

**ASLI DALDAL**  
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, TURKEY

## **POLITICS AND LITERATURE IN TURKISH HISTORICAL NOVEL: KEMAL TAHIR, ATILLA İLHAN AND A.H. TANPINAR**

### **Abstract:**

Literature is an important component of a community's culture. The relationship between literature and culture is a complex one: literature shapes a given culture and in turn is shaped by it. A literary piece of work is not the solitary production of the writer whose sole incitement is inspiration. Quite the contrary, literature is not neutral vis a vis the cultural and political requirements of its community. In fact culture itself is in no way immune from the surrounding ideology and politics of identity. This means that literature, culture and politics (of identity) are inseparable from each other and they all constitute different circles of the same chain of knowledge. This presentation will focus on the works of three famous Turkish writers namely Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, (Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü-The Society for Setting Clocks, 1961) Kemal Tahir (Devlet Ana, 1967) and Atilla İlhan (Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları, Morning Prayers in Istanbul, 1981) whose historical novels are the best examples of the complex relationship between literature, culture and politics of identity formation.

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü is an allegorical novel criticizing various aspects of the Kemalist Ideology. The present analysis will mostly concentrate on the "leadership aspect" of Kemalism that Tanpınar implicitly criticizes. The "father complex" he talks about is the most controversial aspect of the Kemalist ideology. Kemal Tahir's Devlet Ana, on the other hand, is no doubt one of the most influential historical-novels of the late-Republican Era. In a sense it exemplifies Tzvetan Todorov's emphasis on how a novel can be more influential than a mere history book in propagating a peculiar understanding of history. Kemal Tahir's aim here is to transfer his philosophy of nationalism to the reader via a history novel based on a myth. Atilla İlhan's Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları is also a historical novel. Similar to Kemal Tahir's Devlet Ana, this novel also constitutes a good example of Todorov's emphasis on literature and history. Similar to Devlet Ana, its language and narrative style gives us the impression that the author (or more truly the narrator) does in fact live in those days with these people (there exists a reality effect, the impression of reality which substitutes truth with fiction). To increase this impression of reality, both authors (Tahir and İlhan) add some familiar (but somehow obscure, even mystical) figures among the protagonists.

### **Keywords:**

Literature, Politics, History

**JEL Classification:** Y90

## Introduction

The interaction between “art” and “society” has always been a fruitful source of inquiry for scholars and critics. It is a complex and multidimensional subject requiring an interdisciplinary approach in the context of cultural studies, literary theory, sociology and political science. The relationships between “art” and “society” can be multiple and the word “society” can encompass an infinite number of cultural, political and economic elements... It is possible to talk about the *direct* influence of socio-political powers on art such as “censure” or “manipulation for propaganda purposes” as well as the more subtle sociological and political determinants on art coming from this general rubric of “society”. This work will primarily focus on “sociology and politics” of literature. The relationship between literature and culture is a complex one: Literature shapes a given culture and in turn is shaped by it. Literature, culture and politics (of identity) are inseparable from each other and they all constitute different circles of the same chain of knowledge. This paper aims at analyzing the major works of three renown Turkish writers who mostly focused on historical-political subjects and who were, themselves, interested in socio-political matters (Kemal Tahir, for instance, was in prison for years for political reasons). These are Kemal Tahir’s *Devlet Ana (Mother State, 1967)*, Atilla İlhan’s *Dersaadet’te Sabah Ezanları (Morning Prayers in Istanbul, 1981)* and Ahmed Hamdi *Tanpınar’s Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü (The Time Regulation Institute, 1962)*. Although focusing on different aspects of the questions of nation building, historical myths and leadership, they all exemplify Tzvetan Todorov’s emphasis on how a novel can be more powerful in shaping people’s minds than a mere history book, for propagating a peculiar understanding of history.

## A Theoretical Overview

The concept of literature constitutes one of the major preoccupations of Edward Said in his famous “Orientalism”. He sees literature within the institutions of the Gramscian civil society, which is part of the bourgeois hegemonic order through positive will and consensus (in contrast to coercive political society) and which is often mistakenly seen as ideologically neutral. In Said’s case this hegemony amounts to Europe’s cultural and political leadership over the East and expressed in the orientalist discourse. For Said Orientalism, broadly meaning an epistemological (in terms of theory building) and ontological (related to being) difference between the Occident (Europe) and the Orient (East) which culminates in “Eurocentrism” (a eurocentric production of knowledge which promotes the superiority of the west over the east) is basically part of a power relation with definite, imperialist tendencies in the Orient. In Foucault’s spirit, Said states that all knowledge creates power and this strong interest in knowing and dreaming about the East through factual (travels, discoveries) and fictional (novels, myths) means, is within this hegemonic system of power. For Said, literature is within these configurations of power because it may easily create a knowledge and a discourse legitimizing the orientalist view. He gives example of Flaubert’s account of an Egyptian woman whose representation (by the European man) fits perfectly the orientalist image of an Egyptian woman (shy, submissive, weak, ready to be possessed).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Said (1978) *Orientalism*, New-York: Pantheon Books.

Going back to Gramsci, literature is part of this attempted cultural leadership identified as hegemonic which gave orientalism its strength to survive over centuries with its collective notion of Europeans(us) vs. the non-Europeans(them). Some may argue that Europe's imperialist and colonizing tendencies towards the East is a political one and does not concern humanitarian sciences including literature. But as Said argues, society and literary culture can only be studied together and literature is in no way politically innocent. According to Said, something is political as long as it is close to or within the sources of power and as literature creates some sort of knowledge, builds a certain type of structure, circulates certain motives and images and adopts some kind of narrative, it is within the "power cultural" which indirectly(within the institutions of the civil society) serves the imperialist tendencies of Orientalism.<sup>2</sup>

