

ROUNDTABLE

Aziz Nesin about Himself and His Parents: Poor People in Istanbul during the Late Ottoman Period

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A resolute modernist and socialist, Aziz Nesin (1915–95) was definitely an author of the republican period. Born Mehmet Nusret to poor parents, both migrants to Istanbul from the Black Sea coast, he adopted Nesin as his legal surname when surnames became obligatory in 1934. By the 1950s, his satirical short stories and plays had made him famous, but he faced political difficulties for much of his life; likely, it did not endear him to the authorities that he used his experiences with the police as inexhaustible material for his stories.

In 1966, when in his early fifties, Aziz Nesin published *Böyle Gelmiş Böyle Gitmez: Otobiyografi* (That is the Way He has Come, But That is Not the Way He is Leaving: An Autobiography), the first volume of what was to become a three-volume series, which he called an autobiography.¹ The first volume, which is the subject of this study, has remained the most popular; it focuses on Nesin's childhood in Istanbul during the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, with biographies of both his father and his mother embedded in the story.² Nesin had begun the necessary research in the 1950s, including a trip to the Black Sea village where his mother had been born. He searched for documents as well, seemingly with limited success.

Given a strong commitment to children and education, in later life the author used his royalties to establish a foundation supporting forty to forty-five disadvantaged children. Under the guidance of Nesin's son, the professor of mathematics Ali Nesin, the organization functions to the present day.³ Furthermore, Aziz Nesin was one of the first authors in Turkey to write fiction for children that was not didactic, but rather intended for the enjoyment of his readers. Similar to many of the satirical stories that he published during the 1950s and 1960s, the first volume of his autobiography is probably accessible to readers from the age of ten to twelve onward, although it is not specifically a children's book.

On a certain level, the central topic of the first volume is Aziz Nesin's relationship with his mother. At the very beginning of the story, we see her escaping from a fire with her two children and her sewing machine, and the book ends with her death. Readers follow the decline of her health through a series of vignettes. After all, the author saw her only intermittently during the last years of her life, because at that time he was a boarder at the Darüşşafaka School. However, probably due to the twofold pressure under which he found himself, the young Mehmet Nusret during those crisis-ridden months had gotten into the habit of skipping class: first, he could guess that his mother was close to death and, second, the

¹ Aziz Nesin, *Böyle Gelmiş Böyle Gitmez: Otobiyografi* (Istanbul: Düşün Yayınevi, 1969). This is probably a reprint of the first edition, which appeared in 1966. A revised version is *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş Böyle Gitmez: Özyaşam Öyküsü* (The Road: That Is the Way He Has Come, But That Is Not the Way He Is Leaving: An Autobiography) (Istanbul: Nesin Yayınevi, 2014). My hearty thanks to Selim Karahasanoğlu for finding me a copy of the earlier version.

² The second volume, *Böyle Gelmiş Böyle Gitmez II: Yokuşun Başı* (Istanbul: Nesin Yayınevi, 2008) first came out in 1976, and the third one after the author's death: *Böyle Gelmiş Böyle Gitmez III: Yokuş Yukarı* (Istanbul: Aziz Nesin Vakfı, 1996). The second volume has the subtitle *Where the Road Becomes Steep*; and for the third volume the author or his editors have chosen *Climbing the Steep Slope*. The memoirs are available in English translation by Joseph S. Jacobson as *Istanbul Boy: The Autobiography of Aziz Nesin*, parts 1–3 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1977, 1979, 1990), and part 4 (Southmoor Studios, 2000).

³ Partly financed by revenues from real estate donated to the foundation, the children, who come from poor families in non-metropolitan areas, attend state schools. If they pass the university entrance examinations, the foundation provides scholarships for that stage of their education as well. See <https://www.nesinvakfi.org>, accessed 26 September 2020.

boy's very presence at the Darüşşafaka School was irregular, for the latter admitted only fatherless children. Nesin's father, returned home from a long absence that friends and relatives had suspected might well be permanent, told his son not to say anything about his reappearance. After all, keeping the boy in school meant board and lodging supplied by the Darüşşafaka.⁴

