

Modernization Narratives in Turkish Novel: A Spatial Perspective on Public and Private Spheres

Türk Romanında Modernleşme Anlatıları: Kamusal ve Özel Alanlara Mekânsal Bir Bakış

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ABSTRACT

The novel genre first appeared in Turkish literature in the nineteenth century, following the Westernization movements. Beginning with the “Tanzimat period (1860-1895)” and the subsequent periods of “National Literature (1911-1923)” and “Republican Literature (1923-1940)”, as identified by literary critics, novel became a medium where social and spatial issues and changes in everyday life were revealed. This study examines briefly the spatial changes that occurred in public and private spheres as a result of modernization endeavors during the late Ottoman and early Republican periods by looking at the literature and architecture of the period, and in reference to the three periods mentioned above. The periods of literary historiography mentioned above, correspond to the period under discussion and draw its chronological framework. It is argued in this context that, the interdisciplinary approach makes it possible to see overlapping and differentiating aspects in narratives and architectural practices regarding the perception and use of public and private spaces and corresponding daily life practices. The themes determined by the examination of novels representing the three periods of Turkish literature history are presented together with quotations from the sampled novels and brief architectural discussions, and the prominent aspects are discussed in both contexts.

Keywords: Modernization, Turkish novel, Modern Turkish architecture, Public sphere, Private sphere

ÖZ

Roman türü Türk edebiyatında ilk olarak on dokuzuncu yüzyılda, Batılılaşma hareketlerini takiben ortaya çıkmıştır. Edebiyat eleştirmenleri tarafından tanımlandığı şekliyle, “Tanzimat dönemi (1860-1895)” ve ardından gelen “Millî Edebiyat (1911-1923)” ve “Cumhuriyet Edebiyatı (1923-1940)” dönemleriyle birlikte roman, toplumsal ve mekânsal meselelerin ve gündelik hayattaki değişimlerin ortaya konulduğu bir mecra haline gelmiştir. Bu çalışma, geç Osmanlı ve erken Cumhuriyet dönemlerinde modernleşme girişimlerinin bir sonucu olarak kamusal ve özel alanda meydana gelen mekânsal değişimleri, dönemin edebiyatı ve mimarlığına odaklanarak ve yukarıda bahsedilen üç döneme referansla inceler. Yukarıda bahsedilen edebiyat tarihi dönemleri, tartışılan döneme tekabül etmek ve onun kronolojik çerçevesini çizmektedir. Bu bağlamda disiplinlerarası yaklaşımın; kamusal ve özel alanların algılanışı ve kullanımı ile bunlara karşılık gelen gündelik yaşam pratiklerine ilişkin anlatılarda ve mimari pratiklerde örtüşen ve farklılaşan yönleri görmeyi mümkün kıldığı savunulmaktadır. Türk edebiyat tarihinin üç dönemini temsil eden ve romanların incelenmesiyle belirlenen temalar, örneklenen romanlardan alıntılar ve kısaca mimari tartışmalarla birlikte sunulmakta ve öne çıkan yönler her iki bağlamda da tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Modernleşme, Türk romanı, Modern Türk mimarlığı, Kamusal alan, Özel Alan

Introduction

“Modernization”, as narrated in literature and experienced in architecture is an overarching concept that associates literature and architecture as mutually representative spheres of cultural production, starting from the Late Ottoman period. The Late Ottoman period was a prolific era, in terms of the extensive social, political, and cultural transformations that took place in all spheres of daily life, which have been shaped for centuries, by the Islamic doctrines. The literature and architecture of the period witnessed intensive production and represent overtly the social changes and their cultural implementations, and thus serve well to examine the modernization venture of the Ottoman Empire (Seyhan, 2014, s. 34). In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire began to shrink and entered a period of scientific and intellectual stagnation. The state authorities turned to Europe to import renovation ideas and related political and cultural practices (Batur, 1985, p. 1039).

The Ottoman elite, influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution and Enlightenment, supported this maneuver. In accordance with the political developments of the time, the “West” in this period would refer to Europe and, in particular, to the geography of Western Europe- as a model for renovation.¹

Westernization movements were active also in the Ottoman cultural context. As a cultural pursuit, literature became instrumental in introducing the “novel” genre to Ottoman society. Novels of the period form a corpus that allows tracing the social and spatial changes that started in the late Ottoman period, and thus continued well until the end of the Early Republic. Accordingly, this research traces the emergence of the novel as a literary genre from the late Ottoman period and analyses the public and private spaces depicted in the narratives in the light of the architectural developments, including the Early Republican period. In this way, it benefits from literature as a complementary archive in social and spatial history studies.

Methods

Interdisciplinarity and such diverse research tracks as actors and experiences have enriched the boundaries and scope of architectural historiography in the second half of the twentieth century. Literary works that construct characters, places and events are now considered as a “narrative repository” in current architectural history research and writing. The literary narrative in this sense are taken critically as a potential interface that allows spatial experiences for its audience. In particular, novels depicting daily life are potent in revealing social and spatial realities that are not voiced in architectural/urban studies (Çağlar, Ultav, Boyacıoğlu, 2013, p. 63). In this paper as well, literature is instrumentalized to examine the changing state of late Ottoman and Early Republican public and private spheres from the eyes and experiences of novel characters.

The spatial equivalents of Westernization activities in the last period of the Ottoman Empire have an important place in the architectural historiography of the period, where literature serves as a strong complementary corpus; novels present the kinds of changes that have occurred in the space experienced and perceived throughout the period. As the novel genre was used as a means of both spreading Westernization and modernizing the family through fictional characters, the literature of the period between the Late Ottoman and the Early Republic is recognized as one of the most powerful information channels of social life. (Torlak, 2012, p. 137-153)². This study, accordingly, examines how and in what way the changes in the public and private spheres during the process of modernization activities were reflected in the novels of the period.

