5 Changing hearts and minds

Economic thought in late Ottoman fiction

> In poetry's gallery of diverse ways of thinking, diverse aspirations, and diverse desires, we come to know periods and nations far more intimately than we can through the misleading and pathetic method of studying their political and military history. From this latter kind of history, we rarely learn more about a people than how it was ruled and how it was wiped out. From its poetry, we learn about its way of thinking, its desires and wants, the ways it rejoiced, and the ways it was guided either by its principles or its inclinations.[1]
>
> (von Herder, 1993)

> The novels … gave political economy something it ordinarily lacked: a sustained encounter with the states of vitality and sensation it invented but failed to explore fully. Reading political economy through … novels while also reading the novels through political economy will … defamiliarize not only those two modes of writing but also the very notion of life and feeling on which they relied.[2]
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> (Gallagher, 2006)

Humans are the only species that have recourse to fiction to make sense of the world around them. From the earliest traditions of mythology to organized religions, human beings created and passed on to following generations many stories that are supposed to unravel the complexities of the natural and social life and the best ways to act in it. Muslims have referred to traditional narratives about the lives of archetypical figures (such as the *hadith* literature about the Prophet Muhammad) to inspire in tackling problems in their own lives. In the increasingly secular and Eurocentric nineteenth century, Ottoman intellectuals discovered new (European) fictional forms—such as the novel and short story—and used them in reaching the hearts and minds of the masses for social change. In this respect, the Ottoman social novel of the late nineteenth century not only provides us with detailed pictures of Ottoman social and economic life of the era, but also reflects Ottoman reformists' projections for an ideal future for the empire in the age of capitalist modernity.[3]

The oppressive political regime of the Hamidian era and its heavy censorship directed many Ottoman reformists to less dangerous fields of social criticism. One such field was economics;[4] another was fiction. This chapter looks examines the intersection of these two fields. It suggests close textual analyses of some of the popular literary works of the era in order to reveal and contextualize their

economic content. The main aim of the chapter is to demonstrate how some Ottoman reformists used fiction as an instrument of soft social engineering through inoculating Ottoman readers with a new economic value-set. It also shows how bourgeois sensibilities already permeated into all aspects of the late Ottoman sociocultural life as a result of popular economic literature, which was discussed in the earlier chapters.

The chapter focuses on the works of two popular intellectuals of the late nineteenth century, Ahmed Midhat Efendi (1844–1912) and (Mizancı) Mehmed Murad Bey (1854–1917). The main reason for choosing these two figures are the obvious economic elements in some of their fictional works, whose plot, moral, and the characters reflect specific economic principles and notions. Besides, the existence of their non-fictional economic writings on similar issues presents us an opportunity to make intertextual analyses between fiction and non-fiction. It is also worth noting that these two authors had significant cultural and intellectual influence in their age and on subsequent generations, which makes their works particularly important in gaining insights into the impact of fiction in social change.

The first section below discusses the connection between the novel as a literary form and the question of modernization in late Ottoman history. The second section focuses on the fictional works of Ahmed Midhat Efendi in order to investigate how he used fiction to promote his ideas regarding economic development. The third section provides an analytical re-reading of Mehmed Murad Bey's novel, *Turfanda mı, Turfa mı?*, to reveal how the idea of modernization through bottom-up economic development is hidden behind the story of an Ottoman romantic hero. With frequent references to the case of Ahmed Midhat, this last section also aims at revealing the patterns of the use of fiction in late Ottoman intellectual history for social change with economic motives.

Modernization and the Ottoman novel

Ottoman modernists such as Şinasi (1826–71), Namık Kemal (1840–88), Şemseddin Sami (1850–1904), and Ahmed Midhat considered literature as both an indicator of the level of civilization and an essential instrument for modernization.[5] They believed that traditional Ottoman literature was full of pre-modern styles and themes that should be jettisoned on the way to a sophisticated literature of a modern society. Unscientific, irrational, and unrealistic themes in folk tales (such as the love story "Kerem ile Aslı" or the heroic Battal Gâzi stories) and traditional poetry, which promoted melancholy and drunkenness (as opposed to the modern emphasis on labor), were regarded as inimical to modernization efforts. Şemseddin Sami, for example, criticized the vastly popular Middle Eastern folk tale "Leyla ve Mecnun" from a rationalist and positivist perspective. He argued that the story includes many unrealistic and irrational scenes: Leyla talks to a candle and Mecnun gathers wolves, lambs, lions, and gazelles around himself and chats with them. Şemseddin Sami labeled such stories "childish" and maintained that an educated person, even a child, could not enjoy such stories in the modern age.[6]

The first attempts to modernize Ottoman literature came from Young Ottomans like Şemseddin Sami and Namık Kemal, who introduced new forms (such as the novel and short story) as well as new ideas (such as liberty and motherland—*vatan*). Early Ottoman novelists were almost exclusively moralist and didactic, telling allegorical stories about some culturally conservative ideal types for pedagogical—rather than purely literary—purposes.[7] Later Ahmed Midhat took this reformist-pedagogical approach to fiction to another level by using fiction as a school for ordinary people. In addition to his non-fiction books and articles, he wrote and adapted hundreds of short stories and novels full of encyclopedic knowledge. Young Ottomans dismissed traditional folk tales as obsolete. Ahmed Midhat, however, employed many stylistic and moral elements from traditional storytelling to reach a wider audience and to popularize new forms by mixing them with more familiar ones.[8] The quality of his writings was not high in literary terms, but this was least of his concerns. Ahmed Midhat knew that he was the *Hâce-i evvel*, the first teacher, a pioneer who would be followed by more knowledgeable, sophisticated, and specialized ones.[9] Therefore, his main objective was to familiarize his fellow Ottomans with modern European forms of literature and especially with modern sciences. He professes this strategy in a foreword he wrote for the book of a young author:

> My son! One should study only one thing, but one should do it perfectly. Or one should study everything, but of course only superficially! Regarding the conditions that we, the Ottomans, live in today, the latter is more preferable. And I advise you [to do] that. However, in the future the former will be more preferable. So, you will advise it to your son![10]

The novel was not only an artistic form in nineteenth-century Europe either. For many novelists, it was a means of critique of capitalist society. Starting with the French realists, such as Stendhal (1783–1842) and Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850), many novelists told stories of ordinary people who constantly struggled for survival under cruel working and living conditions under capitalism. Through these stories such authors criticized or even presented alternatives to capitalist social relations, as we see in the works of Émile Zola (1840–1902). The novels of Charles Dickens (1812–70) constitute the most notable examples of this genre. As Stefan Zweig puts it,

> His novels should be the instrument for helping the poor, forsaken, and forgotten children who, like himself of old, were suffering injustice at the hands of teachers, badly conducted schools, indifferent parents; who were pining away because of the slothfulness, the lack of affection, the selfishness of their natural protectors and guardians.[11]

Especially towards the end of the century, some writers, such as the American author Horatio Alger, Jr. (1832–99), went beyond social criticism and turned the novel into a survival manual in a capitalist society.[12] In this genre, the main goal

of the writer was not merely to criticize poverty and inequality, but to show ways to succeed under these conditions. These popular dime novels were rags-to-riches stories that displayed the "ways to wealth" to the poor masses. This particular use of the novel matched the social and political concerns of Ottoman modernists.[13]

The introduction of *roman feuilletons* (serialized novels) in early nineteenth-century France not only accelerated the popularization of the novel as a genre by making it more affordable for the greater masses, but also increased newspaper sales, thereby nurturing the press industry.[14] Ahmed Midhat and other Ottoman press entrepreneurs did not fail to realize the importance of this powerful instrument for popularizing this new genre and for increasing profits. Not only novels, but also books on history and other subjects were serialized in their periodicals both to increase the circulation of the papers and to educate the public. Meanwhile, Hamidian educational reforms and the rise of an Ottoman middle class in the late nineteenth century created a market for the novel as well as for newspapers and other forms of intellectual production. In addition, the government provided subsidies and other forms of financial support to the developing independent Ottoman press. The growth of the literate population and the development of the press industry accelerated the bourgeois transformation of the Ottoman public sphere in the late nineteenth century.

In terms of its historical development and its socio-political roles, the Ottoman novel follows European examples. It is worth noting, however, that I do not adopt the conventional "imitation" discourse that would assume that the Ottoman novel was merely a primitive imitation of the French novel. The problem of this discourse is not that it is completely wrong, but rather that it is tautological. Since every successor follows—and to some extent imitates—its predecessor, Ottoman novelists imitated European examples. Nevertheless, European novelists of the same age were also perpetuating the stylistic and thematic patterns of their predecessors. Since the latter are considered a part of the same national or "civilizational" (i.e., European) pedigree, inter-European influence is usually regarded as simply evolution or development, not imitation. In the Ottoman case, however, Muslims have historically been considered outsiders to European civilization. Thus, their efforts to adopt modern forms and institutions have often been regarded as "aping the West." In short, this chapter, in rejecting such a simplistic view, assesses the Ottoman novel as a natural branch of a modern literary genre (i.e., the novel), instead of treating it as an unnatural and odd mutation in the "Oriental" literary and intellectual tradition.

Hâce-i Evvel and storytelling as an instrument of development

Ahmed Midhat, as a modern storyteller and a pioneer of the idea of bottom-up economic development through education, used fiction to alter the Ottoman economic mindset.[15] Not only did he introduce a new work ethic through his writings, he also embodied this ethic in his working habits and business enterprises.[16]

A recurring theme in his fictional works is a dialectical story of an ideal Ottoman hero, who achieves economic and social success through diligence, and a "super-Westernized" anti-hero, whose laziness and mannerisms result in failure and impoverishment.[17] These two characters obviously stand as metaphorical equivalents of industriousness and entrepreneurship on the one hand, and laziness and *fonctionnarisme* (tendency to become civil servant) on the other.

Before analyzing Ahmed Midhat's way-to-wealth stories, it is worth noting that the outstanding example of an ideal Ottoman entrepreneur in his fiction was Seyyid Mehmed Numan, the main character in his novel *Müşahedât* (Observations, 1891). Mehmed Numan is an old Egyptian businessman who comes to Istanbul as a young and sharp clerk. He builds a very successful international trade network stretching from Egypt and the Aegean islands to Marseilles and London.[18] Ahmed Midhat presents this old businessman to his readers as a model to emulate and makes an open call for future generations of Ottoman writers to create similar characters in order to promote entrepreneurship in Ottoman society.[19] Although Mehmed Numan exemplifies the ideal Muslim-Ottoman entrepreneur, I have preferred not to deal with this story in this chapter for two main reasons: first, in the novel, Ahmed Midhat summarizes his reflections about economic development and the roles of the elite in this process through the words and actions of Mehmed Numan. However, Mehmed Numan does not say anything original but simply reiterates Ahmed Midhat's main theses in his *Sevda-yı Sa'y ü Amel* and *Teşrik-i Mesaî, Taksim-i Mesaî*.[20] Second, and more importantly, Ahmed Midhat does not share the details about how Mehmed Numan achieved success. In other words, Ahmed Midhat simply gives the example of a businessman who is already rich, thanks to his earlier successful business ventures and hard work, but does not turn Mehmed Numan's story into a practical manual for achieving success.

