Learning Turkish

LEO SPITZER

INTRODUCTION AND TRANSLATION BY TÜLAY ATAK

Introduction: *Wortkunst* in Turkish: Leo Spitzer and the Development of the Humanities in Turkey

> It is one of the benefits falling to the lot of the emigrant scholar that, however much his outward activity may be curtailed in the new country in comparison with his former situation, his inner activity is bound to be immensely enhanced and intensified: instead of writing as he pleases . . . he must, while trying to preserve his own idea of scholarship, continually count with his new audience, bearing in mind those innermost strivings of the nation . . . which, opposed to his nature as they may have seemed in the beginning, tend imperceptibly to become a second nature in him—indeed to make shine by contrast his first nature in clearest light.
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> —Leo Spitzer, foreword to *Linguistics and Literary History*[1]

EMIGRATION IS TRANSLATION. WRITTEN BY LEO SPITZER IN 1934, "LEARNING TURKISH" OFFERS A GLIMPSE INTO THE HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES of his and other German academics' exile in Istanbul—an exile that plays a foundational role in comparative literature, as Erich Auerbach, Edward Said, Aamir Mufti, and Emily Apter have argued.[2] Spitzer's attempt to analyze the characteristics of the Turkish language while that language was transforming amplifies recent critical attempts to understand "modern Turkey's nation-based and state-directed poiesis" (Yaeger 11). Bridging the gap between exile in Istanbul and the modern Turkish language, "Learning Turkish" introduces complexity to contemporary paradigms of global comparatism and identifies symptoms of literary studies' relocation to the context of a new nation-state; the article exemplifies the complicity between local nationalisms and cultural imperialisms and illuminates, on a personal level, how linguistic estrangement becomes a way of negotiating the experience of deportation, of emigration, and of the foreignness of adoptive cultures for Spitzer.

"Learning Turkish" appeared in French and Turkish in 1934, as "En apprenant le turc: Considérations psychologiques sur cette langue," in *Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris*, and as "Türkçeyi Öğrenirken," in *Varlık*, under the rubric "Dil Bahisleri" ("Language Debates"), in three parts. Spitzer wrote it while he lived in Turkey between 1933 and 1936 as the first professor of Romance languages and literatures and the director of the School of

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Foreign Languages at the newly founded Istanbul University. While no translator is mentioned for part 1 of the Turkish version, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, whom Spitzer called "the bridge between East and West,"[3] translated parts 2 and 3. Although Spitzer, who wrote the French version, did not translate the entire essay into Turkish himself, the peculiar vocabulary in the first part suggests that he may have translated this into Turkish with Eyüboğlu's help.[4]

In this introduction to the first English-language translation of Spitzer's essay, I point toward the historical and geographic circumstances in which "Learning Turkish" appeared and show the intricate links between the text and its fragmented context, which involved the rise of the Third Reich, the exile of German-speaking professors of Jewish origin, and the concurrent Turkish university reform. Further, I describe Spitzer's activity as a philologist in Turkey by referring to other documents, including his address to the University of Istanbul. These documents shed light on the complexity of language studies in a newly founded nation-state and demonstrate the complicity between the European humanism propounded by Spitzer and the nationalist ideology of the young Turkish Republic in the thirties. To examine "Learning Turkish" in relation to Spitzer's work and discuss how the Turkish language becomes a "text" for him, I compare the French and Turkish versions of "Learning Turkish." While Spitzer's only reference to the Turkish language reform is a brief paragraph, the essay's translation from French into Turkish and the discrepancies between the two versions vividly demonstrate its entanglement in the language politics of the young Turkish Republic. The essay, when considered in its context, illuminates how Spitzer's textual analysis involves an attempt to maintain the "foreignness" of languages.

"Learning Turkish" begins with the Western linguist in Istanbul reading a book in Turkish, dictionary in hand. According to Emily Apter, Spitzer in Istanbul exemplifies the practice of "global *translatio*," meaning not only translation but also the movement of philology from Europe to Turkey and the United States. Tracing Spitzer's activities in Istanbul, Apter locates "transnational humanism" at the core of comparative literature (*Translation Zone* 45–46). By actively learning, reading, and writing Turkish, Spitzer's ethos of *translatio* demands the study of foreign languages while acknowledging their foreignness (61–62). Yet "Learning Turkish" also oscillates between "a model of linguistic cosmopolitanism and an argument for the European etymon as hegemon" (27). "Etymon" alludes to Spitzer's emphasis on tracing words and word formations in several languages across history, from one text to another. While effective in making connections, the study of words rarely recognizes its own power in identifying origins or repressing conflict.[5] However, "as the smallest unit of linguistic aliveness" (40), the etymon maintains the possibility of traversing and altering genetic and digital codes because of its deracinated movements and leaps beyond the borders of national languages (25).

Spitzer's essay reflects on a historical project that placed the hegemonic etymon at the foundation of the Turkish nation-state. The hegemonic etymon is more than a metaphor here: Spitzer arrived in Istanbul at the beginning of the Turkish language reform, which "purifi[ed]" the Turkish language by replacing Arabic and Persian words with Turkish originals or neologisms derived from Turkish root words. Atatürk perceived the power of the etymon to alter codes and himself invented new words along with a group of linguists and scholars whom he appointed. It may not be a coincidence that *egemen* ("sovereign"), repeatedly used in reference to the Turkish Republic, sounds similar to *hegemon*. Replacing *saltanat* ("sultanate"), *egemenlik* ("sovereignty") corresponded to the hegemony of the nation-state and summed up the intention to break with the Islamic and Ottoman past to establish the modern Turkish Republic.[6]

The same historical project brought Spitzer to Turkey, along with several other German-speaking professors.[7] Hitler's rise to power, and the consequent exile of intellectuals, coincided with the university reform in Turkey, which led to the foundation of Istanbul University after the dissolution of Istanbul Darülfünun and the dismissal of almost two-thirds of its faculty.[8] The university reform of 1933 was part of a larger cultural-transformation

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program. Other reforms included the unification of instruction, which abolished religious schools and placed all educational institutions under the control of the ministry of education; the alphabet reform, which transliterated the Arabic script into the Latin alphabet in 1928; and the language reform. The cultural reforms activated a rupture with the Ottoman and Islamic past and prepared the groundwork for massive education campaigns. For example, the alphabet reform was a violent change in the way language was written; however, with Atatürk campaigning as the "head teacher" across Turkey, it quickly raised the level of literacy.[9]

Since the first years of the republic, cultural reforms projected a transformation of higher education. In the twenties, the major education reform was the abolishment of all religious schools and the establishment of a secular education system. Since Darülfünun was already a secular institution, the focus was on improving the scientific and intellectual standards of the university as an autonomous institution. By the early thirties, in the context of changing policies, the Ministry of Public Education took a more active role in the reform of the university.[10]

In this context the émigré scholars in Turkey were more than guest performers: not only did they come to occupy the positions emptied by the Darülfünun's dissolution, but they also founded new faculties and programs.[11] Their involvement in Turkish academia depended on government policies regarding universities as well as on their own inclination to engage with Turkish society. Having developed a strong curriculum at the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures after Spitzer left the department, Auerbach chose to be less active because of the concerns he expressed in his letters to Walter Benjamin and Traugott Fuchs about his role as a philologist in the face of the Turkish language reform and the Turkish Revolution.[12] Nonetheless, the universities established after the reform with the contribution of émigré scholars corresponded, in the words of Azade Seyhan, to a "noteworthy, albeit incomplete, implementation of the idea of cities of refuge" ("German Academic Exiles" 276).

