

RECLAIMING THE NATION, MORALIZING POLITICS:
NARRATIVES OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF
PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERS

A PhD Dissertation

by
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Ankara

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RECLAIMING THE NATION, MORALIZING POLITICS:
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The Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Dođramacı Bilkent University

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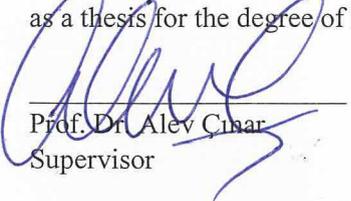
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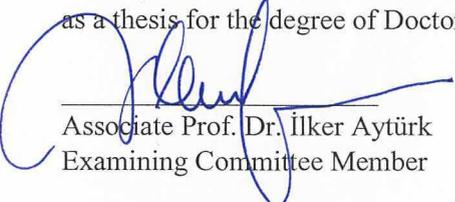
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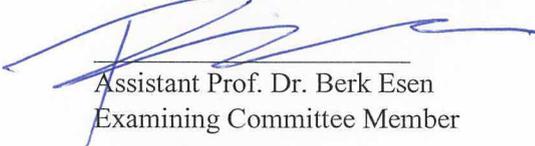
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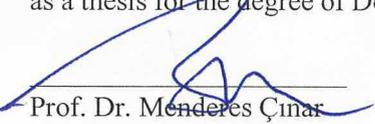
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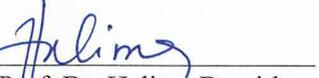
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ABSTRACT

RECLAIMING THE NATION, MORALIZING POLITICS: NARRATIVES OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERS

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In this dissertation, I examine how autobiographical writing becomes a peculiar political space for Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Rauf Orbay, three major leaders of the Turkish War of Independence and the Progressive Republican Party (PRP). I unpack how their autobiographies have continued to shape contemporary public debates on political legitimacy by redefining rulership, patriotism and the national character (*milli karakter*). The analysis of their autobiographies transcends the scholarly works that either view PRP as a peripheral opposition against a top-down modernist center or overemphasize the Unionist political legacy. Focusing on autobiographies instead of their party program reveals the most neglected aspect of their ideological legacy within the existing literature—an idiosyncratic form of elitist conservative nationalism along with this Unionist legacy. I offer an innovative interdisciplinary approach that expands the political science discipline with anthropological and literary

analyses by demonstrating the centrality of contestations over nationalist morality in shaping the right-wing conservative politics in contemporary Turkey. I analyze PRP's legacy by looking at how these autobiographical texts extensively build on moralizing discourses that presume a form of virtue specific to the Turkish nation—national character. Through an intertextual politics the authors claim to embody a nationalist morality that rests on character traits and dispositions that were displayed during the Independence War. I suggest that moralizing discourses ultimately reframe a complex set of political disagreements of the time in terms of character and personality—those who are worthy of representing and governing the nation, vs. those who are not.

Keywords: Autobiography, Conservatism, History of Early Republican Turkey, Nationalism, Progressive Republican Party

ÖZET

MİLLET İDDİASI, SİYASETİN AHLAKİLEŞTİRİLMESİ:
TERAKKİPERVER CUMHURİYET PARTİSİ LİDERLERİNİN
OTOBİYOGRAFİLERİNDE MEŞRUIYET ANLATILARI

İpek, Yasemin

Doktora, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Alev Çınar

Haziran 2017

Bu tezde, Kurtuluş Savaşı ve Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Partisi (TCP) liderleri Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy ve Rauf Orbay'ın hatıratlarının nasıl farklı bir siyaset alanı oluşturduğunu analiz ediyorum. Bu hatıratların, siyasi meşruiyet konusuna dair günümüz kamusal tartışmalarını, liderlik, vatanseverlik ve milli karakter kavramlarını yeniden tanımlayarak nasıl biçimlendirdiklerini mercek altına alıyorum. Otobiyografilerin analizi, dönem üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmalarda yaygın olan iki temel yorumun eksikliklerini gözler önüne sererek, TCP'yi, ya merkeze karşı çevresel bir muhalefet olarak gören, ya da İttihatçı mirasa aşırı vurgu yapan bu iki baskın bilimsel perspektifi aşmayı hedefliyor. Parti programı yerine hatıratlara odaklanıldığında, literatürde göz ardı edilmiş olan başka bir siyasi mirasın ortaya çıktığını görüyoruz: elit muhafazakâr milliyetçi düşünce. Bu metinlerde, milliyetçi bir ahlak anlayışı üzerine yapılan tartışmaların, modern Türkiye'de muhafazakâr sağ söylem üzerindeki merkezi

rolünü göstererek, siyaset bilimi disiplininin sınırlarını, antropolojik ve edebi çalışmalar disiplinlerinin metotlarıyla zenginleştiren yeni bir metot getiriyorum. Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Partisi'nin siyasi mirasının, bu hatıratlarda yaygın şekilde gördüğümüz, milli karakteri Türk milletine has bir erdem olarak varsayan, ahlakileştirici söylemler üzerine inşa edildiğini gösteriyorum. Yazarlar, otobiyografik metinler arasında kurulan bir siyaset alanında, Kurtuluş Savaşı'nda gösterildiği söylenen, kişisel karakter özelliklerine dayalı olan, milliyetçi bir ahlak temsiliyeti iddiasında bulunuyorlar. Bu tarz ahlakileştirici söylemlerin, değişik siyasi görüş ayrılıklarını, karakter veya kişilik gibi kavramlara referansla, ulusu yönetmeyi ve temsil etmeyi hak edenler ve etmeyenler arasındaki ayrılıklar şeklinde, yeniden tanımladığını gösteriyorum.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Erken Dönem Cumhuriyet Türkiye Tarihi, Milliyetçilik, Muhafazakarlık, Otobiyografi, Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası

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chapters and critical insights during our long conversations substantially strengthened my arguments and evidence in the whole dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. 1. Subject Matter of the Study

The first decade of the 2000s in Turkey witnessed a growing interest in popular history and autobiographic writings that covered the formative years of the Early Republic in the 1920s, among both academic-intellectual circles and wider readership. Extensive media coverage, public debates on television programs and thriving publication of the new editions of autobiographic texts from the 1920s and 1930s further popularized this interest in key political figures of the period and their memoirs. Most of these memoirs were written by prominent political and military leaders of late Ottoman and Early Republican Turkey who had adversarial relations with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic. Three of these figures stand out in particular: military leaders of the Independence War, Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Rauf Orbay who founded the first political opposition party of the new Republic, the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) in 1924. Furthermore, following the short life-term of the party, which was closed in 1925, they were prosecuted in tribunals and were completely estranged from the political scene. Autobiographical writings by these figures as respectable leaders of the Independence War, as well as Mustafa Kemal's subsequent political adversaries had first gained popularity between the 1940s

and the late 1960s, periods that witnessed the growth of right-wing and conservative political movements and intellectual circles. The renewed interest in the lives of the oppositional figures of the Early Republic in the 2000s similarly paralleled the resurgence of Islamic-conservative politics by the beginning of that decade. The Islamist-conservative intellectual circles and the larger right-wing political imaginary that oppose the secularist establishment of the modern Turkish polity revere these texts as precious yet repressed legitimate sources of an alternative history and historiography that are yet to be unearthed. At the center of this reverence are the autobiographic accounts by leading cadres of the Independence War who founded the first opposition party against Mustafa Kemal's party: Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Rauf Orbay.¹

This thesis takes as its point of departure the issue of how the contentious politics of truth opened up by autobiographies of the oppositional elite of the Early Republic becomes a space to debate national identity, political legitimacy and rulership. I unpack how the autobiographical writings of military and political leaders of the Early Republican period shaped claims to, and contestations of, political legitimacy by redefining rulership, patriotism and the essential values that make up the nation. By analyzing this under-studied political space where Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay conducted their opposition politics beyond and after their party politics, I document how autobiographic authority contests the morality and hence worthiness of other political figures in order to generate different political subjectivities as foundations of political legitimacy. Focusing on these autobiographical writings and their intertextuality as a

¹ I will refer to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as Mustafa Kemal, since he was granted the surname "Atatürk" only after 1934, while Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay were already known by their surnames during the time.

political site, my analysis throws a different light on Early Republican opposition politics, and contributes to the literature on nationalist and conservative thought in Turkey by unearthing an often-neglected thread of moralist conservative imaginary.

This thesis basically diversifies the narrow disciplinary norms of academic studies in political science and history on the history of modern Turkey by highlighting the significance of literary analyses of political writings. I suggest that over-focus on political activities, party politics and party programs may limit our understanding of the political legacy of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay, and of the political history of the ideological currents of early Republican Turkey in general. Studying these autobiographic writings diversifies and enriches existing studies on early Republican Turkey. By employing literary, narrative and anthropological perspectives, I reveal a peculiar blend of conservative and nationalist ideological positions espoused by these three figures in their autobiographical writings.

As I will analyze in further detail below, contemporary scholarship heavily relies on Erik Jan Zürcher's qualification of Karabekir, Cebesoy, Orbay and other leaders of the first political opposition in early Turkish Republic as liberal-leaning Unionist military leaders. Zürcher argues that Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's differences from Mustafa Kemal and his political establishment were rather limited and it would be misleading to characterize these oppositional figures as conservative. He documents similarities in social, educational and military backgrounds of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay with their opponents which end up discounting the peculiar legacy of their autobiographical writings. Zürcher's insights helped to question reductionist accounts of a dichotomy between an Islamic-conservative peripheral dissent and a Jacobin center.

Contemporary academic literature that followed Zürcher's perspective rightfully questioned and demystified the popular ideological exaggerations of the political rift that defined Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's opposition in terms of an Islamic-conservative peripheral dissent from an authoritarian-elitist center. Yet, I suggest that their overfocus on party ideology and PRP's liberalism ironically tends to reproduce this dualism. This thesis questions the liberalism Zürcher ascribes to their politics and the related downplay of their conservatism. Going beyond the focus on party politics and interpreting autobiographical space as a unique political space reveals a different understanding of conservatism and makes possible to recognize the enduring legacy of political opposition in early Republican Turkey on later generations of right-wing politics.

I offer a new terrain of analysis by employing a literary perspective that focuses on morality as a peculiar political terrain. I argue that the autobiographical writings of those three figures articulate an intertextual account of a conservative-nationalist virtue, which rests on a specific set of moral values, character traits and dispositions. As I will elaborate in detail below, this nationalist virtue, and the authors' incessant references to other political figures who does or does not embody this virtue serve as a peculiar form of conservatism that rests on general political judgments on who is entitled to political legitimacy, and who is not. I rely on a wider definition of "the moral" as a social terrain of contention where convictions, social practices and cultural narratives accrue into claims to better represent and embody a moral substance, hence creating a political space of contending moralities. Building on a contemporary academic literature on morality in political anthropology, (Asad 2003, Fassin 2011, 2012, Mahmood 2001, 2003, 2011, Zigon 2008), I argue that questions of morality extends

well beyond matters of ethical life or moral injunctions based on definitions of good life and evil behavior, or shared cultural values. In the case of the autobiographical writings I analyze in this thesis, morality qualifies in a politically nationalist sense and is associated with its incarnation in the characters and dispositions of individuals as a dutifulness of serving the nation unconditionally and sacrificially. Both in historical and conceptual terms, the concept of morality that emerges in this analysis is deeply associated with a nationalist sense of virtue and dutifulness of serving the nation. Discourses that highlight this nationalist virtue, in turn, raise critical questions of political legitimacy in the political sphere that haven't been addressed by contemporary analyses of conservative and nationalist ideologies.

While the political position of the three figures analyzed here do not correspond to established forms of conservatism in Turkey, which is defined predominantly in terms of traditionalist opposition to modernist reforms, I argue that Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay are conservative by virtue of having three essential tenets of classical conservatism as espoused by Edmund Burke. They rely on (i) the vital need to conserve a moral essence or substance of a nation, which serves as the ultimate source of political legitimacy (the nationalist virtue of serving the nation); (ii) the elitist conviction that only a select few who displays the moral character and disposition worthy of this essence should conduct political authority; and (iii) the contention that revolutionary elites hijack this moral essence, succumbing to their own morally dubious personalistic motives, under-developed moral characters and lust for power. Due to their over-focus on the party politics, daily political controversies and discourses, Zürcher's study and other works cannot explain the enduring influence of these Early Republican figures in shaping the conservative right-wing and Islamic political legacies after

1950s. A careful focus towards autobiographical politics on nationalist morality has the potential to deepen our understanding of the ongoing popularity of conservative ideological formations and their constituencies.

1. 2. Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Rauf Orbay

Karabekir, Cebesoy, and Orbay were among the major military and political figures of the late Ottoman Empire, as well as the most intimate comrades of Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the Turkish Republic, in leading the 1919-1922 Turkish War of Independence (*Kurtuluş Savaşı*), or the “National Struggle” (*milli mücadele*). Many of the popular epic accounts of the period contend that the war was started by “five pashas,” Mustafa Kemal, Karabekir, Cebesoy, Orbay and Refet Bele.² As such, although there have been other military figures that eventually joined the war as leading generals, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay clearly stand out as being the earliest volunteers to have started to war on homeland against occupation by the Allied powers, and their autobiographic accounts of the history of that period form a political challenge that claims an authority to represent the nation and its values in terms of politically legitimate leadership. Their relationship with Mustafa Kemal worsened after the Independence War, and they formed the first opposition party in 1924,³ the Progressive Repub-

² Among the four other than Mustafa Kemal, Refet Bele is the only one who hasn't written any memoirs or autobiographic accounts of the period.

³ For the political history of the first opposition party of the Turkish Republic, see Zürcher (1991), Ahmad (1991), Ateş (1994), Yeşil (2002). For the history of elite politics and political opposition parties in Turkey, see Frey (1965), Zürcher (2010), Rustow (1991), Heper and Sayarı (2002), Heper and Landau (1991).

lican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, the PRP), in competition with the Republican People's Party⁴ (*Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*, the RPP) founded by Mustafa Kemal. Following the Shaikh Said Rebellion in 1925, the PRP was closed almost immediately, and the three were put on trial, though acquitted of all charges.

After the PRP was closed down in 1925, the political presence of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay as oppositional figures against the emerging Republican political establishment was limited. During this period, they started organizing their personal notes and memoirs into autobiographical writings to be published, documenting their recollections of the Independence War and its aftermath. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay use multiple genres of autobiographic writing (autobiography, personal memoir, daily notes and personal records about military activities) in order to recount post-war political developments from their own perspectives. Following the first wave of interest in their writings in 1950s, and especially after the 1990s, various right-wing and Islamist political and intellectual circles demonstrated increasing interest in the memoirs of these figures for their counter-hegemonic political potential. The belief in the memoirs' revelatory potential to challenge the secularist political establishment also parallels the weakening of the "official history" (as it was called by liberal left and Islamist circles alike) in public political imaginary since the 1980s.

As the state-sanctioned official narratives on the 1919 independence movement and the birth of the Republic under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal gradually lost their political legitimacy and authority in both popular and academic-intellectual circles,

⁴ Established in January 1923, the Republican People's Party was initially called the "People's Party" (*Halk Fırkası*).

there was a concurrent rise of interest in the role of other actors of the independence movement and in their autobiographical writings. This loss of legitimacy and authority in the truth-telling capacity of the official history of the Republic was echoed in the primarily right-wing and conservative critical portrayals of the actors of the official history. The proliferation of alternative historical accounts by estranged leaders of the Independence War or marginalized political figures of the Early Republican period in Turkey raised the issue of the political legitimacy of the leaders of the time, and questioned who has the authority to tell the history truthfully.⁵

This dissertation examines how autobiographical writings⁶ by politically neutralized opposition leaders of the PRP open up a peculiar political space to contest history, cast doubt on the legitimacy of their adversaries and assert their own political legitimacy through moralizing discourses. I argue that classical autobiographic discourses on the moral character traits, dispositions and emotional complexions of the authors, and of other figures covered in those autobiographies, are used by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay to index criteria of who is entitled to political legitimacy by defining “national character.” The autobiographical politics of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay extensively builds on moralizing discourses, contrasting the authors’ own heroic

⁵ Following recent autobiographical and memoir studies, I bracket questions of intentionality and verifiability, and instead focus on autobiographic representations of oneself and others in the text—which correspond to articulations of respective political positions. Hence, I do not treat these texts as alternative historical sources to offer a new historical re-reading of the history of the Early Republic. Instead, I treat them as a political site to articulate an ideological position and to naturalize an elitist claim to political authority in moral terms. For the political dimensions of self-presentation in life-narratives, see Anderson (2010), Smith and Watson (1992), Whitlock (2015).

⁶ I follow a recent line of works in autobiography studies that criticize clear-cut separations between memoirs and autobiographies, and introduce hybrid terms like “autobiographical writing,” “life-writing” or “life-narratives,” in order to bend the law of genre in favor of a broader horizon that acknowledges more diverse forms of self-narratives on life. See for example Hunsacker 1999, Moore-Gilbert 2009, Smith and Watson 2001.

achievements against the rise of a circle of military-bureaucratic elites—*etraf*—surrounding Mustafa Kemal after the Independence War. The authors incessantly document the rise of “corrupt” and inept individuals at the expense of those sacrificial comrades. They insist that whoever displayed the national character, and thus sacrificially served in the war, should have ruled the cadres of the new polity in principle. They similarly describe their resignation from the RPP and establishment of a new party not as a result of their admiration for the rule of law, multi-party politics or democratic institutions, but in terms of a moral responsibility to preserve and represent the Turkish revolution against the danger posed by the *etraf*.

Moralizing discourses refer to extensive descriptions of the moral qualities of both the authors and their political rivals that are used to judge the national character and worthiness displayed during major political events including war, political tensions and intra-party disagreements. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay frequently project moral traits they consider to be signs of this national character onto each other, creating an “us” as moral servants of the nation who displayed unconditional sacrifice, humility and selflessness. This “us” stands in stark contrast to their political rivals in the texts—the newly emerging clique of politicians and bureaucrats in Ankara, depicted as unhinged, greedy, corrupt, and incompetent individuals “surrounding” Mustafa Kemal (*etraf*). Their moralizing discourses reframe a complex set of political disagreements and ideological debates of the time in terms of character, disposition and temperament—those who are worthy of representing and governing the nation, vs. those who are not. However, despite a wide of convergences and intertextual references that maintain the ideological integrity of their positions, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay

have differences in the way they conceptualize the nationalist moral virtue of the national character, and how it has been violated by the emerging political establishment in Ankara after 1922. Throughout my analyses in this work, I continuously recognize and point out their differences. Nevertheless, I will nevertheless focus primarily on their shared and intertextually enriched outlook about the moral virtue of the national character of the Turkish nation.

Through carefully attending to their moralizing discourses, which rests on an intertextual politics, I unearth aspects of their political position that have been ignored in the academic literature so far. I demonstrate that these texts both review a longer span of history than their authors' involvement in the PRP, and reveal the most neglected aspect of their ideological legacy. I argue that the moralizing discourses the PRP leaders adopted when writing their autobiographies led to the emergence of an idiosyncratic blend of conservatism and nationalism. I call the specific politics that emerges out of this intertextual space "conservative nationalism"—a politics for which legitimacy depends on embodying the values of the nation, and of the national character. In that sense, conservative nationalism is an amalgamation of strong moral claims on duty, action and sacrifice, encompassing a broader array of identity claims to Turkness within the right-wing political space in Turkey that reached back to Young Turk claims to freedom (*hürriyet*), as well as conservative images of moral humility and duty.

1. 3. The Scope of the Research and the Historical Background of the Study

Karabekir, Cebesoy, Orbay, and only a few other military leaders (like Fevzi Çakmak or Refet Bele), constitute the leading cadre (*pashas*) of the Independence War under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, as well as İsmet İnönü (Mustafa Kemal's closest associate and successor as the president after his death). Unhappy with the emerging political establishment under Mustafa Kemal and İnönü, many of these *pashas* ended up in political opposition a few years after the end of the Independence War, while some of them were subsequently put on trial for treason. Although their memoirs occasionally enjoyed public circulation through published books and newspaper serials, some of these texts were frequently banned. From the perspective of the Turkish state's official historiography, these texts, along with other texts that have been written by other significant figures of the time, posed a dangerous and ambiguously legitimate historical claim to re-tell the history of the first two decades of the new Republic.

I focus exclusively on the autobiographies of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay for three major reasons.⁷ First, historically both the public readership of political memoirs and scholarly studies of the Early Republican period highlighted Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's lives as "treasures" of history to be unearthed. These three figures had joined forces with Mustafa Kemal from the start of the war, partaking in most of its decisive moments, military achievements and political crises. As mentioned above, along with

⁷ This thesis focuses exclusively on the core cadre of the PRP leaders and examines how they produced a political narrative of "opposition" through their recollections of Early Republican history. There are a few other military leaders (like Fevzi Çakmak or Refet Bele) who constituted the leading cadre of the National Struggle under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal, as well as İsmet İnönü (Mustafa Kemal's closest associate and successor to the presidency), and Adnan Adıvar, another dissident figure. Refet Bele never published his autobiographic works, while Adnan Adıvar was not among the key military figures of the National Struggle, and finally Fevzi Çakmak was not part of the PRP and only left daily notes which did not form an autobiographical narrative.

Refet Bele and Mustafa Kemal, they make up the legendary “five pashas” that started the war and hence have a distinct place in the history of the Independence War and the birth of the Turkish Republic. Second, these three figures were not only among the leaders of the National Struggle, but also led the first opposition party of modern Turkish politics, the PRP, along with Refet Bele and Adnan Adıvar. Thus, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay formed a political and military trio for more than a decade. This links to the third reason for my analytical focus, which is that these three key political figures systematically reference each other in their memoirs and create an intertextual political space for collective memory-making. This intertextuality could only be seen through a comparative focus on how three close friends frequently mention each other in texts that are supposed to convey individual life-stories. My analysis demonstrates that each text rarely makes individual-personal claims about its author’s own moral character. Instead, the authors tend to project moral character traits onto each other (and onto other opposition figures), citing each other’s experiences, stories and memories.⁸ By constantly invoking each other as “witnesses” of a past they shared with Mustafa Kemal, they transform individual memory into a politics of collective remembering.

I do not approach these autobiographies as alternatives to the official historiography, as has often been argued within contemporary critical historiographical studies that focus on that period. Instead, I aim to elucidate the multiple connections these authors

⁸ These texts are generally retrospectively reworked notes and memoirs from the 1918-1926 period. They were written (or re-organized) during the often-chaotic period of the establishment of the Republic in the late 1920s and 1930s — i.e. after the authors had a dramatic fallout with Mustafa Kemal. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay had been keeping daily notes since their early youth as part of a common social custom of the educated elite in Istanbul.

articulate in relation to the past to reclaim their political legitimacy, to assert their authority to political agency, and to be recognized as heroic, self-sacrificial and thus patriotic actors of an epic history. Despite the prevalent interest in self-narration and publishing, with few exceptions (Al-Mousa 2013; Fay 2002; Reynolds and Brustad 2001), there exists hardly any systematic analysis of autobiography and self-narration in the contemporary Middle East that pays attention to the role of these texts in identity-making and community-building (Fay 2002). There are also very few empirical works on selfhood and politics of self in relation to modernity and nationalism in Turkey (Ersanlı 2003; Gündüz 2009; Kaplan 1999). With an interdisciplinary analysis on the links between memory, morality, nationalism and selfhood, this thesis will expand theoretical debates on these concepts. Systematic researches on the history of autobiographical writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Turkey is limited. There are several insightful studies on collective memory in Turkey (Kırlı 2005; Özyürek 2006), but there are very few systematic studies on autobiography, memoirs and life-writing. In that sense, this study will also provide a major contribution to the critical analysis of autobiographical writing in modern Turkey.

In contrast to the contemporary right-wing public's celebration of these memoirs as posing a sensational scandalous unmasking of "Kemalist lies," existing scholarly work has maintained that, despite the wide readership they entertain, these dissident autobiographies and memoirs hardly affected the power of official ideology (Gürpınar 2012; Zürcher 1986). Several historians argued that with the post-1940 transition to the multi-party regime and the emergence of opposing claims to appropriate Republi-

can nationalism, the official Kemalist historiography diffused into a range of ideological approaches and became popularized, instead of remaining a singular account to be subsequently challenged or subverted (Demirel 1994:608–9; Koçak 2006:633–92).

Despite this diffusion process, dissident memoirs resurfaced again and again in subsequent decades, being posed as “challenges” to the Kemalist historiography. I suggest that some historians’ dismissive attitude towards these memoirs for their failure to pose an overt challenge underestimates the specific forms of political contestation these memoirs provide. This work aims to go beyond the problematics of challenge, alternative and cooptation endorsed by the right-wing and secular-critical historiographies alike. Instead, I ask a more general and productive question based on the two research themes mentioned earlier: What work do these texts do as publically circulated autobiographic narratives? Where do their authority, legitimacy and appeal come from beyond the popular interest in scandalous details to be unearthed? Autobiographic writings have become ambivalent but powerful battle grounds for the politics of memory in Turkey, which sets the historical parameters of political authority, as well as larger cultural and legal aspects of political legitimacy.

1. 4. Research Questions and Their Relevance to the Literature

There are two major tendencies in the existing academic literature on Early Republican opposition politics. The first tendency is to overstress the PRP’s ideological difference from the RPP, interpreting it as a conservative-traditionalist and peripheral opposition against a top-down modernist-secularist center, in a dualistic binary model that I will criticize below. The second tendency is, conversely, to overemphasize the

Unionist political legacy Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay shared with Mustafa Kemal and the RPP. This approach portrays their opposition as an intra-elite struggle in a post-revolutionary political scene, and downplays their conservatism by reducing their ideological legacy to the liberal tenets of the party program, questioning whether the PRP leaders can be qualified as conservative at all. My analysis acknowledges the second approach's emphasis on the military-elite Unionist legacy the PRP leaders shared with Mustafa Kemal. However, I also show that overemphasizing this military-elite legacy, or the liberalism of their party program, underestimates the conservative and moralist oppositional politics they articulate in their autobiographical writings. Hence, the overemphasis on the party's popular reception as a vehicle for peripheral dissent during its short lifespan, and on the liberal ideological tenets of the party program, obscures the complex layers of its leaders' oppositional politics, which extended beyond the party, and continued to evolve even after the party was closed. Where does the authority and political legitimacy of this oppositional politics rest in the Early Republican political context? How do autobiographic writings produce a means for the authors to claim this political legitimacy, and at the same time undermine the legitimacy claimed by their political opponents in power? How does the textual-literary structure of autobiographic narratives by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay generate historical truth, authority and political legitimacy? What kinds of subversive strategies and new national imaginaries do these oppositional autobiographic texts develop to contest the official history of the Early Republican period?

The "official" account of the events that took place in the immediate aftermath of the First World War and the following decade of political turmoil in Turkey is based on an autobiographical reflection on past events by Mustafa Kemal in his Great

Speech—*Nutuk*. Mustafa Kemal delivered *Nutuk* in six consecutive days in the Turkish parliament in 1927, based on his recollections of the National Struggle, as well as on a plethora of historical documents. This made him the first to publicly construct a history of the emergence of the Turkish nation as an independent nation-state. *Nutuk* was published in two volumes, gradually became the founding historical narrative of the Turkish Republic,⁹ and has remained part of the officially sanctioned history of modern Turkey. It was subsequently canonized in an endless stream of schoolbooks, official publications, popular histories and diverse academic works, and has been commonly named by critical academic scholarship as the basis of Turkey’s “official ideology.” The canonization of *Nutuk* led to a convergence of autobiography with history, and personal narrative with truth, in the making of modern Turkey. Due to this convergence, the publishing of the memoirs and autobiographical writings of *other* leaders of the 1919-1922 Turkish National Struggle (especially those whose narratives diverged from that of Mustafa Kemal) has consistently caused public excitement throughout the history of the Turkish Republic.

My analysis reveals the largely understudied concepts of national character, emotional complexion and moral self-formation as sources of political and military leadership, authority and legitimacy for autobiographic history-writing in Turkey. Looking from that perspective, the autobiographic conceptualization of “morality” as a pedagogical

⁹ The “Speech” (*Nutuk*) was read by Mustafa Kemal in the 2nd congress of the governing People’s Party in 1927 (Göçek 2006, Zürcher 2004: 175). Covering the series of events before, during and after the National Struggle, *Nutuk* has been widely regarded as the sole historical source of the period between 1919 and 1927. Although there is a wide range of military figures targeted by Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk*, Karabekir, Orbay and (to a lesser extent) Cebesoy were the most visible due to their close association with Mustafa Kemal during the war. As a result, their memoirs and autobiographies are popularly viewed in Turkey as “controversial responses” to *Nutuk*, and there is an ongoing politics of their publishing that relates to what their accounts represent against the “official history thesis” (Zürcher 2010, Adak 2003, 2007, Alaranta 2008, Gürpınar 2012).

development (*Bildung*) of character and the moral fashioning of the self and others (as heroic, self-sacrificial, moral, strong-willed or decadent, corrupt, power-seeking, etc.) emerge as central to the construction of legitimate political authority and legitimate forms of selfhood and truthfulness.¹⁰ The authors seek to legitimize their claims through an appeal to and characterization of the Turkish nation and its independence struggle as the ultimate source of moral substance. Their memoirs claim that this essential moral character of the Turkish nation is best embodied by the nation's self-sacrificial heroes, that is, the authors themselves.

1. 5. Significance of Research Themes and Findings

In this dissertation, I unpack how the exceptional interlocking of autobiographical writing with history, truth, and morality during the foundation of the republic has deeply shaped decades of political contestations over the legitimacy of political actors in reference to questions of nationalism, state and citizenship in Turkey. My analysis sheds light on the emergence and circulation of the memoir as a distinctive genre in the Turkish political context. The memoirs provide rich insights into the politics of remembering as well as personal and collective struggles over building connections between the past, the present and the future in ways that claim political legitimacy.

Through unpacking this exceptional role attributed to political memoirs in Turkish

¹⁰ *Bildung* refers to the German philosophical idea of the self-maturation of individual character, as one's sense of self becomes melded into the larger social body, embodying the general in its particularity, as philosophers like Hegel and Humboldt argued. I use an analysis that refers to the larger idea of *Bildung* as a 19th century trope in analyzing how Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay, unlike Mustafa Kemal, rely on the development, change and maturation in their character and personality in their claim to political legitimacy and their right to tell the truth. They basically prioritize the experience of being a part of the Independence War as a melting pot where the *bildung* of national character and moral dispositions attains its highest stage for Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay, transposing them into pure, sacrificial heroes and embodiments of the Turkish nation's moral character.

history and attending to these contestations and the new vocabulary the memoirs unleash, I aim to contribute to i) theoretical debates on nationalism, right-wing conservative ideology, Kemalism and memory-making in Turkey, and ii) inter-disciplinary works on autobiographical writing, modern selfhood and morality.

When we shift our focus from their party-based politics, the liberal tenets of the party, or the kind of active politics Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay conducted in the 1920s to their autobiographies, we can discern a peculiar blend of nationalism and conservatism in moral terms in their recounting of the past. Unlike classical conservatism's skepticism of change from a past ancient regime to future degeneration, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay think reforms are for the good of the society. However, unlike revolutionaries, they attribute a moral order and a sense of teleology to the Turkish revolution, seeing it as a process whereby the moral substance of a nation is gradually being realized. And they consider the revolutionary elite as corrupt individuals against which the process of the realization of this moral order should be protected. In my analysis, I demonstrate that their conservative nationalism displays significant elements of Edmund Burke's conservatism,¹¹ despite their strong Unionist legacy and devotion to the idea of a "Turkish revolution" (*Türk İnkılabı*).

First, as their autobiographical writings extensively focus on who deserves to lead the postwar political process on behalf of the Turkish nation, the opposition posed by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay maintains the need for a vanguard-like moral leadership of wise statesmen within the larger political elite—which is an essential tenet of

¹¹ Burke (1952); for my interpretations of Burke, see Kirk (1952) and Feulner (2008).

Burke's conservatism—instead of representing the “people” against the political center. Secondly, they articulate the moral traits they ascribe to these leaders, or statesmen, as embodiments of the “moral character” of the Turkish nation. More than anything else, their autobiographical writings provide extensive descriptions of the moral qualities of both the authors and their political rivals. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay frequently project moral traits they consider to be signs of this national character onto each other, creating an “us” as moral servants of the nation who displayed unconditional sacrifice, humility and selflessness. This articulation of a moral “us” vis-a-vis an immoral “other” (*etraf*) resembles another fundamental tenet of Burke's conservatism, his moral skepticism about corruption-prone and power-seeking revolutionary elites. Just like Burke, they see this emerging military-bureaucratic-political elite as a threat to the moral essence of the Turkish society and its organic social transformation into an independent nation, which must be guarded by wise statesmen.

Historians commonly approach these texts primarily by problematizing the reliability of such texts as representations of historical truth. However, this thesis methodologically shifts this focus towards how autobiographic texts articulate their authority and legitimacy to generate historical truth in moral terms that bypass the issue of representational reliability. These texts build the moral reliability of the author to directly present the truth instead of the representational authenticity of the texts and their claims. This thesis does not aim to evaluate or judge the political challenge these texts pose to *Nutuk*'s historical account or to the state-sanctioned official historiography. Nor does it attempt to ascertain the truth-content of the historical claims made by these texts or the officially sanctioned account of *Nutuk*. Instead, I analyze the literary, textual and

narrative structures of these texts in order to understand the moral and political authority they articulate as frames of political legitimacy despite lacking the blessing of *Nutuk*'s account. I ask whether the autobiographic discourse and the narrative strategies the authors employ provide a frame of political legitimacy in recourse to a morality-based nationalist historiography of the genesis of the Turkish nation.

I suggest that these texts have ultimately become bedrock for the emergence of the basic conceptual lenses and vocabulary of the right-wing political imaginary in Turkey. In their reckoning with Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk* and the official historiography, these texts provide rich repertoires on political legitimacy, proper leadership, and patriotism for right-wing nationalist and conservative imaginary. They fashion new understandings of political authority in relation to nationalism and the Turkish nation from a more moralistic standpoint.

While early Foucault-inspired poststructuralist critiques and similar textualist and constructivist approaches provide a helpful critical outlook on the limits of considering autobiographies as truthful representations of historical reality, they do not offer much in terms of understanding how autobiographies assert an authority to tell the truth beyond their representational power. I demonstrate in this thesis that the texts analyzed here are centered on developing a moral authority in order to legitimize the author's claim to a political authority. I contend that the autobiographic claim of the authority to recollect history in a truthful fashion inextricably ties history and truth to questions of morality and subjectivity, as well as politics. In that sense, I follow the textualist and constructivist approaches that avoid analyses of the intents, political motives, and actual truth-values of the texts. However, inspired by Foucault's later work that thematizes ethical selves, I also introduce an analysis of the *ethico-moral*

substance that Karabekir, Orbay and Cebesoy aim to fashion themselves with—the moral character of the Turkish nation. Claiming to be the embodiment of the selfless *moral character* of the Turkish nation reveals a desire to be recognized as actors with a legitimate authority to tell the nation’s history. In order to make this argument, I particularly focus on (i) their appeal to the Turkish nation as an audience, as well as a moral substance; and on (ii) their assumed modes of subjectivity as leaders, authors, and heroes.

1. 6. Methodological Framework

In this work, I do not analyze the authenticity of the proposed “facts” in the memoirs. I am not trained as a historian, and hence I am not competent to judge the historical value of the documents presented and arguments made. The question of “what work do these texts do?” is more productive to pursue the main problematics of this thesis, which is understanding how autobiography becomes a key political space of contesting political legitimacy and morality among Early Republican leaders.

I look at the remembering process in autobiographies as fundamentally social and collective. While the memoirists attempt to present a “personal” experience, I approach “experience as an interpretation of the past and of our place in a culturally and historically specific present that is mediated through memory and language” (Smith and Watson 2001: 16). Experience is “at once always already an interpretation and is in need of interpretation” (Scott 1992:37). Thus, writing of the past experience itself is a process of complex interpretation. In the very performance of relying on one’s own

memory to write a memoir, there can be no remembering without forgetting, since the infinite fragmented experience can only be selectively organized.

The textual analysis of these autobiographies in this dissertation draws on the production of truth effects (Foucault 1980), narrative performance of self (Langellier 1999) and narrative strategies (Mishler 1995). Based on the insights of these critical theories, I unpack the intricate conversation between the construction of a moral legitimate self and new imaginations of a nation through complex processes of commemorating and contesting the history of the Independence War and Early Republican period.

The main method employed in this study is narrative analysis, which focuses on the diverse textual strategies employed in these memoirs through which these authors try to come to terms with the new political landscape of the republic. According to Riessman, “narrative analysis refers to a family of approaches to diverse kinds of texts, which have in common a storied form” with sequence and consequence that select, organize and evaluate certain events for a particular audience (Riessman 2005:1). Through narrative analysis, I focus on the way Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay raise issues of national character in terms of a moralist nation imaginary that protects, glorifies and ultimately legitimizes the authors. I highlight the literary-textual strategies and techniques they resort to when describing how they and others were positioned in relation to a falling empire. I approach the aggrandized epic history of the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the birth of the Turkish Republic as an overarching background. I explicate both commonly shared and differing textual mechanisms employed by these autobiographic texts.

Diverse disciplines, including history, sociology, psychology and literary criticism, collaborated in the emergence of “narrative turn” by the beginning of the 1980s, which made narrative analysis a widely-used form of analysis. There are different classifications and models for narrative analysis in different disciplines (Mishler 1995), yet narrative analysis has established itself as a major methodology in human sciences (Berger and Quinney 2004, 2005). The form of narrative analysis I employ in this work is a combination of “thematic analysis,” “structural analysis” and “performative analysis” methods, as widely used and recognized in narrative studies (Riessman 2005:2–6).

Riessman differentiates between these three methods as follows. Asking “what is being said,” a thematic approach allows the analyst to focus on the content of the text; to recognize the unacknowledged philosophy of language; to find the common themes; and to identify the general story the author uses to frame their life. Structural analysis, on the other hand, is more concerned with the “how” question, the way a story is told, according to Riessman. Labov’s model (1982) has guided many narrative analysts with its privileged focus on narrative structure, since it centers on the event sequence in the text, the crisis and turning points in the story and how the author evaluates these moments (Riessman 2008: 84). It allows the analyst to interpret the main motives and emotions of the author by way of identifying how the text is being organized, what forms are repeated, and when.

I read autobiographical narrative as a performative endeavor (Maclean 1988) which allows the analyst to be attentive to multilayered conversations between the narrator, intended and other audiences and the larger historical context. “Approaching personal narrative as performance requires theory which takes context as seriously as it does

text, which takes the social relations of power as seriously as it does individual reflexivity” (Langellier 1999:128). Performative analysis focuses on storytelling by a “self” with a past that engages an audience with what he “does.” How characters are positioned in a story, how they embody certain feelings and how the narrator wants to be known are among the key questions posed in that type of analysis. “Personal narrative performance is [situated] in the voice and body of the narrator; second, and as significantly, in conversation with empirically present listeners; and, third, in dialogue with absent or ‘ghostly audiences’” (Langellier 1999: 127). The concept of performativity enables the analyst to contest the notion of autobiography as the site of authentic identity and prevents him from taking an unwarranted authoritative position of claiming to uncover a presupposed interiority of the author.

I also rely on Foucault’s theory of subjectivity to better situate the narratives within larger constellations of power. Foucault’s work is productive in analyzing the “multiple, dispersed, local technologies of selfhood through which subjects come to self-knowledge in historically specific regimes of truth” (Smith and Watson 2002: 133, Foucault 1980b). The introduction of “true” and “false” stems from a denial of the “interests” of the author, creating truth as a discursive effect (Foucault 1980, 203). Building on Foucault’s insights, I follow the recent critical autobiography studies that addressed issues such as regimes of truth, truth as effect, referentiality, and relationality to contest the idea of a coherent self. My theoretical and methodological analyses rely on the production of truth effects (Foucault 1980) that focuses primarily on narrative performance of self (Langellier 1999) and narrative strategies (Mishler 1995) in these autobiographical texts. Based on the insights of these critical theories, I aim to unpack the intricate conversation between the construction of a moral self and the

idea of the nation through complex processes of commemorating and contesting the history of the Independence War and Early Republican period.

I look at how history is narratively presented as truth and to what effects, and thereby situates the author within larger constellations of power. The question of “what work do these texts do, and how?” helps explain why and how autobiography was key to the political space of contestation among Early Republican leaders. I interpret their efforts of truth-telling as performative practices that seek to justify the autobiographer’s own claims in terms of a moral fashioning of a subject position, to uphold his ruined reputation, to dispute the account of others and finally to appeal to future generations.

1. 7. Organization of Thesis Chapters

The structure and central arguments of the thesis chapters are as follows: In Chapter 2, I provide a detailed review of the academic literature on the genres and sub-genres of autobiographic writings. The chapter is structured around the theoretical debates on the laws of genre that qualify autobiography as a qualified, temporally structured and contemplative text against memoir as an under-structured collection of unorganized yet chronological data. Following contemporary postcolonial, feminist and poststructuralist criticisms of the Eurocentric assumptions of a gendered elite “authorship” that qualify autobiographical reflection and life-writing, I question what autobiographic authorship means in political contexts, and how does the claim to tell the truth relate to demonstration of the development and formation of the authors character. I introduce the significance of the presentation of the moral development (*Bildung*) of the

author in comparison to other people mentioned by the author in modern autobiographic writings. I cover the extensive academic literature on both the history and the philosophical nature of autobiographic writings in Europe.

In the later parts of Chapter 2, I outline the theoretical and methodological frameworks I use in this thesis, and introduce the overarching themes and concepts I will employ in subsequent chapters. I claim that autobiographic writing involves, firstly, a discursively bound presentation that relies on both objective truth and subjective impression. The author makes a claim for the authorship of his/her life through a range of narrative strategies, asserting authority to sort out subjectivity of memory into an objective account. On the other hand, autobiographer seems to dissolve this authority in questions of reliability, truthfulness and legitimacy. In the case of politically over-charged texts by controversial figures and military-political figures, questions of episodic justification coalesce into claims to political legitimacy, questions of reliability to descriptions of moral character. I introduce the following question for the later chapters: What kind of a performative and discursive intervention and authority autobiographical works undertake so that they claim to produce true accounts and histories? How does the development and formation of their moral characters and dispositions (as content of the narrative being written by the author) retrospectively justify and legitimize the formal authority of the author to tell the truth? How do questions of political legitimacy of leaders emerge from literary engagements with the reliability of memory? Engaging with more contemporary literary theories, I try to pose these questions not in relation to the motives and intents, or to the actual representational truth, and instead, in relation to the authority authors assert in autobiographies. Build-

ing on Foucault's later works on the ethics of self, I try to bridge the textualist paradigm's avoidance of the analysis of intents, motives and truth-values with a focus on subjectivity-formation of the authors' claims to moral legitimacy. Such an approach reveals that the autobiographic authority relies on a morally qualified and non-representational notion of historical truth that breaks from questions of verifiability and intentions.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the history of the emergence of autobiographic genres in Turkey by (i) providing a literature review of the rather limited number of works on autobiography, and (ii) reflecting on the popularization of the genre since the 1910s as a source of political revelation. I analyze the vibrant public interest in the autobiographical texts as an ideologically under-structured moralistic right-wing romanticism of political insurgency against a centralist secular political establishment. While the larger literary and socio-historical themes of the increasing public/mass interest in secret diaries of public figures since the 18th century are obviously beyond the scope of this thesis, Chapter 3 outlines a socio-political context to the assumed differentiation of autobiographies from memoirs that blur the boundaries. Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion on how the dissertation is structured in applying the themes, methods and theories covered in Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4 is a detailed analysis of *Nutuk* as a historical narrative that constructs binding definitions for nationalism and leadership in appeal to the abstract and sublimated figure of the Turkish nation, whose fate depended on the insight and foresight of Mustafa Kemal. I rely on existing textual analyses of *Nutuk*, as well as my own narrative analysis, in explaining how Mustafa Kemal's moral perfection and unrivaled political foresight-insight emerge as forceful tenets that maintain Mustafa Kemal's claim to

political legitimacy as a singular and unrivaled leader. The rest of the chapter builds on the moral underpinnings of Mustafa Kemal's position as the singular authority to provide historical truth, and how this singular position elevates *Nutuk* beyond being a simple representation of historical truth towards being an instantiation of truth as such.

Chapter 5 focuses on how Karabekir, Orbay and Cebesoy claim an authority to re-tell the history of the genesis of the Turkish independence movement. I ask, given the tense political climate of late 1920s and early 1930s, how could a different historical narrative find a legitimate position to speak without appearing as a malicious misrepresentation of history? How does the introspective narrative structure of autobiography provide a viable retrospective reckoning with historical truth? I explore the parallels among texts in the way authors present the development of their character in response to the events they commonly experienced. I show that their texts seek redefining nationalism and patriotism through the idea of brotherhood and comradeship. Narratives of brotherhood and comradeship claim to embody personal traits like humility, self-sacrifice, resolution and moral certitude. I claim that these claims to embody the moral substance of the nation open up a new register of political legitimacy that undermines Mustafa Kemal's claim to a singular insight-foresight about history. I then move on to analyses of extensive passages where Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay raise questions about their and Mustafa Kemal's personal traits, characters and dispositions, which decenter the exceptional and singular image of Mustafa Kemal articulated in *Nutuk*.

Chapter 6 demonstrates how the authors provide emotional accounts of self-sacrificial and moral heroes of the independence war (including Mustafa Kemal and İnönü), who

had formed a firm and devout brotherhood in order to wage the Independence War. I argue that these references to a brotherhood of self-sacrificial heroes primarily seek to affirm a moral subjectivity of being part of a cause at one's own expense in order to serve the Turkish nation. They qualify this subjectivity as having (or embodying) the national character (*milli karakter, seciye*), which serves as a moral justification to assert the political legitimacy of the authors, and simultaneously question the legitimacy of those who lack that subjectivity, who are not part of that brotherhood, or who have betrayed it. Therefore, claims to this brotherhood are often accompanied by incremental abrupt moral judgements about whether other leading military and political figures of the time have the moral qualifications peculiar to this national character, or not. I argue that the way memoirs address the fall-out between Mustafa Kemal and Karabekir, Orbay and Cebesoy as a betrayal of this brotherhood, on a more fundamental level, poses their estrangement from the political scene as a betrayal of the Turkish nation itself. Organized around the major historical junctures of this fall-out that were highlighted in memoirs (in particular, the Lausanne proceedings), this chapter unpacks the tensions between moderacy and extremism, ideology and power, and loyalty and betrayal that is narratively constructed through the pursuit of an epic-moral authority, i.e. of being sacrificial members of a brotherhood betrayed by political-bureaucratic degeneration.

Chapter 7 offers a more nuanced theoretical engagement with the texts which analytically defines the ideological position and the political opposition Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay articulate in their autobiographical writings—conservative nationalism. I demonstrate that their autobiographies articulate an oppositional political lexicon and position that have not been addressed in the existing academic literature, which either

views those figures as early representatives of a peripheral dissent against the Republican regime, or overstates their Unionist legacy. Through textual analysis, I argue that the moralizing discourses they use pose a peculiar blend of nationalism and conservatism—an elitist conservative nationalism that ultimately homogenizes political differences and ideological splits. My analysis demonstrates that, contrary to predominant political and academic interpretations of their texts, their conservatism did not seek to voice the conservative sensibilities of a repressed peripheral dissent against a secular-reformist central-nationalist state. Despite the emphases on freedom, democracy and liberalism in the PRP party program, autobiographies reveal an endorsement of an elitist moral guardianship by select soldier elites—who fulfill the function of Burke’s wise and moral statesmen, tasked with neutralizing the threat posed by the excesses of an unhinged revolutionary elite. This focus on vanguardist-elitist conservative nationalism invites new horizons for the literature on Early Republican history and conservative politics in Turkey broadly. I claim that the elitist conservative-nationalism of the first oppositional party leaders offers a reinterpretation of Early Republican history that goes beyond the dualist frames of modernism vs. traditionalism, secularism vs. religious-reactionarism, or center vs. periphery.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL DEBATES ON AUTOBIOGRAPHIC WRITINGS

2. 1. Introduction: What is Autobiography?

The term “autobiography” literally means “self-life-writing” in Greek (Smith & Watson 2001: 1). There has been an ongoing debate over the analytical definition of the term within the literature on autobiography and memoirs. Philippe Lejeune argues that “anyone who works on ‘autobiography’ (...) is obliged to confront the problem of the definition, if only in practice, by choosing what to talk about.” (1989: 121). Underlying this controversy, according to Paul de Man, is the attempt to conceive autobiographical writing as exemplifying a genre that is separate from novel, poetry, and drama — i.e. from fiction (de Man 1979: 920). In the case of autobiography, the criteria of distinction basically concern the generic differentiation of objective truth from subjective fiction. Some analysts argue for a broader definition of the term. According to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson life-writing “can be biographical, novelistic, historical, or an explicit self-reference to the writer” (Smith & Watson 2001: 3) i.e. different types of self-referential writing, including autobiography. Smith and Watson (2001: 3) suggest that “life narrative might be approached as a moving target, a set of

ever-shifting self-referential practices that engage the past in order to reflect on identity in the present.” Hence, the problem of definition is mainly concerned with setting the standards to compare and contrast the elements of “objectivity” and “truth” in autobiographical texts in contradistinction to “subjective” works of fiction. What exactly the reader, or the public audience in general, is supposed to make out of the “non-fictional” in an autobiography? This question sets the boundaries of the literary politics of autobiographical truth.

Another major question that lies at the center of the debates on autobiography is whether autobiography is a peculiarly modern narrative form or not. The romantic modernist approach that dates the inception of the very idea of self-knowledge exclusively to the age of modernity associates the coinage of the term autobiography with the practice of self-referential writing during the 18th century in Europe. Romantic conceptualizations of autobiography consider every form of life-writing in the light of the modern autobiographical writing, defined as eloquent self-confession or self-knowledge.

