New Perspectives on Imagology

Studia Imagologica

New Perspectives
on Imagology

Edited by

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Between Orient and Occident: The Construction of a Postimperial Turkish Identity in Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's Novel *Huzur*

Johanna Chovanec

Abstract

This article aims to show that imagology is a promising method for analysing images of the European Other and the Turkish Self as expressed in Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's novel *Huzur* (1948; trans. *A Mind at Peace*, 2007). The narrative challenges the rhetoric of early Turkish nationalism by promoting a synthesis of the national present with both the melancholically evoked Ottoman heritage and with European cultures. At the same time, the novel's protagonists stand for diverse and often contradicting conceptions of Self and Other and thus provide an insight into the various identity conflicts present in Republican Turkey.

Keywords

1 Introduction

The transition from the multiethnic and multicultural Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey was marked by a series of political and cultural ruptures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the course of the wide-ranging Tanzimat reforms (1839–1876),[1] the governing elites aimed to modernize the cultural, economic, and political realms of the Ottoman Empire following a Western model of progress. Processes of westernization reached their climax

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1 The Tanzimat period began with the declaration of the Imperial Edict of Gülhane (1839) and ended with the announcement of the first Ottoman constitution in 1876; see Topal (2017).

in the radical reforms implemented by the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal (later Atatürk) in the 1920s and 30s. The break with the Ottoman past and its cultural heritage in the wake of the newly founded nation-state has had a lasting impact on Turkish society and its self-conception. One of the most significant changes was the abolition of the Arabic alphabet in favour of the Latin alphabet, symbolizing the cultural orientation toward Europe. From the foundation of Turkey in 1923 until the 1980s, many canonized Turkish novelists promoted the secular state ideology of Kemalism without critically engaging with its homogenizing principles, neglecting the literary, musical, historical, cultural, and ethnically pluralistic legacies of the empire.[2]

Against this backdrop, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's (1901–1962) oeuvre is exceptional. In his novels and essays, the well-known Turkish writer and literary scholar explores perceptions of Europe and the search for a Turkish identity beyond the Kemalist paradigm. Tanpınar captures the political and cultural transformations of his time—sometimes melancholically, sometimes ironically. His literary works express melancholy related to Istanbul's detachment from the past and increasing Europeanization, which distances contemporary Istanbul, as Turkey's cultural centre, and its inhabitants from the idea of cultural authenticity that can only be found in continuity with the past. Originality in times of Europeanization is a central theme in Tanpınar's novel *Huzur* (1948; trans. *A Mind at Peace*, 2007). The main protagonist, Mümtaz, a melancholic intellectual, feels disoriented in postimperial Turkey, searching for an identity that combines both the imperial past with the national present and elements of European culture with "Turkishness." Images of a fragile yet unknown Self are negotiated against the dichotomies of past and present as well as East and West. To what extent can aspects of the Ottoman lifeworld, such as literature and music, be part of the new Turkish national culture? Is it possible to follow European ideas of modernity while remaining true to one's own cultural heritage?

In this article I draw upon imagology to analyse images of the (Turkish) Self and the (European) Other as expressed by different characters in Tanpınar's *Huzur*. Depending on the particular viewpoint of the novel's protagonists, the Ottoman Empire is portrayed either as a necessary part or as a crucial Other of the national Self. The analysis shows that fluid, often conflicting categories

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2   As described by Brinker-Gabler (1998, 84), national literature and especially national canons have to dismiss plurality for the sake of unity. In Turkey, popular historical novels were published after the foundation of the republic and dealt with the Ottoman-Islamic history but did not become part of the (national) literary canon as the secular Kemalist elites promoted literature which supported new national narratives (see Furrer 2005, 5; Gay 2012, 370).

capture the complexities and ambiguities of a society undergoing a process of change. Inspired by the imagological sensitivity toward the relevance of context and intertext when understanding images of Self and Other in literary texts (Leerssen 2016, 20–21), special attention will be paid to the historical circumstances and references to Tanpınar in contemporary Turkish literature with a special focus on Orhan Pamuk. Of primary interest here is Tanpınar's complementary approach, which is based on overcoming the allegedly static and dichotomic difference between "occidental" and "oriental" attributions. Tanpınar opposes the rhetoric of early Turkish nationalism by promoting a synthesis not only with the Ottoman past but also with European cultures.

2 Imagology and Occidentalism

In his famous book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said criticizes the dichotomous differentiation between Orient and Occident, which in Western countries had become the basis for the scholarly, literary, or political preoccupation with non-Western Others. As Said defines it, "Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the Orient and (most of the time) the Occident" ([1978] 2003, 2). Orientalism includes the use of stereotyping and essentializing images, which evoke the so-called Orient as a vague but homogenous geographical and sociocultural space. The reductionist image of "the Oriental" and the dialectical understanding of Self and Other *ex negativo* give rise to the self-perception of "the Westerner" (Carrier 1995, 2). For Said, Occidentalism is the discourse Westerners ascribe to themselves as a result of their engagement with "the East." These identity-building attributions are rooted in paradigms such as modernity, civilization, or rationality. In this dialectical relationship the "Near East" functions as "[the] great complementary opposite" of the 'West' (Said [1978] 2003, 58).