The stories that will be discussed in the section provided young and enthusiastic Ottoman readers with a detailed step-by-step approach to economic and social success.[21] It is obvious that Ahmed Midhat outlined these stories not only as enjoyable tales, but also as ready-to-apply patterns to put these new ideas in practice. In the introduction to one of his earliest stories of the same type—in which some young and idealistic characters establish a small firm—Ahmed Midhat states his motivation very clearly: "Although this association is nothing but fiction, I want to describe it in such a way that if someone would like to put it into practice, it should be possible."[22]

Alafranga *and the leisure class in Ahmed Midhat's stories*

The *alafranga* (*alla Franca*) is probably the most well-known type in the Ottoman-Turkish novel. Felatun Bey in Ahmed Midhat's novella, *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi* (1875) has been considered the prototype for this character.[23] Following Ahmed Midhat, other Ottoman novelists also depicted the *alafranga* character in similar stories. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar (1864–1944)—a follower of Ahmed Midhat in intellectual and literary terms—wrote *Şık* (Chic), which was

published by Ahmed Midhat in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* in 1884.[24] In 1896, Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem wrote *Araba Sevdası* (*The Carriage Affair*), which has been considered one of the most important and influential novels of late Ottoman literature in terms of its characters, plot, and style.[25] The main theme of both stories is the ludicrous situations that superficial Europeanization gives rise to. Bihruz Bey in *Araba Sevdası* wastes his money on ostentation, just like Ahmed Midhat's anti-heroes as we shall see below.

Felatun symbolizes an inappropriate form of Westernization through merely aping French manners and consumption patterns and living an ostentatious life in Beyoğlu (Pera), the Europeanized district of Istanbul.[26] This type usually hates everything Ottoman and Oriental and associates being European with being sophisticated and civilized. However, despite his rather extreme interest in European civilization, he has only superficial knowledge of it, and his knowledge of his own culture is even narrower. He does not speak French well, but he uses French words and expressions in his everyday language.

It is worth noting in passing that using French in everyday language was a typical upper-class behavior in the late nineteenth century, not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in other countries that were under French cultural influence. In the Russian case, for instance, Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877) includes many depictions of such behavior among the Russian elite of the age. As an interesting example from the Ottoman Empire, Arminius Vambéry notes about the sultan Abdülhamid II that "without knowing French he would often interlard his Turkish conversation with French words and sayings, to impress ambassadors and other exalted guests."[27] Speaking—or at least using—French in everyday language was basically an attempt of presenting oneself as an elite, educated, and intellectually sophisticated person.

Alafranga type usually appears as an ignoramus with the crude veneer of a European gentleman. According to some scholars of the Ottoman novel, this character represents the contempt of Ottoman intellectuals towards the super-Westernized Tanzimat generation of the Ottoman elite.[28] As a reaction to this tendency, Ottoman modernists, like Ahmed Midhat, make a distinction between appropriate and inappropriate forms of Westernization by condemning the uncritical adoption of European styles and manners at the expense of one's own cultural values. These critical intellectuals, instead, promote a synthesis of Western material and intellectual culture with Muslim-Ottoman religious and cultural values to construct a native modern Ottoman lifestyle. More importantly, however, the late-Ottoman modernist vision of such a lifestyle was inspired by obvious economic concerns in addition to cultural ones. For example, several of Ahmed Midhat's stories not only show proper Westernization in social and cultural terms, but also reflect the author's suggestions for a bottom-up economic development strategy for the salvation of the empire. Ahmed Midhat's three novellas, *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi* (1875), *Bahtiyarlık* (*Bliss*, 1885), and *Para!* (*Money!*, 1887) stand out as the most important works to be discussed in this context.

As Felatun Bey was the prototype of the *alafranga* character in later Ottoman fiction, his story also became the prototype of a genre in the Ottoman-Turkish

literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[29] Felatun Bey is a Westernized fop, a cocky, extravagant, and lazy man from a wealthy family. On paper, he works as a civil servant; however, instead of going to the office, he prefers frequenting the chic cafes and hotels of Beyoğlu with his mistress, Polini. The hero of the story, Rakım Efendi, on the other hand, is a modest, well-educated, moral, thrifty, and industrious gentleman. He is morally and culturally more traditional and conservative, but he is also Westernized in his manners and with a vast knowledge of modern European sciences and philosophy. In this respect, Rakım represents the ideal modern Ottoman citizen who benefits from advanced European knowledge while preserving Muslim-Ottoman values in the private sphere.

In terms of economic behavior and work ethic, these characters remind us of two key concepts in social and economic theory: Thorstein Veblen's (1857–1929) "conspicuous consumption"[30] (Felatun) and Max Weber's (1864–1920) "capitalist spirit and Protestant ethic" (Rakım).[31] Interestingly enough, Ahmed Midhat wrote these stories long before both concepts were introduced into economic literature. Moreover, not only does Ahmed Midhat introduce these two notions, he also juxtaposes them in the same stories and treats them as two opposite poles of economic behavior that lead to either success or failure.[32]

Felatun Bey does not represent only inappropriate Westernization and consequent cultural alienation. He is also the embodiment of the conspicuous and wasteful consumption of the Tanzimat-era Ottoman leisure class (in the Veblenian sense).[33] In addition to the conspicuous consumption of the elite, wasteful governmental spending on the visual aspects of modernization—such as new palaces—was also an important characteristic of the pre-Hamidian era. As a result, the lack of adequate resources for economic development, huge amounts of wasteful consumption, and failed economic enterprises became serious concerns for Ottoman intellectuals and influenced the literature of the era.

Felatun Bey, as a member of the Ottoman leisure class, is a wasteful character. Although his father works hard to provide him with a good education, he is not interested in knowledge and learning, but nevertheless presents himself as a wise gentleman. In order to put more emphasis on this paradox of the *alafranga* elite, Ahmed Midhat chose a special name for him: Felatun, the Ottomanized version of the name of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. Felatun's family moves from Üsküdar (a conservative Muslim district) to Beyoğlu (the Westernized district of Istanbul) as they climb up the ladder of economic and social status.

Felatun lives an extravagant life with his French mistress Polini in an expensive hotel in Beyoğlu.[34] Their appetite for ostentation is endless. One night, Felatun loses a huge amount at poker as a result of her forcing him to continue playing despite his poor record. Polini's motivation, according to Ahmed Midhat, is to show that she is with a rich gentleman who can afford such losses. In other words, Felatun's great loss in monetary terms has a direct positive correlation with Polini's social standing in Beyoğlu.[35] The next day, Felatun, seriously depressed over his loss, organizes an ostentatious excursion to the countryside with two luxury horse carriages and two large music bands.

Although he spends a lot of money to cure his depression resulting from a large monetary loss, the reaction of observers proves that it is worth the cost in terms of the social status this excursion provides: "Bravo! He spends a lot of money, but he is enjoying himself like a Prince."[36]

Ahmed Midhat associates such irrational behavior with the basic human instinct for ostentation:

> It is due to human nature that a person is not satisfied with his happiness, but also wants to show it to everybody. Even if he is not happy, he lies to others to make them believe that he is happy. This behavior is so common that it does not usually attract our attention. However some exaggerated behaviors like using a twenty-five lira cord, or even more expensively, using a cord with diamonds, for a five-lira watch are examples of this attitude. Obviously, a watch is a necessary device for us. But why do we need a watch chain? If it is needed for the protection of the watch, a cotton cord could also be used. But no, that is not the case. Every human being wants others see that he has such a large fortune that he uses a cord worth twenty-five golden pieces just to protect his watch.[37]

For Ahmed Midhat, this is not merely an innocuous instinct. On the contrary, it usually have destructive consequences. Felatun wastes all his family wealth and takes on a considerable amount of debt to perpetuate his lifestyle. In the end, he finds a job in Alexandria and moves there as a penniless junior civil servant. However his last words to his friend Rakım show that he has not learned anything from his mistakes: "If I can live long enough to save some money after repaying my debts, I can still have some time for self-indulgence in my nineties."[38] This note hints at Ahmed Midhat's giving priority to instincts over experience in shaping economic behavior.

Senâi in *Bahtiyarlık* (*Bliss*) is another *alafranga* character and shares many features with Felatun. The son of the landlord of an estate called "Berrak Pınar" (Pristine Spring), Senâi emulates the French nobility and signs his letters "Senâi de Berrak Pınar."[39] He knows from books that French aristocrats get loans in their youth to be paid off when they inherit the family fortune, and he does the same. His wasteful and expensive lifestyle leads him into a spiral of debt that consumes his family's entire wealth. As a last resort, he borrows some money to present himself as a good and wealthy marriage prospect for the daughters of rich families. Ahmed Midhat notes,

> He began to live so gently with the rest of his money that he proved his suitability for this marriage. Everybody congratulated Abdülcabbar Bey [the head of a rich family and Senâi's father-in-law] for having such a generous son-in-law.[40]

Thus conspicuous consumption proves to be useful for Senâi to indicate high social standing, just as Veblen defined it, and to hoodwink a wealthy family.

However, this does not solve Senâi's problem for good, but rather leads to the bankruptcy of his wife's family. In the end, Senâi escapes to Switzerland with the money he borrowed in the name of his father-in-law, leaving behind a huge amount of debt in both his own and his father-in-law's names.[41]

Sulhi of *Para!* (*Money!*) is another offshoot of the Felatun prototype. Sulhi believes that the most important thing in life is money, and that money is the only source of high social status. According to him, "Money is a general measure. When one asks about a person, one does not ask whether he is a physician or a surgeon, but asks how much money that he possesses."[42] Sulhi attends the medical school, but he gets dismissed due to his laziness. Yet, this does not cause him any sorrow since he thinks that wealth, and not a profession, is the source of reputation and happiness. He says, "Thanks to my aunt's fortune, I do not have to work at all. If I want to be richer someday, I can engage in trade."[43] At some point, he understands that his aunt's wealth will not last long if he continues to lead his ostentatious life and marries the daughter of a very rich man—reminding us of Senâi in *Bahtiyarlık*.