Other approaches suggested that qualifying the surge of autobiography as a narrative form limited to a specific time period is problematic. Written texts and oral narrative forms have many diverse uses for diverse populations across cultures and history. As Robert Folkenflik states: “Of course, autobiography existed before the term came into being — just as one could catch a disease before it was diagnosed or named” (Folkenflik 1993: 7). Such critiques highlighted some autobiographies written much earlier than the advent of the term autobiography. One of the prominent examples is St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, covering the period of his life between the years 387 and 401 AD. In his seminal work, Georg Misch states that autobiography emerged in the

second and third millenniums B.C. as a form of “collective” autobiography (Misch 1950: 19). “In earlier centuries, writers used terms such as ‘memoir’ or ‘the life’ or ‘the book of my life’ or ‘confessions’ or ‘essays of myself’ to mark the way the writer refracted self-reference through speculations about history, politics, religion, science, and culture” (Smith and Watson 2001: 2).

In this chapter, I will first review the literature on the definitional boundaries of autobiographic genres, autobiography and memoirs. This review will conclude that “autobiography as a term is inadequate to describe the historical range and the diverse genres and practices of life narratives and life narrators in the West and elsewhere around the globe” (Smith and Watson 2001: 4). I will then briefly review the historical and conceptual relationship between autobiographic genres and popular-intellectual trends of the literary world, particularly the growing appeal of Romanticism and nationalism. The texts that I analyze in this work is also situated within this appeal that impacted the social and political elites of the late Ottoman Empire. I maintain that the specifically moral dimension of autobiographic truth as a reckoning with the past reflects of a Romantic search for or an affirmation of origins peculiar to the concomitant rise of nationalism in the 19th century.

In critiquing the classical orthodox frameworks of autobiography, I will justify how the autobiographic texts of the Early Republic figures analyzed in this work do not fit into any strict definition of literary genre. These texts are not bound by the duality of either providing an intense contemplative and introspective history, or disseminating astonishing facts that were focused by rigid distinctions drawn between autobiography and memoir in classical literature. Throughout this dissertation I will use the term “autobiographic writings” in order to avoid clinging to autobiography as a genre distinct

from memoirs and diaries, but adhere to the commonly used Turkish translations *hatıra* or *anı* that are widely used to describe a variety of autobiographical writing in Turkey. And then I will outline the overarching themes and concepts I will employ throughout the thesis. I will more specifically discuss how autobiographic constructions of truth, reliability and objectivity work. I will elucidate (i) the brief history of the two literary genres of “life writing” (Smith and Watson 2001) that I will use in this thesis (i.e. *autobiography* and *memoir*), and (ii) how these genres have been approached and analyzed in the academic literature.

2. 2. Modern History of Autobiographical Writing

According to Laura Marcus (1994), a historian of English literature, autobiography rose in the nineteenth century due to the emerging literary and cultural association between the notions of authorship and the notion of autonomy. Accordingly, the idea of authorship, which marks an autonomous internal subjective space, and its introspective or contemplative gaze on its own nature, echoed Enlightenment ideas such as assertive individuality, freedom, subjectivity and rationality of human beings. The modern author was not a storyteller that simply reflected the external world through proverbial lessons to be drawn from narratives, affirming a community of listeners or readers. Instead, the modern author affirmed his/her own inner idiosyncratic and representational universe. Marcus claims that this emerging possibility of revealing the internal and literary capabilities of an author without the need to refer to “outside judgments” made autobiography a tremendously appealing form for the 19th century literary figures (Marcus 1994).

This association between modern authorship (marking the author's subjectivity, personality, character, idiosyncrasy, etc.) and autobiographic life-writing paved the way for a contemplative understanding of autobiography (Anderson 2010; Delany 1969; Gusdorf 1980; Weintraub 1978). This understanding could be viewed as a reaction against popular circulation of memoirs, which were written (or posthumously circulated) with populist or commercial purposes. However, these Enlightenment-based ideas about the modern author's self-contemplative and introspective character were not unanimous among the intellectual currents of the time. Rationalist assertions of the modern subject's intellect that objectively portrays an external world through a logical organization of inner representations were often intertwined with Romanticist gratifications of the inner gaze of an author's self-reflection that vividly portrays the range of subjective depths of the individual soul or the communal/mythical spirit.

These different intellectual trends gradually made their way into the diversification of autobiographic genres with various ideal-types. Some examples to these ideal types are: the rationalist statesmen's or soldiers' autobiographies that seek to set the historical record objectively straight, and the romantic ideologues' autobiographies that aim to reflect on the beauty and grandiosity of heroic acts, larger-than-life personalities and how they exemplify a higher plane of existence of the Spirit, the Nature, the Nation, the State, etc.

Despite their often-contradictory intellectual and ideological proclivities against each other, these diverse currents of "serious" autobiographic writing commonly continued to distinguish their own narratives from the vulgar popular interest. The vulgar popular genres were dismissed for being concerned with satisfying the pornographic gaze

of an emerging mass-public by revealing unknown or forgotten facts, events and secrets. As I will elaborate further below, this rather Western Europe-centered denigration of what were viewed as “unqualified” autobiographic writings lauded the serious autobiography’s contemplative character as a reckoning with the past, and belittled new commercial parameters of mass-publishing. The increasing urban mass publics of the changing 19th century European cities had paramount influence upon the publicization of autobiographic genres. Mass-publishing created a public which widely consumed inadvertently revealed scandalous details and information registered in non-reflective and un-contemplative memoirs.

The classical literature on the modern history of autobiographical writing conceptualized *autobiography* and *memoir* as distinct genres (Ashley, Gilmore, and Peters 1994, Lejeune 1989, Misch 1950, Olney 1972, 1980) Recent works by scholars who are skeptical towards the distinctions drawn between these two life-writing genres widely criticized precise formulas of definition (Smith, Watson, and Franklin 1999, Smith and Watson 1992, 1996, 2001, 2006, Marcus 1994, Anderson 2010, Whitlock 2010, 2015, Moore-Gilbert 2009). These criticisms targeted the modernist assumptions of the rational-autonomous subject that ascribed a contemplative and moral-rational Western subjectivity to autobiography (Delany 1969, Gusdorf 1980, Weintraub 1975, 1978). Those who ascribed moral-rational subjectivity to autobiography as a contemplative genre were critiques for denigrating memoir to a popular indulgence for a devouring mass society that consumes unearthed scandals and shocking empirical details (Anderson 2010, Folkenflik 1993, Marcus 1994, Nussbaum 1989).

This study follows the recent works that introduce hybrid terms like “autobiographical writing,” “life-writing” or “life-narratives,” which helps bend the law of genre towards a broader and more postcolonial horizon that acknowledges more diverse forms of self-narratives on life (Hunsacker 1999, Moore-Gilbert 2009, Smith and Watson 1992, Whitlock 2015). Despite growing critiques of the analyses that associates autobiography with moral-rational contemplation has been widely criticized in autobiography studies (Anderson 2010, Marcus 1994, Nussbaum 1989, Smith and Watson 1992, 2006, Whitlock 2015), autobiography is still predominantly separated from memoir in the literature. Many view autobiography as a site of an intense reckoning with past while memoir is considered a simpler repository of intriguing information. Hence, autobiography as a term is still predominantly used to refer to the Western notion of individual introspective and retrospective contemplation, while other forms of life-writing texts bear the mark of a treasure-box full of details to be unearthed. This predominant understanding relies on specific quandaries of the Enlightenment history. Romantic assertion of spirit and passions in the introspective gaze of autobiographic *subjectivity* is reconciled with the contemplative retrospection into past as *objective* self-certainty. Is this ambivalence between subjectivity and objectivity a defining feature of autobiographic narrative structure? In order to better answer to this question, I will discuss how the growing appeal of Romantic nationalism expanded to the pedantic circles of Enlightenment philosophy and the growing 19th century mass interest in the historical fates of nations and empires, as well as those of individual souls.

The growing importance of the autobiographical genre in literature began with Romantic Period writers’ usage of autobiographical form in their writings (Folkenflik 1993: 8). Thus, the “advent of Romanticism in the eighteenth-century [due to the rise

of] Romantic subjectivity and its expressive poetics” was decisive in establishing the major tradition of autobiography (Folkenflik 1993: 8). Romantics believed in the poetic duality of particularity and universality each individual represented and gratified the notion of a self-narrative that sought expressing how individual character was formed throughout its development in life. In that sense, the most prevalent definition of autobiography as an eloquent and subjective recollection of past events draws upon “eighteenth century notions of self-interest, self-consciousness, and self-knowledge [that] informed the figure of the ‘Enlightened individual’ described by philosophers and social and political theorists” (Smith and Watson 2001: 2). However, this Romantic refashioning of Enlightenment was much less intellectual-elite based and pedantic, since it passionately affirmed the emergence of an “enlightened public,” which was in a contemplative and spiritual search of its origins. Reflecting these Romantic notions of spiritually dynamic communities of enlightened individuals, a “reading public” had already emerged by the 18th century. The emergence of such public sphere incited elite groups such as intellectuals, soldiers, high-rank bureaucrats to assume a larger-than-life personality to appeal to an audience that could appreciate the eloquence of their recollections and the historical reckoning they would set forth (Krailsheimer 1962, Sturrock 1977).

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, diaries and journals, despite being forms of life-writing, increasingly became separated from autobiography. It was believed that they lacked the sophisticated temporal and developmental perspective of autobiographies and simply presented the past in a sequence. In contrast, autobiography was associated with a contemplative narrative structure that traced back the development of temporality and character. Being skeptical towards this modernist distinction that

attributes a contemplative modern subjectivity to elite life-writing while denigrating popular life-writing as crude, I argue that varying forms of autobiographic writing exemplify different cultural dispositions of reckoning with the past and with historical truth. To that effect, the emergence of more popular genres like diary and journal can be interpreted as the development of a popular notion of self, socially and historically associating the author with a special date given to each entry, recording the changes in the subject of these events at least as much as the sequential order of the events. The popularity of these narrative forms incites an alternative way of interpreting the literary history of autobiography, and casts significant doubts on singular discrete distinctions between forms of life-writing.

2. 3. Critical Approaches to

Romantic and Modernist Definitions of Autobiography

Romantic and modernist conceptualizations of autobiography were challenged by feminist, postmodern, poststructuralist and postcolonial critiques for their obsessive focus on the rational and contemplative subject of modernity (Nussbaum 1989, Smith, Watson, and Franklin 1999, Smith and Watson 1992, 1996, 2001, 2006, Ashley, Gilmore, and Peters 1994, Marcus 1994, Anderson 2010, Whitlock 2010, 2015, Moore-Gilbert 2009). Deconstructing Euro-centric notions of rational and exemplary “larger-than-life” elite subjects as agents of a properly contemplative life-writing, these critiques targeted the celebration of autonomous individual and universalizing life-stories associated with the term (Nussbaum 1989, Smith, Watson 2001, Ashley, Gilmore, and Peters 1994, Marcus 1994, Anderson 2010, Whitlock 2010, 2015, Moore-Gilbert 2009).

Smith and Watson argue that modernist scholars such as Gusdorf (1980) and Weintraub (1978) celebrate autobiography as a “master narrative of civilization in the West against many coexistent forms of life narrative” (Smith & Watson, 2001: 4). Gusdorf (1980) for instance, insists that autobiography is centrally tied to the sentiment of curiosity of the individual about himself, and as such culminated as a genre only in recent centuries and only on a small part of the world. These Euro-centric frameworks consider Rousseau’s *Confessions* as inaugurating modern autobiography with his focus on childhood, his retrospective chronology, his radical individualism and his antagonism. Rousseau’s work and project of self-absorbed individualism is still widely regarded as an influential and controversial model of life narrative (Verene 1991). Nevertheless, oral performances of self-narrative have always existed in many indigenous cultures prior to the rise of public literacy (Smith & Watson 2001: 84). The widespread use of self-presentation in both preliterate and literate non-Western cultures contradict the contentions of an earlier generation of literary critics such as Gusdorf and Weintraub who argued that autobiography is a uniquely European form that emerged in the Enlightenment as a specific achievement of individuation.

In addition to bringing in a more inclusive approach that recognizes diverse genres of writing in different historical periods as autobiography, the poststructuralist critiques also questioned the idea of a life that is worth telling and sharing. These recent literary critiques dismantle the notion of the “representative life” by asking questions such as “Whose lives can be considered representative of a culture or a historical moment?” and “Who determines which lives are representative?” (Jardine 1985). Misch’s (2003) classical modernist account on the antiquity of autobiography for instance proposed

that people who lived their lives in the public sphere, who have been actors in important historical events or moments, who have achieved fame in public, etc. are the representative subjects of autobiography. This notion of autobiography as the records of a representative life of a great larger than life personality has long served the model of life narrative in Western civilization.

Historically it is known that many people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds wrote and told their stories before the twentieth century even though their access to larger public and intellectual products were relatively constrained (Smith & Watson 2001: 116). Yet, these texts didn't acquire the status of "representative autobiographies"; these life narratives were not seen as formative of "civilization" (Smith & Watson 2001: 116). Therefore, while the modernist autobiography studies privileged narratives of autonomous individuality and representative lives, recent work on autobiography and life narrative began to focus on the vast production of life narratives by ex-slaves, apprentices and trades-people, adventurers, criminals, immigrants, saints and mystics (Smith & Watson 2001: 128). The diverse mode of life narrating by marginalized, minoritized, diasporic and postcolonial subjects throughout the history of life-writing revealed that the concept of individuality is insufficient as a determining force.

In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's terms, such an individuality is a molar and major form of identification for the autobiography author, which limits the author's agency either to an outmoded modernist notion of an introspective-representational space of subjectivity, or an equally molar and restricting notion of cultural-personal identity. Deleuze and Guattari discuss how Kafka's work engages in subversion through destabilizing the traditional concepts of the dominant language and politics

(Deleuze and Guattari 1986). They argue in their minoritarian analysis on Kafka's writings that "major" or dominant-majoritarian forms of literature limit and historically over-contextualize texts. Accordingly, major literature reduces texts into effects of how they relate to different forms of authority, Oedipal meta-narratives or Biblical metaphors. Genres assume major and established audiences of majority or people of molar identities, while texts of minor literature use "major language," but subvert it from within. Minor literature dismantles notions of value, position, evolution and moving between centers and margins. The self in postmodern autobiographical writing in that regard is not singular and linear and does not have any stable positions (Kaplan 1987: 189). Deleuze and Guattari's analysis on Kafka has been useful to the scholarly analyses on the memoirs of immigrants, their children and other minority groups (Elahi 2006). Such memoirs have relatively minoritarian, separate themes that do not relate to major audiences. They seek their own audiences, borrowing or appropriating languages and forms of the majorities for themselves.

Informed by the recent critical scholarship, various academic works hence investigated memoirs and similar autobiographical texts as a medium to voice marginalized identities. Through this medium, the repressed voices could rebel by locating themselves in a particular history and a community. Particularly for feminist politics, the memoir is praised for its possibility of establishing necessary connections between private and public, personal and political (Smith & Watson 2001: 3). As many forgotten life narratives were republished and as modes of autobiographical narrating proliferated, many hybrid genres collected under the umbrella term "life writing" have been formulated (Smith & Watson 2001: 122). "Life narrative [began to be seen as] a pro-

cess through which a narrator struggles to shape an identity out of an amorphous experience of subjectivity” (Smith and Watson 2001: 125). These hybrid genres display the elements of minor literature in their search for a fleeting audience with a multitude of flow-intensities and hybrid literary forms of becoming. Scholars emphasize the emancipatory dimension of contemporary autobiographical practices and cultural work, as they creatively inquire into the histories of their own cultural erasure in the name of civilizing missions and employ modes of oral storytelling.

I suggest that “autobiographical writing” rather than autobiography is a more productive term for its promise to include forms as diverse as the personal essay, the testimonial narrative, and the diary within that general rubric (Hunsacker 1999: 6). Following the insights of the feminist and postcolonial critiques, I understand autobiography as consisting of historically situated and diversifying practices of narrative self-representation. The distinction that is often made between autobiography and memoirs is problematic for its definition of the former as an analytical and introspective life-record and the latter as a list of periodically interlinked records that are more concerned with external events (Delany 1969: 2).

2. 4. Theoretical Debates on Autobiographic Authorship, Objectivity and Truth

According to Lejeune, there is a certain “autobiographical pact” between the author and the reader of an autobiography, which ensures the distinction of autobiographical text from fiction: the convergence of the authorial signature and the text’s narrator: “What defines autobiography for the one who is reading is above all a contract of

identity that is sealed by the proper name. And this is also true for the one who is writing the text” (Lejeune 1989: 19). Lejeune even goes further to assert that so long as the author and the protagonist share the same name, the work should still be considered autobiography instead of fiction even if the text is fully unreliable or overtly false (Anderson 2010: 3).

For a growing number of scholars, the criteria of truth, objectivity and subjectivity are constraining and not productive tools of critical analysis. These scholars claim that autobiography is only a different kind of “storytelling”: stories of our lives should be questioned whether or not they are less fictive than other stories that spring out of our imagination (Smith & Watson 2001, Ashley et al 1994, Folkenflik 1993, Olney 1972, de Man 1979). A seemingly innocent recollection of one’s life is also an account on one’s subjectivity, which may hardly be exempt of the cultural identification processes that require fictive interventions and discursive closures. “Remembering involves a reinterpretation of the past in the present. The process is not a passive one of mere retrieval from a memory bank. Rather, the remembering subject actively creates the meaning of the past in the act of remembering. Thus, to narrate a memory is an interpretation of the past that can never be fully recovered” (Smith & Watson 2001: 262). One’s multiple fragments of experiences are organized and formed into complex constructions, which in turn become the stories of our lives. Remembering takes place in a specific cultural and political context. There are “struggles over who is authorized to remember and what they are authorized to remember, struggles over what is forgotten, both personally and collectively” (Smith & Watson 2001: 18).

Moreover, there are different practices and techniques of remembering. Smith (1999) details how autobiographers’ remembering and memory are mediated by the language

they use to express themselves. Focusing on women's autobiographies, she argues that it is a vital necessity to consider the historical and linguistic limitations that have shaped concepts of what a woman is at any given point in time. In what is merely alleged to be recording, reflecting and writing her life, the author chooses whether to reproduce or contest existing views, discourses and practices of femininity, while these may be themselves misleading, unfair and insufficient. She sets forth that "memory leaves only a trace of an earlier experience that we adjust into the story" — experience for Smith is mediated by how we describe and interpret it to others and ourselves. She claims that, "cultural tropes and metaphors which structure autobiographical narrative are themselves fictive [...] the language we use to 'capture' memory and experience can never 'fix' the 'real' experience but only approximate it, yielding up its own surplus of meaning or revealing its own artificial closures" (Smith 1999: 35).

This thesis is situated within this scholarship that views autobiography as a narrative presentation of life and the past. Autobiography involves, firstly, a discursively bound presentation of what is objectively true and what is subjectively fictive or false. The author makes a claim for the authorship of his/her life through a range of narrative strategies, asserting authority to sort out memory. On the other hand, autobiographer seems to dissolve this authority in questions of reliability, truthfulness and legitimacy. It is hardly conceivable to tell the truth about one's life, due to the impossibility and artificiality of the process of translating experience into the text.

This brings us back to de Man's assertion about the founding controversy of the literature on autobiography. The reason why autobiography is such a controversial genre is that it extends the boundaries of literary generic discipline "unlike any other form of

literary composition. Its boundaries are far more fluid and less definable in relation to form” (Misch 2003: 4). Misch argues that while other genres, “in spite of variations from age to age, from nation to nation, and from work to work, have preserved unity of form throughout their development, [the autobiographical] representation of life is committed to no definite form” (Misch 2003: 4).

2. 5. Autobiographical Narrative and Textual Mechanisms of Presentation

What does autobiographical truth mean? How does its construction work, and to what effects? What kind of a performative intervention the autobiographical work undertakes for itself so that it can assume on behalf of both the reader and the author to produce a “true” account? Despite vested cleavages of opinion among scholars, it is hardly contestable that we exclusively read the author of an autobiography because she or he makes claims about his/her life, pointing at a larger-than-life and an ahistorical attitude, from where the reader is prompted to reflect on the author’s life or text.

This study is not concerned with which autobiographical claims to truth and objectivity are reliable, but with *how* these claims are made. I build on the poststructuralist and postcolonial approaches’ insistence to break away from the representational internal space of the author and instead to integrate a more textualist paradigm where the focus is on how the author presents him/herself, such that the text becomes the immanent plane of presenting a “self” and its “past” to an immanent audience that is already involved in the text. Attention to presentation enables one to explain why autobiography is the most direct and inclusive genre of writing that acknowledges the

public reader. The specificity of autobiography lies in the presentation (and not representation) of life, of self, and of past to an immanent public.

In philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's words,¹² human beings are "storytelling animals" who constantly seek to define who is "I" for himself and others (MacIntyre 1981).

One of the most important functions of the autobiographical text is to enable a continuous dialogue between the earlier stages of the narrated self and the final referent of the "I" of the text. It is the retrospective vision of a self that gives meaning to the events not as they happen but as they are written in the present. It is the identificatory present's perspective reflected on the earlier experience that gives shape to the narrative (Popkin 2005).

Since autobiography is not a list of events but a narrative shaped by the network of events working to construct the writing "I," how this "I" wants to be perceived affects the writer's relation to truth. As de Man argues, because the writer knows an end to the story, he or she manipulates the medium accordingly and formulates specific relationship sequence between the events so as to lead them to the point of their destination, which is legible and legitimate for the author's point of writing. The issue here is not the fact that the author may insert non-real or even fictional elements into the narrative that is at stake here. What matters more is what Foucault had called the "author function" (Foucault 1984) and the mere working presence of the author of autobiography and hence of a life as a textual effect that determines the way the text functions.

12 While MacIntyre has frequently been praised for being among the first to highlight the significance of narrative in understanding identity, his conceptualization has also been critiqued for its universalist and normative bearings.

Unlike fiction and history, the author-as-text owes its integrity to its claim to truth, which requires re-adjusting Lejeune.

There is an autobiographical pact between the reader and the author of autobiographies, yet it does not guarantee the reliability of the author, and what is being told. As Smith and Watson argue “autobiographical truth is a different matter; it is an intersubjective exchange between narrator and reader aimed at producing a shared understanding of the meaning of a life” (Smith and Watson 2001: 12). Thomas Mitchell also suggests that “memory is an intersubjective phenomenon, a practice not only of recollection of a past by a subject but of recollection for another subject” (Mitchell 1995: 193, n. 17). “Memory is a means of ‘passing on,’ of sharing a social past that may have been obscured, in order to activate its potential for reshaping a future of and for other subjects. Thus, acts of personal remembering are fundamentally social and collective” (Smith and Watson 2001: 20-1).

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING IN THE LATE OTTOMAN AND EARLY REPUBLICAN PERIODS

3. 1. Introduction: History of Autobiographical Writing in Turkey

Akar and Karakoç suggest that the oldest source on autobiographical writing in Turkey is Muallim Naci's 1902 French-Turkish dictionary. Naci's use of the word *hatırat* (memoir) in his entry for the French word "memoire" (Akar and Karakoç 2004: 384) is the first recorded use of that Turkish term.¹³ Before 1902, memoirs were referred to in the Turkish language using the Arabic words *müzekkirat* and *zikrayat*. Akar and Karakoç date the dissemination of the genres of life-writing back to early 19th century examples of *sergüzeştname*, the lyrical account of adventurous events from one's past (ibid). One of the earliest examples of this genre is *Sergüzeşt-i Zaiifi*, while the first memoir in the Western sense is considered to be *Defter-i Amal* by Ziya Paşa, which was serially published in 1881 in *Mecmua-i Ebuzziya* (Olgun 1972: 405).

¹³ "Hatırda kalmış olan hususî keyfiyet, cem-i hâtırat; bunlara dair yazılan eserlere de hâtırat denilir."

While the history of the genre in Turkey goes back to the 19th century, the popularity of autobiography and memoir writing is a relatively recent phenomenon in Turkey that correlates with the emergence of a public sphere where literary products could be shared, circulated and debated by wider social strata. Despite the recent surge of autobiographic publishing in the last two decades, academic attention to autobiographic writings or memoirs has been mostly confined to a methodological interest among historians in autobiographies and memoirs as alternative sources. There are very few published academic works in English that investigate autobiography and memoir as genres of life-writing in Turkey (Seyhan 2003). Apart from a few isolated references to memoirs of writers and poets in the Early Republican period, there is scarcely any scholarly work on autobiographical writing. The first significant academic work on the genre was a special volume of the *Türk Dili* journal in 1972. Prior to that, the journals of the leading literature faculties of universities in Istanbul and Ankara published a few articles, but these limited and brief early pieces focused on the memoirs of famous literary figures, whose other literary works were already in circulation.¹⁴ In that sense, their memoirs were considered an extension of their existing body of works in writing, thereby occupying a secondary position in relation to other “real” works. The articles in the *Türk Dili* journal’s special volume on memoir-writing, which exclusively focused on life-writing as a literary activity in and of itself, provided the first scholarly analyses on the development of the genre abroad (Birsal 1972), the linguistic elements of memoir writing in Turkish (Özdemir 1972), the literary peculiarities of

¹⁴ For extensive bibliographies of memoirs and autobiographic writings, as well as academic works on memoirs, in Turkey, see Akar and Karakoç 2004; Çukurova 1991; Gürkan 2013.

the genre as it developed into an autonomous literary practice, and its leading examples in the “new literature” (Deligönül 1972).

Situated within the modernist framework of self-writing, historian İlber Ortaylı (2002) claims that autobiographical literature in Turkey is weak in comparison to Europe, where there are almost as many unpublished autobiographies as there are published ones. He suggests that since the 19th century, the emerging military and civilian bureaucratic class in Turkey has not cultivated a strong sensibility to provide a written document about their individual lives and understanding of their selves. He also hints at an ironic anecdotal point by noting that especially during the Early Republican period, the leading circle of bureaucrats, diplomats and military officials around Mustafa Kemal often preferred to convey their criticisms in oral and informal ways. Ortaylı suggests that such figures refrained from leaving written accounts of their political lives, which could somehow differ from their daily presentations of self in the actual political scene.

Recent historical analyses of autobiographical writing in Turkey, however, challenge modernist conceptions of autobiography and suggest alternative historiographies and methodologies of the history of self-writing. Cemal Kafadar’s work (1989, 2009) has been of seminal importance in that regard. He criticizes the general assumption that there are no sources of autobiographic nature, such as diaries or memoirs, prior to the *Tanzimat* period. He suggests that the modernist bias in the academic literature on the cultural history of the Ottoman Empire reinforces this assumption by incorporating what I noted in the previous chapter as the romantic view of the “enlightened subject” as the origin of self-knowledge. The romantic view paradigmatically focuses on modern subjectivity as the original inception of an authentic sense of one’s self. This view

dismisses pre-modern oral and written accounts on one's self and the textual presentation of this "sense of self" either as conceptually inferior chronologies or as totally unreliable. Kafadar, referencing the travel writings of Evliya Çelebi, as well as diaries written in several Sufi sects and the tradition of *Sohbetname* during the 17th century, argues that these accounts of their authors' selves expressed a different kind of individuality, which is no less relevant to the historical and social scientific study of the past than written archives. Accordingly, the sense of self in these accounts provides a wealth of information about the material life and daily activities of the community, as well as the way their authors made sense of their positions within the community. Thus, different communities, much before the Tanzimat, and its subsequent modernizing efforts, produced a remarkable number of autobiographical texts and diverse forms of self-narratives.¹⁵ Obviously, this type of writing is not similar to the Enlightenment understanding of individuality that conveys unique individual experiences in ways that reflect a modern consciousness or self-conception. For this reason, Kafadar claims that there are not sufficient examples of Ottoman autobiography to change the existing view that the proliferation of autobiographic writings in Turkey represents a formal expression of the emergence of individuality limited to post-Renaissance European culture.¹⁶ He concludes that the examples reveal that different forms of self-writing exist in Ottoman history but they are not comparable to those autobiographical forms found among diverse social groups in medieval and early modern European history.

¹⁵ See for instance Terzioğlu (2007: 83–99).

¹⁶ Ibid.

In this chapter, first, I will provide a discussion on the historical, literary and political relevance of autobiographic writing in post-Independence War Turkey. This analysis will unpack the complex relationship between personal accounts of memory and contending forms and trajectories of nationalisms. Second, I will substantiate the theoretical framework reviewed in the previous chapter in relation to the Turkish context, both historically and thematically, by asking whether and how these themes are reflected in the Turkish literature on autobiography and memoir, and in published autobiographic writings.

3. 2. Memory, History and Nationalism:

Political Debates on Autobiographical Writing

Memoir-writing as a practice started to become popular among the educated cadres of the Ottoman Empire as early as the 1830s, and the memoir as a genre started to attract considerable attention as a reliable source of knowledge, even if its literary value was considered relatively “low.”¹⁷ The rise of autobiographical writing by the well-educated political and intellectual elite in the late-Ottoman period reveals the emergence of new political actors with a self-consciousness of their own centrality as historical subjects. In the modernizing Empire, in the eyes of many political figures, memoir writing had become an “effective way of pursuing political and personal polemics” (Gürpınar 2012: 538). The period between 1908 and 1914 witnessed a boom in memoir-publishing, since several ministers and men of prominence from the Hamidian era felt free to express their opinions (Gürpınar 2012: 539). In a later period, the political

¹⁷ Haluk Şehsuvaroğlu, *Akşam*, 27 April 1952.

and personal disputes between the Unionists and others started to be published in dailies and memoir columns, since political actors viewed them as weapons for claiming legitimacy and questioning “who did what,” particularly between 1918 and 1922. Following these brief memoir booms, there was a long silence until 1945, with the exception of a few memoirs published in the Istanbul dailies by the unionists and the Young Turks, such as Ali Haydar Midhat and Muhittin Birgen (Gürpınar 2012: 539).

During the 1950s and the 1960s, there was a new wave of memoir-publishing. Numerous memoirs were published posthumously by surviving family members of the leading figures of the late Ottoman Empire. In the first years of the multi-party period, newspapers and magazines were replete with memoir serials by prominent soldiers and politicians.¹⁸ During this first wave of memoir publishing in the post-1945 multi-party period, several prominent journalists highlighted the political potential of the memoir as a genre, and welcomed the flourishing of memoir-publishing.¹⁹ Cebesoy’s (1953, 1955, and 1960) and Orbay’s memoirs were first published in these decades (1962, 1963). Karabekir’s *İstiklal Harbimiz* (Our Independence War) shares the similar narrative genre with *Nutuk* for its copious use of published historical documents (Zürcher 2010a, 2010b).²⁰ It was written during the two decades between 1927 and

¹⁸ See for instance the series on Fevzi Çakmak by Mehmet Razi Yalkın in *Yeni Sabah* newspaper in February 1947 (Birinci 2012: 81).

¹⁹ See Haluk Şehsuvaroğlu, *Akşam*, 27 April 1952, and Falih Rıfki Atay, *Cumhuriyet*, 13 February 1949 (Birinci 2012: 65).

²⁰ *İstiklal Harbimiz*, 1230 pages, offers a detailed history of the Turkish Independence War with more than a thousand documents. For more information on the political and historical significance of this book and the long painful process of the first publication, see Zürcher (1986) and Gürpınar (2012). In many ways, *İstiklal Harbimiz* could be considered to be a veiled criticism of the information presented in *Nutuk*, and even an “anti-*Nutuk*” (Zürcher 2010a: 566). Zürcher suggests that much of Karabekir’s evidence, which contradicts Mustafa Kemal’s *Nutuk*, is supported by other historical sources (Zürcher 2010a: 567). I want to stress again that, not being trained as a historian, I do not assess the historical value of Karabekir’s documents, and in this thesis, I am not concerned with the question of historical validation.

Karabekir's death in 1948. Early attempts to publish it was prevented, while the first state sanctioned edition was published in 1960, although was banned in 1961, until the court case by the publisher resulted in favor of publishing in 1968 again.

The authors' reluctance to publish their memoirs, as well as the careful selection and timing of publication by the families and the publishing houses, could be situated within the historical controversies underlying Early Republican history.²¹ Fierce debates over the benefits and dangers of publishing these memoirs signify the public worth given to memoirs as a genre. In particular, the memoirs of certain individuals who had been close to Mustafa Kemal could receive tremendous attention. The infamous debate over the memoirs of Latife Hanım is a pertinent example.²² Latife Hanım, married to Mustafa Kemal for a brief period, never published her memoirs and strictly willed her family not to share any information about her personal life. Her memoirs and other personal documents are kept in the archives of the Turkish Institute of History. The preservation of these memoirs and the strict ban on publicizing

²¹ Recent controversy around the publishing of the memoirs by Abdullah Gul's adjutant Ahmet Sever in June 2015, right after the general elections in Turkey, illustrates well how the dissemination of alternative recollections of the past is still regarded as a source of dangerous political tension. The growing public debate over Sever's memoirs and the information they provide about Gul is a good example of how memoirs are still used as a battleground between conflicting political actors who did not or could not express their discontent at the lived moments of crises and political collisions. When major politicians and their assistants publish their memoirs, which provide new information regarding the past frictions, resentments or disagreements that had not been voiced previously, both the referenced political figures and the larger public express excessive interest in the truth claims being made. Revealing past disputes or reinterpreting past moments in ways that disrupt the presently agreed forms of collective memory creates a tremendous ambivalence with regard to the "truths" we came to know about major events, people and relations.

²² http://www.radikal.com.tr/kultur/latife_hanimin_anilari_aciklanmali-1046499

them have been widely debated in Turkey since the 2000s.²³ In that sense, the publishing of such controversial memoirs has often been regarded with suspicion on the side of the political authorities.

Even if the published memoir does not articulate a substantial critique of the official historiography, I suggest that the fact that it re-frames a sealed historical period as a period of contestation is viewed as potentially destabilizing the idea of a unified nation with a glorious past. As Boym argues, “national memory tends to make a single teleological plot out of shared everyday recollections. The gaps and discontinuities are mended through a coherent and inspiring tale of recovered identity” (2001: 53). Official ideology in Turkey systematically concealed the struggles that had caused political repression, and represented the Turkish nation as the natural culmination of a history of struggle against foreign enemies and reactionary forces. As I will argue in the next chapters, any reference to, or even hints of, such contestations or interpersonal disputes in memoirs question the established collective imaginary of the Turkish nation as a unified collective body.

Commemorative practices are central to contestations of history and nationalism in modern Turkey (Çınar 2001). Challenging the official history and collective memory of the Republic has thus become the leitmotiv of right-wing opposition against the Kemalist ideology. Recent interest in the prominent figures of late 19th and early 20th century Turkey could be situated within the rise of a conservative-Islamic intelligentsia by the late 1990s (Dağı 2004, Toprak 1993). Memoirs have become an important

²³ To understand the contours of this public debate, see http://www.radikal.com.tr/kultur/latife_hanim_anilari_aciklanmali-1046499

instrument for some of the rising Islamist intelligentsia, who were invested in uncovering the “reality” of the past to challenge the legitimacy of the secular cadres of the modern Turkish state. Conservative scholarly work frames political memoirs as the only viable alternative source of true historical knowledge, because official accounts are considered misleading, partial and manipulative. Memoirs are cherished for their capacity to shed light on the truth of the history of the late Ottoman and Early Republican times.²⁴

In this view, *Nutuk* and official texts represent the “voice of the state” whereas the memoirs are the “voice of the people” (Birinci 2012: 38). In the eyes of these conservative scholars, memoirs are essential sources for shedding light on the history of the late Ottoman and Early Republican times. Accordingly, the information that was “dangerous” at the time could be learned in the later decades thanks to the memoirs:

In that regard, the memoirs that were published in recent years have been contributing to the generation of a quite valuable knowledge on the Second Constitutional Era and the Early Republican period, and it is inevitable for this type of knowledge, which is vital to know [further] about and understand an era, to often emerge much later (Birinci 2012: 39).²⁵

Many other prominent conservative intellectuals convey similar sentiments on the significance of writing memoirs. The prominent female conservative intellectual Münevver Ayaşlı, for instance, in the introduction to her memoir titled *İşittiklerim, Gördüklerim, Bildiklerim*, describes the memoir as a great service to historians and to historical documents on Turkey (Ayaşlı 2006: 5–6). She devotes the first section of her own

²⁴ See Özcan (2011), Kandemir (1955, 1965), Kutay (1980, 1995), Tansu (1964).

²⁵ “Bu bakımdan son senelerde basılan hatıralar II. Meşrutiyet ve erken Cumhuriyet devrine dair çok kıymetli bilgilerin doğumuna vesile olmaktadır ve bir devrin bilinmesi ve anlaşılması için gerekli bilgilerin, çoğu zaman çok arkadan gelmesi mukadderdir.”

memoirs to explaining the significance of memoir-writing, where she complains about the lack of a consciousness or courage about the writing and publishing of memoirs among Turkish state officers. Perhaps with the intention to fill the gap of those who did not leave written memoirs, Ayaşlı uses her own memoir mainly in order to provide eye-witness accounts on the lives of elite male political figures of the time. As a result, although Ayaşlı herself was a prominent intellectual figure of her time, one reads in her work more details on the lives of those male figures and their political experiences, and less on her own life.

Ayaşlı shares how she pressured Refet Bele, a leading figure of the Independence War and opposition party later on, to write/publish his memoirs in order to “shed light on the events that were left in the dark” (*karanlıkta kalmış hadiseleri aydınlatmak*), only to hear his bitter response, “Bu milletin her şeyi yıkılmış, bir İstiklal Harbi ayakta, hatıralarımı yazayım da, onu da ben mi yıkayım?” (Ayaşlı 2006: 13). Bele’s exclamation conveys the sense that writing and publishing memoirs can have very damaging impacts on the national consciousness. Although these words do not reveal any scandalous truths, the very idea that there is a hidden truth regarding the past that could turn everything upside down incites a tremendous sense of curiosity. Ayaşlı similarly blames Orbay for not publishing his memoirs. She writes that she heard from her friend Haluk Şehsuvaroğlu that Orbay initially gave a similar explanation for his hesitancy to publish his memoirs. And she criticizes both Bele and Orbay for hiding many important things from the Turkish nation.

Memoir-writing is thus posed as a genuine sign of endorsing nationalism and Westernization. Ayaşlı points out the discrepancy between memoir-writing in the West and in Turkey, referring to the laziness, ignorance and fear of political figures (Ayaşlı

2006: 8), and depicting memoir-writing as a practice of civility and responsibility towards the nation:

We say the West, West, but where is Westernism? European statesmen, diplomats, literary figures and artists all have their own memoirs. As a result, any kind of distinguished personality had written memoirs, and in this way, there has emerged another history that could illuminate many subtle and inexplicable issues, beyond the frozen official history. [Otherwise] many other types of various truths would remain secret (Ayaşlı 2006: 16).²⁶

Such complaints resonate well with Karabekir's words at the beginning of his autobiographical memoirs, *Hayatım*. Just like Ayaşlı, Karabekir invites others to write their memoirs in order to reveal the knowledge about what happened to "us" (*ne idik, ne olduk*):

What were we, what have we become? [This] must be absolutely known... Everyone must write their own book, and among these [books], those that are deemed useful for everyone must definitely be put in print and published. That's what happens in the civilized World. Those who claim to have entered this World should also do that (Karabekir 2009c: 1).²⁷

Ayaşlı's commentary is one example of the right-wing conservative critiques of the official Kemalist historiography. These critiques argued that there are many "events left in the dark," waiting to be uncovered within the key events of the past from the Declaration of the Republic to the Lausanne Treaty. Ayaşlı and Karabekir's senti-

²⁶ "Batı, batı, diyoruz ama nerede batıcılık? Avrupalı devlet adamlarının, diplomatlarının, edebiyatçıların ve sanatçıların hatıratı vardır. Velhasıl herhangi bir yolda biraz sivrilmiş olan her mümtaz kimse hatıratını yazmıştır ve bu suretle, katı, dondurulmuş resmi tarihin yanında, nükteli ince ve birçok kapalı kalan meseleleri aydınlatacak bir tarih meydana gelmiştir. Başka türlü birçok hakikatler gizli kalırdı."

²⁷ "Ne idik, ne olduk? Mutlak bilinmelidir... Herkes kendi kitabını yazmalı, okunması herkes için faydalı görülenler ise mutlaka ta'b ve neşr olunmalıdır. Medeni âlemde bu yapılıyor. Bu âleme girdiğini iddia edenler de bunu yapmalıdırlar."

mental complaints are examples of how the memoir has been regarded by the conservative elite as an invaluable treasure to unearth the past of the nation and its truth. Memoir-writing is framed as an important duty for those who were higher-rank officers in the political scene of the Early Republic. And the memoir is consistently framed as a story of “all of us,” the entire nation, and thus the narration of each individual story is called for in order to build a new history and historiography for the nation. In both Ayaşlı’s and Karabekir’s attempts to justify memoir-writing with reference to the civilized world, one can also discern a subtle resentment of how the Westernizing elites in Turkey marginalized the conservative elite as reactionary or anti-modern.

If Turkey lacks a proper culture of writing and publishing memoirs, as claimed by right-wing conservative intellectuals and historians alike, how could one explain the keen interest among many publishing houses in publishing memoirs by a wide array of political and social actors; or, to that effect, the numerous reprints and high sales of the same volumes? As noted earlier, the 1950s and 1960s witnessed the publishing of many controversial memoirs describing the Early Republican era for the first time, which stirred live public debates. Yet, the more recent wave of publishing memoirs after the 1990s presents newer and curated editions of the same books as new opportunities to finally uncover the truth that was, allegedly, long hidden. Therefore, new editions of the same memoirs can easily stir heated public debates. Karabekir and Orbay’s memoirs have by now been published by many different publishing houses. This tremendous interest among various publishing houses and the widespread circulation of memoirs raised concern among conservative historians over possible misuses, misprints, omissions and the ruining of these memoirs through bad editing at the hands of small ambitious agencies (Birinci 2012: 81).

3. 3. Renewed Interest in Political Memoirs after the 2000s

As part of the flourishing Islamist intelligentsia during the 2000s, several leading right-wing conservative publishing houses (like Emre, Temel, Dergah and Timaş) republished the memoirs of opposing or dissident political and intellectual figures of the early Republic.²⁸ The upsurge of privatized media has reinforced the growing interest in the past “by bringing previously taboo issues into the public domain” (Gürbilek 1992). Official history has been widely challenged and debated during the 1990s, not only among the small circles of oppositional groups, but in broader media. In the same period, Mustafa Kemal’s personal life and character, as well as the late Ottoman and Early Republican era in general, have been extensively debated through popular TV programs (such as *Siyaset Meydanı* and *Ceviz Kabuğu*).

While Islamist right-wing popular historians had been producing overtly critical and denigrating attacks on the Kemalist account of the Republic’s history since the late 1970s, their audience was limited to marginalized Islamist circles, and they lacked the popular interest or reverence contemporary popular historians enjoy. By late 2010, however, public debates on TV programs, polemics in newspaper columns and popular history magazines (such as *Derin Tarih* and *Popüler Tarih*) had raised this interest to a whole new level of popularity.²⁹ Because of this specific history of publishing

²⁸ Similar to the 1950s and 1960s, new editions of these memoirs easily still stir a heated public debate about their revelations: previously unarticulated disapprovals, disappointments, or critiques of past policies and prominent figures.

²⁹ The popular conservative researcher Mustafa Armağan’s views are prominent examples of the Islamic-conservative imaginary of a binary of “truth vs. lie” that frames popular conceptions about *Nutuk* and other autobiographies. Although Armağan is not an academic scholar, he became a popular public intellectual among conservative nationalist circles by the early 2000s, and his work has received many awards. In his books and newspaper columns he frequently portrays *Nutuk* as an overrated book with mistakes and weaknesses. Instead, he suggests that opposition figures of the time, such as Karabekir and Orbay, are more “worth listening to,” if one wants to understand the truths about that period.

and the historical ties contemporary conservative circles have drawn with autobiographies of key political figures of the Early Republic, studying the memoirs of Karabekir, Orbay and Cebesoy can potentially expand our understanding of conservative politics both during the Early Republican period as well as afterwards.³⁰ During the memoir boom of 2000s, many conservative politicians expressed their interest in reading these kinds of historical memoirs by prominent former leaders and offered to support their publication.³¹

How can we understand the renewed public interest in these memoirs by the 2000s? I suggest that multiple local and global processes interact to produce a renewed public interest in late Ottoman and Early Republican politics, and in the leading political figures of these periods. I primarily situate this increasing contemporary desire for alternative accounts of Turkish history and autobiographies of prominent political figures within the growing power and influence of conservative political ideologies and movements by the 1990s. Public memory has increasingly become a battleground between the Kemalists and rising conservative-Islamic power (Özyurek 2004, 2007).

³⁰ In popular culture, when these writings started to be publicized for the first time as serials in newspapers during the transition to the multi-party period, i.e. from 1946 to 1970, they were admired and referenced as icons of selfless Turkish nationalism. In particular, center-right media organs, such as *Tarih Dünyası* (World of History) and *Tercüman* daily newspaper, among others, heavily supported their circulation, while popular historians of the time such as Feridun Kandemir and Cemal Kutay passionately celebrated these texts for their historical value as priceless sources. Following the desire of post-1980s Islamist movements to decenter Kemalist accounts, the first decade of the 2000s witnessed a remarkable resurgence of public interest in popular history and autobiographic writing that critically appraised the 1920s and the birth of modern Turkey. Although these memoirs started to be published several times after the 1940s, conservative public intellectuals and popular historians still celebrate the new editions of these memoirs as sensational scandalous unmaskings of official Kemalist ideology. The few scholarly works interested in this phenomenal upsurge of Early Republican autobiographies have either suggested that these memoirs represent the first strong critique of the Kemalist regime and authentic sources of history (Zürcher 2010) or dismissively concluded that notwithstanding their wide readership, they hardly destructed the essential contours of official ideology but instead became co-opted (Gürpınar 2012).

³¹ See for instance Bülent Arınç's speech in the opening of Tüyap Bookfair in March 2015, where he says he loves reading memoirs and always encourages his friends to write and publish their memoirs: "Bir siyasetçi olarak hatıratlar çok hoşuma gidiyor": <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/haberler/478480--kitap-okumak-zaruri-bir-ihtiyac>.

For example, the influence of the Welfare Party in the 1990s precipitated a reintegration of the Ottoman past into collective memory, particularly through inscribing the glorious times of Ottoman heritage on the aesthetic of public spaces, especially in large cities like Istanbul (Çınar 2005). The resurgence of neo-Ottomanism in post-2000 public culture and Turkish foreign policy marks the AKP's own political ascendance (Onar 2009, Ongur 2015) and its firm commitment to redraw the official boundaries of collective memory. Pre-Republican visual and symbolic culture has started to proliferate through popular TV series (e.g. *The Magnificent Century*) and movies (e.g. the blockbuster *Fetih 1453*). The majoritarian conservatism of the AKP “promotes uncritical and conservative-nationalist interpretations of the past that have popular appeal” (Bakıner 2013).

The popular conservative researcher Mustafa Armağan's views are prominent examples of the Islamic-conservative imaginary of a binary of “truth vs. lie” that frames popular conceptions about *Nutuk* and other autobiographies. Although Armağan is not an academic scholar, he has become a popular public intellectual among conservative nationalist circles by early 2000s and his work has received many awards. In his books and newspaper columns he frequently portrays *Nutuk* as an overrated book with mistakes and weaknesses. Instead, he suggests that opposition figures of the time, such as Karabekir and Orbay, are more “worth listening to,” if one wants to understand the truths about that period. The binary of *truths vs. lies* applauds the memoirs of the opposition figures as a great historical opportunity which promises to unveil a real past that was hidden by the official ideology. In reading these autobiographies, the entire nation is promised it will uncover what really happened in the past that was allegedly concealed by *Nutuk*. There is an interesting irony in this expectation which

explains one of the important paradoxes of right-wing political imaginary: if Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk* was only a subjective memoir which undeservedly represented "history" and "nation," where does the value of the opposition memoirs come from, given that they were also interpretations of subjective experiences? Evasion of this question among those who celebrate these memoirs and position them against *Nutuk* also shows that memoirs are commonly viewed as objective sources of history with the potential to reveal to us the "truth."

The rising interest in new editions of older memoirs is not limited to conservative publishing houses. İş Bankası Publishing House and Remzi Publishing House, two of the major secular and pro-Kemalist agencies, launched devoted book series of memoirs. Through these series, previously unpublished memoirs and diaries of military officers and private soldiers who participated in World War I were published. Like their conservative counterparts, pro-Kemalist editors introduce autobiographies from this period with prefaces that emphasize their utility as primary historical documents for our "near history," which is allegedly full of gaps and distortions. Similar to memoirs by conservative figures, the major contention is that these memoirs "illuminate" major historical moments during the dissolution of the Empire and subsequent birth of the Turkish Republic. Dogan Gürpınar situates this boom within the rise of neo-nationalism among the secular Turkish middle classes, whose growing frustration with the AKP led to a renewed interest in nostalgia about the "founding spirit of the republic" (2012: 552).

Ever-increasing interest in the Early Republican political actors is significant for understanding how memoir-writing is central to contemporary contestations of nationalism and legitimacy. Leyla Neyzi (2002: 142) argues that "growing public interest in

genres such as autobiography, the historical novel and oral history after the 1990s” is a product of different communities’ political concerns with the past. The new interest in the past could also be explained with reference to wider globalized “disillusionment with the promises of modernity, including those of the nation-state” (Shapiro 2000, quoted in Neyzi 2002). Critique of modernity is deeply connected to a re-assessment of the “study of history insofar as [modern historiography] converges with official/national history” (Crane 1996, quoted in Neyzi 2002). In such a globalized crisis of nationalism, historical memory has globally become both a cultural obsession and a powerful political weapon since the 1990s. In such a globalized crisis of nationalism, historical memory has globally become both a cultural obsession and a powerful political weapon since the 1990s (Hall 1998).

3. 4. Situating Karabekir, Orbay and Cebesoy in History

This study recognizes the complexity of the late Ottoman period, in which most of the childhood and youth stages of the memories I focus on here are staged. Critical of teleological interpretations of Ottoman history that sublimated the birth of the Turkish nation-state, I aim to look at the transition from a declining Empire to the War of Independence and the nascent Republic as involving complex sets of historical developments. Kafadar (1989) argues that it is an ideological choice on the part of the “Kemalist-nationalist historians,” due to their teleological interpretations, to treat Ottoman history merely as a transitory background to the inevitable emergence of the Turkish nation state. When Ottoman history is addressed in Kemalist historiography, it is conceptually subordinated to the national history, i.e. considered to be the primitive form of the latter, which is construed as the highest perfect form of institutionalization. In a

similar vein, several scholars attempted to reveal the multifaceted and vibrant atmosphere of Ottoman political and cultural life, as well as the multiplicity of the actors, in order to subvert the backward and stagnant images of Ottoman daily life (Frierson 2005, Özdalga 2005a). Frierson, for example, reveals that non-elite authors were increasingly writing in gazettes that were widely available in the cities of the empire during the late Ottoman period (2005: 143). My analysis also benefits from recent scholarly works that recognize the connections between the late-Ottoman and Early Republican histories (Ahmad 2008, Hanioglu 2005, 2010, Heper 2000, Mardin 2006, 2004, 2005). This scholarship suggests that Turkish modernization and the organization of state-society relations in the Republican period are rooted in the modernization of several institutions of the late Ottoman period that rearranged various social relations between individual, community and the state.

