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ABSTRACT

Literary sociology is a multifaceted process of analyzing texts. It moves beyond traditional literary criticism to incorporate such varied approaches as: appreciating literary schemata; textual analysis; seeking form, sound, and content regularities; examining the lasting values of the work; and contemplating the reader's own authentic life-world and experience. This paper seeks to provide a literary sociology about growing up Turkish in light of the contents of five works of recent fiction. The titles of the books (with English translation) are: "Korku'nun Bedeli" (The Price of Fear), Ibrahim Ulvi Yavuz, 1983; "Aile Savaslari" (Family Struggles), Bekir Yildiz, 1984; "Yalcin Nereye Kosuyor?..." (Where's Yalcin Running?), Emin Colasan, 1985; "Koca Ren" (Great Rhine), Fakir Baykurt, 1986; and "Geriye Donenler" (Those Who Go Back), Gulten Dayioglu, 1986. A central theme running throughout these works is the cultural conflicts of growing up Turkish. These conflicts take on three dimensions: a fundamental clash between adhering to traditional Islam or adopting modern Turkish behavior; the tension in the socio-political arena between ideologies of the right and left; and the struggle of Turkish guest workers in West Germany and other European countries between the rural Anatolian root values of the older generation and the European values of their children. According to the five books, the 1980s were turbulent times for Turkish youth. Economic fluctuations at home and abroad as well as changing dynamics in the relationships between today's Turkish parents and their children were among the sources of upheaval. Two charts and two figures supplement the text and an 11-item bibliography is included. (DB)

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FIVE CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS' VIEWS OF GROWING UP TURKISH IN THE 1980's: A LITERARY SOCIOLOGY

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Occasional Papers
Turkish Studies Series
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-1988-

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My thanks are also due to Professor Dr. Kâmuran Çilenti who graciously obtained needed supplementary documentation. It was Bay Haydar Göfer, emeritus Turkish Literature teacher at the American School in Tarsus, who first interested me, and hundreds of his students, in modern Turkish literature back in the 1950's and 1960's. I certainly owe a debt of gratitude to Haydar Bey for the pleasures of this long-term interest.

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September, 1988

FIVE CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS' VIEWS OF GROWING UP TURKISH IN THE 1980's: A LITERARY SOCIOLOGY

Many writers of contemporary fiction portray social perspectives on the pages of their published works. Frequently they focus on current concerns and issues - in the case of the five works by Turkish authors that will be examined in this study the central theme is of growing up Turkish in the mid-1980's. The interpretations of the maturing experiences of Turkish children and young people come from 1163 pages of text produced by five novelists. All of the books were published during a four year period: one each in 1983, 1984, and 1985; and two in 1986.

Aside from the general interest in their dominant topic among the Turkish reading public, it can t be claimed that these five popular works of literature are particularly representative or typical. Two were issued by well known publishing houses, Remzi and Varlık; others came from smaller presses. One of the authors is quite famous in Turkey. Fakir Baykurt is a graduate of one of the former Village Institutes, who wrote and published some thirty-two books prior to the novel that will be analyzed here.

Only one writer of the five is a woman, Gülten Dayioğlu, and she achieved literary recognition for a previous book titled Geride Kalanlar (Those Who Remain Behind), which has been translated into four foreign languages. Another writer, Emin Çölaşan, is a talented journalist with a flare for the unusual and humorous. His work that will be studied here is probably best conceived of as semi-fictionalized reporting. It was a best seller in the fall of 1986 when I was in Ankara, being widely read and talked about.

Where there are Middle East Studies Programs at colleges and universities that include Turkish language and literature, there is likely to be a need for appropriate materials in Turkish for the students to read and discuss. Literary sociology can be an applied discipline in such situations. Purcell remarks that:

> The problem that the teacher faces is how best to sensitize the students so that the literature is properly understood and appreciated from the point of view of the target culture and if, indeed, there is need to pay any attention to all cultural facets in the work.[1]

Purcell goes on to identify four categories that describe the cultural aspects of a piece of literature. The work may communicate "authentic culture," by which is meant a presentation of the target culture in a manner that members of that culture would recognize as being typical of their daily lives and experiences. A piece of fiction, according to Purcell, may also be "acultural" if its portrayal of the culture is insignificant or very slight. Aside from having been written in Turkish, works of this type are "universal" and might easily have taken place in other cultural settings. The items being investigated in this inquiry were especially selected as conveying Turkish perspectives on a common theme, so they should not be "acultural."

They may, however, be a "burlesque of culture" if aspects of the target culture have been exaggerated or ridiculed. Stereotypes may have been created or fun poked at the foibles of the writer's society. Similarly, it is quite possible for literature to feature the "deformation of culture" when its depiction of the target culture is patently at variance with the norm. This may have been done with either artistic intent or as propaganda. We must, therefore, carefully examine the five texts in hand, so that we can recognize how Turkish growing up is being communicated in them. This will enable instructors who choose to teach these works to help their students interpret them.[2]

Other processes can also be applied when teaching modern Turkish literature, and some of them will be demonstrated in this mini-study. Muyskens, for example, presents a half dozen possibilities that were identified by Daniel Cardenas.

1. Discussing the significance of the title.
2. Summarizing statements of the main theme.

3. Exploring the surface plane (semantics) and the content of the work.
4. Discovering the metaphorical plane of the work.
5. Analyzing the grammar and externals (metrics).
6. Discussing the perceived lasting value of the work.[3]

Additional approaches to teaching and studying a body of literature such as the one we are examining are suggested by Kramsch. She recommends some activities prior to actually reading the novels. These might include building a common background of knowledge, defining the topics that are likely to be empnasized, discussing the period in which the action takes place, and speculating about who were intended to be the book's reading constituency. She also realizes that some necessary vocabulary may have to be taught so that the students won't become frustrated when they tackle the texts. Also, some basic facts about Turkish culture and society can be assembled in order to create what Kramsch terms "islands of understanding."

Other pre-reading procedures might include brainstorming about the conceptual associations in Turkish that the students will be encountering. Discussions can also lead toward attempting to predict how the key topics might be developed in these works of literature. The students can then get involved in schema building - at first hypothetically and later by testing out what they anticipated as they read the texts. Examples of schemata are discovering key words employed by the authors to indicate special meanings. Similarly, illustrations of motifs and images can be identified. Regularities in content, form, or sound can be traced. Parallels and contrasting perspectives in the various author's works can also be examined.[4]

Modern Turkish literature, however, cannot be fully comprehended by non-Turks simply by applying the conventional tools of literary analysis, hermeneutics, and semiotics. Kramsch, for instance, argues that it is also necessary to phenomenologically understand any literature that was produced within another society, written in a foreign language, by transactional means. The writer's diction, on the one hand, conveys a whole cultural gallaxy of shared beliefs, intentions, and values that the reader must be prepared to decode and internalize if meaning is

to be achieved. On the other hand, it is the privilege of all readers to interpret texts in ways that are personally meaningful to them. Thus, a process of negotiating meanings is inescapable because the literature must be read bifocally. Both the world of discourse to which it belongs and the reader's own authentic life-world have to be recognized.[5]