Scholars have criticized Said's oppositional model for the fact that it does not take the reciprocity of relationships into account and instead perpetuates the division between East and West as if they were clearly distinguishable geopolitical and cultural entities. As Çırakman holds, in Said's work, "East and West are presented as monolithic ideological constructs" (2002, 20). Another criticism of Said's approach is that the term Occidentalism only refers to self-images of the West while neglecting the possibility of "Easterners" talking about *their* perceptions of the West. The scholarly debate in the 1990s aimed to correct Said's theory in this respect. James Carrier has suggested the term "ethno-Occidentalism," which he defines as "essentialist renderings of the West by members of alien societies" (1992, 198). Lamont Lindstrom

understands Occidentalism as the "discourse among orientals about the West" and thus defined the term *auto-Occidentalism* as "the self-discourse of Westerners" (1995, 35). After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, several books were published on Eastern perceptions of the West, attempting to make sense of the violence and hostility expressed in terrorism. Some of them, however, have been heavily criticized for their essentializing understanding of the West (Bilgrami 2006, 384; Akıllı 2013, 25).

Despite this gradual development, Akıllı points out that cultural studies of non-Western countries up until the 2000s were more occupied with the European view of non-Western Others than with the "reverse gaze" (2013, 23) of non-European perspectives. There are two noteworthy exceptions to this trend. First, Chen's (1995) work on images of the West in China distinguishes between a so-called official Occidentalism, in which the Chinese government portrays the West as the foreign invader, and an antiofficial Occidentalism expressed by certain parts of Chinese civil society, in which the West becomes a metaphor for a critique of domestic oppression.[3] Second, Nanquette's (2013) study on Orientalism and Occidentalism compares literary images of the respective Other in France and Iran. In the Turkish context, as Akıllı points out, the tendency to focus on Europe's viewpoint continued throughout the 2000s, when a broad array of studies was published on European perceptions of the Turks or Ottomans (e.g. Çırakman 2002) but only a few on Turkish perceptions of Europe (e.g. Wigen 2009).[4]

Against this backdrop, I suggest that studying images of Europe in Turkey, and more specifically in Turkish literature, is a promising and until now insufficiently pursued endeavour. Literature, with its indissoluble tension between fiction and reality, captures and reflects how certain notions such as "Europe" are conceived and discussed at certain points in history. Here, Occidentalism is a suitable theoretical starting point for the discussion of the role of Europe in Turkey's cultural imagination. In this article, I define Occidentalism as the plurality of images related to Europe that are formulated by different groups or individuals in Turkey and reflected in Turkish literature. Occidentalism not only refers to discourses on Europe in Turkey but also to how these debates

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3 China's images of the West are further investigated in the contributions to part 3 of this volume by Federica Casalin (chapter 9) and Zhu Wenjun (chapter 10). Zhu's article also provides further reflections on Chen's concept of Occidentalism (cf. Zhu 2022, 237–238).

4 The contribution on Turkey in the imagology handbook edited by Beller and Leerssen (Kuran-Burçoglu 2007) gives a summary of the secondary literature on images of Turks and Turkey in European countries. The volume also offers a chapter on Orientalism in European cultural history (Thum 2007), but a contribution on Occidentalism is missing.

shape or reflect images of the Self. The umbrella term "Europe" may refer to specific geographical regions such as France or to other aspects of this historic, cultural, political, or imagined space, including values and ideas. The concept of Occidentalism not only relates to contemporaneous discourses on Europe but also encompasses the historic dimensions of Europe–Turkey relations and how they have been perceived. This includes aspects such as the lasting effects of the so-called Great Powers' political and economic interference in the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and the correlating reform activities implemented by the Sublime Porte (the central government).

Questions of alterity, images of the Self and the Other and how they are evoked in literature are at the heart of imagology or image studies. As Leerssen puts it, the objects of imagological studies are fictional and nonfictional texts (Leerssen 2016, 18). Imagology is concerned with representations of national character, and thus provides a tool to focus on changing conceptions of Self and Other embedded in the long-lasting transformation of political systems from imperial forms of governance to nation-states. The history of imagology itself dates back to the early nineteenth century and can be linked to the emergence of national philologies, "when the academic study of literature along national categories was closely linked to political demands for national unity" (see the introduction to this volume: Edtstadler, Folie, and Zocco 2022, 4). Analysing the creation and perception of national images of Self and Other (auto- and hetero-images) also raises questions about times preceding the nation-state. Narratives of empires are different from and often conflict with narratives of nations, particularly in the case of Turkey, where the formation of the nation-state was accompanied by a shift from a multicultural population to a largely homogenous Turkish-Muslim society (Chovanec and Heilo 2021, 4–8). Which representations of national character, that is, ethnotypes,[5] were to be selected or developed in this situation, and in contrast to what or whom?