Memoirs stand in the ambivalent space between memory and history in Turkey. Memory is different from history because the former is “affective and magical” whereas the latter is an “intellectual and secular production” and calls for “analysis and criticism” (Nora 1989: 8–9). These memoirs are not written for historians but for an imagined community of readers in the nation. I focus on diverse textual strategies employed in these memoirs through which these authors try to come to terms with the new political landscape of the Republic. Interpreting the past is not a simple act of highlighting important moments. When autobiographers make several different connections to the critical events within Ottoman and Early Republican history, they also inevitably produce a multiplicity of truth claims. In that sense, they weave a past of their own which is projected into the present moment of writing a life-narrative, and

into the further future, the time when these life-stories will supposedly be read and interpreted by a larger audience – i.e. the *nation* itself. Even though these texts were written by prominent figures of the time, they are also marginalized voices bound by the established “truths” of the official history. They exemplify an ambivalent position on terms of their prospects of contesting existing historiographies. In that sense, the texts studied here engage in a constant play between the marginalized and the canonical, the subjective and the objective.

The texts reflect the extraordinary role assumed by their authors, who see themselves as prominent and responsible in taking leadership and crafting new political solutions. They share a conviction that their participation was essential and their experience and suggestions had to be spread widely in order to shape the course of events in the near future. The authors of the memoirs display a strong self-awareness of their roles in the society they live in. Most of them routinely take daily notes even in the most pressing time periods. Yet, it is often the publication process that prompts the authors or their families to patch up their fragmented notes into organized life narratives. Writing from the end-point of their success story, most of them express an explicit awareness of the fact that they are writing a story of important moments, with a privileged position to observe the birth of a nation. Accounts of wars and social unrest characterizing the late Ottoman period substantially shape these texts, in which the authors actively try to make sense of the radical restructuring of epistemic systems and political discourses around them.

Following their adolescence in military schools, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay joined the Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), and became sympathizers of the

Young Turks, which preceded this organization. All three of them came from relatively elite families and thus had access to the educational background of the elites of the time. Although there are several historical and biographical studies on the lives and political engagements of many leading figures in these periods, there are no detailed studies on how the military-bureaucratic elites and intellectuals of the time represented and interpreted the historical context they were situated in. This thesis is informed by the scholarly work that mostly observes a great deal of diversity within the Young Türk movement (Hanioglu 2010, Zürcher 2005). This flourishing of the diversity of intellectual activity is a product of Ottoman modernization that began in the 19th century. The *Tanzimat* reforms in 1839 are usually considered the beginning of the Ottoman modernization. The following period of “modernization brought more complex administrative controls as part of state power, but also new educational institutions as well as new ideologies” (Özdalga 2013: 372). This process also generated a new professional middle class that paved the way for the development of modern intellectuals independent of the state, tribal relationships and institutionalized religion (ibid).

During the 1860s, Young Ottoman ideologues started to flourish thanks to the new educational opportunities opened at home and abroad for the social elite. What followed in the later decades underwrote the formation of a distinctive class of modern professionals who assumed some of the secular Western politics of the day (Findley 2014, 10). In the last decades of the 19th century, many educated people witnessed the gradual dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans as a sign not only that their territory was shrinking, but also that the range of ideologies had narrowed. It is in this context that nationalist ideas appealed simultaneously to the opposing political camps

of the Westernists and Islamists alike (Karpas 2001). The historical context, where the fate of the Empire was at the center of heated debates, was also conducive to the proliferation of romantic ideas of nationalism, individualism, struggling for freedom and progress (Hanioglu 2010, Özdalga 2005b).

The rise of this intellectual elite is not merely a product of the modernized educational system. This process was nurtured by a fast-developing cultural circle of readership, which was publishing and circulating modern literary works by both Turkish and foreign authors. The Hamidian and Young Türk eras produced thousands of bureaucratic records, as well as serials, books and pamphlets, since both the bureaucracy and the publication sphere expanded extensively at the end of the nineteenth century (Frierson 2005: 142). Despite the vigilantly implemented censorship of the Hamidian era, the publication sector was active throughout the empire. Thanks to the improving printing and publishing technologies, such formally and informally circulated documents played an important role in creating a sense of a public sphere and a nation (Anderson 2006, Habermas 1991). In Western Europe, institutionalized modern educational opportunities, coupled with a vibrant intellectual atmosphere and printing facilities, promoted the development of a bureaucratic elite class who were well equipped with literacy and culture. Although these processes were not as widely diffused as it was in Europe, a similar military bureaucratic elite with an intellectual affinity to get equipped with “Western” forms of literacy and culture. Thus, it is not a coincidence that the authors often explicitly assert that the memoir as a genre had been developed in the “civilized” world, and view memory-writing as a very refined and civilized act which “we” also need to embrace in order to become truly modernized.

In the backdrop of this history, not surprisingly, life-writing was regarded as a national duty by the autobiographers investigated here. The disintegrating Empire sets forth the task of saving the motherland as a duty for the authors, who were officials of the Empire during this time. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay commonly underline the significance of individual witnessing and writing for understanding historic events and transformations. Their memoirs interfuse narratives of lived experience with detailed polemical considerations of the political issues of the time. Consideration of remembering and sharing what was witnessed as a national duty is also decisive in the selection of “what to write” and “what to publish.”

As noted above, they started organizing their personal notes and memoirs into autobiographical writings to be published, documenting their recollections of the Independence War and its aftermath, mostly after their estrangement from political life after 1926. However, each one had a different experience in the way they arranged their writings and published them. Orbay’s case is particularly different, since, unlike Karabekir and Cebesoy, he was abroad when the Independence Courts were set-up in the aftermath of the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal, and remained abroad until 1935. He was sentenced to exile by the Independence Court in his absence, which he contested in 1941 with a counter-case, and he won. His writings have three different sets of sources, which were eventually grouped together by historians Feridun Kandemir and Cemal Kutay in different editions. The first consists of his daily notes that he himself edited into an autobiographic text when he was in exile in Malta in 1920-21 (Bilgin 1992: 7). The second set is his personal account that he dictated to the historian-editor Kandemir, which was published in pieces in the first 52 issues of the journal *Yakın Tarihimiz Dergisi* between 1962 and 1963. Kandemir

edited all of this material into a separate volume and published them under the name *Hatıraları ve Söyleyemedikleri ile Rauf Orbay* in 1965 from the publishing house of the same journal. The third set was his hand-written accounts of his later political engagements and were kept in secret until Orbay's family shared them with Cemal Kutay in 1991, who published them in a five volume series, accompanied by encyclopedic details and photographs. A further edited version of his political memoirs was published two years later by Emre publishing house in 1993 under the name *Cehennem Değirmeni* (The Mill of Hell).

Cebesoy was acquitted in the Independence Tribunals in 1926, but he was relatively estranged from the political scene, forcefully retired from his military post, and was not re-elected to the parliament until 1933, when his relationship to Mustafa Kemal was restored and he returned to politics (Cebesoy 2007: 626-8). His memoirs were published under his own guidance in volumes (*Birüssebi ve Gazze Muharebeleri* [1938], *Milli Mücadele Hatıraları* [1953], *Moskova Hatıraları* [1955], *Siyasi Hatıralar* [1957], *Sınıf Arkadaşım Atatürk* [1967]). Although, just like Karabekir's works, most of these works were published during the first right-wing government of 1950s, later editions by historians revealed that Cebesoy had left out some letters or hand-written notes in these early editions—especially letters from Çerkes Ethem, which would have marked enduring allegations that Cebesoy and his father İsmail Fazıl Pasha were close to Ethem (Kocahanoğlu 2007: 40-48). Decades later, his daughter shared all of Cebesoy's handwritten manuscripts, notes and letters with Osman Selim Kocahanoğlu, who edited all the material and re-published them in early 2000s from Temel publishing house.

Karabekir, however, had a more unique experience, since he was the most vocal in responding to *Nutuk*, where Mustafa Kemal had accused him and other leader of the PRP with incompetence, personalism and even disloyalty. Like Cebesoy, Karabekir was also acquitted in the Independence Tribunals, and was forcefully retired from his military post. However, Karabekir was included in the list of 84 persons of interest who would be kept under close scrutiny, which de facto resulted in a house-arrest and lasted until Mustafa Kemal's death in 1938, and the subsequent president İnönü's pardon. Nonetheless, Karabekir had written a rebuttal against a series of articles that targeted him and others in 1933 in the *Milliyet* national newspaper, titled *İstiklal Harbimizin Esasları*. Resembling *Nutuk* in style, but much shorter, the publishing of the book was banned almost immediately and all copies were burnt. Furthermore, since Karabekir was presumed to be in possession of five copies of the book, his house was raided, when almost all of his other writings were confiscated, although the alleged copies of the banned book weren't found at the time. He had published some of his autobiographical writings in specific volumes devoted to his perspectives on particular historical issues during 1930s (like the first world war, the Committee for Union and Progress, etc.). Upon the call and insistence of İsmet İnönü, Karabekir later was re-elected to the parliament three months after Mustafa Kemal's death in 1939, and became head of parliament in 1946. He remained in politics until his death in 1948. His personal memoirs, his *İstiklal Harbimizin Esasları*, and more importantly, his largest work, which he had been working on for the two decades until his death, *İstiklal Harbimiz*, was not published in his life time. However, immediately after the ruling party PRP was defeated in 1950 and the opposition came to power, *İstiklal Harbimizin Esasları* was published in 1951, with the claim that it was a complete reprinted copy edition of the original 1933 edition, although popular historians like

Mustafa Armağan contest this claim. The publishing of *İstiklal Harbimiz*, which was a massive manuscript with over 1000 pages, had to wait until 1960. It was published in July, although a coup had happened in May, and lasted in circulation until early 1961, when it was banned. The ban was lifted in 1968 after a legal case by the publisher (Zürcher 2010a: 20-22).

3. 5. Conclusion

I consider autobiographies not as a record of what actually happened but rather as a continuing interpretation and reinterpretation of one's life experiences in relation to others and larger socio-political events. In that regard, despite their limitations in justifiably presenting absolute truths and facts, autobiographies could be interpreted as major socio-political means for memory-making. In the backdrop of the tumultuous political and social transformations from Empire to Republic described above, the process of interpretation is hardly limited to personal introspections. Memoirs commonly picture periods of severe hardship, struggle, grief and sacrifice in order to frame the tumultuous periods that constituted most of their authors' lives. The ever-worsening dissolution of Ottoman state power, degeneration of meritocratic bureaucratic cadres, fragile relations with the Western states, unrest among the Arab, Greek and Armenian populations at the beginning of the new century, and discontent expressed by some of the ultra-nationalist and religious populations constitute some of the main contours of the image of turmoil within the memoirs. In that sense, the memoirs are situated within significant connections and tensions between history, nationalism and autobiographical concepts of selfhood.

The development of the autobiographical subject revolves around the “axis of the nation,” where the political self develops in relation to a collective political consciousness (Moore-Gilbert 2009: 25). The memoirs are mainly centered on the glorious story of Turkey’s struggle for independence and Early Republican tensions from their perspective as participants. Their accounts offer detailed descriptions of various political personalities and events of their time, and are intertextual, weaving diverse historical documents such as letters, telegraphs, speeches and photographs into their recollections. These autobiographies were written to tell the past, but they are equally concerned with shaping the future. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay present their experiences as revealing examples for future generations, speaking from the position of wise and experienced leaders.

Memories function as fragments organized and formed into complex constructions in order to become life-stories. The selective process of writing the past as autobiography is not a pure failure of retrieval, but an immensely political performance of selecting what to remember and what to forget. The actors of the early republic are not only making certain truth claims for a specific period of history, but also producing knowledge of history for the present and future collective memory. Thus, the historical and political context of writing, publication and reading of autobiography reveal that remembering is not an entirely privatized activity, but an activity situated in cultural politics. Memory thus works intersubjectively: it is a practice not only of recollection of a past by a subject, but also of recollection for other subjects (Smith and Watson 2001: 20).

CHAPTER 4

MAPPING THE SELF AS THE HISTORY OF A NATION: MUSTAFA KEMAL'S *NUTUK*

4. 1. Introduction: *Nutuk* and the "Official History" of Turkey

Nutuk is a distinctive autobiographic narrative that sanctions the officially accepted account of the history of modern Turkey (Parla 1994). Written as a lengthy speech to be delivered at the General Congress of the ruling party founded by Mustafa Kemal, it positioned its author-narrator, Mustafa Kemal, and his autobiographical recollections as the sole legitimate source for remembering and reciting a particular historical period. As such, it sanctioned Mustafa Kemal's personal account of his engagements in the Independence War as the ultimate historiographic source for how to address, reproduce and teach history.³² *Nutuk* established a binding representation of the history in Turkey, as well as the historiographic criteria on how to remember and commemorate that history, which was not challenged until the 1990s. (Adak 2003, Gürpınar

³² Ironically, the law of protecting Mustafa Kemal (*Mustafa Kemal'i Koruma Kanunu*) was legislated on 31 July 1951 by the Democrat Party against the growing attacks on public sites of Mustafa Kemal statues. The law is currently still effective and both anti-Kemalist leftist and conservative-Islamic circles frequently criticize this law and demand its desuetude. Popular conservative historian Mustafa Armağan for instance, argued in January 2015 that the law prevents a "better understanding of history" and shares his fear of imprisonment for publishing the memoirs of Çerkez Ethem: [http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/armagan-Mustafa Kemal-koruma-kanunu-kaldirilsin-49136.html](http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/armagan-Mustafa%20Kemal-koruma-kanunu-kaldirilsin-49136.html)

2012, Parla 1994, 1997).³³ *Nutuk*'s narrative is structured as a combination of Mustafa Kemal's personal account of the Independence War and the plethora of official documents he presents in the text. This dual structure, which interconnects the discourse of subjective experience with that of objective documents, remained the shared historical account of how modern Turkey was born until recently (Adak 2003, Ahmad 2008, Gürpınar 2012, Lewis 1961, Parla 1994, 1997, Poulton 1997, Shaw and Shaw 1977, Zürcher 2004). The "official history" that was based on *Nutuk* (Ersanlı 2003, Kaplan 1999, Adak 2003, Alaranta 2008) was eventually "canonized in an endless stream of schoolbooks, official publications, popular histories and diverse academic works" (Zürcher 2010a: 18).³⁴ Consequently, this account of the Independence War under Mustafa Kemal's personal leadership and military-political foresight has been faithfully reproduced within the educational, military and other official institutions of the Republic.

Nutuk narrates and sanctions the history of (i) the birth of the independent Turkish nation, (ii) the Independence War waged for her liberation, and (iii) all the key moments in the Early Republican period. *Nutuk* avoids many common questions typical of modern political autobiographic writings – i.e., questions of assuring the authenticity, objectivity and factual accuracy of the narrative. I interpret this avoidance neither as a

³³ Many Kemalist researchers and academics later expanded on *Nutuk* to offer a more comprehensive and detailed history of the period. For some examples of these works, see: Mahmud Göloğlu, *Millî Mücadele Tarihi* [The History of National Struggle], Volume 1: *Erzurum Kongresi* [The Congress of Erzurum] (Ankara, 1968); Volume 2: *Sivas Kongresi* [The Congress of Sivas] (Ankara, 1969); Volume 3: *Üçüncü Meşrutiyet: 1920* [The Third Constitutionalism: 1920] (Ankara, 1970); Volume 4: *Cumhuriyet'e Doğru, 1921-1923* [Toward the Republic, 1921-23] (Ankara, 1971); Volume 5: *Türkiye Cumhuriyet Tarihi, 1923* [The History of the Turkish Republic, 1923] (Ankara, 1971); Sabahattin Selek, *Anadolu İhtilali* [The Anatolian Revolution] (Istanbul, 1968).

³⁴ See Suna Kili's work, which provides an academic historical perspective on the "Turkish Revolution" that is in complete harmony with all the characteristics of *Nutuk* and the official history (Kili 2003).

failure nor as a simple matter of style. In establishing its author as the infallible and unchallengeable voice of “truth,” *Nutuk*’s narrative diffuses individual memory and larger history in order to provide a frame of moral and political legitimacy that accounts for Mustafa Kemal’s leadership and legitimizes the political structure of the new Republic, against the political opposition that rose especially after 1924. Following an analysis of nationalism as the ideological background of this moral and political legitimacy, I detail how *Nutuk* establishes an unchallengeable and exclusive moral tone to single out and sublimate Mustafa Kemal’s personal vision as an epitome of insightful leadership. This analysis will reveal the continual emphasis *Nutuk* places on individual foresight as a binding and unquestionable source of legitimacy. I will highlight how *Nutuk* relies extensively on a set of visual metaphors and phrases (especially insight into tricky situations and foresight about an unforeseen future) in order to naturalize the idea that there is a singular way of seeing, which ascribed Mustafa Kemal an “optics of legitimacy” that other political and military leaders did not share. The fact that he could see and understand circumstances the best meant that his policy choices and interpretations were always, by definition, both epistemologically and politically, legitimate and justified. Later, I focus on *Nutuk*’s account of the Turkish nation as an agent of history and its characterization of the will of the nation and its internal enemies.

In this chapter, I will explore some of the central themes in *Nutuk* in order to understand its binding authority and claims to truth and legitimacy. Then I will focus on *Nutuk*’s narrative structure and how it maintains an authoritative account that evaluates and discriminates against other personal representations. Building on the critical literature about the *Nutuk*-based “official history,” and on *Nutuk*’s textual analyses, I

will explain how a singular account of history was received and recognized as more than a representation, and became historical, or objective truth. In interpreting this conflation of personal with historical and subjective with objective, I suggest analyzing *Nutuk* as a narrative, a specific presentation of history, rather than a simple representation with its peculiar claims to factual accuracy. Instead of treating it as a representation whose claims to represent truth and historical reality are sanctioned by the policies of a nation-state, I suggest focusing on the force of the narrative structure in order to understand how it could become an authoritative text that not only hegemonized historical truth but more significantly defined the political legitimacy of military and political leaders with claims to represent the Turkish nation's interests.

4. 2. *Nutuk*'s Historiographic Nationalism: The Birth of a Nation

Nutuk was written in 1927, i.e. in the post-war political establishment period that generated a new polity, and as such, it is a product of the new Republic's struggle to develop a secular national identity for the Turkish nation. *Nutuk* itself becomes an active part of these political efforts, which aimed to raise national consciousness (*milli şuur*) among the wider masses (Alaranta 2008: 119). To that effect, *Nutuk* presents the story of a nation that struggled for its independence and subsequently took its place within the highest ranks of civilizations. *Nutuk* presents the narrative about how the Independence War made possible the emergence of the modern Turkish nation and the Turkish Republic.

This narrative is primarily crafted to address the tensions in the post-war political scene where political rivalries and ideological disagreements over the identity of the

new Republic culminated in the political chaos of 1926 – the Sheikh Said Rebellion and the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal. The political ideals it recounts refer to Western European notions of progressive modernization, Enlightenment and national self-determination. They reflect vaguely organized Enlightenment ideas and positivistic approaches to a linear history that moves forward and brings more knowledge. *Nutuk* provides a comprehensive account of the birth of the Republic and the thrust of “revolutions” (*inkılaplar*) through which Mustafa Kemal and his fellow officers aimed to modernize the nation in accordance with their ideals.

Following the defeat of the Ottoman State in World War I, some Ottoman army officers refused to discharge the military forces under their command and collaborated with a range of local defensive organizations (*müdafaa-i hukuk cemiyetleri*) across Anatolia that were emerging (Zürcher 2004). Moving to Anatolia with a forceful military mandate and under orders from the Sultan, Mustafa Kemal coordinated with many other high-ranking officers and local notables (*eşraf*) to lead these local initiatives (Ahmad 1969, Lewis 1961, Shaw and Shaw 1977, Zürcher 2004). Under the protection of gradually growing military forces in Anatolia, and despite the protests of the Sultan, these organizations subsequently formed congresses, committees and eventually a new parliament out of the delegates they appointed. Initially being *de facto* leader of both the political and the military forces in Anatolia, Mustafa Kemal became the first chairman of the parliament of the emerging Turkish state in 1920, and then the first president of the newly founded Turkish Republic. The founding of the Republic of Turkey on 29 October 1923 following the Independence War replaced the disintegrated Ottoman rule with a new Turkish nation-state. After the first politically tumultuous years of the nascent Republic in Ankara, Mustafa Kemal gave his

“great speech” at the Republican Party’s general congress from 15 to 20 October 1927.

The opening of *Nutuk* presents *the view* (“the general state and sight [of the situation] when I arrived at Samsun”) as seen by Mustafa Kemal in May 1919, setting a grand scene he dramatically describes. The disintegration of the Ottoman state, where every institution and actor was either lying dormant and waiting in desperation for the emergence of the Turkish nation as an actor unto the stage of history, constitutes *Nutuk*’s main narrative and its timeframe. The following quotation from the early section of *Nutuk* conveys this perfectly:

I landed at Samsun on 19 May 1919. This was the situation at that time: The group of Powers which included the Ottoman Government had been defeated in the World War. The Ottoman Army had been crushed on every front. An armistice had been signed under severe conditions. The prolongation of the Great War had left the people exhausted and impoverished. Those who had driven the people and the country into the World War had fled and now cared for nothing but their own safety. Vahdettin, the degenerate occupant of the throne and the Caliphate, was seeking for some despicable way to save his person and his throne, the only objects of his anxiety. The Cabinet, of which Damat Ferit Paşa was the head, was weak and lacked dignity and courage. It was subservient to the will of the Sultan alone and agreed to every proposal that could protect its members and their sovereign. The Army had been deprived of their arms and ammunition, and this state of affairs continued.³⁵

Mustafa Kemal portrays the debilitated state of the Empire in 1919, as both military and political leaders were desperate and clueless. The government of Damat Ferit

³⁵ “1335 senesi Mayısının 19’uncu günü Samsun’a çıktım. Vaziyet ve manzara-i umumiye: Osmanlı Devleti’nin dahil bulunduğu grup, Harbi Umumîde mağlûp olmuş, Osmanlı ordusu her tarafta zedelenmiş, şeraiti ağır bir mütarekename imzalanmış. Büyük Harbin uzun seneleri zarfında, millet yorgun ve fakir bir halde. Millet ve memleketi Harbi Umumîye sevk edenler, kendi hayatları endişesine düşerek, memleketten firar etmişler. Saltanat ve hilâfet mevkiini işgal eden Vahdettin, mütereddi, şahsını ve yalnız tahtını temin edebileceğini tahayyül ettiği denî tedbirler araştırmakta. Damat Ferit Paşanın riyasetindeki kabine; âciz, haysiyetsiz, cebîn, yalnız padişahın iradesine tâbi ve onunla beraber şahıslarını vikaye edebilecek herhangi bir vaziyete razı. Ordunun elinden esliha ve cephanesi alınmış ve alınmakta...” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 1).

Paşa is identified as frightened, dishonorable, and incompetent, being under the command of a degenerate Sultan who was ready to surrender for the sake of his own interests. As I will build further on this and similar points, the visual metaphors (“the view”) build into the strength of his interpretations and presentations, and generate a singular optics of legitimacy (a singular eye that sees everything) that founds his account of history, as well as his claim to political legitimacy in more abstract terms.

The quote below similarly construes a partitioning state with people waiting in darkness for guidance and salvation. Both the nation and the military officers are described as extremely tired and helpless, following catastrophic defeat. Mustafa Kemal also highlights that the people, or the military officials, were blindly following the Sultan out of strong traditions of respect for the sovereignty of Sultan’s political rule. Mustafa Kemal does not offer extensive analyses of the Ottoman Empire’s participation in World War I or detailed recollections of his own military duties and accomplishments. In his account, wartime politicians are presented as having escape and abandoned their posts and responsibilities.

Morally and materially, the enemy Powers were openly attacking the Ottoman State and the country itself. They were determined to disintegrate and annihilate both. The Padişah-Caliph had one sole anxiety — namely, to save his own life and comfort. The members of his Government had the same feeling. Without being aware of it, the nation no longer had any one to lead it, but lived in darkness and uncertainty, waiting to see what would happen. Those who began to understand clearly the terrors and extent of the catastrophe were seeking some means whereby to save the country, each guided by the circumstances that surrounded him and the sentiments that inspired him. The Army existed merely in name. The commanders and other officers were still suffering from the exhaustion resulting from the World War. Their hearts were bleeding on account of the threatened dismemberment of their country. Standing on the brink of the dark abyss which yawned before their eyes, they racked their brains to discover a way out of the danger. Here I must add and explain a very important point. The Nation and the Army had no suspicion at all of the Padişah-Caliph’s treachery. On the contrary, on account of religious and traditional

ties handed down for centuries, they remained loyal to the throne and its occupant. Seeking a means of salvation under the influence of this tradition, the security of the Caliphate and the Sultanate concerned them far more than their own safety. That the country could possibly be saved without a Caliph and without a Padişah was an idea impossible for them to comprehend.³⁶

The above quotes are examples of how Mustafa Kemal visualizes a nation that is waiting for salvation. The decrepit and decadent institutions and officers of the Empire are described at length, and they are contrasted with the good-willed and traditional masses, who are unaware of the situation. Apart from the decrepit government and the sultanate in Istanbul, there were only a handful of political actors left who struggled to initiate the elements of a resistance movement. Mustafa Kemal pictures the high-ranking officers and military leaders of the Empire as baffled, hopeless and waiting for a leadership to emerge.

In contrast to those figures whose incompetency, lack of love for the nation and pursuit of self-interest spoil the epic narrative of the “nation,” Mustafa Kemal appears as a mythical figure in *Nutuk* who authoritatively narrates the linear presentation of historical events. Thus, even before the gradual consolidation of the power of the RPP elite after the 1930s, Mustafa Kemal becomes a trans-historical actor, more than an author who narrates the events from the eyes of himself as protagonist. Not only the

³⁶ “Muhasım devletler Osmanlı devlet ve memleketine maddeten ve mânen tecavüz halinde; imha ve taksime karar vermişler. Padişah ve halife olan zat, hayat ve rahatını kurtarabilecek çareden başka bir şey düşünmüyor. Hükümeti de aynı halde. Farkında olmadığı halde başsız kalmış olan millet, zulmet ve müphemiyet içinde tecelliyata muntazır. Felâketin dehşet ve sıkletini idrake başlayanlar, buldukları muhit ve hissedebildikleri tesirata göre çarei halâs telâkki eyledikleri tedbirlere mütevessil... Ordu, ismi var cismi yok bir halde. Kumandanlar ve zâbitler, Harbi Umuminin bunca mihnet ve meşakkatleriyle yorgun, vatanın parçalanmakta olduğunu görmekte dilhun, gözleri önünde derinleşen karanlık felâket uçurumu kenarında dimağları çare, çarei halâs aramakla meşgul... Burada, pek mühim olan, bir noktayı da kayıt ve izah etmeliyim. Millet ve ordu, padişah ve halifenin hıyanetinden haberdar olmadığı gibi o makama ve o makamda bulunana karşı asırların kökleştirdiği dinî ve an’anevî rabitalarla mûti ve sadık. Millet ve ordu çare-i halâs düşünürken bu mevrus itiyadın sevkiyle kendinden evvel makamı muallâyı hilâfet ve saltanatın halâs ve masuniyetini düşünüyor. Halife ve padişahsız halâsın manasını anlamak istidadında değil” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 10).

narrating-author but also the protagonist remains the same throughout the narrative, probably due to the author's over-identification with the protagonist. In other words, during the advance of the narrative, Mustafa Kemal, either as the author-orator writing in 1927, or as the protagonist undertaking a great cause, does not change, develop, or mature in any moral-pedagogical or literary-narrative sense, marking an omniscience that was already there (Adak 2003, Alaranta 2008, Parla 1994). The following appeal to the listeners and/or readers in the opening sections of *Nutuk* effectively summarizes Mustafa Kemal's claim of omniscience, which interweaves the history as such with his own actions and politics:

In order to dispel any doubts which might still be entertained, one fact is urged upon us for mutual examination. As the national struggle, carried on for the sole purpose of delivering the country from foreign invasion, developed and was crowned with success, it was natural and inevitable that it would gradually, step by step to the present day, have established all the principles and forms of government founded on national sovereignty. The ruler of the dynasty who, thanks to his traditional instincts, foresaw this fatal course of historical events, declared himself from the very beginning the most bitter enemy of the national struggle. I, also, from the first could anticipate this historical progress. But we never disclosed the views we held. If we had spoken too much about future prospects our realistic endeavours would have been looked upon as dreams; and consequently from the outset it would have caused the alienation of those who -discouraged by the closeness of dangers that threatened from abroad- were fearful of possible changes which would be contrary to their tradition, their way of thinking and their psychology. The only practical and safe road to success lay in making each step perfectly understood at the right time. This was the way to ensure the development and restoration of the nation. This was how I acted.³⁷

³⁷ “Burada, zihinlerde mevcudolması ihtimali bulunan bazı tereddüt düğümlerinin, çözülmesini teshil için, bir hakikati beraber müşahede etmeliyiz. Tezahür eden millî mücadele, haricî istilâya karşı vatann halâsını yegâne hedef addettiği halde bu millî mücadelenin muvaffakiyete iktiran ettikçe safha safha bugünkü devre kadar iradei milliye idaresinin bütün esasat ve eşkâlini tahakkuk ettirmesi tabî ve gayrikabili içtinap bir seyri tarihî idi. Bu mukadder seyri tarihiyi ananevi itiyadiyle, derhal ihtisas eden hanedanı hükümdarı, ilk andan itibaren millî mücadelenin hasmı bîamanı oldu! Bu mukadder seyri tarihiyi ilk anda ben de müşahede ve ihtisas ettim. Fakat nihayete kadar şâmil olan bu ihtisasimizi ilk anda kâmilten izhar ve ifade etmedik. Müstakbel ihtimalât üzerine fazla beyanat, giriştiğimiz hakiki ve maddi mücadeleye, hayalât mahiyetini verebilirdi; harici tehlikenin yakın tesirâtı karşısında, müteessir olanlar arasında, ananelerine ve fikrî kabiliyetlerine ve ruhi haletlerine mugayir olan muhtemel tahavvülâtan

The most striking aspect of this retrospective reading and portrayal of history as a natural and inevitable flow (*mukadder seyr-i tarihi*) is that Mustafa Kemal had to keep silent about the real course and strategies that were to be followed, since overtly talking about them could cause incompetent, ignorant or foolhardy attempts to debate and question them, or even worse, undermine the natural flow of history.³⁸ Because Mustafa Kemal portrays himself as acting in line with the natural flow of history, the presentation of history within the Speech, the new regime and its regulations are also justified. With reference to the changing political structure, Mustafa Kemal says that even during the Independence Struggle he knew that the probable changes to come would frighten many participants, so he kept them to himself. He justifies his strategic thinking, and his gradual revelation of the nature of his political struggle, as the best way to pursue the nation's progress. The "truth" (*hakikat*) was visible to Mustafa Kemal's prescient calculations and prudence, yet it had to wait a certain period to be disclosed. Thus, Mustafa Kemal not only knew what was to be done and hence what was to happen subsequently, he also had to manage this knowledge, restricting it to himself and *only* himself – it was knowledge only he could know what to do with:

I may add that it was incumbent upon me to develop our entire social organisation, step by step, until it corresponded to the great capacity for progress

ürkeceklerin ilk anda mukavemetlerini tahrik edebilirdi. Muvaffakiyet için amelî ve emin yol her safhayı vakti geldikçe, tatbik etmekte. Milletin inkişaf ve itilâsı için selâmet yolu bu idi. Ben de böyle hareket ettim" (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 14–5).

³⁸ In *Nutuk's* portrayal, history is both inevitable and yet in danger of being pushed off-course. Mustafa Kemal does not merely assert the rationality and sensibleness of the course he envisions, he frequently associates these policies and strategies as the bits and pieces through which the nation comes into existence. Hence, for him the way the national struggle was conducted was the only necessary way ever, and he frequently notes how certain and assured he was about his choices, despite adverse conditions or skepticisms. However, he also frequently incriminates or accuses many actors for putting the national struggle at risk, which required Mustafa Kemal's personal guidance and intervention to make sure the process was kept on track. In one sense, this is not a contradiction, since it merely re-affirms the necessity of Mustafa Kemal's singular leadership, as he is elevated into a failsafe mechanism to guide the national struggle in a way no one else could, based on his foresight into the teleological and subsequent culmination of the National Struggle into the Turkish Republic.

which I perceived in the soul and in the future of the nation and which I kept to myself in my own consciousness as a national secret.³⁹

While Mustafa Kemal narrates a timeless history that does not change, narrated events develop and all the actors involved also disclose their real nature. The other actors around Mustafa Kemal either come to appreciate and accept Mustafa Kemal's foresight, and present their allegiance to Mustafa Kemal himself, or they fail to comprehend the necessity of what is supposed to be done and thus betray the orders of history and the national will.

Although Mustafa Kemal as a person remains the same, *Nutuk*'s narrative elevates the nation to an eternal agent that gradually finds its essence and national character in independence (Parla 1994). In that sense, the unfolding of events in history is actually, according to *Nutuk*, a natural progressive and linear succession of events that made possible the birth of the Turkish nation. As evident from the quote, Mustafa Kemal highlights himself as the only one who could properly see and understand that. Parla refers to the classical genre of the self-development novel (*Bildungsroman*) from 19th century Western Europe, and argues that the hero in *Nutuk* is the Turkish nation, seeking its proper socio-political formation in Independence. Mustafa Kemal becomes the main protagonist despite his omniscience, as history becomes a large scene where he *embodies* the nation, which in turn gradually, albeit slowly and under the necessary supervision of its leader, develops into a society worthy of its essence and character (Parla 1994: 30). In other words, as the Independence Movement gradually falls in line with Mustafa Kemal's foresight and becomes better and better organized under

³⁹ “[D]iyebilirim ki, ben, milletin vicdanında ve istikbalinde ihtisas ettiğim büyük tekâmül istidadını, bir milli sır gibi vicdanımda taşıyarak peyderpey, bütün heyeti içtimaiyemize tatbik ettirmek mecburiyetinde idim” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 15).

his leadership, the national struggle becomes more and more destined to succeed. The following passage, which is one of the most recited passages from the whole text, provides such a narrative confluence of individual and collective destinies under the inevitability and naturalness of a great task.

Now, Gentlemen, I will ask you what decision could have been arrived at under such circumstances for salvation. [...] Therefore, what could be a serious and correct solution? In these circumstances, one solution alone was possible, namely, to create a New Turkish State, the sovereignty and independence of which would be unreservedly recognized by the whole world.⁴⁰

Founding the new state is thus referred to as the only possible decision dictated by history. Mustafa Kemal again does not try to give specific reasons for his decisions but instead frames his subjectivity as someone who could foresee what history requires and thus who does not make a decision but who knows what decision should be made. Similarly, Mustafa Kemal refers to an exchange of telegraphs between him and Refet Paşa that affirms the inevitability of the decisions to be made:

In his telegram Refet Bey says that he considers it certain that the English will exert pressure on the Government to have him recalled, but that nevertheless he will remain on the spot and act according to circumstances. The position, however, was quite clear, and I had indicated in the instructions I had circulated on the 7 July 1919 what he was to do (No. 2 of the instructions). No other steps were to be taken.⁴¹

⁴⁰ “Şimdi, Efendiler, müsaade buyurursanız, size bir sual sorayım, bu vaziyet ve şerait karşısında halâs için, nasıl bir karar varidi hâtır olabilirdi? [...] O halde ciddî ve hakiki karar ne olabilirdi? Efendiler, bu vaziyet karşısında bir tek karar vardı. O da hâkimiyeti milliyeye müstenit, bilâkaydüşart müstakil yeni bir Türk Devleti tesis etmek!” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 12).

⁴¹ “Bu telgrafında, Refet Bey, kendisinin avdeti için İngilizlerin, hükümeti tazyik edeceklerini muhakkak görüyor ve vaziyete göre icabına tevessül ederek buralarda kalacağını söylüyor. Halbuki vaziyet malûm ve yapılacak şeyi ben kendisine 7 Temmuz 1919 tarihli umumi talimatımda bildirdim. (Mezkûr talimatın ikinci maddesi) Ondan başka yapılacak şey yoktu” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 54).

In his view, in almost every situation, there was only one thing to do, and he was the only one who could clearly see that course of action. This privileged position of seeing what needs to be done at a given moment narratively justifies Mustafa Kemal's leadership and decisions as inevitable and right. Other actors are criticized for not submitting to Mustafa Kemal's orders and instead acting autonomously. Although Mustafa Kemal presumably does his best to disseminate what is to be done as the required and natural course of action among his fellows and followers, he complains that ignorance, incompetence, imprudence and occasionally selfishness would intervene and cause failures.⁴²

The maturing protagonist-hero of *Nutuk* is the Turkish nation, but as Parla (1994) noted in his analysis of *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal remains the same as a narrator, who always already had an infallible understanding of how the Turkish nation was to emerge as a grand agent, and what was to be done. Although Mustafa Kemal as the *narrated character* of the text occasionally feels the need to give an account of his suggestions or even orders, Mustafa Kemal as the *author-narrator* does not even try to account for, legitimize or sublimate any of his personal preferences, strategic choices, or

⁴² In her thesis, Aslan refers to Volkan and Itzkowitz's denigrating conclusions and Halide Edib's poignant analyses of Mustafa Kemal in her memoirs and reaches the same conclusion: "Mustafa Kemal did not praise any of his companions in the Independence Struggle, except for İsmet Pasha. Halide Edib explains the reason as follows: 'İsmet Pasha is the military man whom he has ever praised in public, yet behind the praise there was a subtly concealed motive. İsmet Pasha had been badly beaten in Kutahya and in Eskişehir, defeat at which had almost brought the Greeks to Angora; so Mustafa Kemal Pasha in praising İsmet Pasha was saying with a wink, 'I have commanded Sakaria and the march to Smyrna: İsmet was under me, so by all means praise him freely; it all comes back to me.' Knowing this side of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, it is for the future historian to decide whether İsmet Pasha would have been in the position he is at the present if he had not had that military misfortune...' Edib makes the reader understand that Mustafa Kemal wanted the success of the nationalist movement to be regarded wholly as his own: he could not share any of it even with his most loyal supporter. This observation back in the 1920s is similar to Taha Parla's observations on *Nutuk* and Mustafa Kemal's other speeches [...] that Mustafa Kemal sees İsmet Pasha as an ideal 'subchief' (in psychoanalytic terms his 'extension') and regards İsmet Pasha's success as his own, which is an evidence of his narcissism" (Aslan 2009: 37–8).

courses of action. The narrator's presentation of himself as a naturalized protagonist at the service of a naturalized view of history is essential to understanding the authoritative power of *Nutuk*'s narrative. When the narrator refuses to acknowledge his particularity, his individuality, or the relevance and importance of his choices, policies, it becomes almost impossible to challenge what was done.

4. 3. *Nutuk* as a Narrative on History

As I noted above, I approach the autobiographic narrative of *Nutuk* as a sublimated and singular source of history by analyzing the author's claim to moral and political legitimacy, and showing how its narrative avoids questions of accuracy and objectivity. As noted in the previous chapters, autobiographic narratives in general, and especially those told from positions of power, assume a contract with the reader/audience that the autobiographic narrative accurately represents historical events in good faith (Lejeune 1989, Smith and Watson 2001). Despite the tacit recognition of this contract, autobiography authors often feel obliged to address more explicitly the question of the factual accuracy of their own accounts. (Anderson 2010, Marcus 1994). Raising such questions within the body of the text enables them to solidify their authority as authors. In contrast, Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk* does not raise these questions of factual accuracy, and does not explain to the readers why they should believe what is being told. *Nutuk* does not operate on the simplistic terms of the textual-narrative pact of autobiography. Adile Aslan, in that regard, refers to Cohn's reflections on historical narratives (Cohn 2000: 112) and argues that while the standard "historical narrative is in need of a referential point to be accepted as such, and in this way it adds 'reference' level to the already existing 'story' and 'discourse' levels in fictional narrative, [...]"

Mustafa Kemal seems to regard the documents he integrates into *Nutuk* and his historical existence as a sufficient reference point for his point of view to be accepted as the only true one” (Aslan 2009: 49). Mustafa Kemal finds multiple ways to appeal to and convince other actors around him by giving various justifications to account for his actions. Yet, the narrative is structured with the author’s repeating claims that only he, as the major protagonist of the narrative, could foresee the near future and the most viable course of action.

As a narrative on history, *Nutuk* relied on Mustafa Kemal’s self-representation as a trans-historical figure acting concomitantly with the national will. Recent psychoanalytical analyses of Mustafa Kemal and *Nutuk* have noted the way *Nutuk* singles out Mustafa Kemal as a trans-historical figure with majestic character traits and qualities, i.e. one who does not need to evolve, learn or change (Adak 2003, Parla 1994, 1997, Volkan and Itzkowitz 1986).⁴³ Such studies helped to historicize the author of the text and contributed to the problematization of interlocked histories of the “personal” and “nation” as such. Yet, their deconstructive critiques do not explain why and how the text itself acquired its binding authority.

Apart from several laws and regulations that historically sanctioned *Nutuk*, where does its appealing power stem from? The narrative analysis I provide here highlights

⁴³ See for instance an example from Volkan and Itzkowitz’s text of such forms of analysis: “We came early to the conclusion that Mustafa Kemal had an inflated and grandiose self-concept, basing this on the way others described him, but also - and more significantly - on his own delineation of his personality organization. He believed he was a unique man above all others and endowed with the right to assert his will. He saw others in two categories - those who were his admirers and followers and those who were not and who therefore had no existence at all as far as he was concerned” (Volkan and Itzkowitz 1986: xxiii). Despite their occasional sound inferences based on years of research, Volkan and Itzkowitz’s detailed and engaged attempt to provide a holistic psychoanalysis of Mustafa Kemal’s personality and life-history frequently lacks proper evidential analysis and is prone to unfounded generalizations.

this interesting relation between *self* and *history*, and how this relation influences the narration of truths and facts that ultimately produce an authoritative account of history as such. With this singular and binding regime of truth, which discriminates between facts and mere stories or distortions, *Nutuk* provides historiographic parameters that bind how history can and cannot be written. Narrative forms employed by the authors analyzed here to contest and negotiate the history of the Independence War are in conversation with those historiographic parameters set by *Nutuk*. In contrast, the narrative of Mustafa Kemal's account of his personal acts, choices and interpretations culminate into a grand yet optically singular narrative history, thanks to extensive use of visual metaphors that singled out Mustafa Kemal's insight, foresight and vision. I use the term "optical" to describe Mustafa Kemal's narration of himself as the only person who could literally "see the situation" through a multiplicity of visual verbs and metaphors.

4. 4. "National Will" and the Justification of the Republic and the Reforms

National will is the core idea that is systematically articulated in *Nutuk*. Mustafa Kemal uses it to frame how to address the political opposition that emerged after the Istanbul parliament was disbanded, making Ankara the only source of national representation. The national will, in Mustafa Kemal's view, reacted not only against the occupying powers, but also against the illegitimate and degenerate Ottoman sultanate. Although *Nutuk* was recited in 1927, it does not cover the history of the period from 1919 to 1927, and instead mainly focuses on the period until the emergence of the PRP in November 1924. The fact that only approximately 1.5% of the text is concerned with the later events (Zürcher 2004: 175) suggests that Mustafa Kemal was

mainly interested in justifying the transition from the Sultanate to the Republic through the “glorious” story of the nation’s struggle.

According to Mustafa Kemal, political and military leaders commonly sought avoiding aggravating the foreign powers at the expense of imagining any promising solution to the ongoing occupation of the country. He lists prevalent “salvation proposals” that ranged from getting aid from the US to becoming a mandatory state, or separation of Anatolia into distinct political bodies. Mustafa Kemal claims that he opposed all of these existing proposals, since he believed that there was only one possible solution.

The main point was that the Turkish nation should live in honour and dignity. Such a condition could only be attained by complete independence. [...] the Turk is both dignified and proud; he is also capable and talented. Such a nation would prefer to perish rather than subject itself to the life of a slave. Therefore, Independence or Death! This was the rallying cry of all those who honestly desired to save their country.⁴⁴

The idea of full independence is repeatedly praised as the best and the only ideal for the Turkish nation. The cited quote below expresses that this full independence would rely on self-determination.

In these circumstances, one solution alone was possible, namely, to create a New Turkish State, the sovereignty and independence of which would be unreservedly recognized by the whole world.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “Esas, Türk milletinin haysiyetli ve şerefli bir millet olarak yaşamasıdır. Bu esas ancak istiklâli tam memalikiyetle temin olunabilir. [...] Türkün haysiyet ve izzetinefis ve kabiliyeti çok yüksek ve büyüktür. Böyle bir millet esir yaşamaktansa mahvolsun evlâdır! Binaenaleyh, ya istiklâl ya ölüm! İşte halâsı hakiki isteyenlerin parolası bu” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 13).

⁴⁵ “Efendiler, bu vaziyet karşısında bir tek karar vardı. O da hâkimiyeti milliyeye müstenit, bilâkaydüşart müstakil yeni bir Türk Devleti tesis etmek!” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 15)

According to Mustafa Kemal's portrayal, the new Republic, its government and its policies are retrospectively justified by creating a link between two distinct temporalities: the Independence War and post-1923 Turkey. In that sense, the narrative of the Ottoman Empire's disintegration and the weaknesses of its existing institutions is intertwined with the creation of the Republic. The Declaration of the Republic is presented as the natural outcome of that process. I suggest that when Mustafa Kemal clearly identifies the current changes as a *fait accompli* (*emrivaki*) and thus as inevitable truths that express the national will, any kind of objection automatically becomes obsolete.

Mustafa Kemal declares a clear break with the Ottoman past and justifies this with references to the history of the Independence War and rebirth of the national will, where the nation at the time of the Independence War was always already the Turkish nation he would be appealing to in the post-war period. Framed through a positivist conception of a naturalist progressive history, *Nutuk* frequently addresses many mistakes or irrationalities of the Ottoman period as catalyzers for the progressive emergence of new political forces that avoided these mistakes in the interests of the nation. The independence struggle and the emergent Republic and its key institutions are presented as the products of a nation revolting against the oppressive Ottoman dynasty. The present policies led by Mustafa Kemal are framed as an oppressed nation revolting against occupation and oppression in order to gain its agency.

Drawing comparisons with the incompetent and corrupt Ottoman institutions is central to explaining the inevitability of the Republic and its reforms. These comparisons are not made in the level of abstract conceptual debates or legal and institutional

frameworks. The emotional depictions of pre-Independence and the early Independence War are framed with reference to the “national will,” which was allegedly usurped during the Ottoman Sultanate and could only express itself through the Republic.

Naturalizing the history of events being narrated, *Nutuk* sanctions particular historical events as being natural results of the nation’s will (*hakimiye-yi milliye*) and then maintains that there existed only one possible course of action which involved a certain set of actors and agents. In that narrative, every strategy, policy and decision endorsed and implemented under the authority of Mustafa Kemal retrospectively becomes sanctioned as an inevitable necessity. The inevitability of what happened is built not only in reference to a practical necessity of not having any other choice. The history is sanctioned as the unfolding of a linear progressive process whereby the Turkish nation emerged unto the scene of history as an independent and sovereign collectivity with its own nation-state. *Nutuk* introduced a language for sanctifying the new nation-state to legitimately represent its people, which is ascribed a trans-historical agency that marks it as one of the leading nations of the world. In that sense, national consciousness is further justified with reference to an international scenery of “civilized nations” and their gaze.

4. 5. The Indisputable Leadership of Mustafa Kemal

As noted above, Mustafa Kemal persistently underlines the continuity of his policies in relation to embodying the national will in *Nutuk*, and portrays himself as a fully

consistent actor who does not change his mind or make mistakes. One major consequence of this representation is that his nine years of leadership between 1918 and 1927 becomes a continuous struggle for pre-set goals, which legitimizes his political leadership on a broader, non-political level. Mustafa Kemal portrays a continuous and controlled evolutionary progress painstakingly led by himself, which did not involve any contradictions or interruptions, despite all the external challenges and threats. He claims that he never deviated (*inhiraf*) from the designated way towards pre-set goals, and states that his leadership was more than a personal choice or the outcome of a political competition, but inevitable. He cites the Erzurum Congress and describes these initial attempts to form such as full of powerless patriots who could not meet the expectations of a nation in darkness. In such a context, Mustafa Kemal identifies himself as the only existing determined and capable leader who can be a solution.

Nutuk rests on a particular conception of a natural movement of history and how Mustafa Kemal could display the ability to adapt to the necessities of this natural historical process. Yet, the concept of history presented in *Nutuk* has far more implications than merely reflecting Mustafa Kemal's naturalist or positivist mindset. *Nutuk* rests on an association of the Independence War and the national struggle with Mustafa Kemal's singular optics of legitimacy, and hence on the he, and only he, could see, perceive and understand the natural course of history that generated the Turkish nation's struggle for independence. Mustafa Kemal, once again, presents himself as someone who was capable of seeing what should have been done at a given moment, and thus as the visionary hero since the beginning of the Independence War itself. Adak argues that Mustafa Kemal portrays the historical processions of the national struggle as a first-

person narrative, detailing his own actions, insights and ideas to save the Turkish nation.