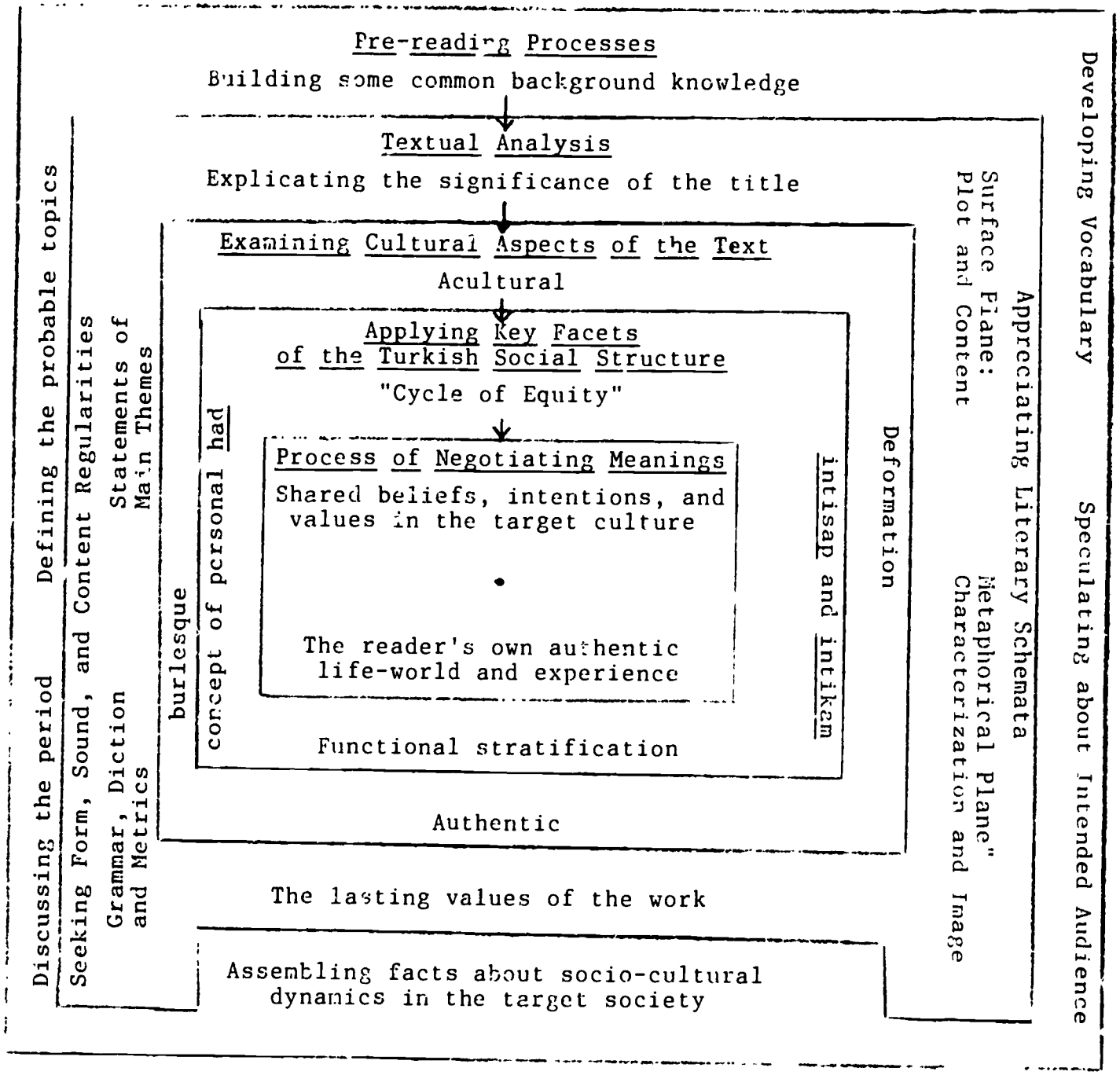
Several interesting examples of the dynamics of Ottoman society that persist in modified forms in modern Turkey are presented by Shaw. He describes the typical view of the purpose and structure of the state and society as a "Cycle of Equity." The chief functional groups comprising Ottoman society are identified, and to some extent they are still visible on the contemporary Turkish scene. Divisions by residence, religious practice, occupation, and gender are discussed, and these have current counterparts. Most arresting is Shaw's description of the characteristic Turkish perception of personal relations and preferred behaviors.

> Individual behavior was closely bound by the concept of an individual <u>had</u>, or "boundary," which was determined by a combination of one's family, position, religion, class, rank and wealth. Within this <u>had</u> the Ottoman was relatively free . . . But beyond it he could not go except at the peril of transgressing on the <u>had</u> of another . . .[6]

We will be encountering some explicit references to this notion of <u>had</u> in the modern Turkish literature being analyzed. Several other key cultural concepts also mentioned by Shaw are <u>intisap</u>, " . . . a tacit relationship established by mutual consent between a powerful individual and a weaker one,"[7] and <u>intikam</u> (revenge). Instances of these will be encountered in the texts, too.

It hasn't been possible to conduct a field study of the impact these five books had on their readers. Several appear to have been popular, being reprinted once or twice. It must be kept in mind, however, that Turkish publishers often issue books in fairly small editions. Çölaşan's <u>Yalcın Nereye Koşuyor</u>?, on the other hand, was in its thirteenth printing in the fall of 1986 and seemed to be "the talk of the town" at that time.

Chart One



A PARADIGM OF LITERARY SOCIOLOGY PROCESSES

Most of the books for this inquiry were purchased at bookstores in Yenişehir, Ankara. One, Yavuz's Korkunun Bedeli, was given to me by the owner of a conservative, Islamicist appearing, bookstore on the main street of the Anatolian city of Elazig.

It would have been desireable to have obtained reviews of the five books in Turkish literary journals. Doing so wasn't feasible, however, due to the time constraints under which I was working. This study, therefore, will not be a full sociology of literature aimed at tracing the various influences on the writers and their works, and, in turn, studying the impact their works have had on the reading public in Turkey and abroad. Rather, the present goal is to provide a small literary sociology about growing up Turkish in light of the contents of the five works of recent fiction.[8]

The books will be examined in their order of publication, beginning with the novel that first came out in 1983.

Korku'nun Bedeli (The Price of Fear)

İbrahim Ulvi Yavuz

1983

The Islamicist perspective from which this novel is written is implied in the book's title. The "fear" in this case is generated by what the author believes are efforts to impose western secular materialism on Muslim Turks. Bedel is a word that has been borrowed into Turkish from Arabic, with rich value associations. It was, for example, the term for the sum that used to be paid in earlier eras in order to purchase exemption from Ottoman military service. It could also mean compensation formerly given to military officers in place of rations.[9]

Semantically, therefore, this title conveys the appearance of more traditional Turkish diction. It suggests that the writer is concerned about what he regards as the multiple costs of passive acquiescence to the imposition of western modernism and secular materialism. The novel, thus, is a polemic for an Islamic ideology that has some commonalities with the "moral majority" and Christian fundamentalism in the United States.

The plot of this work of fiction opens on a rainy day in a neighborhood bakery located in an interior town. A pious, sincere, hard working, lower middle class baker, Selim Efendi, reflects on his life and goals.

> Sometimes he would ask himself, "Why this work, this struggle? Why am I working myself to this extent?"
>
> Then his children came before his eyes. Kemal studying in the lycee, and Serdar being educated in philosophy (at the university.)
>
> Well, it was then that he understood why he worked; why he put up with the fatigue. These trials were all for them . . . in order to educate them and make men of them. It was for them that he was being crushed, for them that he felt sorrow. When he reflected that the ordeals that he sometimes had to undergo were for his children's future, the pain would become less. When he brought to mind the happy days that were being anticipated when

> his offspring would cross over the thresholds of their positions (in society), in a single breath he'd forget his tiredness and be at ease.10

Readers begin to recognize more specifically the nature of the confrontation that is the central theme of the novel in this dialogue, which quickly follows the father's musings.