How can one envision the role of language studies in the context of a university that was a site of reform and a city of refuge at the same time? For Albert Malche, a Swiss pedagogue hired by the government to create a plan for the university reform, departments of language and literature were crucial for the establishment of humanism and, thus, for the development of a modern culture. According to his report, the pre-reform program of literature consisted of courses on the history and literatures of East and West. Yet there were no debates about language, and comparative literature studies were absent (50, 16). Malche proposed language and philology as foundational courses in the establishment of humanistic thinking and suggested a supplementary course on comparative literature studies. It may have been Malche himself who recruited Leo Spitzer to establish the proposed framework and head the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures.[13]

When Spitzer arrived, the reform in the departments of languages and literatures was already charged with an initial conflict between efforts to establish a national identity implicit in the university reform and to establish universal humanism as prescribed by Malche. Spitzer directly addressed this conflict and proposed a possible negotiation in his introductory lecture at Istanbul University, "Roman Filolojisi Kurlarina Medhal" ("Introduction to Romance Philology Courses").[14] Part of Istanbul University's first publications, the lecture exposes the goals and objectives of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and displays an acute understanding of the forces at work in the university reform and Turkish Revolution. Spitzer compared the foundation of Istanbul University with that of Berlin University, whose founder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, he credited for eventually overcoming Napoleon's armies by advancing science and humanistic studies (284). Using Berlin University as an example of an institution of German Romanticism, Spitzer situated philology between nationalism and cosmopolitanism and emphasized the role of comparative studies, which, by introducing the relativity of cultural values, would prevent both extreme nationalism and a rationalist "abstract notion of humanity" that ignores all differences (279).

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Spitzer's emphasis on the role of comparative studies in a modernizing society becomes apparent in the special place he assigned to the study of Spanish language and literature in the immediate context of the Turkish Republic. As he poignantly observed, Ladino—also known as Judeo-Spanish—was "a coincidentally preserved, precious old Spanish belonging to the period before 1492" that could still be heard on the streets of Istanbul (282). Furthermore, the drive toward modernization in the peripheries of Europe, or "Europeanization," to use Spitzer's word, suggested a parallel between Alcalà-Zamora's Spain and Atatürk's Turkey. As Ladino became the historical link between contemporary cultures and languages, it was also the audible trace of an earlier exile in Istanbul and exemplified a minor language that maintained its vitality in the face of violent changes.

Despite his observation on Ladino, Spitzer never made any remarks on the current state of the Turkish language as he addressed his audience in Istanbul—a significant oversight, since Turkish was undergoing a radical transformation, a homogenization that would lead to the near extinction of several minor languages in Turkey. In fact, none of the introductory lectures given at the university were concerned with Turkish language and literature.[15] Is Spitzer, then, complicit in a reform movement that implemented European humanism to erase what was already there, establishing a surrogate history and obfuscating the destruction of a past?

Yes and no. Spitzer believed that language studies must retain their autonomy in the face of the immediate politics of a nation-state. In tracing the beginnings of philology to German Romanticism and Berlin University, Spitzer argued for a model that strove to transcend nationalism. Michael Holquist has written that Humboldt programmatically placed classical philology at the center of his *Bildung* effort in order to institutionalize Kantian autonomy in the university.[16] Accordingly, the place that Spitzer found for humanistic studies in Istanbul is neither a single nation nor the infinite universe but "Romania," referring to studies of Romance languages.[17] Romania is a "cosmos that has won victory over chaos" ("Roman Filolojisi" 281), a literary world where languages and literatures are necessarily related and compared with each other, a utopia of languages traversing each other's borders. As such, Romania is the space where Ladino, modern Spanish, and Turkish can come together, not because they share a common ground in grammar and structure but because they cross paths when a language that could have been petrified survives as it moves across territories. As a cosmos that has overcome chaos, Romania looks like a city of refuge where the dislocated etymon maintains its vitality. In other words, Romania is the program of "Learning Turkish" or the reason the Western linguist would go through the experience of learning a foreign language while maintaining its foreignness.

Throughout "Learning Turkish," Spitzer associates Turkish with emotionalism, theatricality, spontaneity, and animation. Spitzer's generalizations show the limits of his method—which demands the discovery of an internal principle that coheres the details of a work into a whole—when applied to an entire language.[18] Yet an experience of strangeness also imprints itself on the method when one confronts Turkish. Spitzer compares the observation of details in language with the observation "of the expressions, gestures, or voice of a recently met stranger" that "can lead us toward the discovery of his personality" (23). Edward Said has pointed out that Spitzer's close reading begins and ends with the reader's "gesture of reception," an opening of the self to the text ("Return" 66). In "Learning Turkish," the gesture of reception also involves a stranger and, as the stranger embodies the movements between surface details and internal principle, a foreign language.

The differences between the French and Turkish versions of "Learning Turkish" highlight the essay's entanglement with the language politics of the Turkish Republic and illuminate Spitzer's emphasis on the foreignness of languages. In the context of the French journal, Spitzer's article interacts with a tradition of orientalism and includes stereotypical descriptions of Turkish language and culture, such as "antilogique" or "l'empire d'une émotion" ("antilogical" or "dominion of an emotion" ["En apprenant" 88, 87]). Yet the text's inter-

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play with orientalism is edited out when it enters its Turkish site, *Varlık*. When read with the knowledge of what is missing in the Turkish version, the French one suggests an opposition between two orientalist platitudes, rigidity and illogic, and undermines them by introducing the "psychophonics" of Turkish as the trace of life in language.[19]

The Turkish version of the text also excludes an observation on Atatürk. When contrasting the levels of abstraction in Turkish with those in Indo-European languages, Spitzer refers to the lack of articles in Turkish and gives the example of the noun *gazi* ("veteran"). When capitalized, *Gazi* is also one of the names given to Atatürk; the difference signaled by definite and indefinite articles in English is achieved with lowercase and capital letters in Turkish. Spitzer further writes that "as an isolated phenomenon in the world for Turks," *Gazi* is similar to the Roman paterfamilias ("En apprenant" 96). Since *paterfamilias* is also an irregular form in Latin, his analysis is limited to grammar, but the comparison carries a sense of irony: the paterfamilias is the supreme authority over the Roman family, the hegemon who assumes the legal power over life and death. Although it is not clear who made the editorial changes, the exclusion of the comparison reveals the impossibility of voicing a critical observation of Atatürk's authority.

"Türkçeyi Öğrenirken" is not simply an amputated version of "En apprenant le turc," missing its references and critiques. It also inflects the French text toward universal humanism. The French, for instance, does not include the sentence "any language is human prior to being national," through which "Türkçeyi Öğrenirken" engages with universal humanism more directly and which becomes its slogan (196). The difference between the two versions shows how Spitzer addressed the tradition of linguistic universalism at a moment when the ideas of linguistic universalism and universal humanism themselves were oscillating between Europe and Turkey.