4. 6. The Enemy Within

The idea of national consciousness and its embodiment in the leadership and foresight of Mustafa Kemal were at the heart of *Nutuk*'s compelling narrative. Ideas of national will and national character as embodied by Mustafa Kemal have become constitutive of the nation's *Bildung*, the unfolding of its history and memory. Not everyone was considered a legitimate participant in that grandiose history. Mustafa Kemal targets certain people as unwanted elements within the imagined boundaries of the nascent nation-state; the Sultan, the cabinet that followed his lead, rival political figures, Mandate-seeking pro-British intellectuals, the Christian minorities, and the Allied Powers, particularly Britain, working and cooperating to split the Ottoman state. Mustafa Kemal also claims that the FCP was plotting to force the political scene of the newly forming independence movement to accept a British Mandate by spreading rumors that Christians were being massacred around Anatolia, particularly in the Northeast Black Sea coast regions, like Trabzon. When, in June 1919, Mustafa Kemal ordered demonstrations all over Anatolia in order to protest increasing incursions by the Allied powers and the beginning of the Greek invasion of Western Anatolia, there were some parties who were skeptical or unwilling to execute his orders. The following passages interconnect a variety of events and reactions to the existing political atmosphere, and portray a bleak picture of domestic forces or "internal enemies" that seek to undermine or actively sabotage the national struggle:

A telegram received from the Vilayet of Sivas on the 2nd June stated that another had been received on the same day, signed by Colonel Demange, of which this is an extract: "On account of the occupation of Izmir, the lives of the Christians at Aziziye are in danger. This cannot be tolerated any longer. In virtue of the authority conferred on me, I draw your attention to the fact that such occurrences will probably lead to the occupation of your province by the troops of the Allies ..." In reality, nothing whatever in the shape of unrest had taken place at Sivas, and it is natural, therefore, that the lives of the Christians had not been endangered. The fact is that the Christian elements, influenced by the meetings which the people had begun to organise and which they regarded as damaging to their own interests, intentionally spread these rumours abroad for the purpose of attracting the attention of foreign countries.⁴⁶

The imagined web of enemies conspiring against the nation serves as a parallel "constitutive outside" for the real narrative (the national struggle) and its major plot (the organization of scattered Anatolian resistance movements into a singular national struggle, and subsequently into a new Turkish state).

Later on, this category of the internal enemy as a sub-plot of continuous struggle and vigilance is expanded to accuse those who had different views from Mustafa Kemal regarding how the national struggle should be maintained, especially those who were skeptical about the prospects of the Turkish nation to survive complete Independence. Mustafa Kemal therefore frequently questions how other actors and political move-

⁴⁶ "Sivas Vali Vekâletinden 2 Haziran 1919 tarihli aldığım bir telgrafta da "Bugün Miralay Demange imzasıyla alınan telgraf namede 'Aziziyede İzmirin işgali üzerine Hristiyanların katil ile tehdidedildiği ve bu ise muvafık olmayıp size vaziyetten haber veriyorum ki bu haller müttefik askerleri tarafından vilâyetinizin işgaline sebeb olur' mealinde işaratta bulunulmaktadır," denilmekte idi. Hakikatte, ne Sıvasta dahi endişe bir hal vardı ve ne de Hristiyanların katil ile tehdid edildiği vâki idi. Mesele, milletçe yapılmaya başlanılan mitinglerden müteessir olan ve bunu emellerinin husulüne mâni addeden anasını Hristiyaniyenin, ecebilerin nazarı dikkatini celp için bililtizam yaptıkları işaat kabilinden olarak kabul etmek lâzımdır. [...] Bu tarihlerde bütün milletin İngiliz Muhipleri Cemiyetine iştirakle İngiltere müzaheretinin talebedilmesi, bu cemiyet namına, Sait Molla imzasıyla umum belediye riyasetlerine bir telgrafla bildirildiği ve bu telgrafın tesirini akim bırakmak için milleti lüzumu gibi tenvir etmekle beraber hükümet nezdindeki teşebbüsatım malûmunuz olmuştur" (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 23–5).

ments, even his allies, like Karabekir, could not accurately see the state of the fatherland from a wide and general view, or occasionally failed to respond properly due to moral character deficits or ignorance.

Gentlemen! As Kazım Karabekir Paşa had said at the end of his telegram, as I have explained already, there was surely no justification for demanding the formation of any government or taking part in it at the moment when our first thought was the liberation of the country — a country in which there was neither proper organisation nor a Parliament; nor had any party appeared in the Assembly with any ideal or programme which was supported by the organisation and full strength of the nation. Such procedure, which would have been inspired rather by personal interests than any desire to serve those of the country, was, as far as I could see without wishing to be unjust, nothing but ambition or at least ignorance.⁴⁷

Mustafa Kemal mentions an exchange between Karabekir and himself in October 1919, describing a disagreement over how to designate the representatives for the meetings that would take place. Mustafa Kemal does not justify his preference for designating the representatives in a certain way, but instead asserts that the situation at that time required such a decision, and also accuses those who show resentment for not being represented of “pursuing personal interests.” Through additive comments such as “of course it could not have been true,” (*elbette doğru olamazdı*) Mustafa Kemal constantly reserves the right to see and know the truth to himself. Mustafa Kemal does not provide any evidence for those claims, but we are told that Mustafa Kemal knew what was right and wrong from the very beginning.

⁴⁷ “Efendiler, Kâzım Kara Bekir Paşanın bu mütalâa ve teklifi, telgrafnamelerinin sonunda söyledikleri gibi vatan ve milletin halâsı mevzuubahis olduğu bir devirde ve benim izah ettiğim veçhile henüz, memlekette hiçbir teşkilât ve meclis yok iken ve meclis toplandığı zaman da mecliste böyle bir teşkilâta ve kudreti milliyeye güvenir mefkûre sahibi bir grup ispatı mevcudiyet edememişken, her ne suretle olursa olsun hükümet teşkiline veya teşekkül edecek hükümete dahil olmaya heves etmek elbette doğru olamazdı. Bu tarzı harekete, memleket ve millet menafiine hizmet emelinden ziyade, şahsi hırs ve menfaat veya hiç olmazsa cehalet atfetmekte, itikadımca asla isabetsizlik olmaz” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 221).

There are extensive similar passages in *Nutuk*, where both his close circle of military leaders and the politicians or bureaucrats of the subsequent political scene in Ankara are dismissed or accused of being ignorant, incompetent or selfish, which according to Mustafa Kemal, prevented them from properly seeing and understanding the situation during the initial phases of the Independence War, as well as the subsequent phase of post-war institutionalization efforts. In that vein, Mustafa Kemal does not refrain from locating the responsibility for minor or larger failures within the specific political and military figures who are accused of not being patriotic enough, or not having the required qualities:

Gentlemen! There is no doubt that Thrace was in a peculiar position and under difficulties of a very special description. But neither the peculiar character of the position nor the difficulties should have prevented the Army Corps in Thrace from performing what military exigencies and patriotism demanded. If this was not so, the responsibility in the eyes of history and before his own nation must fall solely on the head of Cafer Tayyar Paşa. Armies have been known in history to heroically and honourably defended a whole country against superior hostile forces, inch by inch to the last inch of their territory and which, in spite of evrything, have been able to preserve their existence. Such is the character of the Turkish Army. It suffices that all those in command should possess the qualifications which are necessary for those at the head of the Army.⁴⁸

While the first part of the passage establishes the absolute and unchallengeable interpretation of the situation (“... mani olamazdı”), the latter part accuses with failing a task and not acting according to the essences and value of the Turkish nation and

⁴⁸ “Efendiler, Trakya'nın hususi ve müşkül vaziyet ve şerait içinde bulunduğuna şüphe yoktu. Fakat bu hususiyet ve müşkülât, hiçbir vakit Trakya'daki Kolordunun icabat-ı askeriye ve vatanperverlik namusunu ifa etmesine mâni olamazdı. Eğer, bu, yapılamamış ise millet, tarih nazarında bundan yegâne mesul, Cafer Tayyar Paşadır. Tarihte bütün bir vatani, çok faik düşman kuvvetleri karşısında, son kabza-i türabına kadar karış, karış kahramanca ve namuskârane müdafaa etmiş ve yine muhafaza-i mevcudiyet eyleyebilmiş ordular görülmüştür. Türk ordusu, o cevherde bir ordudur. Yeter ki ona kumanda edenler, kumanda edebilmek evsafını haiz bulunsun!” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 485).

army. The quote is one among many other examples in which Mustafa Kemal explicitly names specific actors as the major reason behind a problem or failure. The main idea is that unless other individuals and actors failed in their jobs, the Turkish nation would naturally progress towards actions, processes and goals that Mustafa Kemal himself had correctly envisioned.

Mustafa Kemal presents the Sivas Congress in detail in *Nutuk*, and documents extensive debates about the Mandate issue. He justifies his views on the strategies pursued with regard to the Mandate issue with reference to the characters and dispositions of the people who were involved in the debates, especially Refet Bele, whom he describes as “manipulative.” There is a range of telegraph exchanges between Mustafa Kemal and Refet Bele before the Sivas Congress, where both demonstrate cautious skepticism towards each other’s policy and strategy preferences (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 53–60, 90). Mustafa Kemal repetitively accuses Refet Bele of disregarding his orders, refusing to discharge a local military leader (Demirci Mehmet Efe), disappearing for weeks, contacting Istanbul without his permission, leaving his post without asking, etc. And most of these instances involve Orbay and Cebesoy, leading Mustafa Kemal to make cryptic remarks about how these seemingly small problems or frictions hinted at much bigger discords that would emerge years later. The following depiction of the signing of the Amasya Circular (*Amasya Tamimi*)⁴⁹ is a revealing example in that regard:

I wanted my comrades who had just arrived also to sign the draft of the circular we were speaking about. Rauf Bey and Refet Bey were at that moment in

⁴⁹ The Amasya Circular (*Amasya Tamimi* in Turkish) is the first written document that marked the public declaration of the start of the National Struggle. It was issued on June 22, 1919, in Amasya by Mustafa Kemal, Orbay, Refet Bele and Cebesoy. It included an open declaration of Turkey’s independence and a call for a Congresses to be held in Erzurum and in Sivas.

my room; Fuat Paşa was in another. Rauf Bey politely expressed that because he was just a visitor he had no authority or interest in signing this document. I pressed him to sign, assuring him that this document would be of historical value: this induced him to sign. Refet Bey, however, declined, saying that he could not understand why and with what object we were convening the congress. I was astounded at his attitude and mentality. It seemed incredible to me that a comrade whom I had brought with me from İstanbul could take such an extraordinary view about so simple a question, especially as he understood perfectly well what we were going to do. I sent for Fuat Paşa, and as soon as he understood my point of view he signed. I told him that I could not understand why Refet Bey had demurred. After Fuat Paşa had reproached him rather sharply, Refet picked up the draft and put some sort of signature to it, which it is rather difficult to make out. This is the document I am talking about. All who are interested in it might like to look at it. Gentlemen! At first sight this account might appear to be superfluous. I have submitted it to you, because I think it will throw some light on certain dark points connected with subsequent events.⁵⁰

Mustafa Kemal's narrative retrospectively refashions his earliest relations with many of the actors that were with him during the national struggle with reference to disagreements and political divisions that were to come years later. Mustafa Kemal narrates those moments of relative peace and solidarity as if he knew or at least felt the future problems to come, and describes how he had to show constant vigilance and avoid trusting those close to him. Those other leading actors of the war are not necessarily portrayed as villains, but rather as incompetent and weakly devoted in their commitments. They could not comprehend and support the necessary course of action Mustafa Kemal ordered or suggested, which eventually caused their estrangement in the long run. And the subsequent discords and political rivalries that targeted Mustafa

⁵⁰ "Rauf Bey, misafir olduğundan bu müsveddeye vaz'ı imza için kendinde bir alâka ve salâhiyet görmediğini nezaketen ifade etti. Bunun bir hatıra-i tarihiye olduğunu dermeyan ederek imza etmesini söyledim. Bunun üzerine imza etti. Refet Bey, imzadan istinkâf etti ve böyle bir kongre akdindeki maksat ve faydayı anlayamadığını söyledi. İstanbuldan beri, beraber getirdiğim bu arkadaşın —tuttuğumuz yola nazaran— anlaşılması pek basit olan bir meselede, izhar ettiği haleti fikriye ve ihissiyeden müteallim oldum. Fuat Paşayı çağırttım. Paşa, noktai nazarımı anlayınca derhal imza etti. Fuat Paşaya Refet Beyin tereddüdü sebebini anlayamadığımı söyledim. Fuat Paşa, Refet Beyden, biraz ciddî, istizahta bulunduktan sonra, Refet Bey müsveddeyi eline alarak kendine mahsus bir işaret vaz etti, öyle işaret ki, bunu, bu müsveddede bulmak biraz müşküldür. [Buyurun! merak eden tetkik edebilir.] Efendiler, lüzumsuz gibi görülebilen bu izahat, mütaakıp senelere ve hâdiselere ait bazı muzlim noktaları tenvire medar olur zanniyle dermeyan edilmiştir" (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 34).

Kemal or his political party, RPP, are attributed to this inability on the part of the fellow leaders and actors of the national struggle, who failed to appreciate the singular and unique status of Mustafa Kemal as a leader, and follow his commands.

By coding each and every strategic decision in the momentous turning points of the War as the will of the nation, Mustafa Kemal interweaves himself and the nation throughout the text. “Others” are cast as enemies both because they disagreed with Mustafa Kemal and because they acted against the national will. Different opinions are described as voices against the national struggle itself, not against Mustafa Kemal himself. The below quote illustrates how Mustafa Kemal explains the emergent discord between him and other leading figures of the Independence Struggle:

Some of my companions who had entered into the national fight with me went over to the opposition, due to the limitations of their mentality and the failure of their moral courage in the effort to develop national life, to proclaim the Republic and enact its laws. So that you may be informed, so that the public opinion be enlightened; I shall refer to these cases individually as I proceed with my statement. To summarise what I have been saying, I may add that it was incumbent upon me to develop our entire social organisation, step by step, until it corresponded to the great capacity for progress which I perceived in the soul and in the future of the nation and which I kept to myself in my own consciousness as a national secret.⁵¹

As one of the most famous passages from *Nutuk*, this account unequivocally singles out Mustafa Kemal as an agent that has a transhistorical perspective and duty to perform. Mustafa Kemal clearly affirms here a gap between the transhistorical author-

⁵¹ “Millî mücadeleye beraber basliyan yolculardan bazilari, millî hayatın bugünkü Cumhuriyete ve Cumhuriyet kanunlarına kadar gelen tekâmülâtmda, kendi fikriyat ve ruhiyatının ihatasi hududu bittikçe, bana mukavemet ve muhalefete geçmişlerdir. Bu noktaları, tenevvür etmeniz için, efkârî umumiyenin tenevvürüne medar olmak için, sirasi geldikçe, birer birer isaret etmeye çalışacağım. Bu son sözlerimi hulâsa etmek lâzım gelirse, diyebilirim ki, ben, milletin vicdanında ve istikbalinde ihtisas ettiğim büyük tekâmül istidadım, bir millî sir gibi vicdanımda taşıyarak peyderpey, bütün heyeti içtimaiyemize tatbik ettirmek mecburiyetinde idim” (Mustafa Kemal 1970: 14–5).

narrator and the protagonist-author. According to Mustafa Kemal, he had to act as if he was not a larger than life personality, keep the larger picture relatively secret and execute this larger plan piece by piece, letting only relevant actors know about the relevant pieces. Mustafa Kemal considered himself to be an agent that is singularly tasked with the leadership of a momentous process, an inevitable aspect of the larger flow of history. Only he could see the larger picture, and furthermore, he was restrained by his singularity, unable to share his knowledge with others who would fail to understand or even cause failure.

4. 7. Conclusion

In *Nutuk*, not only Mustafa Kemal's leadership, policies and reforms appear as a natural outcome of the progression of history unto the birth of the nation. The subsequent discord with fellow leaders was also probably inevitable, as a result of the inabilities of people like Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay to comprehend and act in congruence with the will of the nation. Mustafa Kemal explains all the disagreements and political divisions within the party he founded, as well as the political opposition lately enticed against him, in terms of the inability of his former fellows and colleagues to appreciate and properly follow his leadership. They fell into discord with him, and insisted on their personal perspectives on how to conduct the new politics of the new regime in service of the nation, because of their failure to properly see and comprehend things in the ways that Mustafa Kemal did.

Nutuk's narrative structure elevates Mustafa Kemal's vision of the multiple sequences of historical events into a singular, linear and all-encompassing history. As a result,

Mustafa Kemal's personal recollections intersect with the awakening of the Turkish nation, and become an exclusive criterion of how the history of that period can be legitimately recollected and remembered. How Mustafa Kemal perceived the history as such becomes the most objective account of that period. I called this forceful elevation of the author's particular vision a "singular optics of legitimacy." I suggest that this optics had long-lasting legal and political repercussions. The singularity of legitimacy set by *Nutuk* formed the history of the Turkish Revolution (*Türk İnkılabı*), as well as the standards of discriminating between historical truth and illegitimate claims that threatened that revolution. It unequivocally defines how historical recollections and writings can and should represent actual history. Those who remember the history in a way that concurs with *Nutuk* have been exalted as model citizens. Those who propose contrasting accounts have come to be viewed by the establishment as traitors or the improvident, who distort the truth for personal benefit, or due to incompetence.

Nutuk is also a text of reckoning with those who were eliminated from power (Koçak 2006). In addition to being an authoritative text of official ideology that tells the nation how to remember and understand its history, *Nutuk* is a text about the "others" of this history. In his speech, Mustafa Kemal consistently targets specific people and recounts how they were not important parts of the National Struggle, or were even impediments to or enemies of the struggle. Mustafa Kemal tells various anecdotes to inform the readers who the enemies of the nation are, and what makes them enemies.

Reckoning with *Nutuk* has become a major theme for subsequent memoirs, and thus has established itself as an important political concept in Turkish political history. More than the existence of conflict between major political actors, reckoning also refers to the ongoing, unresolved and protracted characteristics of these controversies.

Disagreements, frictions and controversies of the period involving Mustafa Kemal, İnönü, Orbay and Karabekir have been a major topic for numerous historical books and articles that were published both by pro-Mustafa Kemal and pro-opposition figures. In their memoirs, various leading figures of the Independence War sought to challenge *Nutuk's* truth regime with regard to the war and many aspects of the rising civic-political constellations after the declaration of the Republic. As primary figures of this challenge, the memoirs of the opponent pashas Cebesoy, Karabekir and Orbay have become primary examples of such textual politics.

CHAPTER 5

RECLAIMING POLITICAL LEGITIMACY: “NATIONAL CHARACTER” AND SACRIFICIAL BROTHERHOOD

5. 1. Introduction: Moralizing Discourses and Oppositional Politics

This chapter analyzes how contestations over who best embodies the *national character* of the Turkish nation were central to Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s ambivalent engagements in their autobiographical writings with the past and history. I will show that the development of the authors’ characters into self-sacrificial and dutiful soldiers and statesmen was narratively constructed coterminally with the development of the national character of Turkey, as the Turkish nation searched for its independence and salvation. Extensive comments on self-sacrificial and patriotic character traits that imbue the heroic stories of the Independence War with moralistic discussions about the values of the Turkish nation occupy a large space in the memoirs. Similarly, key opponents, devout friends and close allies largely appear in these texts through analyses or descriptions of their personal traits. I claim that the extensive presence of such character analyses in their texts marks the strong connection between morality and legitimacy for Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay. The more strongly one’s character could embody the national character in displaying self-sacrifice and selflessness in the narrative, the more powerful is the claim to legitimately represent the nation. Moralistic

discourses about character traits describe the contours of the loyalist understanding of rulership and political legitimacy that they espoused. In this chapter, I focus more on how the three authors depicted a brotherhood of patriotic leaders of the Independence War, because their writings on that issue have an intertextual nature. Despite differences, which I will address below, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay continuously refer to each other, and narrate similar stories and anecdotes, affirming each other's patriotism, self-sacrifice and humility, and thereby producing a shared moralizing discourse that affirms the importance of these traits and dispositions.

I argue that these moralistic discourses on the national character (*milli karakter* and *seciye*) generate a moral authority that ultimately questions the legitimacy of the political establishment that excluded Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay from Early Republican Turkish politics. Through such claims to embody the national character of the Turkish nation and represent its moral values, the authors could portray themselves as legitimate leaders of the Independence War and guardians of the Turkish revolution—thereby undermining the political elites that targeted them and their party. More than anything else, their autobiographical writings provide extensive descriptions of the moral qualities of both the authors and their political rivals. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay frequently project the moral traits they consider to be signs of this character onto each other, creating an “us” as moral servants of the nation who displayed unconditional sacrifice, humility and selflessness. This “us” stands in stark contrast to their political rivals in the texts—i.e. the newly emerging clique of politicians and bureaucrats in Ankara (*etraf*). The authors mourn how the new Republic clings to other

justifications of political authority, allowing immoral, undeserving and corrupt individuals to gain ranks in the state apparatus and “surround” Mustafa Kemal. These *et-raf* will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

In this chapter, I will offer an analysis of how Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay seek political legitimacy by asking who embodied the moral character of the Turkish nation, and who did not. As I discussed in the previous chapter, *Nutuk* ascribes a singular and unchallengeable optics of legitimacy to Mustafa Kemal, who is posed as the only one who could properly see history in its depth and give the most reliable account of events, both by understanding current events at the time, and by recounting history later on. This singular capacity that is attributed to Mustafa Kemal’s insight underlies *Nutuk*’s legitimacy to interpret and speak about history. I will show that Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s moralistic accounts of the Independence War diffuse this authority, and relocate the legitimacy to remember history and represent the nation, towards a closely related network of military and political actors that led the Independence War.

In my narrative analysis, methodologically I will focus on two major aspects of the memoirs in order to pursue the above-stated themes: i) their literary form: the specific textual strategies of narrative organization and emplotment used to present history; and ii) the personal and political content of the historical material: the detailed accounts of the maturation and cultivation of characters, events, crises, transformations, etc. that are covered through this form. I ask whether and how Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay manage to cultivate a moral authority through their engagement with autobiographical writing.

Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay refrain from directly responding to the incriminatory accusations *Nutuk* makes against them. Their memoirs are not mainly concerned with providing an apology or defense. With the exception of some of Karabekir's *İstiklal Harbimizin Esasları* (Karabekir 1951), they are not written in a confrontational tone. Yet, I suggest that these apparently banal recollections of sacrifice and heroism potentially subvert official historical accounts by introducing critical portraits of moral dispositions and character traits, as well as counterintuitive images, of both the authors and others—particularly Mustafa Kemal and İnönü. The authors develop specific narrative styles that integrate laudatory evaluative comments about how characters react to “complicating actions” in “complicated situations” (Labov 1982), and quick evaluative comments about how characters are oriented or positioned with respect to time, space and other actors, subsequently altering the existing images of the actors involved. (ibid). In drawing examples from the texts, I will illustrate these narrative styles.

5. 2. Sacrifice and Devotion: Preparing for the Independence War

In Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's writings, the maturation of the author's self throughout the life-narrative is co-constituted with the rising of the new independent nation. Claiming to embody the national character becomes possible through an intertextual co-narration of the birth of a nation and the *Bildung* of a self-sacrificial hero collaborating with similar-minded leaders of the time to save that nation. This dual textual movement situates the authors within a life-story of heroism that includes stories of going through the insurmountable tasks of leading the National Struggle. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay continuously affirm the heroism of all their comrades as

much as themselves. This stands in stark contrast with *Nutuk*, where Mustafa Kemal consistently claimed that the Independence War would have been at risk if he had not always intervened at the right moment thanks to his exceptional foresight into existing situations. In contrast to the framework of the national character in *Nutuk* that is represented with single-handed exceptional authority, the autobiographies of the PRP leaders define the national character as brotherhood and comradeship of the highest caliber applied to the duty of waging an unsurmountable fight to liberate the nation.

The narratives of brotherhood and comradeship need to be understood within the context of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, which these authors perceive as a historic moment that calls them into duty. This disintegration makes saving the fatherland a duty for most of the narrators who were high-ranking officials at that time.

World War I and the Independence War are described in the texts through images of a nation in terror, waiting to be saved from the chaos of the late Ottoman Empire. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay articulate a scene of cohabiting an unusual stage in the history of the nation. It is this temporality of inhabiting a momentous time and position in history, and of collaborating during the birth of an independent nation, that all their memoirs consistently highlight as what makes the authors' lives distinct, and their written accounts important sources of historical truth.

The atmosphere of war, oppression and chaos is naturally a recurrent theme in the everyday notes and diaries of the authors. In various stories set between 1895 and 1918, the despotism of Sultan Abdulhamid's regime, the incompetent government of Damad Ferid Pasha, or the destitution they observe within the larger population highlight the authors as self-sacrificial subjects who target these conditions as problems to be solved, and who prioritize working for the fatherland over anything else. Frequent

depictions of the Ottoman state as decrepit, and of most of its governors as corrupt, or at best ignorant, are critical to the authors' presentation of themselves as filling a vacuum of agency that calls for the virtuous and honorable leaders.

They commonly write that thinking of alternative solutions to save the country (*memleket*), or the motherland (*vatan*), was the primary activity of their everyday lives starting from the very early years of their adolescence in military schools. Cebesoy for instance writes about many informal youth meetings he joined together with Mustafa Kemal during their attendance at the War Academy and afterwards, where they discussed "country affairs" (*memleket meseleleri*). The below quote from 1905, when Mustafa Kemal was frequently visiting Cebesoy's house in Kuzguncuk, Istanbul, is an example of such gatherings. The author conveys that what mainly concerned these figures at a very young age was the political issues:

Mustafa Kemal and a few of his friends who were waiting for reassignment had rented a room at Sirkeci. We were occasionally gathering in this room, discussing major issues of the country. The most fundamental one was the issue of [political] regime. It was inevitable for the salvation of the country to establish a constitutional regime... (Cebesoy 1997:92).⁵²

Despite stylistic differences, all three authors frame their lives as contemplating the desperate state of the country and exchanging solutions and devising strategies together. The engagement with the state of the country is almost never a solitary or individual activity. Unlike Mustafa Kemal, they describe saving the nation as a matter of

⁵² "Mustafa Kemal ve tayinlerini bekleyen birkaç arkadaşı Sirkeci'de bir pansiyon kiraladılar. Ara sıra bu pansiyonda toplanıyor, memleket meseleleri üzerinde konuşuyorduk. Başlıca konumuz, rejim meselesi idi. Memleketin kurtuluşu için meşruti bir idare kurulması şarttı..."

a collaboration performed by like-minded elite figures, who visit each other to exchange information and perspectives on critical issues such as what is going on in the Palace in Istanbul, among circles of government or army officials and across the larger political terrain of the crumbling Empire. The authors do not merely document their own individual roles in (or responses to) the vocational call of the “duty to save the country,” but frequently emphasize the participation of others who shared similar sentiments. By recognizing the contribution of other political actors who share patriotic sentiments, the authors portray a political landscape where many similar-minded people like them in both Istanbul and Anatolia were actively crafting solutions for the post-World War I chaos.

Throughout his *Siyasi Hatıralarım*, Orbay details meetings with high-ranking political and military actors with whom he discussed the growing “disorder” (*asayışsizlik*) and “unrest” (*huzursuzluk*). For instance, towards the end of the First World War, in a subsection titled “Ne durumda idik?” (“What was our situation?”) that describes the end of 1917, Orbay reviews the economic, political and social situation in the Empire at length, and names several Ottoman bureaucrats who were deliberating on how to respond to the financial and economic strains of the time (Orbay 2003: 91-3). By the beginning of 1919, one reads that the authors have started to think that the Ottoman bureaucracy is becoming less competent to handle the decrepit situation of the country, and that Istanbul is not the best place to design working schemes for the benefit of the nation.

The immediate aftermath of the Armistice of Mudros on October 30, 1918 saw an increase in those informal communication networks, particularly in Istanbul, as both *Nutuk* and all the memoirs by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay concur. Cebesoy

acknowledges different actors when he discusses the vibrant political atmosphere of Istanbul at the end of 1918:

It is an undeniable fact that we were not the only ones who could see the catastrophic situation the country was suffering, who were working for its salvations, looking for solutions. In truth, the Independence Struggle, which marks, and will continue to mark, a significant point in the world of history, was not a product of individuals, but of the grand Turkish nation. We were simply humble servants (Cebesoy 2000: 58).⁵³

The existence of other patriotic people who desperately look for solutions to the bleak state of the country is a truth to be disclosed, according to Cebesoy. His stress on this as “truth” reveals a desire to destabilize the one-man narrative of *Nutuk*. He identifies the leading military and political figures of the Independence War as “servants” (*hadim*) of the Turkish nation, which are the real heroes behind the Independence struggle.

Karabekir’s diaries are similarly full of references to his meetings with other leading army officers in Istanbul, where they continuously met to exchange ideas about the deteriorating situation of the Empire, government-cabinet changes, CUP leaders and their policies. His poignant references to pre-World War I pro-CUP officers across Anatolia, and to high ranking officers in Istanbul close to the Sultan (particularly Mustafa Kemal) reveal a network of agitated young army officers and bureaucrats who frequently visit each other and debate about possible solutions. Karabekir mentions many visits to the leading figures of the government and highest-ranking pashas

⁵³ “Şurası bir hakikattir ki memleketin düştüğü felaketi gören, onu kurtarmak için çırpınan, çareler arayan elbette ki yalnız bizler değildik. Esasen tarih aleminde büyük bir yer tutan ve tutacak olan İstiklal mücadelesi şahısların değil büyük ve asil Türk milletinin eseridir. Bizler onun sadece naçiz birer hadimiydik.”

of the time. He writes that they were all excited by his visits, courage and idealism, especially his insistence on being appointed to Anatolia to start organizing the remaining armies:

1 December 1918 – In the afternoon, I visited Ahmet İzzet Pasha, the former cabinet leader. He [suddenly] became hopeful, and cried, after my speech. I asked my reassignment to the East from him too. Today I also visited İzzet Pasha. Along with the former Chief of Staff. Rauf Bey also came. I said, haven't you seen yet that the future of the country is being ruined, and that we can only save this [situation] from the East. He had tears in his eyes (Karabekir 2009a: 566).⁵⁴

The Istanbul cabinet, at the time, arguably supported Karabekir, since they all despaired of finding an effective solution to the travails the Empire was going through. In this bleak picture, Karabekir depicts himself as a courageous and visionary actor who undertakes a struggle against the occupying forces on the Eastern front, and one reads that his courage moves others emotionally as well. He clearly identifies his actions as motivated solely by the independence of the nation under tough circumstances. Karabekir's account of devising strategies in Eastern Anatolia to lead the Independence Struggle outside of Istanbul as early as 1918 creates a disruptive effect on *Nutuk's* portrayal of Mustafa Kemal as the one and only actor with the courage to go to Anatolia and mobilize a resistance there. Even though at no place does Karabekir explicitly state that Mustafa Kemal lies in *Nutuk*, his account presents a narrative and set of information that clearly contradicts the major presentation of history in *Nutuk*.

⁵⁴ ‘1 Aralık 1918 – Öğleden sonra sabık sadrazam Ahmet İzzet Paşa'yı ziyaret ettim. Meyüs idi. Beyanatımdan ümitvar oldu ağladı. Şark'a iademi buna da rica ettim. Bugün İzzet Paşa'yı da ziyaret ettim. Eski Erkan-ı Harbiye Saffet'le beraber. Rauf Bey de geldi. Millet in istiklalinin mahvolduğunu ve bunu şarktan kurtarabileceğini takdir etmediniz mi dedim. Gözleri yaşardı. Seni getirmekle vatana ihanet ettim dedi.’”

This quote and the other quotes I will cite below are unsettling for the contemporary reader, given that one of the central ideas in *Nutuk* is Mustafa Kemal's pioneering role in the Independence War. *Nutuk* starts the narrative of the Independence War with Mustafa Kemal leaving Istanbul to arrive at Samsun, where the reader is presented with a free-spirited courageous hero who was the first to think of leading an insurgency in Anatolia against the occupying forces. However, Karabekir imagines *himself* as the only commander at the service of a possible national government that is to be formed. His story, although it says nothing explicitly negative about Mustafa Kemal, questions Kemal's claims to lead the Independence War. *Nutuk* portrays the three authors as skeptical and indeterminate in undertaking such action. In contrast, Karabekir represents himself as the most insightful analyzer of the situation, and as thoughtful of his friends, always considerate of the rights and well-being of others.

Karabekir's dialogue with Ahmet Izzet Paşa also involves patriotic figures from a patriotic Ottoman rulership that was depicted as completely corrupt in *Nutuk*. In all of the memoirs, one reads that after the First World War, some of the well-intentioned Ottoman governors were in contact with diverse political and military figures of the time. When Ahmet Izzet Paşa wanted to form a government in October 1918, promising young nationalist officers, including Mustafa Kemal, İnönü, Karabekir, Orbay, Cebesoy, Okyar and many other later fellow leaders of the Independence War, were in his wish-list (Cebesoy 2000: 24–8, 44–6). Orbay became a minister in this government (which lasted only 25 days) and signed the Armistice of Mudros on behalf of the Ottoman Empire. In March 1919, Ahmet Izzet Paşa wanted to form a second government, pressured by the progressive and pro-resistance figures, especially Mustafa Kemal, who allegedly wanted to become the Minister of Defense (Karabekir: 2009a).

Karabekir states that given these circumstances, he could get a post in Istanbul too, but he instead preferred to be given a post in Erzurum, thinking that Istanbul was not the most suitable venue to resist the threat of invasion.

Attention to how preparations for the Independence War were narrated differently by the authors reveals how the operation of a common language of moralizing politics can take diverse shapes. I will cite several quotations from Karabekir to illustrate the co-existence of a common language of laborious sacrificial preparation and the articulation of a clear complaint regarding the other, less devoted political figures, including Mustafa Kemal. In comparison to Cebesoy and Orbay, Karabekir's narrative more closely resembles that of *Nutuk*, where Mustafa Kemal distinguishes himself from the rest of the officers, who were either too cowardly or too ignorant to see what needed to be done. Unlike Cebesoy and Orbay, Karabekir is not simply trying to pluralize the political space for his fellow patriotic leaders who were collaborating before the Independence Struggle. Instead, he radically questions others' patriotism, especially by depicting those figures of the later RPP establishment as cowardly, power-seeking and lacking enthusiasm to fight for the nation. Karabekir tries to portray a scene where he was almost completely alone in calling everyone to move to Anatolia, despite the apparent willingness of many of his friends to undertake any initiative:

1 January 1919 Wednesday – Didn't leave the house. İsmet visited. [...] Ideas that emerged until now: İzzet Pasha – hesitant. Regretting that he withdrew from the cabinet. Says, maybe it wouldn't have been that bad. Cries when pushed. Mustafa Kemal Pasha – convinced that he can work [productively for the cause] by joining the cabinet through the Ministry of Defense. [He is] the special aide of the Sultan, in contact with him every Friday. Rauf Bey – thinks that, if push comes to shove, one must be [like the] Bolsheviks, otherwise neither the Greeks, nor the Armenians could be kept (I made him change [these ideas]). Fevzi and Cevat Pashas – whatever cabinet comes, they think they should continue on their posts. İsmet – says, let's leave our military posts and become villagers. Me – the task at hand will only be fulfilled with gun. Even if

I remain alone in this, I will never be daunted. A national government should be set up in Anatolia. I could do that if I went to the East (Karabekir 2009a: 573).⁵⁵

One reads that Karabekir feels rather disappointed and sad in his meetings with fellow officers, higher ranking pashas, ministers and promising military leaders, particularly Mustafa Kemal and İnönü, during the few months he was in Istanbul before leaving for Erzurum. In his account, Mustafa Kemal, İnönü and many others are portrayed as unwilling to leave Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal is depicted as a figure who was close to the Sultan and waiting for his promotion within the imperial hierarchy. At times, even his observations about his close friends such as Orbay and Fevzi Pasha reveal that they were not thinking of or supporting any form of struggle against the growing British threats, and instead were willing to accept the status quo. In that aspect, Karabekir's narrative significantly diverts from that of Orbay and Cebesoy, who both repeatedly underscore the existence of multiple patriotic actors in 1918 and 1919 including Mustafa Kemal. Compared with Cebesoy and Orbay's insistence on recognizing Mustafa Kemal and Karabekir as two leading patriotic figures who launched the Independence War, Karabekir's narrative is more similar to the "one man" narrative in *Nutuk*. Like Mustafa Kemal's depiction of himself as the only soldier who considered leaving Istanbul and fighting from Anatolia, Karabekir claims that it was actually only he who had this idea.

⁵⁵ "1 Ocak 1919 Çarşamba – Evden çıkmadım. İsmet geldi. [...] Şimdiye kadar tebellür eden fikirler: İzzet Paşa - Müteredit. Hükümetten çekildiğine nadim. Belki bu kadar fenalık olmazdı diyor. Sıkıştınca ağlıyor. Mustafa Kemal Paşa- Harbiye Nezaretine geçmek suretiyle teşekkül edecek kabine iş göreceğine kani. Hususi yaver-i Padişahi, her Cuma selamlığında temasta. Rauf Bey - Sıkıya gelince Bolşevik olmalı, ne Rum kalır ne Ermeni zannediyor (Tashi-i fikir ettirdim). Fevzi ve Cevat Paşalar- Hangi kabine gelirse vazifelerine devam fikrinde. İsmet- Askerlikten çıkalım, köylü olalım diyor. Ben- Mesele silahla hallolacak. Tek bile kalsam yılmayacağım. Anadolu'da bir milli hükümet kurmalı. Şarka gidersem bunu yaparım."

Similar to Mustafa Kemal, Karabekir presents himself as the only one aware of the existing conditions, and desperately trying to convince others of the futility of engaging with Istanbul politics. He finds others reluctant to leave Istanbul and move to Anatolia as late as March 1919, as they lacked his courage, idealism, and patriotism:

9 March 1919 Sunday – Husrev Bey and Kemal Bey visited me. Consulted my take on how bad the situation is. I told that nothing could be done [by remaining] in Istanbul, that we should make an incursion to Anatolia (Karabekir 2009a: 582).⁵⁶

23 March 1919 Sunday – Ahmet Rıza bey's cabinet [is set up], in which Mustafa Kemal Pasha could accept the position of Minister of Defense, and there is a position even for İsmet. They saw it fit that I [should get] Ministry of Finance. İsmet told that. They had not informed me about the meeting. Topçu Tahir Bey, who was at the meeting, informed me. I asked [about this] during my visit to İsmet. [He said] at first, they also informed me last minute. The issue is the issue of [setting up a] cabinet. If you accept Ministry of Finance, we will have succeeded [in setting up the cabinet]! I was surprised. There isn't a proper task to be fulfilled by setting up a cabinet. I said, do you know the number of those who are dying out of hunger. In response, he said, we call it hunger, but I haven't seen any. I said, when you knock the door of any poor family, they are hungry, just take a stroll towards Edirnekapi and you will see (Karabekir 2009a: 584).⁵⁷

The second quote is a good example of how Karabekir denigrates those, including İnönü and Mustafa Kemal, who were engaged in making a cabinet at the time the rest of the nation was troubled by poverty and hunger. The officers in Istanbul are portrayed as blind and ignorant to the harsh conditions of the people, and concerned

⁵⁶ “9 Mart 1919 Pazar – Hüsrev ve Kemal Beyler ziyaretime geldiler. Ahvalin fenalığına karşı fikrimi sordular. İstanbul'dan bir şey yapılamayacağını, Anadolu'ya atılmaklığımızı söyledim.

⁵⁷ “23 Mart 1919 Pazar – Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın Ayan Reisi Ahmet Rıza Bey kabinesinde Harbiye Nazırlığını kabul edecek veçhile bir kabine, İsmet'e bile vazife var. Bana işe nazırlığını münasip görmüşler. Bunu İsmet söyledi. İçtimadan bana haber vermemişlerdi. İçtimada bulunan Topçu Tahir Bey haber verdi. İsmet'e ziyaretimde kendisine sordum. Evvelce bana da ani haber verdiler. Mesele kabine meselesidir. Sen işe nazırlığını kabul edersen muvaffak oluruz dedi! Bu fikre hayret ettim. Kabine yapmakla görülecek bir iş yoktur. Hususiyetle bana işe nazırlığını nasıl münasip gördünüz. Açlıktan ölenlerin miktarını biliyor musun dedim. Cevaben, açlık diyoruz ama ben aç görmedim dedi. Fakir ailelerden kimin kapısını çalsan açtır, Edirnekapi'ya doğru bir dolaş bunu görürsün dedim.”

mainly with their own self-interest and promotion. It is hard to overlook the resentful tone in Karabekir's complaint that Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü preferred to partake in a newly formed cabinet, since they believed a political initiative could be enacted through the cabinet in Istanbul. Karabekir portrays himself as shocked with that choice, and conveys that in his visit to İnönü he informed him of the destitute condition of the people in the country, but İnönü refused to believe him. In such comparisons of different choices and attitudes regarding how competing figures were preparing for the Struggle, moralistic judgments on character qualities and emotions become essential to claims made over patriotism.

The fact that there were many others within the Turkish nation who were concerned with saving that nation expands the number of respectable figures to whom "we" as readers should feel indebted following the War. If the Turkish nation was not embodied in one figure who led the struggle with his foresight from beginning to end, then the implication is that there was not only one hero who could tell us "our" past, but also many others whose experiences need to be taken into account if one wants to uncover the history. When the retrospectively recollected sacrifices and struggles of the authors are weaved alongside other figures, the imagination of the nation is expanded, and new "hero" figures could potentially emerge. Recognition of new "heroes" and their alternative accounts could pluralize the legitimate political landscape and contest the past of the nation, what really happened, and who the moral agents really were. Yet, stories of pluralization did not necessarily welcome everyone's efforts for the Struggle, and evaluated the devotedness and courage of those who publicly became heroes of the nation. As could be seen based on Karabekir's questioning of RPP leaders' motives during 1918 and 1919, this perspective and discourse makes it possible to

question Mustafa Kemal and İnönü's commitment to the nation. I argue that, in both strategies of pluralization that recognize other actors' efforts, and those of exclusion that dismiss other actors' efforts, *Nutuk's* account and the official history based on that account become questionable.

5. 3. Affectionate Narratives of Brotherhood and Comradeship

Narratives of brotherhood and comradeship do not only rest on stories of devout soldiers collaborating to save the nation. They are centered on affectionate displays of friendship, care and support during difficult times. While Cebesoy frequently reiterates his decades-old youth experiences with Mustafa Kemal in military school as constituting inalienable bonds of brotherhood and comradeship and a sense of shared destiny, Orbay provides sincerely emotional accounts of his excitement to share the destiny of Mustafa Kemal and others in early 1919 — i.e. when Mustafa Kemal was still under the command of the Istanbul government.

The detailed accounts of emotional exchanges between Cebesoy and Mustafa Kemal when they were young military students reinstate the author as a legitimate figure who shared the fate of saving the nation with Mustafa Kemal (52-55, 63). Cebesoy extensively refers to various encounters where Mustafa Kemal recognizes this relationship with jovial affection:

I didn't have a house in Ankara. Since Ankara lacked any proper and comfortable hotel at the time [1920], I didn't want to settle into [bad] rooms. As I was speaking to a [parliamentary] deputy friend of mine, Mustafa Kemal Pasha ran to my help. Finding me in the parliament building, asked if I would like to be his guest at Çankaya. I said, I would be afraid that I could be bothering him [if

I stayed there], and I apologized. He said, Far from it! You are my school-friend. How many times had I stayed at your house in Kuzguncuk, in Istanbul? We will just commemorate all our good and bitter memories. That's how I became the guest of Gazi Pasha. I stayed there until the days when the Great Offensive [of the Independence War] started (Cebesoy 2007: 52).⁵⁸

Some evenings, when we could save ourselves from the city, feeling overwhelmed by the intensely abstemious life-style of Ankara, Pasha and I would return to Çankaya together and get aperitifs. We almost had no other occasion to enjoy ourselves. We would tell [each other] the stories of our youth days in Istanbul and Salonika, and commemorate those days of fun, joy and hope. Rest in peace, Mustafa Kemal's personal friendship was quite joyful (Cebesoy 2007: 53).⁵⁹

Even though these passages are written from the perspective of a "present" when Mustafa Kemal had already passed away, Cebesoy pictures the relationship between them as extremely warm and caring. When Cebesoy hesitates to bother Mustafa Kemal, Mustafa Kemal reminds Cebesoy of how he used to host him in Istanbul during their school days. Here, Mustafa Kemal is portrayed as a very thoughtful and warm friend who wants to reciprocate with gratitude a past benevolence he had received. He is also described as good company in a boring place like Ankara at that time. Given the huge political cleavages and inimical relationship that the two figures started to have a few years later, I suggest that the good times being spent function as a reminder of past brotherhood and comradeship in which both partners suffered together

⁵⁸ "Ankara'da evim yoktu. O zamanki [1920] Ankara'nın muntazam ve rahat bir oteli de bulunmadığından, pansiyon köşelerinde kalmak istemiyordum. Bir karar vermek üzere mebus arkadaşlarla konuşurken, imdadıma Mustafa Kemal Paşa yetişti. Meclis binasında beni bularak, Çankaya'da kendisine misafir olup olamayacağını sordu. Rahatsız etmem ihtimalinden korktuğumu söyledim, özür diledim. - Ne münasebet, dedi. Siz benim mektep arkadaşısınız. İstanbul'da Kuzguncuk'taki evinizde az mı misafir kaldım? Acı ve tatlı günlerimizin geçtiği eski hatıraları beraberce ya da vesile buluruz. Bu suretle Çankaya'da Gazi Paşa'ya misafir oldum. Büyük taarruzun başlayacağı günlere kadar orada kaldım."

⁵⁹ "Ankara'nın bir hayli perhizkar olan hayatından bunalmış bir halde, şehirden kurtulduğumuz akşamlar, Çankaya'ya, Paşa ile beraberce döner aperatif alırdık. Bundan başka eğlenemiz hemen hemen yok gibi idi. İstanbul'da ve Selanik'te geçen gençlik günlerimizin hatıralarını anlatır, bizim için zevk, neş'e ve ümitle dolu olan o günleri hasretle yâd ederdik. Nur içinde yatsın, Mustafa Kemal'in hususi arkadaşlığıma doyum olmazdı."

and tremendously supported each other at difficult times. Cebesoy's praise for Mustafa Kemal could be interpreted both as an affirmation of loyalty despite the discords that happened afterwards, as well as making claims to having partaken in past sacrifice despite the official account ignoring his role.

Orbay similarly lauds the genuineness of the sacrificial comradeship that brought him and Mustafa Kemal together like brothers. The detailed account of his experiences with Mustafa Kemal in the first year of the National Struggle, from late 1918 to early 1920, portrays a strong and intimate friendship. Mustafa Kemal addressed Orbay quite affectionately by his first name, and the two exchanged their most personal feelings, dreams and emotional distress (298-308, 316, 320, 324). Orbay provides details about how he and Mustafa Kemal worked together day and night—along with devoted others like Cebesoy, Karabekir, Hüsrev Paşa (Gerede), and Ferit Bele—to establish committees, congresses and eventually parliamentary bodies of delegates from across Anatolia. Orbay's memoirs are full of descriptions of emotional scenes where Mustafa Kemal and Orbay hug each other with tears of joy, or grief, particularly before Mustafa Kemal moves to Samsun from Istanbul, after the Erzurum Congress (1919-20). Even in later periods of political opposition, Orbay visits Mustafa Kemal after Kemal had a minor heart attack, immediately following the declaration of the Republic (November 1923).

Orbay provides extensive laudatory remarks that Mustafa Kemal made about Orbay's character and assistance throughout a decade of brotherhood and comradeship. One edition of his memoirs, for instance, opens with one of the iconic photographs of Mustafa Kemal from 1920, which Mustafa Kemal gave to Orbay upon Orbay's return

from exile to Ankara in November 1921. The photo contains a hand-written note that Orbay is proud to display and occasionally mention: “My honorable brother and my true supporter in [the task of] saving Turkey.”

Another key feature of sacrificial brotherhood and comradeship in Orbay’s account is his role as a mediator. Orbay’s memoir consistently presents him as a reconciliatory figure between Mustafa Kemal and others. One example among many others is during the Mudanya conference, where he acts as a mediator between Mustafa Kemal and Refet Bele:

It became clear that I was right in reconciling Mustafa Kemal Pasha with Refet Pasha, who had to stay away from active duty for a long while due to some disagreements, and hence could not participate in the last military offensive that resulted in the great victory, when [Refet Pasha proved himself] with his behavior, as he arrived at Istanbul in order to take back the [military] control of Thrace (Orbay 2000 102).⁶⁰

Orbay narrates that certain disputes with Mustafa Kemal led Refet Pasha, a leading commander of the Independence War, to leave his military duty as early as 1923. Orbay works to fix the problems between the two and convinces Mustafa Kemal to appoint Refet Bele to important tasks. Writing years later, Orbay comments in the quote that his bridging service between the two was a very prudent idea, and that Bele served as an effective soldier with distinguished successes. Orbay consistently emphasizes that such efforts to enhance interpersonal relations were key to the winning of

⁶⁰ “Bazı anlaşmazlıklar sebebiyle epeydir faal vazifeden uzakta kalmış ve bu yüzden büyük zaferle neticelenen son askeri harekate da iştirak edememiş olan Refet Paşa’nın Mustafa Kemal Paşa ile aralarını bulup, bu vazifeye tayinini delalette ne kadar isabet ettiğim, kendisinin Trakya’yı teslim almak üzere daha İstanbul’a ayak bastığı günkü davranışı ile tahakkuk etti.”

the war, and hence to the making of a new nation. He claims that his acts of mediation and reconciliation ultimately were an important service in the interests of the nation.

Orbay's memoirs are full of stories that communicate reconciliatory efforts between him and other figures who had problems with Mustafa Kemal at that time. He frequently remarks that many members of the first parliament, some of whom were his close friends, had strong disagreements with Mustafa Kemal. The below quote from the time he is elected as vice president in February 1922 illustrates how he approaches these quarrels, and how he asserts himself as a conciliatory figure:

After a while, I was elected to the post of the Secondary Head of Parliament. At the time, the opposition in the parliament was taking every opportunity to increase their criticisms and causing the rift between them and Mustafa Kemal to become wider. In the meantime, Kazım Karabekir Pasha was also making brief declarations that he didn't approve some of the decisions taken, or was being planned to be taken. I would find myself necessitated to work constantly in order to maintain agreement among the sides (Orbay 2000: 113).⁶¹

Orbay continues by naming the opponents, and writes that they were mainly frustrated with Mustafa Kemal becoming the head of the parliament, the government, and the army at the same time (74). He clearly argues that, at that time, the war conditions required such an exceptional situation, and details at length how much effort he put into convincing the opponents of the legitimacy of Mustafa Kemal acquiring exceptional power.