For Tzvetan Todorov on the other hand, whose main preoccupation is to reach "universalism", literature is rather an "instrument". For Todorov, to reach the universal, one should be aware of its own culture. From the particular and local comes the universal. Literature is an important asset in digging (in Goethe's terminology) into one's own culture and in finding what's universal in there. Culture is not systemic but is made up of fragments, and contacts among cultures can only be enhanced by literature. Gabriel Garcia Marquez for instance in his "One Hundred Years of Loneliness" was rooted so much in the culture of the Caribbean but at the same time was really universal as it also made use of literary discoveries of Faulkner and Rabelais. Goethe was also interested in the contacts of different cultures. Todorov cites that in a letter he wrote, Goethe says: "I have never looked or made a step in a foreign country without the intention of recognizing in its most varied forms what is universally human." For Todorov-who is a true admirer of the Romantic German writer, Goethe in his universal literature, sought the greatest common product.<sup>3</sup>

According to Todorov, there are different levels of "truth". The production of truth can be either in the form of "truth adequation" and "truth disclosure". The former concerns the zero-sum ontological opposition between "true" and "false". The latter is based on the equivocal concept of "more or less". The truth disclosure is also called the novelist truth. Citing Stendhal and Auge, Todorov supports the view that novel is superior to history books because it goes beyond the factual, and superior to philosophy because it stays within the "specific" and as long as the realist literary tradition is concerned, gives truth with details. In sum, novel is a middle ground between philosophy and history and produces a higher form of truth to understand the society.

Benedict Anderson on the other hand has a quite different conception for literature. He is not interested in the analyses of different cultures and identities through the use of their separate literatures, but rather builds a general theory on how literature served to create a common imagined identity that later gave birth to imagined national identities. For Anderson whose main problematique is to build a (somewhat eurocentric) theory of nationalism, literature makes the cultural artefact of national imagination. The making of the modern nationalism has to do with the concept of "homogeneous empty time" which stresses simultaneous activity of people, in other words the temporal coincidence through clock and calendar, members of the society can thus imagine each other performing some sort of activity at a homogeneous time. This imagination is largely created through novel

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<sup>2</sup> Antonio Gramsci (1971) *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, New-York: International Publishers Co.

<sup>3</sup> Tzvetan Todorov (1981) *Introduction To Poetics*, University of Minnesota Press.

and, newspaper. Authors and readers move together through calendrical time. Anderson here gives examples of Filipino, Albanian and Mexican literature to show how the novel served to the formation of an imagined community. He does not differentiate between Albany, Mexico, and Philippines in terms of their cultural diversities but only gives them as examples to show the visualization of homogeneous empty time in different communities. As we said above, literature in Anderson's analysis is rather the independent variable which played (as far as Europe, that is the genuine and original dreamer is concerned) an essential role in the process of "print-capitalism", and in the creation of a national (shared) imagination.<sup>4</sup>

### **Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana (Mother State)***

Kemal Tahir (1910 - 1973) was a prominent Turkish novelist and intellectual. His most important novels include *Esir Şehrin İnsanları* (1956), *Devlet Ana* (1967) and *Yorgun Savaşçı* (1965), all in which Tahir uses historical background to support his characters and settings. Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana* (which can be translated as *Mother State*) is no doubt one of the most influential historical-novels of the late-Republican Era. In a sense it exemplifies Tzvetan Todorov's emphasis on how a novel can be more influential than a mere history book in propagating a peculiar understanding of history. It is certainly more entertaining and philosophical than a simple history book. Kemal Tahir's aim here is to transfer his philosophy of nationalism to the reader via a history novel based on a myth. As Anthony Smith puts, myths serve to relate present intentions to future purposes via references to the past.<sup>5</sup> Tahir makes use of the Ottoman dynastic myth to reinforce some of the old clichés used by the Kemalists to crystallize the Kemalist ideology as well as to show his nationalism based on a dichotomy of "east" vs "west". Here the analysis will focus on the presentation of the "other" (the enemy), its implicit contribution to the process of national imagination in an Andersonian sense, the usage of the myth of descent and some aspects of its implications in terms of age, gender and political domination.

*Devlet Ana* (DA) includes some of the traits that Anne Norton says that the "frontiersmen" possess. Those liminars far from the capital and the center are more equitable and just and they sympathize more easily with the underdog.<sup>6</sup> Throughout the novel it is stressed that Osman Bey and his father had a deep tolerance for different religious beliefs and they always have pity for the prisoners of war: "...Zorlu savaş atları besler Ertuğrul Bey...Yürekli ve de esir kısmına acır, ünü vardır..."<sup>7</sup> (Ertugrul feeds war horses, he has pity for the captives, he is brave.) They are self-reliant and independent. They have a big capacity for conquest as they are themselves in constant danger of being conquered.

In *Devlet Ana*, Tahir, sets dichotomous distinctions between the "Turkmens", their friends (all together forming the frame of the infant Ottoman State) and their enemies (mostly the Frankish people). There is a sharp distinction between the good (Turkmens) and evil (Frankish people) characters symbolizing the difference between the West and the East. As Norton says the enemies to whom the nation is supposed to oppose should be carefully chosen and there should be a

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson (1991) *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Smith (2010) *Nationalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>6</sup> Anne Norton (1988) *Reflections on Political Identity*, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

<sup>7</sup> Kemal Tahir (1967) *Devlet Ana*, Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, p.41.