Both versions contain a sense of foreignness across languages. In "Türkçeyi Öğrenirken," Turkish phrases, placed in quotation marks, estrange themselves from Turkish as part of a world of languages. In "En apprenant le turc," French is compared with Turkish in the examples of the French phrase *à peine* and asyndetic sentences in Turkish. When placed next to the Turkish sentences theatrically demonstrating succession, *à peine* literally expresses the pain of actions seeking isolation and completion in French ("En apprenant" 88). It is as if Turkish allows French to be translated into French, making *à peine* strange to its own language. If this strangeness echoes the role Walter Benjamin assigns to translation, which is to "allow pure language [to] shine" (79), it is activated by affectively placing two very different languages next to each other.

Spitzer's "Learning Turkish" goes far beyond fragmented observations. It is a reflection on its immediate historical and geographic circumstances, part of institutional initiatives aimed at education reforms and the establishment of the ideology of the regime through language politics. As the emigrant scholar's address to an audience, the essay belongs to a program of situating humanist philology and literary studies in the young Turkish Republic. The essay exemplifies Spitzer's extension of the idealized Romania to Turkish, while maintaining estrangement as a condition of literary analysis. The discrepancies between the French and Turkish versions of the essay show the essay's relation to its context and illuminate the role of foreignness in Spitzer's thought. In "Learning Turkish," every language is foreign and no language is at home.

Notes

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1. While the book was published in 1948, the foreword is dated 1945.

2. Auerbach, *Mimesis*; Said, "Connecting"; Mufti; Apter, "Comparative Exile," "Global *Translatio*," and *Translation Zone*.

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3. This is from Spitzer's speech before his departure as quoted by Erhat. Eyüboğlu played an important role as a translator and critic in the early years of the Turkish Republic. After studying in Paris, he returned to Istanbul to join the faculty of Istanbul University and met Spitzer there, becoming the translator of his lectures. Some of his work reflects the influence of Spitzer's writing and lectures at the university.

4. I thank Filiz Nayır Deniztekin for drawing my attention to this point.

5. Spitzer suggests the power of the etymon in "Ratio > Race," and Apter analyzes the complexity of the etymon for Spitzer's thought by rereading this essay alongside "Learning Turkish" (*Translation Zone* 25–40).

6. "Egemenlik kayıtsız şartsız milletindir" ("Sovereignty unconditionally belongs to the nation") is a foundational principle of the Turkish Republic. Eyüboğlu, writing on the vitality of language in 1935, identified *saltanat* as an example of a word that was "expiring" in the face of the transformation sweeping Turkish society (353). He appropriated Spitzer's emphasis on words and their relation to history in the context of the Turkish Revolution and language reform.

7. In *Atatürk ve Üniversite Reformu* ("Atatürk and the University Reform"), the Turkish translation of *Exil und Bildungshilfe* ("Exile and Educational Assistance"), Widmann lists many of the German-speaking professors in Ankara and Istanbul Universities during this period, including Wolfram Eberhard (Chinese language and literature, Ankara University); Carl Ebert (music, Ankara State Conservatory); Paul Hindemith, who founded Ankara State Conservatory and, with Ebert, helped many other people come and teach in Turkey; Ernst Hirsch (law, Istanbul and Ankara Universities); Gerhard Kessler (economics), a political exile in Istanbul and one of the two founders of the Turkish Worker's Syndicate; Fritz Neumark (economics and law), who founded the faculty of economics at Istanbul University; Hans Reichenbach (philosophy, Istanbul University); Ernst Reuter, the former municipal governor of Magdeburg and, in Turkey, an expert for the government in city planning; Helmut Ritter (oriental languages); Georg Rohde (classical philology), founder of the series Translations from World Literature, published in Ankara; Philipp Schwartz (medicine), who founded and directed Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler in Ausland ("Emergency Organization of German Scientists Abroad") in Zurich, which helped find scholars academic positions abroad; and Bruno Taut, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, and Martin Wagner (architecture, Academy of Fine Arts).

8. I will be using *Darülfünun*, the Ottoman word for "university," to refer to the academic institution that became Istanbul University. The transformations of this institution's name mark major political shifts. Established in 1900 as Darülfünun-u Şahane ("University of the Empire"), it became the Istanbul Darülfünun with the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. During the university reform in 1933, the Ministry of Public Education legally abolished the Darülfünun to establish the new Istanbul University, sending 157 of its 240 instructors, professors, and assistants to different parts of Anatolia as high school teachers. As a continuation of the university reform, Ankara University was established in 1937.

For a general historical analysis of educational developments from the nineteenth century onward, see Kazamias. Szylowicz provides a comparative analysis of the education reforms in Egypt, Turkey, and Iran. An account of the Darülfünun in the twenties can be found in Ayni, the first historical work on the topic, written in 1927. For information on the 1933 reform, see Widmann; Tunçay and Özer. Çetik describes the ideological complexity of the period following the reform.

9. Parla discusses how language reform has impeded the novel's development in Turkey (27–29) and Seyhan points to its role in increasing the level of literacy (*Tales* 35–38).

10. The period 1923–30 is generally considered the "liberal" years of the young Turkish Republic. However, during the early thirties, more-conservative policies, marked by increasing state control over the economy and politics, were implemented in response to the global economic crisis of 1929 and changing power relations among the ruling elite. Cultural reforms accompanied the new policies; the establishment of the Turkish History Institute and Turkish Language Institute in 1931 exemplifies the state's involvement in cultural affairs just before the university reform.

11. While Albert Malche contacted several academic institutions, the responses he received were mainly from German or German-speaking professors through the *Notgemeinschaft deutscher Wissenschaftler im Ausland*.

12. Letter to Walter Benjamin (12 Dec. 1936; letter 8 of Auerbach, "Scholarship" 749); Letter to Walter Benjamin (1 Mar. 1937; letter 10 of Auerbach, "Scholarship" 750–51); Letter to Traugott Fuchs (22 Oct. 1938; letter 12 of Auerbach, "Scholarship" 752–55). Auerbach's criticism of how the language reform destroys the properties of the Turkish language by dismantling its relation to history is especially strong in his 12 December 1936 letter to Benjamin. Parts of this communication were previously published by Barck. Konuk discusses Auerbach's response to "the humanist reform" of the Turkish education system.

13. According to Bayrav, Malche had contacted Spitzer to teach and establish the program for humanities that Malche described in his report.

14. The lecture is published in *Istanbul Üniversitesi Açılış Dersleri* ("Istanbul University Convocation Lectures"), an edited volume that includes introductory lectures for several departments at the university following Atatürk's address to the nation. The book demonstrates how the university's curriculum was part of public discourse.

15. This neglect is surprising given that there was a department of Turkish literature at the university with faculty members like Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar. Nergis

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Ertürk points out that while Turkey is acknowledged by comparative literature studies, Turkish literature is an absent presence in the field (41–42). Here, in the table of contents of *Istanbul Üniversitesi Açılış Dersleri*, is an institutionally marked absence in Turkey.