⁶¹ "Bir müddet sonra, Meclis İkinci Reisliğine seçildim. O sırada Meclisteki muhalefet de, her fırsattan istifade ile hükümeti tenkit konusundaki şiddetini arttırarak Mustafa Kemal Paşa ile aralarındaki anlaşmazlıkların genişlemesine yol açıyorlardı. Bu arada Kazım Karabekir Paşa da, Ankara'da alınan veya alınması tasavvur edilen bazı kararları tasvip etmediğini belirten is'arlarda bulunuyorlardı. Ben bu anlaşmazlıkları gidermek için, taraflar arasında uzlaşmayı sağlamak maksadıyla durmaksızın çalışmak zorunda kalıyordum."

In his accounts of both the Independence War and parliamentary politics, Orbay presents himself as a true patriot who transcends all the cliques and ideological camps, thereby reversing the image of extremism previously directed at him. For instance, in describing the İnönü government and figures like Yunus Nadi and Recep Peker as extremist, Orbay presents himself as a moderate, wise figure who mediates between the conflicting members of the parliament and the government. Orbay frequently expresses his sadness because of the intense debates and quarrels in the parliament. We read long accounts of the debates in the parliament where he patiently requested these figures to act in dignity, be understanding towards each other and avoid insulting or defamatory conversations.

Karabekir, the only vocal critic of Mustafa Kemal among the three, nevertheless participates in the intertextual moral politics of brotherhood, and blends his critique with affectionate portrayals of his brotherhood with Mustafa Kemal. Although Karabekir is the most bitter in his memoirs about his excommunication from political leadership, he nevertheless expresses affection towards Mustafa Kemal in many moments. The below quote from Karabekir's poignant *İstiklal Harbimizin Esaslari* illustrates well how the explicit expressions of affectionate love and support for Mustafa Kemal are intertwined with disturbing insinuations of how Mustafa Kemal was not patriotic enough and lacked foresight and wisdom.

April 11, 1919—I visited and thanked Izzet pasha, Cevat pasha, and Şevket Turgut pasha for trying to have me promoted to the Eastern front based on my requests. I also visited Mustafa Kemal pasha. He was residing at Şişli and was sick. I explained the situation with the following and shared my decisions with him:

“I am moving to lead the Eastern army, which has been renamed army corps. [...] It is not possible to prevent the urgency of our situation from Istanbul. Nothing can be done here except executing the will of the Allied Powers. Yet

in the East, it is possible to start a struggle to prepare the grounds for national government and to save our future and independence by preserving the power of the army. I am not convinced that the Allied powers will consider military occupation of Anatolia. [...] If we have to consider that possibility, despite my conviction otherwise, it still should not prevent us from waging an Independence War. This duty fall onto our shoulders as commanders, rather than the nation. [...] First of all, I am thinking of cultivating a National force against any kind of possible threat by uniting the Eastern forces in Erzurum. In other words, the principle of National Turkish Government. If our Independence won't be under threat and only Eastern regions will end up being threatened, this national government will be put into effect immediately and I, as an army commander under the national government, will undertake the defense of the East. If, as I presume, the same threat will be present for all of the motherland, the emerging government will be a new Turkish nation state and we will together undertake duty of defending the whole motherland. My request from your excellency is that you also move to Anatolia as soon as possible. All the honorable representatives of official posts [in the service of the nation] is of the view that young commanders should move to Anatolia. With that in mind, it is possible that you come to Anatolia with a specific duty or mission. If that is not possible, you could also come privately. Let us all first gather in Erzurum and establish the basics of the National Government. I will make all the preparations in Trabzon and Erzurum until you arrive.”

M. Kemal Pasha — Yes, that's also an idea.

Me — Your excellency, this is not an idea, it is a decision. I will start my undertaking and will honorably do my best for its completion. [...] Please do not stay in Istanbul extensively, and, by creating an influence on other commanders, let us all move to Anatolia and fortify our forces there. As so many desperate nations are gaining their independence, let us save the Turkish nation which has a centuries-long incredible history.

M. Kemal Pasha — The situation corroborates your position. I will try to come after I am better.

Me — Your excellency, then we have united under the oath of either independence or death, in order to save and fulfill our personal and national honor, by struggling even if all the mountain tops turn into graveyards, have we not?

Having said this we kissed goodbye. My final visit was meeting and having a conversation with Ismet bey. I requested from him that, in case he wouldn't be able to undertake a post in the East, he should avoid being involved in any Political engagement in Istanbul and should wait for the final situation in the East and move to Anatolia, based on the situation. And we hugged like two brothers as we separated and I said goodbye. At April 12, 1919, I quietly got on

the ferry from Istanbul, avoiding the presence of any Friends. (Karabekir 1951: 35-7).⁶²

The entries cited above represent well how Karabekir, both in his memoirs and in *The Fundamentals of Our Independence War*, relies on extremely affectionate descriptions of how he was deeply invested in the well-being of his dear comrades, directing them towards the most sensible and moral path of strategic/military action. Not only does Karabekir express his devout determination to lead a war against the occupying forces, but he also asserts his leadership skills to passionately try to motivate other

⁶² “11 Nisan 1919 — İzzet paşa, Cevat paşa, Şevket Turgut pasalar gibi kendilerine yaptığım ricalarımı is’af ile beni Şark’a tayine çalışan zatlara arzı teşekkür ve veda ettim. Bugün Mustafa Kemal Paşa Hazretlerini de ziyaret ettim. Kendileri Şişli’de oturuyorlar ve hasta yatıyorlardı. Vaziyeti şöyle izah ile kararımı söyledim:

“Paşa hazretleri, ben Şark’taki ismi kolorduya tahvil olunan ordunun başına geçiyorum. [...] Vaziyetimizin vahametini İstanbul’dan durdurmak imkânsızdır. Burada ancak itilafın arzularını tatbikten başka bir şey yapılamaz. Hâlbuki Şark’ta Milli bir hükümet esasını hazırlamak ve ordunun kuvvetini de muhafaza ederek vahim sulh şartları karşısında milli istiklalimizi kurtarmak için mücadeleye girişmek mümkündür. İtilaf devletlerinin Anadolu istilasına kalkışacaklarını ümit etmiyorum. [...] Ümidimin hilafına itilaf devletlerinin de ise karışmaları cihetine gelince: bu fikir bizi istiklal harbine girmekten menetmemelidir. Bu vazife milletten daha ziyade biz kumandanlara düşüyor. [...] Evvel Sark teşekküllerini Erzurum’da birleştirerek herhangi bir tehlikeye karşı bir milli taarruz hazırlamağı düşünüyorum. Yani bir Milli Türk Hükümeti esası. Eğer istiklalimize dokunulmaz, yalnız Sark vilayetleri tehlikeye düşerse, derhal Erzurum’da bu Milli Hükümet faaliyete baslar ve ben de Milli Hükümetin emrinde bir ordu kumandanı olarak Sarkın müdafaasını deruhte ederim. Eğer tahminim veçhile bu tehlike bütün vatan için görülürse çıkacak hükümet yeni bir Türk milli devleti olur ve bizler de bütün vatanın müdafa vazifesini deruhte ederiz. [...] Zat-i Samilerinden ricam da bir an evvel sizin de Anadolu’ya geçmeliğinizdir. Her makamın namusu siması, genç kumandanların Anadolu’ya atılmasına taraftardır. Bunun için derhal sizin de bir vazife ile gelmeniz mümkündür. Eğer mümkün olmazsa hususi bir tarzda da gelebilirsiniz. Evvela Erzurum’da toplanalım ve Milli Hükümet esasını kuralım. Ben Trabzon ve Erzurum’da siz gelinceye kadar bu esası hazırlarım.”

M. Kemal Paşa — Evet, bu da bir fikirdir.

Ben — Paşam fikir değil karardır. Ben ise başlayacağım ve ikmalî namus için uğraşacağım. [...] Paşam İstanbul’da çok kalmayınız ve buradaki diğer kumandanlar üzerinde de müessir olarak bir an evvel Anadolu’yu kuvvetlendirelim. Birçok batmış milletler istiklallerine kavuşurken asırlar doldurucu muazam tarihi olan Türk milletini kurtaralım.

M. Kemal Paşa — Vaziyet size hak verdiriyor. İyi olayım gelmeye çalışırım.

Ben — Paşam, o halde tek dağ başı mezar oluncaya kadar mücadele, şahsi ve milli namusumuzu ikmal için ya İstiklal ya ölüm! ahinde birleştik değil mi?

Dedim ve sarılıp öpüşerek veda ile ayrıldım. En son ziyaretim de İsmet beyle hasbihal oldu. Anadolu’da bir vazife almasını mümkün olamadığı takdirde İstanbul’da hiçbir siyasi cereyana karışmayarak şarktaki neticeye intizar etmesini ve hale göre Anadolu’ya atılmasını kendilerinden rica ettim ve iki kardeş gibi sarılarak veda’la ayrıldım. 12 Nisan 1919’da gayet sessizce ve hiçbir arkadaşımın teşyini istemeyerek İstanbul’dan vapura bindim.”

commanders of the empire to join him. In the beginning of the dialogue, after Karabekir details the grave situation of the country, he encourages Mustafa Kemal to immediately move to Anatolia, promising to make the necessary preparations prior to Mustafa Kemal's arrival. Karabekir adds in the conclusion of the passage that Mustafa Kemal and he hugged each other like two brothers. I suggest that, thanks to his performance of a patriotic, good-willed and devout brother, Karabekir could claim an exceptional moral authority for recognizing Mustafa Kemal's initial sacrifices, a recognition that was not available in *Nutuk*.

5. 4. Praising Other Leaders and Decentering Mustafa Kemal

Praising Mustafa Kemal's qualities and actions reminds the reader of the author's loyalty to the spirit of brotherhood and comradeship. Mustafa Kemal is frequently lauded, especially by Orbay and Cebesoy, for his leadership skills, passion and patriotism. Yet, these praises are often followed with evaluative comments on the other leading figures of the Independence War, particularly the three authors themselves. Orbay and Cebesoy spend considerable time praising each other, as well as Kazim Karabekir, especially in the scenes where Mustafa Kemal is also praised. I suggest that coupling praises to Mustafa Kemal with such praises to others, or oneself, has two effects. First, Mustafa Kemal is decentered from the unique position he assumed for himself in *Nutuk*. Second, the authors could claim political legitimacy and authority in the eyes of the nation. Extending their appreciation to other figures within an intertextual politics of recognition is extremely significant to understanding how the authors reckon with *Nutuk*'s account and present a narrative of brotherhood that demands legitimacy for all the conflicting actors.

I argue that the invocation of other actors alongside Mustafa Kemal creates an ambivalent space in which the reader is told that one's love for Mustafa Kemal is incomplete if he does not also appreciate "other" heroes who supported Mustafa Kemal. For instance, Cebesoy's memoir cites a meeting with Mustafa Kemal where Mustafa Kemal recognizes Karabekir as sharing similar patriotic sentiments, and agrees with Karabekir on the necessity of dealing with the political situation from outside of Istanbul.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha had said the following, after summarizing his meeting with Kazım Karabekir Pasha and [Karabekir] Pasha's opinions: He has a strong affinity to our opinions. Especially his point that it is impossible to prevent the gravity of the situation from Istanbul, and that not much can be done other than executing the demands and wishes of the victorious powers, is also our opinion. It is also a great achievement that he could have himself assigned to the 15th Army Corps in Erzurum. Because our Army Corps and other organizations in Erzurum could maintain their presence thanks to the permission they enjoy from both the Istanbul government and the occupying Entente Powers due to this or that reason. The fact that a dear friend like Kazım Karabekir, who is powerful and fully supportive of our cause, takes the lead in the East could be one of the most fundamental tenets of our cause [in the East] (Cebesoy 2000:61).⁶³

Cebesoy thus joins Karabekir in subverting *Nutuk*'s one-man narrative, given that in *Nutuk* Mustafa Kemal depicts himself as the only one who was willing to go outside of Istanbul to start an independently organized war in Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal's words, as conveyed by Cebesoy, show that Karabekir and Mustafa Kemal were in good terms at the beginning of 1919, before Mustafa Kemal landed in Samsun in May

⁶³ "Mustafa Kemal Paşa Kazım Karabekir Paşa ile İstanbul'da yapmış oldukları mülakatı ve Paşa'nın fikirlerini bu şekilde hulasa ettikten sonra şöyle demişti: - Bizim fikirlerimizle çok esaslı müşâbeheti vardır. Bilhassa vaziyetin vehametini İstanbul'dan durdurmanın imkansız olduğunu ve galiplerin arzularının tatbikinden başka bir şey yapılamıyacağı hakkındaki nokta-i nazarı tamamiyle bizim de fikrimizdir. Kendisini Erzurum'daki 15 inci kolorduya tayin ettirebilmesi de büyük bir muvaffakiyettir. Çünkü Şarktaki kolordumuz ve oradaki teşekküller gerek İstanbul hükümetinin ve gerekse İtilaf devletlerinin bazı sebepler dolayısıyla müsaadesinden istifade ederek mevcudiyetlerini muhafaza eyliyebilmiştir. Başına Kazım Karabekir gibi muktedir ve tamamiyle bizimle beraber olan bir arkadaşın geçmesi Şarkta davamızın en mühim mesnetlerinden biri olabilir."

1919. Mustafa Kemal's praise of Karabekir's strength and loyalty also recognizes the fact that Karabekir went to Anatolia before him.

Another example of recognition of other leaders is from a passage where Cebesoy writes at length about a visit he and Orbay, who was the Prime Minister at the time, paid to Mustafa Kemal in the aftermath of the signing of the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. Cebesoy was accompanying Orbay (upon Orbay's own request), in order to inform Mustafa Kemal that the treaty had been signed the previous day, although Orbay's real motivation was to submit his resignation from his post. Nevertheless, following a speech that affirms the long struggle they all went through during the Independence War, Orbay suddenly starts to applaud Mustafa Kemal and others intensely:

We owe the success we gained in this felicitous day to Karabekir, Ali Fuat [Cebesoy] and Refet Pashas, and you, being the first among all of them. This is your work. I consider myself the most fortunate person in the world for having worked among you as a comrade. Since when you all started working to save the country with [a spirit of] self-sacrifice and total renunciation in Amasya, I always carried within me the wish to kiss your hands, but I never could express my feelings. Now I will explain how I feel by kissing your hands. (Cebesoy 2007: 406).⁶⁴

Filled with disillusionment at Mustafa Kemal's clear preference for İnönü over Orbay during the Lausanne proceedings, Orbay nevertheless speaks with an excessively emotional and intimate tone and expresses overt appreciation for Mustafa Kemal's leadership. He praises Mustafa Kemal with reverence for his devoted involvement in the National Struggle. Orbay unexpectedly invokes the brotherhood and comradeship

⁶⁴ "Başta siz olmak üzere, bu mesut günün muvaffakiyetini Karabekir, Ali Fuat ve Refet Paşalara borçluyuz. Bu, sizin eserinizdir. Ben sizin aranızda bir arkadaşınız olarak çalışmakla kendimi dünyanın en bahtiyar insanı telakki ediyorum. Sizlerin çok samimi surette bir araya gelerek vatanın kurtuluşu için feragat ve fedakârlıkla çalışmağa başladığınız Amasya'dan beri içimden daima ellerinizi öpmek arzusu gelmiş, fakat bunu izhar edememişim. Şimdi bu hissiyatımı ellerinizi öpmek suretiyle açıklıyacağım."

of fellow leaders of the Independence War in these praises, claiming that the nation is indebted to all the cited leaders. Orbay's invocation of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Bele asks for recognition for everyone. Invoking these figures could disrupt the latter reverent praises to Mustafa Kemal, decentering Mustafa Kemal's central leadership position and one-man narrative. The reminder of past brotherhood and comradeship demands that those figures be able to partake in the honors of the success in Lausanne as much as Mustafa Kemal and (Orbay's political rival) İnönü.

Similarly, Orbay's reverential remarks about Mustafa Kemal in his own memoirs, such as in his retrospective descriptions of the beginning of the Independence Struggle in June 1919, right before the Erzurum Congress, provide a good example of a demand for recognition of the other leaders of the war:

It would be a great ingratitude to forget the share [of duties] Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat (Cebesoy) undertook in the cause of independence, who demonstrated a great patriotism, sacrifice and self-renunciation by unconditionally giving Mustafa Kemal Pasha their highest regard and by crediting him with their own [military] authority, despite pressures by the Sultan, the [Istanbul] government and enemy powers, when [Mustafa Kemal] was stripped of all his qualifications and authority, and reduced to a simple individual. (Orbay 2003: 324).⁶⁵

These quotes epitomize the ambivalent style of frequently expressed praises for Mustafa Kemal in all three of the memoirs. Orbay imagines himself as making a genuine confession in the presence of history when he acknowledges Mustafa Kemal's role in

⁶⁵ “Başından sonuna kadar, mücadelenin içinde bulunmuş bir insan olarak bütün samimiyetle tarih huzurunda itiraf ederim ki: O (Mustafa Kemal) olmasaydı, bu vatan ve bu millet, bu kurtuluşu, böylesine tam ve şan ve şerefle, kolay kolay idrak edemezdi. Bu gerçeği itiraf ederken, Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın, bü-tün sıfat ve yetkilerinden sıyrılıp bir millet ferdi haline geldiği zaman, “Önde-rimiz ancak O olabilir.” Diye O'nu padişaha, hükûmete ve düşmanların tazyikine rağmen, kendi yetkileriyle teçhiz ile baş tacı edip emrine girmek suretiyle vatansızlık, fedakârlık ve nefis feragatini göstermiş olan Karabekir ve Ali Fuat (Cebesoy) paşaların kurtuluş davasındaki hisselerini de unutmak büyük bir nankörlük olur.”

saving the nation during the Independence War. However, these praises are often about Mustafa Kemal, the comrade in and fellow leader of the Independence War, and not *Mustafa Kemal*, the mythical leader of the secular revolutionary Republic. It is not a coincidence that right after acknowledging Mustafa Kemal's central role, Orbay refers to Karabekir and Cebesoy's recognition of this role. He describes their submission to Mustafa Kemal's leadership as a courageous risk that displays patriotism (*vatanseverlik*), sacrifice (*fedakarlık*) and selflessness (*nefis feragati*). He concludes that forgetting the sacrifices of these two Pashas would be a severe ingratitude. This quote is only one example among many others that shows how Orbay is invested in responding to the general accusations and suspicions about his friends, and in trying to prove that they are no less patriots or heroes than Mustafa Kemal. Orbay, Karabekir and Cebesoy all explicitly acknowledge Mustafa Kemal's leadership role during the Independence War and attribute to his character high moral qualities, yet they qualify their reverence for him with respect to his role as a leader of comrades.

Recognition of Mustafa Kemal's significance ambivalently goes together with decentering Mustafa Kemal in the narratives. In the very passages where Orbay and Cebesoy praise Mustafa Kemal's sacrifices, they also decenter Mustafa Kemal from the heroic leadership narrative of *Nutuk* by extending their recognition and gratitude to other major leaders of the war, especially the figures who would become part of the PRP later on. They relocate Mustafa Kemal on a relatively equal ground with themselves through the narratives of comradeship and brotherhood. Yet, the authors also recognize the greatness of Mustafa Kemal as a leader, and avoid overtly confronting *Nutuk*.

The extensive praises and affectionate remarks they make about Mustafa Kemal become one of the major strategies for creating a compelling story of brotherhood and situating themselves as loyal and grateful patriotic actors in this story.

I interpret this ambivalence in commemorating and contesting a shared story of sacrificial brotherhood with Mustafa Kemal as reflecting a desire to gain moral authority, an authority that is claimed through recognizing the other contributors as opposed to those who had forgotten them. Mentioning other leaders as sacrificially contributing to the Struggle makes two major claims. First, it demands recognition and legitimacy for those who were condemned as betraying the nation. Second, it construes this very act of condemnation and delegitimization as an act against the nation and patriotism. Thus, I suggest that remembering and recognizing other contributors to the Independence Struggle, the foundational sacrificial narrative of the newly born nation, becomes central to PRP figures' definition of patriotism, as opposed to the narrative of saving the nation singlehandedly. Even though *Nutuk* is not directly targeted in these stories of appreciation, its forgetting and dismissing of other contributors is framed as ungratefulness.

5. 5. On Mustafa Kemal's Character

The affectionate remarks and comments by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay about Mustafa Kemal are also shadowed with many open-ended stories, which leave the reader with several confusions and ambiguous impressions about Mustafa Kemal's character. Based on subtle remarks in different parts of the stories, Mustafa Kemal could appear as someone who is constantly in pursuit of some secret plans or hidden

schemes, a despotic ruler who wants to control others, or a paranoiac. I contend that the authors' ambivalent narratives, which decenter Mustafa Kemal from a perfect hero in *Nutuk* to a fallible human being who could be weak, vulnerable, and also could commit mistakes, have important implications in contesting official historiography. The authors frequently make comments on Mustafa Kemal's character, specifically on his odd personal traits and changing emotional states. Their willingness to evaluate personal traits while discussing the key events of the past needs to be understood together with their desire to give accounts that judge the validity and legitimacy of Mustafa Kemal as well as others.

One strategy Orbay uses to portray Mustafa Kemal with these negative traits is to refer to comments made by other prominent figures of the time. For example, Orbay quotes Enver Pasha's complaints during the First World War about the political drives of Mustafa Kemal:

Whatever the reason, Mustafa Kemal pasha does not keep to merely expressing his opinions on points that pertain to his duty. He also undertakes private and Political provocations that are impossible to be reconciled with military vocation (Orbay 2003: 266).⁶⁶

Orbay is not the enunciator of this denigrating characterization of Mustafa Kemal, but he prefers to voice it without questioning its validity. However, Orbay continues, when Enver Pasha told Mustafa Kemal if he wanted to conduct politics then he should leave the military, as he could easily become an MP, Mustafa Kemal replies to Enver Pasha that he was misunderstood and that he wants to remain a soldier. Orbay notes

⁶⁶ "Mustafa Kemal Paşa nedense sadece vazifesine talluk eden noktalardaki kana-atlerini söylemekle kalmıyor. Askerlikle bağdaştırılması mümkün olmayan hu-susi ve siyasi tahriklere de teşebbüs ediyor."

that he had defended Mustafa Kemal against such criticisms by his supervisors, arguing that these were rumors arising from jealousy. However, it remains unclear to the reader whether Orbay agreed with the complaints by Enver Pasha and others about Mustafa Kemal, since Orbay never makes this explicit. Orbay often refrains from expressing clear judgments, and consistently avoids conclusive statements about Mustafa Kemal. As evident from the dialogue with Enver Pasha above, Orbay carefully reveals certain negative images, but does not clarify in the text whether he believes these images or not.

Through frequently using the strategy of mentioning others' words instead of directly voicing them, Orbay qualifies Mustafa Kemal as unable to contain his worries and always having problems with high-ranking people who live around him. His memoirs have a long and diverse range of such incidents where Orbay does not himself make explicit comments, but just like in the case of Enver Pasha, voices his views through the words of other prominent figures of the time. A carefully selected quotation from one of the most incisive critics of Mustafa Kemal and his government, journalist Hüseyin Cahit Bey, is another revealing example:

It is very disappointing for everyone that one may notice vices like fieriness, chimera and vindictiveness in the moral character of İsmet pasha. In order to love the country sincerely, one should be able to go beyond such personal feelings, prioritizing the good of the country (Orbay 2003: 352).⁶⁷

Orbay skillfully inserts the quote while discussing the entirely different subject of parliamentary debates. While Orbay merely says that he just read this in the newspaper,

⁶⁷ “İsmet Paşa'nın seciyesinde, pek çabuk alevlenen, vehimli ve kindar bir zaaf fark edilmesi, herkeste hayal kırıklığı doğurabilecek bir mahiyettedir. Memleketi gerçekten sevmek, memleketin menfaatleri uğrunda böyle şahsi hislerin üstüne çıkabilmeyi istilzam eder.”

anyone who knows the fact that Orbay and Hüseyin Cahit Bey are close friends can easily infer that he shares Hüseyin Cahit's views.

Orbay also shares his first-hand observations on the character of Mustafa Kemal. In the same passage where Enver Pasha's comments were shared, Orbay continues his story by stating that after Enver Pasha, he met with Mustafa Kemal and discussed this issue. We read that Mustafa Kemal nevertheless claims that since MPs do not function any differently than civil servants, the military is a better option for him. Orbay ends the dialogue by saying to Mustafa Kemal:

I know, in some situations you run out of patience, you cannot restrain your excitement. But the state of the other side is also clear. I am really worried about the possibility of unwelcome consequences both for you and for the country (Orbay 2003: 270).⁶⁸

The quote describes Mustafa Kemal as emotionally unstable, while Orbay portrays himself as a genuine brother who affectionately tries to calm down Mustafa Kemal. In what follows, Orbay adds that Mustafa Kemal thought for a while and agreed to listen to Orbay's advice. In his care for Mustafa Kemal, Orbay stresses that he is worried about both Mustafa Kemal's well-being and the related troubles that could potentially impact the nation itself negatively. Not only does Orbay construe himself as concerned by the nation's fate, but he also depicts Mustafa Kemal as too immature to act wisely and prudently on his own while working for the nation.

⁶⁸ "Biliyorum, bazı vaziyetlerde sabrınız tükeniyor, heyecanınızı frenleyemiyorsunuz. Lakin karşı tarafın hali de malum. Sizin için olduğu kadar, memleket için de hiç istenmeyecek akıbetlerle endişe ediyorum."

In addition to the scenes from the war, the authors also share incidents from the first parliamentary meetings that ultimately question Mustafa Kemal's leadership skills. Even before the deterioration of their relations by Lausanne, Orbay shares incidents from parliamentary debates during which Mustafa Kemal is portrayed as agitated, unpredictable and despotic. During the tense meetings for setting up the new government in the Parliament in July 1922, many members ask Orbay to take the lead for this task. Orbay comments that despite being favored, he had strong reservations and did not want to take the responsibility of leading the new government (Orbay 2003: 76). Orbay does not mention the nature of these reservations, and despite his friends' insistence, he continuously refuses the offer and instead asks them to find another candidate and elect him. On 11 July 1922, Mustafa Kemal invites Orbay to his room and asks him why he does not take this role given that most members agree that he must be the head of the parliament and in charge of setting up the new government. In what follows, Orbay shares an interesting dialogue:⁶⁹

“Let me tell you,” I said. “If I accept this position, you will intervene in my mandate. I will not be able tolerate this and will have to resign. But my faith is such that you are the one who will save this nation by leading its armies. Therefore I can absolutely not accept being in any conflict with you.” When Mustafa Kemal pasha asked me in a very sincere way, “My dear brother, am I an honorless man?” I was surprised. “I did not say something like that.” “Then I am promising you based on my honor. Accept the position of Prime Ministry, form the government, I will not intervene in any of your duties. That was what he said, and indeed followed his promise (Orbay 2000).⁷⁰

⁶⁹ In the edition published by Emre Publishing house, this incident is subtitled and highlighted by the editor of the book.

⁷⁰ “Söyleyeyim Paşam, dedim. Ben bu vazifeyi kabul edersem, sen yine benim isime karışacaksın. Ben de buna tahammül edemeyeceğim ve çekilmek zorunda kalacağım. Halbuki benim imanım, bu orduların başında bu milleti senin kurtaracağın merkezindedir. Bu yüzden, seninle ihtilafa düşmeyi kat'iyen kabul edemem. Mustafa Kemal Pasa, son derece samimi bir tavırla: -Kardeşim, ben namussuz muyum?

Like the other examples, the dialogue quoted above is based on Orbay's memory, being only a recollection of its "real" version that is transformed to its written expression years later. Still, it constitutes a good example of how ambivalent the relationship between Orbay and Mustafa Kemal had become, and how the former fears the latter's controlling and unpredictable nature. We first learn that the reason behind Orbay's unwillingness to lead the new government is his fear of Mustafa Kemal's interference, and of the potential confrontation that might result. This fear is based on previous incidents where Orbay came to know Mustafa Kemal as someone who interferes in others' jobs to the extent that they cannot tolerate and accept it, and feel forced to resign. But Orbay continues his rather subtle critique of Mustafa Kemal's despotism by praising him, expressing a firm belief in Mustafa Kemal's capacity to save the nation as the chief commander of the army. Orbay then finishes his explanation by adding that he certainly cannot accept any discord between them. Mustafa Kemal is not surprised by Orbay's fears, but instead shocks Orbay by unexpectedly asking Orbay whether he thinks Mustafa Kemal is an honorless man or not. Orbay closes this rather edgy dialogue by confirming that Mustafa Kemal kept his promise, but the reader is left with the image of Mustafa Kemal as someone who interferes in others' tasks and does not respect their ability to handle those tasks alone.

Through such observations about Mustafa Kemal's behaviors, speech and bodily manners, Orbay communicates to the reader how emotionally unstable and insecure Mustafa Kemal was at different times during the Independence War. Similar to Kara-

Deyince, hayret ettim. -Ben böyle bir şey söylemedim. -O halde sana namusumla söz veriyorum. Heyeti Vekile Reisliğini kabul et, hükümeti kur, senin hiçbir isine karışmayacağım. Dedi ve hakikaten dediğini yaptı.”

bekir and Cebesoy, Orbay writes that Mustafa Kemal was very anxious when he resigned from his position in the Ottoman military, during the two congresses and about the possibility of winning the war. We read portrayals of Mustafa Kemal at many critical junctures becoming hopeless, feeling insecure and failing to trust those around him. In the quote below, Orbay expresses his affection towards Mustafa Kemal but also portrays him as pessimistic and hopeless, the two qualities which stand in contrast with *Nutuk*'s undismayed and unyielding hero:

He was so disappointed. I had never witnessed anything similar to the pessimism and desperation that Mustafa Kemal showed at that moment—him being my friend for so many years, whom I had shared many dangerous situations that could take his life during the wars we came through together (Orbay 2003: 320).⁷¹

The following quotation from Orbay's account of when he and Mustafa Kemal were in Erzurum in 1919, immediately before the Erzurum Congress and right after Mustafa Kemal resigned from his military post in order to claim leadership of the independence movement, is such a portrayal of sacrifice. The quotation starts from the moment when the two were informed that Karabekir was about to visit them. Orbay describes an insecure Mustafa Kemal in panic due to the lack of sufficient support for his leadership after resigning from his military post in the army:

“Sir, Commander of Army Corps, Karabekir pasha is on his way.” [Mustafa Kemal] pasha was both under the influence of the dreadful news about Kazim (Dirik) bey's move, and also thinking about the possible consequences of Istanbul [government's] provocations against him, and [hence] suspicious and

⁷¹ “Çok, son derece üzgündü. Bunca yıllık dostum, arkadaşım ve içinden çıktığımız harplerde, hayatına mal olabilecek kadar tehlikelerle karşılaştığı anlarda da yanında bulunarak, her hal ve tabiatına yakından vakıf olduğum Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın, bu olay karşısında belirttiği karamsarlık ve umutsuzluğun benzerine hiç şahit olmamıştım.”

worried about Karabekir pasha. He smiled at me bitterly, with a look that implied “Do you see now, how my predictions were true?” and turned to his aide, saying, “Let him in” (Orbay 2003: 322).⁷²

The quote pictures Mustafa Kemal not only as emotionally insecure and panicked but also as someone who does not trust other people, and constantly expects bad things to happen. And yet, in what follows, we read that Karabekir presents his allegiance to Mustafa Kemal with full support and respect, which shakes Mustafa Kemal deeply. Orbay details how Mustafa Kemal, in tears, hugged Karabekir to express his joy and gratitude:

At that moment, I should admit, I absolutely could not estimate that [Karabekir], with such an unprecedented selfless sacrifice and humble benevolence that I had neither observed nor heard of throughout my military life, was about to create such a memorably vivid historic scene for future generations to remember that they would visualize as if they had seen it with their own eyes (Orbay 2003: 322).⁷³

Orbay’s memoirs are full of descriptions of scenes in which Mustafa Kemal and Orbay hugged each other with tears of joy or grief, or worked together day and night, along with devoted others like Cebesoy and Karabekir, as well as Hüsrev Paşa (Gerede) and Refet Pasha (Bele). Orbay seems deeply impressed by Karabekir’s submission to Mustafa Kemal’s leadership at a time when Mustafa Kemal was feeling upset and hopeless. Orbay interprets Karabekir’s recognition of Mustafa Kemal’s

⁷² ““Efendim, Kolordu Kumandanı Karabekir Paşa geliyor.” Haberini Verdi. Paşa bir yandan hala Kazım (Dirik) Bey’in hareketinin verdiği sarsıntının tesiri altında, bir taraftan da İstanbul’un, sağ ve solunu durmaksızın aleyhine tahrik edişinin ne gibi sonuçlar vereceğini düşünerek, Karabekir Paşa’dan şüphe ve endişe eder bir durumda bulunduğundan, “gördünüz mü, tahminlerim doğru değil mi imiş?” der gibi bir bakışla, bana acı acı gülümseyerek yaverine dondu: “Buyursunlar.” dedi.”

⁷³ “O anda, onun bütün askerlik hayatımda mislini görmediğim gibi kimseden de işitmediğim bir fedakârlık ve uluvvucenapla (cömertlikle), gelecek nesillere “Vatanın gerçekten nasıl sevildiğini” gözlerde belagatle canlandıran bir tarihi sahne yaratacağını, itiraf ederim ki hiç tahmin edememiştim.”

leadership as an exceptional sacrifice and distinct act of patriotism which should form a historical model for the next generations. Even though Mustafa Kemal seems to be the main actor in the story from which I quoted above, the conclusive statements ultimately mark Karabekir as a genuine and devout soldier at the service of his nation.

The anecdotes about Mustafa Kemal's emotional instability and insecurity could potentially challenge his claim to supreme moral leadership of the nation. Similar to Orbay's story above, Karabekir, for instance, narrates that on the last decisive night in the Sakarya War, Mustafa Kemal had given up the battle for lost and was ready to order a general retreat, only to find at dawn that the Greeks had retreated first (Karabekir, 1960: 997n). In contrast, Mustafa Kemal portrays himself in *Nutuk* as a prudent and wise leader who knows the course of events from the beginning. Instead of a leader who believes in his cause fully, as narrated in *Nutuk*, these memories reveal to us an anxious and often hopeless commander who constantly asks people around him what they expect to happen. Through such details, the figure of a prescient and fearless commander in *Nutuk* is radically destabilized.

5. 6. Destabilizing *Nutuk*'s Truth Regime and Mustafa Kemal's Nationalism

The memoirs also present accounts that inadvertently question Mustafa Kemal's idealist leadership vision and linear progressive narrative of the National Struggle in *Nutuk*. They instead portray a pragmatic leader who was open to many diverse, if not contradictory alternatives as the circumstances changed. There are two key issues raised in the memoirs that portray Mustafa Kemal as a pragmatic leader in ways that

trouble *Nutuk*'s account of patriotism, legitimacy, national character and enemies of the nation: the debates on Mandate and the Islamic character of the first parliament.

Mustafa Kemal presents himself in *Nutuk* as radically opposing the Mandate option, and highlights this as one of the main pieces of evidence that his patriotism was much stronger and more real than that of his peers. In his account of how the Sivas Congress was convened, Mustafa Kemal refers to the “enemy within,” or those who did not have faith in the ability of the Turks to survive without the Mandate of one of the Western powers. For instance, Refet Bele was depicted as a manipulative speaker whose arguments favoring the acceptance of the Mandate “poisoned” the minds of his listeners.

Those whom Mustafa Kemal accused of supporting the Mandate solution, on the other hand, argue in their memoirs that Mustafa Kemal himself was seriously considering the Mandate as a solution. The provocative accounts of the Mandate issue in Karabekir and Orbay's memoirs are among the few major cases in which Mustafa Kemal is implied to have given false accounts in *Nutuk*. They share a version of the story that completely contradicts *Nutuk*, though they do not link the debate directly with Mustafa Kemal, nor do they say that Mustafa Kemal's account was false or deceptive. Orbay, for instance, discusses the Sivas Congress in detail, and through documents tries to prove that Mustafa Kemal met American representatives in the aftermath of the Sivas Congress to negotiate the possibility of a Mandate, understood as the symbolic protection and sponsorship of the American state, instead of an official, formal Mandate system. Orbay claims that American representatives rejected this offer, even though Mustafa Kemal himself tried to gain their support, a detail Karabekir also includes in his *İstiklal Harbimiz*, and which clearly contradicts *Nutuk*. Hence, for a

reader who is familiar with *Nutuk* and its widely-accepted accounts on the congresses and the Mandate issue, such information could be unsettling. It could raise several questions on truth and legitimacy, such as which version of history is true, and whether there might be other such unknown or misunderstood issues.

It is Karabekir who details at length the Islamic character of the opening ceremonies of the first Grand National Assembly in 1920, including long Quran recitations, constant references to religious sources and the summoning of deputies to pray five times a day: “*Tarihimizde bu kadar koyu bir taassuplu merasim-i diniye ile hiç bir meclis açılmamıştır*” (Karabekir 1960: 656). Some of these views were also highlighted by prominent historians of modern Turkey. Şükrü Hanioglu cites extensive examples of Mustafa Kemal’s friendly exchanges with different Soviet representatives, as well as his initial tolerance of piety and pan-Islamism during the National Struggle, and argues that Mustafa Kemal gave the impression of being a Muslim communist (2011: 105). According to Hanioglu, the regulations at that time, such as the ban on the sale and production of alcoholic beverages and the overall enforcement of Islamic morals in the first Parliament “surpassed any Ottoman administration since the inception of the Tanzimat in 1839” (2011: 103). Hanioglu documents many other details on how Mustafa Kemal embraced Islamic practices and pan-Islamic discourses to appeal to larger groups of people against the imperial government.

What is significant about the Islamic character of the first Parliament, which Karabekir describes at length and *Nutuk* does not mention at all? From the perspective of a critical student of political science, such preferences might be appreciated as successful political tactics, or simply ignored as trivial and common. Yet, in the context of the political struggle that takes place within the memoirs, such details are crucial.

First, the description of the Parliament's Islamic character immediately reveals that there are things that were not told by *Nutuk*, and hence destabilizes *Nutuk*'s authority to tell the truth. Second, it questions the authority of Mustafa Kemal and the Republic to represent the nation, since it portrays most of the nation's first elected deputies as religiously oriented. It is not difficult to understand how the right-wing conservative and Islamist oppositions later on have continuously invoked the Islamic character of the first Parliament in order to substantiate their claims to represent the nation. Third, these accounts can potentially undermine Mustafa Kemal's image of a Western-minded secular idealist at the service of the nation, and portray a pragmatist politician who could occasionally lie when necessary. Such details could disrupt Mustafa Kemal's image as a strong and foresightful leader who consistently pursued a fixed agenda.

5. 7. Conclusion

The memoirs of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay display a consistent preference to portray the early stages of the Independence War as a collective engagement that was undertaken by a circle of devoted and well-qualified comrades. Their stories of an affectionate circle of comrades starting the national independence movement pose a significant transgression against *Nutuk*'s regime of truth, which centered on one hero. Thus, the memoirs carve out a discursive space of legitimacy for *others* to speak, i.e. to inhabit a subjectivity of retelling or recollecting a period of history bound by *Nutuk*'s narrative. Refusing to confront *Nutuk*'s narrative as individuals who defensively account for their deeds, the authors instead construct a narrative of brotherhood and comradeship. I suggest that, through the narrative of brotherhood, they could assert a

moral authority to be able to speak the truth about history—an authority that is not bound by *Nutuk*'s regime of truth.

In affirming both Mustafa Kemal and themselves as parts of an authentic epic moment, they construct a narrative of brotherhood and comradeship. I argue that this moral-discursive space they share with Mustafa Kemal seeks both agency and legitimacy. As part of their quests to be viewed as self-sacrificial and selfless patriots, they extensively praise other fellows and also Mustafa Kemal. They copiously document Mustafa Kemal's exceptional leadership skills and courageous initiatives, despite the fact that *Nutuk* portrayed them as traitors who betray their cause and their leader for personal gain. Against such a hard blow and undermining of their legitimacy, gratifying Mustafa Kemal ironically helps them to counter this image and reclaim their legitimacy. By including Mustafa Kemal in the narrative of brotherhood, they present themselves as moral figures who could collaborate with others at the service of the nation without excluding anyone.

My analysis also builds on the recent literature on emotions in the shaping of legitimate forms of moral conduct and collective imaginaries of proper citizenship. With few exceptions, the significance of character traits and emotions in the shaping of the political landscape was not recognized in scholarly political analyses, which unanimously viewed character traits and emotions as ephemeral, internal and unreliable aspects of interpersonal, communal and institutional life, and thus as inappropriate loci of scientific investigation. Recent theoretical revisions of narrative analysis highlighted the centrality of emotions to understanding the narrative structure and composition of both grand and minor life-stories. Prominent figures in contemporary social

and cultural theory further unpacked the role of emotions in the construction, circulation and appeal of personal public narratives (Berlant 2004).

In memoirs, one reads that political actors constantly monitor, interpret and express the emotional states, personal traits and dispositions of their competitors, and in turn formulate judgments about their competence and respectability. Claims over displaying proper emotions at the right time emerge as important instruments of political contestation that can bolster or undermine one's legitimacy. More specifically, the ability to practice conciliation and moderation instead of the stubborn and aggressive pursuit of one's beliefs is depicted as essential to moral political conduct. Firmness and strength are highlighted as invaluable signs of a devout patriot, while trust, cooperation, loyalty and gratitude involving one's comrades are proposed as key elements of a sacrificial and selfless leader. Claiming "mediation," "wisdom" and "moderacy," all three authors emerge in their own texts as moral figures who are capable of embracing everyone, even enemies (*herkesi kucaklayabilme*), which could potentially qualify them as wise figures that can appeal to the nation and the conscience of people (*halkın vicdanı*).

CHAPTER 6

BETRAYING THE BROTHERHOOD, FAILING THE NATION: RECKONING WITH POLITICAL MARGINALIZATION AND *ETRAF*

6. 1. Introduction

The previous chapter noted that the authors seek legitimacy by claiming to display a national character and embody the moral qualities of a sacrificial brotherhood that is solely devoted to the nation. This legitimacy and the related moral authority ultimately question the very legitimacy of the military-bureaucratic elite in Ankara who excluded Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay from the political scene. *Nutuk*'s account portrays them as incompetent and disloyal dissidents who put the progress of the nation and establishment of the Republic in jeopardy. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay do not directly respond to those portrayals. Instead, they repeatedly accuse the Republic's ruling RPP party and emerging political establishment of incompetence and corruption, and of acting with the motivations of self-interest and power-seeking. In particular, they target what they consider to be the opportunist circle of newly emerging political hawks in the RPP. The authors argue that the increasingly repressive influence of those figures in Ankara demonstrates that the political institutions of the Republic were being betrayed by illegitimate actors who undeservedly occupy their posts, undermining the political legitimacy of the Republic itself. Karabekir, Cebesoy

and Orbay's narratives oscillate between *contesting* and *commemorating* a shared, epic history of a brotherhood and comradeship that waged a war and saved the motherland. In this chapter, I will further unpack this ambivalence between contestation and commemoration by focusing on how they address the bitter political conflicts they were drawn into, and the subsequent parting of the ways among the brotherhood, which cut them off from Mustafa Kemal and political power.

Orbay, Karabekir, Bele and Cebesoy belonged to a group of pioneers of the national Independence War who were gradually isolated in Mustafa Kemal's party, the RPP, due to their critical stance in the parliament towards a series of governments led by İnönü (Zürcher 2004). In 1924, after their de facto elimination from power in the new political scene of Ankara, they initiated the first opposition party of the new republic, the PRP. The political presence of the PRP was interpreted and framed by the government as representing a reactionary opposition, while discontented religious populations in Anatolia sought a viable platform in the PRP for their protests against the new reforms. The Kemalist establishment's constant watchfulness of political movements and parties with Islamic and conservative constituencies has been pointed out (Çınar 2008). The first opposition party in Republican history similarly concerned the political establishment led by Mustafa Kemal. Following a religiously motivated Kurdish insurgency in Eastern Anatolia (the Sheikh Said Insurgency) and the subsequent involvement of the army, the PRP was banned by the *Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu* ("Law on the Maintenance of Order") introduced in 1925. A year after the insurgency, an assassination attempt targeting Mustafa Kemal caused a massive wave of tribunals where

all opposition politicians and dissident figures were arrested and put on trial. Karabekir and other PRP leaders were accused of plotting to overthrow the government and assassinate Mustafa Kemal.

A substantial portion of the memoirs is filled with elaborate stories that explain disagreements and frictions between the major political figures of the time. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay are ambivalent over how to address the reasons behind their discord. How do they present the basic disagreements that led them to part ways with Mustafa Kemal, and eventually, after the trials of the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal, the bitter sentiment of a brotherhood betrayed in their narratives? How do they narrate their oppositional politics in the new parliament? What is the role of *etraf* in narrating this oppositional politics? What function do these extensive references to an amicable friendship and brotherhood fulfill in their portrayal of disagreements and the subsequent political showdown that put them on trial by Independence Courts? Organized around the major historical junctures highlighted in their memoirs, starting with the Lausanne Treaty, this chapter will unpack the thematic tensions raised in the memoirs between moderation and extremism, ideology and power, and loyalty and betrayal that contour the narration of conflicts in the aftermath of the Independence War. The authors are not unanimous in the extent of the emotional resonance they attribute to the falling out among those who were previously brothers. I will attend to how Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay present their versions of historical facts that underlay these discords in different emotional and moralistic frameworks.

I suggest that their use of autobiographical writing as a genre opens up a peculiar political space to voice an oppositional politics that seeks to renarrate the history of the Independence War and its aftermath in ways that will appeal to future generations.

The most fundamental aspect of this opposition is to contest the legitimacy of the emerging clique of military-bureaucratic elites and their claims to rule the Republic on behalf of the Turkish nation and its values. As their autobiographical writings extensively focus on who deserves to lead the postwar political process on behalf of the Turkish nation, the opposition posed by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay maintains the need for a vanguard-like moral leadership of wise statesmen within the larger political elite.

The autobiographical politics of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay extensively builds on moralizing discourses contrasting their own heroic achievements against the rise of a circle of military-bureaucratic elites—*etraf*—surrounding Mustafa Kemal after the Independence War.⁷⁴ Pursuing the epic moral authority of being sacrificial members of a brotherhood betrayed by political-bureaucratic degeneration, the authors deliberately avoid the image of bitter defeated actors who seek vengeance. The authors incessantly document the rise of corrupt and inept individuals at the expense of those sacrificial comrades. They insist that whoever displayed the national character and thus sacrificially served in the war should have ruled the cadres of the new polity in principle.

⁷⁴ There are many terms extensively used across the texts analyzed here, which qualify the degeneration and decadence of “*etraf*” in different senses: *ıfrahçı, muhteris, kindar, su-i niyet güdenler, menfaat-perest, oportünist, parazit, imtiyaz pesinde koşan zümre, müfritler, mideciler, gayri-ahlaki, la-kayıt, la-dini*. However, these negative terms coalesce in opposition to the moralized sense of humility and self-sacrifice that defined the authors’ engagement within the National Struggle. And in a way, although it is not spelled out clearly, almost all references to “*etraf*” are accompanied by comments about the fact that they emerged on the political scene after the National Struggle.

6. 2. The Lausanne Proceedings

The memoirs identify the proceedings of the Lausanne Treaty as the first explicit sign of discord between the authors and Mustafa Kemal, which eventually paved the way for them to part ways in the second half of 1923. At the root of the conflict lay the deepening divide between İsmet İnönü, the chief negotiator at the conference, and Orbay, who had been prime minister⁷⁵ for two years, and led a government that followed Mustafa Kemal's parliamentary presidency against the Istanbulite opposition and the opposing Second Group in the parliament. Orbay and İnönü bitterly disagreed over İnönü's negotiations in Lausanne on behalf of the nascent Turkish state. In the final phase of the Lausanne Proceedings, Orbay refused to authorize İnönü and the delegation to sign the peace treaty, arguing that İnönü had violated his mandate as defined by the Government – i.e. by Orbay. Despite Orbay's refusal, İnönü signed the treaty anyway, under the authorization of Mustafa Kemal. The treaty ended the war with Greece, resolved the Ottoman Empire's legal-political and economic legacy issues and also took effect as Turkey's new treaty with the Allied powers, officially ending and replacing the Ottoman Empire as a counterpart in World War I (Ahmad 2008; Lewis 1961; Shaw and Shaw 1977; Zürcher 2004: 161–4).

As the below quotes exemplify, the Lausanne negotiations (or the related parliamentary tensions) emerge as a major turning point in İnönü, Orbay, Cebesoy and Karabekir's texts. The conflict between İnönü and Orbay was repeatedly addressed on the

⁷⁵ This post, at the time, referred to the leader of a board of ministers, appointed by the leader of the parliament, Mustafa Kemal, while each minister was selected out of the parliament.

agenda of daily debates in the parliament (Zürcher 2004: 161–4).⁷⁶ In this sense, Lausanne might be viewed as the first moment where a power struggle starts surfacing between Mustafa Kemal and İnönü on the one hand, and Karabekir, Orbay and other leading opposition figures on the other hand. In all of the memoirs, the post-Lausanne dialogues mark the first clear expression of discontent over Mustafa Kemal’s increasing role and control in politics. The accounts set after Lausanne portray Mustafa Kemal as increasingly distant from his former comrades, even as Orbay and Karabekir, and to a lesser extent, Cebesoy take more critical positions towards him.

In the quote below from his defense in the Independence Tribunals, Karabekir highlights the frictions between Orbay and İnönü during the Lausanne Proceedings as the beginning of tensions among the “friends” who worked together during the Independence War:

Dring the truce, when we had made Gazi our leader while working together against dire situations, I was the only force that the country relied upon. But, just as it is in every revolution, those who were working together at first end up breaking their unity under the influence of parasites that emerge after the targets are attained. My conviction is that a type of discord emerged among the close friends, who worked in unison until the Lausanne peace. The first incarnation of this discord was seen with the [problems] among Rauf bey and İsmet pasha (Erman 1971: 120).⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Orbay was in a unique situation at the time. As the prime minister and a close colleague of Mustafa Kemal, he was certainly defending his government’s policies and his support for İnönü, who was acting as the chief negotiator on behalf of the government. The opposition consisted mostly of the infamous Second Group, previous MPs and politicians from the parliament in Istanbul, or new political figures who were unwilling to leave political power to the military leaders of the national struggle, particularly Mustafa Kemal, İnönü, Orbay and Karabekir. In that sense, it is vital to note here that, despite occasional similarities in political positions, the subsequent opposition movement that formed the PRP is different from and cannot be reduced to the Second Group’s reactionary opposition to the prominence of national struggle leaders, a group which included almost all the subsequent leaders of the PRP.