In order to answer these questions by means of Tanpınar's famous novel *Huzur*, I draw upon Leerssen's imagological triangle ("threefold procedure," Leerssen 2016, 20–21), including the contextual, textual, and intertextual examination of narratives. First, I contextualize Tanpınar's biography against the backdrop of the Tanzimat period, the transformation from empire to nation-state, as well as the role of Europe in the development of modern Turkish

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5 Ethnotypes as representations of national character invoke Self–Other oppositions (auto-images vs. hetero-images) "and/or will silhouette a given national character against the implied background of how it differs from other[s]" (Leerssen 2016, 16–17).

literature.[6] Second, the textual analysis of *Huzur* reveals the auto- and hetero-images surrounding the new national Self of the young Republic of Turkey in relation to not only Europe but also the Ottoman past. Third, the intertextual perspective takes centre stage. Leerssen's understanding of intertext is "to trace the paper trail of textual occurrences of the commonplace in question" (2016, 20) in the past. As I cover the past in the context section, I deviate from Leerssen's approach by looking instead at intertextual references to Tanpınar's work in Pamuk's memoir *İstanbul—Hatıralar ve Şehir* (2003; trans. *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, 2005). This allows me to shed light on the current significance of Tanpınar's literary themes for contemporary Turkish literature. Taking Pamuk as an example, references to Tanpınar are manifold and illustrate his literary themes' unabated importance for Turkey's literary and intellectual history.

3   Context: Tanpınar and the Role of Europe in Modern Turkish Literature

The development of modern Ottoman-Turkish literature should be understood against the backdrop of the Tanzimat reform era, which went hand in hand with cultural, legal, and political transformations and included an increased diplomatic exchange between the Ottomans and the Europeans. Considering the important geopolitical situatedness of the Ottoman Empire, the European powers were eager to include it into the new regional order that was to be established after the Congress of Vienna in 1815. From the beginning of modern Ottoman-Turkish literature in the nineteenth century, novels dealing with topics such as Europeanization (*Avrupalılaşma*) or the East-West issue (*Doğu-Batı meselesi*) formed an important subgenre in fiction. The so-called Tanzimat literature (1860s to 1890s) was influenced by rapid sociopolitical changes. The novel itself was a key part of this process: it was in the 1840s that the first translations of foreign, mainly French, novels were published in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman writers started to adopt this new literary style, and the first "Ottoman novels" were published in the 1870s.[7] One of the most noteworthy authors in this context is Ahmet Mithat. Mithat and other intellectuals critically

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6   Understanding the political and historical context as a frame of reference for the study of texts allows for an interdisciplinary focus exploring differences and commonalities between literary and political discourses as well as their reciprocal influence; see Leerssen (1992, 289).

7   In the nineteenth century, written literature increasingly turned away from the until then traditional Divan tradition, see Kuru (2013, 567–568).

examined the influence of Western European countries on Ottoman society. As Saraçoğlu claims, "Midhat's voice was an influential one in the hegemonic process of defining what it meant to be 'Ottoman' as the empire tried to prove its compatibility with the modern West" (2006, 20). Authors criticized the new consumerism becoming visible among Ottoman elites, which was seen as "the symbolic occasion pinpointing that the system has been subverted [by the West]" (Mardin 1974, 424). Instead, the desired goal was seen in combining a moderate orientation toward the material goods and prosperity in Europe with maintaining one's own spiritual, moral, and religious values. Many authors in this period expressed the fear of losing the connection with their own culture.

After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, westernizing reforms reached their climax and went hand in hand with the denial of the Ottoman past as a possible source of cultural identity. In this civilizing mission pushed for by Kemalist elites, the Ottoman Empire was portrayed as an obstacle on Turkey's way to becoming a modern nation-state (Gay 2012, 370). The goal of Kemalism was to transform the society not only politically and legally but also culturally. The slogan "despite the people for the people" (*Halka rağmen halk için*) illustrates the paternalistic approach to reform aspects of daily life even against the will of the people. Under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), Kemalists tried to implement a European lifestyle (*alla franca*) as a condition for economic and political progress as well as the development of a modern Turkish civilization (Günay 2012, 172) presented as the vital "Self" defined by everything the Ottoman Empire as old and stagnating "Other" had been lacking (Wigen 2009, 96).