As the author emphasizes, among the four persons who determined his future course in life two were teachers. One of them was a friend of his father named Galip, who acted as Nesin's informal tutor when he was very young. At a later stage, the director of the Darüşşafaka School, where the author began his secondary education, played a similar role. Even so, Nesin regarded his father and mother as the principal figures in his early life, and in consequence the present paper focuses on the way in which Nesin's autobiography depicts these two persons. For the social historian of the late Ottoman Empire, Nesin's book is a key source, as it allows the reader at least a glimpse of the lives lived by very poor people.⁵

After discussing the meaning of the term "autobiography" as used by Nesin, we briefly present the author in his role as a biographer. Next, we introduce the salient points of the two biographies at issue, an enterprise that often implies "connecting the dots" between episodes that the author has presented to his readers. In the conclusion, we deal with the manner in which his parents' decisions, as reflected in their biographies, resulted in the solitude that apparently characterized Nesin's childhood. From there, we pass on to the manner in which the depiction of this loneliness became part of the author's "self-fashioning," a major aspect of his book, as in any ego-document.⁶

An Autobiography of the 1960s: Observing and Questioning the Emergence of the Self

The reason for including this autobiography (*yaşam hikayesi*, *özyaşamöyküsü*) from early republican times in a discussion of Ottoman first-person narratives is its relevance to working-class people during the closing years of the Ottoman Empire.⁷ As readily apparent from a scan of autobiographies—and of biographies written by close relatives of the men and women at issue—such texts normally refer to upper-class milieus, with occasional accounts of families struggling to retain at least some of their previous status after the wartime upheavals from 1911 to 1922.⁸ Although Aziz Nesin in the early 1970s lived a middle-class life and was quite wealthy in his later years, his parents in the early 20th century were desperately poor. As we possess only one first-person memoir of a working-class man who for at least part of his life was a denizen of the late Ottoman Empire, any text based on personal observation and reflecting the lives of working people "from the inside" is of great value.

After all, these people struggled to find work, to hold on to their jobs, and if possible to ensure that their sons received an education. Given constant effort and limited literacy, writing about oneself must have seemed a luxury, perhaps even frivolous. However, Aziz Nesin wrote his book when he had left behind the poverty and illiteracy typical of this environment, established himself as a writer, and could be sure that many people, not only in Turkey but abroad as well, would be interested in reading about his early life. In the first chapter of the first volume of *Böyle Gelmiş Böyle Gitmez*, Nesin emphasized that his inspiration simply came from his need to make a living and fulfill his various responsibilities to family and friends. Thus, his writings needed to appeal to the book-buying public, which in the 1960s was still quite small. In his hope for the interest of his readers, both in the short and the long run he was correct. In 2015, twenty years after the author's death, the publisher recorded that nearly 85,000 copies had appeared, and the University of Texas Press had published a translation into English in 1977.⁹

⁴Nesin, *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş*, 389–90.

⁵For attempts to write the biographies of 19th-century slaves, compare with Eve M. Troutt Powell, *Tell This in My Memory: Stories of Enslavement from Egypt, Sudan and the Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

⁶Nesin, *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş*, 494.

⁷Donald Quataert and Yüksel Duman, "A Coal Miner's Life during the Late Ottoman Empire," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (2001): 153–79.

⁸Gülriç Sururi, *Bir An Gelir* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2016) is a revised version of an older memoir, which focuses on people with an Ottoman elite background making their way in theater and film during the early years of the republic.

⁹See note 2 for bibliographical data. For two comments on the high quality of the translation, one anonymous and the other by Kathryn Burrill, see Nesin, *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş*, 503–8. For information on published copies, see the copyright page of this volume.

Aziz Nesin had absolutely no hesitation about defining his book as an autobiography. In the subtitle, he first employed a loanword (*otobiyografi*); in later editions, he switched to a literal translation into modern Turkish (*özyaşamöyküsü*). Likely, the debate about whether autobiography was possible in an environment where community values were strong was of no interest to him at all. In his book, Nesin appeared as a child with spectacularly well-developed powers of observation and memory, combined with considerable introspection. Although it is impossible to tell how much of this introspection happened in the 1920s and how much was later interpretation, it bears remembering that first his parents, and later the author on his own initiative, made great efforts to ensure his separation from the neighborhood boys.¹⁰ It is perfectly reasonable to consider his book an autobiography in the classical sense of the term, in which the author portrays himself as an individual. Admittedly, this individualization occurred during the 1960s, likely not exclusively but at least in part.