When Sulhi meets the girl, he proves his social status by emphasizing his leisure class identity. He introduces himself by saying, "My name is Mehmed Sulhi. I live in Aksaray! I have lots of real estate. I do not work at all, and I live on the returns of these properties."[44] The classic moral ending of Ahmed Midhat's stories awaits Sulhi too: he wastes his aunt's and then his father-in-law's wealth, which had once been considered "endless." The successful character of the story, Vahdeti, who becomes rich through hard work despite his modest background, offers a small loan to Sulhi to be used as initial capital for a business. Sulhi's response reflects Ahmed Midhat's belief in the hopelessness of the *alafranga* character: "I am confident that I would spend that money in a very short period, but I doubt that I can make money by using it as capital."[45]

Sulhi's description of the social importance of money remind us of the works of Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850), who had a considerable influence on the Ottoman novelist of the era:

> [Balzac] investigated money values and introduced them into his novels. Ever since the days when aristocratic privileges was abolished, ever since the vast differences of status were reduced to a general level of equality, money has come more and more to be the blood and the driving force of social life. Money value gradually came to determine all things; the worth of every passions was estimated in terms of the material sacrifices entailed; every human being was judged by what his income happened to be in hard cash. Money circulates in these novels. Balzac allows his heroes to accumulate vast fortunes, only to lose all in the end [...].[46]

French literary romanticism made a formative impact on the development of Ottoman novel, and Balzac as one of its leading figures was of course well-known among the Ottoman literary elite. Therefore the idea of "Money is a general measure" in *Para!*, or in more general terms "the circulation of money"

(from accumulation to bankruptcy) as a theme in Ahmed Midhat's fiction may be an inspiration from Balzac. However, we should also remember that Balzac's fiction reflected not only his imagination, but more importantly the social reality he witnessed. According to many contemporary observers (including Balzac), the radical social transformation brought about by capitalism situated money at the center of social relations. After all, the capitalist transformation and the *Zeitgeist* it created led Georg Simmel—a contemporary of Ahmed Midhat—to write *The Philosophy of Money* (1900) to explain how money and the act of calculation shaped social relations in modern age. In this respect, Ahmed Midhat's putting the circulation of money in his fiction seems to reflect his observations on the social change in European capitalist societies as well as his literary and economic readings. Considering the role he assumed in Ottoman intellectual life—the conveyor of European knowledge to his society and the teacher of the masses on this basis—it is not surprising to see the same social and intellectual trends shaped his work with that of Georg Simmel or Max Weber.

Returning to his *alafranga* characters, the common characteristics of Ahmed Midhat's anti-heroes are that they come from wealthy families, but they are lazy, extravagant, immoral, and careless by nature. They usually attend the best schools of the empire, but they are either expelled or they can barely finish their schooling. They never work, and they are not interested in any sort of productive activity, including using their wealth for investment. *Alafranga* types waste all their family wealth—and in some cases the wealth of other families—in conspicuous and wasteful consumption. Hence, a financial tragedy always awaits them and their families at the end of the story. By including their families in the story, Ahmed Midhat emphasizes that a lazy and unproductive individual is harmful not only to himself but to his society too. As he puts in his introductory economics book, *Ekonomi Politik* (1879), Ahmed Midhat believes that such a "lazy and harmful man should be kicked out of modern society."[47] Now that we have seen the reasons for economic—and thereby social—failure as presented in Ahmed Midhat's fiction, it is essential to take a look at the opposite side of the story to see how he fictionalized his economic ideas on individual success and economic development that we discussed in earlier chapters.

Ahmed Midhat's ideal entrepreneurs

Rakım Efendi of *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi*, Şinasi in *Bahtiyarlık*, and Vahdeti in *Para!* are examples of ideal Ottomans in Ahmed Midhat's stories. As indicated previously for Rakım, they are all modest, well-educated, thrifty, moral, and industrious. They start with modest means, as the sons of middle class families, but thanks to the modern education they receive in imperial colleges and their hard work, thrift, and systematic thinking, they succeed in accumulating significant amounts of wealth in the end. Besides, they marry ideal Ottoman women, who are also moral, modest, and educated; they thereby achieve happiness in private life in addition to material comfort.

In his own life, Ahmed Midhat was loyal to the principles that he promoted to the readers of his economic writings. He was a "lover of labor" himself, with his entrepreneurial spirit and devotion to hard work and self-discipline. It is also known that there is a strong connection between his biography and fiction.[48] The heroes in his stories simply represent and propagate the social and economic values which he put forward in his economic writings and pursued in his own life. While Rakım and Vahdeti are also good examples of such a type with an obvious "love of labor" spirit, Şinasi in *Bahtiyarlık* stands out as a self-made man and an ideal Muslim-Ottoman capitalist entrepreneur in Ahmed Midhat's mind, thereby deserving special attention.[49]

Şinasi's story begins when he is a student at the Mekteb-i Sultâni (The Imperial High School), an elite educational institution of the era. Although the graduates of this school are expected to become high-ranking officials and diplomats of the empire, Şinasi plans to follow a completely different career path. While at school, he is interested in modern agricultural techniques and rural life, and he plans to become a "peasant."[50] According to one interpretation of the story, Şinasi's preference to settle in a village reflects the influence of nineteenth-century pastoral romanticism—more specifically of Rousseau—on Ottoman literature.[51] However, the real reason is his decision to live a productive life, instead of a non-productive but comfortable life in Istanbul thanks to his diploma. Moreover, pastoral romanticism was a reaction to rapid industrialization and the consequent social problems of urbanization in the nineteenth century. As we shall see more clearly below, Şinasi's main objective actually opposes the ideals of pastoral romanticism as he works toward transforming traditional rural life into a modern capitalistic form.

After graduation, Şinasi decides to settle in a village in Anatolia to live his dreams, and his initial capital is the pocket money that his father gives him. In a letter to his father, he explains his plan:

> Please keep sending me the money for two more years. Let me go to Anatolia and experience peasant life. . . . Even if I waste all of it, we lose nothing, because I would have probably wasted that money in Istanbul anyway. Whatever I can save from that money will be my initial capital, and with the help of God, I will expand my capital.[52]

It is worth noting that Şinasi, with such naive ideas, was not unrealistic as a character for a novel. On the contrary, he reflects a growing interest among Ottoman reformists in the possibilities for an agrarian-based socio-economic transformation. For instance, the renowned Young Turk leader, Ahmed Rıza Bey (1859–1930), was a real-life example of the Şinasi character, at least in his intentions. After observing conditions in Anatolia in his youth, Ahmed Rıza decided to study agriculture. Having completed his studies at the *École d'agriculture de Grignon* in France (1884) and returned to Istanbul, he looked for Ottoman financiers who would invest in his project for a modern farm, where he could apply modern agricultural techniques.[53] Much to his dismay, he could neither realize

this project, nor find a suitable job for his education (even in the Ministry of Agriculture) due to capital shortages, insecure conditions in rural Anatolia, and general indifference to modern farming in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, he gave up his dreams to follow the classic path to reviving the country: education.[54]

Unlike Ahmed Rıza Bey, Şinasi is able to secure some capital (from his father), and after buying a small piece of land and settling in a village, he starts work immediately. Although his father sends him a sufficient amount of money for a comfortable life, he has a hand-to-mouth existence. The reason for this is his dedication to his enterprise. He uses all his money to buy land, animals, and modern tools, such as the pickaxe, shovel, and wheelbarrow. It is worth noting in passing that these simple metal tools, in the context of late nineteenth century Ottoman agriculture, were considered products of advanced industrial technology compared to the wooden implements that the villagers were using at the time.

At this point, we can refer to Weber's definition of an ideal capitalist entrepreneur for a rather theoretical explanation of Şinasi's seemingly irrational obsession with his business at the expense of his personal comfort and his indifference to the question of social status:

> [The capitalist entrepreneur] has no relation to such more or less refined climbers. He avoids ostentation and unnecessary expenditure, as well as conscious enjoyment of his power, and is embarrassed by the outward signs of the social recognition which he receives.... He gets nothing out of his wealth for himself, except the irrational sense of having done his job well.[55]

Apparently, Ahmed Midhat and Max Weber thought along similar lines regarding the worldview and lifestyle of an entrepreneurially-minded capitalist.

In Şinasi's village, new tools, machines, and techniques at first seem strange to the peasants; they therefore watch him with suspicion. However, in the end they cannot resist the protagonist's modernizing and therefore rationalizing (in the Weberian sense) capitalistic venture. They begin to work with Şinasi and learn new techniques from him.[56] As Şinasi introduces modern production methods gleaned from books and even builds primitive machines such as a simple incubator,[57] another autobiographical detail about the author manifests itself: Ahmed Midhat built a model farm in Beykoz, on which he applied modern agricultural techniques. He shared his experiences with his readers in the pages of *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*.[58] Besides, as an admirer of industrial capitalism, his many fictional and non-fictional works are full of expressions reflecting his admiration for machines as a symbol of the progress of human civilization.[59]

In addition to the author himself, we find other real-life examples of Ottomans with entrepreneurial spirit from the era—which helps us contextualize these stories. In Şerafeddin Mağmumî's (1869–1927) accounts of his travels in Anatolia (*c.*1894–95), we read the story of a certain Hüsnü Bey who establishes a modern farm in Ahvat, a village of Bursa. Hüsnü Bey, as a man of the nineteenth century, has a keen interest in machines and modern agricultural technologies. To establish his modern farm, he brings tools from Istanbul. At first, just

as in Şinasi's case, his neighbors derides him saying, "farming cannot be done *alafranga*-style!"[60] Yet he never gives up his project and eventually becomes successful. One of the factors behind his success is his perseverance in getting his fellow villagers accustomed to modern farming, just like Şinasi.[61] Thus, Ahmed Midhat's stories were not only inspiring quasi-utopian narratives, but they were also reflections of a capitalist spirit that had already captivated modern-minded entrepreneurs like himself and Hüsnü Bey.

Şinasi presents a brief report about his investments and the results of his enterprise in another letter to his father. His meticulous calculations and detailed input-output analyses in the letter testify to his rational and systematic thinking in capitalist terms. According to the Şinasi's calculations, the total amount of money received from his father is 24,000 *kuruş* over a six-year period. Yet, the value of his lands already exceeds 20,000 *kuruş*, and he owns 37,000 *kuruş* worth of animals and tools. More importantly, at the end of these six years, he starts to employ workers and begins production for the market.[62] This letter stands as a proof of Şinasi's success thanks to his diligence, industriousness, entrepreneurial mentality, dedication to work, thrift, and systematic thinking, or in Weberian terms, his capitalist spirit. Şinasi, in short, exemplifies an ideal entrepreneur not only in Ahmed Midhat's thinking, but also in Max Weber's understanding of capitalism—which indicates the impact of the same *Zeitgeist* on these two intellectuals of completely different social and economic settings:

> The question of motive forces in the expansion of modern capitalism is not in the first instance a question of the capital sums which were available for capitalistic uses, but above all, of the development of the spirit of capitalism. Where it appears and is able to work itself out, it produces its own capital and monetary supplies as the means to its ends, but the reverse is not true.[63]

An analysis of economic thought in Ahmed Midhat's fiction

The ideas of a native Ottoman modernity and modernization through economic development constitute the subtext of Ahmed Midhat's *romans à thèse*.[64] The heroes of his stories are culturally and morally conservative Ottoman Muslims who never compromise their traditional identities for any economic and social gain. Yet, they also equip themselves with the latest ideas, techniques, and skills from Europe. In this sense, Ahmed Midhat's idealized modern Ottomans are Ottoman in their cultural and religious values, and European in their work ethic and rationalist approach to problems. As a result, for Ahmed Midhat's heroes there is not an essential clash between modern European and traditional Muslim-Ottoman values. The problem arises whenever Ottomans try to ape Europeans at the expense of their own culture. The question of "what to take and what not to take from the West" was the main question of Ottoman-Turkish modernization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For Ahmed Midhat's characters, however, it was not an issue.