⁷⁷ “Mütareke sırasında elîm durumlara karşı elbirliğiyle göğüs gererek çalışıp Gazi’yi kendimize reis yaptığımız sırada, memleketin istinad ettiği yegane kuvvet bendim. Ancak her inkılapta olduğu gibi, ilk zamanlar birlikte çalışanlar, maksad hasıl olduktan sonra ortaya çıkan parazitlerin bu birliği bozdukları

Karabekir refers to the Independence War and the spirit of friendship present at that time to prove an unusual change in the course of events. He points to the Lausanne Proceedings as the first breakpoint among the friends who used to work like one body (*yekvücut*). References to the Lausanne Proceedings are not simple reiterations of a chronological mark that highlights the temporality of the relationships among brothers and comrades. Rather, Lausanne marks the crystallization of the problems and issues that separated brothers, undermining the spirit of unity that had sustained the moral leadership of the Independence War.

Orbay gives more space than other authors to explaining the discord prior to and in the aftermath of the Lausanne Proceedings. One reads in Orbay's notes that İnönü had occasionally responded to Orbay's intervention quite bitterly and with a harsh language that targeted Mustafa Kemal as much as Orbay. In his own and his friends' memoirs, Orbay is described as being under great distress and avoiding İnönü. The day after the Lausanne treaty was finally signed, Orbay made his last personal visit to Mustafa Kemal, where he informed him of his resignation as Prime Minister. The way both Cebesoy and Orbay recollect the meeting is a good indicator of the extent to which İnönü's relationship with the rest had deteriorated. In that visit, Orbay recollected his tumultuous relationship with İnönü during the Lausanne Proceedings in the previous months as follows:

“The telegraph texts that were sent from Lausanne, and the things we had talked about because of the position he took are all known... Although—I do remember that you had said his reproaches that targeted not only me, but also

görülür. Benim görüşüm şudur ki, Lozan sulhüne kadar kalb kalbe yekvücut olarak çalışmış arkadaşlar arasında sulhu müteakip bir ayrılık başladı. Bunun ilk tecellisi Rauf Beyle İsmet Paşa arasında müşahede edildi.”

you and other members of the parliament could be considered excusable, given the period of time. Nonetheless, whatever the circumstances, I can never come face-to-face with İsmet pasha again, and cannot work with him. Basically, since he was the one who signed the peace treaty, I am of the view that it is much more appropriate to leave the task of executing it to him.”

He looked disappointed and said, in a very sincere and soft voice:

“My dear Rauf, I don’t know what to say, you are right... This milieu makes one devoid of morality.”

I said, “Pasha, please don’t be upset, you will rule this country perfectly with only a dozen honorable men” (Orbay 2000: 133).⁷⁸

Here Mustafa Kemal appears as a dear brother, saddened by the discord between his two close friends and colleagues, while Orbay is convinced that his relationship with İnönü has been irrevocably terminated. The ambivalence in the dialogue stems from the fact that Mustafa Kemal acknowledges Orbay’s critiques of İnönü, and yet still expresses a clear preference for İnönü over Orbay by accepting Orbay’s resignation. Not surprised by the resignation, Mustafa Kemal does not ask Orbay to continue working with him. But both know that İnönü, who is responsible for Orbay’s resignation, is on very good terms with Mustafa Kemal at the moment of the dialogue. While Mustafa Kemal seems to affirm the “immorality” of İnönü and his actions, Orbay ends the dialogue by saying that Mustafa Kemal could govern the country perfectly with a “dozen honorable men.” It is not clear what Orbay meant in the *coda*, the very ending of the story, with his seeming assurance of Mustafa Kemal regarding the governance of the

⁷⁸ “Lozan’dan yazdığı telgraflar ve aldığı vaziyet dolayısıyla, konuştuklarımız malum... Gerçi onun yalnız beni değil, tarizlerine sizi de, Vekil arkadaşları da hedef edindiği ve zaman icabı bunun hoş görülmemiz gerektiğini söylemişsiniz ama, ben, ne olursa olsun, bir daha İsmet Paşa ile yüz yüze gelemem ve artık onunla birlikte imkân yok çalışmam. Esasen, sulh muahedelerini imzalamış olduğu gibi, bunun tatbik işini de ona bırakmak doğru olur düşüncesindeyim.” [...]

Müteessir oldu ve gayet samimi görünen, yumuşak bir sesle:

“Raufcuğum, dedi, ne söyleyeyim bilmem ki, haklısın... Bu muhit adamı ahlaksız yapıyor.”

“Paşam üzülme, dedim, bir düzine namuslu adamla sen bu memleketi mükemmel idare edersin.”

regime. The phrase “dozen honorable men” could very well be understood as an ironic and resentful expression of discontent with being pushed away from political power.

Cebesoy remembers that same day when he and Orbay met with Mustafa Kemal right after the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, and recollects the dialogue in more detail that praises Orbay and his qualities. In Cebesoy’s account, Orbay is said to merely talk about his distress and deteriorating health when he offered his resignation.

As we were drinking the coffee that was served a moment ago, Rauf bey made the following request:

“Pasha, I’d never consider bothering you today. But since I will not be able to find a more appropriate time, I will present my thoughts. If you allow me, I will leave Chief of Staff Fevzi pasha as my deputy [to conduct my duties], and I will go to Sivas, the town which was my original constituency. I want to visit and thank the township of Sivas for having entrusted their representation in the darkest of days, and want to tell them why I accepted becoming a member of parliament from Istanbul this time, before the Second Parliament meets for the first time. And I want to go to Izmir in order to rest for a while with my mother.”

Gazi, who looked during our conversations as if he was trying to find out the reason why Rauf bey wanted to resign, suddenly said, with an air as if he found that reason:

“During the [Lausanne] conference İsmet upset you unfairly. You demonstrated great patience and toleration. Today, we could finally get the result we all wanted thanks to the assistance and moderation you showed to İsmet in every aspect. I presume you were glad about my arbitration at the time. The things İsmet did was not only against you, but also all of us. If he continues to act like that, I will make him come to his senses, once again (Cebesoy 2007: 406-7).⁷⁹

⁷⁹ “Getirilen kahveleri içerken Rauf Bey şu maruzatta bulundu:

-- Paşam, bugün sizi sıkamak hatırımdan geçmezdi. Fakat daha müsait zaman bulamayacağımdan düşüncelerimi arz edeceğim. [...] Müsaade ederseniz İkinci Meclis toplanmadan yerime Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Reisi Fevzi Paşa’yı vekil bırakarak eski intihap dairem olan Sivas’a gitmek, kara günlerde Heyet-i Temsiliye azalığımı ve mebusluğunu bana emanet eden Sivaslılara teşekkür etmek, bu

Cebesoy's words highlight Mustafa Kemal's acknowledgement of İnönü's mistakes during the Lausanne Proceedings, and recognition of the validity of Orbay's complaints. However, the dialogue in Cebesoy's memoir includes praise by Mustafa Kemal of Orbay which we do not read in Orbay's memoir. Mustafa Kemal mentions Orbay's patience and tolerance, as well as Cebesoy's own role as a successful arbitrator between Orbay and İnönü. The dialogue ends with Orbay's acknowledgement of Mustafa Kemal's neutral arbitration role, and soft warning against Mustafa Kemal's potential over-involvement in politics. Before submitting his resignation, he refers to newspaper interviews in which Mustafa Kemal signaled his willingness to become the head of the party, and clearly indicates that "we" are not supporting this increased involvement by Mustafa Kemal in daily politics, which is against the interests of the country:

Rauf bey: "The most significant part of the Lausanne Peace will be the execution of the treaty. Therefore İsmet pasha should at least be the minister of foreign affairs. We wish that you remain as the true arbiter you are, and as the Leader of State, beyond parties and persons. You had underlined this aspect perfectly, yourself, during the conference. Based on the declarations you have shared with the newspapers, you plan to be involved in daily politics by leading the People's Party you will establish. We are not in favor of this. We want you to continue your role as arbiter and leader, and avoid wearing yourself away, as that would be in favor of the country... I request forgiveness for bothering you, and ask that my resignation will be accepted (Cebesoy 2007: 407).⁸⁰

intihapta neden İstanbul mebusluğunu kabul ettiğimi kendilerine anlatmak, sonra validem nezdinde bir müddet dinlenmek üzere İzmir' e gitmek istiyorum...

Konuşmalarımız arasında Rauf Bey'in istifa arzusunun sebebini kendi kendine bulmaya çalışan Gazi, birdenbire bulmuş gibi tavır takınarak dedi ki:

-- Konferans esnasında İsmet haksız yere, seni çok kızdırdı. Büyük sabır ve tahammül gösterdin. Senin her hususta İsmet' e yaptığın yardım ve gösterdiğin itidal sayesinde ki bugünkü mesut neticeyi elde ettik. O zamanki hakemliğimden memnun olduğumu sanıyorum. İsmet'in o hareketleri yalnız sana değil, hepimize karşı idi. Bunda devam ederse o gün olduğu kadar bugün de onu yola getiririm."

⁸⁰ "Rauf Bey -- Lozan Sulhunun bundan sonraki en mühim kısmını muahedenin tatbiki teşkil edecektir. Bu sebeple İsmet Paşa'nın en az Hariciye Vekili olması lazımdır. Biz, sizin partiler ve şahıslar üstünde

Orbay clearly states, according to Cebesoy's recollection, that from that point onwards, Mustafa Kemal transformed from a neutral umpire to a politicized party leader, and thus a partial actor within political debates, presumably on İnönü's side. Orbay's bitterness, in that sense, and his feeling of obligation to resign, are framed less in terms of exclusion, and more in terms of fear that a great leader and dear brother is about to become a political adversary.

Even before the Lausanne Proceedings begin, one reads that problems were surfacing among fellow comrades during their frequent meetings to discuss military, political and administrative issues. All the memoirs involve accounts of such meetings and address how Mustafa Kemal had started to become more controlling in the political field through a growing alliance with İnönü. For instance, in a meeting before the chief negotiator for Lausanne was selected, one reads in Karabekir's memoirs that Karabekir clearly states to Mustafa Kemal that he wants to lead the Turkish delegation in Lausanne, to which Mustafa Kemal responds that it should be İnönü who represents Turkey: ⁸¹

hakiki bir hakem ve Devlet Reisi olarak kalmanızı arzu ederiz. Konferansın devamı müddetince bunu mükemmelen ifa buyurmuşunuz. Gazetelere verdiğiniz beyanattan sulh devresin—de, teşkil edeceğimiz Halk Partisi'nin başına geçerek, günlük politikaya karışacağınız anlaşılıyor. Biz buna taraftar değiliz. Sizin Devlet Reisliğinde hakem ve nazım rolünüzü devam ettirmenizi, parti reisi olarak kendinizi yıpratmamanızı, memleket menfaatine uygun görüyoruz... Sizi fazla sıktığımdan dolayı affımı diler, istifa arzusunun kabulünü rica ederim.”

⁸¹ Cebesoy describes Mustafa Kemal's careful selection of İnönü as follows: “Bizdeki İcra Vekilleri Heyeti Reisi, diğer Devlet teşekküllerindeki Başvekillere muadildi. Bu devletler, Başvekillerini konferansa göndermek istemediklerine göre, Hüseyin Rauf Bey'in Türk Başmurahtası olarak gitmesi uygun görülmemiştir. Rauf Bey, kendisinin başmurahtas olmasını arzu eden vekil ve mebus arkadaşlarına hadiseyi etraflı şekilde izah etmişti. Bu durum karşısında Rauf Bey'in yerine başka bir zatın intihabı düşünülmüştü. Bu zatın aynı zamanda salahiyyetli ve tanınmış bir asker olması da ileri sürülmüştü. Bütün bu mülahazaları dikkat nazarına alan Gazi Paşa, daha Bursa'ya hareket etmeden evvel Rauf ve Hariciye Vekili Yusuf Kemal Beylerin fikirlerini almıştı. Bursa'da da Fevzi ve İsmet Paşalar ve diğer zevat ile konuşmuş ve şöyle bir karara varmıştı: Sulh konferansında Başmurahtas Garp Cephesi Kumandanı İsmet Paşa olacaktı. Doktor Rıza Nur ve eski İktisat ve Maliye Vekili Hasan Beyler aza olarak kendisine terfik edileceklerdi” (Cebesoy 2007: 158).

October 19, 1922, Thursday – I told M. Kemal about the benefits of abolishing the Sultanate, yet leaving the post of Khilafat to the Ottoman family, and going to the conference with a full Turkish nationalism. He said, “I cannot send you as the head of the peace committee. Because you would act according to your own initiative. I will send İsmet pasha. Because he wouldn’t go against my wishes” (Karabekir 2009b: 822).⁸²

Karabekir explains his candidacy for Lausanne as an expression of his willingness to show other countries the new regime’s firm commitment to Turkish nationalism and distancing from the Ottoman past. He explains Mustafa Kemal’s preference for İnönü by arguing that İnönü had a weak character and would loyally follow Mustafa Kemal’s orders and submit to his authority, whereas Karabekir would act independently (*kafana göre hareket edersin*). This is only one example of many where Mustafa Kemal is quoted by Karabekir as making such straightforward remarks, indicating Mustafa Kemal’s inclination for domination, control and avoidance of strong characters who would potentially oppose him. What differentiates Karabekir’s account from those of Cebesoy and Orbay is his outright targeting of Mustafa Kemal’s character, as opposed to Cebesoy and Orbay’s focus on İnönü’s misconduct.

6. 3. Historical Narratives of the Lausanne Proceedings

In Zürcher’s account, the Turkish delegation’s firm insistence on the complete sovereignty of the new Turkish state and the inviolability of its borders as declared in the National Pact was met with a staunch and denigrating protest by the negotiators of the

⁸² “19 Ekim 1922 Perşembe – M. Kemal’e sulh konferansına saltanatı lağv ve hilafeti al-i Osman’da bırakmak suretiyle ve tam Türk milliyetçiliğiyle gitmekliğimizin faydalarını anlattım. Sulh heyetimize baş murahhas olarak seni gönderemem. Çünkü kafana hareket edersin. İsmet Paşa’yı göndereceğim. Çünkü sözümden çıkmaz dedi.”

Allied powers, particularly by Lord Curzon. This extreme chasm between the positions of the two sides was further exacerbated by the limited diplomatic skills of the Turkish delegates, and even further by the aggravating and fervently nationalist criticisms targeting the delegation's negotiation tactics (Zürcher 2004: 160–1). Highlighting the multitude of political and diplomatic tensions İnönü had to maneuver within, Zürcher's account also contextualizes the specific demands all involved parties brought to the table. On the one hand, the political opposition in Ankara was expecting İnönü not only to maintain the National Pact at all costs, but also to succeed in having the Allied powers recognize the new Republic's claims over the Aegean islands, Mosul and Western Thrace, hoping to guarantee subsequent plebiscites for local populations to decide on joining the Turkish Republic. On the other hand, the Allied powers set the bar on the National Pact, focusing the negotiations on whether the Turks should be allowed to have a nation-state at all, the legal status of non-Muslims, the operation of the straits, and economic capitulations. Although this strategy eventually granted the Turkish side almost all the items of the National Pact they pursued on the table, it also rendered any territorial claims beyond those of the National Pact unacceptable in the eyes of the Allied powers (Zürcher 2004: 161–2).

However, Bernard Lewis provides a slightly different account that singles out Mustafa Kemal's own vision in absolutely finalizing all diplomatic and international issues once and for all, at any bitter cost (Lewis 1961: 255–7). In that account, İnönü (as he himself also claims in his memoirs) and the Turkish delegation appear as military-politicians and amateur diplomats stuck in the impossible position Mustafa Kemal had put them in, frequently complaining to Ankara about the pressure put on them. In-

deed, the first round of the Lausanne negotiations was ended abruptly, after the Turkish delegation reacted extremely slowly to the “final offer” of the Allied powers, deliberated excessively for months and eventually refused to sign (Zürcher 2004: 161).⁸³ When the Allied powers offered to open a second round of negotiations, İnönü returned to Lausanne. Although the Turkish delegation secured a favorable agreement on the absolute sovereignty of the Turkish state over its borders, the political storm in the parliament considerably delayed authorization of the delegation to sign the treaty, and İnönü had to ask for Mustafa Kemal’s own authorization as the president.

6. 4. Declaration of the Republic and Growing Tensions

The increasing tension around the conduct of İnönü, who became the prime minister after Orbay’s resignation, and the range of cabinet crises and parliamentary disputes that followed, culminated with the declaration of the Republic on October 29, 1923. The detailed descriptions of the political rivalries, disagreements and quarrels in the parliament concerning that period are expressed in the form of a gradually increasing sense of disillusionment, bafflement and betrayal. The declaration of the Turkish state as a Republic is never mentioned in these memoirs with the excitement and celebration with which Mustafa Kemal mentions it in *Nutuk*. I suggest that this absence of

⁸³ “The Turkish delegation had a very hard time at Lausanne, especially in the beginning. They were not considered equal partners. Curzon adopted an extremely patronizing and arrogant attitude, which contributed to the bad-tempered atmosphere. The Turks were severely handicapped by their lack of diplomatic expertise. For fear of being tricked into major concessions, they remained almost totally inflexible, refusing to give direct answers or to be drawn into impromptu discussions. İsmet’s deafness often served as a useful excuse. The Turkish delegation continually consulted Ankara, unaware that British intelligence intercepted all their messages” (Zürcher 2004: 161).

excitement is the most conspicuous aspect of how the memoirs mainly react to this historic event.

For instance, Karabekir merely notes that he “hears” about the process in his memoirs among other irrelevant news:

October 29, 1923, Monday – The Republic is officially declared in Ankara in the evening. Azerbaijan central committee accepted the use of the Latin alphabet. I didn't go out to anywhere today. Guests came. The central secretariat of the Defense of Rights visited, everybody is complainign about the situation. I received the order of my promotion to the post of First Army Inspector General (Karabekir 2009b: 883).⁸⁴

In Karabekir's short entry, the declaration of the Republic is noted as an ordinary daily news item, among several others such as the acceptance of the Latin alphabet in Azerbaijan. Unlike in many of his other entries, which were full of emotional vocabulary, Karabekir does not express any negative or positive emotions on the event. He does not highlight it as a historic day. His grammatical choice to use both passive form and past perfect participles signals to the reader two important comments about the way he and his friends had been left in the dark. Passive voice does not identify any doer, and thus Karabekir neither congratulates not disapproves of anyone or the action itself. More importantly, unlike the other past participle form of the Turkish language (*-di'li geçmiş zaman*), the *-miş'li geçmiş zaman* form used by Karabekir gives an idea to the reader that the speaker was not part of the event at all, but merely heard it from others. In a few entries such as this one, Karabekir is silent, even though

⁸⁴ “29 Ekim 1923 Pazartesi – Ankara'da akşam cumhuriyet ilan edilmiş. Azerbaycan Merkez Komitesi Latin hurufatını kabul etmiştir. Bugün bir yere çıkmadım. Misafirler geldi. Müdafaa-i Hukuk merkezi geldi, vaziyetten herkes şikayetçi. Birinci Ordu Müfettişliğine tayinim emri geldi.”

he is typically quite outspoken about his complaints and critiques in the memoirs. I interpret the above-quoted entry that day as showing conceited disinterestedness. Karabekir does not appreciate what happened, but is nevertheless cautious to challenge it explicitly.

In a later entry in the same book, one reads additional information clarifying Karabekir's initial silence on the declaration of the Republic. İnönü visits Karabekir in Ankara in December 1923, shortly after the declaration of the Republic. Karabekir writes that the purpose of the visit was to try to restore accord between Orbay and İnönü. He notes that İnönü briefly apologizes to Karabekir for not sending someone to inform him about the declaration of the Republic, and for the abruptness of the event, which left Karabekir and others in confusion (Karabekir 2009b: 896). Karabekir's notes from that day are not brief at all. He quotes the meeting and İnönü's remarks at length. İnönü's brief apology for the sudden declaration of the Republic is given more space in the memoirs than the declaration itself and the debates around it. We learn that even in the aftermath of the declaration of the Republic, Karabekir continued to have amicable relations with İnönü, and even personally worked to restore the relations between İnönü and Orbay (Karabekir 2009b: 872, 896, 902, 917). The same moment where Karabekir presents himself as a selfless, friendly and mature leader who works to build bridges between his estranged friends, we are also reminded of a past injustice that was done to him and his friends. One might also infer that Karabekir considers İnönü's apology as a small and inadequate yet promising acknowledgement of his and his friends' worthiness and deservedness.

Still, the changing narrative style in the passages on the post-Republic period indicates how Karabekir starts to become more vocal in his criticisms of İnönü and Mustafa Kemal. Karabekir's short-notes-style memoirs reveal his increasing distaste for İnönü, and his bitterness about how rarely he gets to meet Gazi Pasha (as he always refers to Mustafa Kemal) after the declaration of the Republic. Karabekir's diary entries below are replete with conversations on the growing tensions with İnönü:

December 8, 1923, Saturday – This morning representatives of the Independence Tribunal from Ankara came, led by Cebelibereket MP İhsan efendi (Divitçiler). He didn't have any favorable impact on those who knew him. I was disappointed to see that İsmet started his job with Independence Tribunals. Neither MP friends from Ankara, nor the Army Corps Commander that was my underling had informed me about this. The committee visited Şükrü Naili, but did not visit me. I sent a protest to Ankara and told Naili of my regret [that I was not involved]. This pasha responded that he did not let me know [of the committee's visit], since he had thought I was already informed (Karabekir 2009b: 892).⁸⁵

October 25, 1924, Saturday – Gazi pasha promoted Erzurum commander Hasan bey to [the post of] pasha. But he hadn't joined in the Independence Struggle. He was [apparently] promoted despite the objections of National Defense [cadres]. Those I put forward as candidates were not promoted. Anyhow, none of my bills and propositions have been taken seriously for over a year (Karabekir 2009b: 933).⁸⁶

As the above quotes exemplify, complaints over exclusion from decision-making and the incompetency of those who exclude them are the two major themes that frame Karabekir's understanding of the growing tensions in the immediate aftermath of the

⁸⁵ “8 Aralık 1923 Cumartesi — Derece-i hararet sabahleyin + 14, hava bahar gibi. Bir yere çıkmadım. Bu sabah Ankara ‘dan İstiklal Mahkemesi geldi, reisieri Cebelibereket Mebusu İhsan Efendi Divitçiler. Taniyanlara hüsn-i tesir yapmadı. İsmet’in istiklal Mahkemeleri ile işe başlamasına çok esef ettim. Bana, ne Ankara’da dost mebuslar, ne de madunum olan Kolordu Kumandanı haber vermediler. Heyet de Şükrü Naili ‘ye iade-i ziyaret ettiği halde bana uğramadılar. Ankara ‘yı protesto ettim, Şükrü Naili ‘ye teessüf ettim. Bu Paşa benim haberim var zannıyla haber vermediğini söyledi.”

⁸⁶ “25 Ekim 1924 Cumartesi — Gazi Paşa Şarkta Erzurum mevki-i müstahkem kumandanı Hasan Bey’i Paşa yaptırmış. Halbuki istiklal mücahedesine iştirak etmemişti. Müdafaa-i Milliye’nin itirazına rağmen terfi edilmiş. inha ettiklerim terfi etmedi. Zaten bir seneden beri verdiğim hiçbir layiham nazarı ehemmiyete alınmamıştır.”

declaration of the Republic. Karabekir complains that, as with the declaration itself, he is not informed of many important events, and expresses his sadness about his growing exclusion from the decision-making process. Karabekir's evaluation reflects his commitment to military hierarchy and values, since he judges everyone according to whether they are worthy of their post. When he finally resigns from military duty, he learns that in the last round of military promotions, many officials from the Independence War were not promoted, while others who had not contributed to the Independence War were promoted. In particular, he critiques Mustafa Kemal's decision to promote Hasan Bey to the rank of Pasha even though he did not participate in the Independence War. He claims that the authorities "lost their track" and did not even consider his personal warnings, memos and official inquiries.

In the entries that follow, one reads more of İnönü's mistakes and how Karabekir is still trying to act as a mediator. Karabekir stresses how he avoids displaying enmity and instead tries to promote reconciliation. Karabekir consistently comments on how he tried to do his best to improve the tense relations after referring to the faults of people like İnönü and how İnönü apologized to him. Such additive comments following the critiques of certain figures in the narrative are significant because the author uses them to construct a more solid binary between the malevolence, ignorance and injustice of those in power, and his own amiable, sacrificial and mature character. İnönü, on the other hand, is presented as someone under the influence of gossip told by people around him regarding Orbay and other figures. In one of the accounts describing disagreements with İnönü, Karabekir accuses him of not seeing his mistakes and of bothering people. He says to İnönü that he is not interested in politics and is happy to live as a soldier:

April 30, 1924, Wednesday — İsmet Pasha has been sick continuously for over two weeks. I visited him. In our conversation, I told him, everybody is moving their adherents to favorable positions, the most important schools are entrusted to people with no experience [...]. İsmet [replied], “This is politics! What did you think of Refet’s comments? If it was Rauf, he would definitely get involved.” [I said] “I did my best to restore our old sincere and intimate relations. You don’t see the mistake here, although you are the one who refuses to accept anything, you are pushing even further. I told you, I am not going to deal with anything other than my military post. Just don’t get me involved in matters of politics.” After some silence, İsmet said, “Kazım, Mosul is empty! Why don’t you occupy the place!” [...] I told him about that that would draw enmity by the whole world and that it would be a disaster to try to fight the British over Mosul. I told him how the British have educated the Nasturi population in missionary schools against us in the villages around İmadiye ve Çölemerik (under the auspices of the London archbishop delegate). “Weren’t you the one who signed the treaty on Lausanne? Why didn’t you deal with Mosul there?”⁸⁷

The dialogue over engaging in politics is interesting because İnönü and others constantly portrayed Karabekir and his friends as political power-seekers in their memoirs. In contrast with this accusation, Karabekir portrays himself as a selfless soldier who is genuinely and patriotically concerned with various political and social issues. Karabekir’s account reverses this accusation and portrays İnönü himself as power-seeking, incompetent and ignorant. İnönü is also represented as cowardly and insufficiently patriotic in his response to a challenging situation, as he simply leaves power and “retreats somewhere” (*bir tarafa çekilirim*). Although Karabekir does not comment, we are left with the impression that either İnönü is a coward, or he does not feel

⁸⁷ “30 Nisan 1924 Çarşamba — İsmet Paşa ‘nın iki haftadır rahatsızlığı devam ediyor. Ziyaretine gittim. Görüşürken söz maarife intikal etti. Dedim, herkes müntesibini iyi yerlere kayırıyor, en mühim mektepler tecrübesiz kimseler elinde. Dünkü rezaleti izahla maarifi Maarif Vekili hırpalıyor. İsmet, siyaset bu! Refet’in beyanatını nasıl buldun? Rauf olaydı o da karıştırdı. Ben elden geldiği kadar eski samimi hale ircaa çalıştım. Kabul etmeyen sen olduğun halde hatayı görmüyorsun, daha fazla uğraşıyorsun. Ben askerlikten başka bir şeyle uğraşmayacağımı söyledim. Artık politika işlerine beni karıştırma! (Bir müddet süküttan sonra) İsmet: Kazım, Musul boş! Şunu işgal ediversene! Bu esnada oturduğum sandalyenin yanındaki sandalyedeki kağıdı telaşla hiddetle çevirdi. Ben: Cihanın husumetini tekrar üzerimize çekeceğimizi ve Musul yüzünden İngilizlerle harbe girişmenin felaketini izah ettim (Fransa ve İtalya hatta Yunanlı pusudadır). Harb-i Umumi ‘den evvel İmadiye ve Çölemerik civarındaki köylerde (Londra Başpiskopos Murahhası namıyla) İngiliz misyonerlerinin İngiliz mekteplerinde Nasturileri aleyhimize yetiştirdiklerini anlattım. Lozan ‘da muahedeyi imzalayan sen değil misin, Musul ‘u neden orada halletmedin?”

enough responsibility or love for his nation. He characterizes İnönü as failing to create peace and order, to prevent corruption within the educational system or to monitor foreign interference by British missionaries.

Karabekir's brief comments on historical events are thus filled with elaborate evaluations of the "worthiness" of the different political figures of the time. Disagreements are used as opportunities to rather implicitly conclude that the new Republic is not in the hands of patriotic, worthy and competent people. Karabekir constantly gives examples of disagreements that hint at the ignorance of İnönü and Mustafa Kemal in the management of domestic and foreign affairs. Similar to Mustafa Kemal in *Nutuk*, Karabekir presents himself as a prudent actor who can see future dangers thanks to his foresight, and who constantly warns those in power when necessary. He does not clearly identify anyone with any negative traits, but we are provided an account of a wise soldier who has better foresight than İnönü or Mustafa Kemal, as the conversations on Mosul and Nasturis (Karabekir 2009b: 917–8, 931–4) illustrate. İnönü is represented as someone who is ignorant and cowardly, constantly makes mistakes, and lacks responsibility. Thus, in the chronological narrativization of Karabekir, we learn that eventually the cracks that were opened by the disputes around Lausanne become splits in "brotherhood," the penultimate step before the total parting of ways in late 1924.

6. 5. *Etraf* and *İfratçılar*:

Extremist and Power-Seeking Cadres of the New Republic

In different ways, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay clearly distinguish between people of moral character who are impervious to unhinged greed, corruption or subservience, and those who lack that character, becoming part of corrupt relations of domination and power. I interpret this moral separation as questioning the political legitimacy of those without such a moral character to influence how the Turkish revolution was to be realized and implemented. These references to the sacrificial fellow comrades during the National Struggle reserve a peculiar space of political legitimacy for a select few to act like guardians on behalf of their nation. They portray an elite group of vanguards who are tasked with the moral duty to preserve and maintain the Turkish revolution's connection to the legacy of the Independence War. And as the following chapter will demonstrate in detail, this sacrificial vanguard discourse is often contrasted with the newly emerging military-bureaucratic elite of the post-war Republican capital: *etraf*.⁸⁸

6. 5. 1. Becoming Estranged from the Emerging New Cadres of the Republic

Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's memoirs provide detailed accounts of how the extremist factions surrounding the İnönü government started to harass them in the newly forming Republican media, in the parliament, and in the granting of state posts (Orbay 2000: 135–70). The authors claim that the main reason for their marginalization is not

⁸⁸ As mentioned in earlier chapters, the word "*etraf*" means "surrounding social circle" and in the Early Republican Turkish context it is used to refer to the elite circle around Mustafa Kemal.

ideological disagreement but the leading cadres' desire to marginalize the other prominent figures of the Independence War in the emergent political field. They portray the leading cadres of the RPP as being power-seeking and not caring about the nation's interests. The authors do not accept competition for power as an ordinary quality of political life, and never justify any of their actions as seeking power, success or career advancement. On the contrary, they view the pursuit of power as a sign of decadence, and accuse their opponents who target them of lacking commitment of any kind, and of succumbing to primitive desires and ambitions to seek more power. Such accusations are obviously intended to undermine the moral worth of the political actors. They try to render the targeted people in power as illegitimate and immoral enemies of the nation. Who are these targeted figures exactly? There are certain differences in the way each author identifies these "external forces" which had split them from their former brothers.

Cebesoy's memoirs provide a bundle of incongruent characterizations about abstractly described political adversaries, ranging from ideologically wrong (particularly accounting for the post-1924 clashes in the parliament (450, 472, 489) to parochially power-seeking (65, 560-575, 609-627, 647). Cebesoy's incessant claims that it is the hijacking of the revolution by "inclinations for domination" (*tahakküm eğilimleri*) that fatefully separated Mustafa Kemal from his friends are a good example of how these memoirs identify the "other" (Cebesoy 2007: 179, 379, 472, 512-15, 526, 578-584, 608). Cebesoy insists that the emergence of "other" figures, "extremists" (*ifratçılar*), and political forces hijacked the historical momentum of revolutionary change (*inkılaplar*) that he and Mustafa Kemal had initiated with his friends:

Extremists wanted to legitimize the totalitarian administration that they established by pretending that it was a consequence of the execution of some of the revolutionary policies and laws. But they had not only punished the rebels and reactionaries, but also managed to drive their old and new opponents to the camp of the real rebels and reactionaries and punished them with the same crime. Extremists had this forgotten that, by doing so, they were smearing the tools and procedures of the real revolutionaries and thus of modern civilization, which would prevent the country to benefit from the revolutionary politics. [1924-5] (Cebesoy 2007: 583).⁸⁹

Cebesoy critiques the “extremists” in the government for conflating all the old and new opposition with the rebels and reactionaries. He argues that this proclivity to punish all the critical voices by calling them rebel and reactionary is linked to the prevalent totalitarian tendencies. The governors of the time are thus presented as unjust, and as using the law to justify their totalitarian rule. The totalitarian order is depicted as betraying the genuine reformists, methods and ways of civilization as well as the nation. Cebesoy reverses the accusations of extremism that targeted his party by identifying their adversaries in the RPP as “extremists.” He suggests that these extremists in government were hijacking the revolutions and reforms introduced for the sake of the Turkish nation’s culmination into a free and independent civilization.

For Cebesoy, what targeted him and his party was a pragmatic establishment of politicians and party officials that were trying to cultivate a regime of political domination after the formation of the first İnönü government by the end of 1923. He claims that

⁸⁹ “İfrazatçılar, sonradan bazı inkılap hareketleriyle kanunlarının tatbikini bahane ederek tesis ettikleri totaliter idareyi haklı ve yerinde göstermek istemişlerdi. Onlar yalnız asileri ve mürtecileri cezalandırmakla kalmayıp, eski ve yeni muhaliflerini hakiki asilerin ve mürtecilerin saflarına kadar sürerek onları da orada aynı suçla da cezalandırmışlardı. İfrazatçılar bu hareketleriyle mukaddes inkılapçıların, yani medeniyetin usullerini, yollarını ve cihazlarını lekeleyeceklerini ve bunların faydalarından memleketi yeter derece istifade ettiremeyeceklerini unutmışlardı.”

this “personal domination” inadvertently pushed devoted political figures like himself and his fellow brothers towards political opposition in 1924 and 1925.

Truth be told, most of the country was weary of party and personal domination, as much as they were weary of personal sultanate. They had experienced very bitter examples of these in the past. In a period of time when peace was not completely established, the matter of the form of administration could divide the politicians into two factions. But the majority of the country, who had intuited that peace could come at a big price and great difficulty, nonetheless did its best to avoid this duality and never avoided demonstrating unity (Cebesoy 2007: 379).⁹⁰

Cebesoy compares the current state of affairs in post-1923 Ankara to the Istanbul of the degenerate Ottoman Sultanate in 1918 by imagining a figure of the “nation” that is fed up with both regimes. Referring to the post-Lausanne process, he says that at a time when peace still has not consolidated itself, the nation prefers to stay in unity and does not want the existence of two parties. He does not express these opinions using a first-person narrative. Through speaking with the voice of the nation, Cebesoy conveys that he disapproves of forming a second party because history teaches him that different parties and personal domination harmed political order. Cebesoy’s narrative is a good example of the oppositional memoirs’ claim to represent the nation in ways that glorify unity.

The elimination of the authors by those in power is always framed as an attack against the entire nation, its moral qualities and future potential. Cebesoy and others avoid an

⁹⁰ “Hakikati söylemek lazım gelirse, memleketin ekseriyeti şahsi saltanattan bıktığı kadar, fırka ve şahsi tahakkümlerden de o derece usanmıştı. Bunların geçmişte çok acı tecrübelerini ve misallerini görmüştü Sulhün tam bir surette halledilmemiş olduğu bir zamanda idare şekli meselesi, politikacıları iki partiye ayırabilirdi. Fakat sulhün pek büyük müşkülâtle elde edilebileceğini sezmiş olan memleket ekseriyeti, her taraftan bu ikiliğe meydan vermemeye çalışmış ve birlik göstermekte asla kusur etmemişti.”

apologetic defensive position, refusing to view these attacks merely as pressure on their party, and instead seeing them as a step towards an authoritarian rule that degenerates all the major institutions of the country. I suggest that an apologetic and defensive position might have undermined their ultimate goal to speak in the name of the nation. Thus, *etraf* gives the authors a compelling narrative that could decenter the RPP and show PRP representatives as the real representatives of the nation.

The authors hold the “extremists” responsible for failing to establish national unity. Cebesoy consistently distinguishes Gazi (Mustafa Kemal) from the extremists he harshly attacks in the memoirs who surrounded Gazi:

I intimately knew that my brothers continued to harbor respect, confidence and trust towards [Mustafa Kemal]. It was perfectly reasonable that a person, who felt a mutual sentiment with someone, would try to maintain this sentiment among others. Therefore, I had always looked forward to an opportunity [to do something] with this particular longing. However, I knew that it was not an easy task to overcome the greed and resentments of those extremists that had surrounded [Mustafa Kemal]. Nonetheless, I had never quit and continued trying with fervor and aspiration (Cebesoy: 646).⁹¹

Here we see that Cebesoy locates the problem of his and his friends’ disconnection from Mustafa Kemal within the ambiguous group of *etraf*, which is composed of extremist people motivated by greedy ambitions and vengeance. He also maintains that his friends in the PRP also hold similar respect and trust for Mustafa Kemal. Cebesoy describes himself as an unyielding peace-maker between Mustafa Kemal and his

⁹¹ “Arkadaşlarımın Mustafa Kemal’e karşı olan hürmet ve itimatlarının devam ettiğini çok yakından biliyordum. Bu karşılıklı arzuyu hisseden bir kimsenin bunun husulüne çalışması kadar tabii bir şey olamazdı. İşte ben daima bu hisle fırsat kollamıştım. Fakat Mustafa Kemal’in etrafını almış olan ifratçıların ihtiras ve kinlerini yenmenin kolay bir şey olmadığı biliyordum. Buna rağmen ümitle çalışmaktan vazgeçmemiştim.”

friends who passionately struggles to overcome the blockage of such extremist people that surround Mustafa Kemal.

Each of the three have a rather different take on how to conceptualize etraf. For Karabekir, etraf was a more generalized “immoral” milieu of selfish and incompetent newcomers that were not on the scene until 1922. Cebesoy views etraf as bureaucratic corruption, a product of self-interested people with “tendencies for domination.” And for Orbay, etraf was a sinister set of political agents with secret agendas, which they implemented in unlawful ways, while legitimizing their influence by becoming closer and closer to Mustafa Kemal. In his view, these agents were the enduring legacy of corrupt and unlawful ways to conduct politics, especially komitacılık. The differences in which they conceptualized etraf and the threat it posed is emblematic of their individual approaches, which nevertheless coalesce into a shared moral outlook. Karabekir is more interested in the higher echelons of the military establishment and his earliest disagreements and complaints primarily register the promotions of generals or pashas. In other words, he is primarily preoccupied with the criteria with which emblematic military leaders were supposed to be chosen, which colors his views on the emerging political scene of early 1920s as occupied by unworthy individuals. Cebesoy’s priority is the problematically increasing strength of bureaucratization of emerging state structures and the consequent reliance on institutions and individuals that resort to intimidation and domination in order to assert their power both in military affairs and public administration. Orbay has a unique perspective which is colored by his views on ages-old problematic habits of political and military rule that favor illegal or illicit measures. His skepticism about the structural reforms under the new Republic rests on his conviction that such habits and measures had not disappear, and

were frequently employed by people who have not partaken in the national virtue that is the defining feature of aptitude for political and military authority. While it is possible to continuously document those subtle differences throughout the thesis, I will nevertheless focus primarily on their shared and intertextually enriched outlook about the moral virtue of the national character of the Turkish nation.

6. 5. 1. Projections of *Etraf* as Hostile and Dangerous Adversaries

Orbay focuses on *komitacılık*, by which he meant the remnant of the violent political culture of the Ittihat-Terakki period. In Orbay's view, *komitacılık* continues to deeply influence the present structures of power. His discussion on *komitacılık* expresses fear that such old habits continued to live among many figures of the new political scene in Ankara, leading them to resort to such means to neutralize their opponents – particularly emerging figures of the opposition (Orbay 2003: 350). In that vein, Orbay describes a series of dubious and dark relationships among dangerous party officials and bureaucrats who had the potential to utilize *komitaci* networks to harm and repress their adversaries, occasionally assassinating dangerous rivals (Orbay 2000: 184). He notes his worries about the ever-lingering custom among many politicians and military leaders to resort to these violent yet secret means when he discusses the assassination of the leader of the infamous Second Group by an associate of Mustafa Kemal.

Orbay refers to a series of assassination attempts that targeted him, or the secret police that watches his moves, as proofs that this unfortunate political custom is yet to be eradicated from the political scene of Ankara, as dark and mysterious figures around Mustafa Kemal continued to resort to such means for decades after 1922 (Orbay

2000: 121–8, 167, 182–9, 226–30, 245–50). In explaining the events he is narrating, Orbay continues this 19th century Ottoman imagery of a capital full of trickery, deceit and deadly dangers, thereby associating his rivals with the political conspiracies of a decadent monarchy, and arguing in line with the new PRP's program that the biggest danger was "*Istibdat*" (Orbay 2000: 167).

Orbay's stories outline a political landscape of secrecy and rumors which affect many bureaucrats and parliamentarians. Especially in the aftermath of the declaration of the Republic, Orbay frequently mentions controversial incidents involving Mustafa Kemal and his relationship to opposition in general, without giving a definite conclusion to the story or making any evaluative judgment. Orbay also documents others' accusations against Mustafa Kemal, such as his alleged involvement in unsolved murders, without making any conclusive remarks. He usually does not explicitly endorse any of these criticisms, but neither does he refute or disprove them. Such an ambiguous silence raises questions over the trustworthiness and reliability of Mustafa Kemal himself. The most well-known such incident is the murder of Ali Şükrü Bey, an outspoken critic of Mustafa Kemal, by Mustafa Kemal's bodyguard Topal Osman in March 1923. The incident is known as a political assassination in Turkey, and some authors refer to it as one of the earlier symbols of Kemalist authoritarianism.⁹² Orbay details the incident without directly accusing Mustafa Kemal, but ends his discussion by expressing severe fear and concerns about the secrecy and lawlessness prevailing in Ankara.

⁹² See for instance Kadir Mısırlıoğlu, "Ali Şükrü Bey," Sebil Yayınları, 1996.

Orbay shares Cebesoy's views on the distinction between *etraf* and Mustafa Kemal. Gazi is often portrayed as surrounded by *etraf*, which is full of dangerous, decadent people who could resort to any means for their personal ends. Even more than a decade later, in 1936, when Cebesoy insists that Orbay meet with Mustafa Kemal after Orbay's return from exile, Orbay refuses, claiming that he was afraid not of Mustafa Kemal himself, but *etraf*. In recollecting, writing and editing these memories later, Orbay adamantly maintains that he was right not to go and meet with Mustafa Kemal, and thereby avoided a life-threatening danger. Even in his recognition of the unexpectedness and unjustness of what happened later on, Cebesoy and Orbay both draw a clear line between Mustafa Kemal and those others who control him. By not directly blaming Mustafa Kemal, they narratively avoid confrontation and affirm their loyalty to the well-established friendship between them.

Karabekir is perhaps the harshest in condemning the extremists and opportunists among *etraf*, and he describes them as poisoning both Mustafa Kemal and the wider public. He does not praise Mustafa Kemal, and leaves it ambiguous whether Mustafa Kemal was responsible for the recent institutional changes. According to Karabekir, new cadres which did not deserve their posts were symptomatically concerned about their status, and this is why they felt threatened by the opposition of the PRP. He also disapproves of the leading cadres for not representing the national culture. He argues that the extremists within the leading cadres are disrespectful of the defining cultural and social tenets of the Turkish nation, particularly its religious beliefs and related forms of everyday morality or virtue.

Karabekir views the ideological battles in the press and in the parliament, where the government and its supporters attack Karabekir and other members of the PRP, as dishonest and deceitful defamation:

June 20, 1926, Sunday – İsmet Pasha went to İzmir with the Istanbul train. Falih Rıfkı again attacking [our] party shamelessly in the [Daily] *Hakimiyet-i Milliyet*: “Here is the result of the party game played by our previous Friends: last year, the Sheikh Said incident, and at the start of this year, the anti-government initiative and the assassination attempt where we heard the name of Şükrü Beyefendi!” You without honor—when the government knew about the Kurdish issue way before the founding party, when it is given that the government did not even inform the local governors about it, how can you still ascribe any of this to the party? If Şükrü Bey is of this or that view, how can you smear a group of people that gathered under a public program. It is obvious that the assassination is directed against the party (Karabekir 2009b: 989).⁹³

Falih Rıfkı Atay is one of the leading figures of the intellectual circles of this *etraf*, and Karabekir’s anger towards him months after the Sheikh Said Revolt is an example of how sometimes certain members of *etraf* could be explicitly identified by name. Karabekir characterizes Atay’s writings about the PRP as dishonorable and accuses Atay of disseminating groundless defamation against the party. Atay was a leading intellectual between the 1920s and 1940s, and was known for his close relationship with Mustafa Kemal. Even though Karabekir does not directly challenge Mustafa Kemal in the text, to a reader who is even slightly familiar with Atay’s profile, Karabekir’s accusations raise questions over the thin line between *etraf* and Mustafa Kemal. Karabekir ends his quote by asserting that the İzmir assassination attempt was actually an

⁹³ “20 Haziran 1926 Pazar – İsmet Pasa, İstanbul treniyle İzmir’e gitmiş. Hakimi-yet-i Milliyet’te Falih Rıfkı, namussuzca yine fırkaya taarruzla, söyle diyor: “İşte bizim dünkü es dostların oynadığı fırkacılık oyununun netayici: Geçen sene Şeyh Sait vakası; bu sene baslarında, Şükrü Beyefendi’nin ismini işittiğimiz taklib-i hükümet ve suikast macerası!” Namussuz herif, Kürt meselesinden, fırka teşekkülünden aylarca evvel hükümet haberdar iken, isyan mıntıkasındaki valilere bile haber vermediği sabit iken, bunu nasıl hala fırkaya atfediyorsun. Şükrü Bey su veya bu fikirde ise, muayyen bir program etrafında toplanan insanları nasıl lekeliyorsun. Suikast, fırkaya karşı olduğu anlaşılıyor.”

attack on the PRP, implying that underground forces prepared the assassination to publically tarnish its reputation. Throughout the memoirs, he systematically maintains that these cadres were constantly scheming to eliminate him and his friends through illegitimate plots before and after the Izmir assassination attempt. While targeting Atay, Karabekir also critiques the government for not properly handling the Kurdish problem, even though it was informed about the possibility of a revolt months before it happened.

6. 5. 2. Moralizing Discourses on *Etraf*

In comparison to Orbay and Karabekir, Cebesoy is more careful to distinguish Mustafa Kemal, as the president, from the cabinet and its political associates. Cebesoy describes how Mustafa Kemal was surrounded by the “greedy” and “resentful” *etraf* (Cebesoy 2007: 646) and locates the problem (the reason why he and his friends were disconnected from Mustafa Kemal) in the influence of *etraf*, which was composed of actors motivated by avidity. He maintains that his friends held similar respect and trust for Mustafa Kemal, and describes himself as an unyielding peace-maker between Mustafa Kemal and his friends who struggled to overcome the blockage of *etraf*, keeping alive the spirit of the brotherhood of comrades that led the Independence War.

Both Cebesoy and Orbay draw a clear line between Mustafa Kemal and those who influenced him, however. By neither directly blaming Mustafa Kemal nor mentioning him in any negative way when depicting tense political scenes, they avoid confronta-

tion and affirm their loyalty to the well-established friendship between them. Karabekir, on the other hand, does include Mustafa Kemal within the “decadent” cultural landscape of the new Republic. He frequently depicts unpleasant scenes in which Mustafa Kemal was involved, though he avoids statements that target Mustafa Kemal directly. Many of his depictions involve Mustafa Kemal in “immoral” (*la-ahlaki*) settings or merely situated within an “immoral” *etraf*. Karabekir could be considered the one who expressed traditional conservative-religious sensibilities most comfortably. Karabekir expresses utter discomfort with the long, pre-prepared tributes (*medhiye*) for Mustafa Kemal during the first commemoration of 30 August, the Victory Day (*Zafer Bayramı*), which celebrated one of the most decisive battles in the National Struggle:

August 30, 1924, Saturday—We arrived by 12, noon. Trains had arrived from Ankara and İstanbul. Aide Salih called [me] to the train car [reserved for] Gazi [Atatürk]. [It was] in a state of tavern, *irreligious and immoral*. I discussed [the state] of the country. He said [the issues I mentioned] were indeed requisite. The ceremony occurred later. Pre-prepared tributes were recited. A set of subservient [officers] lauded Gazi on behalf of the press, academics, lawyers, etc. *Erkan-ı Harbiye Reisi* [chief of staff] mentioned the National Struggle. But again, no reference to the Eastern front. This ceremony was disorderly. Officers were rude to guests. A young journalist, called Nüzhet Hâşim, was hypocritically making speeches on behalf of academics and teachers, but one could hear sentences like academics were burdens. On behalf of lawyers, Muhtetin Baha (former Bursa MP) was lauding Gazi and accusing the nation of being ungrateful! On our return to the train, I bitterly protested these hypocrisies to Fevzi Pasha, but [I wish I] had spelled out the truth, or at least a part of it. Even Gazi, at the train, for a moment, said, “It will be whatever the nation wants!” After my departure, [as I heard later] he told other commanders that: “Nation, and all that – these are nothing but empty talk.” (Karabekir 2009b: 927).⁹⁴

⁹⁴ “30 Ağustos 1924 Cumartesi — 12 öğleyin vardık. Ankara ve İstanbul’dan trenler gelmiş. Gazi’nin vagonuna yaver Salih seslenerek çağırıldı. Bir meyhane halinde, la-dini ve la-ahlaki. Memleketten bahsettim. Lazımdır dedi. Merasim 2 sonrada oldu. Hazırlanmış birtakım methiyeler okundu. Birtakım bendeler matbuat namına, muallimler namına, avukatlar namına [...] gaziyi methettiler. Erkan-ı Harbiye Reisi istiklal harplerinden bahsetti. Fakat yine Şark’tan hiç bahis yok. Bu merasim intizamsızdı.