> How happy he had been when Serdar had registered at the University. His eyes filled with joy, he had curiously asked Kemal:
>
> "What does philosophy mean, son?"
>
> Kemal, after a moment of confusion, tried to express what was on his mind.
>
> "It's a discipline that examines the meaning and realities of life. In other words, that's what professional philosophers do," he had said.
>
> Selim Efendi could only be amazed at the answer his son had given him.
>
> "Allah! Allah! How did Serdar ever choose this school? He always said he'd be a doctor."
>
> "It isn't in his hands, Father."
>
> "Why not?"
>
> "Wherever the score that he got on the (entrance) examination entitles him, only there can he enroll. It's a question of chance . . . " 11

This segment of the conversation indicates the tensions that still exist between European disciplines, such as philosophy, and the traditional Islamic sciences. At the same time, the father is encountering the Turkish problem of too few opportunities to enroll in the most desireable branches of higher education preparing for prestigious professions, such as medicine. The normal role of parents being the guides and mentors of their children has here been reversed. It is the son

who must explain what philosophy is to his father. The youth, again, must interpret to the parent what caused his older brother to enroll in this program of study. Thus, it is not merely the introduction of modern fields of study that is at issue, but much more fundamentally the nizam (order or regularity) of the society itself.

Subsequently Selim Efendi receives a letter from Serdar, his son who is now away at the university. The young man writes:

> Dear Father,
>
> I don't know what I can write to you all. Studying in this large city is very difficult. We are living through frightening events every moment. Due to boycotts and fights everyday we can't go to class. I try to be a spectator to what's going on. But as you'll recognize, that's hard when you're right in the middle. As a matter of fact, I can do so only with difficulty. They are always trying to force a person into a group. If you resist, you're faced with life-threatening dangers . . .[12]

Here the author is introducing the turmoil that existed at the Turkish universities during the 1970's. The letter suggests how the conflicts were radicalized into extreme right and left wings. Youths from conservative families in the interior of the country, like Serdar, found themselves directly in the line of fire. They could often find no middle ground. The university authorities were unable to cope with the turmoil and meaningful studies were disrupted for years on end.

The manner in which these social struggles reached down into local lycees is also portrayed in this novel. The character involved is a pious instructor who teaches Turkish literature. He is Fevzi Öğretmen (Teacher Fevzi) who tries to discuss current events and ethics in his classes. Some of his students become irritated, challenging his authority. They call out, "Is this lesson philosophy? Or is it literature?" and "We don't need to hear any sermons." [13]

When the teacher attempts to bring the class back to order, he is reported to the principal. The school administrator castigates the teacher for not sticking strictly to the formal syllabus. Eventually, teacher Fevzi is exiled from the lycee. He is punished by being demoted to middle school teaching and transferred to a much less desireable post. A few of his former students, including Kemal, come to the bus station to see their teacher off. Their farewell gift to him is a beautiful copy of the Holy Koran.

The pace of the plot quickens as readers follow events taking place at the university in the city, as well as in the hometown. Tensions mount as Serdar confronts the dominant forces around him. At last he is reduced to becoming what he had originally abhorred, a secular materialist, himself. He adopts a dissolute lifestyle.

The younger brother, Kemal, whose name means moral attainment and maturity, on the other hand, maintains his Muslim way of life. He says his prayers, gives alms, keeps the fasts, and reads his Holy Koran.

Eventually Serdar comes to his senses, recognizing the evils of secularism. At great personal danger he returns to his Islamic roots. He lands in jail, however, while at the same time his father, who is ill, has come to a hospital in the city. Ayşe Hanım, the mother and wife, running back and forth between the prison and hospital, confronts a demonstration being held by students. She asks one of the young people,

> "My child, what's this crowd?"
>
> "We're marching, auntie."
>
> "What is the march about?"
>
> "It's the devrimciler (revolutionaries)."

Ayşe Hanım, looking very naively at the person opposite her (replies).

> "Değermenci (millers)? What do they want?" [14]

This pure and simple woman of the people simply cannot comprehend the ideological clash in Turkish society that she is witnessing. When she realizes the young people's intentions she exclaims, "May God forgive! In other words, those are leftists." The youth with whom she had been speaking replies in a single word, "Yobaz! (religious fanatic)" The novel ends with Selim Efendi dead, his elder son now well aware of the ideological danger that he narrowly escaped from, and the younger son dutifully comforting his mother.

Serdar articulates the position of the writer of this polemic.

> Today's young people are being raised with deficient faith and education. These youths who don't know why they are studying, and who are bores lacking ideas and ideals, are trying to accomplish by pouring out into the streets what their empty heads failed to win them.

The young man now wants to convey a principle to other youths of his generation.

> Killing (even) one human being is like murdering a whole society, and gaining one person for society is gaining an entire society.[15]

This statement is made with an interesting play on two words for society: cemiyet and toplum. One is from Arabic, the other new Turkish. One is Islamic, the other secular. The writer, thus, seems to be envisioning the possibility of a new, healthier relationship between the Turkish Muslim heritage and modern trends in Turkey.

Aile Savaşları (Family Struggles)

Bekir Yıldız

1984

This novel is the third of a trilogy that began with Evlilik Şirketi (The Marriage Corporation) followed by Halkalı Köle (Slave of the Wedding Band, literally, Ringed Slave). These earlier works deal with husband and wife relationships in Turkey and when the men left their wives for long periods of time in order to work as European guest workers. The third novel, however, takes place in one of the Asian suburbs of Istanbul.

Yıldız's choice of the word savaş in the title of the book suggests that its central topic isn't a couple's conflicts and disagreements. If this were the dominant notion, the author doubtless would have preferred the word kavga. In this context savaş implies a more fundamental struggle of endeavoring to surmount fears and frustrations in order to fulfill a relationship even through disputes. As the reader gets into this novel, it will become apparent that one of its themes is "growing up" in several senses. Young adults are trying to cope with commitments in a segment of Turkish society that puts them under considerable strain. The husband is haunted by a Muslim morality he observed in his mother that he cannot live up to. His quandry is communicated through verbal sparring and a stream of consciousness approach that includes flashbacks.

The novel's topic is symbolized by an illustration of two swords and heart shaped shields on the cover. The shields are torn and patched. One sword is broken. The other appears to remain intact. Although their wielders are nowhere to be seen in the picture, the inference is that the conflict has raged between traditional Islamic and the secular modern cultures.

The story begins with the husband being awakened on a autumn morning by the ezan calling the faithful to prayer.

> Allahü ekber, Allahü ekber . . .
> Eshedü enla ilahe illallah . . . Hayye alel
> Felah, hayye alesselah. 16

God is Great! God is Great!
I testify that there is no god but God.
I bear witness that Mohammad is God's
prophet.

The familiar sound brings to his mind the memory of his pious mother who died in an old house near the seaside, but was a person from the interior of Turkey - a girl of the bozkır or Anatolian steppe. The storks fly back to their desert homes in autumn, he recalls, and he imagines that they carried his mother back to her cultural and religious origins. He reflects on the distance in faith between the believers of her generation and his.