Literature in what had become Turkey continued to focus on East-West questions. However, contrary to the scenarios created by late nineteenth-century novelists, the Ottoman Empire was now mostly rejected as a possible source for identification. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar is exceptional in this regard, as he tried to bridge the gaps not only between past and present but also between Europe and Turkey. Most of Tanpınar's narrations are set in Istanbul, the Ottoman capital city. Inspired by the famous poet Yahya Kemal (1884–1958), Tanpınar studied literature in Istanbul and graduated in 1923, the year in which the Republic of Turkey was founded and Ankara became the new capital city. He first worked as a teacher and then became a professor of literary studies in the Faculty of Letters at Istanbul University in 1939. Tanpınar was not only a scholar, poet, and writer, but also politically active. He was selected as a deputy for the Kemalist party CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, "Republican People's Party") in 1942 and served in the Grand National Assembly. He later returned to academia and continued working as a professor until his death in 1962 (Günay-Erkol 2009, 103). Throughout his professional career, and in

addition to his academic work, Tanpınar published novels, poetry, short stories, and essays. Among his most important works are the novels *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (1961; trans. *The Time Regulation Institute*, 2001) and *Mahur Beste* (unfinished, 1975), the essayistic compilation *Beş Şehir* (1946; trans. *Tanpınar's Five Cities*, 2018), the biography of his famous teacher and mentor *Yahya Kemal* (1946), and the yet untranslated story collection *Abdullah Efendi'nin Rüyaları* (1942, The Dreams of Abdullah Efendi).

In secondary literature, Tanpınar is often described as an author who was "at home" in European as well as in Ottoman/Turkish cultures, a poet of intellectual floating and in-betweenness (Lerch 2008, 557). His novels and essays reflect the drastic sociopolitical changes in the first half of the twentieth century and are deeply influenced by Yahya Kemal. For both authors, visions of the nation are supposed to be rooted in tradition; their critique of top-down forced modernization and radical reforms calls for continuity with the past. As a political and cultural rupture, the downfall of the Ottoman Empire is an important theme in Tanpınar's writings, often melancholically aestheticized as an irretrievably lost past. The echoes of the empire reverberate in Tanpınar's novels as a "phantom pain" (Rentzsch and Şahin 2018, 11) and are intertwined with questions of national identity.[8]

4   Text: *A Mind at Peace* (*Huzur*)

4.1   *Formal Aspects and Contents*

Before being published as a book in 1949, the novel *Huzur* was released in 1948 through regular instalments in the newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, which is still today close to the Kemalist political party. The novel is set in Istanbul in the late 1930s, when the outbreak of World War II was intensively discussed among Turkish intellectuals. It consists of four main chapters that are named after the four key protagonists: Mümtaz, Nuran, İhsan, and Suat. The story is told by a heterodiegetic narrator who describes the lifeworlds of the protagonists without being part of them. Mümtaz is the main protagonist and "focalizer" as it is his perspective through which the story is told. The original Turkish title *Huzur* is translated into English as *A Mind at Peace*. In modern Turkish, *huzur* refers to inner peace or composure as well as presence. These meanings are reflected

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8 "*Huzur, Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* ve diğer bazı eserlerinde hep batmış imparatorluğun yankısını ve kaybolan kimlik işaretlerinin fantom ağrısını duyuyoruz [...]" (Rentzsch and Şahin 2018, 11).

in the etymological derivation of the term. In Arabic, *huzur* has three conno-tations: firstly, "quiet, calm, or peace" (*rahat*), secondly, "present or available" (*hazır*, *mevcut*), and thirdly "deep-rooted" (*yerleşik*) (Etimoloji Türkçe n.d.). The protagonists in Tanpınar's novel are characterized by *huzursuzluk*—the absence of *huzur*, i.e. unrest and unease.

The novel begins with twenty-six-year-old Mümtaz trying to find a nurse for his mentor and relative İhsan, who has fallen alarmingly sick. The story line further develops with many flashbacks that inform the reader about the main protagonist's childhood in an Anatolian town and then focus on the dramatic love story between Mümtaz and Nuran in Istanbul. When his parents die dur-ing the Turkish War of Independence, the eleven-year-old Mümtaz is sent to live with İhsan in Istanbul. İhsan takes on the role of Mümtaz's father, elder brother, and teacher. Mümtaz spends much time in İhsan's library, reading books from both European and Ottoman collections. At the age of seventeen, Mümtaz has become something like İhsan's intellectual companion, helping him with his writings and engaging in discussions about world politics and literature. While strolling through Istanbul in order to find a nurse for İhsan, twenty-six-year-old Mümtaz remembers where he used to be with Nuran and thus tells the story of their love, which begins shortly after he finishes his doc-toral thesis. He first meets Nuran and her daughter on a ferry to the Princes' Islands. After a failed marriage, Nuran is taking care of her daughter alone. Mümtaz idealizes Nuran and often compares her with famous paintings and the beauty of the Bosphorus. Throughout the novel, his descriptions of and admiration for Nuran often get blurred with his fascination for Istanbul. Both Nuran and Istanbul seem to open doors to a lost past for Mümtaz. When their relationship evolves, however, Mümtaz is increasingly afraid of losing Nuran. This fear manifests itself when Suat, who is also in love with Nuran, appears as Mümtaz's rival. Mümtaz is haunted by the idea that he will lose Nuran to his antagonist.[9] Ultimately, it is Suat's suicide that destroys Mümtaz's relationship with Nuran: Suat finds the key to the couple's flat and hangs himself there. The reader witnesses Mümtaz's increasingly dubious state of mental health, İhsan's death, and learns that Nuran has reconciled with her ex-husband.