discrimination between enemies and aliens. In DA the real enemy to the tribe of Osman Bey is the Frankish people. This enmity does not have a real material, basis in the novel except for the low personality traits attributed to them. Frankish people are greedy, pitiless etc.: "... Frenkin deli kudurganlığıdır bu, hiç bir zaman önleyemediği kan dökme tutkusu..."<sup>8</sup> Their empires are feudal and their lords own the land and whoever lives on their land is their property. This shows in fact the backwardness and the cruelty of the western dynasties vis a vis the infant Ottomans. In that picture Byzantium has a peculiar place which is shown as originally part of this Frankish Empire but later "forced" by the customs of Anatolia to change some of its "evil" institutions: "...İstanbul'un Bizansı Frenkin karanlık dünyasından kopup geldi. Ama oranın kölelik düzenini burada tutturamadı. Tutturamayınca da "toprak Allah'ın, İmparator kahya, köylü kiracı" demek zorunda kaldı. Frenkin düzeni köylüyü köle etmeye dayanır.... İşte bu yüzden say ki Frenk adamı kuduz canavarıdır. Kahpedir, kıyıcıdır, dini imanı soymaktır... Bizans köylüsü kabul etmez bu rezilliği..."<sup>9</sup> (The Frankish order is based on slavery. The Frankish people are like ravaged dogs. But the Byzantine peasants will not accept it. So they had to rent the land to the peasants...) The wickedness of the Frankish people is symbolized in the person of Notüs Gladyüs. He is the enemy, evil and cruel. Apart from him, there are other "bad" characters whose common point is their being non-Ottomans (religion is less important than the tribal affinities). In DA, the bad is also physically ugly. Therefore we have as the basic "bad" characters a fat Mongolian Çudaroğlu(...gövdesi kısa tombuldu...erimiş yağla doldurulmuş tuluma benziyordu...,p.241), an animal like Frankish Notüs Gladyüs(kısa, tıkız, hayvani), horse-faced Turkopol Uranha(uzun at suratlı, kafası omuzları inanılmayacak kadar sivri, çekik kirpiksiz gözlü...p.59) and Pervane whose ethnic affiliation is unclear. On the other hand the "good" characters are depicted as physically very beautiful. Osman Bey, Orhan Bey, Kerim, Mavro and their female counterparts( Balkız, Lotüs, Aslihan...)were all sharing common positive physical characteristics reinforcing the contrasting positive image vis a vis the west(Frankish people)created in the novel.

As far as the image and imagination is concerned Tahir's book aim at helping in a sense to build the image of a Turkish society whose existence is continuous in time. In Anderson's words Tahir "imagines" and make the readers "imagine" the idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through time. Although the events occur seven centuries ago, and most probably the customs of living and the mode of apprehending the world were very different in the world of the 1200's, Tahir uses modern concepts of time and space to create the sense of continuity in time. What Anderson calls homogeneous empty time and temporal coincidence between the communities, exist in DA. For example a calendrical time is specified (1290) in the novel. This time elapses normally (meaning according to the norms and understandings of the modern era) which reinforces the abovely mentioned idea of continuity over time. Besides, although in the culture of the so-called nomadic Turkish community everything was visual and oral, Tahir depicts us a society where the chains of communication are so well established that the Andersonian concept of common imagination within the society is made possible. The image of the fellow-members of the communion lives in the minds of each member of the society. Let's take as an example the concept of "ORTAK", a chain of trade and communication. In DA this "ORTAK" anachronically makes possible all

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid p.77.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid p.177

kinds of exchange of information: "...Osman Bey yarı deli görünüşüyle bu sıkı Moğol'un Kıbrıs'a haber salıp ne idüğü belirsiz bu iki serserinin kimliğini bütün girdisiyle çıktısıyla 15 günde öğrenmesini kışandı Bu, her yerde ORTAK diye anılan ticaret kumpanyasının korkunç gücünden ileri geliyordu....Bu kumpanya bütün Endonezya'dan Cermanya'ya, Seylan'dan Afrika'nın göbeğine, Kanarya adalarından Moskova prensliğine.... kadar uzanıyordu...."<sup>10</sup> (The ORTAK was a trade network ranging from Indonesia to Moscow which made the information spread very quickly). In fact Tahir imposes to the reader a contemporary view of the world. There are some other rather funny anachronisms that Tahir uses such as his usage of the modern greek expressions (panaya mu lotüsaki..) in the world of 1200's. He helps to imagine the lives of the older Turks for the present reader through using a peculiar narrative style (resembling the oğuz Turkish), and reanimating the well known ottoman dynastic myth so as to assure the sense of continuity over time and also to reinforce some stereotypical concepts of the Turkish thesis of history.

The Ottoman Dynastic myth is widely used in DA. Tahir makes heavy use of what is known as the official account of the foundations of dynasty and empire. This account is mainly created upon the works of historians such as Aşıkpaşazade, Ahmedi and Neşri. Ertuğrul is depicted as the heir to Seljuks and although explicit use of this myth of descent is carefully avoided in the book, we learn that the land of Söğüt was a gift to Ertuğrul Bey, and his tribe thus possessed the inheritance of Seljuks (in conformity with Fuat Köprülü's thesis of history<sup>11</sup>). The dream motif is also present in DA. Since in popular tales God can speak directly to man through dreams, it is natural to find the dream motif playing a part in the legends surrounding Osman and his father. Edeballi's famous dream which he interpreted as meaning that God had given rulership to Osman and his line is reproduced in the novel this time also including Yunus Emre. The genealogical myth that Ottomans physically descend from Oğuz also takes part within the novel: "Therefore we can appropriately say that the two basic features of Ottoman dynastic myth namely the concept of physical descent from Oğuz Khan, and spiritual descent from God through dreams are heavily used by Tahir with nonetheless more emphasis on the secular sides of them. For instance, as far as the gazi order is concerned Tahir omits the concept of Holy War and stresses the idea of voluntary means of acquiring livelihood: "Talan etmeyeceğiz! Din yaymağa çalışmayacağız! Tersine herkesin inancına saygılı olacağız! İnsanlar arasında din, soy, varlık bakımından hiçbir üstünlük tanımayacağız...."<sup>12</sup> (No plundering, no forcing of people for a specific religion but respect for everyone's beliefs....)

*Devlet Ana* gives us abundant material for analysis in terms of age, gender and political identity. Although *Devlet Ana* is a very entertaining novel and it is very meaningful in terms of the peculiar understanding of history it conveys so delicately. Tahir fails to legitimize its anti-westernism as he falls prey to the usage of some western gender and age stereotypes. First of all, Tahir has a very stereotypical (even ironical) conception of gender. He uses common clichés to physically describe women and men. The general patriarchal idea that women are men's possession and that they need men's protection are widely reproduced in the novel: "...Ağlamanın hiç yararı yok....Babamın öğüdüdür, kız kısmı istemediği bir herif edepsizlendi mi babasına, yoksa ağasına o da yoksa erkek hısımlarına

<sup>10</sup> Ibid p.150.