The man s wife wakes up. While the husband still lies in bed he can perceive her brushing her teeth and systematically getting dressed in preparation for going to work. This is his second marriage, and he recalls an encounter with his first wife.

In my first marriage, we decided whether or not to give birth or put to death together.

"I'm pregnant," she'd say.

"If you wish, you can have an abortion," I'd reply.

"As a matter of fact, I was also thinking about having an abortion," she'd say.

That evening when I returned home, I'd understand that another of our children had been killed from her pinched mouth, and the ashen color of her face. 17

At that time they didn't pay much further attention to the matter because there were already children in the home. But now, in his second marriage, the man no longer had his children with him. In other words, symbolically, the piety of the past had been killed, he was alienated from what he had been able to produce, and the potential for a new generation seemed to have been lost.

The novel is written in a stream of consciousness style with almost staccato sentences. Word plays are made between the conservative diction of traditional Islam and the purged modern form of Turkish spoken by the

new Turkish intelligensia. There are flashbacks when our protagonist imagines that he could have intervened in order to prevent his mother's, or his unborn children's, deaths. The reader encounters his submerged guilt.

A little example of Yıldız's writing style is displayed in these opening lines of Chapter Three.

> I got out of the minibus near the Kadiköy dock. Why had I left home? Where was I going to go? I forgot for a second. That hour of day was the time when everybody would be at work. But the streets, the squares, were full of people. Was today a holiday? Or had a struggle broken out, instead? Hundreds, thousands of people, whole households, old and young, were being run around everywhere, here and there . . . 18

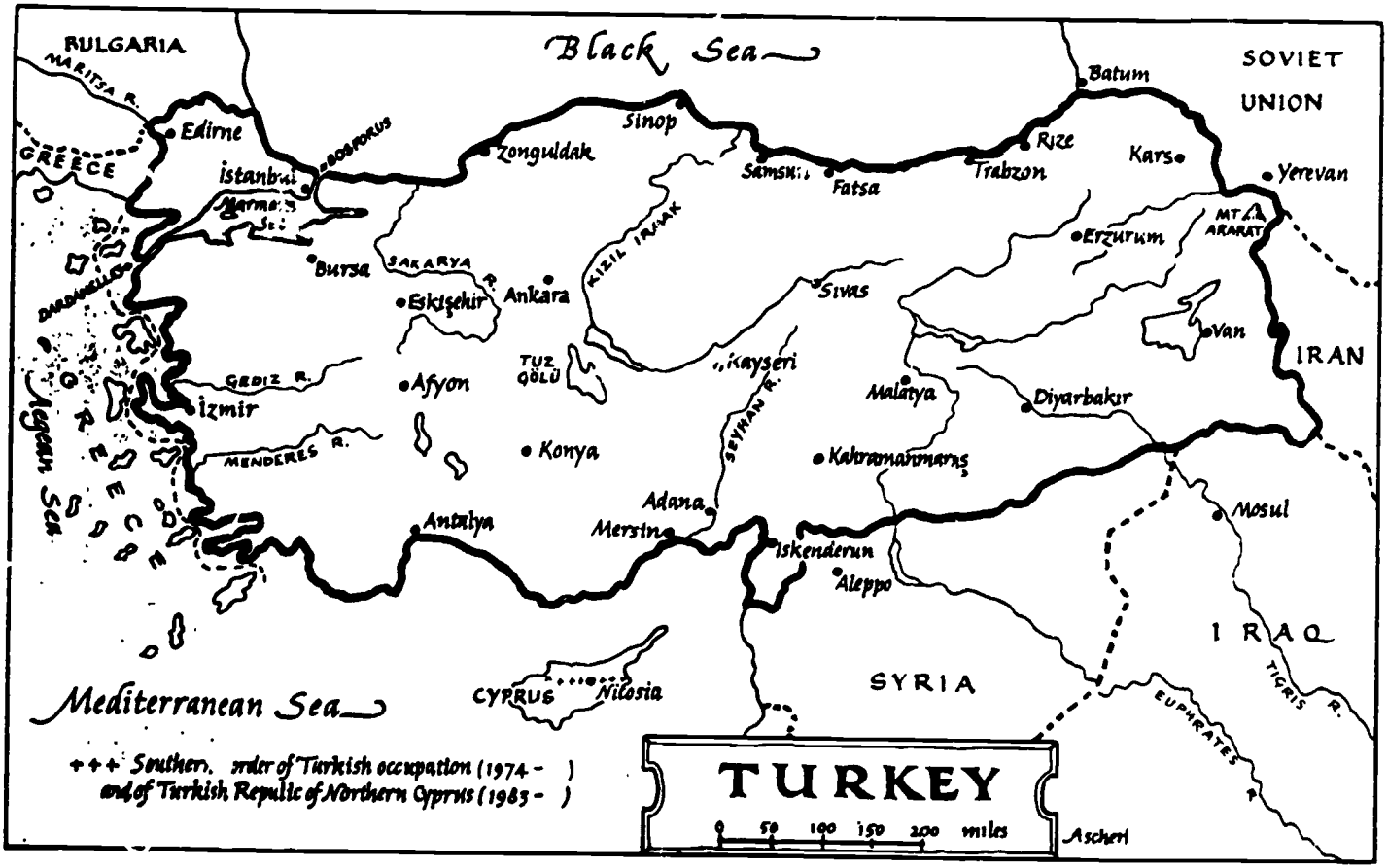
Readers, thus, begin to realize that the theme of the novel is lack of direction and faltering commitments. The old has slipped away and the potential new was killed before it could even be born.

The male character's wife is a wage earner, working as a cashier in a bank. She tries to be a homemaker on her off-hours. Both she and her husband remain nameless throughout the book. Her husband is unable to meet all of the expectations for a male and husband and father in his society. This may be the submerged reason that makes him so ambivalent about having children with his second wife. Motherhood, he seems to be implying, would fulfill her womanhood while still leaving him a shell of a man.

The novel ends in a sterile hospital. The wife has had a miscarriage. The husband again remembers his mother's death. Walking out of the hospital he knows that he is on the margin of life. He is unable to be what he thinks he ought to be.

Is this a burlesque or deformation of culture? I believe that many Turks must regard Yildiz's surrealism as such. Yet a profound cultural disjuncture is powerfully portrayed in this novel. Concerning our topic of maturing and growing up, this work of fiction raises questions in its readers about how young people can cope with today's social expectations.

Figure One



Map of the Republic of Turkey.

Yalçın Nereye Koşuyor? . . . (Where's Yalçın Running?)

Emin Çölaşan

1985

This title suggests that the story will be about a hyper-active entrepreneur, as indeed it is. The sub-title, taken from one of the hero's advertizements, heightens one's first impressions. It reads:

> Bendeniz 18 yaşında Banker Yalçın
>
> Paracıkları Bana Emanettir Halkın . . .
>
> (Your humble servant eighteen year old banker Yalçın, The people's savings are to me a sacred trust . . .)

This is a neat play on diction and images. A subtle dash of youthful genius and humility are conveyed. There is also a recognition that the investors are likely to be risking their relatively modest life savings. A mood of trustworthiness is generated by the word emanet that is steeped with the notion of the faithful discharge of one's duty, and in Ottoman times was the term for an official agency receiving or paying out government funds. 19

The book is written in the style of an autobiography, based, supposedly, on letters written by young Yalçın Doğan, a teenager who began his working career as one of the lads who runs orders for tea and coffee in an office building. The place he was working was the İller Bankası (Provinces Bank) in Turkey's capital city, Ankara.