It is difficult to establish the history of the text. Given current problems of library access, I have not been able to reread the original 1966 edition, only a reprint from 1969. As the copyright page of this later edition says that the first printing was in 1966 and does not mention any revisions, we can assume for the time being that there had not been any. As for the edition brought out by Aziz Nesin Vakfı, the first printing was in 2006, eleven years after the author's death. Here the copyright page records that between 1966 and 1998 75,000 copies had appeared in thirteen printings. It seems that between 1998 and 2006 no new printings were issued, but after 2006 there was a new one every two years, and sometimes even every year. A number of additional short chapters appear in the later edition, but at present, I do not know whether—and if so when—the author added them, or, alternatively, an editor had access to a file of stories that had remained unpublished in the 1960s. The style of the added chapters resembles that of the older material, and I do not see any reason, political or otherwise, why Nesin or his editor should have left them out in the 1960s. Perhaps the explanation is simple: paper was scarce and expensive in those days.

The Author: What Is in a Name?

As noted, Aziz Nesin was born Mehmed Nusret, son of Abdülaziz. The name Nusret, which means “victory,” alludes to the victory at Çanakkale (Gallipoli) of the Ottoman army in 1915. Nesin experienced the transition from empire to republic as a young boy. His father fought in World War I; he was seven years old when the sultanate ended and nearly eight at the proclamation of the republic in October 1923. At this time, family names were common only among people of some prominence, and most ordinary people identified themselves by their given names and patronymics. In this sense, the family of Nesin's father was exceptional, known by the sobriquet of Topalosmanoğulları despite the poverty of many of its members.¹¹

When choosing a pseudonym under which to publish his writings, Mehmed Nusret adopted the short version of his father's name Abdülaziz; when the latter was an older man, people were in the habit of calling him Aziz Efendi, perhaps in deference to his piety and literacy. Thus, to his readers, Mehmed Nusret became Aziz Nesin. As Nesin had adopted his author's pseudonym as his legal name, the writer's children and grandchildren use it today.¹² Nesin's last name implied a question to himself and to his readers, as literally it means, “What are you?”

Writing the Biographies of the Poor in the Late Ottoman Empire: Hanife Known as İkbâl

Aziz Nesin remained very much aware of having grown up in a poverty-stricken milieu, and he was quite self-conscious because of his great success, not only in comparison with the other boys of the town quarters where his family lived, but even in comparison with fellow students at the Darüşşafaka School, which he attended for about two years.¹³ When commenting on the embarrassment of a school friend who in the early 1960s was wealthy enough to buy a fancy car but got rid of it when realizing how much attention

¹⁰Ibid., 101, 132–40.

¹¹Ibid., 59. The family's other sobriquet was Bardakçioğulları.

¹²For this reason, I mostly refer to the author as Aziz Nesin, although as a child, he was Mehmed Nusret.

¹³Founded in 1863, the Darüşşafaka provided a secondary education of good quality for poor boys who had lost a father; since the 1970s, girls having lost a parent also are eligible.

the vehicle attracted, Nesin commented that in Turkey embarrassments of this kind were usually short-lived.¹⁴ The reader may ask whether this stricture referred to the author himself as well, at least in part.

After all, Aziz Nesin's situation differed dramatically from that of his parents. His mother was illiterate; she had worked as a child servant (*besleme*) for the family of a naval officer and, as was common practice at that time, her employers did not regard it as necessary for her to receive even minimal schooling.¹⁵ Even so, Hanife, renamed İkbāl in the hope of ensuring good fortune to the little girl, must have seen advantages in her new situation; for she had "voted with her feet" when after a short time of service her natal family attempted to take her back to the village. Apparently the backstory was that Hanife's mother had left her father when the latter took a second wife, and when the newcomer had children of her own the little girl apparently felt that conditions at home were worse than those of a servant in a strange family.¹⁶ If the second wife of Nesin's maternal grandfather, whom the author interviewed as an old woman in the 1950s, remembered the story correctly, Hanife ran off to rejoin her employer's family, and this escape was the one major decision in her life that she took completely on her own initiative.