16. See also Theodore Ziolkowski on the university as an institution of German Romanticism.

17. Spitzer cites the journal *Romania*, published by Gaston Paris and Paul Meyer in 1872, as one of the seminal comparative studies of language.

18. Spitzer argues for this internal principle in "Linguistics" (19).

19. Spitzer uses *psychophonic* to describe the role of sounds in Turkish.

Learning Turkish

[I]

THE WESTERN LINGUIST WHO, AFTER THE AGE of forty, tries to learn Turkish (an apparently easy but actually ambiguous language), resembles an old person yearning to learn how to ski. This old person may have a lot of life experience, and he may know and understand the core concepts of skiing. On the ski trail, however, he is practically inferior to a ten-year-old kid. In a similar way, the most theoretically competent linguist is stumped by simple linguistic practicalities when he tries to learn a new language.

In this struggle, there are some moments of peace, when the linguist, with the help of an exceptional dictionary, forges a path through thickets of syntax toward the theoretical knowledge of human language. With the aid of the studies he has pursued elsewhere, he can interpret some general occurrences in several languages that may elude easy explanations by native speakers.

This may be difficult for those who have not studied linguistics to understand, but we can concretize it with an example: in a foreign city, one would feel at home when one hears a familiar opera piece, even if it is sung in a foreign language. One could deduce the spirit of this foreign language despite the unfamiliarity of the words set to the recognized melody. Why shouldn't philology help the philologist discover humanity—by recognizing the brotherhood and mutual affinity among peoples, even those who appear to each other to exist in distant realities? Why shouldn't being a philologist help him taste the pleasure of conquering a foreign language and mentality that existed prior to us and that remain distinct from and superior to us?

I will mention some familiar faces that I came across while investigating the Turkish language and mentality. At first, it seemed as if I were up against a wall, but the discovery of some familiarities made me smile: "See! We are on familiar ground." This article will not present anything new or unknown to Turkish readers. Since I never studied Turcology, my conclusions will remain tentative, limited, and perhaps even wrong. Yet I hope that my qualified statements will provide the freshness of new impressions and the *hic et nunc* of coincidences.

My attempts to conquer the Turkish language will not consist of anything but brief notes "observing the beautiful expressions dancing on the stage set of our *Folies Gramaticales*" (as Valery-Larbaud wrote when he was learning Portuguese). Like Valery-Larbaud, I enjoyed Turkish only after reading some pages from a thin but well-written book. Literature gave me a better sense of the life of this language than did studies of syntax or impoverished conversations I had with people on the street. I read Reşat Nuri [Güntekin]'s *Olağan İşler* [Ordinary Affairs] with deep pleasure.[a]

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I have read the following sentences on the eighth page of this elegantly written storybook: "Yakın akrabalarımdan birinin zevcesini seviyordum. . . . O vakit ki aşklarin bir hususiyeti vardi. . . . *Kaçgöç* sebebile insan en yakın akrabasından baska kadınla görüşemezdi. . . ." ["I was in love with the wife of a close relative. . . . Love in those days was exceptional. . . . Due to *kaçgöç,* one could not meet with any woman but one's closest relatives . . ."].[b] As explained to me, *kaçgöç* is an allusion to the times when women were in veil. In his book *Grammaire de la langue turque*, Jean Deny explains the phrase as "women's disappearance from sight when a stranger enters the house." Here is a face familiar to me. In this expression, instead of nominative-infinitive tense, imperative is used. What *kaçgöç* actually expresses is "the necessity for women to hide and escape from men."

I have come across comparable formations in Roman languages. For instance, in Italian, "essere a *tocca e non tocca* del carnavale" means that the carnival is approaching. However, an exact translation would be "touch and do not touch the carnival." Similar expressions can be found in Spanish. In his book *Doña Perfecta*, Galdos uses the expression "basta de retoricas, basta de mete y saca de palabrejas y sermoncillos" ["enough of rhetoric, enough of the give and take of petty words and little speeches"], referring to arrogance (*ukalalık ve vaiz yetişir* ["enough of arrogance and preachers"]). The word-to-word translation of the expression "mete y saca" would be "put and take." The Spanish expression resembles a Turkish one, *gelgeç*.[c] In a French dialect, one finds the expression "c'est toujours sauté," which means "it is always necessary to jump." An exact translation would be "it is always jumped." There are similar formations in Balkan languages. In modern Greek, the expression "to prama denine pekse yelase," which refers to a sense of seriousness and means "this is no laughing matter," takes the following form [in which *play* and *laugh* are second-person verbs]: "this is not play laugh."

These formations, which I will call "imitative or hypothetical imperatives," animate an expression by assuming and simulating the existence of a fictitious character who would utter these imperatives. It is as if we are confronted with an event whose actors we can see. Instead of coldly isolated,[d] we find ourselves in front of a stage set where a drama is taking place. In the Turkish expression *kaçgöç*, we are witnessing life in the harem, where poor captive women are subjected to the authoritarian commands of a man—or rather a woman. In the Italian expression "essere a tocca e non tocca del carnavale," we are confronted with a scene of hesitation. This state of mind is vigorously expressed through the juxtaposition of two opposing commands: "touch" and "do not touch." The feelings of an obedient child who finds himself caught between two conflicting instructions help us understand the analogous mood of an Italian waiting for the magical carnival season. In several languages, we find cases where two second-person imperatives follow one another. With these repetitions, we recognize that a theater play begins. A single second-person imperative cannot prepare us to see the drama as well as these repetitions do. Similarly, in the French expression "c'est toujours sauté," "c'est" informs us that the play is starting. Moreover, repetitions signify that the action continues. In the old days, it must have been a rule to say "kaç, göç" to women in the presence of men. The juxtaposition of two imperatives shows that an action runs an endless course. Like a mathematical term, the juxtaposition denotes infinity.

Aside from other second-person imperatives, there are expressions with verbal adverbs (or gerunds) like "nihayet *düşüne düşüne* careyi buldum" ["thinking thinking I found the solution"] or "ben eski yazıyı vaktile sana mektup *yaza yaza* öğrenmistim" ["I learned the old alphabet writing writing let-

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ters to you"].[e] Deny gives the examples "çal yaka etmek" ["to beat someone up"] and "gel zaman git zaman" ["come time go time"].[f] One can also mention the expressions consisting of an imperative, an *enclitic* that has lost its mode of proclamation ("ha!"), and a repetition of the first imperative or a negative second-person interrogative in the aorist wide tense: "gezin ha gezin" ["wander 'ha' wander"] or "bekle ha beklemez misin" ["wait 'ha' will you not wait"].[g] These examples remind me of some French expressions: "Là-dessus naturellement, nous avons consolé notre café, *consolé consoleras-tu*" ["there of course, we consoled our coffee, consoled you will console"] (Goncourt, *Germinie Lacerteux*). And a strange expression: "Je n'aime pas les bavards, ils parlent tout le temps comme un moulin, *mouds! mouds!*" ["I don't like talkative people, they are like grinders, grinds! grinds!"]. Deny suggests that repeated imperatives help express continuity: for instance, in the Italian example "mi ha preso li una vertigine e li una vertigine e li, andiame, metti su da capo la veste e via, corri que come un matto" ["I was caught in a vertigo and there in a vertigo and there, I left, I put on my robe and off, I ran as if I was crazy"] (Fogazzaro); in the French "marche, marche!" ["walk, walk!"] or "il prend le fouet et fouette qui en fouette" ["he takes the whip, and whips what is whipped"]; and in the Catalan ". . . y y marxa, amunt, avall" ["and and up, up, down"], repetition suggests incessant action.