<sup>11</sup> See Fuat Köprülü (2000) *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu*, Ankara: Akçağ Yayınevi.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid p.178.

açacak.... Orhan Bey, Lotüs'ü tutup kabaca çekti kollarına aldı, sağ koluyla sımsıkı sardı. Kız, bulanık, anaforu akıntıdan büsbütün korkmuş, hafif bir çığlıkla göğsüne sığınmıştı, tüğ gibi hafifti yumuşacıktı. Orhan Bey keyiflendi..."<sup>13</sup> (No use for crying. A woman should talk to her father or brother when an unpleasant man annoys her....Orhan held Lotus very tightly, she was soft and fragile. Orhan enjoyed that..) The age difference between a woman and a man is not so important when it comes to marriage as: " Türkmende erkeğin yaşı yıllarla ölçülmez, yiğitlikle ölçülür. Bizde sakat makat olmayan erkeğin delikanlılığı kırkında başlar . Hele babam gibi güçlü yiğit yakışıklı oldu mu..."<sup>14</sup> (For the Turkmens, a man's age is measured through his bravery. A man's good years start at his forty, especially when he is handsome and brave like my father...)

It is possible to argue that Tahir does not reflect his own conception of gender but rather he tries to visualize the ways gender identity was apprehended in the early Ottomans. In DA there is also a homology between sexual and political dominance. Similar to Ashis Nandy's account of how sexual stereotypes were related to political domination in colonial and post-colonial India, we can detect some features of "manliness" in the political domination of the early ottoman period according to Tahir. The criteria of manliness in the novel are aggression, achievement, control, power courage, self-confidence and patience. These are necessary attributes to dominate politically in a border region where -warfare is much more common than peace and in a culture where "erkek kısmının değeri akıl ve de yürek ve de bilektir". (a man's worth is measured by his mind, heart and muscle). As for the women who have some control over the community (i.e. Bacıbey) these are more manlike and aggressive than their male counterparts: "...Osman Bey anası yerindeki Bacıbey tutup elini öpseydi ne bu kadar şaşırır ne de duygulanırdı. Bu selamda doğruca yüreğe dokunan, erkekçe güven vardı..."<sup>15</sup> Bacıbey whose son is killed by Notüs Gladys sheds no tears behind her son as he had a love affair with a non-muslim woman but preaches revenge before everyone else. In DA where there is an implicit praise to the bravery and warriorship of the turkmens, asceticism, intellectuality are second order. Although at the end of the novel Kerimcan finishes by returning to his "dervish order" and reads "Siyasetname", his courage and ability as a warrior is put before his "asceticism" not only in the eyes of his tribesmen but also in the eyes of the readers... As far as age is concerned I'll again make use of some categories elaborated by Ashis Nandy. Nandy tells us how in the minds of the colonizers-though they are not fully aware of that- the colonized is akin to a child whose growing up depends on the colonizers. The so-called "white man's burden" to bring civilization to the lands of primitive people is homologous to this dichotomy between childhood and adulthood. In other words there is a homology between childhood and the state of being colonized or primitive. Thus being a child, or being childlike is synonymous in a sense with being dominated. The idea of fully socialized male adulthood symbolizes the perfect human being.<sup>16</sup> We see a similar logic in DA. Although most of the protagonists in the novel are quite young (Orhan Bey is only 13 years old), there are in fact no children or more truly childish behaviour in the novel. They all act as grownups and it seems as if they had no childhood at all. This serves in the

<sup>13</sup> Ibid p.144.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid p.408.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid p.426.

<sup>16</sup> Ashis Nandy (1989) *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press.

novel to show that Turks have never been primitive or backward and thus they never deserved to be politically dominated. The delegitimization of both femininity and childhood in the political domain serves to reinforce this idea.

### **Atilla İlhan's *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları (Morning Prayers in Istanbul)***

Atilla İlhan (1925-2005) was a Turkish poet, writer and journalist. His famous novel *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları*<sup>17</sup> (DSE) is also historical novel. Similar to Kemal Tahir's *Devlet Ana*, this novel also constitutes a good example of Todorov's emphasis on how an "assertive" literary piece of work can be as influential as a mere history book in propagating a certain understanding of history and politics. Similar to *Devlet Ana*, its language and narrative style gives us the impression that the author(or more truly the narrator) does in fact live in those days with these people(there exists a reality effect, the impression of reality which substitutes truth with fiction). The protagonists live through historical events; they are either witnessing or actively participating in these events. They make history and the reader who identifies himself with the protagonists feels as if s/he also takes part in the making of that history. To increase this impression of reality, both authors(Tahir and İlhan) adds some familiar(but somehow obscure, even mystical) figures among the protagonists. Yunus Emre who appeared as a "clairvoyant" dervish in DA is similar to Osman Nevres in DSE who uses the nickname of Hasan Tahsin. In addition to all these familiarization and identification mechanisms Atilla İlhan inserts some "real" newspaper articles within the chapters which reinforce his thesis of history and which "guide" the reader throughout the story.

But what is the nature of this thesis (or more truly, "peculiar" understanding) of history and politics developed by Atilla İlhan? İlhan devoted considerable volumes to put forth his understanding of "modernization". In *Hangi Batı (Which West?)*, he emphasized that the Turkish Evolution should develop along the lines of modern civilization/not western diplomacy. In that respect İlhan despised both the imitators of the West which humiliated their past and glorified western civilization and those "socialists" whose theories merely reflect the dogmas of some philosophers and some standards previously determined. İlhan asserts that in both cases there is no national salvation, no authenticity, but only imitation; in fact Eurocentrism. Thus he glorifies Mustafa Kemal who fought against the imperialist West. İlhan reformulates Mustafa Kemal's assertion "Biz bize benzeriz" (We are all alike) as "Biz bize benzemeliyiz" (We should be all alike).<sup>18</sup>

In *Dersaadet'te Sabah Ezanları* (DSE) we observe the same dilemma experienced by the Turkish bourgeois intelligentsia who assumed the responsibility to save the Empire from disintegration in the first quarter of the century. There are two trends, in fact two orientations among those elites: Either towards France or Germany.