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9   While Günay-Erkol (2009, 97) traces this tension back to a fragile masculinity and unstable self-image, the rivalry between Mümtaz and Suat can also be explained by the characters' oppositional intellectual positions: whereas İhsan takes views similar to those of Tanpınar's mentor Yahya Kemal, Suat is a nihilist, supportive of war and violence, and ready to cut all ties with the past in order to create a new future.

4.2   *Images of Self and Other*

Throughout the novel, Mümtaz and İhsan discuss topics such as Turkey's future and the question of Turkey's cultural identity in relation to European identities. Of primary imagological interest are the two intertwined Self/Other dichotomies negotiated between the protagonists. The first one relates to the new national Self versus the past imperial Other; the second deals with Turkey's position(ing) in the East/West debate.

When Mümtaz, İhsan, Suat, and their friends Nuri and Fahri have a conversation about the books they are currently reading, a discussion about East and West evolves. Suat wonders "whether everyone reads as much as we do" (Tanpınar 2008c, 105), and Fahri answers, "Europe reads much more than we do. And a number of languages at once."[10] Fahri thus implies that "Europe" is intellectually advanced compared to "us." İhsan then replies that when "we" read about "ourselves," meaning when they read what Europeans write about Turks, it becomes obvious "that we're wandering on the peripheries of life."[11] İhsan makes the point that the Westerner (or the Westerner's perspective) satisfies "us" only when "we" remind "ourselves" that we are world citizens.[12] Interestingly, this implies that "they" are world citizens but forget this global belonging due to a feeling of marginalization. İhsan argues that "some of us read as if embarking on a voyage, as if escaping our own identities" (ibid., 105).[13] Escaping means that there is something to run away from—and the question of what their identity might be is answered differently by all characters, showing the plurality of conceptions of both individual and collective Selves.

Suat wants to escape the in-betweenness of Turkey by getting rid of both European and Ottoman traditions: "Indeed, with one leap to shake and cast out the old, the new, and everything else" (ibid., 105).[14] By "the old," he refers to the Ottoman heritage, and with "the new" he points to the trends and customs that have been influencing the region since the nineteenth century. Suat's concept of the Self remains in abeyance and its solution is projected into a utopian

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10   "Avrupa bizden çok fazla okuyor. Birkaç dilde birden okuyor" (Tanpınar [1949] 2008b, 90). I include quotes from both the Turkish original ([1949] 2008b) in the footnotes and the English translation (2008c) in the text in order to include Ottoman terms used in the original and to slightly adapt the English version where necessary.

11   "Kendimizi okuduğumuz zaman hayatın hâşiyesinde dolaştığımızı biliyoruz" (Tanpınar [1949] 2008b, 90).

12   "Garplı, bizi, ancak dünya vatandaşı olduğumuzu hatırladığımız zaman tatmin ediyor" (ibid., 90).

13   "Hulâsa, çoğumuz seyahat eder gibi, benliğimizden kaçar gibi okuyoruz" (ibid., 90–91).

14   "Evet, bir adımda eski yeni ne varsa hepsini silkip, fırlatmak" (ibid., 91).

future ("He [the New Man] has yet to be born," ibid., 107).[15] For the sake of a completely new civilization, Suat is in favour of war and violence as they would inevitably destroy the past and the present, giving way to an allegedly completely new future. When İhsan argues that war would ruin civilization, Suat confirms, "this is exactly what I want" (ibid., 108).[16]

İhsan takes a different stand: "To cut our ties with the past and to close ourselves off from the West! Never! What do you think we are? We're the essence of Easterners of taste and pleasure. Everything yearns for our persistence and continuity" (ibid., 107). In the Turkish original, İhsan uses the term *millet*, saying that of all the nations of the East, "we" are the one with the most classic taste.[17] He identifies Turkey as an Eastern country that is perceived by the European Other as rich in traditions and heritage. For İhsan, the assumed Western gaze—the meta-image (see Leerssen 2016, 24)—is a crucial factor in deciding to maintain the connection with the Ottoman past. Europe, imagined as educated, progressive, and modern while at the same time rich in tradition, is assumed to expect a similar continuity or synthesis from Turkey. However, according to İhsan, only certain aspects of the Ottoman tradition should be selected for this new national Self in order to be on an equal footing with the West: "We'll cast out our dead roots; we'll engage in a new enterprise and foster new people and society ..." (ibid., 107).[18] Here, the Kemalist stance becomes visible: to create a new, modern society, people have to be educated and change in order to fit into the image of a progressive nation.

Whereas Suat is oriented toward the future and İhsan is engaged with the challenges of the present, Mümtaz is occupied and sometimes even obsessed with the past. In the Kemalist nation-state, radical cultural transformations and the estrangement from Ottoman heritage leave him forlorn and desperately searching for an identity. Mümtaz is anxious about the present and feels torn about the past. This inner imbalance finally leads to his increasingly critical state of mental health. He promotes continuity with the past and is convinced that it is only the past that should serve as a framework for national identity.[19] He acknowledges that analysing and developing social realities is necessary, but "our attachments to the past are also part of these social realities,

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15   "[...] bu yeni insanı daha doğmadı. Fakat doğacak, eminim..." (ibid., 92–93).