In these sentences, instead of being given the description of an event that has taken place, we are repeatedly told the imperatives that can be pronounced during the event. The repeated imperatives better express the willpower or the drive that gives rise to the event. The phrase "gezin ha gezin" shows us the act of wandering that results from a pressure imposed by an unknown authority. Such expressions sometimes involve sarcasm: for instance, "like grinders, grinds! grinds!" reduces talkative people to grinders grinding endlessly in vain. Sometimes these repeated imperatives involve an implicit sympathy for the object of reference, which explains the insistent character of repetition. Regardless of the intention, the disagreement between the verb and subject shows that these expressions have by now become grammatical.

There is a further implication that repetition is grammatical: it is also used with nouns to express incessant action, as in "[a]kşama kadar *kapı kapı*, *daire daire* dolasarak dostlari görecektim" ["I was going to see some friends, wandering door door, apartment apartment"].[h] This sentence reminds me of the Italian expressions "navigare riva riva" ("going by the coast" ["navigate shore shore"]) or "andare muro muro" ("going by the wall" ["going wall wall"]). Sandfeld mentions the sentence "*alay alay* olup gelen turnalar" ("les grues volant par troupes") in his book *Linguiste Balkanique*.[i] In describing flocks of cranes coming one by one (*alay alay*), the Turkish sentence is less abstract than the French one, which logically unites them ("par troupes").

These examples, like repeated imperatives, belong to a sense of expression that can be described as "impressionistic": the narrator describes his impressions sequentially, one by one as they unfold, instead of expressing his ideas as a whole. The phrase "kapı kapı" conjures the image of a person wandering from one door to another. In conclusion, all these forms of expression can be explained by the inclination of the Turkish people's spirit toward emotion rather than logic.

[II]

The urge to animate and invigorate the language reveals itself in the following sentence as well: "*Beni görür görmez ağlamağa başladı*" ["she began to cry sees does not see me"].[j]

Hence, the idea of immediacy is expressed by juxtaposing the affirmative and negative versions of the same verb: *görür görmez* ["she sees, she does not see"]. There is a

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mood of hesitation and a drama of indecision disguised in the opposition between the acts of seeing and not seeing. We have seen a similar case in the Italian expression "essere al tocca e non tocca." Here, however, hesitation belongs to the past, and the implication of the past in the present revives the period of uncertainty. The French phrase *à peine* ("barely" or "hardly") dramatizes the expression as well, by suggesting sudden consecutive actions. Compressed among others, actions appear to suffocate. The hasty effort of each action to follow another enlivens a story of serial activities in a human and subjective way. The "dramatization" in the Turkish expression is even more vigorous than in the French since it carries a witness's exclamations—"She sees!," "She does not see!"—within itself.[1] These exclamations express the temporal succession by placing an action after one that is not yet manifest or fully realized.

The expression "Beni *görür görmez* para istiyor" ["he asks for money sees does not see me"] describes a scene of wile:[k] The subject is being asked for money just when he is thinking, "did the inquirer see me or not?" Despite some different nuances in meaning, similar expressions can be found in Romance languages: in Portuguese, "Janta, nao janta, hassa-se tempo" ("Eat, do not eat, time passes"); in Italian, "Improvisamente, che è che non è, le pupilla della fanciulla si accendondo" ("Suddenly, there is there is not, the pupils of the young girl shone"); in Sicilian dialect, "Si é no, no é si, all'ultimo fini ca la signura dissi si" ("Repeating yes, no, no, yes, finally the woman said yes"); in Mallorca Catalan, "El posa caych no caych en es cantells de sus penyes" ("He dropped the bag, am I falling am I not falling, by the rocks"); and in Spanish, "A eso de si son luces o no son luces, entraremos en la casa de . . ." ("Whether there are lights or no lights, we entered the house"—thus at dusk).

In the Catalan example, this type of expression has become a fully grammatical formula. Is it possible that a bag asks these questions? The verb is conjugated in the first-person singular to emphasize the sense of action. We find a similar example in Turkish. In the sentence "Ben kapıyı *açar açmaz* siz geldiniz" ["As I opens does not open the door, you came in"], "I" and "open"—subject and verb—do not correspond.[l] The generalized formula "opens, does not open," therefore, is a fixed form of expression, which can be used in any sentence to describe a sense of temporality.

*

In general, we can say that the habit of repeating a verb (placing an affirmative form of it after a negative, as in "açar açmaz" ["opens, does not open"]), bespeaks an inclination to avoid simplicity of expression. In Turkish sentence structure, nothing corresponds to the French *non*. The sentence "gelecek mi gelmeyecek mi?" ["will he come or will he not come?"] can be translated into French as "va-t-il venir ou non?" What Turkish achieves with a symmetrical doubling, French realizes with an algebraic sign (-) or nullification. To understand the difference between Turkish and French, it is necessary to compare the two forms of expression, both of which exist in French. One can say, "Va-t-il venir ou non?" ["Will he come or not?"], as well as "Va-t-il venir ou ne va-t-il pas venir?" ["Will he come or will he not come?"]. The second form belongs to everyday speech, because people avoid abstraction. Similarly, fairy tales start with expressions like "bir varmış bir yokmuş" ["once there was, once there was not"] in several languages (Sandfeld, p. 162).[m]

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Until now we have written about syntactic doubling, which belongs to an impressionistic rather than objective style of expression. There is also a more primitive phonetic doubling, which corresponds to an almost childish need, as exemplified in the word *bambaşka* ["very different"]. Prussez-Ludner explains this doubling as a rule of Turkish,

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according to which an entire adjective or its first syllable is repeated with a *p* or an *m* added to reinforce it. Other examples are *yepyeni*, *bembeyaz*, *taptaze*, *taze taze*, *sımsıcak*, *sıcak sıcak*.[n] I do not know the historical explanation of this rule. Yet I can confirm that the reinforcement of a word with a labial consonant added to the first or second syllable occurs in many languages.

Schuchardt points to similar cases in Basque languages. In *aiko maiko*, for instance, *aiko* means "should I do?" and the *m* in *maiko* has no meaning. Similar examples exist in German ("Schorlemorle," or "Holterdipolter" [as the name of a mixed beverage, or "helter-skelter"]), in Hungarian (*csiga-biga*, meaning "snail"), and in Persian, Armenian, Altay, and Semitic languages. Therefore, this primitive linguistic incident is common and general—it exists above nations and can be explained naturally. In fact, the type of doubling produced by added bilabial consonants reproduces the effect of children's speech. In children's speech, one can see the repetition of every kind of syllable, especially those that are pronounced when a child is closing his lips (for instance, while he is eating or kissing). In many languages these syllables relate to baby talk and produce the first few words that children need to pronounce, like *baba*, *mama*, *bobo* ["boo-boo"], and *bébé*.