For this purpose, a group of novels that take the urban context as setting are used as references.³ The novels are selected based on preliminary research as well as classifications by various literary anthologies, literary historians, and critics. Novels that particularly focus on urban, architectural and spatial environments and/or depict them through the eyes of characters are selected and included in the study. The article provides a panorama of both the narrated and the actual public and private spaces, as literary material is a fictitious creation which requires a critical approach. The cultural and social life of the period

¹ As Afife Batur puts forward, contrary to what is generally assumed, taking the West as a model was neither a one-way nor a spontaneous orientation. The orientation was guided by the European countries which had already developed an interest in the East and approached it as a new market to expand production and trade capacity in the 17th century (Batur, 1985, p. 1039).

² Torlak argues that the capacity of the novel as a vehicle of the

depicted in the novels are highlighted to illustrate their influences on the use and perception of space.

To this end, the article chronologically follows the shifts and ruptures that literary historians have identified in the literature of the periods under consideration and provides a snapshot of the changes in the cultural and literary practices together with corresponding architectural productions and developments. In this respect, it intends to present complementing layers of insight into the changing state of public and private spheres and spaces via literary narratives.

Pre-Republican Era: Ottoman Societal Westernization Through Culture, Literature and Architecture

In the late Ottoman period, the anticipated renovations took place largely in the military, state administration, education, and technology contexts, and had far-reaching effects on the social and cultural apparatuses of the Empire. The Empire went through a process of intense economic and socio-political transformation aimed at modernizing the existing administrative systems of public and state affairs (Çelik, 1986, p. 31). It was recognized that the religious and military institutions met the needs and expectations of the state, and that the survival of the system depended on the modernization of the administrative apparatuses that would raise the status of the Ottoman state to that of European states (İnalçık, 1995, p. 135).

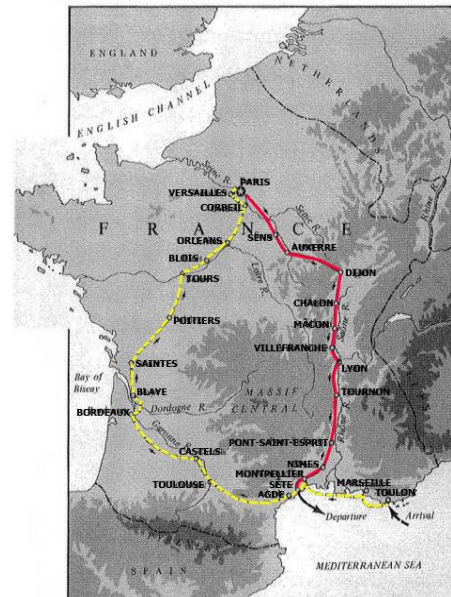


Figure 1. Ambassador Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi’s route to and from Paris. The yellow line indicates his route to Paris, the red line his return route (Göçek, 1996, p. 19).

France was seen as the role-model country to follow besides being the first country in the European continent to establish diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire. According to Batur, Ottoman state and French regime remained in close contact through diplomacy as the Ottoman state was the biggest market in the region and the French regime considered the Ottoman Empire as the biggest rival and obstacle in trade (Batur, 1985, p. 1039) (Figure 1).

modernization project began to lose its impact in the 1970s, with the proliferation of popular culture instruments (radio, television, magazines, cinema, and theater) and mass-media (Torlak, 2012, p. 137-153).

³ Due to the limits of an article research format, a limited number of novels are cited from the existing corpus. English translations were made by the first author.

The Ottoman state made various efforts to prevent nationalist ideas that emerged after the French Revolution (1789) from infiltrating the Empire. It declared the Edict of Gülhane on November 3, 1839, which guaranteed the rights of all Ottoman citizens regardless of religion and ethnicity. Then, the Reform Edict of 1856 was declared, enabling non-Muslim minorities to become autonomous and privileged societies and to strengthen their legal status. This declaration has a pivotal role in making foreign capital one of the key elements of the Empire's economy (Kurdakul, 2000, p. 19).

The developments in commercial and diplomatic affairs also found resonance in the cultural realm of the 18th century. The literature, music and architecture of the period witnessed an intense production that showed how the modernization adventure of the Ottoman Empire penetrated socially. In architecture, for instance, the systemization and centralized hierarchy of civil servants brought about by the *Tanzimat* reforms turned the capital of the Empire into a laboratory for the establishment of a European-style municipality and the use of contemporary Western-oriented urban planning principles (Çelik, 1986, p. 43). In addition, such new types of buildings and public spaces as military barracks, public squares, passages, business halls, clock towers, factories, and hospitals, were introduced (Figure 2 and Figure 3)⁴.



Figure 2. Selimiye Barrack, Istanbul (Salt Research, Ülgen Family Archives, URL-1).



Figure 3. Macedonia Tower (Edirne Clock Tower), Edirne (Salt Research, URL-2).

The Ottoman elite was also introduced to literary and cultural occupations such as novels, stories and theater during this period (Enginün, 2010, p. 265). Minority groups contributed to the creation of new cultural genres, and various interactions in literary productions⁵ (Strauss, 2014, p. 37). Thus, early Ottoman

⁴ With the enactment of *Ebniye Nizamnamesi* in 1848 and 1849, the construction works were regulated as a whole, and laws and restrictions were introduced about those works. In 1882 with *Ebniye Kanunu*, the legal regulations were set, both for settlements and constructions in the areas with municipal organization.