The French oriented bourgeoisie is symbolized mainly in the person of "Bacaksız" (legless) Abdi Bey and his "entourage" composed of the Jewish "Mizrahi" family, his various love affairs including Roza and Rachel Mizrahi, Gülistan Satvet and the "jeunes-turcs" who formed "Union and Progress". Throughout the novel we see that

<sup>17</sup> Dersaadet refers to Istanbul. It means happy and rich city. So the novel can be translated as "Morning Prayers in Istanbul".

<sup>18</sup> Atilla İlhan (2001) *Hangi Batı*, İstanbul: Bilgi Yayınevi.

Abdi Bey who becomes the deputy of Salonika in the second “Meclis-i Mebusan” (Grand Assembly) represents the general “jeune-turc” liberal mentality (mostly the French- English oriented wing of it) and his fate is parallel to that of the “Union and Progress” which lost power after the First World War. Abdi Bey and his entourage’s pro-French worldviews exemplify a kind of orientalism directed towards their own society (also showing their own colonized minds) reinforced by the power politics of their era.

In Edward Said’s account, Britain and France dominated the world orientalist system and the idea that the European identity was a superior one in comparison with non European nations. This Eurocentric belief is reinforced with the rhetoric about “the white man’s burden”. Throughout DSE we see examples of this eurocentric worldview: “...L’Humanité Türkiye’yi parçalamak istediklerini tebarüz ettirip, şöyle devam etmektedir: “Sosyalist dostlarımız, Balkanlardaki Cumhuriyet Federasyonu yanında, Anadolu’da bir Rum-Türk Federasyonunun teşkilini öneriyorlar.”<sup>19</sup>. (Here we see the paternalistic attitude of the french socialists who know what is good for the Turkish society.) Another interesting example may be found in the depiction by Abdi Bey of a Chinese woman living in Paris. Although the French or western educated Turkish women are described generally as being very beautiful, charming and seducing, this unique Chinese woman (although she lives in Paris just like the other female figures) is quite different. “ Abdi Bey, Armande’in omuzu üzerinden, Madam Nhung’un suratını görebiliyor: Kaplan üçgeni bir surat, sarı esmer bir ten, bıçağın ucuyla çizilivermişe benzer iki çekik göz. Bakışları sahiden kızılımtırak mı; sanki kan sızıntısı, insanın aklına önüne geleni tirmalamaya hazır bir Siyam kedisini getirmektedir. Sizi temin ederim mon cher, eğer iblis kadına tebdil olsaydı, filhakika böyle bir siması olurdu...”<sup>20</sup> ( So the Chinese woman is depicted as satanic because of her redish eyes, triangular face and dark yellow skin).

In line with this Eurocentrism, we see in DSE a strong “xenophilic” attitude on the parts of the Turkish bourgeois intelligentsia. According to Todorov, “xenophilia” has to do with an inferiority complex; whereby a culture is perceived as wholly superior. Todorov also calls this attitude “malinchismo” which means an inferiority complex vis a vis an other culture.<sup>21</sup> In that process, “the self is in a way erased, it is assimilated by the other”. “Bacaksız” Abdi Bey is in many ways a xenophilic (especially towards the British culture), a cosmopolitan similar to his “comrades”: “...İngiliz taraftarlığı kuvvetlendirilmeli, vakit geçirilmeksizin bütün memlekete teşmil edilmelidir. .Bizim için çare-yi halas, İngiliz idaresi altma girmektir...”<sup>22</sup> (We should be ruled by the British). Abdi Bey, his friends and lovers generally speak a mixed language among each other. It is half Turkish and half French. So we normally see sentences such as “Bonsoir ma chere, au revoir mon bey”. This inferiority complex comes from their “şarklı” (oriental) background. “Şarklılık” is synonymous with “primitiveness”(which in fact leads to colonization as in India). Therefore Abdi Bey accords at most importance to “asrilik” (to be modern). (...birlikte,dedi, osmanlı taşrasının tahammül fersa hayatını yaşamayacağız. Bunu bilhassa tebarüz ettirmek arzusundayım. Vaziyet tavazzuh etsin ihtimal Paris’e yerleşiriz. Her veçile asri bir kadın olmanız, şayan-ı temennidir. Dişlerinin arasından Fransızca tekrarlıyor:.. une

<sup>19</sup> Atilla İlhan (2010) Dersaadet’te Sabah Ezanları, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, p. 113.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid p. 137.

<sup>21</sup> See Todorov (1981) *Introduction to Poetics*.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 91.

femme tout a fait moderne”...”<sup>23</sup> (We will settle in Paris, not live in the Ottoman villages, and I want you to become a totally modern woman).

Another concept related to eurocentrism and xenophilia is colonization. Eventhough Turkey has never been fully colonized as in the case of Far East and Africa, it came quite close to it (semi-colonization), and more important than that, there occurred a colonization in the minds of people or in other words some people’s minds were already colonized by the imperialist western cultures and norms before an actual colonization took place. Those people were the western educated petty bourgeoisie represented in the person of Abdi Bey. In his *Intimate Enemy*, Ashis Nandy explains how the culture of colonialism manages to perpetuate itself by inducing the colonized to accept new social norms and cognitive categories. In that way, many concepts with which anti-colonial movements work with are borrowed from the imperialist culture itself.<sup>24</sup> In DSE we often see the sensitivity of the “ittihatçı” (unionist) to preserve the integrity of the Ottoman Empire against the English and Russian imperialisms. Against the Reval conference between English and Russians where the “sick man of Europe” was finally divided in principle, all the members of the “Union and Progress” worked unanimously to reopen the Assembly. Nevertheless it was also well known that they had a pro-British tendency: “...Her tonda liberal olan jöntürkler, Almanya’nın, Sultan Hamit rejiminin coşkulu bir destekleyicisi olduğuna inanıyorlardı. Bu yüzden Alman nüfuzunu yeni rejim için tehlike gördüler. Jöntürklerin liberalizmi için başından beri Anglomania belirtileri gösteriyordu. Hürriyet, parlamento, halk hükümeti ve ülkesi olarak İngiltere övülüyordu...”<sup>25</sup> (The British parliamentary system was praised as part of the young Turcs’ liberalism and Anglomania...)