In French, we find the doubled syllables of children's speech especially in words that start with a labial consonant, like *bibiche* and *poupoule* [terms of endearment]. However, these primitive and sympathetic formations, once recognized as real words, have since been removed from the French language, which has developed under the control of grammarians and logicians. Words like *flofloter* and *balaître*, which were proposed by the Pléiade, disappeared in time. With a couple of exceptions, such as *pêle-mêle*, these simple word inventions were not able to survive in French.

In contrast, the Turkish language systematizes this form of expression with "twin words." The origin of words like *bambaşka* and *yepyeni* is perhaps forgotten by now, and these words are no longer limited to children's speech. For linguists who compare languages, it is a great pleasure to discover the ruins of rough expressions and cellars of rudimentary phrases in every spoken language. In this respect, Turkish completely differentiates itself from French. Whereas French has eliminated all traces of repetition that are still used in Italian and Spanish (like *piano piano*, the [Italian] equivalent to yavaş yavaş ["very slowly"]), on the streets of Istanbul we hear the cries of street vendors selling chestnuts: "sıcak sıcak" ["hot hot"].

**

Turkish proverbs carry Turkish people's sense of prudence and precaution; will we be able to find the traces of these characteristics in their language as well? The suffix of narration and doubt, *mış*, signifies that the narrator is not willing to say more than he knows and that he wants to restrict the authority and certainty of his words. We find a similar tendency in the following sentence: "Evlerine benden başka erkek gelip gitmiyor *gibi idi*" ("It seemed as if no other man entered their house").[o] According to Deux, a phrase like *seviyor gibiyim* resembles the suffix *mış*.[p] In his words, "This small fragment *gibi* is added to the verb when imitated, similar, or comparable actions are expressed." The interrupting *gibi* ["like"] indicates that the narrator has little confidence in his own words. Words no longer hold a definitive value but are engulfed in comparison's ambiguity.

A similar blur of precision occurs in Romance languages. In the Normandy dialect, especially in peasant talk, one can find sentences like "Il pleut comme"["It rains like"]. In Italian, one finds the expression "poteva un bue come" ["as could an ox"] (as if "poteva" did not prove to be sufficient for comparison). This sensibility exists in English as well. When a Dickens character says, "Mr. Bucket clings to George like," *like* is a "parasite

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suffix." Its sole function is to diminish the strength of the preceding words. The narrator almost mitigates his statement in penitence at the end of the sentence. The Turkish *gibi* has been examined more thoroughly than *like*. *Gibi* can be placed between two suffixes of a verb, as in *geçiniyor-gibi-idi*.[2] I will compare this *gibi* of mitigation with the use of some words in bureaucratic records that Deux mentioned in a meeting of the Paris Language Association.[3] According to Deux, words and phrases like *only*, *approximately*, and *as much as* are employed with exact numbers in paperwork. Similarly, in his article "A Peculiarity of Country Talk: Mitigation," Marouzean emphasizes the lack of precision in peasant talk.

French peasants say "pas mal" ["not bad"] instead of "bon" or "bien" ["good"], "y en a" ["there are"] instead of "beaucoup" ["a lot"]. Taine writes that peasants, when asked about their well-being, answer, "on se défend" ["one defends oneself"]. In all these examples, one must differentiate between the various types of mitigations, from peasant talk to bureaucratic records and others.

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"Uğraşıp duruyoruz çünkü yaşamak çok güç" ["We are trying standing, because it is so difficult to survive"].[q]

It is necessary to examine the melody of this sentence to draw out some psychological characteristics of Turkish. I will mention another issue that attracts my attention. When words like *but*, *now*, and *however* are used as the first words of a sentence, they are pronounced with reticence. Even a foreign ear can distinguish the change of volume as these words are pronounced. The voice drops by one third. I take great pleasure in hearing these changes in melody because I sense that they are reflections of a life experience. This experience is so complex that it deters us from providing straightforward explanations, filling our sentences with *but*s and *however*s. The reasoning and consciousness hidden in these *but*s and *however*s relieve the reflecting person from the smothering pressure of life's exigencies.

Hence, in this voice drop, I see our humility. For an instant, the human spirit descends to pessimism, just before ridding itself of its numbness and triumphing against difficulties with the power of reason. Thus, a small word (like *but* and *yet*) that is actually nothing more than a grammatical tool to express negation does not remain limited to the intellectual domain but becomes an affective manifestation loaded with the weight of life. In these small words, we can almost perceive the reflections of humanity confronting its eternal rivals.

[III]

Turkish spirit can combine logical skills with a phonetic sensibility. This combination, rarely seen in other peoples, bears a quality that I will call symbolic hearing. Turkish people are capable of designing the spiritual parallelism of language, and they have no difficulty grasping that similarities in sound may lead to a symbolic meaning. In Turkish grammatical schemes, the inclination to represent relations [of a noun or a verb] with phonetic resemblances leads to an order, a logic that, along with phonetic sensibility, results in the harmony of front and back vowels.[r] One could imagine that phonetic sensibility would obstruct the logical ordering of different sounds. Yet the Turkish language proves the contrary. For instance, the suffix of plurality is determined according to the vowels of the root word: it is either *-ler* or *-lar*, depending on whether the preceding vowels are front or back. This rule cannot change according to other, seemingly more-logical necessities. Instead, the actual order is the understanding of the value of similar sounds and their unity in the formation of each word.

I see this psychophonic sensibility most vividly in sentences formed with asyndetic

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coordination.[4] In such sentences, relations between different words are established through suffixes rather than conjunctions. At the same time, the narration is unified not by a narrator depicting similar events from a single point of view but by psychophonic parallels. When we refer to our initial example, *kaçgöç*, we see that the formal similarity of verbs corresponds to a similarity of meaning. The unity of *kaç* and *göç* is affirmed by the lack of suffixes. I see the following sentence in a letter: "*Üstünüz, başınız, fotininiz* çamur içinde idi" ["Your top, your head, your boots were all muddy"].[s] Repetition of the possessive suffixes [*-ünüz*, *-ınız*, *-iniz*] connects the three words of this sentence. The first two words (*üstünüz*, *başınız*) signify a single idea that can be translated as *extérieur* ["appearance"] in French and *Aufzug* ["outfit"] in Austrian German. In the Turkish sentence, shared suffixes augment the conceptual unity among words with similar meanings, as in "Alacaklarımı almış, borçlarımı vermiş, işlerimi yoluna koymuştum" ["I had received my credits, paid my debts, settled my jobs"].[t] (We could have written this sentence as «alacaklarımı almış, borçlarımı vermiş, işlerimi yoluna koymuş» dum.)[u] There is nothing more foreign than these repeated sounds to the logical French mentality, which has always avoided expressing conceptual unity with phonetic unity. In Turkish expressions, we see the reflections of an "impressionistic" mentality that wants to remain close to a sense of reality through mimicry and repetition instead of reasoned interpretation.