⁵ The Ottoman Armenians played a leading role in the popularization of theater. One of the first works of Turkish theater literature, *İkinci Arsas*, was about an Armenian ruler and was written by Ottoman Armenian authors such as Mıgırdiç Beşiktaşlıyan (1828-1868), Emanuel Yesayan (1839-1907), Khoren Kalfayan (1831-1892) and Tovmas Terziyan (1840-1909) (Strauss, 2014, p. 40).

⁶ The literary critics generally study the emergence and development of modern Turkish literature and novel genre in three timeframes: *Tanzimat* Period (1860-1895), National Literature Period (1911-1923), and the Early Republican Period (1923-1940). This classification is suggested by Şükran Kurdakul in her three-volume review on Turkish literary history

literature can be described as “Western” in method, but “national” in content and spirit⁶.

Tanzimat Period Literature (1860-1895)

During the *Tanzimat* period, the state played a key role in the development of the new literature and in the emergence and dissemination of the novel as a new genre (Kütükçü, 2018, p. 43). It was instrumental in two particular issues; translation and copyright publication (Kütükçü, 2018, p. 43).

According to Kütükçü, between 1860-1901, 457 novels were translated into Turkish, 426 of them from French (Kütükçü, 2018, p. 43). As the figure illustrates, the translation of works of Western origin was considered a powerful agent of the modernization project in the period. Translation had a significant impact on cultural change. According to literary critics, the activity of translation represents a subject, a mentality and the language in which they are represented; therefore, the issue of translation plays a primary role in cultural and civilizational changes (Uslu, Altuğ, 2014, p. 495).

Newspapers, magazines, printing presses and bookstores of the period functioned as an “open university” to popularize such concepts as freedom, progress, equality and science and hence played an important role for exposing society to European culture⁷ (Moran, 1983, p. 18) (Figure 4).

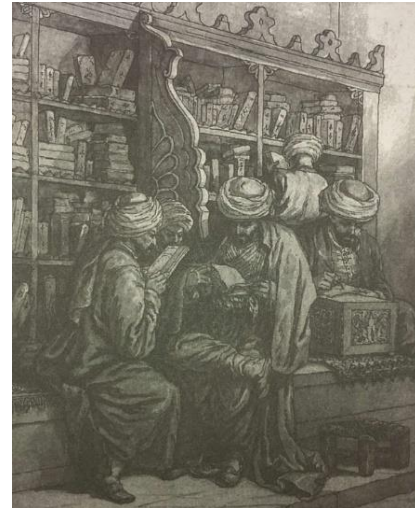


Figure 4. A Bookstore in 1840s Istanbul, depicted by Camille Rogier (Uslu, Altuğ, 2014, 1).

The increase in the number of printing houses in Istanbul was another influential factor in the reforms concerning education. Among the fundamental educational reforms were the

series. The first volume of the series focuses on the nineteenth century - “Values Left by the 19th Century to the New Age”; where she discusses that 19th century can be considered as the “Era of Initiatives” for literature, similar to the westernization movements seen in other fields.

⁷ Many literary works of the period were first serialized in periodicals. For instance, *Le Smyrnéen* established in 1824 in İzmir was the first newspaper in French; *Ceride-i Havadis* was the first unofficial Turkish newspaper established in 1840; İstanbul; *Lyuboslovie* was the first Bulgarian newspaper established in 1844 in İzmir; *Saare mizrax o Puertas del Oriente* was the first Judeo-Spanish newspaper established in 1845 in İzmir; *Masis* was the most effective Armenian newspaper established in 1852 in İstanbul; *Hadikatü'l-ahbar* established in 1858 in Beirut was the first newspaper to include a regular section on fiction; *Tercüman-ı Ahval* was the second unofficial Turkish newspaper, established in 1860 in İstanbul.

establishment of the first modern university (*Darülfünun*) and teacher training colleges (*Darülmualimin*) in 1848, the reorganization of elementary and middle schools, the increase in the proportion of science education, and the establishment of an Education Council, which was responsible for the establishment and supervision of curricular activities in schools. The educational reforms, indeed, not only made the literate society more knowledgeable, but also enabled novelists to voice the *Tanzimat* mentality and the mindset of social and spatial modernization. According to İnci Enginün, in this sense, the works of the first intellectuals of the *Tanzimat* period had social contents and could not be evaluated merely as literary works (Enginün, 2013, p. 24).

The content of the novel literature particularly emphasized the cultural dualities between the East and the West. Berna Moran, like Enginün, also points out that the aim of the *Tanzimat* novels was to adopt the concepts and values that were considered necessary for civilization from the West in order to appropriate them culturally.

Although “Westernization” is the main subject in the novels of the period, there were others thematized spatially and socially. The portrayal of the transformation of the public and private spheres and the family structure for example, was a common occurrence:

- **Theme I: Pleasures of public sphere**

The theme of public life and its portrayal as a pleasurable leisure activity is often taken up by novelists of the period in parallel with the westernization of educational and literary mediums. *Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet Efendi* introduced public gardens articulated by water elements to the capital. The new urban arrangement of the Kağıthane region in Istanbul, for example, included the rehabilitation of the stream and the reorganization of the canals, the collection of water in pools, and the building of waterfront residences (*yalı*) for the Sultan and state officials. Thus, in the late 19th century, water began to be used as a means of public recreation in the Ottoman Empire.



Figure 5. Times of boating in Kağıthane, 19th century, Istanbul (Işın, 2001, 206).

In *Felâtn Bey ile Râkım Efendi* (1875) novel, Kağıthane is depicted as a traditional place of recreation where life was interwoven with pleasures and tastes as follows (Figure 5):

“[...] At the mouth of the stream of Alibey village, they came across a dairy, and the flock was still there because the sheep had just milked.” “[...] Canan and Yozefino gladly stayed with the sheep and lambs from afar. Râkım called the dairyman and had him bring a few bowls of fresh milk. They drank it to the brim.” (Mithat, (1875/2005), p. 125).