An obvious characteristic of Ahmed Midhat's heroes, in terms of their economic thinking and behavior, is that they prefer private entrepreneurship to state employment. Even if they work as civil servants, they regard it as a service to their country, not a source of income. This is not simply an anti-bureaucratic stance. This is rather a reflection of Ahmed Midhat's bottom-up approach to economic development. The Smithian idea of a nexus between private and public interests marked the late Ottoman approach to economic development, and it is apparent in Ahmed Midhat's thinking too. The open challenge to the traditional (militaristic-bureaucratic) Ottoman economic mentality reveals itself clearly in Ahmed Midhat's advice to his readers. However, he does not totally discourage his audience from the civil service. He believes that if it is done properly, civil service too can contribute to the country's wealth.[65] It is also worth noting that the character of the young and lazy Tanzimat bureaucrat, who is generally depicted as a spoiled son of a high-ranking official, is another subject that frequently appears in the Ottoman novel.[66] Ahmed Midhat's stories include these types as they represent his criticism of the wasteful and unproductive lifestyles of the Tanzimat-era Ottoman leisure class.

A chronological analysis of Ahmed Midhat's stories about economic success shows us that his emphasis shifted from hard work to capitalist entrepreneurship between the early 1870s and the late 1880s. Yet the traditional militaristic-bureaucratic economic mentality, and especially laziness and fatalism, remained at the focus of his criticisms. As early as 1870, for example, he voiced his criticism of the bureaucratic economic mentality through his adaptation of an Aesop's fable about a diligent donkey and some lazy dogs.[67] The story begins with the dogs complaining that no one feeds them even with leftovers. Hearing this, the donkey criticizes the dogs for doing nothing but jumping up and down to entertain and flatter their owners. In contrast, the donkey works all day and earns its living by carrying water and wood; the farmers, in return, feed it hay every night. The donkey says it is unwise to complain about one's fate if one is not making any effort to change it. In the end, the donkey concludes that the way to earn one's living should be service, not fawning. It is important to note once more that the moral of this story is to earn one's living through effort and service, although Ahmed Midhat's later stories emphasize entrepreneurship in addition to effort.

As the donkey's story also shows, the classical labor theory of value not only shapes Ahmed Midhat's economic thought, it also makes its way into the essence of his stories. Ahmed Midhat's successful characters show how value—and consequently wealth—is created by labor alone. It is neither the initial capital nor any form of rent, but labor (directed by a capitalist work ethic) that constitutes the way to wealth. His anti-heroes, on the other hand, prove a belief frequently repeated in the economic literature of the era: the wealth at hand, however large, is doomed to perish unless it is turned into capital and processed and augmented through labor.

Ahmed Midhat's way-to-wealth stories remind us of the genre of rags-to-riches stories, which was immensely popular in Europe and especially in the

United States during the same era. However, it is essential to note that Ahmed Midhat's characters do not start from "rags."[68] His successful characters generally hail from the newly rising middle classes, just like himself. Thus his target audience is not the desperately poor, but middle-class youth. Moreover, it is also possible to read his stories as a metaphorical development strategy—through hard work and education—for a country of modest means. In this sense, his stories imply that the non-industrialized and underdeveloped Ottoman Empire could achieve industrialization and development if its citizens received a good education, worked hard, and created wealth through entrepreneurship despite the country's relative lack of wealth. In short, Ahmed Midhat's stories provide a dramatic presentation of the dominant approach to economic development in the Ottoman economic thinking in the era.[69]

In addition to Ahmed Midhat's inspiration from economic theory, economic ideas found in French novels of the age also influenced his fiction. Ahmed Midhat admitted that he was influenced by Émile Zola, despite his criticism of Zola's pessimistic naturalism.[70] One of Zola's most popular works of the same era provides us with important insights into Ahmed Midhat's possible sources of inspiration for his own stories:

> [In *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883)] Vallagnosc has no ambition, despite a brilliant school career…; life, he feels, is pointless. Octave starts from the bottom of the ladder and works his way up, by charm, drive and effort, to become director of his mighty emporium, while Vallagnosc is stuck in a tedious, if respectable, bureaucratic post. Where Vallagnosc represents decaying upper class, so exhausted that it has lost faith even in itself, Mouret is the force of the new age, open to every kind of change and driven by an irresistible lust for life and power.[71]

Similarly, as we have seen previously, Ahmed Midhat tells stories of lonely idealist characters who represent a new work ethic in a society still dominated by the laziness and lack of entrepreneurial spirit of the old elite. In a sense, he tells us stories of a Weberian clash of rationalization-versus-tradition in a burgeoning capitalism.

Despite his emphasis on cooperation and division of labor in his economic writings, we do not see these principles very frequently in action in Ahmed Midhat's fiction. He puts the emphasis on the loneliness of his ideal characters. The only exception to this is the sexual division of labor among male and female protagonists. He created ideal wives for his heroes based on the same criteria (e.g., diligence and resourcefulness).[72] These ideal wives appear as the chief assistants of their husbands by virtue of being competent managers of the household economy. The wives of Rakım and Şinasi, for example, work hard and use limited resources economically, thus contributing significantly to their husbands' efforts. It is important to note, however, that Ahmed Midhat's ideal family operates within the rules of the traditional patriarchal system, and that his female characters do not actively individually participate in the labor force.[73]

Ahmed Midhat's heroes are obvious reflections of his own life story, lifestyle, and economic worldview.[74] He came from a modest family and achieved success simply by educating himself and working harder than others. He earned his living through his labor (mostly by writing and publishing) and his business enterprises. His family worked together at his printing press, exemplifying a household type of cooperation and division of labor.[75] In short, Ahmed Midhat himself exemplified the ideal modern Ottoman—in bourgeois-capitalist standards—in his own life as a hard-working writer, editor, and entrepreneur, and used fiction to present himself, as well as his economic ideas, to his audience, with an eye to influencing their economic mentality and behavior.[76]

An early Young Turk manifesto-novel: *Turfanda mı, Turfa mı?*

(Mizancı) Mehmed Murad (1854–1917) was an important figure in late Ottoman intellectual and political life.[77] After some years of service as a junior civil servant, he became professor of history at the Mekteb-i Mülkiye (The Imperial School of Administration) in 1876 and assumed other high posts in the state in the first two decades of the Hamidian regime.[78] In 1886, he began to publish his popular newspaper *Mizan*, which earned him the moniker Mizancı Murad (Murad of Mizan). In his early career, he appeared to be a successful but sometimes refractory bureaucrat, intellectual, and educator in the Hamidian regime. In the early 1890s, however, he began to be more critical of the regime and joined the secret organization of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), rising to the position of committee leader by 1896.[79] In 1891, he was appointed to the Duyûn-ı Umûmiye (The Ottoman Public Debt Authority) as an inspector,[80] and he retained this position until his self-exile in 1895. As an intellectual, teacher, and also as a Young Turk leader, he was very influential, particularly on the Hamidian-era youth.

Murad Bey wrote *Turfanda mı, Turfa mı?* while he was still following the line of social reformism but slowly drifting towards Young Turk radicalism.[81] The novel includes very significant details about the social, economic, and political problems of the era, and it also provides us with important insights into the reformist thinking of the era. Moreover, it depicts interesting examples of ideal modern Ottomans and a blueprint for a comprehensive socio-economic development project in the mind of a reformer of the era. Murad Bey's messages and lessons for his readers start with the title of the book. In his introduction, he states that he presents some characters that are "products of recent times,"[82] and then asks his readers: "are they avant-gardes (early fruits) of a new society or are they simply strange outcasts?"[83] The question is actually rhetorical. It is obvious that Murad Bey presents his protagonists as models for his Ottoman male and female readers to emulate. The novel also includes harsh criticisms about the Ottoman political and financial system, and proposes a new social and political order. In this respect, the novel goes beyond being a *roman à thèse* and takes the form of a manifesto-novel. Therefore, a careful reading of *Turfanda mı, Turfa mı?*—keeping the discussions about economic development in Ottoman economic thought of the era in

mind—will reveal how major economic ideas of the age permeated the Ottoman novel as a result of reformists' pedagogical purposes, with an eye on social change.

Mansur as the idealist civil servant

The protagonist of *Turfanda mı, Turfa mı?*, Mansur, is a typical romantic hero of the nineteenth-century novel.[84] He is an idealized Ottoman type in terms of his moral and intellectual attributes as well as his work ethic. Just as in the case of Ahmed Midhat's heroes, Mansur represents the author's own worldview transposed into fiction. It is easy to see that Mansur's biography has a strong resemblance to that of Murad Bey, and many details in the story have strong parallels in Murad Bey's memoirs that he published later.[85]

Murad Bey's Mansur is a young and idealist man from an elite Algerian family. His belief in Islamism and Ottomanism leads him to move to Istanbul instead of Europe, contrary to what many like-minded young people did at the time.[86] However, from the moment he arrives, the European impact on the "capital of the Caliphate" causes a great disappointment for him. He observes, for instance, that French francs are preferred to Ottoman *kuruş* in everyday life,[87] and that the Beyoğlu district is dominated by signs and advertisements in French rather than Turkish.[88] In addition to its obvious Ottomanist, Islamist, and anti-imperialist tone, the novel carries the seeds of Turkish nationalism, which was to dominate the early twentieth-century Ottoman-Turkish political sphere through the Young Turk ideology. Although Mansur is mostly referring to "Ottomans" when he says "Turk," at several places in the novel he and his friend Doctor Mehmed praise the virtues of the "pure Turks" of Ankara, Konya, Kastamonu, Çankırı, and Yozgat.[89] This is one of the earliest traces of an Anatolian-Turkish nationalist discourse in the Ottoman intellectual sphere.[90]

At several junctures in the novel, we read long tirades of Mansur that provide us with detailed blueprints of Murad Bey's own socio-economic reform program for the empire.[91] His program operates at two separate but internally connected levels: governmental and individual. According to Murad Bey's narrative, at the governmental level the problems of the Ottoman Empire could be analyzed under two main categories: first, the ineffective organization of the Ottoman bureaucracy and the problematic work ethic of Ottoman civil servants; and second, the chaotic and inefficient financial and economic administration of the country. At the individual level, lack of education, laziness, and an anti-entrepreneurial popular economic mentality constitute the main obstacles to economic development. All in all, economic messages given in the novel through Mansur's words and deeds seem to reflect major discussions and suggestions in late Ottoman economic thought regarding the question of economic development—which we discussed in the previous chapters.