We do not know whether Hanife İkbāl told part of her life story to her son, or whether Nesin reconstructed her life from other sources, almost all of them oral. Likely, the reminiscences of his father were important, but Nesin used his critical sense when evaluating them. He realized that although his father deeply loved his mother, he had abandoned her when she needed him most. Furthermore, when working on his autobiography, Aziz Nesin had learned part of the "family tradition" as remembered in the 1950s; it was probably as inexact as family traditions usually are.¹⁷ Moreover, during the last years of his mother's life, when his father very often abandoned his family, Hanife İkbāl's former employers aided both mother and son, and as a child in primary school, Nesin was a frequent guest with them at meal times. Although the author does not say that members of this family gave him a novel perspective on his mother's history, this is a likely assumption.

As for his mother's own memories of her childhood, she may not have had many opportunities to narrate them. For by the time Nesin was old enough to place these stories in their contexts, she was already very ill with tuberculosis and spent much of her time in hospitals, where Nesin had only limited access. Hanife İkbāl and everyone else in contact with the family worried that her young son might catch the disease. However, given his highly developed powers of observation even as a child, the author must have noticed some events that the family tried to keep from him. He noted that after a beating from her husband (which, as Nesin assured his readers and perhaps himself, had happened only twice in her life) the unfortunate woman suffered a miscarriage.¹⁸

Hanife İkbāl, born about 1900 in the mountain village of Annaç in the province of Ordu on the Black Sea, left few documentary traces. The author recorded that for an official procedure, she once needed to have her photograph taken, which he later tried to track down without success. Apparently there was no other picture, as her husband considered taking photographs a sin. As the author expressed in the poem serving as an epigraph to his autobiography, his mother had never gone swimming, although for much of the time she lived on Heybeliada, one of the Princes' Islands, at that time already a favorite among Istanbul vacationers. Nor had she ever been to the theater or to the cinema, both popular among the inhabitants of the capital in the 1920s, or even lived in a house with running water or electricity.¹⁹

Despite the difficulty of producing a "verbal portrait" under these conditions, Aziz Nesin ascribes some definite attitudes and opinions to the young woman, some of them emotional and others strongly

¹⁴Nesin, *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş*, 32–33.

¹⁵Nazan Maksudyan, "Foster-Daughter or Servant, Charity or Abuse: *Beslemes* in the Late Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 21, no. 4 (2008): 488–512; Yahya Araz and İrfan Kokdaş, "In between Market and Charity: Child Domestic Work and Changing Labor Relations in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Istanbul," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 97 (2020): 81–108.

¹⁶Apparently the child's original name was Hanife Havva; the author has not recorded her patronymic.

¹⁷When the actress Şirin Devrim wrote the story of her family, with a special emphasis on her mother, the painter Fahrünnisa Zeyd, she stressed that she often reported family traditions whose accuracy she could not guarantee; *A Turkish Tapestry: The Shakers of Istanbul* (London: Quartet Books, 1994).

¹⁸Nesin, *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş*, 48, 51.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 5.

“modernist.” If the author had judged the situation right, Hanife İkbāl treasured the small gold coin that her husband had given to her at their wedding, and was much disappointed when Abdülaziz Efendi took it back and lent it to one of his friends.²⁰ Although Abdülaziz later gave her another such coin, she made it clear that for her the promise of love and happiness had been attached to this particular item and no other; perhaps she knew by the time of receiving the substitute that her hopes had been mostly in vain. On a more practical level, Hanife İkbāl resented her husband’s growing a beard and wearing a turban and gown suitable for a religious scholar; her feelings may have intensified because she had to sew the garment.²¹ Nesin did not elaborate, but Hanife İkbāl, he himself, or perhaps the two of them, realized that Aziz Efendi did not have the training to be a religious scholar, so that his posing as one was quite unrealistic.

At the same time, Hanife apparently disapproved of her husband’s interest in the occult, with the aid of which the latter hoped to find buried treasure. As Nesin has related, in his futile searches Aziz Efendi abandoned his family for months on end, so mother and son had very practical reasons to reject this obsession.