M. E. Lewy discovered similarities between characteristics of Turkish and Finno-Ugric languages (*Zur Finnisch-Ugrichen Satzverbindung* ["Finno-Ugrian Clause Construction"], 1910). For instance, there is an equivalent for the compound Turkish phrase *üstünüz başınız* ["your top your head"] in Hungarian: *arcz* ("face") = *orr* ("nose") + *szaj* ("mouth"). There are other resemblances between Finno-Ugric languages and Turkish, both of which can be classified under the category of Uralic languages. For example, the exact translation for the Hungarian sentence "esik az esö" ("yağmur yağıyor" in Turkish) is "la pluie pleut" ["the rain rains"]. In both Turkish and Hungarian the idea of rain is repeated. Similarly, the Hungarian "idöm van" and the Turkish "vaktim var" both imply the idea of possession of time.[v] These languages are brought closer by characteristics like negative conjugation, possessive suffixes, and compound phrases, all of which can be attributed to a mentality that dislikes abstraction. (In Turkish and Hungarian, the idea of rain is repeated twice because the verb for "to rain" in each language is not considered as a verb without an object; negative verbs are considered words in themselves [rather than words negated by their context], time is considered superior to human being, relation to an abstract concept like time can only be considered in terms of possession, complex data of reality is not analyzed, etc. . . .)

I do not claim to draw any definitive conclusions about the values of diverse systems of expression. All I can do is explain the origins of certain formations and determine their characteristics. While it would be naive to ascribe logic per se to Indo-European languages, it would be correct to say that Indo-European languages produce more concepts that are abstract than other languages.[w] Societies that express the idea of countenance with *ağız* + *burun* ["mouth" + "nose"], the idea of exterior with *üst* + *baş* ["top" + "head"], or the concept of commerce with *alış* + *veriş* ["buying" + "selling"] are inclined to think more with fragments and their aggregations than with abstract conceptual unities.[5] (In contrast we can consider the Latin word *commercium* ["commerce"], which displays a strong unity with the prefix *com-* and the suffix *-ium*.)

However, there is still a degree of abstraction in these fragmented forms of expression. The similar sounds of suffixes ensure their conceptual unity:

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üst-*ünüz* baş-*ınız* potinler-*iniz*	The repeated idea of possessions.

The repetition of possessive suffixes achieves a symbolic unity with sounds. We see and hear this unity rather than cogitate it. As M. Lewy mentions with respect to Finno-Ugric languages, the omission of conjunctions like *and* may signify that the narrator avoids commentary. Fragments of sentences, which follow one another without conjunctions that fix them in place,[x] produce a thick frame and sense of heavy, encircling destiny: "O bana hayatın yalnızlıklarında, hüzünlerinden bahsediyordu" ["She was talking to me about life's loneliness and sadness"]. With the repetition of the suffixes *-lerinden* and *-larından*, we can visualize each iron bar surrounding a woman's life. "(Bedbahtlara tavsiye edilir): İçmek, eğlenmek, çapkınlık etmek. . . . Bence bu mesela ayağından yaralı bir insanı, sızılarını unutturmak için koşturmağa, dans ettirmeğe, boğazı hasta bir biçareye şarkı söyletmeğe benzer. . . . Kendimi avutacağım diye aylarca ötede beride sürüklendim. . . ." ["Recommended to unfortunates: to drink, to have fun, to be a debauchee. . . . This is like making a person wounded in the foot run and dance, a person with a sore throat sing to forget his pain. . . . I drifted here and there to forget my pain. . . ."] The presence of so many rhymes [*içmek*, *eğlenmek*, *etmek*; *koşturmağa*, *ettirmeğe*, *söyletmeğe*; *ötede*, *beride*] in such a short excerpt cannot be mere coincidence. It indicates a characteristic of the Turkish spirit. One could claim that similar rhymes are found in French: "Elle me parlait des isolements et des tristesses de sa vie . . ."; "Cela resemblait à faire courir, danser et chanter"; "Je me trainais ça et là."[y] However, the repeated *de*, the single use of *faire*, and the repetition of *a* in "ça et là" remain weaker in idea and sound [conceptually and phonetically] when compared with the powerful rhymes of Turkish that suddenly appear in prose. Independent from the idea expressed in the sentence, these rhymes embrace each other like geometric lines. Is it possible to ignore the vibrant symmetries in this sentence? I emphasize the verb *to see* because the effect is that of a painting: "Mamafih bu acıyı gönlümden, onun yüzünü gözümden söküp atabilmek icin çok uğraştım" ["Nevertheless, I tried very hard to take this pain away from my heart, her face away from my imagination"]. The Turkish expression counters the lack of abstraction with the dynamic sensations it creates. Are these symmetrical rhymes related to the taste for ornamentation and decorative geometric forms that is rooted in Turkish culture? As I write this, I cannot help thinking of the skillfully composed and stylistically decorated shop windows and the street vendors' well-ordered tables.

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I refrain from searching for the traces of ancient Turkish fatalism in language (though the Turkish *yok* ["no," "none," "nill"], with the gesture accompanying it, can provide a point of departure for such an inquiry).[6] Nor will I look for traces of the optimism of the new age, which would be difficult to find in places other than words. This is a language that finds itself in the midst of powerful change; its new form is not yet well established. Moreover, ten years cannot be considered a long time in the life of human languages.

**

I believe the lines above prove that a linguist who does not know a language properly can virtually come to comprehend it by means of comparison. This can be accomplished because any language is human prior to being national: Turkish, French, and German languages first belong to humanity and then to the Turkish, French, and German peoples. Following the eighteenth-century philosophers, and based on expansive knowledge of human languages, the linguist Trombetti noted, "Tutti gli uomini sono fratelli."[7]

You could say that I did not do anything other than randomly list some basic charac-

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teristics of the Turkish language. True. These are only a few pages torn out of the great book of language, which is a universal being in itself. However, reflections on these details, simple though they may be, can help us understand the entire system of language—provided they are well-observed and correctly interpreted, just as our small observations of the expressions, gestures, or voice of a recently met stranger can lead us toward the discovery of his personality.

In the final analysis, it is possible to sum up the distinguishing characteristics of a language and extract their psychological essence to arrive at a synthetic view of that language.[8] This was the path I followed. In the light of the small language events we considered above, I believe that we have obtained an idea (inevitably cursory and scattered) about the Turkish way of thinking, which is close to reality itself. It is able to see parallel events and life patterns without submitting them to reason and abstraction—a characteristic of the Western mindset. Moreover, this Turkish way of thinking can re-create the vitality and freshness of life in all its spontaneity. With this love for life and its mimesis, the Turkish language can emancipate itself from schematic conceptions and fatalism. Without a doubt, such a language provides a treasury of insightful possibilities for *verbal art*.[z]

Notes

1. Dante expressed this condition very well (*Purgatore*, VII, 10–12): "Colui che cosa nuanzi o se / Subita ve de, ond'ei si maraviglia / Che crede e no, dicicudo: Ell e non e. . ." ("As one, who aught before him suddenly / Beholding, whence his wonder riseth, cries, / 'It is, yet is not,' wavering in belief").

2. Similar to the Spanish *una como allegria* ["one like joy," meaning "some sort of joy"], the word-to-word Turkish translation of which would be *bir gibi neş'e*.