Union and Progress and its liberal pro-western ideology was criticized and satirized by İlhan in the person of Abdi Bey. Other than having a colonized mind, Abdi Bey was also physically ugly; he was very short (eciş bücüş, cüce gibi bir şey), lacking sensitivity, and having perverse sexual impulses. His patriotism was in fact a “pseudo-patriotism” which was limited by imitating the West (especially France), and by political pragmatism. Abdi Bey was also against the workers’ movements. In 1908 he was in charge of controlling and suppressing a general strike organized in Saloniki: “...Biz kendimizi vatanı istihlasa vakfettik mon cher, bu amele tayfasıyla mı uğraşacağız...”<sup>26</sup> (We are busy saving the country, we have no time for the workers!) Abdi Bey’s lack of sensitivity was contrasted to his wife Neveser (frau Abdi) a “müteverrim”, educated this time in the German manner. Their misfit is exemplified in many cases (for instance, when they are with their lovers, Abdi Bey with Rachel remembers a Bulgarian folk song; “Tuna’da çırpar bezini/ hayda more/ kim sevmez bulgar kızını... Whereas Neveser with her lover Munif Sabri recalls a poem by Tevfik Fikret: “sen olmasan, seni bir lahza görmesem yahud, bilir misin ne olur? Sen olmasan, seni bulmak hayali olsa muhal yaşar mıyım dersin? . . .)

The second western orientation in the novel is the German orientation symbolized by Abdi Bey’s wife’s family. Neveser, educated with “schwester” Magda, “tante” Ulrike had a “pro-german father” “Alamancı” Ziya Bey. He admires Germans and works in “the Deuthche Levant Line”. As Bismarck defeated French who lacked the German discipline and loyalty (like Abdi Bey who spends most of

<sup>23</sup> Ibid p.198.

<sup>24</sup> Ashis Nandy (1989) *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>25</sup> İlhan, p.145.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid p.136.

his time with “femmes legeres”), Ziya Bey supports the German influence and protection in the Empire. Germans give more importance to industrialization an idea also stressed by İlhan elsewhere) which increases his admiration. Abdi Bey hates his father in law: “...Herif bir nevi Alman mon cher! Alman ırkının türlü mazarratını nefsinde cemetmiş...”<sup>27</sup> (The man is almost a German! He shows all the weird traits of the German race.) The German orientation within the Union and Progress is symbolized with warriorship, hard work and discipline. What Germany did in Prussia is generally appreciated and it is often stressed that the coup d'état of 1908 was in fact realized by the pro-Germans in the army. Contrary to passive pro-French and English officers those germanophilic officers are men of action. But their activities don't bring real freedom to the country: “...İttihat ve Terakki'de daha önceleri ön planda yer alan Parisli ve Londralı jöntürkler saf dışı edildiler... Artık yönetici duruma jöntürklerin askeri önderleri geçmişti ...Bunların çoğu Prusya türü eğitim görmüş Mahmut Şevket Paşa, Enver Bey türünden kişilerdi. Prusya kafasıyla yetiştirilmiş bu kişiler, devrimci anti emperyalist bir halk hareketinin başında egemenlik haklarına sahip sömürge bağlarından kurtulmuş bir Türk Devleti uğruna verilecek kavgayı yönetecek yerde, ülkelerini yeniden Alman emperyalizmine bağımlı kıldılar.”<sup>28</sup> (The ruling elites of the young Turks such as Enver and Mahmut Şevket had Prussian type of education. So instead of fighting for the anti-imperialist popular resistance for an independent Turkey, they made us dependent upon Germany.)

A different type of western and German orientation is found in the person of Ahmet Ziya, Neveser's brother, educated in Berlin. He is a socialist and together with his friends (Meleho Avram and Beşir Usta) they try to form a branch of the socialist party in Turkey. They often shout joyfully “Proletarier aller Lander, vereinigt euch!” They see the liberation of the country in the internationalist workers movment. (It is in line with Anne Norton's views that where the workers are actually fewer in number they become signs for their countries salvation). The identification of nation and worker and the “worker as the mythic representative of the nation, are dependent on the absence of a real working class”. Also worker's movement indicates the transcendence of national boundaries, and a communal identification of the nation with others sharing “a world historical position”.<sup>29</sup> This communal identity is observed during the big Salonika strike where “hilekar rumlar, geveze yahudiler, tahta sakallı priştine arnavutlar, mütehammil türkler, hoyrat sırlar, ele avuca sığmaz bulgar komitacıları”, Greek, Jewish, Albanian, Bulgarian, Sirbian workers all come together. Nevertheless in line with İlhan's rejection of eurocentric solutions to national question, İlhan (the narrator) despise the socialist doctor Meleho Avram who is depicted as egoistic and pedant.

So where lies the solution? The solution is within the national struggle. A struggle which is authentic to the Turkish nation symbolized by Mustafa Kemal. In DSE the person of Mustafa Kemal and the national solution is represented by Munif Sabri who had no foreign education in either France or Germany. He is (accidentally) blond just like Mustafa Kemal, and proudly says that he has complete trust in Mustafa Kemal Pasha. In Istanbul where only the “ezans” (prayers) show the “turkishness” of the city, Munif Sabri is depicted as the true lover, true fighter and the real courageous one: The altruistic who dies for his country. And this is the

<sup>27</sup> Ibid p. 212.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid p.172.

<sup>29</sup> Anne Norton (1988) *Reflections on Political Identity*, Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.

culminating point in İlhan's thesis that western civilization through blood and violence cannot elevate the Turkish nation.

### **Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar and *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (*The Time Regulation Institute*)**

Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (1901 - 1962) was one of the most important modern novelists and essayists of Turkish literature. He was also a member of the Turkish parliament (the Grand National Assembly of Turkey) between 1942 and 1946. Tanpınar's *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (SAE) which was translated into English by Maureen Freely as *The Time Regulation Institute* is an allegorical novel criticizing various aspects of the Kemalist Ideology. The analysis below will mainly concentrate on the "leadership aspect" of Kemalism that Tanpınar implicitly criticizes. The "father complex" he talks about is the most controversial aspect of the Kemalist ideology. The analysis firstly will concentrate on the main character of the novel Hayri İrdal in whose person the Turkish intellectual society is criticized.