16   "İşte ben de bunu istiyorum" (ibid., 93).

17   "Hele mazi ile bağlarımızı kesmek, garba kendimizi kapatmak! Asla! Biz şarkın en klasik
       zevkli milletiyiz. Her şey bizden devam istiyor" (ibid., 92).

18   "Ölü kökleri atacağız; yeni bir istihsale gireceğiz: Onun insanını yetiştireceğiz ..." (ibid., 92).

19   "Bir hüviyet lazım. Bu hüviyeti her millet mazisinden alıyor" (ibid., 171).

because those attachments constitute one of the manifest forms our life has taken, and this persists into the present as well as the future" (ibid., 199).[20]

Mümtaz searches for places in Istanbul that might bring him closer to the inevitably lost Ottoman history. For instance, he enjoys going to the Grand Bazaar in the district of Fatih, and laments the inexpensive wholesale products, shoddy imports, and cheap imitations that are sold there (ibid., 47). However, within the labyrinth of the bazaar, he loves the Bedesten, the old cloth merchant hall, as well as the flea market. There, he feels a connection with the past as he finds glimpses of the Ottoman Empire.

Mümtaz feels drunk and satisfied after having immersed himself in those lost worlds that can only be approximated but never reached. Similarly, his lover Nuran opens a whole new (old) world to him by introducing him to Ottoman music: "In [Ottoman] music, he found one of the purest and most rejuvenating wellsprings of the human soul" (ibid., 194). When Nuran asks him why they are so bound to the past, Mümtaz says, "whether we like it or not, we belong to it" (ibid., 197).[21] For him, music is the key to this lost past he inevitably belongs to. Ottoman music embraces Istanbul and the history of "their" civilization, with both glorious and filthy parts and its final decay. Mümtaz contrasts his immediate emotional connection with the inability of the Westerner to fathom "their" music—a lack which makes the Westerner a stranger (cf. ibid., 170). For Mümtaz, Istanbul and Nuran bridge the gap between the present and the irretrievably lost past. Mümtaz intertwines Nuran with Istanbul and vice versa:

> Nuran's every aspect drove Mümtaz wild on that day. Her amorous surrender to love in expectation of pleasure, a moored vessel in calm harbor waters; her face veiled like a somnolent Istanbul morning; smiles emerging seemingly from beyond the present moment [...].
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> IBID., 163[22]

Mümtaz's orientation toward the past prevents him from "being in the moment" and from productively engaging with the present. He is a melancholiac, longing for what has become his idea of an idealized Ottoman past.

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20   "Fakat bu realiteler içine maziyle bağlarımız da girer. Çünkü o, hayatımızın, bugün olduğu gibi gelecek zamanda da şekillerinden biridir" (ibid., 172).

21   "-Niçin eskiye bu kadar bağlıyız? ... -İster istemez onların bir parçasıyız" (ibid., 170).

22   "O gün Nuran'da her şey Mümtaz'ı çıldırttı. Kendi kendisini aşka veriş şekli, hazza sâkin bir limanda bekleyen gemi gibi hazırlanmış yüzünün mahmur İstanbul sabahlarının hatırlatan örtülüşleri, yaşanan zamanın ötesinden gelir gibi tebessümler, [...]" (ibid., 141).

However, just as the Ottoman Empire has been lost, he is also afraid of losing Nuran, which proves to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Nuran does not take part in most of the conversations between Mümtaz and his friends; however, she protests against Mümtaz orientalizing her (see Hemmat 2017). When the couple visits an Ottoman summer palace that once belonged to a Sultan's concubine, Mümtaz's imagination casts Nuran as "a favourite odalisque of the age of Sultan Murat IV" (ibid., 147). By evoking the Ottoman past as an exotic lost world or depicting Nuran, a "modern" single parent, as an Ottoman harem's concubine, Mümtaz reproduces orientalist images. When Mümtaz tells Nuran about his fantasies, she makes a clear point by saying: "No, thanks. I'm Nuran. I live [...] in the year 1938 [sic!] and I wear more or less the fashions of my day. I have no desire to change my style or identity. I'm not in a state of despair [...]" (ibid.).[23] This short statement shows clearly that Nuran wants to be "herself." She wants to neither get lost in imaginations of the past nor in utopian ideas of the future. It is remarkable that Nuran, who rarely takes part in the male-dominated intellectual circles, often adopts a clear position when she gets the chance to raise her voice (see Nolte 2017, 252–253). Although it is Nuran who introduces Mümtaz to Ottoman music, she seems to naturally integrate the past into the present. In contrast to Mümtaz, she is neither stuck between an exoticized Ottoman Other and a fragile national Self, nor between images of a modern Europe and a yet unknown Turkey. In fact, as a single mother, she benefits from the more open societal structures and criticizes Mümtaz's idealization of the Ottoman Empire. Nuran embodies a positive, nonmelancholic counter concept. Having both feet on the ground, she also does not buy into Suat's visions of a utopian future. And Nuran's natural way of being in the present also provides a contrast to İhsan's technocratic approach, evaluating cultural elements of the past in order to artificially form a new national narrative.