The author, Emin Çölaşan, explains in a foreword that the book presents the first reminiscences of Yalçın Doğan. These are to be followed by a second volume. Çolaşan declares,

> Yes, my dear reader, what Yalçın Doğan, who was born in 1962, has published in this volume in 1985 (is) when he is twenty-three years old and sentenced to twenty-five years (in prison) . . . In this first book you'll read what happened to Yalçın when (he was) seventeen and eighteen and what he then experienced. Yalçın (has had) a great adventure, a great story . . .

> What happened to him hasn't occurred even to a cooked chicken. . . As for what he lived through when nineteen and twenty years of age, I'll relate them to you in the second book.[20]

From beginning to end, as I've tried to suggest in the translation, the tone is informal. The style is that of a journalistic narrative. The word bol, for example, is repeated twice in one phrase and intimates that something is too large, over abundant, or exaggerated. The same word is used in such sayings and proverbs as "bol yiyen bel bel bakar," (He who squanders his money is left empty-handed.) and "bol keseden at" (to make extravagant promises.) [21] Thus, even before the tale begins, readers have become aware that it will have a picaresque flavor.

The story quickly introduces a bushy-tailed lad to the reader who can comment about himself, "Since my childhood I was a devilishly smart kid . . . I was born on February 17, 1962." [22] Yalçın is the son of Ali Doğan, a government employee who works as a driver - a rather menial job. Due to his duties, the father was often away from home. At their small flat in Ankara's Varlık district awaiting the father's return would be, besides Yalçın, two older brothers, an older sister, and their mother. Yalçın attended the Ziya Gökalp Elementary School, and even when he was only in the fourth grade was already trying to earn a little extra money with onescheme or another.

Yalçın recalls getting along fairly well with his father, and readers learn that his mother was the father's fourth wife. The boy loved her a lot, and tried to help her with small amounts of money, without his father being aware of it.

When in middle school Yalçın was in a cooperative education program working all day and then studying in the evenings, so it took five years for him to graduate. He then enrolled at the Evening Commercial Lycee, but he wasn't able to continue in this high school level program. Already Yalçın's social climb from relative poverty to quickly acquired wealth had begun.

The rest of the book is a fascinating account of this youth's development and meteoric rise. He is delivering liquid refreshment orders for a little tea stand at sixteen, always keeping his eyes and ears open for possible means of advancement. Next, he's the manager of the Bimbo Hamburger Shop after having answered an ad placed by one of the partners who own this business. This individual, Cihan Bey, whose name suggests an opening onto a wider world, shows the lad how to run a hamburger place. The man becomes Yalçın's sponsor, forming an intisap relationship. The lad is leaping over his earlier bounds or had, not only in fact, but even more so in his own imagination, as this little episode at the shop portrays.

> The woman after a bit came and asked me to give her a light for her cigarette. I lit it immediately.
>
> "My name is Fatoş . . . What's yours?"
>
> "Yalcın . . . I'm the manager here."
>
> "Oh, really? I've never seen you here before."
>
> "That's because I'd gone to Europe . . . I just got back."
>
> "Do you know a foreign language?"
>
> "Of course . . . I know French and English "
>
> "Oh, how nice . . . " [23]

It is evident from this dialogue that Yalçın has become a talented lier who knows how to promote himself. All the other workers in the shop observe his encounter with this stylishly dressed female customer. They regard him as being suave and sophisticated. He is now in a position to sponsor underlings, himself.

The Bimbo position is suddenly terminated when a fight among the customers causes breakage and lands Yalçın in jail. He is accused of having failed to control the altercation, so, although he really wasn't at fault, the lad spends some time in prison. Nobody rushes to get him released. Behind bars for the first time, he becomes aware of the rightist and leftist political movements that were struggling for control of the society at this time. It is assumed that if a young person is in trouble that he must be connected with one extreme or the other.

When he's finally free again, Yalçın has to go back to the tea stand, but he has learned a valuable organizational lesson. He quickly restructures the operation, saying,

> It's very important to have a group that will back you up in any place of business. Whatever's going to be done ought to be done with that close-knit group. If you try to run the business all by yourself, you'll burn. The person who's in the leadership position must make a plan, and the group behind him must give (it) their support. 24

It is at about this point that Yalçın recognizes the need for venture capital if the business is to expand. He gets into a discount grocery business. He then finds out that people are making a business of providing short term loans at exorbitant rates of interest. These, of course, are shady deals that are illegal, but that aspect doesn't deter our hero. Little by little Yalçın borrows to pay off his earlier loans, and then becomes the lender - a much more powerful role.

He models his operation on that of a very experienced female money lender, and soon has set up a corporation with the legitimate sounding name of Yalçın Tıcaret (Yalçın Commercial Enterprises) which later becomes Yalçın Holding (Yalçın Holding Company). The whole scheme is completely financed by revolving loans and deposits made by individuals seeking quick profits.

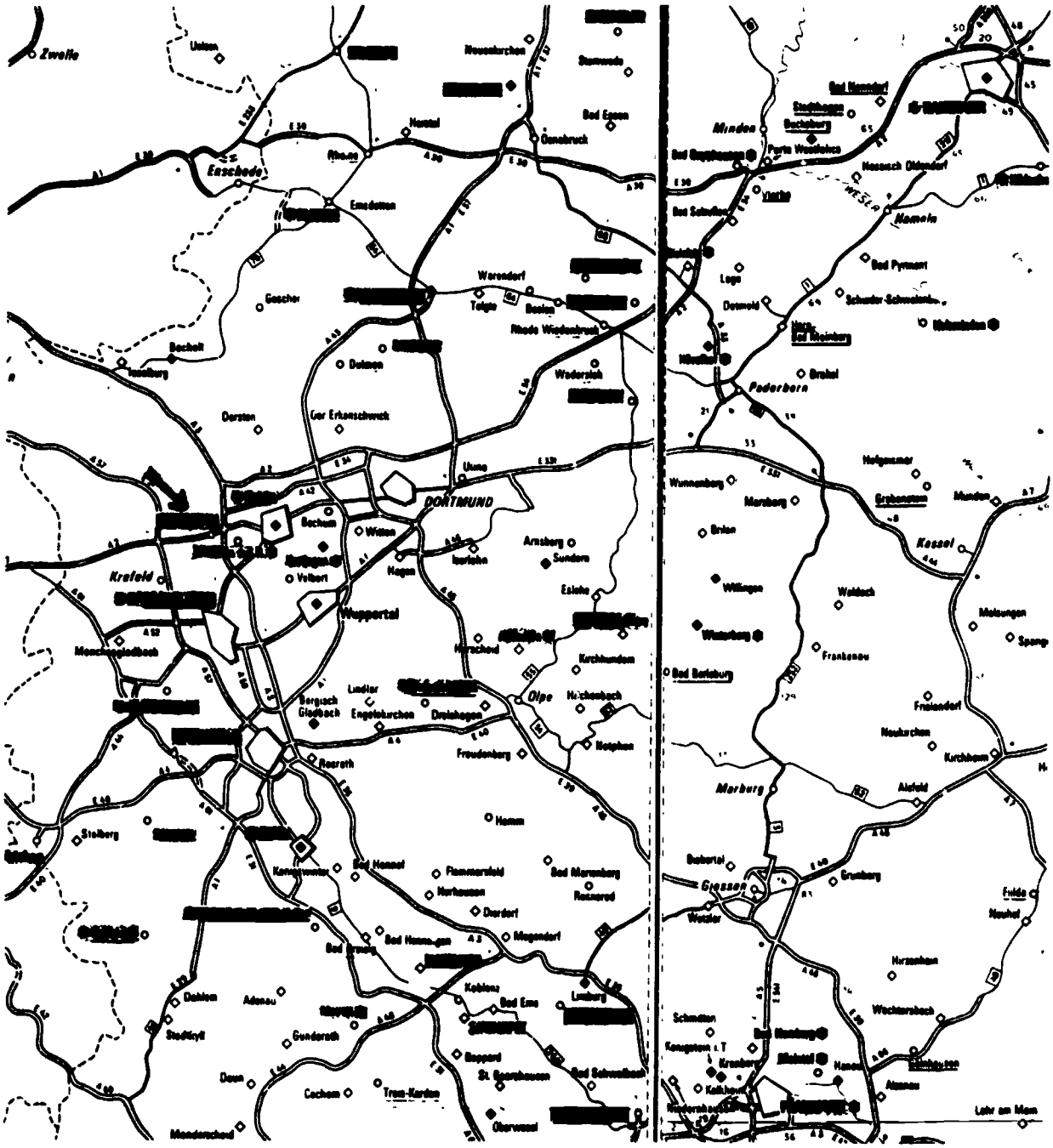
Yalçın links himself up with a retired military officer, a former Colonel, Cemal Akcan, who lends acumen and respectability to the young man's loan business. Their relationship is another instance of intisap. Soon the young entrepreneur is prospering. He has a luxurious social life. He can afford to travel in a chauffeur driven limosine. His place of business appears to be very affluent and he has hired a suave female secretary. He is able to arrange a desireable marriage for himself and has the last word in an engagement party.