“[...] Then Râkım and Yozefino took Canan with them and went for a walk up the meadow under the rows of trees. Poor Canan, isn’t she a child after all? When she saw himself in a

meadow as wide as a poet’s dream, her enthusiasm and joy increased in proportion, and she was eager to leap and run.” (Mithat, (1875/2005), p. 126).

- **Theme II: Diversification of private sphere**

The private sphere undergone changes in terms of status and use. The traditional wooden single-family houses, and ostentatious seaside residences (*yalı*) which represent the typical homes of the socially well-off in the nineteenth century Istanbul became places of elite socialization, recreation and entertainment on the shores of the Bosphorus (Figure 6). In the *Tanzimat* era, the theme was treated in two ways: The culture of seaside residence was articulated as the subject of the narrative, and the traditionally introverted nature of the house was expanded to include other temporary living spaces.



Figure 6. Shores of the Bosphorus, favorite location of summer homes of both the the foreign embassies and the Ottoman statesmen (Işın, 2001, 89).

In Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil’s *Aşk-ı Memnu* (1901), the *yalı* is portrayed as important as the main characters of the novel: “[...] It is depicted as a mansion with chandeliers, heavy curtains, Louis XV. carved walnut chairs, lamps with large shapes, gilded chairs and tables, and a white and mahogany boat with clean covers in the boathouse can be noticed as you pass by” (Uşaklıgil, 1963 (1901), p. 17). Similarly, in his novel *Eylül* (1901), Mehmet Rauf depicts an elite Istanbul family living in a traditional house and *yalı*, and the principal members of the family are portrayed as people of Istanbul (the Bosphorus, Büyükkada, Şişli or Beyoğlu), who are associated with such type of houses. The relationship between *yalı* and the sea is also reflected in the characters’ emotional states, and is described by the novelist as follows:

“[...] He really liked the mornings. [...] Suad woke up every day with this sun, he would jump up and open the windows; then morning, life, joy, youth, all this, everything, only with this sun, only with the sounds of the sea, would rush into their room, into their hearts; they were bathed in the sun that warmed them by smelling it, that gave them a cool warmth with the freshness of the sea...” (Rauf, (1901/1946), p. 54).

Indeed, the Ottoman elite transformed the traditionally introverted culture into an extroverted structure by extending the boundaries of the house. Until the late nineteenth century, the house was depicted in Ottoman literature as a protected family structure; with the social life that brought the individual rather than the family to the fore, this association and its perception began to loosen. Family life began to transcend the boundaries of the house and to be practiced in new domestic settings. As depicted in *Araba Sevdası* (1896), the Ottoman elite began to acquire a summer house to use as a second home apart

from the main family residence.⁸

"[...] Mr. Bihrüz, who had heard about the opening of the *Çamlıca Bahçe-i Umumi* before anyone else due to its proximity, forced his mother to move to the garden as soon as March arrived. And the day after their transfer to the mansion, he immediately examined the inside and outside of the public garden in a hurry and realized that it would be a very fashionable and especially a very suitable promenade for adornment as he wished." (Ekrem, 2015 (1896), p. 61).

- **Theme III: Changing family structure**

While privacy was still a highly valued aspect of the traditional elite house, both the spatial layout of the house and the structure of the nuclear family were subject to change. One aspect of the modernizing family that was explored in the novels was the expansion of the nuclear family to include new members, such as the French governess, the black nanny, and the Circassian maid. Accordingly, the governesses, who were mostly French, began to work in the houses of wealthy and cultured families. They were responsible for teaching foreign languages, Western education, etiquette and music, especially piano, to children and women.

In *Sergüzeşt*, for instance, Sami Paşazade Sezai portrayed the French governess of Celâl and his sister as such: "[...] Although this old French woman had been in Istanbul for almost ten years, she had never felt the need to learn the language of the people among whom she lived." (Sezai, (1888/1963), p. 43).

In his novel *Bahtiyarlık* (1885), Ahmet Mithat mentions that if a family intended to teach their children French, they would either hire a teacher at home or send them to a French school:

"[...] Those who disliked the Ottoman form of education and were enthusiastic about *alafranga* wanted to teach their daughters French, and for this purpose, some of those who had the means hired French teachers in their households when the child was still young, or as soon as the child was a little older, they gave the child to a French school run by nuns, and these girls, even though they learned the things that a European girl learns, were able to earn their own livelihood in their own households." (Mithat, (1885/2022), p. 104).

The guest room with a piano serving as an ornament was elevated to a symbol of modern life in elite houses and the children received piano lessons from both the governesses and private teachers in the guest rooms. The room was thus, mentioned in several literary works. In Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu* (1901), Mlle de Courton, the governess of the house, gave piano lessons to Nihal, the youngest daughter of the house, and was stunned by her skill and progress in a short time:

"[...] This girl's fingers are infected with the spirit of the famous Russian pianist and composer Rubinstein!" (Uşaklıgil, (1901/1963), p. 45).

⁸ The shores of the Bosphorus in particular, and the Islands in the Marmara and Yeşilköy, which had begun to develop outside the old city walls, were the primary locations of the flourishing *yalı* culture (Işın, 2001 p. 96).