Mansur begins to observe the ineffective and wasteful administration of the Ottoman bureaucratic system on his first day at the office. As a young physician, he decides to pursue two parallel career paths: he earns his living through practicing his profession—working as a teacher as well as a medical doctor at the

Imperial School of Medicine—and he joins the civil service out of patriotic feeling in order to serve his country.[92] He decides to work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and like many educated young people who knew foreign languages in the era, he is appointed to the Translation Bureau.[93] However, on his very first day on the job, he realizes that there is actually no work to do at the office. He witnesses many senior officials spending their days doing nothing but "sitting on their chairs and eating rice pudding (*sütlaç*)…, having their meals, drinking fruit juice (*şerbet*) or coffee, smoking, and yawning, and sometimes leaving the office for a promenade [arm-in-arm with other fellows] in the corridor."[94] He understands that all this eating and drinking is not because of hunger or appetite, but only to pass the time.

> [Mansur] was terribly dismayed. He understood that it is impossible to improve one's intellectual capacity under these conditions. On the contrary, he thought, one can lose everything that one knows. Mansur investigated the reasons for this situation … [and] he realized that the office did not need so many people. Just a redactor, a translator, and a recording clerk would suffice. The rest [of the staff] was simply redundant.[95]

Later, Mansur learns also that these redundant personnel are not even educated, and they lack the skills and talents for any sort of civil service. Most of them hold these posts because of their personal connections with senior officials, reflecting the institutionalized favoritism of Ottoman bureaucratic mechanisms. While observing undeserved appointments and promotions, he learns that he and another junior official are being considered for promotion. This becomes the last straw for Mansur.[96] He rejects this promotion saying that he did not do anything to earn it, and that in fact he hardly worked at all since there was no work for him to do at the office. This open rebellious attitude to the established system annoys his superiors.[97] However, his protests against wrongdoing in the office continue with increasing intensity, culminating in his refusal to go to work.[98]

One day, he is introduced to the Minister of Public Works, Emin Pasha. During his conversation with the pasha, Mansur's idealism and ideas for reform erupt into a quasi-manifesto—in the form of a dialogue between the old and the new—for a comprehensive reform in the Ottoman Empire:[99]

> Mansur told the pasha that he had studied in Europe and wanted to see everything [in the Ottoman Empire] as orderly and organized as it is in Europe, and that he could not bear the situation at the office. He even mentioned the promotion incident. Upon hearing this, Emin Pasha said:
>
> – My dear son, not everything can be [as] orderly and perfect [as we wish]. One should let it be. The order that you saw in Europe is unattainable in our country.[100]

Mansur immediately rejects this idea and suggests that if every Ottoman official took his job seriously and worked hard and faithfully, everything would be as

perfect as in Europe.[101] He adds that the Ottoman Empire has more faithful and moral subjects than Europe does. However, in his view, there are two great obstacles: a general ignorance in society and the irresponsibility of civil servants. He maintains that the sultan is aware of all these problems and has even issued a decree to fight them.[102] Emin Pasha, in response, reminds Mansur of the fact that reform is always easier said than done, and he adds that people who try to fight for such causes always give up eventually. Therefore, Emin Pasha confidently concludes, Mansur will sooner or later understand this reality and simply surrender to the status quo.[103] Mansur rejects these pessimistic and conformist ideas by arguing that although it is true that fighting is hard for junior officials, it should not be so for the senior ones who hold political power. He thinks that the power one holds should also go with certain responsibilities.[104] In response, the pasha complains about the many obstacles, such as inadequate financial sources, the lack of educated personnel, and especially the youth whom the state sends to Europe:

> We send many young people to Paris to study. However, none of them returns as we expect. They lose their good manners and morals and become useless [for the state]. All they learn is to dress elegantly, to waste money on self-indulgence, and to become French by losing their moral and religious values.[105]

Mansur agrees with the pasha on this matter, but as a solution he suggests sending talented and meritorious youth instead of the spoiled sons of the Ottoman elite.[106] The pasha responds to this by saying that the state by itself cannot afford to provide a comfortable life to those who go to Europe; therefore, sending the sons of the rich is the only practical solution.[107] At this point the discussion concentrates around three main problems: the uneducated and unskilled bureaucracy, the lack of an educational system that could solve the human capital problem, and the inadequacy of financial resources that lies at the heart of everything. Mansur tells the pasha that government offices are overstaffed with useless personnel, and that this puts a huge burden on the government's budget.[108] He then suggests a comprehensive educational reform, including opening up new schools to train officials. The pasha, once again, puts forward the obstacle of inadequate financial resources and complains that only a small fraction of the state's budget is allocated for education; he then adds that the Ministry of Finance is unable to pay even this small amount.[109] This time, Mansur's response comes in the form of a long tirade about an overall economic development project for the whole country:

> Sir, you are the one who will make them pay! Make them pay it!…
>
> You say that there are financial difficulties. If we take a look at the [amount of] waste, it is not possible to believe in the existence of such difficulties. Let's assume that they exist; we still do not see any attempts to solve this problem. Isn't it your responsibility? The reform in fiscal affairs

> and the expansion of state revenues are both tied to public works. In Anatolia, surplus production goes bad due to the lack of roads for freight and transportation. As a result, people cannot benefit from surplus.
>
> Other nations make all kinds of sacrifices to build railways in order to increase their revenues and augment their power and [productive] capacity. Attracting foreign investors to our country—even it takes begging them—is a necessity for the sacred interests of the state. However, [in our country] even those [foreign investors] who come voluntarily lose all hope and return [to their countries] because of never-ending negotiations and meetings with irresponsible, unskilled, and uneducated bureaucrats.[110]

Mansur goes on to say that the Ministry of Public Works should make a plan and give concessions to deserving investors. He complains that neither such a plan exists, nor does the Ministry send engineers to Anatolia.[111] After his harsh criticisms against the Ministry of Public Works, he openly blames the pasha for not taking any action for the construction of land routes, and he asks: "Now, if there is financial difficulty, who is to blame?"[112] The pasha tries to defend himself and the system by telling Mansur a secret that proves the impossibility of the situation:

> The government budget constantly runs a deficit. In order for you to comprehend our financial situation, I will tell you a secret that should stay between us: In the last few years, we have had to turn to external borrowing even to pay off the interest on our existing foreign loans.[113]

Upon being informed of this scandalous secret, Mansur shows how this method is economically irrational and has potentially disastrous consequences by making a simple but educated economic analysis:

> Mansur – So, sir, the Treasury is hoping to receive a large sum of revenue in the near future?
>
> Emin Pasha – What does this mean?
>
> Mansur – Sir, this means that last year and the year before the Treasury had recourse to foreign loans to achieve budgetary balance and to pay off the interest on the foreign loans. As your excellency has also stated, [when the borrowed money is used to pay interest] the money obtained under very heavy conditions of foreign borrowing goes directly [into the coffers of the financiers] abroad, instead of being used for works that could augment the state's revenues. Under these conditions, borrowing will not give any results other than further expanding the amount of interest payments in the following year's budget.[114]

Emin Pasha understands Mansur's point and responds to his initial question by saying that there is no such "miraculous revenue" that could solve the problem. Upon Mansur's insistence on getting an explanation for such a dangerous policy,

the pasha finally admits that he has been ordered to find solutions simply to stave off bankruptcy.[115] Mansur understands that the pasha implies an order from the top, that is, from the sultan. However, as a manifestation of his adherence to traditional Ottoman paternalism, he dismisses any possibility that the sultan would force his men to ruin his own country, and accuses the pasha of treason; but the pasha responds in cold blood: "[The state's] master demands this. We cannot do anything."[116] Mansur, filled with feelings of patriotism and loyalty to the sultan, puts an abrupt end to the discussion as he storms off repeating his accusation of treason.[117] Meanwhile, the pasha understands that Mansur belongs to "the harmful group" and blacklists him in order that he be taken care of later.[118] This brief note hints at both what will happen to Mansur at the end of the story and what happens to anyone who questions the status quo in the Hamidian regime. In writing this, Murad Bey seems to be pondering the possibilities for his own future too.

Mansur as the vanguard of the rationalization process

After resigning from his post, Mansur dedicates himself to his patients, his studies, and more importantly to his bottom-up reform project for the empire. He presents a reform proposal to the Ministry of Education.[119] However, having seen that the state is incapable of a comprehensive educational reform such as he has envisioned, he decides to start his own project. Meanwhile, he observes that foreign powers, through the interference of the embassies, have their proposals for new missionary schools passed through the same commissions.[120] Mansur thereby witnesses once again the power and influence of the embassies over the Ottoman government. Upon the uprising in Herzegovina against Ottoman rule, Mansur writes articles for a newspaper criticizing the interference of the European powers. In response, the embassies force the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Directorate General of the Press to take action against him. Eventually, the same newspaper is left no choice but to publish another article rejecting Mansur's claims, labeling him a traitor, and calling him non-Ottoman and non-Turkish.[121] Mansur appeals directly to the Sublime Porte to protest these claims, but to no avail. Then, having lost all his faith in a top-down change in the Ottoman Empire, Mansur decides to move to Anatolia in order to start a bottom-up transformation: "They say that reforms should begin at the bottom. This is obviously true. In Europe, efforts at development appeared in the provinces earlier than the capitals."[122]

As another biographical connection between the author and his protagonist, we know that the author, Murad Bey, later presented a memorandum of reform upon the request of the sultan just before he went into exile in 1895. He also had a chance to receive an audience of the sultan to explain his ideas.[123] However, just as with Mansur, these last efforts to find legitimate ways for change did not produce any results, and Murad Bey left the country to join the Young Turks in exile in 1895.

