i yeis ve ıstırab kalmak, mümkün olabildiği kadar nail-i refah olmak ister. Bu ikdamat-ı hodbinanesine hail olan her şey nefret, hiddet ve infialini tahrik eder. Bu haili vacib-ül-izale bir hasm-ı bi-aman addeyler. Her şey, her şey, her şey benim olsun der… Bu kabil olamayacağından hiç olmazsa her şeyi kendi üzerine ram etmek hakimiyetine yol arar. Her şey benim olsun, diğerlerine bir zerre bile kalmasın, işte nazıma-i hareketi budur. Hodbini bipayandır. Dünyayı doldurup taşar. Bir insana 'Bin-nefs mahv ve na-bud olmakla bütün dünyanın mahvolduğunu görmek şıklarından hangisini tercih edersin?' sualini irad ediniz. Alelekser bu mizan-ı sualin hangi kefesi ağır basacağını izaha lüzum yoktur zannederim… Her şahıs kendi başına bir 'kainat-ı nefsani', bir merkez-i hodbinidir. Hodbini tarik-i tuğyanını haricen maddi, manevi korkular, hailler ile mesdut bulması, hiçbir şeyi nazar-ı itibara almayarak gayeye varmak ister. Sonra la-büdd hodbinlerin tehalüf ve tearuz ve amalından zuhur edecek kargaşalık tasavvur buyrulsun. O zaman dünyanın hali ne olur? İngiliz filozofu meşhuru 'Hop'un kavlince *La guerre de tous contre tous*[85] fekaleti zahir olur. İşte bu sebebe mebni aklen bir hükümetin lüzum-ı teessüsü tebeyyün eder: Binaenaleyh hükümet, insanların haiz oldukları kuvvetle yekdiğerine karşı ilka ettikleri havf-ı mütekabil sebebiyle vücut bulmuşlardır.

"Fazilet-i şefkate gelince bu haslete alelekser karşı gelen şey bedhahlık yahut buğztur. Evvela bunlardan birincisinin menşe ve derecatını tetkik edelim. Bedhahlık henüz bir hal-i cüzi ve zaaf da pek kesirdir. Umumidir. Hemen herkeste vardır ve pek suhuletle kabarır. Yukarı derecatı olur. Alman edibi 'Gote'nin 'bikaydiyle adavetin bu dünya tamam mekânlarıdır' sözü pek haklıdır. Bizim için ne saadet ki hazm, teenni ve nezaket puşidelerini bedhahlığın üzerine atıyorlar da bu çirkin şeyin ne kadar umumi ve mütekabil olduğunu ve cümlenin cümleye karşı ilan-ı harbi hakikatinin manen, fikren olsun ne mertebede hüküm sürdüğünü görmekten bizi men' ediyor.'

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[85] [Yazarın notu] 'Cümlenin cümleye karşı ilan-ı harb ve husumeti'

"İşte kardeşim Raci bu sözler benim değil taharri-i hakikati meslek-i hayat ittihaz etmiş büyük bir Alman feylesofunundur. Sen de ben de feylesofun tarif ettiği hodbinisine mağlup insanlardan birer ferdiz… Sen teali-i ahlaka kâni görünüyor, biraz da kendini o zümreden adde yeltenerek aldanıyorsun. Ben ise hilkat-i beşeriyetim ne ise bila-vehm ve tezyin kendimi olduğum gibi gösteriyorum. Şimdi hak kimindir? Bunun takdirini erbab-ı vukuf-danişe havale ederim…

"Şerait-i ictimaiye ve servetim, bütün hırslarımı, emellerimi, cinnetlerimi tatmine kâfi değildi. Zer ve samanın bazılarına gösterdiği tebessümlerin menşeini tetkik ettim. Bu mektubumun yukarısındaki 'İnsanlar kendilerinden daha ahmaklarının zararına tesis-i refah ederler.' nazariyesini unutmadın ya? İşte ben de bu kaideye itbaen Kasım Efendi'ye çattım. Sağa bocaladım, sola bocaladım. Hayatında heriften bir şey koparabilmek kabil olamayacağını anladım. Vefatını beklemeye de vaktım kalmadı. Bu servetten biraz olsun istifade için Mahir'in hamakatı işime yarayacağını kestirdim… Zavallı çocuk evvela iğfalatıma mağlup olmak istemedi. Fakat kendi maksadımla onun ismet-i cahilanesi arasına bir güzel kadın vücudu ikame edince yularını elime geçirdim. Evet şimdi kendisine pek acıyorum. İki bin altı yüz liralık kadar tutan semere-i sirkatinden biçarenin eline yüz elli lira bile geçmedi. Revolverini yüz yastığının altına saklayıp da beni ya mebaliğ-i mesrukenin sahibine iadesi veyahut intihar arasında muztarr bırakmaya uğraştığının günü, seni kandırmak için türlü mavallar okuduğum esnada, bu paralar 'çek' olarak kamilen üstümde idi.