⁹ It is suggested that the National Literature movement started with the publication of the literary magazine *Genç Kalemler*, which was published between 1910-1912, by Ali Canip Yöntem (1887-1967), Ömer Seyfettin (1884-1920) and Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924). The movement is accepted to represent the preparatory phase in the simplification of Turkish language. Mehmet Ziya Gökalp (1876-1924), Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu (1889-1974), Refik Halit Karay (1888-1965), Mehmet Emin

National Literature Period (1911-1923)

The National Literature era refers to the works that have nationalist contents, articulated women and strongly criticized the social changes that took place in the *Tanzimat* era.⁹ A strong criticism was raised against the westernization process that started with the *Tanzimat* reforms, arguing that the reforms were not successful in terms of penetrating all social and spatial layers of the current system. Using a simple Turkish language¹⁰, the authors of the period aimed to reveal nationally addressed social problems/values, while at the same time delineating the evolving notion of the public sphere in their narratives.



Figure 7. *Hariciye Vekaleti* (Ministry of Culture, 1927), Ulus, Ankara (Hasol, 2017, p. 51)

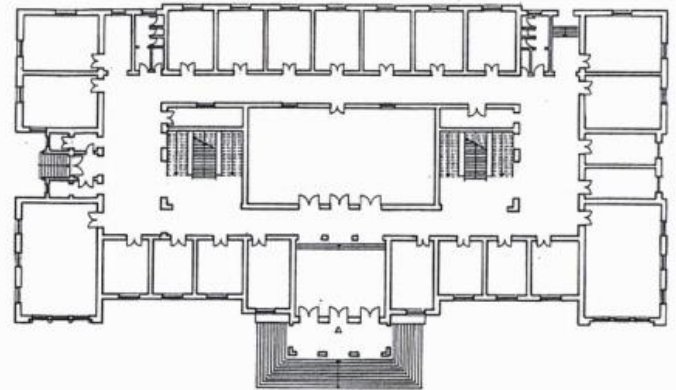


Figure 8. *Hariciye Vekaleti* (Ministry of Culture, 1927), Ground Floor Plan, representing the typical setting of the National Architecture Renaissance period Ulus, Ankara (Hasol, 2017, p. 51)

The public architecture was also prone to change in line with the nationalistic tendencies. According to Bozdoğan and Akcan, the Ottoman Revival style of the period, retrospectively referred to by architectural historians as the "First National Style" but known to its contemporaries as the "National Architectural Renaissance," combined elements derived from classical Ottoman architecture with Beaux-Arts design principles and new materials and construction techniques (Bozdoğan, Akcan, 2012, p. 21).

Yurdakul (1869-1944), Reşat Nuri Güntekin (1889-1956), Halide Edip Adıvar (1882 or 1884-1964), and Ömer Seyfettin (1884-1920) are among the representatives of the period. (Kurdakul, 2000, p. 135).

¹⁰ The *Tanzimat* period literature welcomed different literary genres such as novels, stories, and theatre but not the poetic style which had dominated the Turkish literature before the *Tanzimat*. The post-*Tanzimat* era witnessed a return to poetry and emergence of poetry-oriented literary groups. The first group established was the *Encümen-i Şuarâ* in 1861, known for being influential on young poets such as, Ziya Pasha and Namık Kemal (Emiroğlu, 2008, p. 57).

Emerging between 1908-1918 and continuing well until the 1930s, the new revivalist architecture was thus, eclectic, representing the ideologies and cultural complexities of the late Ottoman Empire. It was transformed into an effective and visible architectural style, especially in the public buildings of Istanbul, including banks, offices, and cinemas (Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 18) (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

It follows that the main subjects of the narratives in this period are Nationalism and the use of public space in a spatial context and are generally expressed under two themes.

- **Theme I: Changing public and private spaces**

Such public spaces and socializing venues as *kahvehane* (coffee house for use of men), *kıraathane* (câfe- having a collection of newspapers and magazines for its customers) and *çayhane* (tearoom), where the society could freely spend time, as well as fancy urban venues like restaurants and hotels became visible in the literature of the period (Anar, 2012, p. 548). In addition to being portrayed in literary texts, these spaces were also public spaces where literature was produced. Authors used to meet in their houses for literary gatherings until public venues were established, which allowed literature to leave the confines of the house and mingle with everyday life (Anar, 2012, p. 548). The use of open public spaces as promenades and means of socialization and recreation is also prominent in the literature of the period. The neighborhoods of Kağıthane, Beyoğlu, Kuzguncuk, Çamlıca and Boğaziçi and the islands were such popular areas of the period and were depicted in the narratives (Kavcar, 2016, p. 256). Similarly popular recreational districts mentioned on the Bosphorus in the narratives are Tarabya, Bebek, Emirgan, Yeniköy, Yeniköy, and Kanlıca.

According to poet Behiç, one of the protagonists of Mehmet Rauf's novel *Genç Kızın Kalbi* (1912), "[...] The only place where one can have fun according to a certain order is Büyükkada. Especially on Sunday mornings, the pier, the docks, and the casinos would be crowded with people coming from Istanbul, it would be very lively, very active. [...] This situation does not exist anywhere else in Istanbul." (Rauf, (1912/1946), p. 67-68).

References to public spaces in novels and the emergence of the National Architectural Renaissance style in architecture occurred almost simultaneously. However, the architectural approach, which was criticized by writers defending the national spirit of the period, gradually faded away because it did not fit the new and progressive character of the young and dynamic Republic. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu for example criticized this style in his novel *Ankara* (1934) (Özcan Geylani, 2023, p. 53):

"[...] New Ankara was developing at a dizzying pace: On the fields stretching from Taşhan to Samanpazarı, from Samanpazarı to Cebeci, from Cebeci to Yenışehir, from Yenışehir to Kavaklıdere, apartment buildings, houses and official buildings were rising as if they were springing out of the ground. Although each of these took on certain shapes and colors according to the knowledge of the builder and the taste of the builder, it was evident to a careful eye that the "exotique" architectural style that dominated almost all of them at once stood out." (Karaosmanoğlu, (1921/2016), p. 12-13).