Similar to the story of Şinasi in Ahmed Midhat's *Bahtiyarlık*, which was discussed previously, Mansur goes to Anatolia and settles on a farm in Western

Anatolia that he inherited from his late uncle. He uses his estate to launch a small-scale modernization project, yet a much more comprehensive one than that of Şinasi. In addition to running his farm, he becomes the main agent of modernization with his various roles: a physician who treats poor peasants for free, a warm-hearted creditor who provides interest-free loans to the peasants, an altruistic employer, and the founder of modern schools.[124]

At the end of the book, we find Mansur's letters written to his friends about the hardships and successes of his project. In one of these letters, we can clearly see Murad Bey's criticisms of the Ottoman tax system as one of the biggest obstacles to development.[125] Mansur appoints a literate person as the headman of his village and centralizes the tax collection system under the headman's management. Under this new system, the collection process, which caused resentment and even fights before Mansur's arrival, begins to be handled relatively smoothly, the taxes being paid even before the deadline.[126] However, one day a revenue officer comes to the village and demands money from the peasants, even though the peasants have paid their taxes already. Upon hearing this, Mansur intervenes in the situation and then realizes that this is not a simple misunderstanding, but an unpleasant remnant of the old inefficient system. The revenue officer requests that Mansur abolish the new system and says that the livelihood of his family depends on it. He then explains the situation:

> We make money every time we come to the village. It is not our salary, but these [small] payments allow us to make ends meet. The less we collect [on each visit] and the more we come to collect the remaining parts, the more profitable it is for us. Especially the late payments are our [source of] main income. We come here at the worst time for the peasant. We harass him and threaten him with selling his ox in return for his debt. Finally, we make a deal and get some money for ourselves in return for postponing the collection for three months. We do not come three months later, because then he would have the money. We wait until he is poor again, and we come at such a time so that we can get twice as much as we got the last time.[127]

Upon hearing this scheme that "even the Devil could not think of,"[128] Mansur dismisses him from the village and informs the district governor of the situation. However, the district governor responds to him resentfully, saying that it is not right to bother those "poor revenue officers."[129] Moreover, Mansur observes that the provincial administration is in a worse situation than the central administration in Istanbul, and that irresponsibility and corruption are both more overt and more widespread in the rural parts of the empire. In addition, all channels for the people to voice their problems and communicate with the central government are closed because of the oppression of the provincial officials.[130] Once more, Mansur realizes the hopeless situation of the Ottoman bureaucratic system at both the central and provincial levels. This last incident also shows him the roots of the financial crisis of the state that Emin Pasha was complaining about: "Now I begin to understand the mystery of our revenues not being in proportion to our

natural resources and territorial expansion."[131] In other words, Mansur realizes that although the Ottoman Empire has vast and rich territories, the revenue is lost during the collection and transmission process. This causes chronic fiscal shortages, which in turn impedes economic development.

As mentioned earlier, Mansur acts as the vanguard of a modernization process in the village. Not only does he bring modern education, he also introduces new economic institutions that would constitute the backbone of a prospective capitalist system. For example, his provision of interest-free credit to the peasants is by no means a simple act of philanthropy, but rather a deliberate economic development scheme in a capitalist sense. In other words, Mansur advances these loans not to help the poor, but to encourage peasants to invest in their property to expand their productive capacities.[132] More importantly, he puts the idea of cooperation into action—just as Ahmed Midhat also suggests—to establish a yarn factory by gathering small contributions from the peasants.[133] For him, this enterprise is important not only for its imminent economic results, but also for the change in mentality that it would lead to:

> At first, I considered founding it at my own expense and profit. But later I decided to familiarize our rural uncles [peasants], who cannot think beyond the limits of tradition, with the idea of profit-seeking.[134] First, I had ten *kuruş* [piasters] of donation collected from each household of the nearby villages by using their trust in me. Then, their neighbors also wanted to contribute.… Finally, I added the same amount as the sum collected from the peasants, and I founded a company based on fifty-fifty shares. Things have gone well so far. The cost of our product is one hundred *paras*,[135] whereas the same quality European yarn costs five *kuruş*es. I am trying to bring it down to sixty *para*s.[136]

In short, Mansur, just as Ahmed Midhat suggested earlier, establishes a successful factory that can compete with European producers simply by gathering modest amounts of capital. He thereby solves the ubiquitous problem of financial capital. By dragging the peasants into shareholding, he aims to transform the mentality in the village into a capitalistic one. In this respect, Mansur's capitalist rationalization process includes both short- and long-term projections for economic development. However, Mansur does not live to see the final results of his project, since, like many other nineteenth-century romantic heroes, he dies prematurely as a result of an unfortunate accident.

Mansur's story gives us important insights into the emergence, in Ottoman economic thinking, of the idea of the salvation of the empire through bottom-up economic modernization instead of a political power struggle at the top. Mansur is a patriotic Ottoman who believes in the sacredness of the Ottoman state and of its sultan, who is also the caliph of the Muslims. However, Mansur witnesses the incapacity of the bureaucracy to govern the country effectively. Institutionalized corruption, favoritism, ignorance, irresponsibility, and indifference to the Ottoman central and provincial bureaucracy kill all hopes for a better future.

Furthermore, the same political and administrative system chokes any idealistic attempt to carry out reforms and punishes the idealists. Upon understanding both the inability of the central government to solve the problems of the empire and the danger facing the reformists, Mansur has to turn to a bottom-up approach to economic development, taking up the endeavor to build a new society based on new economic principles. In this respect, Mansur's story provides us insights into why both Ahmed Midhat and Murad Bey adopted social reformism upon their return from exile (1873–76 and 1895–97, respectively), which was caused by their earlier political reformist stance.

As another connection of the story to real life, it is worth noting that cooperatives, like that of Mansur, did not appear only in such quasi-utopian literary works of the era. On the contrary, some reformist Ottoman statesmen actually established such institutions to encourage economic development at the local level.[137] The best-known example is the *Memleket Sandıkları* (District Funds) founded by Midhat Pasha in the Danube province in the early 1860s.[138] The main objective of these funds was to provide the peasantry with cheap credit.[139] In another example, Kâmil Pasha (1832–1913) initiated the *köy bakkalları* (village grocers) project in the province of Aydın in 1900 to replace exploitative local merchants with a kind of consumer cooperative. With this project, Kâmil Pasha aimed at relieving the peasants of the heavy exploitation of local merchants and usurers, thereby improving economic conditions in rural areas.[140] Turning back to the realm of fiction, Kâmil Pasha's project provided the well-known Ottoman satirist Şair Eşref (*c.*1847–1912) with inspiration for his poem, *Köy Bakkalları* (village grocers, *c.*1900).[141] In this poem, Eşref advises Ottoman Muslim peasantry to put some capital together in order to establish a grocery shop in the village to take over the business of the Greek merchant (whom he calls "Yani"). According to him, exploiters such as Yani—thanks to their limited literacy that Muslims lack—establish businesses and get rich simply by cheating poor peasants. Eşref accuses Muslim peasants of laziness, ignorance, and traditionalism, which provide these shrewd shopkeepers with the opportunity to exploit them.[142] In short, Eşref's poem is the equivalent of Ahmed Midhat's and Murad Bey's novels in poetry, as it promotes a new capitalistic economic mentality to the Muslim peasantry. Moreover, it also reflects the emerging Muslim-Turkish economic proto-nationalist discourse of the era.

Murad Bey's marks the end of the idealist era of the Ottoman novel.[143] *Turfanda mı, Turfa mı?* is the most radical example of the Ottoman *roman à thèse* because of its bold social and political criticisms.[144] After the publication of *Turfanda mı, Turfa mı?*, Ottoman novelists had to change their course due to the increasing pressure of the Hamidian censors.[145] The novels of the 1890s and 1900s, therefore, focused more on social and cultural problems such as slavery, the education of girls, and marriage, instead of issues with direct political implications.[146] Hüseyin Cahid Yalçın (1875–1957) used the metaphor of "tightrope walking" to describe the dangers and hardships of being a writer under the paranoia of the Hamidian regime.[147] However, it is also important to note also that although many books and periodicals were banned in those years, the

government was never able to prevent their illegal circulation completely.[148] As a result, the idealist examples of early-Hamidian-era fiction made a deep impact on the Young Turks in their formative years.

Conclusion

The quasi-utopian fiction of Ahmed Midhat and Mizancı Murad Bey provide us with insights into the mindset of late nineteenth-century reformers. These works also demonstrate how economic discussions of the age had already permeated into the social and cultural sphere, and bourgeois-capitalist values began to have a role in social change in Ottoman society. The fictional communities in these narratives, which can be regarded as the authors' simulations for the future of Ottoman society, are imagined to be built with a capitalist spirit and are organized according to the principles of cooperation and division of labor. It is not hard to see that through these stories, both authors not only make a criticism of the existing social and economic order, but they also present an alternative that can be built with the help of modern economic principles and a capitalistic approach.

Ahmed Midhat and Mizancı Murad used fictional stories about some idealized Ottoman vanguards of modernization as a practical guide to put bourgeois economic values and some economic principles in action for a prospective modern Ottoman society. The ideas of cooperation and division of labor, a capitalist work ethic, and the importance of science, technology, and education were presented to readers in easy-to-digest stories about success and failure. The authors showed the ways to wealth and social reputation through hard work, thrift, diligence, moderation, and rational thinking, and they hoped that their readers would emulate the protagonists. At the same time, they also warned their audience against the destructive consequences of ignorance, laziness, indifference, irresponsibility, and irrational behavior. In fictionalizing such an apparently capitalist-bourgeois value set, both Ahmed Midhat and Mizancı Murad hoped to influence popular economic mentality and behavior, with an eye on a bottom-up social change towards an advanced industrial capitalist society.

It is also important to note that the existence of some real-life examples of the characters of Ahmed Midhat and Murad Bey indicates that these stories also reflect an already started change in Ottoman society. The propagated the social and economic values, from entrepreneurial spirit and hard work to meritocracy and moral integrity, had already started to make an impact in the empire thanks to a newly rising Ottoman bourgeoisie. This new class and its economic values were in clash with the economic mentality and behavior of the old elites. In such a social and economic atmosphere, both authors criticize the parasitic *alafranga*-type old Ottoman elite and promote an alternative upper-class behavior reminiscent of a Weberian-type entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. In other words, Ahmed Midhat and Murad Bey, through their novels, not only reflected the rise of bourgeoisie in Ottoman society, but also promoted the emergence of a "national bourgeoisie" —with its entrepreneurial as well as patriotic mindset—which was

expected to supplant the Ottoman leisure class of the Tanzimat. In the following decades, this idea was to shape the main economic objective of Young Turk governments, starting from the 1908 Revolution well into the first decades of the Republican era.

Notes

1 Johann Gottfried von Herder, *Against Pure Reason: Writings on Religion, Language, and History*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Marcia Bunge (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 143, quoted in Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 6–7.

2 Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 6.

3 Many scholars have pointed to this fact, see for example, Şerif Mardin, "Super Westernization in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century," in *Turkey: Geographic and Social Perspectives*, ed. Peter Benedict, Erol Tümertekin, and Fatma Mansur (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 403; Kemal Karpat, "Traditionalist Elite Philosophy and the Modern Mass Media," in *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, ed. Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), 266. More recently, Carter Findley noted, without much elaboration, that conservative Ottoman writers used the novel as an instrument of social engineering. See his "Competing Autobiographical Novels, His and Hers," in *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th–20th Century)*, ed. Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse (Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 133–40.