Questions, however, begin to be raised about whether Muslims can take interest on loans. Then after twenty-two months and fifteen days of affluence, the bubble bursts. Ever mounting debts finally catch up with Yalçın. His investors go to the police and the authorities close

down the operation. Amazingly, the older people who were equally involved in the scheme are all able to disassociate themselves from it. As the book ends, Yalçın is the "fall guy."

Is this authentic or burlesque? Probably the answer to this query depends on the reader's perspective. The book certainly isn't a case of cultural deformation, as much evidence could be gathered to prove. The author has gone to great lengths to verify the account and make it appear valid. Does it also function on a symbolic level, not only being concerned with a young person's struggles to get ahead, but possibly also those of the modern sector of the Turkish society, itself? If this were true, it would help to explain the book's popularity because on its pages segments of society that usually are submerged or above critique are portrayed humorously and exposed.

Figure Two



Map of the Federal Republic of Germany showing the location of the communities in which the Turkish "guestworker" immigrants in the novels settled.

Koca Ren (Great Rhine)

Fakir Baykurt

1986

The novel is set in the city of Duisberg, located close to Düsseldorf and Essen in West Germany. The book's title is a reference to Duisburg's position on the bank of the Rhine River, and also projects water imagery suggesting the Turkish experience of being aliens who are marginal to the deep and huge "river" of German culture. The word, koca, is hard to translate into English because it connotes something that is ancient, large, and famous. 25

As readers begin this narrative, a Turkish "guest-worker" extended family is going to the Düsseldorf Airport, which is about twenty miles from their place of residence in Germany. The Mother, Hacer Hanım, is flying back to Ankara in order to visit her home village in Anatolia. Salim Efendi, the father, has accompanied his wife to the airport, along with his son-in-law, Mustafa, Mustafa's wife, Aydan, and their three year old child, Cihan. The other children in Salim's family are seven year old Fatih, and his older brother, Adem, who is fourteen. Adem is the central character of the novel. Seven Turks are thus squeezed into a small German Taunus automobile, along with mounds of luggage containing gifts that the mother is bringing back to their kin in the homeland.

The parents know very little German, so the conversation is all in Turkish. Mustafa also isn't completely at home in the second language, therefore it is Adem, who attends a German school, who does most of the translating. The excess baggage is a problem, so Mustafa arranges for a working class Turkish couple to take several suitcases on their tickets. They are travelling for the sad purpose of bringing back to their Turkish village for burial the remains of their fourteen year old son who died in Germany of jaundice. The family avoids telling their mother that the dead boy's coffin will be on the same plane that she'll be flying on. Mustafa says to Salim Efendi,

> "Don't raise any questions, I told you! They are friends from our Velbert (a community close to Duisberg). They're bringing a coffin back. They've had a death. They've no luggage.

> I'll give one of the pieces of (excess) baggage to each of them. They'll turn them over to my mother in Ankara. But don't tell her 'they're transporting a coffin.'"
>
> "Where's the coffin? On this plane?"
>
> "(It's) on this airplane! But don't say so. She's afraid! I spoke to the friends, and they also won't tell her." [26]

This incident conveys images of an Anatolian villager's superstitions and fear of evil omens. It also symbolically juxtaposes a fourteen year old Turkish boy who has died of what ought to have been a controlable disease with fourteen year old Adem. Adem will struggle with other types of contagion as he emerges as the hero of the novel growing up Turkish in a foreign society.

Koca Ren consists of twenty-nine chapters presenting aspects of Adem's maturation as a Turk growing up in Germany. The boy is caught up in a cultural clash, for example, on his fourteenth birthday. The Turkish custom for reckoning age adds a year. Rather than having his fourteenth birthday, he's "finishing his fourteenth year." And he wonders if his family will celebrate his birthday, as is done in Germany, but not in rural Anatolia. Adem thinks to himself,

> He didn't even celebrate his birthday in this Germany to which he had come a long time after his worker father 'in order to study in better schools.'
>
> He was completing his fourteenth (year - according to Turkish custom). After seven years of studying and studying in Turkey and Germany he'd only gotten to the sixth grade. He was being truant today. He was going to have had mother tongue and religion lessons in the afternoon. He didn't find anything worthwhile in the words of his Turkish teacher, Sadik Toprak, they gave him no pleasure. His thoughts of school were that due to his mother's and father's wishes he had put up with a lot of discomfort in the mother culture (Turkish subjects). From now on he wouldn't take part (in them). He was escaping, untying the bonds. He wouldn't go to the afternoon classes. He'd just go to the ones in German. [27]

The alienation communicated in Adem's ruminations comes through loud and clear. Caught in a bilingual and bicultural web, he isn't succeeding very well with any aspect of his schooling. Yet, much as he wishes to do so, he can't completely assimilate German culture. His dilemma is not only being caught between Turkish and German ways, but also between Christian and Muslim life-styles. Eventually Adem cries out,

> "Oh, great Rhine! I won't study in that school' Oh big Rhine, it's enough! Rhine, I want to ask you a question: Where, oh where are you coming from? Where, oh where are you going to? How are the schools where you came from? Are the teachers good where you've gone? What is the width, depth, and height of their loneliness? When they talk about Deutsche Geschichte (German culture) can you faintly recognize it? Were those really good times? Won't there be any good times at these schools? More correctly, great Rhine, won't there be any good times (at all)? . . . [28]

Readers encounter many issues of adolesence in Koca Ren. The relations between boys and girls, especially Turkish lads and their German female contemporaries, are among these. One of Adem's friends, Ali, attributes the Turkish gender morés to Islam.