According to Ihsan Bilgin, the apartment came to the fore as a new housing type, especially in Istanbul, also during this period.

The apartments were of the type known as "rental apartments" (*kira evi*), which had a single owner and were built for the purpose of generating rental income, and they were characterized by standardized, rational plans (Bilgin, 2010). The apartment building, as a new private sphere, has been the scene of many narratives. Domestic life in an apartment became a frequent subject of novels, as they represented the Westernization of the private context. Accordingly, the home environments in the apartments were enlivened with sofas, dining sets, bedside tables and/or mirrored cabinets instead of traditional furniture such as *divans* and *sedirs*. The rise of first multi-storey apartment buildings in Beyoğlu in the late 19th century also transformed the family life of the Ottoman elite, some of whom also moved from traditional *konaks* to such residences. The modernization of daily life practices, criticism of architecture and living conditions in traditional mansions and life in the apartment found a response in writers such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, who expressed this in his novels like *Kiralık Konak* (1922):

"And to tell you the truth, I could not feel comfortable in that house; for years I could not find a way to stay warm for six months in winter in those big rooms, and for years I could not find a way to breathe for six months in summer. So many windows, so many doors... In January, the air comes even through the walls. [...] I don't see the point of living here as a nomad when there are all these wonderful new apartments in Şişli. [...] There isn't even a proper bathroom in the whole house. In order to light that cumbersome bath, you have to prepare three days in advance, burn three sacks of firewood, have the boiler plastered every other day, and have the basins repaired every other day. Under these conditions, it is impossible to bath even once a month." (Karaosmanoğlu, (1921/2016), p. 192).

- **Theme II: Women in public space**

The increased visibility of women in the public sphere is a theme articulated with the emergence of the public sphere (Utku Günaydın, 2012, p. 74). Female characters were given more active roles in novels, a situation that is often associated with the atmosphere of the Constitutional Monarchy period, when women's demands for freedom and education came to the fore¹¹. Women were approached as a social being and depicted as an educated character who was responsible for raising future generations both at home and in the public sphere, who paid attention to her clothing, participated in public life, received the same education as men, learned foreign languages, and had knowledge and taste (Kavcar, 2016, p. 90-102). For instance, Feride, the young teacher in Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Çalığışu* (1922), was portrayed as a self-sufficient, modern woman living alone:

"[...] This morning I started classes at B... Darülmüallimatı. I think I'm going to warm up very well here. [...] My new friends are not bad people in appearance, my students are close to me, and I think some of them are older than me, intelligent women." (Güntekin, (1922/2017), p. 246).

"[...] I have achieved one more of my greatest ambitions. Since yesterday I have a nice, small, clean house, which was found for me by Hacı Kalfa, God bless her. Two or three minutes away from his house, on the edge of the same neighborhood, we will have a three-roomed, tiny, garden, cute house. Even better, they rented it to me with all the furniture inside." (Güntekin, (1922/2017), p. 254).

¹¹ Günaydın states that at that time, there were demands to remove all kinds of restrictions, including clothing, so that women could benefit from educational opportunities and participate in public life. However,

women's public rights were expanded to some extent; arrangements were made for them to participate in social life, the right to divorce was granted, and polygamy was left to the consent of women (Utku Günaydın, 2012, p. 74).

Authors of this period paid particular attention in their narratives to show women's position in social life as equal to men, and to highlight their participation in social life and integration with society. Women were portrayed, especially in recreation and entertainment venues, participating in teas, dances, balls, social and cultural activities, and meetings (Kavcar, 2016, p. 91). For instance, in Mehmet Rauf's novel *Karanfil ve Yasemin* (1924), Samim, who returned from Europe where he has lived for many years is astonished to see Turkish women dancing with men at a tea party:

"[...] Please tell me, are all these women Turkish, or am I dreaming? [...] Yes, my dear, this is not a dream, this is a reality. These women you see are all Turks, and they are Turkish women who, until a few years ago, would not dance with men like this, but would hide if they came across one!" (Rauf, 1924, p. 24)

Early Republican Era: Modernizing Society and Architecture in Literature

In the Early Republican era, the image of modernizing Turkey was projected more strongly through architecture. Literacy, reading and education played a central role in reflecting the image of the modernizing society. State prioritized literacy as an identity marker. Mustafa Kemal led for the adoption of Latin letters in 1928, instead of the Arabic alphabet (Fortna, 2013, 30-31). The Arabic and Persian lessons were abolished from high schools at the beginning of the 1929-1930 academic year. A literacy campaign was initiated to teach the Latin alphabet to adults in a short time for which *Millet Mektepleri* (Nation's Schools) were opened in almost every province (Figure 9).

The importance given to literacy in everyday life was due in part to the increase in the number of available jobs that were appropriate for literate people in both public and private sectors (Kabacalı, 2000, p. 177-195). In the early years of the Republic, as a result of the central government's conscious and planned policy based on Western models, translation activities increased and literacy issue was also affected. *Tercüme Bürosu* (1940-1967) established in 1940, translated many copyrighted books into Turkish and contributed to the country's westernization movement as a literary institution (Berk, 2002, p. 513).

By the end of the Republican regime's first decade, both Ottoman revivalism and nationalist approaches in architecture were abandoned in favor of an imported "New Architecture" (*Yeni Mimari*), as modern architecture of the period was called in Turkey (Bozdoğan, 2012, p. 21). During the 1930s, the new architectural discourse was ideologically constructed and legitimized with reference to three binary themes: old and new, traditional and contemporary, reactionary and progressive. (Bozdoğan, 2012, p. 21). In this way, the architecture of the period also formally rejected the history of the Ottoman Empire and sought to construct itself (Figure 10).