4 Şerif Mardin, "Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyete İktisadî Düşüncenin Gelişimi (1838–1918)," in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 629.

5 Ahmet Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1983), 15. For more information on the Ottoman novel and the question of modernization and Westernization, see Ibid., 10–19; Güzin Dino, *Türk Romanının Doğuşu* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1978), 18–22; and Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1983), 9–22.

6 Moran, *Türk Romanı*, 1:10; see a similar example from Namık Kemal in Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 19. Ahmed Midhat Efendi also regarded such traditional works as "lousy old stories that are full of superstitions," although he benefitted from this genre in forming his own popular style. (Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çagdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, vol. 1 (Konya: Selçuk Yayınları, 1966), 159).

7 Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1990), 18–19, 52.

8 For Ahmed Midhat's understanding of fiction and its social roles, see Fazıl Gökçek, *Küllerinden Doğan Anka: Ahmet Mithat Efendi Üzerine Yazılar* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2012), 43–78.

9 For critical studies on Ahmed Midhat's literary style, themes, and characters, see Nüket Esen and Erol Köroğlu, eds., *Merhaba Ey Muharrir!: Ahmet Mithat Üzerine Eleştirel Yazılar* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2006); Gökçek, *Küllerinden Doğan Anka*; Nüket Esen, *Hikâye Anlatan Adam: Ahmet Mithat* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014).

10 Quoted in M. Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmed Midhat Efendi* (Ankara: Baylan Matbaası, 1975), xv.

11 Stefan Zweig, *Master Builders: A Typology of the Spirit* (New York: Viking Press, 1939), 64.
12 For an analysis of Alger's novels as "guidebooks for survival in an industrializing economy," see Carol Nackenoff, *The Fictional Republic: Horatio Alger and American Political Discourse* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 52–77.
13 Using fiction to teach economic ideas is not exclusively a nineteenth-century phenomenon. In the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, fiction continued to be an instrument to teach the principles of the "dismal science." Two well-known authors who devoted their literary works to teaching economics are Russell Roberts (a professor of economics at George Mason University) and Marshall Jevons (a fictitious writer created by two economists, William L. Breit and Kenneth G. Elzinga, and named after two well-known economists, Alfred Marshall and William Stanley Jevons).
14 Anne Green, "The Nineteenth Century (1820–1880)," in *Cassell Guide to Literature in French*, ed. Valerie Worth-Stylianou (London: Cassell, 1996), 128.
15 Scholars of the Turkish novel have presented various analyses of Ahmed Midhat's economic ideas as reflected in his fiction. See for example Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında*, 114–21; Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 83–93; Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, ed. Ahmet Kuyaş (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 411–12. However, all of these studies, except for Okay's, focus only on his most popular novel, *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi* (1875).
16 For a biography of Ahmed Midhat with a special emphasis on his industriousness and entrepreneurship, see M. Orhan Okay, "Teşebbüse Sarfedilmiş Bir Hayatın Hikayesi," *Kitap-lık*, no. 54 (2002): 130–6.
17 I borrow the term super Westernization from Mardin, "Super Westernization."
18 Ahmed Midhat, *Müşahedat* (İstanbul, 1891), 127–9.
19 Ibid., 129.
20 Interestingly enough, Ahmed Midhat notes in the novel—in which he appears as a character as himself—that Seyyid Mehmed Numan inspired him to write these books (Ibid., 137).
21 Evin presents a concise analysis of Mehmed Numan's character and the economic ideas he represents for the interested reader (Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 108–13).
22 Ahmed Midhat, "Te'âvün ve Tenâsür," *Dağarcık*, no. 2 (1871): 57.
23 Abdullah Uçman, "Türk Romanında İlk Alafranga Tip: Felatun Bey," *Kitap-Lık*, no. 54 (2002): 140–7.
24 Hüseyin Rahmi tells the story of *Şık*'s publication in his introduction to the second edition of his book (1919). See Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, "Muharririn Önsözü," in *Şık* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınevi, 1964), 5–6.
25 For summaries and literary analyses of the novel, see Robert P. Finn, *Türk Romanı, İlk Dönem: 1872–1900* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1984), 87–99.; and Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 158–72.
26 For an analysis of the political and cultural roots of the late Ottoman suspicion of the *alafranga* type and his "conspicuous consumption," see Mardin, "Super Westernization."
27 Arminius Vambéry, *The Story of My Struggles: The Memoirs of Arminius Vambéry*, Third Impression. [London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905], 371.
28 Moran, *Türk Romanı*, 1:38–9; Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 80–1.
29 For an analysis of this genre in the Turkish novel, see Moran, *Türk Romanı*, 1: 219–26.
30 "Conspicuous consumption means the use of consumer goods in such a way as to create a display for the purpose of impressing others rather than for the satisfaction

of normal consumer demand. It is consumption intended chiefly as an ostentatious display of wealth. The concept of conspicuous consumption was introduced into economic theory by Thorstein Veblen (1899) in the context of his analysis of the latent functions of 'conspicuous consumption' and 'conspicuous waste' as symbols of upper-class status and as competitive methods of enhancing individual prestige." (F. Stanković, "Conspicuous Consumption," ed. Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume, *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 118).

31 According to Weber, a particular work ethic (or a capitalist spirit) is more responsible for the capitalist development than material reasons. He traces the source of this spirit to "the 'worldly asceticism' of reformed Christianity, with its twin imperatives to methodical work as the chief duty of life and to the limited enjoyment of its product. The unintended consequence of this ethic … was the accumulation of capital for investment." (David Beetham, "Max Weber," ed. Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume, *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 716.) As Ahmed Midhat suggests in his stories, the work ethic of a capitalist entrepreneur is diametrically opposed to leisure-class behavior.

32 These stories are analyzed in detail in the context of the dialectics of the notions of conspicuous consumption and capitalist spirit in another study. See Deniz T. Kılınçoğlu, "Weber, Veblen ve Ahmed Midhat Efendi'nin Kahramanları," in *Kurumsal İktisat*, ed. Eyüp Özveren (Ankara: İmge Yayınevi, 2007), 441–72.

33 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study in the Evolution of Institutions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1899).

34 Ahmed Midhat, *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi*, ed. Tacettin Şimşek (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2000), 96.

35 This scene reflects the ubiquitous misogyny of the era in addition to a criticism of ostentation. Ali Bey, in his satirical dictionary, defines profligacy (*sefahat*) as "a valuable defect in the eyes of women" (Ali Bey, *Lehçet ül-Hakâik* (Mısır: Matbaa-yı Osmaniye, 1897), 21.). In the same dictionary, the devil (*şeytan*) is defined as "the friend of women" (*sadîk-i nisvân*) (Ibid., 23).

36 Ahmed Midhat, *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi*, 133.

37 Ibid., 131. For a more detailed analysis of Ahmed Midhat's notion of conspicuous consumption, see Kılınçoğlu, "Weber, Veblen ve Ahmed Midhat Efendi," 448–460.

38 Ahmed Midhat, *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi*, 200.

39 Ahmed Midhat, *Letaif-i Rivayat On Birinci Cüz'ü, (Bahtiyarlık) İsmiyle Bir Hikayeyi Havîdir* (İstanbul, 1885), 37.

40 Ibid., 175.

41 Ibid., 190–3.

42 Ahmed Midhat, *Letaif-i Rivayat On Yedinci Cüz'ü, (Para!) İsmiyle Bir Hikayeyi Havîdir* (İstanbul: Kırkanbar Matbaası, 1887), 23.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 51. These words remind us of Ali Suâvi's complaints (1867) about Muslims' investing in land rather than commerce and industry, and thus losing economic and social status while non-Muslims rise in Ottoman society.

45 Ibid., 151.

46 Zweig, *Master Builders*, 46.

47 Ahmed Midhat, *Ekonomi Politik* (İstanbul: Kırkanbar Matbaası, 1879), 44.

48 For the relationship between his characters and his own biography, see Sema Uğurcan, "Ahmet Midhat Efendi'nin Hatıratı İle Romanları Arasındaki Münasebet," *Türklük Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 2 (1986): 185–99.

49 Due to the popularity of *Felatun Bey il Rakım Efendi*, Rakım has been analyzed by many scholars of the Ottoman novel as the ideal Ottoman depicted in late Ottoman literature. For analyses of Rakım character as the first Ottoman *Homo economicus*, see Tanpınar, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, 411–412; Robert P. Finn, *Türk Romanı, İlk*

Dönem: 1872–1900 (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1984), 31–2; Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 87–92. However, Şinasi's story has been ignored despite its importance as being one of the quasi-utopian narratives of late Ottoman literature.

50 Ahmed Midhat, *Bahtiyarlık*, 5–6.
51 Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında*, 39.
52 Ahmed Midhat, *Bahtiyarlık*, 55.
53 Mardin, *Jön Türkler*, 174–5.
54 Ahmed Rıza, *Meclis-i Mebusan ve Ayân Reisi Ahmed Rıza Bey'in Anıları* (İstanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1988), 9.
55 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 71.
56 Ahmed Midhat, *Bahtiyarlık*, 47–8.
57 Ibid., 75.
58 See for example his article, "Bereket Yerde midir, Gökde midir? Yahud Bir Cahil Çiftçinin Mütâlaât-ı Fenniyesi," *Müntahabât-ı Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, Vol. 2 (1884), 289, in which he relates his discussions with the gardener of his farm. Ahmed Midhat's article also reminds us of the modernist Ottoman elite character in the novel of one of his followers, Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar (1864–1944). Dehri Efendi in Hüseyin Rahmi's novel *Mürebbiye* (1899) is a farcical character sketch of an Ottoman vanguard of modernism. Even his name, which literally means "materialist," reflects the dominant worldview of the people he represents. Dehri tries to teach lessons from political economy and the science of midwifery (and others) to his illiterate gardener and housekeeping woman whenever he catches them off guard. As usual, Hüseyin Rahmi's scenes reflect highly ironic and mostly ludicrous encounters between the traditional and the modern, as these "simple" people try to get away from Dehri's highly didactic discourses. (Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Mürebbiye* (Dersaadet [İstanbul]: İkdam Matbaası, 1897), 65.) Nevertheless, Hüseyin Rahmi also notes how these forced lessons sharpen the gardener's intellect as he builds an effective scarecrow, which was then imitated by the gardeners of neighboring farms. (Ibid., 75–6).
59 Jale Parla, "Rakım Efendi'den Nurullah Bey'e Cemaatçi Osmanlılıktan Cemiyetçi Türk. Milliyetçiliğine Ahmet Mithat'ın Romancılığı," in *Merhaba Ey Muharrir!: Ahmet Mithat Üzerine Eleştirel Yazılar*, ed. Nüket Esen and Erol Köroğlu (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2006), 21–3.
60 "*Alafranga çiftçilik olmaz*!" (Şerafeddin Mağmumî, *Seyahat Hâtıraları* (Cairo, 1908), 91.).
61 Ibid.
62 Ahmed Midhat, *Bahtiyarlık*, 144–5.
63 Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, 68.
64 "[A] *roman à thèse* is a novel written in the realistic mode (that is, based on an aesthetic of verisimilitude and representation), which signals itself to the reader as primarily didactic in intent, seeking to demonstrate the validity of a political, philosophical, or religious doctrine." (Susan Rubin Suleiman, *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 7).
65 Ahmed Midhat, *Sevda-yı Sa'y ü Amel* (İstanbul: Kırkanbar Matbaası, 1879), 56–57.
66 See Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 86.
67 Ahmed Midhat, "Tesellî-i Miskinan," in *Kıssadan Hisse*, 31–4 (İstanbul, 1870). *Kıssadan Hisse* consists of fables translated from Aesop (*c.*620–564 BC) and François Fénelon (1651–1715), in addition to a few others which are written by Ahmed Midhat himself. After each story, Ahmed Midhat summarizes its critical message.
68 For an Ottoman rags-to-riches story, see Mehmed Tahir, *Netice-i Sa'y* (Dersaadet [İstanbul]: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1893), in which the protagonist comes to Istanbul as a poor boy and struggles to survive simply through his hard work and

intellectual and entrepreneurial skills. However, although we see that the boy keeps his head above the water with his persistence and hard work, we do not see him attaining riches in the end.