"Bedbaht Mahir'in, başı omzu üzerine düşmüş, kolu sarkmış o kanlı gömleğiyle fıraş-ı intiharında yatışı bazı bazı gözümün önüne geliyor. Zavallı budala! Bir kadını, artık senden esirgemeğe başladığı buseleri başkasına verirken yakalamaktan mütevellit bir teessürle feda-yı can belahetine kadar varılır mı? Güzel bir kadının zekât-ı hüsnü yok mu? Varsın birkaç öpücük de başkasına versin. Ne olur? Yanakları aşınmaz ya! Elbette gönlü olur bir gün sana da verir. Hodbinliğin en vahşi bir suret-i şedidesi de aşki alakada ru-nüma oluyor. Belahet-i beşeriye sayılmakla, yazılmakla biter mi? İki bin lira eksilmekle babasının serveti mi tükenirdi? Böyle şeyler nefsine kıymak için bir sebep olabilir mi? Bu safvet, hamakat değil adeta hayvanlık… Vukuat-ı ailemize dair buradan alabildiğim havadisin en mühimleri şunlar:

"Senin dikkat-i mütemadiye ve alaturka amiriyet-i vahşiyanene rağmen Rebia bir daha hamil kalmış… İskat-ı cenine ikinci cüretinde bu sefer tebdil-i âlem etmiş… Yani cavlağı çekmiş… Hak selamet vere… O aptal kız mutlak ahrette Bedri'ye varırım ümid-i hamıyla ölmüştür…

"Aşüfteliğinden dolayı Zarafet'i haneden kovmuşsun… Sizden sonra kapılandığı mahalde bu da yine kaza-yı hamle uğramış. Fakat bu defa iskata cesaret edemeyerek hastahanelerin birinde doğurmuş… Zarafet Arap'tı, ama beyaz erkeklere pek düşkündü. Şimdi, sütlü kahverenginde çocuğunu küfe gibi sırtına bağlayıp koca tencereyi başına oturtarak cami kapılarında dolma satıyormuş… Oh olsun fellaha, gebe kalmayı artık oyuncak ettiydi…

"En tuhafı mutallaka-i cebriyem Edibe Hanım benden aldığı 'koketri' derslerinden hilaf-ı memul büyük bir feyz göstererek Azize Hanım'la birlikte eve delikanlılar celp eylemişler. Bu rezaletlerini konu komşu görmüş, ardından Kasım'a nüzul isabet etmiş, ağız çarpık, bir koluyla bir bacağı işlemez bir halde öyle menzulen yaşıyormuş… Kalıbı dinlendirdiği vakit Edibe'den başka varisi yok… Hikmet-i rabbaniyeye bakınız bu kadar

fırıldaklar, uğraşmalar neticesinde elde edemediğim bu servete valide tarafından bil-verase mahdum-ı bendeniz Neval Şarik Bey konacak… İhtiyar Kasım gözünü yumar yummaz ben İstanbul'dayım… Çünkü geç kalmaya gelmez. Edibe'nin oğluma başka kocadan ortaklar yetiştirmesi ihtimali var. Ben karımı zaten boşamadımdı ki… Bu servet-i cesimenin Paris'te her gece hayırlı hayırlı rüyalarını görüp duruyorum. Validemin ellerinden, Lebibe'nin gözlerinden öperim… Hissetinden dolayı Kasım Efendi oğlum Şarik'i senin yanına göndermiş… Bu küçük prensi sen adeta kuş sütüyle beslemelisin… Yavrumun şapır şapır o gül yanaklarıdan koklaya koklaya bûse ederim… Teehhülümden evvel bana çıkan piyango keyfiyeti bir sania, bir hülya idi. Ama kariben konacağım servet işte göz önünde koskoca bir hakikat… Bunu inkâra mecalin yok ya! Kariben muhterem kayınpederimin bırakacağı küflü liraların samia-nüvaz şıkırtılarıyla senin de aleyhimdeki şiddet-i gayzını teskine muvaffak olacağımı kaviyen memul ediyorum… Baki yakında sürur-ı mülakatına nailiyet temennisiyle sevgili Raci alnına koskoca bir buse-i tahassür ihdası…

Kardeşin Meftun"