The most important character (who is also the narrator) in the novel is Hayri İrdal. He is not a real character in fact, or in other words he does not have a clear cut personality. He lives in a dream-like world and parallel to this he has a "shadowy" existence, He is not real, not unified. He is part of the schizophrenic society which tries to reconcile contradictory, mostly irreconcilable trends. Hayri İrdal in many respects represents the Turkish society that doesn't know where it belongs, to the west or to the east, to the past or to the future. This schizophrenia and fragmentation of personality as well as the wish to escape the world of the real and live in a world of illusions and "doxas" (in the platonic sense) is apparent in the novel.

Hayri İrdal is a passive individual and he has a serious "father complex" and cannot impose his own will to the people and events that surround him. He is a foreigner, a liminal, a spectator: "Hayatımı düşündükçe daima kendimde seyirci haletiruhiyesi hakim olduğumu gördüm. Başkalarının halini, tavırlarını görmek, onlar üzerinde düşünmek bana kendi vaziyetimi daima unutturdu."<sup>30</sup> (When I think of my life, I see that I have always been a spectator. Seeing others' attitudes, thinking about them have made me forget about my own condition.)

As he himself is unable to impose his own will upon the others and challenge the world of the real, others' wills are generally imposed upon him and he is easily manipulated. His lack of self-confidence, maturity and inner strength lead him to seek father figures (or leaders in a more sociological perspective) that will tell him what he should do: "...Ben yıllarca bu adamların arasında, onların rüyaları içerisinde yaşadım. Zaman zaman onların kılıklarına girdim, mizaçlarını benimsedim. Hiç farkında olmadan bazan Nuri efendi, bazan Lutfullah, veya Abdiisselam Bey oldum. Onlar benim örneklerim, farkında olmadan yüzümde bulduğum maskelerimdi..."<sup>31</sup> (I lived among these men, within their dreams for years. They were my examples, my masks...) Hayri İrdal is a prototypical figure of the many intellectuals of the pre-republican era. A popular coffeehouse (kahve) that he visits frequently in

<sup>30</sup> Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar (1962) *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü*, İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p.49.

Şehzadebaşı tells us allegorically that the Turkish intellectuals of the post-tanzimat Era are alienated, lonely, displaced just like Hayri Bey. In this "kahve" there are three classes or rather strata of people akin to those of the society: "Nizamı-alemciler" the aristocratic intellectuals that aim at changing the world, "Eşefili şark" the masses, and "Şiş Taifesi" the uncivilized vulgar people. We can see from this allegory that the "Şehzadebaşı Kahvesi" in fact represents the Turkish society and Hayri İrdal is a common member of that society. Hayri Bey together with other people in this "kahve" represents for Tanpınar the society in search of a father figure that can give them a coherent and unitary identity.

This search for a father figure is an important component of the Ottoman-Turkish society. As Weber puts it the patrimonial tradition of the Ottoman society, the idea of "hisba" which sees the sultan as the father and protector of the whole Ottoman society forms the basis for this endless search for fatherlike leaders.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless Tanpınar's peculiar use of this "father complex" is more significant than that. It is related to the personality cult formed in the person of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk which forms the basis of Kemalist ideology. As Taha Parla says, the Kemalist regime is based upon an irrational personality cult of Mustafa Kemal.<sup>33</sup> Many aspects of this cult making around a charismatic (in the Weberian sense) leader is present as part of the general ironic criticisms in SAE. Hayri İrdal (representing, as mentioned above, a prototypical alienated semi-intellectual) who is always in search of fatherlike figures is part of this cult-making in the person of Halit Ayarçı (representing allegorically Mustafa Kemal): "...Bu eserin gördüğü rağbeti enstitümüzün kurucusu , aziz velinimetim, büyük dostum, beni hiçten bugünkü şahsiyetime eriştiren yüksek meziyetlerine borçluyum..Zaten hayatımda iyi güzel ne varsa hepsi o büyük adamındır..."<sup>34</sup> (The attention and interest shown to our Institute is totally indebted to the work of our founder, my dear friend, the person who took me from zero and brought to these days. In any case, whatever is good and successful in my life is thanks to him...) This part is especially parallel to the ironic statement made by one of his loyalmen to Atatürk: "What is Zero? That is me, compared to you, my Pasha!"

This search for father figure (Atacılık sendromu-fatherhood syndrome- as Taha Parla says) is typical for Turkish society and as Dr Ramiz's diagnosis shows it is not peculiar to the pre- Kemalist Turkish society (represented in the person of Halit Ayarçı): "...Bakın etrafa hep maziden şikayet ediyoruz, hepimiz onunla meşgulüz. Onu içinden değiştirmek istiyoruz. Bunun manası nedir? Bir baba kompleksi değil mi? Şu Etilere, Frikyalılar'a bilmem ne kavimlerine muhabbetimiz nedir? Baba kompleksinden başka birşey mi?"<sup>35</sup> (Look around you, everyone is complaining about the past. What does that mean? Isn't it a father complex? What is this exaggerated interest for the past cultures and peoples? Nothing but father complex!) As Dr. Ramiz says Halil İrdal has remained a child, he couldn't become an adult. This represents the lack of maturity and self-governing power in the society. As Ashis Nandy says childhood is akin to the primitive stage of manhood and requires guidance.<sup>36</sup> This is the paradox of the Turkish society highly perpetuated during and after the Kemalist Era in the personality cult of Mustafa Kemal: "This is the paradox of the Charismatic leadership: as the leader is exaggerated the individuals as well as the society gets more and more powerless

<sup>32</sup> Max Weber (1978) *Economy and Society*, Univ. of California Press.

<sup>33</sup> Taha Parla (1991) *Türkiye'de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, s. 176.

<sup>34</sup> Tanpınar, p.10.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p.15.