69 See Chapter 4 for major late Ottoman approaches to and discussions about economic development.

70 Ahmed Midhat, "Hikâye Tasvir ve Tahriri," in Mehmet Kaplan *et al*., eds., *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Antolojisi*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1979), 57.

71 Robin Buss, "Introduction," in Émile Zola, *Au Bonheur Des Dames*, trans. Robin Buss (London: Penguin Books, 2001), xii.

72 By contrast, his anti-heroes have affairs with immoral, uneducated, and unskilled French or culturally alienated Ottoman women.

73 For an analysis of Ahmed Midhat's understanding of family as an economic unit in his fiction, see A. Holly Shissler, "The Harem as the Seat of Middle-Class Industry and Morality: The Fiction of Ahmed Midhat Efendi," in *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, ed. Marilyn Booth (Duke University Press, 2010), 319–41.

74 Uğurcan, "Ahmed Midhat."

75 Tanpınar, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, 411.

76 For his influence on the following generation of press entrepreneurs, see Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, *Matbuat Hatıralarım, 1888–1923*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Ahmet İhsan Matbaası, 1930), 52–3, et passim.

77 For a short biography of Murad Bey, see Abdullah Uçman, "Mizancı Murad," *T.D.V. İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2005). For a more detailed analysis of his political and intellectual life, see Birol Emil, *Mizancı Murad Bey: Hayatı ve Eserleri* (İstanbul: İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1979); Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri, 1895–1908* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 77–135.

78 Emil, *Mizancı Murad*, 79–82.

79 For the organization and activities of the Committee of Union and Progress under the direction of Murad Bey, see M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 90–109.

80 For his term at *Duyûn-i Umûmiye* see Mehmed Murad, *Meskenet Ma'zeret Teşkil Eder Mi?: Mücahede-yi Milliyeden: Mizan-ı Kadim ve Düyun-ı Umumiye Komiserliği Devirleri* (Dersaadet [İstanbul]: Matbaa-yı Âmedî, 1913), 173–253.

81 In his memoirs, he notes that some students from the Mekteb-i Mülkiye asked him to join and lead the Committee of Union and Progress, but he responded that he still believed in the sultan and legitimate ways of reform. (Emil, *Mizancı Murad*, 93–4).

82 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?* (İstanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1890), 3.

83 Ibid., 3–4.

84 For an analysis of the romantic hero in the early Turkish novel, see Finn, *Türk Romanı*, 40–65.

85 Mehmed Murad, *Meskenet*.

86 Murad Bey himself was not from Algeria, but from Dagestan, yet he had a very similar life story. See Uçman, "Mizancı Murad," 214.

87 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 19.

88 Ibid., 23.

89 Ibid., 117. For Murad Bey's cultural Turkism, see Mardin, *Jön Türkler*, 114–16.

90 Murad Bey calls his novel a *millî roman* (national novel), but he notes that this term is also used of some other novels to indicate that the novel in question is not a translation but it is written by an Ottoman author. He questions the alleged national character of such novels and emphasizes that his novel is national in terms of its identity and spirit (Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 2).

91 Some examples are as follows: Ottoman bureaucracy, Ibid., 117–32; the importance of hard work and the problem of laziness and indifference, 187–91; an empire-wide

educational organization, 214–15; the difference between Europe and the Ottomans, 294–8; financial policies, 299–307; problems of the Ottoman tax system, 395–9. These are direct reflections, or fictionalized versions, of Murad's ideas on these topics that he presented in his articles in *Mizan* and other publications. Cf. Emil, *Mizancı Murad*, 288–91 (on bureaucracy); 275–8 (on economics and public finance); 278–86 (on education).

92 Cf. Ahmed Midhat's arguments on civil service employment above.

93 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 100–1.

94 Ibid., 118. The same scene appears in his memoirs as a real event. Cf. Mehmed Murad, *Meskenet*, 64.

95 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 118.

96 Ibid., 121–4.

97 Ibid., Cf. Mehmed Murad, *Meskenet*, 46–52.

98 In fact, Mansur does not resign officially, nor does he inform anyone of his decision. He simply stops going to the office. More interestingly, no one asks about his whereabouts. This is another detail that testifies to the loose administration at the office.

99 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 294–307. Evin argues that Murad Bey was influenced by Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* (1861), which has similar scenes of heated arguments between different generations on social and political issues (Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 125). It is important to note, however, that Turgenev successfully blends such scenes into his literary work and gives a realistic and complex picture of the tensions in a changing society, whereas Mansur's abrupt tirades and Murad Bey's black-and-white picture give away the author's purely political aims in writing this novel.

100 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 293–4.

101 Ibid., 261.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid., 263.

105 Ibid., 296–7.

106 Ibid., 297.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid., 297–8.

109 Ibid., 299.

110 Ibid., 299–300.

111 Ibid., 300.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid., 301.

115 Ibid., 302.

116 Ibid., 303.

117 Ibid., 303. Here, we see another manifestation of Murad Bey's own political stance. In his *Mizan*, he harshly criticized the government while praising the sultan's excellent statesmanship. (Mardin, *Jön Türkler*, 82).

118 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 304.

119 Ibid., 368–9.

120 For example, the American Bible Society obtains a permission to found a missionary school near Diyarbakır. (Ibid., 369).

121 Ibid., 371–2.

122 Ibid., 373.

123 Emil, *Mizancı Murad*, 101; for a transcribed copy of the memorandum see Kaplan *et al.*, *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Antolojisi*, 3: 486–508.

124 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 372–3. Evin argues that Mansur's rural life resembles that of Levin of *Anna Karenina* (1877). According to Evin, "Murat,

in fact, had derived his ideas on rural reform from the debates of Russian intelligentsia on the issues related to serfdom, and *Turfanda* is the first Turkish novel to pay attention to the village." (Evin, *Origins and Development of the Turkish Novel*, 125).

125 Murad Bey was closely interested in the Ottoman fiscal system and wrote articles about its problems in his *Mizan* before the publication of his novel. (See Emil, *Mizancı Murad*, 275–8.) He later became an inspector of the *Duyûn-ı Umûmiye* (Ottoman Public Debt Administration), shortly after the publication of this novel.

126 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 395–6.

127 Ibid., 397.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid., 398–9.

131 Ibid., 398.

132 Ibid., 373.

133 Cf. Ahmed Midhat's example of a paper factory in *Teşrik-i Mesaʿî, Taksim-i Mesaʿî* (İstanbul: Kırkanbar Matbaası, 1879), 131.

134 Cf. Sabahaddin, "Terbiye-i Milliye ve Islahat-i Şahsiye," *Terakki*, no. 19–20 (June 1908): 8. Sabahaddin Bey, in this article that he wrote 20 years after the publication of *Turfanda*, complains about the lack of entrepreneurial spirit among the Anatolian peasants. He states that the "moral purity" of the Anatolian peasantry is a result of the simplicity of rural life. This life also leads people "to observe tradition instead of adopting entrepreneurship and to cling to the past instead of [planning] the future." Therefore, he concludes, "the productive power of the nation is not improving."

135 1 *kuruş* = 40 *paras*

136 Mehmed Murad, *Turfanda Mı, Turfa Mı?*, 399–400.

137 In the post-1908 (i.e., the Young Turk) era, the idea of cooperation was to dominate nationalist economic thought as well as the government's economic policies, see Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Ekonomi ve Toplum (1908–1950), Milli İktisat, Milli Burjuvazi* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995), 125–44.

138 The Memleket Sandıkları later evolved into the Ziraat Bankası (Agricultural Bank) in 1888.

139 For more information on the Memleket Sandıkları, see Seçil Akgün, "Midhat Paşa'nın Kurduğu Memleket Sandıkları: Ziraat Bankası'nın Kökeni," in *Uluslararası Midhat Paşa Semineri: Bildiriler ve Tartışmalar, Edirne: 8–10 Mayıs 1984* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1986).

140 For more information on Kâmil Pasha's *köy bakkalları* (village grocers) project and favorable reactions to the project in the local press, see Zeki Arıkan, "İzmir'de İlk Kooperatifleşme Çabaları," *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, no. 4 (1989): 31–42.

141 Kâmil Pasha (1832–1913) served several times as grand vizier from 1885 to 1913. When he started the *köy bakkalları* project, he was governor of the province of Aydın. He was also the lifelong patron of Şair Eşref.

142 Eşref and Alpay Kabacalı, *Çeşitli Yönleriyle Şair Eşref: Hayatı, Sanatı, Yergileri* (İstanbul: Özgür Yayın Dağıtım, 1988), 387–9.

143 Pertev Naili Boratav, "İlk Romanlarımız," in *Folklor ve Edebiyat*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Adam Yayınları, 1982), 316.

144 It is important to note that although Murad Bey was able to publish his novel, it was later banned and existing copies were confiscated by the government.

145 For more information on censorship in the Hamidian era, see Cevdet Kudret, *Abdülhamit Devrinde Sansür* (İstanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1977).

146 For examples of such stories and novels, see Boratav, "İlk Romanlarımız," 313–15.

147 Hüseyin Cahid Yalçın, *Edebî Hatıralar* (İstanbul: Akşam Kitabhanesi, 1935), 102.

148 For an example of the illegal printing and distribution of Namık Kemal's works such as *Rûya*, see Kudret, *Abdülhamit Devrinde Sansür*, 29.