> . . . It's the Arab influence. Prior to accepting Islam, we were a free and healthy society. Many, many inhibitions came with Islam. On the other hand, as an individual I'm not opposed to Islam. But I also can t come out against freedom. If they ask, "What is the most valuable thing in my life?" I say, "Freedom!"[29]

The boy's concerns at other points in the novel include having to adhere to Muslim dietary inhibitions in Germany, the living conditions of the Turkish minority in Germany, and confronting cultural bigotry. Discrimination is shown by a female classmate who, when Adem is ordered to sit next to her by the teacher, whispers, "You really don't take baths. You stink like dead meat all the time, okay?" [30] His discomfort constantly causes Adem to rebel and misbehave. Even the German teachers also share their society's anti-Turkish prejudices.

Due to their menial jobs, lack of fluency in German, and unawareness of the proper procedures in their adopted country, the Turkish parents can't intervene on behalf of their children. They often have strained and confrontational relations with the German school personnel. Even when the Turkish teachers who have been assigned to the German school try to interpret the German being spoken at a parent's meeting, they are faced with a culture chasm.

The German parents can't understand why few, if any, working class Turkish mothers attend school functions. Adem's father is at a loss to comprehend why the German faculty are having any difficulty maintaining order in their classes.

> . . . I and my wife together will give you our signatures; let them beat our Adem! Without any blows our children won't be afraid of their teachers. They'll just pass away the time with them. They won't stand up when they're ordered to stand. They won't study their lessons. They won't do their homework. . . .[31]

Other moral issues such as family relations and having a baby or seeking an abortion also come up. The boy, Adem's, pereception of having been caught in between the German and Turkish cultures persists throughout the book. At the conclusion of the novel an older Turkish friend drives him to his neighborhood in Duisburg and drops him off. Kenan is in a hurry and he drives off without ever finding out what was on Adem's mind. Thus, the lad reflects on his need to have had somebody in whom he could confide.

Addressing the reader, Adem exclaims,

> What's within me, outside of me, I've told as they were. I haven't laid all of my troubles on you, don't worry! I'll pour out all of my joys to you. That's it for now. . . . Farewell for the time being I say to you, Great Rhine! [32]

The author, in other words, implies that by communicating through the narrative and plot of the novel, this character has been able to become somewhat reconciled to his situation.

Geriye Dönenler

(Those Who Go Back)

Gülten Dayıoğlu

1986

Dayıoğlu selected a title for this collection of short stories to mirror that of her earlier book called Geride Kalanlar (Those Who Stay Behind). There are layers of semantic implications of the word, geri, which suggests backward and underdeveloped, as well being or staying back. The sub-title on the book's cover is "Adın Almancıya çıkmışsa." This is difficult to directly translate into English because ad conveys the multiple means of one's name or appellation, one's fame and reputation, and an enumeration or counting. As used here, it seems to consciously be a parallel to the idiom, "adın kötüye çıkmışsa" (if you've gotten a bad reputation), so it suggests that children and young people are being stereotyped and labeled for having lived in Germany.[33] The illustration on the cover of the book shows a valise with leather straps. Behind it is a transistor radio/tape recorder. There is a water jug in front of the type used in Anatolian villages. Decals of the German and Turkish flags are attached to the luggage, heightening the intercultural impression.

Nine short stories comprise the core of this work, with a final section that reports on "Interviews with Families and Youths." The data from these informants are grouped into two chapters. The first is titled, "Is Staying or Returning the Hardest?" The second is called, "Our Girls Who have Come Back from Germany." The author explains that she conducted both series of interviews in order to form the bases of her short stories. The topics discussed by the informants, therefore, are supposed to suggest the themes of her stories. They are also similar to the themes in Koca Ren, for that matter. Their flavor can be recognized by listing a dozen of the topic headings.

> Turkish Babies Who have German Nannies
>
> A Robotlike Lifestyle
>
> After a Rigorous Work Regime, Emptiness (Concerning women who were employed in Germany, but return to Turkey to being housewives.)

Why Do Children Treat Us Coldly and Hesitantly?
(Strained intergenerational relations)

I Wore a Coat in Germany, Here I Wear Baggy Work Pants
(Differences in female roles and garb)

Why Do the Germans Want the Turks Out?

We Couldn't Learn Either a Trade or a Profession

My Mother Speaks Turkish, I Speak German

In Order Not to be Humiliated in a Co-Educational Class

Let My Daughters Learn to Live According to Turkish Culture

Our Teacher Helped Us to Get Along Well with One Another

After Coming Back Here, My Mother became Depressed and My Father Got Even More Authoritarian[34]

Themes that parallel these topics are central in Dayıoğlu's short stories. The lead story, for example, is called "Küpeli Ertürk" (Ertürk, a pure Turkish boy's name meaning, literally, "Turkish male," with an ear ring.) This title succinctly communicates a fundamental cultural clash. The traditional gender differentiation in Turkey precludes boys from conforming to the western adolescent counter cultural custom of wearing a decoration in one ear.

It becomes evident as the plot of this story unfolds that between a Turkish father and his son it is not merely this outward symbol that is amiss. Kenan, a Turkish teacher who has been appointed by his government to teach the mother tongue and culture to guest workers' children remarks that:

> . . . Our streets (in the homeland) are very different from those here. Children over there are constantly under everyone's eyes. Most customs, traditions, love, respect, and cursing are learned in the streets. The street games that they play, even, are part of the children's personality formation.[35]

He means that their normal town or village setting reinforces Turkish children's Turkishness, while in Germany their surroundings threaten it.

Perceptions about parental authority and child raising differ between Germans and Turks. Yakup, a Turkish working class parent, remarks, as he blows the smoke from his cigarette out of his mouth.

> "Isn't the child mine? If I beat him or love him, what's that to a German? They can't turn out to be my son's owners, even if I break his bones, he'd have to fall in behind me and go back to the village. Over there I would have known how to make a man out of him," he muttered.[36]

The radical disjuncture in child rearing among Turkish parents in Germany comes to a head in this story when the son, Ertürk, sasses his father, Yakup. The father declares he'd rather see his son dead than rebellious and disrespectful. Their confrontational dialogue leads up to Ertürk saying to his father unthinkable things from the point of view of conventional Turkish behavior.

After Yakup threatens to take him back to the Anatolian village from which he came, Ertürk becomes abusive. He regards his father as an ignorant peasant who is making unreasonable demands on him.

The father, Yakup, recounts his clash with Ertürk.

> "I blew my top. 'You,' I said, 'Have you lost your senses? Can somebody tear their fingernails out of their flesh, or cut off their nose from their face? You're Turk. Your homeland is Turkey. What are you saying, 'I'll apply for German citizenship?' Don't you have any common sense at all?". . .

The son, with an insidious smile, replies,

> "To hell with you, Dad! You can't take me back against my will. If you try to force me with beatings, I'll report you to the Youth Bureau." [37]

The impass between father and son has deepened until they can no longer even talk with each other. The story ends with the boy's decision to become a naturalized German. When asked to at least explain his motives to his father, Ertürk tosses a cassette tape to the Turk with whom he has been speaking. He says, "My conversation with you is on this tape." He implies that his father can listen to the recording if he wants to find out what his son is thinking.

Symbolically, the imposition of the latest technology onto what might have been an intimate parent/son relationship conveys the depth of the alienation that has occurred. The subsequent short stories in this collection convey other similar episodes of disjuncture between the two cultures and generations.