3. *Bulletin* 1933, XVII.

4. *Asyndéte*: an abridgment made to hasten the expression by connecting or omitting fragments that would make composite phrases. E.g., "İnsan, hayvan, top, tüfek hep bir arada koşuyorlardı" ["Man, animal, cannon, rifle, they were running altogether"].

5. I do not know if it would be too daring to relate the abundance of mosques' domes to this additive mentality. Gothic architecture represents infinitude with sharp lines of vaulted arches disappearing in sky. However, multitudes of domes placed next to each other represent the abundance of creatures on earth. Since these domes are all half spheres—definite, yet repetitive forms—they convey a sense of uniform richness just like similar words coming together and forming a whole in language. It is one of the best-known characteristics of the Turkish language that it multiplies and unites the elements that are reduced to one by Indo-European languages.

6. This gesture seems to be an expression of neutrality toward fate. One raises one's head and eyes sternly toward the sky as if to arise from under a heavy weight and show one's independence. Another gesture common to everyone from members of parliament to barbershop apprentices consists of bowing the head to one side and softly raising the shoulders up. This gesture gives the impression of acceptance and resignation. There are other gestures implying the irrevocability of decisions or orders. For instance, a porter's "yok" orders the inquirer not to question anymore, but to abide by the directive.In another gesture of irreversibility, the palms of one's hands are pushed forward and quickly taken back as if one is saying, "I am putting this in front of you and I have nothing else to say" and expressing that what is being talked about has an existence independent of the discussion taking place. All these gestures are related to a belief in fate. To say "hiç" ["none"], hands are rubbed against each other as if to clean them. (In French, to express "none" as a gesture, belts are tightened.) There is a deep pessimism in asking for help. When saying "lütfen" ["please"] or similar words, the face becomes wrinkled as if asking for pity. We could add the sounds made by hitting the tongue against the palate to these gestures. One hears these sounds a lot in conversations of Turkish people, as an expression of affection or objection.

7. "All languages [sic] are brothers."

8. In this aspect, we diverge from Max Müller, who in 1864 wrote that "it is a pleasure to read Turkish grammar though we have no intention of writing or speaking the language spoken by Ottomans. The employment of grammar, order, and clarity of sentence structure are all manifestations of human intelligence in language." We see the perfection that Müller mentions, as well. However, we are more interested in a creative *spontanéité* and liveliness in expression born out of the urge to imitate life in Turkish.

Translator's Notes

The three parts of "Learning Turkish" were published separately in three issues of *Varlık*: volume 19 (1934), volume

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35 (1934), and volume 37 (1935). According to the notes in the publication, parts 2 and 3 were translated by Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, who was also translating Leo Spitzer's courses at Istanbul University. As in his other essays, Spitzer used many terms and examples from different languages, sometimes translating them in the essay and sometimes leaving them in their original forms without a translation. Those terms, sentences, and phrases are left in their original languages as they appeared in the essay.

a. This book includes Güntekin's short stories, as well as his translations from the French writers Guy de Maupassant, Alphonse Daudet, Tristan Bernard, Georges Courteline, and Leon Frapier. The examples that Spitzer uses in this essay are from Güntekin's stories, namely "Aşk Mektuplari" ("Love Letters") and "Ahret Dönüşü" ("Return from Hereafter"), which are brief, and sometimes comical, reflections on human relationships among the Istanbul bourgeoisie in the late twenties.

b. Güntekin, "Ahret Dönüşü." *Kaçgöç* is defined as "the practice of women covering their faces in the presence of men" ("Kaçgöç"). The word consists of two imperative verbs: *kaç* ("escape") and *göç* ("migrate").

c. Meaning fickle, unreliable, or inconstant; a word-to-word translation would be "come-pass."

d. Here Spitzer uses the word *tecrid*. Elsewhere, he uses a similar word, *mücerred*. Both *tecrid* and *mücerred* imply a sense of abstraction and isolation. While *tecrid* could also be translated as "abstract," "isolated" is more fitting given the theatrical scene Spitzer is describing.

e. That is, "thinking thoroughly, I found the solution" and "I learned the old alphabet while writing you letters" (Güntekin, "Aşk Mektupları"). Spitzer suggests that *yaza yaza* and *düşüne düşüne* are verbal adverbs.

f. I.e., "in a long while."

g. Meaning "wandering for a long while" and "waiting for a long while." The aorist-wide tense does not have a counterpart in English but is similar to simple present tense and covers the past, present, and future.

h. Güntekin, "Ahret Dönüşü."

i. This phrase, which means "cranes coming in flocks," recurs in several Turkish poems and songs. A word-to-word translation of the Turkish is "cranes coming troop troop."

j. I.e., "She began to cry as soon as she saw me."

k. That is, "He asks for money as soon as he sees me."

l. The verb *açmak* ("to open") is not conjugated in the first-person singular but in the third-person singular; Spitzer is making a note of this case.

m. I.e., "once upon a time. . . ."

n. Meaning "very new" (*yepyeni*), "very white" (*bembeyez*), "very fresh" (*taptaze*, *taze taze*), and "very hot" (*sımsıcak*, *sıcak sıcak*).

o. A word-to-word translation would be "no other man than myself was coming and going to their house like."

p. *Seviyor gibiyim* literally means "I am like I love" (i.e., "I seem to love").

q. In other words, "we keep trying because life is difficult."

r. There are eight vowels in Turkish: *a*, *e*, *i*, *ı*, *o*, *ö*, *u*, *ü*. Following the International Phonetic Alphabet, the Turkish language assigns each vowel to one of three categories according to its backness, height, and roundedness. Turkish especially emphasizes the backness and distiguishes between two kinds of vowels, front and back: back vowels are *a*, *ı*, *o*, *u*, and front vowels are *e*, *i*, *ö*, *ü*. A word usually contains only one kind of vowel, front or back; this extends to the conjugations of a word. Likewise, a word generally contains only rounded or spread vowels.

s. Güntekin, "Aşk Mektupları."

t. Güntekin, "Ahret Dönüşü."

u. In this version, Spitzer transforms the Turkish sentence into a mathematical formula.

v. The Hungarian and Turkish phrases both mean "I have time"; however, because of the possessive suffix added to *vakit* ("time"), a word-to-word translation would be "there is my time."

w. The phrase in this essay that corresponds to *concept* is *mücerred mefhum*. *Mücerred* is also a grammatical term referring to the simple case of a word without conjugations or suffixes.

x. The grammatical term for "conjunction" used in the essay is *rabıta*; it is derived from the verb *rabt etmek*, which can mean both "to connect" and "to fix." Both senses of *rabt* (as a verb and as a grammatical term) are used in Spitzer's text. The idea that conjunctions connect and fix persists in Turkish: *bağlaç* ("conjunction") derives from the verb *bağlamak*, which can mean "to connect" and "to tie [in place]." Considering the distinction that Spitzer makes between conjunctions and repeated suffixes, I translated *rabt etmek* as "to fix."

y. These lines are a French translation of parts of the Turkish passage above.

z. The phrase used in the essay is *söz san'ati*, which is a direct translation of the German word *Wortkunst*.

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