<sup>36</sup> Ashis Nandy (1989) *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, Oxford University Press.

and childlike.<sup>37</sup> Halil İrdal is guided and manipulated by Halit Ayarçı and his love and hate relationship with the latter (just like a child towards his father) is often emphasized: "...Ne garipti, hepimiz Halit Ayarçı'nın elinde bir kukla gibiydik. O bizi istediği noktaya getiriyor ve orada bırakıyordu. Ve biz o zaman, sanki evvelden rolümüzü ezberlemiş gibi oynuyorduk. İçimde ona karşı hiddet, kin, isyan ve hayranlık birbirine karıştıyordu."<sup>38</sup> (It was so weird. We were all puppets at the hands of Halit Ayarçı.... I had mixed feelings of hatred, revolt and admiration towards him...)

Another aspect of this search for fatherlike figure inherent in the society is the "group psychology". As far as SAE is concerned the concept of group psychology will be used in two related ways. First of all, we will deal with the Freudian concept of the group psychology (elaborated in *The Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*) which relates the coherence and unity of a group to its fatherlike leader. In an all encompassing ideology like Kemalism (represented in SAE in the bureaucratic working of SAE) the idea of a homogeneous group (here of course group refers to the whole community which embraces this ideology) the mechanism of the Freudian group psychology does in fact exist. Tracing its roots back to *Totem and Taboo*, Freud says that in all coherent and unified groupings there exists an identification with the community's leader.<sup>39</sup> This identification is apparent in SAE as all the members of the SAE work in harmony with the wishes of Halit Ayarçı (until of course it comes to the question of house building) and the childish admiration of Halil İrdal to his "velinimet" (beloved one).

Nevertheless this mechanism of group membership (in the novel taking part in the huge bureaucracy of SAE) turns negative as members of a group act like automats leaving all their conscience and logic aside. In SAE, the major requisite of the newly formed bureaucracy is people that will work like automats, the so-called "plak-insan": "Yani bir nevi otomatizm...Asrımızın asıl büyük zaafı ve kudreti. İçten içe hazırlanan aydınlık ve düzenli yeni Ortaçağın temeli ve belkemiği. Haklısınız Hayri Bey...Hayri Bey siz bir dahisiniz. Öyle bir şeyi buldunuz ki..Tam çalar saat gibi konuşup susacak insanlar.değil mi? Plak insan...Harika!"<sup>40</sup> This shows in the novel in a Kafkaesk manner, how the Kemalist bureaucracy in the allegorical foundation of SAE aims at creating uniform and mindless people cut from their past (mazi) and mere imitators of their leader (or the leading cadre).

The second concept of group psychology that will be used relating to SAE is that of Erich Fromm. Nevertheless Fromm's concept of group psychology is more politicized and in fact he uses it as a socio-political concept to explain the birth of "Nazism". In *Escape from Freedom* Fromm says that one of the basic needs of human beings is to be related to the world outside from them, and to avoid loneliness. Says Fromm: "A human being may be physically lonely but at least he can be related to sociological norms that gives him the feeling of belonging to somewhere, to some values or ideas. If he loses these norms he finds himself in an unbearable loneliness and isolation."<sup>41</sup> This loneliness and isolation is the psychological situation of most Turkish-intellectuals in the pre- Kemalist era in SAE. The liminality of the intellectuals of "Şehzadebaşı Coffeehouse", their

<sup>37</sup> Parla, p.177.

<sup>38</sup> Tanpınar, p.266.

<sup>39</sup> Sigmund Freud (2010) *The Group Psychology and The Analysis of The Ego*, New-York: Batleby.com.

<sup>40</sup> Tanpınar, p. 206.

<sup>41</sup> Erich Fromm (1994) *Escape From Freedom*, New-York: Henry Holt and Co, p.118.

immobility, weariness exemplifies this situation: “Yavaş yavaş bu hayata ben de alıştım. Ne kadar hafif ve rahattı. Uysal kalabalık başta kendisi olmak üzere insana herşeyi unutturuyordu. İşimden çıkar çıkmaz bir soluk oraya uğruyor, daha ilk adımda sanki bir başkası oluyor, günlük üzüntülerden uzak yalnız şakadan bir aleme giriyordum...”<sup>42</sup> (Slowly I got used to this life. The docile crowd would make everyone forget about everything. I was going there after work, and lose myself in an unreal but pleasant atmosphere...)

The whole life story of Hayri İrdal does in fact tell us his search for avoiding his ultimate isolation, alienation. Fromm says that in such depressive situations, to avoid isolation and loneliness people may advocate the most despotic, even totalitarian regimes. They wish to melt within this crowd where spirits are united for one “ultimate” goal in the person of their leader. To our opinion, Tanpınar's view of Kemalism is similar to Fromm's views of Nazism. Kemalism (as we understand from the mottos of SAE) is totalitarian and despotic. First of all the real meaning of SAE is in fact controlling and regulating not watches but “human beings”: “...Saatin kendisi mekan, yürüyüşü zaman, ayarı insandır...Bu da gösterir ki zaman ve mekan insanla mevcuttur!... Ayarsız saat bu halim selim adamı çileden çıkarırdı. Meşrutiyetten sonra bilhassa şehir saatleri çoğalınca ayarsız saat göreceğim korkusuyla muvakkithaneden çıkmaz olmuştu...”<sup>43</sup>. (A clock is a space, it walks with time, and regulated by men. An unregulated clock would make this calm man crazy. He would not leave his office with the fear of seeing an unregulated clock...) The strong emphasis put on work and working(in a regulated and coherent manner) also have some totalitarian associations. Moreover, as said above, Kemalism is closely related to the personality cult created around his leader Mustafa Kemal. In fact our protagonists in SAE all joyfully accept to work in SAE (meaning becoming part of the Kemalist cadres)under the guidance of Halit Ayarçı as their liminality and isolation turns unbearable. Even if they turn into puppets or develop authoritarian personality traits they remain within this ideology which gives them some sort of shelter(and in the case of SAE some material gain as well) and normally do not question their adherence to these absurd ideologies. Although in the end of SAE Halil İrdal paradoxically begins to question his puppet position and starts to quest for “absolute truth” he cannot quit SAE although he knows the absurdity of it as the “outside” world is more frightening for him, for such a “little child”(the Turkish society in fact) unable to solve its problems by himself.

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