Findings and Conclusions

Three of the five narratives are set in Turkey, two in Germany. The Turkish settings are urban: an interior town, Ankara, and a suburb of Istanbul. The German locations are also urban, but the characters in these works of fiction contrast their present contexts in Germany with the Anatolian villages from which they and their families have come.

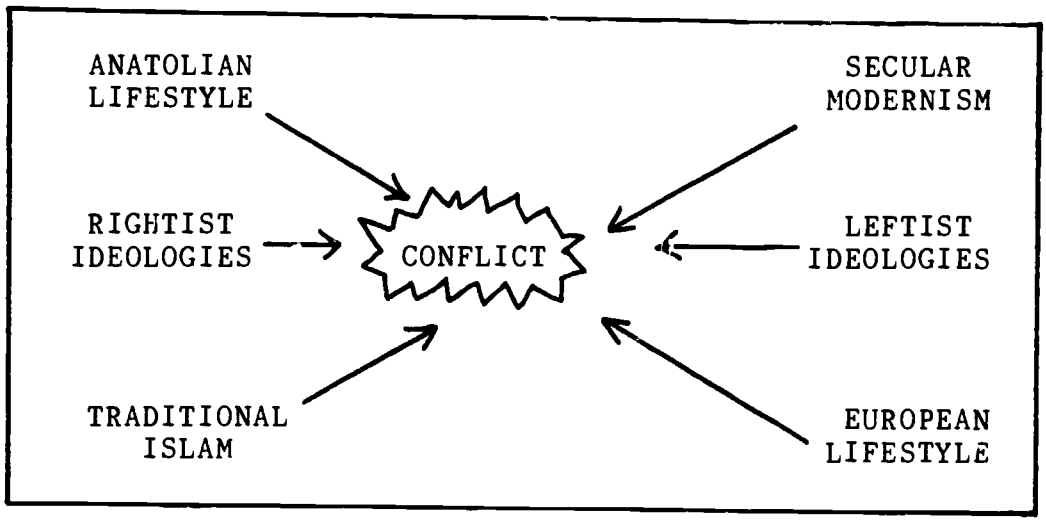
According to these five authors, growing up Turkish can especially be illustrated in the male experience. There are some references to female maturation, but in the pieces of literature that we have examined the gender focus is male dominant. Thus it is often male "rites of passage" that are portrayed as being controversial. It is especially relationships among fathers and sons that are in tension. Even in several cases when abortion is the issue, which might seem to be primarily a women's dilemma, it is portrayed largely from the male point of view. There is one case where the tensions are between an older and younger son, the older lad having temporarily conformed to the morality of his peers while his younger brother continues to adhere to a Muslim lifestyle. This is a reversal of the traditional male sibling roles in Turkish society.

The cultural conflicts of growing up Turkish appear to be three dimensional in these books. There is a fundamental clash between adhering to traditional Islam or adopting modern Turkish behavior, which has more secular values. Another tension exists in the socio-political arena between ideologies of the Right and Left. The rightist views contain some fascist and nationalist overtones, and emphasize capitalism and free enterprise. Those of the Left are socialist, envisioning a radical restructuring of contemporary Turkish society in order to shift the current locus of power. The third plane of conflict particularly exists for the millions of Turkish "guest-workers" and their families who lived for years and, in many cases, decades as a minority in Germany or some other European society. Here the struggles are between the rural Anatolian root values of the older generation - which their children often regard as ignorant or superstitious - and the European ones of their children, many of whom assimilated the dominant culture around them during their formative years.

Education is a popular topic in these books, often informal or nonformal, as well as formal schooling. The perception of these authors is that the informal socialization of the home often comes into conflict with what is subsequently taught at school. This seems to be the case, as they see it, not only in Germany, where there are obvious differences in language and values between home and school, but almost equally in Turkey, itself. Here too, the language of one's parents and family circle doesn't employ the same diction as that of formal instruction used in lectures and textbooks at school. This is more than simply a difference in dialect, but reflects divergent technologies and axiologies as well.

According to these writers, the 1980's are a turbulent time for Turkish youth. This is doubtless due, in part, to economic fluctuations at home and abroad that generate many changed conditions. Also, it seems to be due to newly emerging relationships among today's Turkish parents and their children. Even with the persistent economic problems of Europe and Turkey, the young people perceive themselves to be freer with greater socio-economic mobility. Their actions, as portrayed in these books, demonstrate that they are less hemmed in by conventional stratification and role boundaries.

Chart Two



Dimensions of the Tensions
between the Turkish Generations

NOTES

1 John M. Purcell, "Cultural Appreciation through Literature," Foreign Language Annals 21(1), February, 1988, p. 19.

2 Ibid., pp. 20-21.

3 Judith A. Muyskens, "Teaching Second-Language Literatures: Past, Present and Future," The Modern Language Journal 67(4), Winter, 1983, p. 416.

4 Claire Kramsch, "Literary Texts in the Classroom: A Discourse," The Modern Language Journal 69(4), Winter, 1985, pp. 359-361.

5 Ibid., p. 361.

6 Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Volume One: The Empire of the Gazis: The Rise and Decline of the Ottoman Empire, 1280-1808. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, p. 166. All of Chapter Five concerns the Ottoman social dynamics. See pp. 112-166.

7 Ibid., p. 166.

8 Olcay Önertoy, Türk Roman ve Öyküsü. Cumhuriyet Dönemi. Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası, Kültür Yayınları, 1984 contains essaysabout three of the authors whose works are examined in this study: Fakır Baykurt, pp. 126-131, 266-268; Gülten Dayıoğlu, p. 318; and Bekir Yıldız, pp. 199-201, 304-305. Emin Çölaşan and İbrahim Ulvi Yavuz are not included, and none of the texts included in the present inquiry are analyzed.

9 Redhouse Yeni Türkçe-İngilizce Sözluk. İstanbul: Redhouse Press, 1968, p. 146.

10 İbrahim Ulvi Yavuz, Korkunun Bedeli. İstanbul: Şamil Yayınevi, 1983, pp. 5-6.

11 Ibid., p. 6.

12 Ibid., p. 9.

13 Ibid., pp. 20-21.

14 Ibid., p. 210.

15 Ibid., p. 220.

16 Bekir Yıldız, Aile Savaşları. İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1984, p. 5.

17 Ibid., p. 9.

18 Ibid., p. 23.

19 Redhouse, p. 337.

20 Emin Çölaşan, Yalçın Nereye Koşuyor? İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1985, p. 8.

21 Redhouse, p. 190.

22 Çölaşan, Yalçın, p. 14.

23 Ibid., p. 34.

24 Ibid., p. 52.

25 Redhouse, p. 669. The definitions of koca in Türkçe Sözlük, Altıncı Baskı, Ankara, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1981, p. 499 are: 1. Büyük, önemli derecede büyük. 2, Kocaman. 3. Ihtiyar, yaşlı.

26 Fakir Baykurt, Koca Ren. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1986, p. 15.

27 Ibid., p. 25.

28 Ibid., p. 30.

29 Ibid., p. 38.

30 Ibid., p. 84.

31 Ibid., p. 120.

32 Ibid., p. 312.

33 Redhouse, pp. 11 f.

34 Gülten Dayıoğlu, Geriye Dönenler. İstanbul: Altın Kitaplar Yayınevi, 1986, pp. 179-240.

35 Ibid., p. 14.

36 Ibid., p. 16.

37 Ibid., p. 25.

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