This quotation is one of the most vivid descriptions of Karabekir’s discontent with the growing “decadence” within the changing public representations of political power and among *etraf* surrounding Mustafa Kemal. Karabekir complains that his successes on the Eastern front were not mentioned within these long praises. He mourns that the day was celebrated in an “irreligious” (*la-dini*) and “immoral” (*la-ahlaki*) style. This is one of many instances where Karabekir criticized the RPP leaders for denigrating or slandering him in order to steal his and his brothers’ moral dignity.⁹⁵ In the abrupt last sentence, he claims that he later heard that Mustafa Kemal said, “Nation, and all that – these are nothing but empty talk.” While not providing any context or detail, the very ambiguity and abruptness of the way he quotes Mustafa Kemal calls into question whether and how Mustafa Kemal, who claimed to embody and protect the national will, actually respected and valued the “Turkish nation.” One is also left wondering whether Karabekir meant that Mustafa Kemal himself was also hypocritical like *etraf*, as he spoke differently about the “nation” for different audiences.

Karabekir’s story of that day ends with an emotionally dubious assertion of how he and his friends resigned from military service and eventually became members of the first opposition party of the new Turkish Republic. In this story of how he became an “opponent,” Karabekir paints a sad picture of how the nation was being betrayed, inviting the reader to commemorate the glorious and forceful moral superiority that defined the Independence War. He highlights the emotional vibrancy of their political

Misafirlere neferler haşin muamele yapıyorlardı. Muallimler namına Nüzhet Haşim isminde bir genç gazeteci riyakar beyanatta bulunurken, muallimler namına züldür diye sözler iştiliyordu. Avukatlar namına diye Muhittin Baha (Sabık Bursa Mebusu) Gaziyi medh ile milleti nankörlükle itham ediyordu! Trene dönüşte Fevzi Paşa’ya riyakarlıkları acı protesto ettim [...]. Gazi bile trende görüşürken bir aralık “Millet nasıl isterse öyle olur!” dedi. Benim müfaretatımdan sonra ise kumandanlara demiş: Millet falan hepsi laf.”

⁹⁵ Karabekir (2009b: 964, 1010, 1077).

choices, and portrays their active opposition as a legitimate reaction. Accordingly, the nation, which was actually embodied in the figure of the selfless brothers, reacts to the immoral and irreligious deviations from the history of moral grandeur that was asserted in the Independence War.

6. 6. Formation of the PRP

Given the incessant narratives about brotherhood, comradeship and loyalty within these memoirs, how do they explain and justify their separation from the *Halk Fırkası* and Mustafa Kemal? All three authors give the most detailed and fervent accounts about the attacks they endured in parliament in the immediate period before their resignation from the People's Party. Karabekir, Orbay and Cebesoy provide ample details and parliamentary logs over how they were being continuously harassed and were forced to respond by certain figures from RPP. All three represent their collaboration as negative solidarity instead of an ideological splinter in their memoirs. They reiterate that they were commonly under pressure from those that targeted them as a threat to new Republic. Hence, they present being an "opposition" as an external pressure that was forced on them. The degeneration of the spirit of the national struggle into a regime of bureaucratic domination is the main narrative framework that is used by authors to relocate the PRP to a position of savior of the nation. By infusing brotherly collaboration and the heroic moments of Independence War to the stories of post-1923 conflict, they reclaim their authority as legitimate political actors. PRP is ultimately framed to represent the "nation" not merely an oppositional party that put together marginal backward forces as identified and targeted in *Nutuk*.

6. 6. 1. The Nature of the Opposition Posed by the PRP

The authors retrospectively read the history of the discords emerging among brothers which eventually evolved into political rivalries as a background to how and why they established the first opposition party: in order to preserve the spirit of the Turkish revolution. The authors refrain from portraying themselves (and the PRP) as ideology-driven. They disregard the political and ideological nature of their own discontent with the leaders of the RPP and portray their opposition as a moral duty that reaffirms the spirit of the nation and the Republic. They are deeply skeptical of (what they viewed as) the unhinged and unmoderated radical reformism of the RPP, seeing it as driven by an avid greed for political power and domination. In that sense, for them, *etraf* and the RPP under its influence did not represent the Turkish nation at all. They view themselves as vanguards of the revolution and the Republic, following a moral responsibility to preserve and represent the Turkish revolution against the danger posed by *etraf*.

They refrain from asserting commitment to multi-party politics or democracy to explain the transformation of the opposition into a separate party against Mustafa Kemal's own RPP. Instead, they often portray the need for opposition as an inevitable requirement to stop the hijacking of the revolution. The memoirs instead accuse the post-1923 cadres of RPP for being an instrument of power that betrays the moral quality of the Independence War and the values of the Revolution towards civilization. For Cebesoy for instance, criticizing RPP is essential to justifying the establishment of the PRP. His introduction of the new party's principles might be interpreted as documenting what People Party lacked: transparency, people's sovereignty, rule of law and progress:

The program of this party was examining the situation quite well. [...] It was prepared based in principles like contempt for narrow factionalism, party politics, greed and domination; support for national unity, opposition to favoritism that destroys development of abilities and creates a ruthless predilection to steal; favoring the truest form of national sovereignty, progress and perfection; assurance that legitimate and legal tools would never be suspended when it comes to attaining political goals or reforms; respect for the people's own spheres of influence and development in everyday life. And as such it was impossible for any rational person to be considered natural and desirable. The basic difference between the two parties was the following: The new party was more prone to populism. RPP procedures were secret, those of PRP were open. In Europe, party processions are open. The biggest enemy of democracy is secrecy (Cebesoy 2007: 512).⁹⁶

Cebesoy suggests that the program of the new party could be read as a thorough investigation into the problems of the current rule. The existing party, of which they were also members before, is described as practicing secrecy, partisanship, tyranny and hatred. The new party is hence framed as an inevitable response to the growing tyranny (*tahakküm*) and blind loyalty to power (*intisap*) caused by RPP. Cebesoy argues that RPP takes decisions secretly and PRP is instead a transparent party in line with the contemporary political parties in European countries. The secrecy is framed as posing a danger to the fate of the nation itself. Cebesoy does not say that the reason for the second party is an attempt to adapt to multi-party political culture. Nowhere in the texts, he or other authors praise multi-party system and explain their party as an attempt to contribute to Turkey's first experiment with multi-party system. Being in

⁹⁶ “Bu fırkanın beyannamesi, vaziyeti iyi bir surette teşrih etmekteydi. Umumi efkara karşı pek kati taahhütlere girişilmişti. Dar fırkacılık zihniyetinden, ihtiras ve tahakkümlerden nefret, milli birliğe taraftarlık, şahsi kabiliyetleri söndüren ve memlekette imansız bir midencilğe yol açan intisap ve himaye sistemlerine aleyhtarlık, en hakiki şekliyle milli hakimiyeti, terakkiyi, tekamülü iltizam, maksadın istihsali hususunda meşru ve kanuni vasıtalar haricine çıkarılmayacağına temin, mahalli hayatta halkın nüfuz ve inkişafını terviç gibi esaslar üzerine hazırlanmıştı ki, bunların her idrak sahibince tabii ve şayan-ı arzu görülmemesine imkan yoktu. İki fırka arasındaki başlıca farklar şunlardı: Yeni fırka halkçılığa daha mütemayildi. Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasının içtimaları gizli, Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası'nın ise alenidir. Avrupa'da fırka içtimaları alenidir. Demokrasinin en büyük düşmanı gizliliklidir.”

opposition is framed in the memoirs as a form of negative solidarity against the government cadres that attacked and rendered them as outcasts and traitors.

Karabekir's emotional depiction in his testimony during the Independence court trials, on how he was forced to involve in the founding of a new party illuminates the shared feeling of being outcast:

I did my best to prevent the discord between İsmet Pasha and Rauf Bey which had started because of the Lausanne Conference. But I just could not succeed in my efforts. Of course it wasn't possible for [them] to have same ideas and opinions in everything and be in complete unison. But still there was the possibility for people with a strong friendship to work in unison for matters of country and nation. I spent a lot of efforts to establish this. But when I was dealing with this and was trying to make peace between Rauf Bey and İsmet Pasha, the negative coverage [in newspapers that targeted me] started. It was especially hard to tolerate all the meaningless derogatory remarks that I had to endure during my post as Army Inspector General. All the bills and proposals that I prepared after long and detailed analysis was being left in a corner without even being considered, and we were being subjected to propaganda that we were reactionary and backward. [...] The real principle was unity. If that wasn't broken down, there wouldn't be anymore problems. When I was Army Inspector General, I was even being attacked for saying that it is not appropriate to be a parliamentarian when one is a soldier. Nevertheless, it became clear how right was my position after a little while. In the end, it became inevitable that friends who saved this country was about to separate from each other under the unfluence of some others that emerged [out of nowhere]. As a result, I resigned from the party and visited İsmet pasha. And then I went back to my house and closed myself. I had no intention to found an opposition party. I had decided to get involved with my own life, away from politics. But the other side did not let me be. They were constantly trying to mislead the public against me, asking "Why are away? Why are silent? Speak! Come out!" implying that I am avoiding or escaping from duty. It wasn't possible to remain that way for long. So the PRP was born out of the influence of this situation. (Erman 1971: 120–2) (Karabekir 2009c).⁹⁷

⁹⁷ "İsmet Paşa ile Rauf Bey arasında, Lozan Konferansı yüzünden başlayan ayrılığa mani olmağa çok çalıştım. Fakat bir türlü muvaffak olamadım. Her şeyde aynı düşünce ve kanaate sahip, müttehid olmak imkanı tabii yoktu. Ama, buna rağmen kuvvetli arkadaşların memleket ve millet işlerinde elbirliği ile çalışmaları imkanı vardı. Ben bunu temin için çok uğraşım. Fakat bununla uğraşır ve bu arada Rauf Beyle İsmet Paşayı barıştırıp birleştirmeye çalışırken, aleyhimde neşriyat başladı. Bilhassa ordu müfettişliğim sırasında maruz kaldığım manasız muamelelere tahammül gücütü. Uzun ve derin tetkikler neticesinde hazırladığım layihalar, göz gezdirilmek zahmetine bile katlanılmadan bir köşeye atılıyor ve

Karabekir argues that even though he and his friends did not necessarily share same opinions in everything, he worked tremendously to prevent discords that had started with Lausanne Proceedings. He states that the main reason for his involvement in an opposition party is not holding a different vision but an inevitable result of growing tensions and pressures he had encountered within the larger political and social field. His efforts for reconciliation specifically between Orbay and İnönü were fruitless. He complains that a systematic propaganda targeting him and his work initially pushed him to a hermit life at his home. Karabekir suggests that the continuing accusations and harassment from “the other side” is the reason behind the initiation of a new party because his silence was interpreted as an escape from responsibility and even worse as an escape from service to the nation.

Karabekir is almost apologetic about founding a new party and insists that he is a staunch nationalist that consistently prioritized unity (*vahdet*) and reconciliation. Karabekir’s testimony has a strong undertone that claims that what ultimately brings him to the courtroom is a result of the gradual degeneration following the Independence struggle of the Turkish nation. Karabekir does not always specifically engage the actual speeches in the court, and instead resorts to a higher audience in more abstract

mütemadiyen geri kafalılığımız iddia edilerek propagandalar yapılıyordu. (...) Esas; birlikte, vahdette idi. O bozulmasaydı hiç kötülük olmazdı. Ben ordu müfettişi bulunduğum sırada askerlikte Meb’usluğun telif edilemeyeceğini (hem asker hem milletvekili olunamayacağını) ileriye sürdüğüm zaman bile hücumu uğruyordum. Halbuki, ne kadar isabet ettiğim biraz sonra anlaşıldı. Nihayet, bu memleketi kurtarmış olan arkadaşların, zuhur eden bir takımları tarafından, birbirlerinden ayrılması önlenemez bir hale geldi. Böyle olunca Fırkadan istifa ile İsmet Paşayı ziyaret ettim. Sonra gidip, evime kapandım, oturdum. Muhalif bir fırka kurmak tasavvurunda değildim. Siyasetten uzak, kendi alemimde sükuna dalmak kararındaydım. Fakat karşı taraf bırakmadı. Boyuna: “Ne susuyorsun? Ne duruyorsun? Söylesenize... Çıkınız” gibi sözlerle umumi efkârı (kamuoyunu) bir bu suretle, yani memleket hizmetinden kaçıyor muyuz gibi aleyhimize çevirmek istiyorlardı... Bu durumda daha fazla durulamazdı. İşte Terakkiperver Fırka bu ahval tesiriyle doğdu.”

terms. In this way, he qualifies setting up an opposition party and his political activities as undertaking of noble tasks at the service of nation forced by outside conditions despite his unwillingness to do so.

For Cebesoy too, the reason to form a new party is neither ideological disagreements nor power-struggle. It is about a series of misunderstandings and manipulations that have caused the great rift that divided brothers. Yet, Cebesoy is the only opposition figure who continuously underscores that he continued to have faith in Mustafa Kemal in the course of events. He insists on the artificialness of the discord among them and Mustafa Kemal. Like Karabekir, he does not completely refuse existence of ideological differences but to him the crux of the problem is personal misunderstandings caused by malevolent people around Mustafa Kemal. Despite his loyalty to Mustafa Kemal, Cebesoy is no less critical of the emerging political regime than Karabekir or Orbay. He vehemently claims that totalitarianism is gradually growing as a dangerous tendency on the side of the government that is controlled by those groups inclined to dictatorship:

One of the most essential differences between us and the ruling party was that once elected, the majority of the parliament would not be bound by anything and would rule the future of the nation, in other words, would be able to exert a dictatorship by a ruling group. We, on the other hand, had accepted the principle that the Grand National Assembly, which gathers executive and legislative powers under its mandate, would not be able to abstain from consulting the nation's preferences on some issues (Cebesoy 2007: 522).⁹⁸

⁹⁸ “İktidar partisiyle aramızdaki en mühim zihniyet farklarından biri bir defa seçildikten sonra Meclis çoğunluğunun hiçbir kayıpla mukayyet olmayarak milletin mukadderatına hâkim olacağını, yani bir nevi zümre diktatörlüğü yapacağını iddia etmeleri idi. Biz ise icrai ve teşrik kudreti kendisinden toplamış olan Büyük Millet Meclisinin bazı hususlarda milletin reyine müracaat etmekten vareste kalamıyacağını kabul etmiştik. Bu kadar ağır mesuliyet ve vazifeleri üzerine almış olan bir Meclisin

Cebesoy delineates the main difference between RPP and their party as the latter's outright rejection of the insurmountable power of parliamentary majority. The monopolistic rank (*inhisarcı zümresi*) within the RPP is targeted for making trouble and acting against the national interests. Thus, again, the ideological difference described does not acknowledge a legitimate co-existence of different opinions or a belief in pluralistic democracy. The new party allegedly exists to counter the totalitarian tendencies within the existing government which could potentially harm the national interests. National interest and the author and his friends' loyalty to it are raised as the main concern to justify the new party.

6. 6. 2. Against Religious Fanaticism

In line with the narrative centering of Turkish nationalism, religious fanaticism is also systematically rejected in all the memoirs. In search of a sounder ideological ground to associate themselves with the new parliamentary regime under the guiding principles of Mustafa Kemal's socio-cultural and political revolutions, they strictly avoid appearing as a reincarnation of the *Second Group* (the opposition group in the first Ankara parliament with pro-Caliphate tendencies in 1920-2 period). To that purpose, they highlight their devotion to combat religious backwardness, or to avoid spreading obscurantist calls to bring the Sultanate or the Caliphate back. Particularly Cebesoy, being the most secular and modernist among the three, expresses severe disapproval for reactionary religious forces that existed within the society and affirms the necessity of the reforms targeting such forces. Cebesoy's childhood memoirs and other

umumi efkara karşı çok hassas bulunarak esaslı meselelerde hakikaten vekalet almadıkça bir teşebbüste bulunmaması lazımdı.”

writings also confirm that he was always a secular Western-minded who did not practice Islam. Cebesoy refuses the idea that tolerance to religious extremism was the main difference between the two parties. Cebesoy suggests that religious extremism is a centuries old phenomenon that exists anywhere in the world, rejecting the accusation that their party stirred it up or encouraged the extremist people:

Just as it was the case everywhere, an insidious and secretive reactionary movement had emerged among [our nation] either. There was a clique of [religious fanatics] that would capitalize on reactionary movements for their own benefit, and a segment of people that would gather around those [fanatics]. This clique wasn't able to rise suddenly. Because a Grand National Assembly, which was known with its executive fervour and patriotism, and a victorious grand commander, who was renowned among the citizens as the saviour of the country were legitimately occupying positions of ruling power. At that stage, any kind of movement would be considered as a vicious rebellion against reform laws and movements, just like it would be during the National Struggle, and would cause the Independence Tribunals to act against them. So the success of the reactionaries depended upon dividing the intellectuals of the country into factions (Cebesoy 2007: 487).⁹⁹

Accordingly, the reactionary forces do not have an undefeatable power, but feed on the wrong behaviors by some members of the government, members of the parliament and prominent journalists. Thus, Cebesoy relocates the cause of the problem within the extreme secularists that disrespected religious sensibilities for the sake of revolution. The quote reflects a political sensibility that outspokenly condemns religious extremism, and counter-revolutionary conservatism. Cebesoy critiques the government's

⁹⁹ "Her yerde olduğu gibi, bizde de sinsi ve gizli bir irtica hareketi baş göstermişti. Asırlardan beri, irtica hareketlerini kendilerine bir gelir edinmiş bazı sarıklılarla bunların etrafında toplanmış bir zümre vardı. Bu, birden bire başkaldıramıyordu. Çünkü icraat ve vatanperverliğiyle tanınmış bir Büyük Millet Meclisi ile Riyaset-i Cumhur makamına seçilmiş ve bütün vatandaşlar nazarında memleketin hakiki kurtarıcısı olarak tanınmış muzaffer bir başkumandan iktidar mevkilerini meşru olarak işgal etmiş bulunuyorlardı. Bu esnada hangi suretle olursa olsun, bir kımıldanma, inkılap kanun ve hareketlerine karşı Millî Mücadele esnasında şiddetli bir isyan gibi telakki edilecek ve icraatıyla tanınmış İstiklal Mahkemeleri derhal harekete geçecekti. Mürtecilerin muvaffakiyeti, ancak memleket münevverlerini ikiye ayırmakla mümkündü."

harsh policies for fueling extremism and solidifying its power through oppressive measures.

Despite an outspoken denunciation of religious fanaticism as in the case of Cebesoy, Karabekir's memoirs display ambivalent ideas with respect to religiosity and its role of religion in the post-Republican Turkey. Although he is known for his criticisms directed at Mustafa Kemal's "immoral" life (which I will elucidate more in the coming section) his memoirs are full of critiques directed against wrong religious ideas and practices. We read that Karabekir was raised in a religious family, his mother and father were both very religious and his father belonged to a Mevlevi order, a Sufi community that is regarded relatively moderate in Turkey (Karabekir 2009c: 22). Karabekir emphasizes that his parents taught him moral values such as being a good person, not relying on others and being self-dependent. He names his father's religiosity as Turkish model:

He would never leave his prayers, or fasting. He would often try to pray extra in order to compensate for the prayers he missed during the Crimea [military] campaign. He had complete faith in [the fact that everything came from God]. But he was also convinced that the individual had autonomous volition, and thus had the capacity to lead his life according to his will. The impression my father left on me was that he was a complete "Turkish model" (ibid).¹⁰⁰

Karabekir identifies his father's religiosity as a Turkish synthesis which combines his prayers with a firm belief in individual agency. Throughout the book, one frequently encounters the distinguished and noble qualities of the Turks as a race. Reading his

¹⁰⁰ "Namazını, orucunu terk etmezdi. Kırım Seferi'nde ve gençliğinde edemediği namazlar için de beş vaktine beş katardı. Kaza ve kadere tamamıyla inanırdı. Fakat şahsın irade-i cüziyesi olduğundan azim ve iradesiyle hayatını istediği istikamette yürütebileceğine de kani idi. Babamın bende bıraktığı intiba tam bir "Türk modeli" olmasıdır."

experiences in different schools and his travels to different parts of the Ottoman Empire before the Independence War, we also hear him saying numerous derogatory comments on Arabs, how uncivil their behaviors are and how wrong their practices of Islam were. Thus, Turkishness and its superior values are consistently emphasized to frame Karabekir's patriotism and disregard for pan-Islamist or similar ideologies.

In line with underscoring the religiosity of his family, Karabekir makes overtly critical remarks on the modernist-Jacobin revolutions that targeted religious beliefs. As early as the Lausanne period, Karabekir was noting the differences of opinion between him and İnönü:

August 19, 1923, Sunday – Gazi pasha, his wife Latife and İsmet pasha came to dinner. We had a conversation about the future program for hours. İsmet says we should completely abolish the hodjas. I held that specific jobs had to be put under programs, and that every step [we take] should prioritize economic benefit, and should eventually serve the unity of the people. In other words, the unity of feeling, the unity of economics, and the unity of benefit among the nation should always be maintained. Our thoughts are against each other, İsmet thinks we should abolish [the power of] the hodjas since we have the power in our hands. I had him read Öğütler's piece "Religion and Sect" (Karabekir 2009a: 872).¹⁰¹

In a dinner Karabekir hosted where İnönü and Mustafa Kemal had participated, we read that the future of the country is being debated and İnönü is in favor of dismantling all religious teachers. Karabekir describes himself as a leading figure who

¹⁰¹ "19 Ağustos 1923 Pazar – Gazi Paşa, hanımı Latife ve İsmet Paşa akşam yemeğine geldiler. Atı programı hakkında saatlerce görüştüğ. İsmet hocaları toptan kaldıralım diyor. Ben muayyen işlerin program altına alınması ve her adımın iktisadi menafı teminine ve halkın vahdetine hizmet etmesi fikrindeyim. Yani daima millette his birliği, iktisat birliği, menfaat birliği sarsılmamalı. Düşünceler aykırı, İsmet kuvvet elimizde iken hocaları kaldırmalı diyor. Öğütler'in "Din ve mezhep" parçasını okuttum."

teaches the significance of religion to İnönü for the unity of the nation and its feelings. To that purpose, he even makes book suggestions to İnönü.

Moderacy and embodying nation are important qualities Karabekir highlights while he discusses his position against religion. For instance, we read that he used to drink alcoholic beverages when he was young and also did not pray and fast in different periods:

The prayers and fasting that I had to leave during the second year in military college (because of my illness) still remain as they are [waiting to be compensated]. Sometimes this happens. I rather hate bigotry much more. Considering the significance of having a spiritual connection, I also hate unbelievers. [...] During my early adolescence in Manastır and Edirne I used to drink beer every now and then. But I never was addicted to anything. I especially could never like rakı (Karabekir 2009c: 177).¹⁰²

Karabekir hates religious fanaticism and deism equally. He is proud of his distance from alcohol as it proves that he did not get addicted to anything in his life, hence he has control of his life. Throughout his memoirs, Karabekir highlights his religious sensitivities but also consistently distances himself from religious blind-faith and fanaticism (*taassub*): “Biz abdestsiz soyundan değildik fakat mutaassıpları da sevmiyorduk” (Karabekir 2009b: 114). He cites different examples from everyday life in Istanbul and other cities before the World War I in which prevalence of *taassub* results in illogical practices and injustices:

What kind of a period are we living in, my God? One day, when I wanted to get a carriage with my mother in Sultanahmet, the guy told me “It has become

¹⁰² “Harbiye ikinci sınıf nihayetinde hastalığım dolayısıyla bıraktığım namaz ve oruç öylece kaldı. Ara sıra oluyor. Taassuptan daha ziyade nefret ediyorum. Manevi bir bağ olmasını da düşünerek dinsizlerden de nefret ediyorum. [...] Manastır ve Edirne’de ilk gençlik yıllarımda ara sıra bira içtim. Fakat hiçbir şeyin tiryakisi olmadım. Hele rakıyı bir türlü sevmedim.”

forbidden to have a man and a woman in the same carriage.” I told him, “This is my mother. Even you’d understand. God damn those that give such beastly orders!” and forcefully convinced him to let us get to the carriage (Karabekir 2009c: 190).¹⁰³

The quote is a good example of how Karabekir tries to distance himself from the extremist religious practices and opinions that were targeted by RPP. Karabekir, similar to most of friends from PRP, was systematically accused with being conservative, religious extremist and hence ideologically against the Republic and its Westernizing reforms. Although he does not welcome the reforms with enthusiasm like Cebesoy did, he tries to portray his religiosity and hatred for fanaticism as a mere embodiment of a Turkish culture. Discussion of his religiosity in his memoirs is a fine example to his portrayal of himself as a devout nationalist whose practices were only reflection of embodying the national character. In that regard, he could arguably be considered as the first outspoken models of a Turkish-Islamic synthesis.

6. 7. Independence Courts and the Political Pressure on PRP Leaders

After the Lausanne Proceedings (1923), due to the increasingly critical and polemical stances Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay took in the parliament towards a series of governments led by İsmet İnönü, their relationship with the RPP government and the political authority of Mustafa Kemal became increasingly strained. In 1924, their *de facto* elimination from power in the new political scene led them to found the first opposition party of the new republic, the PRP. Following a religious insurgency led by

¹⁰³ “Ne devirde yaşıyoruz Yarabbi. Bir gün Sultanahmet’te annemle bir faytona binmek isteyişimize arabacı, “Efendim erkekle kadının bir arabaya binmelerini yasak ettirdiler.” Demişti. Ben de “Bu benim annem. Sen bile anlarsın. Allah belasını versin böyle hayvanca emir verenlerin” diyerek zorla binmişim.”

Kurdish leaders in Eastern Anatolia (the “Sheikh Said rebellion”), and the subsequent involvement of the army, the government closed down the PRP and introduced the “Law on the Maintenance of Order” (*Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu*) in 1925. Furthermore, a year after the insurgency, an assassination attempt targeting Mustafa Kemal in İzmir caused a massive wave of tribunals. All opposition politicians and dissident figures were arrested and put on trial. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay were accused of plotting to overthrow the government and assassinate Mustafa Kemal.¹⁰⁴

The overarching theme of the way Cebesoy, Orbay and Karabekir remember the process was how swords were unsheathed finally with a brutal showdown under the arbitrary authority of Independence Courts. Cebesoy for instance critically analyses circulating discourses in the press as well as political circles that had been portraying Cebesoy and others as conservative reactionaries who schemed to prevent political reforms:

İsmet pasha government’s first act was to close the newspapers *Tevhid-i Efkar*, *Son Telgraf*, *İstiklal*, *Sebilürreşat*, and *Aydınlık*, on March 6, 1925, indefinitely. Ankara Independence Tribunal had also started by making a declaration on March 12. In one part of this declaration, it was said that “those who instrumentalize religion for their personal and political benefits; those who poison public opinion and cultivate contempt and rebelliousness against the existing administration; those who transgress against our country’s security or against the peace of our dear people; those who escape military duty and conscription or to incite rebellion and reactionarism through any means—they will find our tribunal against them, since it represents the Republican people’s desire for maintenance of order.” However, the government that gained extraordinary powers through the Law for Maintenance of Order had already conveyed its declaration to the nation through the intermediary of the President. Neither the parliament nor the government had bothered to intervene in this act of the

¹⁰⁴ Zürcher (2004: 166-76), Ahmad (1993: 52-71).

tribunal that had started its mandate with such an infringement. On the contrary, 61 of our towns were left without any legal jurisdiction under the uncontrolled authority of this Political court (Cebesoy 2007: 556).¹⁰⁵

During the same days, our party was the target of a series of slandering accusations. In response, I made the following comments as the secretary general [of the party]: “There has been some insinuations and rumors about Progressive Party’s alleged support for reactionarism with plans to change the form of government. Our party, which was founded thanks to laws that granted it, has been conducting its opposition within and out of the parliament in a legitimate fashion by following the basic principles of law and legality. No other movement beyond this [legitimate form of opposition] is related in anyway to our party. Therefore, our party will always remain safe and secure from all types of rumors and secret, suspicious goals (Cebesoy 2007: 559).¹⁰⁶

Cebesoy mainly targets the Law on the Maintenance Order (*Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu*) and the Independence Courts enacted by İnönü government. He suggests that these extremist measures were based on unjust attacks, outrageous defamations and ungrounded excuses fabricated for repressing the opposition party. The above quote encapsulates well how Cebesoy and his friends felt being attacked at all fronts and İnönü’s government pressured severely to deter them completely from a legitimate space of political opposition. They systematically framed the real threat was not

¹⁰⁵ “İsmet Paşa Hükümeti ilk İcraatı olarak 6 Mart 1925 ‘de Tevhid-i Efkar, Son Telgraf, İstiklal, Sebilürreşat, Aydınlık Gazetelerini müddetsiz olarak kapattırması. Ankara İstiklal Mahkemesi de 12 Martta neşrettiği bir beyanname ile işe başlamıştı. Bu beyannamenin bir kısmında “Dini; şahsi ve siyasi menfaatlerine alet edenler, efkar-ı ammeyi zehirleyerek idareyi hazıraya karşı nefret ve isyan hissi telkin edenler, memleketin asayiş ve emniyetini, aziz halkımızın huzur ve istirahatini ihlal edenler, vazife-i askeriyeden firar veya firan teşvik ve her ne suretle isyan ve irticaa müzaheret edenler, Cumhuriyet halkının takrir-i sükun arzusunu temsil eden mahkememizi derhal karşılarından bulacaktı” denmişti. Halbuki Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu ile fevkalade salahiyetler almış olan hükümet, Cumhurreisinin delalet-iyle millete beyannamesini bildirmişti. Bu mahkemenin salahiyetini tecavüz edercesine başlayan bu hareketine Meclis de, hükümet de müdahale etmemiştir. Bilakis 61 vilayetimiz bu siyasi mahkemenin adli hududu içerisinde kontrolsüz, kendi başına bırakılmıştı.”

¹⁰⁶ “Aynı günlerde fırkamız bir takım iftiralarla itham edilmek istenmişti. Bu münasebetle umumi kâtip sıfatıyla şu beyanatta bulundum: ‘Terakkiperver Fırka’nın, taklîbi hükümet fikriyle irticaa ve kaçakçılığa müzaheret ettiğine dair bazı imalar ve şayialar vardır. Kanunla teşekkülüne müsaade edilmiş olan fırkamız Meclisin dışında ve içinde hukuku esasiyeye istinaden meşru surette muhalefet etmektedir. Bunun dışında hiçbir hareket fırkamızla alakalı değildir. Binaenaleyh fırkamız kendisine isnad edilecek her türlü şaibeden, gizli şüpheli emellerden masun kalacaktır. Millet arasında meşru ve muayyen gayelerimizin gelişmesine çalışmayı kendimiz için vatani bir vazife addediyoruz.’”

against their party but was against the entire nation and all parties involved would pay the cost if the ongoing extreme repression continued.

Karabekir similarly characterizes what happens as threatening the unity of the entire nation and respect for the republic. He provides ample examples of what he calls “terror” perpetrated by the government officers:

August 1, 1925 Saturday – District governor Mehmet bey from Bursa was moved to Ankara (from the newspapers). A fire that started in Demirci destroyed a great deal of the town (from the newspapers). Former Biga MP Hamdi bey was arrested. Mehmetçe Bey and Sapançalı Hakkı Bey were released. This is the terror of the Independence Tribunal terror. Will they ever grant credit when no one knows who is going to be arrested tomorrow? Police raids to the houses of people arrested, others being arrested from their houses at random hours, what a sad picture all of these pose for us. [...] The forces of evil will always be alive, as long as we are alive. Does that mean our lives will have to pass along with this terror? [...] Republic has to be remembered as a word that reminds moderacy, and has to be desirable, causing good feelings. It shouldn't be inscribed into the minds and hearts of a generation as a source of terror that puts personal freedoms at peril (Karabekir 2009b: 960-1).¹⁰⁷

Karabekir views Independence Courts as source of terror and lawlessness that arbitrarily arrest and humiliate many innocent and well-educated citizens. His vivid scenes that emotionally describe impact of terror saying how it destructed the moral and political dignity of innocent and virtuous people. He mocks the idea of Republic

¹⁰⁷ “1 Ağustos 1925 Cumartesi – Bursa Heyet-i Mahsusa azasından Kaymakam Mehmet Bey Ankara'ya sevk olunmuş (gazeteler). Demirci kasabasında başlayan bir yangın kasabanın mühim bir parçasını harap etmiştir (gazeteler). Sabık Biga Mebusu Hamdi Bey tevkif olunmuş. Mehmetçe ve Sapançalı Hakkı Beyler tahliye olunmuş. Mesele İstiklal Mahkemelerinin terörüdür. Yarın kimin tevkif edileceği meçhul iken kredi verirler mi? Tevkif edilenlerin evlerinde polis taharrileri, polislerle rastgele vakitte bir insanın karakola götürülmesi, hakiki bir tasavvur olunsun ne hazin bir tablodur. Gözyaşları, elemli dövünmeler, kalplerin kanaması, itibar-ı mevkiyesinin sarsıntısı, velev tahliye de olursa bir kişinin tevkifiyle sebep olanlar yalnız onun ve ailesinin değil bütün onları sevenlerin inkisarını alıyor. Hariçteki erbab-ı fesat tabii biz yaşadıkça yaşayacaklardır. şu halde ömrümüz terörle mi geçecektir. En yüksek tahsil görmüş, senelerin emeğiyle kütüphanesini, hatıratını tespit etmiş bir insanın evinde, aldığım emri yapacağım gayretiyle basit insanlar tarafından yatak odalarına kadar yapılan taharriyat ne hazin bir levhadır. Cumhuriyet, her dimağda munis, cazip, feyznak bir kelime olmalıdır. Yoksa dehşet, korkunç, hürriyet-i şahsiye-yi tehlikeye kor, bir umacı gibi yeni neslin zihniyetine nakşolunmamalıdır.”

for it came to mean terror and repression for the new generations. Again, the authoritarian rule and its implications are the main focus, and the degeneration of power at all scales is richly described to undermine the moral authority of the government to reclaim back its claim to represent the nation.

All memoirs thus proclaim that it was in fact the İnönü government that diverted the Turkish revolution from this path, and pursued the pettiness of degeneration into a hunger for power, office and dominative control over the independent Turkish nation:

We [founders of the PRP] were chosen [at first] as representatives of the original [Committee for] Defence of Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk*). It wasn't us who deviated from the principles of Defence of Rights, it was members of [the RPP] (Cebesoy 2007: 511).¹⁰⁸

With “the principles for defending rights” (*Mudafaa-i Hukuk umdeleri*) Cebesoy refers to Erzurum and Sivas Congresses and he claims that the members of the People's Party has betrayed these principles when they are in power. As highlighted in the previous chapters, referring to Independence War to contest accusations directed against them is a common strategy in the memoirs.

6. 8. A Brotherhood Lost

Recountings of the Lausanne Proceedings and the rising tensions with Mustafa Kemal afterwards are not simple stories of victimhood and resentment. The authors carefully

¹⁰⁸ “Yeni fırkayı teşkil edecek mebusların mebusluktan çekilmeleri istenmişti. Halbuki biz, Müdafaa-i Hukuk namzedi olarak seçilmiştik. Müdafaa-i Hukuk umdelerinden ayrılanlar biz değildik, Halk Fırkası mensupları idi.”

frame these stories to portray themselves as patriotic servants of the motherland and they question the legitimacy of the existing rulership, their opponents, by expressing their concerns regarding the future of the nation. By referring to each others' and their own sacrifices and loyalty to brotherhood and comradeship, they refuse to present political discords as a matter of ideological or inter-personal disagreements, but as a matter of gradual broad moral degeneration in which they could no longer find a space to conduct politics.

Recourses to the narratives of brotherhood and comradeship during the Independence War fill in the descriptions of post-1923 conflicts. Conflation of two temporalities is textually preferred to reclaim legitimacy in the face of present accusations instead of providing defensive statements against the specific accusations themselves. As pointed out earlier in the first two chapters, memoirs do not necessarily progress in a strict chronological order. Many of the commentaries that refer to past times appear when the author talks about an event at a later period. While Cebesoy does this by bringing in details about his friendship with Mustafa Kemal, Orbay suddenly brings up how the most desperate days of the 1919 were overcome by mutual trust and encouragement among himself, Karabekir and Mustafa Kemal. In a more condescending tone that prioritizes narration of his own sacrifices, even Karabekir reaffirms his choice to join Mustafa Kemal was right.

The inter-personal exchanges in the aftermath of the Lausanne and well into the Izmir Assassination are all framed as benevolent warnings to a brother, who constantly ignores them at several historical junctures either for ideological reasons or for differences in styles of rule: Cebesoy on the military conduct of the Western Front and its protection during 1923, Orbay on a range of parliamentary disputes about opposition,

as well as the dangers of authoritarian rule, and Karabekir on the move to antagonize Britain about Musul, Kurdish question and the significance of Islam for Turkish culture. Flasbacks to the Independence War cooperation such as how Cebesoy, Orbay and Mustafa Kemal secretly had met in Istanbul in some common friend's house, how the set-up of the Erzurum Congress was conducted after much belaboring work, or how critical decisions about the military conduct of the Western front were taken in distress but with complete devotion, etc. are frequently invoked to contrast it with how their warnings were not even taken into consideration in post-1923 period.

Cebesoy shares the moment where Orbay and Karabekir vehemently tried to warn their fellow brothers in the government, but were not taken seriously:

After the declaration of the Republic, in other words, way before the rebellion, Hüseyin Rauf Bey had mentioned in a [party] group meeting at the parliament, which he joined as the former prime minister, that a rebellion could emerge in the East, and asked about the preparations and precautions taken by the government and the chief of staff, but failed to get a response to his inquiries. Former Eastern front commander Karabekir pasha had also tried to direct the attention of government and military leaders to the situation in the Eastern regions, but found out that there wasn't enough attention and interest in that issue (Cebesoy 2007: 581-2).¹⁰⁹

Cebesoy refers to Karabekir and Orbay's timely warnings for a potential revolt in the Eastern provinces and concludes that the RPP and the government did not care and ignored. Instead of fighting with ideological explanations, they highlight their good

¹⁰⁹ "Cumhuriyetin ilanından sonra, yani isyandan çok evvel Hüseyin Rauf Bey eski Başvekil sıfatıyla Şarkta bir isyan çıkacağını Halk Fırkası'nın bir grup içtimasında söyleyerek hükümetin ve Erkan-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Reisinin hazırlık derecesini öğrenmek istemişse de, bu sual ve istihzahı sükütla geçirilmişti. Eski Şark Cephesi Kumandanı Karabekir Paşa da bu hususta hükümetin ve askeri makamların nokta-i nazarını Şark vilayetlerinin durumu üzerine çekmişse de kafi derecede ehemmiyet verilmemiş olduğu anlaşılmıştır."

will, patriotism and brotherhood that survived despite the utmost pressure and polarization. In that way, not only Karabekir and Orbay could be represented more prudent actors who think the nation's interests better, but also the government could be blamed for the revolt and the following disorder.

The authors write about these warnings with constant flashbacks to an earlier period of the onset of the Independence War. The frequent references to personal disappointments of post-Republican period are usually expressed through flashbacks to the most critical moments of the Independence War which happened just a few years before the narrated moments of conflict. The stark contrast between the Independence War solidarity and the animosities and conflicts during the Republican period allows the authors to articulate their disillusionment more clearly. To that effect, the decision to initiate political party is paralleled to the epic/moral moment of the independence struggle.

I interpret reminding of heroic past, i.e. a shared partaking to a great cause, as a genuine strategy to respond to the accusations of an authoritative regime. I suggest that they spend considerable time to mourn over the loss of brotherhood and comradeship more than sharing suffering of how each individually endured injustice invokes moral authority. The articulation of brotherhood and comradeship, a feeling of committing oneself to the service of the nation, instead of individual defense against the specific accusations, produces a sacrificial subjectivity who does not care about himself but is devoted exclusively to the fate of the nation. The stories of brotherhood and comradeship allow them to transcend the image of the naïve bitterness of a soldier whose pride was hurt. One can further infer that these persistent references to brotherhood and comradeship call an imagined nation to intervene to what is regarded as deviation, or

recently emerging tendencies towards political domination. The narrative regarding the attacks against the authors or the PRP is framed in “we” language that invokes brotherhood and comradeship in a way that claims to represent the entire nation and its values. In this intertextual collective imagination of brotherhood and comradeship, the authorial claim of the memoir becomes a stronger moral claim instead of a mere personal desire to regain a lost individual reputation.

6. 9. Conclusion

In their accounts for the tensions, conflict and discords, the authors portray an elite group of vanguards who are tasked with the moral duty to preserve and maintain the Turkish revolution’s connection to the legacy of the Independence War. This sacrificial vanguard discourse is contrasted with the newly emerging military-bureaucratic elite of the post-war Republican capital: *etraf*. According to Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay, the establishment of extraordinary Independence Tribunals and many other political developments of the time revealed the lack of moral character and integrity among bureaucrats, judges, governors, etc. The typical incarnation of this lack of integrity and selfishness, was the rather abstract allusion to a set of politicians, bureaucrats, artists and intellectuals that surrounded Mustafa Kemal—*etraf*. Members of this clique, some of the rising political figures in the RPP in the late 1920s, are all portrayed in the autobiographies as lacking the qualities of national character, moral integrity and patriotic feelings, in contrast to the authors, i.e. the self-sacrificial and selfless heroes of the National Struggle.

The accounts of discords and how the initial phase of polarization (*saflasma*) evolved into a violent conflict that literally threw them off the stage of politics in late 1920s are significant to understand how they contest official historiography. The authors commonly contend that the institutionalization of revolution in the post-1923 period betrayed the past heroism of the Independence War. The idea of betrayal is enforced with the argument that it is only their political party and its program reflect the moral essence of the Independence War. This way, they aim to reverse *Nutuk*'s and official ideology's narrative that labeled their party a betrayer, and argue that it was in fact the extremist RPP policies that betrayed the nation. Their discontent is hence not articulated as an individual injustice but as a hijacking of a historical moment caused by the unjust rulership of an incompetent politicians.

CHAPTER 7

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND THE CONSERVATIVE-NATIONALIST UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN EARLY REPUBLICAN TURKEY

7. 1. Introduction

As I noted in the previous chapters, following the Kurdish Shaikh Said Rebellion and the assassination attempt against Mustafa Kemal, the PRP was closed, and Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay were put on trial, though ultimately acquitted. Despite this disgrace, Karabekir, Cebesoy, and Orbay have had enduring political influence through their political memoirs, which provide an alternative perspective on the National Struggle and early Republican period. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how autobiography-writing provided these three figures a unique space to articulate a powerful and complex political position to evaluate political legitimacy during the birth of modern Turkey. I suggest that these key figures of the National Struggle and the first opposition party in modern Turkey generated a moralistic and elitist “conservative nationalist” political ideology that the existing academic literature on Turkish politics has not properly addressed. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay weaved a unique conservative ideology that sought to preserve the National Struggle’s moral values as the ultimate

source of political legitimacy, against what they viewed as a “decadent” New Republican bureaucratic elite.

Their texts describe the maturation of the authors’ personal character into “leaders” as a process of gradual perfection, which parallels the larger historical processes of the maturation of the Turkish nation into a modern nation-state. More than anything else, their autobiographical writings provide extensive descriptions of the moral qualities of both the authors and their political rivals. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay frequently project moral traits they consider as signs of this national character onto each other, creating an “us” as moral servants of the nation. Each author cites how the other two displayed sacrifice, humility and selflessness in service of their nation. And this “us” stands in stark contrast with their political rivals in the texts—i.e. the newly emerging clique of politicians and bureaucrats in Ankara, depicted as greedy, corrupt, and incompetent individuals “surrounding” Mustafa Kemal (*etraf*). As a result, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay reiterate a moralist and personalistic source of political legitimacy through a conservative nationalist imagery, which questions the legitimacy of the government that eventually neutralized them.

This chapter demonstrates that, through the articulation of conservative nationalist position, autobiographies articulate an oppositional political lexicon and position that have not been addressed in the existing academic literature, which either views those figures as early representatives of a peripheral dissent against the Republican regime, or overstates their Unionist legacy. Through textual analysis, I argue that the moralizing discourses they use pose a peculiar blend of nationalism and conservatism that ultimately homogenizes political differences and ideological splits. My analysis

demonstrates that their conservatism did not seek to voice the conservative sensibilities of a repressed peripheral dissent against a secular centralist state. I will maintain that autobiographies endorse an elitist moral guardianship by wise statesmen of high moral caliber—tasked with neutralizing the threat posed by the excesses of an unhinged revolutionary elite.

7. 2. Conservatism in Early Republican Turkey

With the exception of few recent works on the elite legacies of conservative thought and politics (İrem 1996, 1999, 2002, Aytürk 2014, Aytürk and Mignon 2013), conservatism in Turkey has been mostly associated with the demands of the culturally conservative Anatolian “people” (*halk*) who remained in the “periphery” of the bureaucratic-authoritarian political “center” in Ankara (Mardin 1973, Zürcher 1991, Ahmad 1993, Berkes 1966). Consequently, conservative opposition has often been portrayed as representing the “people” and “periphery” against the Republican elites (Aktay 2003, Akdoğan 2004, Çaha 2004, Çiğdem 1997, Mardin 1973, Öğün 2009, Yavuz 2005), or as reactionary forces that resisted, or could not adapt to, the fast-paced Westernization of Turkey by the regime (Berkes 1966, Ahmad 1993, Karpat 2001, Ergil 1989, Bora 2015).

Contemporary conservative scholarship strongly adheres to this center-periphery framework and analyzes conservative intellectual traditions and movements as having inherited a legacy of political engagement with the center on behalf of the periphery. These works often take for granted that the PRP marks the earliest challenge posed by the “people” against the elite-led center, which repressed their opposition in order to

consolidate the center's power over the periphery (Aktay 2003, Akdoğan 2004, Çaha 2012). For instance, Ömer Çaha claims that Turkish liberal-conservatism has a legacy that can be traced back to the PRP, Liberal Republican Party (*Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*) and Democrat Party (Çaha 2012: 126). Other conservative interpretations focus on the PRP leaders' autobiographical writings and frame them as alternative sources of true historical knowledge, claiming that official accounts are misleading and partial.¹¹⁰ In this view, *Nutuk* and other official texts represent the voice of the authoritarian state, whereas dissident memoirs represent the repressed voice of the people. This approach, shared among conservative scholars, maintains an image of the PRP and its leaders as having initiated an intellectual and political legacy of liberal and democratic conservative opposition (Mustafa Akyol 2011). Given the underlying influence of the center-periphery framework, and simplified representations of the PRP actors as early liberal democrats, in-depth studies on Early Republican oppositional figures have a strong potential to complicate the reductive perspective on conservatism as resistance to (and/or gradual counter-hegemonization of) the center.

I argue, during the intra-elite struggles of the early Turkish Republic, the conservative opposition sought to use nationalist and moralist politics to legitimize its leadership within the political elite, rather than representing the “people” against them. Focusing on the leading figures of the first opposition party I problematize these dualistic analytical frameworks. I suggest that these key figures of the early opposition did not seek to voice the conservative sensibilities of a repressed *halk* against a secular-reformist nationalist state, but to guard and gratify moral values like self-sacrifice and

¹¹⁰ Birinci (2012). For a criticism of this approach to these writings as an “alternative,” see Hanioglu, “Kâzım Karabekir’i Nasıl Tarihselleştirelim?” *Derin Tarih*, Nisan 2012.

humility, which are epitomized in the “moral character” of the Turkish nation. Their conservatism pertains more to the contrast they delineate between this “moral character” to be preserved, and the “degeneration” and “decadence” of the emerging bureaucratic clique in early Republican Turkey. When divested from both gratifying and damning associations of figures like Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay with the “repressed” or “reactionary” people of Turkey, there emerges a relatively understudied picture of this early conservative movement, unearthing its nationalist, elitist, and authoritarian nature. My analysis will ultimately show the need to go beyond the dualist frames of state vs. society, center vs. periphery, official vs. alternative, etc. in understanding the conservative legacy in Turkey.

Most of the literature on right-wing politics and conservative thought in Turkey tends to over-emphasize the notion of tradition and its hold on Turkish politics. As a result, there has emerged an enduring trope in the way both critical academic works and conservative historians and ideologues analyze conservatism: a dualist account of secularist elite politics and its reformist ideology, on the one hand, and a reactionary conservatism with its political ideology anchored to the traditions of the Anatolian population, on the other. Secularist, modernist elite politics and its “top-down” Republican ideology, against a reactionary conservatism with its political ideology anchored to the traditions of the Anatolian population. Despite variations, a wide range of the literature on conservatism in Turkey has portrayed it as representing the “people” and “periphery” against the Republican elites (Aktay 2003, Akdoğan 2004, Çaha 2004, Çiğdem 1997, Mardin 1983, Öğün 2009, Yavuz 2005), or as religious, traditional, and “reactionary” forces that resisted, or could not adapt to, the fast-paced Westernization of Turkey by the regime (Berkes 1966, Ahmad 1993, Karpat 2001, Ergil 1989). The

overemphasis on party politics of the Early Republican period in Turkey among studies and perspectives on opposition politics rests on this sociological outlook of conservatism as a centrifugal force and a background for the rise of Anatolian traditionalist conservatism after the 1940s and 1950s (Barış 2014). These works emphasize deep cleavages between “the center and the periphery,” strengthening the image of a geographically separated, peripheral, antithetical, and Anatolia-based conservative opposition.

Niyazi Berkes’ works, for instance, collate conservatism with a simplistic reactionary traditionalism, reducing the intellectual and political currents of Early Republican conservatism to reactionary cultural sensibilities coming from outside the political center (Berkes 1966: 51-62, 446-472, 500). Kemal Karpat has a relatively more complicated picture of conservatism as a sensibility that could be observed among Anatolian merchants, as well as emerging urban elites, and even the bureaucratic establishment. However, he also maintains a definition of conservatism as a centrifugal force, pushing the center towards appeasing “reactionary” sensibilities (Karpat 2001: 315-20). Şerif Mardin’s studies on Islamic movements underline the authoritarian and centralist nature of Turkish modernism and Kemalist ideology, which was countered by the centrifugal political rise of conservative and Islamic movements (Mardin 1981, 1973). In the 1990s and 2000s, many critical academic studies on the hold of the Kemalist “official history thesis” and “official ideology” heavily relied on Mardin’s center-periphery argument, viewing Kemalist modernism as an authoritarian central force that exorcized and projected conservative ideology on “people,” peripheral social actors (Heper 1980, Parla 1995, Arat 2005, Toprak 1981).