5   Intertext: Tanpınar in Orhan Pamuk's Work

Tanpınar posthumously[24] became known as one of the most important Turkish writers who aesthetically captured the transformation from empire to

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23   "Hayır istemiyorum. Ben Nuran'ım. [...]. 1937 senesinde yaşıyor, aşağı yukarı zamanımın elbisesini giyiyorum. Hiçbir elbise ve hüviyet değiştirmeğe hevesim yok. Hiçbir ümitsizlik içinde değilim [...]" (ibid., 127).

24   Tanpınar himself was aware of this fact and wrote in his diary on March 4, 1961: "They will surely turn to me one day. But when?" (Tanpınar quoted in Ertürk 2017, 264). According to

nation-state.[25] As Göknar argues, "One of Tanpınar's literary achievements is his narrative aestheticization of the anxiety of a society on the verge of permanent yet uncertain change" (2003, 650). This aestheticization of what is irretrievably lost, namely the Ottoman Empire and its cultural realms, and the connected question of cultural authenticity are among the main characteristics of postmodern Turkish literature, and it was Tanpınar who coined them. The intellectual conflicts discussed in his novels have influenced many authors, including Orhan Pamuk. Rentzsch and Şahin even speak of "Tanpınarology" (2018, 11) as a lens through which to view Turkey.[26] In the postmodern period after 1980, when authors such as Pamuk appeared on the literary scene, and against the background of Turkey's possible accession to the European Union, the East–West issue gained renewed importance. Simultaneously, history and in particular Ottoman history became a main theme in literature. Since the 1980s, the Ottoman Empire and its multicultural population, imperial architecture, and rich musical and literary traditions have become part of what I have referred to as the Ottoman Myth in Turkish literature (see Chovanec 2017, 2018, 2021). A central element of this myth is a postimperial melancholy that expresses a longing for both cultural and social aspects of the empire.[27] On a general level, this imperial nostalgia in literature challenges the Kemalist framings of history and sheds light on forgotten or suppressed parts of Turkish national history. More specifically, postimperial melancholy often has different political faces or aims, ranging from a critique of capitalism and its destructive policies (e.g. in Ahmet Ümit's crime novel *Istanbul Hatırası*) or a search for identity in a lost past (e.g. in Pamuk's novels)[28] to proposals for an alternative model of the present inspired by the multicultural outlook of the Ottoman society (e.g. in novels by Elif Şafak).[29]

Pamuk's notion of *hüzün*, as elaborated in his memoir *İstanbul—Hatıralar ve Şehir* (2003; trans. *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, 2005), became known to a European readership as a particular term expressing melancholy connected to the rapid change of Istanbul from its once glorious imperial past. Pamuk's city

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Ertürk (2004), the "Turkish 'rediscovery' of Tanpınar must be understood in the context of the post-Kemalist turn of the 2000s."

25 Attention to Tanpınar—including the translation of his novels—increased significantly after Pamuk received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006.

26 "Türkiye'de [...] Tanpınaroloji'den söz etmek mümkündür"; Ertürk speaks of a "Tanpınar Turn."

27 Parallel to the developments in literature, neo-Ottomanism started as a trend among conservative Islamists in Turkish politics; see Yavuz (1998, 2016).

28 See Konuk (2011).

29 See Furlanetto (2015).

narration contains several intertextual references to Tanpınar and his novel *Huzur*. Pamuk emphasizes that he has written his memoir in constant dialogue with four melancholic (*hüzünlü*) writers among whom he mentions Tanpınar as well as Tanpınar's mentor Yahya Kemal (Pamuk [2003] 2013, 107). For Pamuk, these authors gave modern Istanbul its melancholy and also shaped his own imagery of the city; they felt they would only find an original voice if they turned to their city's irretrievable, lost past and wrote of the melancholy it inspired (ibid., 112). In his chapter "Hüzün-Melankoli-Tristesse" (ibid., 92–107) Pamuk refers to *Huzur* as the most important novel ever written about Istanbul. According to Pamuk, the main protagonists of Tanpınar's novel suffer from *hüzün*, a state of mind which they draw from the city's history and which makes them feel broken and condemned to defeat.[30] Pamuk promotes *hüzün* as an authentic feeling of belonging, exclusively incorporated by Istanbulites and explicitly distinguished from the European "melancholia" or "tristesse." Pamuk thus finds a way to solve the dilemma Tanpınar's male protagonists are caught in: the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and the clear severance from its heritage leads to the untranslatable, unique experience of *hüzün*, a feeling which captures Istanbul's special positioning between East and West as well as past and present. Tanpınar's literary themes live on in how Turkey is portrayed in contemporary novels. For Tanpınar, Istanbul, the neglected former imperial capital city with its rich history and traditions, is the door to the past and the bridge between "Orient" and "Occident." Without getting to know Istanbul and its manifold histories, the Self is lost: "If we don't truly know Istanbul, we can never hope to find ourselves" (ibid., 195).[31]