During the period, authors¹² generally focused on subjects related to socialist realism and its impact on the public. Regarding the perception and use of private and public space, it is seen that the following themes address this issue:

¹² Rauf Mutluay states that some authors of the *Tanzimat* and National Literature periods, like Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan, Sami Paşazade Sezai, Cenap Şehabettin, Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil, Mehmet Rauf, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, and Ahmet Rasim continued to write, albeit infrequently, in the Republican period as well (Mutluay, 1973, p.140-153).

¹³ The Turkish Civil Code issued in 1926 made men and women equal regarding inheritance and testimony. Legal marriage was made compulsory, and polygamy was banned. The Municipality Law that granted



Figure 9. A newspaper clipping from the autumn of 1928 which featured Latin letters in some of the headings and columns to familiarize the reader with the new letters (Kabacalı, 2000, p. 172).



Figure 10. New Architecture (*Yeni Mimari*) showing rational forms, İsmet İnönü Girl's Institute, Manisa, 1930s (Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 88).

- **Theme 1: Changing public life and co-existence of women and men in public sphere**

With the changes in public life, it is seen that men and women are represented together and as complementary in daily life in the novels of the early Republican period. In this context, the legal and social rights gained by Republican women and the social freedom they achieved were often narrated.¹³ The narratives addressed modern Turkish women both as social figures participating in the public sphere and as mothers performing child-rearing tasks in the private sphere. Thus, "The Republican period literature" overtly witnessed women's visibility and presence, as authors, readers, and fictional characters.¹⁴

political rights to women in Turkey was adopted in 1930. The "*Memurin Kanunu*" adopted in 1926, enabled women to become civil servants. As of this date, restrictions on self-employment have also been eliminated (Çeri, 1996, p. 22-23).

¹⁴ The term "Republican literature" is coined by literary critics who identified the literature of the period 1923-1980 as "Republican Period Literature" [*Cumhuriyet Dönemi Edebiyatı*]. The female authors of the period include Müfide Ferit Tek (1892- 1971), Şükûfe Nihal Başar (1896-

As Suat Derviş portrays in her novel *Hiç* (1939), for example, Seza was a single mother, but she was searching for herself as an individual, and experiencing the public life as a woman: “[...] The station was very crowded. She was watching this crowd with the great curiosity of people traveling for the first time in their lives.” (Derviş, (1923/2016), p. 34-35). In another example Memduh Şevket Esendal portrayed a ball-room with men and women in his novel *Ayaşlı ile Kiracıları* (1934) as such:

“[...] Our manager Selime and the deputy opened the ball by dancing with Mrs Melek. Then I danced with the manager's wife and Fahri danced with the deputy's wife. Then everyone got up. There was no room left in the dance hall to move, let alone dance! [...] It was up to us to ask some ladies to dance.” (Esendal, (1934/2016), p. 243).

Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu describes Seniha in his novel *Kiralık Konak* (1921), whose only goal was to go to Europe, as free in her daily life and as spending time with her male friends in the following words:

“[...] Seniha was now like an animal on the loose. [...] The festive and bright cities of Europe attracted her in a magical way. [...] The way she went on those visits all day long, the way she received guests, the way she wandered from shop to shop, the way she and the young people around her were so happy [...] all that madness, all that stagnation, was all in order to console this longing, to forget this trouble.” (Karaosmanoğlu, (1921/2016), p. 43).

- **II: Critique of apartment as building and lifestyle**

Detached family houses or villas with gardens, and apartments were the two types of urban residential architecture elaborated in the Early Republican literature (Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 245). The term “apartment” in the 1930s, referred to a rental apartment, and corresponded to a multi-unit building with a single owner, who rented out the units for income. In his novel *Ayaşlı ile Kiracıları* (1934), Memduh Şevket Esendal articulated the type of accommodation in the apartment buildings, which included rental rooms and was used as an investment for the owner:

“[...] We live in a nine-room section of a large, newly built apartment building. A man named Ayaşlı İbrahim Efendi has rented out this unit, room by room, to anyone who wants it. The rooms are lined up on either side of a dimly lit corridor. At the end of the corridor is the bathroom and the kitchen. My room is the first door on the right as you enter the corridor.” (Esendal, (1934/2016), p. 9).

Rental apartments could range in size, from buildings that were originally built as one large residential block consisting of several separate living units, to high rise urban apartments for which the “apartment” term was more appropriate (Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 245). In many cases, the apartment was commissioned by the known architects of the period, and the quality of design and construction was often an important marker of prestige for the owner who gave the building his name (Bozdoğan, 2001, p. 245). For instance, Esendal illustrates, how the concept of rental apartment was conceived, experienced and criticized in the novel's protagonist's first evening:

“[...] I was glad when I woke up in bed and found myself in the new room. I could hear footsteps upstairs. There is no sound in our company. I feel a sense of timidity, as if I'm in a guest house, in a strange place. I don't know the owner of the house, nor the neighbors. When do they go to bed and get up,

what are the customs here? I slowly open the door, go out into the hallway, there is no sound. Wouldn't the pale maid who helped me yesterday make a morning coffee? On my way back to my room, the maid's head appeared through the kitchen door, I stopped.” (Esendal, (1934/2016), p. 10).

However, although their numbers would increase at a rate that would create the dominant housing culture in the mid-century period, apartment buildings and the living culture they offered were approached with a critical approach and distance by novelists, unlike in the National Literature period. Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Ankara* (1934) and *Panorama I* (1953) novels illustrate the case in which he disapproved the housing pattern that emerged in the early Republican era:

“[...] The facades of many buildings were changing, smoothing and simplifying like the faces of these men who shaved their beards and mustaches. However, as this modern taste crept into the interior of the houses, it became strangely degenerate, almost rococo. A Hungarian plasterer introduced the fashion of painting the walls with stamped embroidery. On the other hand, the furniture makers of Beyoğlu, with furniture styles that were worse than the aesthetics of these walls, turned the interior of the houses into a nightmare.” (Karaosmanoğlu, (1934/2004), p. 108-109).