Historical studies of early Republican Turkey rarely engage extensively with Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay, and the emergence of the first opposition party. There are two major tendencies in the existing academic literature on the PRP and its politics. The first tendency is to overstress the PRP's ideological difference from the RPP, interpreting it as a conservative-traditionalist and peripheral opposition against a top-down modernist-secularist center. Here I question the dualistic binary these works rely on by underlining the elitist aspects of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's views on politics in their autobiographic writings. The second tendency is, conversely, to overemphasize the Unionist political legacy Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay shared with Mustafa Kemal and the RPP. Portraying their opposition as an intra-elite struggle in a post-revolutionary political scene where Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay are reduced to the liberalism of the party program, these works question whether the PRP leaders can be qualified as conservative at all.¹¹¹ My analysis acknowledges the second approach's emphasis on the military-elite Unionist legacy the PRP leaders shared with Mustafa Kemal. However, I also show that overemphasizing this military-elite legacy, or the liberalism of their party program, underestimates the conservative and moralist contours of the oppositional politics they articulate in their autobiographical writings. The overemphasis (i) on the party's popular reception as a vehicle for peripheral dissent during its short lifespan, and (ii) on the liberal ideological tenets of the party program, obscures the complex layers of its leaders' oppositional politics, which extended beyond the party, and continued to evolve even after the party was closed.

¹¹¹ The main proponent of this view is Zürcher; for detailed analyses on this issue, see his "Were the Progressives Conservative?" (Zürcher 2010).

When we shift our focus from their party-based politics, the liberal tenets of the party, or the kind of active politics Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay conducted in the 1920s to their autobiographies, we can discern a peculiar blend of nationalism¹¹² and conservatism in their recounting of the past. In my analysis, I demonstrate that their conservative nationalism displays significant elements of Edmund Burke’s conservatism, despite their strong Unionist legacy and devotion to the idea of a “Turkish revolution” (*Türk İnkılabı*). First, as their autobiographical writings extensively focus on who deserves to lead the postwar political process on behalf of the Turkish nation, the opposition posed by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay maintains the need for a vanguard-like moral leadership of wise statesmen within the larger political elite—which is an essential tenet of Burke’s conservatism—instead of representing the “people” against the political center. Secondly, they articulate the moral traits they ascribe to these leaders, or statesmen, as embodiments of the “moral character” of the Turkish nation. Their articulation of a moral “us” vis-a-vis an immoral “other” resembles another fundamental tenet of Burke’s conservatism, his moral skepticism about corruption-prone and power-seeking revolutionary elites. Just like Burke, they see this emerging military-bureaucratic-political elite as a threat to the moral essence of the Turkish society and its organic social transformation into an independent nation, which must be guarded by wise statesmen.

¹¹² Here, I use nationalism in a broader sense, since I argue that Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s nationalism is a patriotic and abstract form of nationalism that glorifies the moral values of the Turkish nation before anything else. Since their definition and understanding of the Turkish nation is geared towards judging who has a legitimate claim to represent or act on behalf of the nation, their discourse almost renders nationalism exchangeable with patriotism. For an account of the relationship between nationalism and patriotism, see Billig (1995).

Works by historians Erik J. Zürcher, Feroz Ahmad and Şükrü Hanioglu, on the other hand, affirm the shared intellectual (Unionist) legacies of both Mustafa Kemal's Republicanism and the PRP's oppositional politics (Zürcher 1991, 2004a, 2004b, Hanioglu, 1995, 2011, Ahmad 1991). Although these works do not specifically engage with conservatism, I suggest that their claim that founders of the opposition in Early Republican Turkey were in fact part of the shared central elite formation complicate the taken-for-granted assumptions that portray the PRP as representing the "people" or as external to the political center. These works recuperate the PRP leaders from simplistic images of peripheral reactionaries by underlining the shared military, political and intellectual Unionist backgrounds of Mustafa Kemal and Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay. However, these works overstate the fact that Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay were elite figures with a shared Unionist background. In his article, "Were the Progressives Conservative?" Zürcher argues that they were part of an intra-elite struggle, where they ended up with a liberal-leaning opposition party in order to sustain a legitimate power competition with Mustafa Kemal. While my analyses of the autobiographies affirm that the PRP leaders shared a military-elite nationalist legacy as well as some elements of liberalism, I argue that the moralistic discourse the PRP leaders adopted when writing their autobiographies led to the emergence of an idiosyncratic blend of conservatism and nationalism. Through carefully attending to their moralizing discourse, which rests on an intertextual politics, I unearth aspects of their political position that have been ignored in the academic literature cited above.

My analysis also builds on and contributes to a recent thread of studies on Early Republican and single-party era conservative intellectuals that were not part of the politi-

cal opposition. These studies offer fresh perspectives on the Early Republic and complicate dualistic portrayals of conservatism as a peripheral reaction against the Kemalist modernist-nationalism of an emerging political center (İrem 1996, 1999, 2002, Aytürk 2014, Aytürk and Mignon 2013). Nazım İrem's studies on intellectuals blending Kemalist modernism with conservative tradition challenges the dominant trend in Turkish historiography of characterizing the Kemalist Revolution as "a zero-sum game between secular-modernist Kemalists in action and religiously oriented anti-modernists in reaction" (2002: 92). However, his focus is restricted to a subservient intellectual elite circle at the service of the Kemalist bureaucratic hegemony and single-party rule. Christine Philliou's work on the intellectual figure of Refik Halit Karay uncovers a unique elite position that is neither in the political center, nor in the reactionary periphery (Philliou 2011). Alexander E. Balistreri's work on Kadirbeyoğlu Zeki Bey, the only MP who voted against the abolition of the caliphate, similarly complicates the dualist account of conservatism. Balistreri points out how the pro-caliphate opposition in the first Ankara parliament came from a conservative elite active in the center, utilizing remnants of an Ottoman nationalism, instead of representing traditional Anatolian peasantry or notables (Balistreri 2015). These studies demonstrated that political positions were much more heterogeneous, and emphasized conservatism's elite and nationalist aspects, complicating the dualist portrayals of conservatism in Turkey in earlier works.

Even though the pro-state position of these conservative intellectuals could be read in terms of a respect for state-craft and the moral dimension they attribute to political leadership, this position is significantly different from Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay, who are extremely skeptical of the state, and instead rely on a moralistic elitism, an

authoritarian scheme of political legitimacy that reserves political power to who morally deserves it and can embody that position in terms of character, disposition and complexion. They openly affirm and rejoice in the revolutionary spirit of the Turkish nation that overcame ages of absolutist state-structures. Their main target is the bureaucracy that emerged in early Republican Turkey, which in their view displayed immoral tendencies such as decadence and degeneration, as well as a voracity for domination that had to be kept in check. They frequently express disdain for the newly emerging bureaucrats, politicians and military leaders, accusing them of not being a part of the National Struggle. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay clearly contrast the new bureaucratic elite with the national character of the Turkish nation, which had gradually emerged on the scene of history, and embodied itself through the morally perfect “heroes” of the National Struggle.

7. 3. What is “Conservative Nationalism”?

7. 3. 1. Edmund Burke’s Conservatism

Based on Russell Kirk’s readings of Edmund Burke’s conservatism (Kirk 1952), I claim that Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s anti-state elitism and conservative nationalism display significant elements of Edmund Burke’s conservatism (Burke 1952, Kirk 1952, Feulner 2008), despite their Unionist legacy. I argue that attention to those elements could expand our understanding of their political legacy among the Turkish right and the conservative understanding political legitimacy in Turkey. First of all, as their autobiographic writings extensively focus on who deserves to lead the post-war political process on behalf of the Turkish nation, I demonstrate that the opposition

posed by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay reaffirms the need for a vanguard-like moral leadership of wise statesmen within the political elite, instead of representing the “people” against the political center. Secondly, they articulate the traits they ascribe to these moral leaders or statesmen as embodiments of the moral character of the Turkish nation, in contrast to an unhinged, corrupt and power-hungry revolutionary elite. In that sense, in their autobiographic writings, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay share Burke’s moral skepticism about corruption-prone and power-seeking revolutionary elites as threats to the moral essence of society, which must be guarded by wise statesmen. Unlike classical conservatism’s skepticism for change from a past ancient regime to future degeneration, they think reforms are for the good of the society. However, unlike revolutionaries, they attribute a moral order and a sense of teleology to the Turkish revolution, seeing it as a process whereby the moral substance of a nation is gradually being realized. And they consider the revolutionary elite as corrupt individuals against which the process of the realization of this moral order should be protected.

Russell Kirk underscores the significance of a strong commitment to a transcendent moral order and its incarnation in the world through moral values as the most important trait of conservatism (Kirk 1952: 187-9). If we follow Kirk’s readings of Burke, despite their differences from other tenets of classical conservatism, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay still qualify as conservatives. While emphases on sacrifice, selflessness and humility could be viewed in many other forms of non-conservative nationalism in Turkey and globally, what makes them conservative in the larger Burkean sense is their moralist discourse, their belief in a transcendent moral order—

although they see this order as a process towards the future, unlike the classical conservative glorification of the past. This moralizing discourse imagines a continuous threat of moral corruption (*fesat*) against which the moral substance and social fabric of the nation have to be preserved, depoliticizing political rivalries. This heavily reminds Kirk's claim that "political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems" (Kirk 1952: 8).

The autobiographies' framing of political problems in moral terms consistently adheres to a similar conceptualization of politics, even though Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay do not explicitly adhere to conservatism as an ideology. Burke espouses a moral skepticism towards revolutionary elites as unhinged, greedy and corrupt individuals who undermined a moral order, and argue that political power should instead rest with moral and wise statesmen who would wield and control social change responsibly. Similar to Burke, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay prioritize and define morality as a matter of temperament and character, posing themselves, and their political position, as moral counterparts of a corrupt revolutionary elite.¹¹³ They believe in a moral order that is threatened by an unhinged-greedy (*muhteris*) post-revolutionary cadre, which needs to be kept in check by the guardianship of wise and moral statesmen—a select few among those who embodied the national moral character of the Turkish revolution.

¹¹³ Kirk writes the following about Burke's criticisms of the revolutionary elite and quotes him directly: "Against an 'elite' recruited out of conformity to party fanaticism and enthusiastic adherence to a shallow and venomous intellectual credo, Burke wrote in the second letter of the Regicide Peace: 'To them, the will, the wish, the want, the liberty, the toil, the blood of individuals is nothing. Individuality is left out of their scheme of government. The state is all in all (...) The state has dominion and conquest for its sole objects; dominion over minds by proselytism, over bodies by arms.' These were, of course, the Jacobins; the description applies as well, or even better, to the Communist and the Nazi rule of an 'elite'."

What I call “conservative nationalism” refers to a loosely articulated representation of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s political positions as the first vocal opponents of the new Republican political establishment. Their critiques offer an assemblage of moral sensibilities that rests on the “national character” of the Turkish nation and its moral perfection. All three share an intertextual discourse on the moral nature of the development of the humble, selfless and self-sacrificial character, which made possible all the immense struggles and sacrifices through which the Turkish nation emerged on the “scene of history” as a major force. Despite differences, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s accounts rested on the idea of a nation that was in the process of maturing, and they viewed their own individual life-narratives as the ultimate embodiment of this process. This pedagogically moralized association of duty, brotherhood and sacrifice with the teleological emergence of a nation in terms of values to be preserved against degeneration and decadence is radically different from the two large threads of conservative thought and politics both in Turkish and world history that have been analyzed up to date: 1) counter-revolutionary or anti-reformist conservatism that rested on the abstract allusion to an ancient regime that needed to be guarded, and often implemented through statecraft; and ii) moderate and compromising “pragmatic” conservatism that prioritized the preservation of the status quo through rationalized traditionalism, negotiating political and cultural change on an ad hoc basis (Mannheim 1953, Nisbet 1986, Parkin 1969, McIntyre 1981, Beneton 2009).

7. 3. 2. National Will, National Character and Moralizing Discourses

Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay portray themselves as proactive nationalists who were ready to humbly sacrifice themselves for the nation, and who sought to preserve a

moral essence that had been maturing since the 1890s. I do not use conservative nationalism as a specific doctrine with a particular ideological audience, but an amalgamation of strong moral claims on duty, action and sacrifice, encompassing a broader array of identity claims to Turkness within the right-wing political space in Turkey that reached back to Young Turk claims to freedom (*hürriyet*), as well as conservative images of moral humility and duty. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay define Turkness in terms of a moral character that incidentally finds its expression in the authors' characters and their sacrifices during the National Struggle. Through this moral-pedagogical image of the nation as a moral essence embodied within "national character," they seek to appeal directly to the whole Turkish nation as an audience. They commonly highlight selflessness, self-sacrifice and brotherhood as moral parameters of the Turkish nation's "character," which was best embodied by "themselves" throughout their personal lives, as well as their participation in the National Struggle. Unlike the doctrine-based articulations of *Turancılık*, *Ülkücülük*, *Nizam-ı Alem* or Islamic nationalism (White 2014), where morality and moral character is a consequence of some other ethno-religious essence to be preserved or re-vitalized, their writings heavily build on the moral epics of this "national character" itself, as well as the Turkish revolution (*Türk inkılabı*), which needs a historical maturing and eventual articulation through a "*dava*" (cause). Their loyalty to the idea of the revolution distinguishes them from other conservative political positions of the early 20th century that express nostalgia for a past that is gone. In that sense, while the emphasis on sacrificial comradeship could be dismissed at first sight as typical popular nationalist rhetoric of the time, I show how multiple nationalist tropes produce moralizing discourses that ultimately reclaim a lost authority over the Republic and the new nation-state.

In my analysis of the autobiographies, I use a broad definition of Turkish nationalism that also encompasses Young Ottoman and later Young Turk ideologues which articulated the triplet of “motherland,” “blood” and “religion” as the three fundamental tenets of Turkish nationalism (Aytürk 2014, Canefe 2002). Many oppositional figures of the Early Republic, including the figures discussed in this dissertation, were situated within this Young Turk discourse of nationalism. Although it was mainly the Early Republican leadership and the new modern nation-state that institutionalized and canonized “Turk-ness” as a national identity, the history of Turkish nationalism goes back to the late Ottoman Empire (Heper 1985: 50). However, it was the Early Republican leadership and the new modern nation-state that took ownership of “Turk-ness,” institutionalizing and canonizing it as a national identity (Aytürk 2014). The nationalism of the RPP’s single-party rule during the 1920s and 1930s centered on Westernization and modernization, with the motto of “elevating the country to the level of contemporary civilizations of the West” (Heper 1985: 50). Yet, there have been competing definitions and practices of Turkish nationalism, and some of these intellectual trends found themselves in opposition to the state as represented by the RPP. In comparison to the widespread aversion among political actors to appearing “reactionary,” Turkish nationalism was welcome by diverse set of political groups as legitimate, established, continuous, and overtly embraced ideological and discursive political position throughout the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.

The autobiographical politics of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay extensively builds on moralizing discourses contrasting their own heroic achievements against the rise of a circle of military-bureaucratic elites—*etraf*—surrounding Mustafa Kemal after the In-

dependence War. The authors incessantly document the rise of “corrupt” and inept individuals at the expense of those sacrificial comrades. They insist that whoever displayed the national character and thus sacrificially served in the war should have ruled the cadres of the new polity in principle. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay do not define their position in defensive terms against a reformist center with a vision to preserve or revitalize traditional “ideals,” but in reference to a historical and particular reformist and developmentalist teleological mythology of moral and cultural perfection. The fact that Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay are elitist and reformist nationalists, who defer to a moral and pedagogical dutifulness in the way the German Enlightenment was defined as a teleologically culminated historical moment of maturing into the will and power to defy corrupt traditions and monarchies. Similarly, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s conservatism caters to the will to preserve and protect the “national character” and its moral development both in terms of individual lives (self-sacrificial heroes who emerge in specific moments of history thanks to their moral perfection) and a teleological historical maturing of a larger social substance, the Turkish nation.

As I demonstrated earlier, conservative-nationalism is qualitatively different from some of the basic pillars of classical conservative thought and politics. In Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s case what mainly distinguish them from classical conservatism is their support for reformist ideas of progress and the Turkish revolution. In other words, they invert the temporality of the moral substance of history that is typical of classical conservatism: they do not consider history as a moral degeneration from a glorious past, as it is in most classical conservative ideologies, but a teleological maturing of a nation’s moral and rational development into the future—very similar to

the ideals of the German Enlightenment. Thus, the idea of maturation is central to understanding how conservatism and nationalism was weaved in the memoirs' political space. These historical narratives of maturation diverge from each other in their content. For Karabekir, maturation is an awakening from the political domination of the archaic structures of the Ottoman Empire and its outdated interpretations of Islamic rule, which caused a regime of incompetence and corruption. The autobiographic account of his own moral development appears to be completely in parallel with the maturation of the national will that abandoned its misplaced trust in incompetent rulers and instead acted through its heroes to emerge unto the scene of history. Cebesoy views the same maturation as a modernization of the reformist spirit of the heroic and self-sacrificial actors (especially young and leading soldiers), such that it totally accords with the waking national will. His autobiographic account gives details about the personal networks and exchange of ideas among such figures, especially Mustafa Kemal, himself and Karabekir, all eventually becoming tools of the national will who embodied the national character and did the nation's bidding. For Orbay, maturation of the national will is a spirit of liberty and free-association that could only at that moment in history have crystallized, thanks to the mediating functions of a handful of self-sacrificial heroes. Orbay's account is the most classically liberal-conservative of the three, associating the character of the Turkish nation with freedom, where freedom refers to the overthrowing of the yoke of a state that dominates, so that social structures could govern themselves according to the local traditional forms. The three authors are united, however, in their accounts of how heroic acts by self-sacrificial soldiers and statesmen best embodied the maturation of the Turkish nation. This chapter underlines this moral exclusivism, which resulted from a peculiar blending of modernist nationalism with a moralist conservatism.

I argue that conservative nationalist definitions of Turkish identity downplay doctrines and prioritize a moral-pedagogical essence ascribed to the Turkish nation, which finds its exemplification in the selfless and heroic “national character” of its heroes. As I will elaborate in detail below, early conservative understandings of nationalism are centered mainly on epic accounts of the Independence War as a moment of moral perfection and consequently the only possible source of legitimacy for any socio-political initiative. In their memoirs, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay claim that the Republican era (1923-1945) marks the emergence of a “decadent” bureaucratic elite and “new actors” who were literally absent from the military and political scene during the war. As a result, the whole process of establishing the new Turkish polity was framed in the memoirs as a “hijacking” of the national struggle by opportunists – a process that begins with the early debates on the Lausanne Proceedings in the Turkish parliament in 1923, and ultimately crystallizes after the declaration of the Republic towards the end of 1923.

7. 4. Elitism of PRP: True Republicans vs. Hypocrites

One of the tenets of their party, the PRP, was a call to reformist forces to be respectful, pragmatic and to commandeer existing socio-cultural traditions in a reformist fashion, instead of fighting them. The aim of this call was not to defend these traditions against reformism, but to be pragmatic in the way reforms are implemented. Looking from that perspective, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s position is a diametrical opposite of pragmatic conservatism, which instead calls conservatives to be pragmatic in order to weaken the reformist’s hold. For them, the truly moralistic core

of the National Struggle (*milli mücadele*) and the national character was not a continuous respect for traditions, but a proactive moral pedagogy of developing and maturing into something else, both on an individual and socio-historical level. The RPP's aggressive fight against traditions was interrupting that process, giving rise to anomalous state structures and bureaucratic degeneration, rendering the state an agent of betraying the nation. In that outlook, both state domination and traditional reactionism appear to be similar threats against the Turkish revolution, i.e. not alternatives to choose from. Statecraft and politics were mere tools to eventually control and minimize the "temporary" role of the tradition, which could poison the moral development of the Turkish nation, as much as bureaucratic decadence itself.

Karabekir for instance provides extensive documentation about his objections to the promotion after 1921 of army officers that he did not deem worthy. His objections increase especially after 1923 (the declaration of the Republic), when the issue of promotion became increasingly divisive. Orbay provides a similar description of the new bureaucratic-political clientele he found in Ankara when he returned from exile in Malta in 1921. His memoirs from 1921 to the 1930s abound with observations on the "dangerous" figures and *etraf*, portraying these circles as not having partaken in the dutifulness of serving in the war along with Mustafa Kemal. Cebesoy similarly notes that "all kinds of people" had rushed into and hijacked Ankara with their "avarice/greed" (*ihiras*) and "domination mentality" (*tahakküm zihniyeti*) as early as 1920—explaining the political pressure that caused Mustafa Kemal to "unwillingly" appoint Cebesoy as ambassador to Moscow, removing Cebesoy from the political scene for a while:

I had heard during those days that a [sense of] distrust and insecurity befell the social circles of Ankara, and that mentalities and ideas of personal government were becoming predominant, but I had refused to believe any of it. (...) no doubt, the flocking of all kinds of people to Ankara had also caused this [situation]. The unhinged avarice and greed that was emerging among certain people was naturally destined to pull the new administration towards a mentality of personal government. (...) It was becoming clear that the domination mentality was gaining prevalence (Cebesoy 2000: 562).¹¹⁴

Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay were part of the same Unionist military elite social milieu (Zürcher 2010a, 2010b, 2004, Hanioglu 1995, 1997, 2011), with a preference for the top-down resolution of political problems by a like-minded military-bureaucratic elite. And they almost never justify their actions in their writings as giving voice to the “Anatolian people,” or proposing an alternative ideology on their behalf—apart from abstract references to how they are serving their nation. Hence, it is not surprising to come across dismissive vanguardist-elitist remarks about the “people” in their autobiographical writings. Karabekir wrote that:

The foundation lays underground. Only experts know about the integrity and longevity of a building, because they have a grasp of the foundation. The people can only pass judgement by looking at the polish on the visible façade. They cannot see what is going to fall off and when (Karabekir 2009b: 1010).¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ “O günlerde Ankara muhitine bir itimatsızlık ve emniyetsizlik arız olduğunu, şahsi idare zihniyeti ve fikrinin hakim olmaya başladığını işitmiş, fakat inanmak istememiştim. (...) Bu hale, şüphesiz her çeşitten birçok kimselerin birden bire Ankara’da toplanması da sebep olmuştur. Bazı kimselerde uyanan ihtiras elbette yeni idareyi şahsi bir idare zihniyetine doğru çekecekti (...) tahakküm zihniyetinin hakim geldiği anlaşılıyordu.”

¹¹⁵ “Temel gömülüdür. Bir binanın metanet ve ömrünü ancak mütehassıslar bilir çünkü temeline bakarlar. Halk görünen kısmının cilasıyla yani zahire göre hüküm verirler. Ne kadar zamanda nelerin döküleceğini göremezler.”

This quotation is a good example of the elitist discourse that views “people” (*halk*) as focusing on appearances and incapable of understanding the essences of history, as opposed to those experts (*mütehassıslar*) who are able to do so.

The authors claim that they established the first opposition party in order to preserve the spirit of the Turkish revolution. Even though the official party program included elements of political and economic liberalism, their autobiographies neither express an interest in pluralizing the political space, nor any pride in partaking in the first experiments of the multi-party system. The authors refrain from portraying the PRP as an ideology-driven party. They disregard the political and ideological nature of their own discontent with the RPP, and retrospectively portray their opposition as a moral duty to reaffirm the spirit of the nation and the Republic. As such, they view themselves as vanguards of the revolution (*Türk İnkılabı*) and the Republic:

We were going to do our best to prevent the falling of our regime, the Republic, into the hands of individuals or cliques (Cebesoy 2007: 498).¹¹⁶

They similarly described their resignation from the RPP and establishment of a new party not as a result of their admiration for multi-party politics or democratic institutions but in terms of a moral responsibility to preserve and represent the Turkish revolution against the danger posed by *etraf*. They are deeply skeptical of (what they viewed as) the unhinged and unmoderated radical reformism of the RPP, seeing it as driven by an avid greed for political power and domination. In that sense, for them, *etraf* and the RPP under its influence did not represent the Turkish nation at all. The

¹¹⁶ “Devlet şeklimiz olan Cumhuriyetin bir şahıs veya zümrenin idaresine alet olmasına mani olmaya elimizden geldiği kadar çalışacaktık.”

following quotations from Cebesoy's political memoirs clearly lay out how they see the difference between the RPP and the PRP in moral instead of political terms. Both quotations explain why they established a new political party and what they deemed problematic about the existing ruling party:

We [founders of the PRP] were chosen [at first] as representatives of the original [Committee for] Defence of Rights (Müdafaa-i Hukuk). It wasn't us who deviated from the principles of Defence of Rights, it was members of [the RPP] (Cebesoy 2007: 511).¹¹⁷

The doors of the party [RPP] were open to all citizens, irrespective of their personal convictions. The party was especially under the control of mideciler [stomach-fillers]. Of course, there were also many citizens among [party members] that deserved respect. (...) Those who were acting according to their own independent opinions had remained within the party with the hope that there might eventually emerge wider inclinations to maintain unity and stability (Cebesoy 2007: 514).¹¹⁸

Ironically, the reference to the "openness" of the ruling RPP to all sorts of citizens has a productive ambiguity for Cebesoy's discourse: it both refers to an earlier moment of political equality which was betrayed by those who hegemonized the party, and to the promotion of unworthy individuals into the RPP's higher ranks, which made the party weak. There were also "*şayan-ı hürmet*" (worthy individuals), who resisted separation until it became impossible for them to operate in the existing party. And these people, in Cebesoy's view, were the real proponents of the national struggle and the principles that it was based upon, while their rivals were simply deviating from these principles.

¹¹⁷ "Biz, Müdafaa-i Hukuk namzedi olarak seçilmiştik. Müdafaa-i Hukuk urodelerinden ayrılanlar biz değildik, Halk Fırkası mensupları idi."

¹¹⁸ "Fırkanın kapılan hususi kanaati ne olursa olsun, her vatandaşa açıktı. Fırkaya en ziyade mideciler hakim olmuştu. Bunlar arasında şüphesiz birçok şayan-ı hürmet vatandaşlar da vardı. Bu gibiler işin içinde bulunursak belki daha müessir bir salalı arnili oluruz, tarzında bir nokta-i nazar t~ibetmişlerdi. Tamamıyla müstakil kanaat sahipleri de son saniyeye kadar Fırka çevçevesi dahilinde kalarak belki ahenk ve istikrarı tesis yoluna meyil gösterilir diye beklemişlerdi."

The notion of the “Republic” is often contrasted in the autobiographies, as an abstract principle, with domination and greed for power—again in moral terms that separate the author from those with a character weakness to seek power, or to become subservient to those who have power. The “us” versus “them” discourse is straightforward and repetitive especially after 1924, associating the RPP with a clique of “stomach-fillers” that had hegemonized the party, while portraying the PRP as a sincere attempt to keep the Turkish revolution on track. The following quotation from Karabekir is an example of how the authors endorsed the Republic as a value to be associated with its “real” proponents—not the hypocritical and fake Republicans:

In my opinion, the most important thing is to tell the wider public that the Republic is a good thing and to keep the Republic [together] with the true Republicans. Not with hypocrites. Hypocrites are those miserable [people] who just keep on clapping [in support], whatever the name of the regime (Karabekir 2009b: 975-6).¹¹⁹

In that sense, Karabekir is joined by Cebesoy and Orbay, who claim that they were the real proponents, if not owners, of the Republic—drawing clear lines of separation between “us” and “them.” The point that I would like to underline is the significance of the moral aspect of this separation, which reserved political authority for the authors by denying the worthiness of their rivals as proponents of the Republic, instead portraying them as weak and hypocritical.

¹¹⁹ “Bence en mühim şey, cumhuriyetin iyi bir şey olduğunu ekseriyete anlatmak ve cumhuriyeti hakiki Cumhuriyetperverlerle tutmaktır. Riyakârlarla değil. Riyakârlar kuvvetinin ismi ne olursa olsun alkışlayan bedbahtlardır.”

As pointed out before, the autobiographies are not written in a perfect linear temporality. Within critical discussions of the Republican era, the earlier period of the Independence War frequently appears as a recurrent background to how a select few bears the character and disposition to resist corrupt power-relations. The authors highlight *seciye* and strength of character with references to their sacrifices in the war, as well as to other instances during pre- and post-war periods, often in the same paragraph. The word *seciye*, which could be translated as natural moral character, is interesting because in Ottoman Turkish it assumes the existence of a superior character by birth. Those who proved their high natural moral character by leading the Independence War have a natural disposition to lead their country and conduct political reforms.

Cebesoy clearly distinguishes between people of moral character who are impervious to unhinged greed, corruption or becoming subservient to others, and those who lack that character, becoming part of corrupt relations of domination and power. I interpret this moral separation as questioning the political legitimacy of those without such a moral character to influence how the Turkish revolution was to be realized and implemented. The following quotation from Cebesoy similarly highlights the centrality of *seciye* as what brings comrades together under the flagship of the PRP.

[Our aim] simply consisted of not trying to gain strength by compromising on our opinions, and [instead] gathering those of strong personal convictions and moral character under the banner of the [spirit of] true renovation and national will (Cebesoy 2007: 515).¹²⁰

¹²⁰ “Kanaatlerden fedakarlık ederek adetçe kuvvetli olmaya çalışmamak, sağlam kanaat ve seeiye sahiplerini hakiki teceddüt ve hakimiyeti milliye bayrağı altına toplamaktan ibaret olmuştur.”

He clearly stresses that they cared less about strengthening their parties' power of representation with more members of parliament, but instead tried to bring together those who had *seciye*. As these quotations reveal, the emphasis on prioritizing individuals with specific moral character traits is central to their meticulously fine-tuned elitism. They contrast the RPP's policy to keep its doors open to "all kinds of people" with the selective approach of the PRP.

7. 5. Conclusion

Zürcher claims that their party program did not correspond to classical versions of 19th or 20th century conservatism. Zürcher refers to Frederick Frey's analysis that many revolutions or revolutionary movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries had their own evolutionist-gradualist wings or intellectual circles ("post-independence conservatives") that ended up in opposition to a Jacobin hardliner wing—what Frey called "ardent nationalists" (Zürcher 2010b: 244). He argues that the PRP was such a liberal and evolutionist wing of a revolutionary elite, aspiring for a social contract-based political legitimacy, "who see the achievement of independence as the fulfillment of their ambitions and reject further radical social and cultural change" (ibid). As for the party, Zürcher claims that "its philosophical basis clearly was to be found in liberalism, not conservatism and there are no traces of monarchism or religious reaction anywhere. (...) This was also (belatedly) recognized by İsmet İnönü¹²¹ [who wrote in 1963] that the party had never described itself as conservative and that its

¹²¹ Mustafa Kemal's closest associate and successor as the president after his death

leaders were in fact ‘progressive and reformist people’ (*ileri fikirli ve islahatçı insanlar*). They were” (ibid: 245). My analysis here does not reject that the PRP was based on an overtly liberal party program displaying elements of a liberal-social contractarian ideology. However, I claim that the overemphasis on the party program obscures the complex layers of its leaders’ oppositional politics, which continued to evolve even after the party was closed.

Despite significant differences in their frameworks, the way Zürcher explains PRP leaders’ liberal aversions to the statist official ideology converges with conservative scholars’ celebratory analysis of them as voices of the people. Attention to their moralizing discourse and its elitist and vanguardist aspects offers an account of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s politics different from the historiography of conservative scholars, who associate the three authors with a liberal-conservative traditionalism on behalf of Anatolian populations, or from the historiography of works that completely ignore the conservative elements within their politics by overstating their Unionist legacies or the elements of liberalism or popular democracy in their party program. I argue that analyzing Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s autobiographical writings as the bedrock of this political space offers a correction to scholarly overemphasis on PRP party politics and provides a fresh perspective into their wider opposition politics.

My analysis demonstrates that their conservatism did not seek to voice the conservative sensibilities of a repressed people against a secular-reformist nationalist state. Despite the emphases on freedom, democracy and liberalism in the PRP party program, autobiographies reveal an endorsement of an elitist moral guardianship by select soldier elites—who fulfill the function of Burke’s wise and moral statesmen, tasked with neutralizing the threat posed by the excesses of an unhinged revolutionary elite. This

focus on vanguardist-elitist conservative nationalism invites new horizons for the literature on Early Republican history and conservative politics in Turkey broadly. The elitist conservative-nationalism of the first oppositional party leaders offers a reinterpretation of Early Republican history that goes beyond the dualist frames of modernism vs. traditionalism, secularism vs. religious-reactionarism, or center vs. periphery.

A nationalist understanding of morality as dutifulness is central to the articulation of what I call a “conservative nationalist” political position in universalist terms, claiming to represent the whole nation—i.e. not particular factions, ideologies, social groups, etc. And recognition of the central role of morality in the autobiographies led me to situate them within Edmund Burke’s conservatism. Their moralizing discourses reframe a complex set of political disagreements and ideological debates of the time in terms of character, disposition and temperament—those who are worthy of representing and governing the nation, vs. those who are not. I claim that the moralizing discourses also obscure intra-elite disagreements and competition for power. The discourse of “us” vs. “them” homogenizes the diversity of political voices within the Early Republic and reduces the political field to the duality of betrayed patriotic heroes vs. unworthy bureaucrats that hijacked the Turkish revolution. I contend that while moralizing discourses depoliticize various issues of the time in *discourse*, it also ironically creates a forceful political space in *practice* that calls the reader to read history from the author’s perspective and act on behalf of the author—to protect the moral legacy of the Turkish revolution against threats.

Widespread equation of political opposition in Turkish politics with “people,” “periphery” or “progressive politics” has obscured the exclusionist, elitist and authoritarian

ian tendencies of conservative movements in Turkey. In contrast, I hold that the autobiographical political discourse created by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay reveals an alternative yet exclusivist and elitist form of conservative nationalist ideology. They juxtaposed a conservative opposition politics with an authoritarian-elitist nationalism against (what they considered) the “repressive tendencies” of “degenerate bureaucratic circles.” Through a narrative of the “brotherhood” of moral heroes, and their “betrayal” by emerging “decadent” elites, they called on the conscience of future generations to take power back from “betrayers” and “decadents.” And their autobiographies have had an enduring popularity both among the conservative political leadership and their larger public constituency since the late 1940s.

Karabekir’s epigraph to his *İstiklal Harbimiz* (Our War of Independence) epitomizes the political significance of writing personal narratives on the history of the Independence War: “We waged the National Struggle. If its actors do not write [about it], [then] its history becomes a fairy tale” (Karabekir 1960: 1). In this sense, their writings pose an idiosyncratic political site that calls future generations to actively remember and reevaluate history in a way that does more than demand political legitimacy and recognition of service—it creates its own political ideology with a moral-universalist claim to represent a whole nation. As the continuous reprinting of these autobiographies and their popularity among conservative scholars and intelligentsia reveal, their call has been taken seriously since then, and their autobiographies have had an enduring popularity among both conservative, Islamist and center-right political constituencies, as well as their intelligentsia. Autobiographies in that sense are political sites that are continuously reappropriated by new generations of conservative, center-right and Islamist political actors, who problematize the history of the Early

Republic—especially on controversial topics such as the Lausanne Proceedings and Independence Tribunals.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8. 1. Memoir-writing, Legitimacy and Nationalist Morality

What work do the autobiographic writings analyzed here do as publicly circulated narratives in re-defining frames of political legitimacy in Turkey? Where do their power and public appeal come from, beyond the standard popular hunger for scandalous details to be unearthed about the political elite? How do morality and character become vital elements of a political opposition that generates a debate on the moral and political legitimacy of the new polity and its rulers? In answering these questions through the analysis of these texts, I unpacked in this dissertation how autobiographic writings become ambivalent battlegrounds for the politics of memory in Turkey, and how the concept of “morality” becomes central to the construction of political authority and legitimate forms of selfhood. Existing literature on autobiography as a source of political history focuses on the “fact-finding” aspect of autobiographic texts, and their incorporation of marginalized political identities and positions by voicing “hidden” truths. This work explicated that the authority of autobiographic narrative does not necessarily rely on the revelation of hidden truths. The author’s authority in the Early Republican context relies less on the revealing of scandalous facts in the text, and more on the performance of the author as a moral subject.

Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's autobiographical writings offer a retrospective interpretation of a history that was remembered and registered in the Turkish public imaginary primarily by reference to Mustafa Kemal's *Nutuk*. In *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal provided a self-centered narrative that claimed the National Struggle would have been at risk without his exceptional understanding of existing situations, foresight, and last-minute interventions in crises. Mustafa Kemal also portrayed Karabekir, Cebesoy, Orbay and many other key figures of the Independence War as prone to errors in judgment, occasionally imprudent, politically timid, or lacking the will to execute planned or preset courses of action against the odds. Both *Nutuk* and the autobiographical writings of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay provide extensive descriptions of the moral qualities of both the authors and their political rivals, in which character and morality emerge as central to making claims about rulership, legitimacy and patriotism. I argued that moralizing discourses ultimately claim an authority to speak about a history and to articulate new political claims.

My focus in this dissertation is not the actual political history of the rise of the first opposition party in Republican Turkey, or the kind of active politics Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay conducted in the 1920s. I do not treat these texts as alternative historical sources to offer a new re-reading of the history of the Early Republic. Instead, I interpret their claims to truth-telling as performative practices that sought to justify the autobiographer's own claims, upholding his reputation, disputing other accounts, and inventing alternative desirable futures. Following recent autobiographical and memoir studies, I bracket questions of intentionality and verifiability, and instead focus on autobiographic representations of oneself and others in the text. Through employing narrative analysis, I treat the intertextual space that emerged between these three figures

as a peculiar political site to articulate an ideological position to contest the past and make demands on the future.

Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's texts rely on an extensive moral fashioning of themselves as men of cause and incarnations of the Turkish nation's moral character.

These texts describe the personal maturation of the authors into "leaders" as a process of gradual perfection, which parallels the larger historical processes of the maturation of the Turkish nation into a modern nation-state. The authors reclaim the position of the moral and righteous founders of the Republic by citing each other as embodying a moral-national character. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay frequently project the moral traits they consider to be markers of this national character onto each other, creating an "us" as moral servants of the nation. Each author cites how the other two displayed sacrifice, humility and selflessness in service of their nation. This "us" stands in stark contrast with their political rivals in the texts—*etraf*. Their memoirs thus produce an intertextual political space that rests on an identity of "us," who embody the national character as Independence War brothers, against the *etraf*.

Instead of an individual defense against specific accusations, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay passionately articulated narratives of a brotherhood, who (unlike emerging decadent bureaucrats) selflessly committed themselves to the service of the nation. Past stories of hardships endured through sacrificial brotherhood are central to the construction of worthy leaders. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay primarily portray their individual stories as the maturation of selfless nationalists who sacrificially served the nation in solidarity with their brothers during the late Ottoman period, the National Struggle and afterwards. While the emphasis on sacrificial brotherhood could be dismissed at first sight as typical popular nationalist rhetoric of the time, I show how

multiple tropes knitted around brotherhood produce moralizing discourses that ultimately reclaim a privileged position against *Nutuk*, which rested on a one-man narrative. Brotherhood narratives paint a self-sacrificial moral subject, devoted exclusively to the fate of the nation, transcending the image of a naïve bitter soldier. These persistent references to the moral substance of a brotherhood being betrayed appeal to an imagined nation to intervene against what is regarded as deviation. Opposition to government in that sense becomes a frame of representing the nation as an integral whole, instead of the marginal “backward forces” targeted in *Nutuk*.

8. 2. Moralistic Discourses and Conservative-Nationalism

This dissertation provided detailed analyses of how these moral problematizations regarding “us” vs. “other” elevate a literary medium to a political level, while articulating a unique ideological formation—which I call conservative nationalism. I do not use conservative nationalism as a specific doctrine with its own political constituency within society. I rather see it as a moralistic vision of a national order that is gradually actualizing itself through history, but has to be protected against the “corrupt” excesses of an unhinged revolutionary elite. I suggest that a nationalist understanding of morality is central to the articulation of this conservative nationalist politics, as it claims to represent the whole nation—i.e. not particular factions, ideologies, social groups, etc. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s texts seek to reclaim political legitimacy and authority for their authors, while denigrating political adversaries through a complex interplay of morality, character and dispositions of the political actors mentioned. Moralistic definitions of political legitimacy guide how they problematize and define

the authority to write history and the legitimacy to represent and politically lead the nation.

I argue that the autobiographies' framing of political problems in moral terms consistently adheres to a similar conceptualization of politics, even though Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay do not explicitly adhere to conservatism as an ideology. While emphasizes on sacrifice, selflessness and humility could be viewed in many other forms of non-conservative nationalism in Turkey and globally, what makes them conservative in the larger Burkean sense is their moralist discourse, their belief in a transcendent moral order—although they see this order as a process oriented towards the future, unlike the classical conservative glorification of the past. This moralizing discourse imagines a continuous threat of moral corruption against which the moral substance and social fabric of the nation have to be preserved, depoliticizing political rivalries. Burke similarly espoused a moral skepticism towards revolutionary elites as unhinged, greedy and corrupt individuals who undermined a moral order, and argued that political power should instead rest with moral and wise statesmen who would wield and control social change responsibly. Similar to Burke, Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay prioritize morality as a matter of temperament and character, posing themselves, and their political position, as moral opposites to a corrupt revolutionary elite. They believe in a moral order that is threatened by an unhinged-greedy (*muhteris*) post-revolutionary cadre, which needs to be kept in check by the guardianship of wise and moral statesmen—a select few among those who embodied the national moral character of the Turkish revolution.

This moralizing discourse on leadership, legitimacy and nationalism reframes a complex set of political disagreements and ideological debates of the time in terms of

character, disposition and temperament—those who are worthy of representing and governing the nation, vs. those who are not. I claim that the moralizing discourses also obscure intra-elite disagreements and competition for power. The discourse of “us” vs. “them” homogenizes the diversity of political voices within the Early Republic and reduces the political field to the duality of betrayed patriotic heroes vs. unworthy bureaucrats that hijacked the Turkish revolution. I contend that while this frame depoliticizes various issues of the time in *discourse*, it also ironically creates a forceful political space in *practice*, as it calls the reader to read history from the author’s perspective and act on behalf of the author—to protect the moral legacy of the Turkish revolution against threats. Just like narratives of sacrifices that were made for the National Struggle, narratives of *etraf* open up a timeless temporality, a wide horizon in which the reader is invited to do something in retribution for the betrayal of the nation’s moral values, and to preserve those values. In its demand of retribution, recognition and legitimacy, the textual politics of the memoirs operates by connecting different temporal horizons in the making of a nation.

8. 3. Elitist Vanguardism of Conservative Nationalism

Attention to moralizing politics and its elitist and vanguardist contours offers an account different from the historiography of contemporary scholarship that associates Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay with a liberal-conservative traditionalism on behalf of Anatolian populations, or from the historiography of works that completely reject the conservative elements within their politics by overstating their elite-Unionist legacies or the elements of liberalism or popular democracy in their party program. Despite significant differences in their frameworks, the way historians like Zürcher explain

PRP leaders' liberal aversions to the statist official ideology converges with conservative scholars' celebratory analysis of the leaders of the PRP as voices of the people. Inter-textual analysis of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's autobiographic writings provides a correction to these studies that focus on the PRP's apparently liberal and social-contract-based party program and politics, revealing a different aspect of the party's leaders.

Despite the emphases on freedom, democracy and liberalism in the PRP party program, autobiographies reveal an endorsement of an elitist moral guardianship by select soldier elites—who fulfill the function of Burke's wise and moral statesmen, tasked with neutralizing the threat posed by the excesses of an unhinged revolutionary elite. My analysis documents that their conservatism did not seek to voice the conservative sensibilities of a repressed people against a secular-reformist nationalist state. The resulting "pluralization" of claims to political power and alternative accounts of political legitimacy when the marginalized voices of the PRP leaders are incorporated into exclusive and dominant forms of politics does not necessarily entail new visions for a more democratic public sphere. The memoirs' reckoning with the past expands the boundaries of national imaginary and helps to popularize and disseminate nationalist sentiments (as *Nutuk* primarily did), but does not necessarily promise a more inclusive understanding of the public sphere or citizenship beyond an elitist and moralist affirmation of the right of a clique of wise and moral statesmen to political power.

Their narratives mainly demand inclusion for a select group of people with certain moral qualities. National character (*milli karakter*) in these texts allegedly qualifies certain people as being more patriotic, and hence superior to others. Embodiment of

certain traits such as self-sacrifice and devotedness to saving the nation composed the national character. The authority to speak on history, truth and politics becomes a right for those who could perform a moral dignified self that appropriately embodies the national character. They insist that whoever displayed the national character and thus sacrificially served in the war should have ruled the cadres of the new polity in principle. Moralization of the political discourse counterposes compatriots with a national character against those who lack it, ascribing a naturalized right for a select few to serve their nation.

Unearthing elements of such an elitist discourse in Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's writings decouples their position from the historiography of conservative scholars, which overstates the liberalism or popular democracy of the PRP. This focus on vanguardist-elitist conservative nationalism invites new horizons for the literature on early Republican history and conservative politics in Turkey broadly. The elitist conservative-nationalism of the first oppositional party leaders offers a reinterpretation of Early Republican history that goes beyond the dualist frames of modernism vs. traditionalism, secularism vs. religious-reactionarism, or center vs. periphery.

8. 4. The Politics of the Public Reception of Autobiographic Writings by Early Republican Opponents

All three authors call for acting on behalf of the "Turkish nation" being betrayed. Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay's accounts of degeneration and betrayal explicitly affirm and embrace the duty of the moral agents of the nation to intervene and protect the

fate of the Turkish revolution, which they paint extensively with the same moral conservative emphasis on brotherhood, moral perfection, humility, self-sacrifice and other similar values. In that sense, this conservative nationalist imagery of the nation radically departs from existing accounts of marginalized and silenced “people,” “rural masses,” or the “periphery” in much of the Turkish scholarship.

In this conservative nationalist imagery, the authority to speak on behalf of the nation, its history, and the truth is reserved as a right only for those who could pedagogically form and routinely perform moral dignified selves that embody the national character in the most appropriate way. Despite existing images of a progressive politics of memory-making through autobiographic texts, the moment of autobiographical contestation can become a fully-fledged moment of political exclusion. The narrative articulations of such exclusive moralities generate a vast array of complicated boundary-making practices, so that only those with certain qualities are viewed as legitimate political actors. The authors’ memoirs help popularize and disseminate nationalist sentiments to a wider audience, but their narratives do not warrant more inclusive understandings of citizenship, politics or agency. Instead they resort to a strong conservative morality as a means to demarcate binding boundaries between moral and immoral subjects and subjectivities in an authoritarian and exclusionist fashion.

What are the elements that overcharge the political status of these texts as alternatives to “official history”? Based on Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay’s texts, I hold that this conservative nationalism draws its moral-ideological essence not from the travails of *halk* (people), but from the epic victories, self-sacrificial values and idioms of brotherhood and the moral character of *millet* (nation), which are asserted against the loom-

ing “decadence” and betrayals of the emerging bureaucratic elite. Dissident memoirists do not seek to voice the conservative sensibilities of a repressed *halk* (people) against a secular-reformist nationalist state. But through narratives of the “brotherhood” of moral heroes, and their “betrayal” by emerging “decadent” elites, they call on the conscience of future generations to take power back from “betrayers” and “decadents.” Their texts construct a moral duty that animates new definitions of national values, moral responsibility and political action. My analysis shows the need to go beyond the dualist frames of center vs. periphery, official vs. alternative, etc. in understanding the conservative legacy in Turkey.

8. 5. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Work

The scope of this thesis is limited to the texts published by leading figures of the Independence War. The arguments developed in this thesis could be furthered by (i) extending the focus to other autobiographies and memoirs by other figures from the same time period, (ii) studying the historically shifting publishing policies and the political motivations behind different editions and their circulation, and (iii) analyzing the public reception of these and other similar texts as sources of historical truth, as well as political statements. There are a range of other texts by less important political figures, journalists, artists, popular historians, etc. who have actually experienced the time period and written about its political issues and historical details from their perspective. Analyses of the variation of themes, structures and discursive techniques across the multiplicity of such texts in comparison with the memoirs of Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay could provide insights on how issues of morality and emotional complexion are relevant for contestations over political legitimacy and historiography.

Parallel studies on the publishers, their initiatives and engagements, as well as the public reception of these engagements would also deepen our understanding of the legacy of these texts within the wider conservative and nationalist popular political tradition in contemporary Turkey.

In its aggressive claims to represent the “nation,” the conservative nationalist moral opposition led by Karabekir, Cebesoy and Orbay can potentially shed light on the contemporary political landscape. Intra-elite struggle that I documented in this work can provide insights regarding why and how an initially moderate liberal party with Islamic sensibilities like the AKP has recently become a nationalist party with dispersed sets of authoritarian practices. The AKP’s transformation into a staunchly nationalist party in the last decade that seeks to redefine the foundation of the nation through discursively claiming new beginnings and formations on the Independence Struggle and resurrection of the nation could well be situated within the historical conservative discomfort with the declaration of the Republic in 1923 that granted Mustafa Kemal the leadership of the new nation. Political debates regarding the temporality of the nation, on the beginnings, heroes and sacrifices of the past and the present could be better understood in excavating the historical genealogy of the contestations over patriotism and heroism.

The idioms of brotherhood, betrayal and *etraf* can also help trace the genealogy of intra-elite struggle among the current conservative cadres. When Ahmet Davutoğlu, former Prime Minister of Turkey, re-affirmed “*kardeşlik hukuku*” (the law and legacy of brotherhood) between him and Erdoğan, he described his sudden dismissal from his prime minister post in early May 2016 as inconsistent with being a “*refik*” (brother-like friend, in Arabic). The critiques by another dissident AKP founder and former

minister, Bülent Arınç, of how “we” became “I” echo similar sentiments of the betrayal of a brotherhood. Like the memoirists discussed here, Davutoğlu and Arınç claimed moral authority through the idioms of brotherhood, sacrifice and betrayal. Hence, for future studies that focus on the AKP and conservative politics, the moral idioms of dissent among early Republican political elites in Turkey can potentially offer a productive political vocabulary for unpacking historically powerful discourses of conservative nationalism and authoritarianism.

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APPENDIX

A BRIEF PUBLICATION HISTORY OF MAJOR EDITIONS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHIC WRITINGS BY MUSTAFA KEMAL, KAZIM KARABEKİR, ALİ FUAT CEBESÖY AND RAUF ORBAY

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