6   Conclusion

Embedding Tanpınar's novel *Huzur* in the historical context of early modern Turkish literature has shown that the specific auto- and hetero-images evoked by the protagonists capture the struggles of a society shaped by long-lasting social and cultural transformations. The quest for one's own cultural identity is omnipresent in Tanpınar's narration and has continued to reverberate in postmodern Turkish literature, as the intertextual references in Pamuk's Istanbul memoir have illustrated. As revealed in the textual analysis, the central

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30   "İstanbul hakkında yazılmış romanların en büyüğü olan Huzur'da kahramanlar şehrin tarihinin, yıkım ve kayıp duygusunun kendilerine verdiği hüzün yüzünden kırık iradeli ve yenilgiye mahkûmdurlar" (Pamuk [2003] 2013, 106).

31   "İstanbul, İstanbul, diyordu, İstanbul'u tanımadıkça kendimizi bulamayız" (ibid., 168).

problem discussed in *Huzur* is the split between past and present that affects individuals not only on a personal level but also collectively. The Western concept of modernity defined and shaped the cultural and political realms of both the late Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. As İhsan puts it, "We're conditioned to regard the modern with suspicion because it's foreign to us and we look upon tradition as of no consequence because it's outdated" (ibid., 83).[32] This state of in-betweenness is described as a "duality" (*ikilik*) that becomes visible in almost all parts of daily life such as entertainment, aesthetics, morality, etiquette, and conceptions of the future. The dichotomies of present Self versus past Other and Eastern Self versus Western Other form uncertain, ambivalent auto-images. The national Self neglects its own traditions and strives for civilizational progress; and this denial leads to a feeling of inferiority.

The psychological effects of this inner in-betweenness are illustrated through the main protagonist Mümtaz, whose anxiety represents his inability to find his Self in the uncertain present. He searches for glimpses of his individual and collectively embedded identity in his exchanges with Nuran and longs for peace (*huzur*) in the present but cannot find it unless he immerses himself in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Mümtaz adopts orientalist hetero-images such as the "Eastern emotionality" expressed through Ottoman music as a positive auto-image. Similar to Orhan Pamuk's notion of *hüzün*, described as a typically Istanbulian feeling that cannot be grasped by foreigners, the ability to connect with Ottoman music is depicted as one of the positive features distinguishing the Easterner from the Westerner.

The heterodiegetic narrator of the novel as well as the protagonists mainly use the dichotomy of East and West (*şark* and *garp*) when discussing images of the Self in relation to the Other. The Occidentalism expressed in the novel is characterized by a vague idea of a distant, unspecific Europe. Europe is mostly referred to as an abstract, imagined space and not geographically specified. The meta-image of Europe (how the protagonists think of the image Europeans allegedly have of Turkey) is one that judges and evaluates Turkey: Europe as an economically and intellectually progressive and superior entity is contrasted with the Eastern Self, which is economically underdeveloped and culturally ambivalent. Targeting this felt imbalance, several characters in the novel want to popularize their own culture and literary traditions.

Tanpınar's synthesizing approach suggests going beyond the clearly distinguished dichotomies of empire/nation and East/West, and creating continuity with the past and a synthesis with the West. Continuity with the past is

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32   "Yeniye başından itibaren bizim olmadığı için şüphe ile, eskiye eski olduğu için işe yaramaz gözüyle bakıyoruz" (ibid., 246).

absolutely necessary for Tanpınar and his intellectual protagonists Mümtaz and İhsan, who "[...] only know one thing: the necessity of relying on established roots. If we fail to do so, we won't be able to move beyond a state of duplicity" (ibid., 288).[33] With foresight, Tanpınar warns against the long-term effects of Kemalist state-orchestrated changes in Turkish culture, arguing that this might lead to a divided society in which one group is the "mangled remnant of traditional culture and the other newly settled tenants of the modern world" (ibid.).[34] Tanpınar's analysis somewhat foreshadows today's polarized political camps in Turkey that, in broad strokes, represent the conservative Muslim society on the one hand, and the Kemalist secular population on the other.

Acknowledgements

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33 "Yeni Türk insanının ölçülerini kim biliyor? Yalnız bir şeyi biliyoruz. O da birtakım köklere dayanmak zarureti. Tarihimize bütünlüğünü iade etmek zarureti. Bunu yapmazsak ikiliğin önüne geçemeyiz" (ibid., 250).

34 "Birisi eski bir medeniyetin enkazı, öbürü yeni bir medeniyetin henüz taşınmış kiracısı olmasınlar. İkisinin arasında bir kaynaşma lazım" (ibid., 251).

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