“[...] They had a huge concrete house built in Yenışehir with a bathroom and a garage. [...] They built it, but they couldn't live in it... A week ago, they moved back to their old house. They spend forty-five or fifty thousand liras on rent and sand. On top of that they had to pay property tax. Is this wise?” (Karaosmanoğlu, (1953/2008), p. 14-15).

Conclusion

Introduced to the Ottoman cultural context first in the 19th century, the novel not only became instrumental in popularizing Westernization and Modernization in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods respectively but also served a medium of praise and criticism regarding the consequences of both social reform processes. The novels of both eras in this respect, project a broad political and social panorama of Turkey that witnessed sharp political, social and economic developments. Among many themes, they often present a panorama of changing aspects of daily life and how these are reflected in public and private spaces.

In the 19th century, the novel genre served mostly as a means of popularizing Westernization and depicted spaces, events, and fictional characters aimed at modernizing the “family.” Similarly, in the following Republican period, the modernization process largely determined the framework of fictions. The developments and changes that trigger social transformation are presented to the reader in the narratives with a positive or critical approach, according to the value systems varying between traditional and modern. This research outlined the societal dynamics of both eras in reference to the literary productions which are classified under three periods by literary critics (Table 1). It exemplified the themes covered extensively in the novels of all three periods with short quotations from the novels and supported the spatial reflections of social and cultural changes with brief discussions of the architectural practices of the period.

In this sense, three general conclusions can be drawn from the research. Firstly, the pleasure of public life, which is one of the prominent themes in the novels of the *Tanzimat* Period, and the

1973), Halide Nusret Zorlutuna (1901-1994), Mükerrrem Kâmil Su (1906-1984), Kerime Nadir (1917-1984), Samiha Ayverdi (1905-1993), Safiye Erol

(1902-1964), Suat Derviş (1903-1972), Nezihe Araz (1922-2009), and Peride Celâl (1916-2003).

emergence of public space and related activities in the architectural context of the period are parallel developments. Similarly, the fact that families from the Ottoman upper and upper-middle class began to live in waterside residences (*yalı*) on the Bosphorus, creating a new housing culture, is an issue that is frequently addressed in the literature of the period and manifested also in urban and architectural terms. A situation that mostly stands out in the novels of this period is the emphasis on the concept of summer house in the context of private space. The fact that families from the same social class lived in another mansion in the summer, that is, the seasonal change of residence, can be read in the novels as an expression of the closed structure of the house and the integration of the summer house culture with urban life. Another development that is especially emphasized in the novels is the change in the structure of the nuclear family. Resident foreign servants or tutors, who became part of the private spaces of elite families during the Westernization process, broke the nuclear family structure and diversified the users of the private space.

Table 1. The main subjects and related themes of the novels of the three successive periods.

Subjects/ Themes	Tanzimat Period Literature	National Literature Period	Republican Period Literature
Subject(s)	Westernization	Nationalism The Use of Public Space	Social realities of the period and their effects on people
Theme(s)	Pleasures of public sphere Diversification of private sphere Changing family structure	Women in public space Changing public and private spaces	Changing public life and co- existence of women and men in public sphere Critique of apartment as building and lifestyle

Secondly, one of the prominent themes of the National Literature Period is the transformation of public and private space. In novels, the transformation of public life is often emphasized by the novel protagonists. Since it is known that the public space gained priority in the architectural activities of the period, it can be claimed that the descriptions in the literary narratives of this period and the activities in the field of architecture overlap in content. On the other hand, it is seen that the First National Architecture, which is described as a new architectural style blending Ottoman and modern design features in the architectural publications and manifested itself especially in public buildings was not internalized by some novelists who criticized it; the style thus, is not mentioned much in the corpus of this period's novels. Considering the private space, it is observed that the novels of the period praised the apartments that were integrated into the urban context as a new type of housing, emphasized the comfort achieved in private space thanks to new domestic technologies, and thus aroused interest in apartment life. The literature of this period also made women visible in the city by depicting female characters in public spaces, thus bringing women to the agenda; the new rights women gained during this period must have contributed to shaping the content of these narratives.

Thirdly, the depiction of male and female characters together in public life and spaces is one of the prominent themes in Early Republican novels. This is compatible with the modern

understanding of architecture and the use of public spaces of the period. On the other hand, apartment buildings, which have now begun to form an established housing culture and architectural texture, were not discussed very enthusiastically, unlike some novelists of the National Literature period. They were criticized, perhaps more than in the previous period, and their negative aspects highlighted, such as their interior decoration, which was not in harmony with modern apartment buildings, or the incompatibility of their users with the novelties that apartment buildings brought to daily life. Although the narratives regarding these negativities will continue to be addressed in the novels until the middle of the century, they will not have an effect on preventing the apartment from becoming the dominant housing typology.

As presented here in a limited scope, literature is a rich corpus for examining the modernization processes of Westernization and Modernization from the 19th century to end of the Early Republic period from an interdisciplinary perspective. These processes are also important research areas in architectural historiography. When viewed from this perspective, comparatively seeing the intersection and divergence points of literary narratives and architectural practices of the periods may enables one to find situations and experiences that remain implicit in one in the other. Through the environments, events and novel characters/actors it describes, the novel can be the voice of spatial and social experiences and emotions experienced in contexts such as public space, private space and daily life, that change with the dynamics of the period.

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