More importantly for the author’s future, Hanife İkbāl wanted her son to have recognized schooling in government institutions. When expressing her intention to send the boy to a state school, Nesin recounts that she took a certain risk, as quite possibly her husband would beat her for advocating something that in his own perspective was equivalent to becoming a Christian (*tanassur*).²² In addition, we may wonder whether her strenuous objection against her husband’s project of making the boy a madrasa student (*softa*) was at least partly due to Nesin’s editing or even reformulation of her words. At the same time, when reading this chapter, the reader may suspect that perhaps Abdülaziz had beaten his wife more than just two times in his life. It is noteworthy too that when referring to wife beating the author suddenly abandons the combined perspective of “adult narrator and young hero” that characterizes the entire story. For a brief moment, the adult author of the 1960s remains alone on stage, commenting that at the time of writing, there were still “animals” (*hayvanlar*) even among educated people and those in high places, who followed an unfortunately long-established tradition and did not hesitate to beat their spouses.²³

Writing the Biographies of the Poor in the Late Ottoman Empire: Abdülaziz

At an unknown date, but probably about 1880, Aziz Nesin’s father was born in a Black Sea village whose male inhabitants routinely came to Istanbul to work as gardeners. He was part of the centuries-old serial migration that brought provincials to Istanbul. As young men, Albanians, Greeks from present-day Central Greece, Muslim Turks from the Black Sea, Muslims and Christians from the region of Kayseri, Kurds and Armenians from Eastern Anatolia, as well as many others flocked to Istanbul, where they worked in trades in which people from their home regions already had established a presence. Scholars have shown the existence of this pattern already in the 18th century, and it may well be much older.²⁴

Abdülaziz began his working life in the art nouveau villa of the Egyptian princesses that today houses the Egyptian Consulate in Istanbul, where he received some instruction.²⁵ Abdülaziz was literate in the Arabic alphabet. Aziz Nesin commented that throughout his life his father remained self-conscious about his lack of education and sometimes used “learned” words (*lügat paralamaya çok düşkünmüş*) that he badly mispronounced.²⁶ When returning to his village as a teenager, Abdülaziz’s relatives married him

²⁰Ibid., 193.

²¹Ibid., 88.

²²Ibid., 46–47.

²³Ibid., 48.

²⁴Suraiya Faroqhi, “Migration into Eighteenth-Century ‘Greater Istanbul’ as Reflected in the Kadi Registers of Eyüp,” *Turcica*, 30 (1998): 163–83; Cengiz Kırılı, “A Profile of the Labor Force in Early Nineteenth-Century Istanbul,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (2001): 125–40; Nina Ergin, “The Albanian Tellak Connection: Labor Migration to the Hammams of Eighteenth-Century Istanbul, Based on the 1752 İstanbul Hammamları Defteri,” *Turcica*, 43 (2011 [2012]): 231–56.

²⁵Nesin, *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş*, 61.

²⁶Ibid., 63. One of Abdülaziz’s favorites was *dehşetli* (terrible), which he mispronounced as *devşetli*. The term *devletli*, probably the source of the confusion, was a title used for high-ranking persons.

to a local girl, whom he soon repudiated. Before his marriage to Hanife İkbāl, who was almost twenty years his junior, Abdülaziz had been married four times, one of these unions barely outlasting the wedding night.²⁷

Aziz Nesin does not say much about what motivated Salih Bey, the officer in command of the naval high school on Heybeliada, to arrange a marriage between Abdülaziz Efendi and Hanife İkbāl, the child servant he once had brought back from his Black Sea posting. Apart from his marital adventures, Abdülaziz had been in serious trouble for insubordination while in the military. After discharging him from the army, probably well before the Italian-Ottoman war over Tripolitania (1911–12), the authorities had banished the ex-soldier to the deserts of Fezzan, today in Libya, a penal posting for Ottoman soldiers and officials alike.²⁸ Abdülaziz Efendi's four marriages may not have been on record, but Salih Bey surely knew about his banishment. Nesin does not give us a date for the wedding of his parents, but it probably took place during the Balkan Wars (1912–13). If so, Salih Bey knew that he soon would see active service and may have wished to rid his household of responsibility for Hanife İkbāl. In addition, we may surmise that much later, in the 1920s, Salih Bey felt that he had made a bad choice, as Abdülaziz Efendi had been a poor provider for his family. Perhaps for that reason, the director of the naval school arranged for the acceptance of Aziz Nesin into the Darüşşafaka, although it was by no means clear that his father was dead; in fact, as we have learned, the latter turned up again some time later.²⁹

Aziz Nesin managed to combine a profound respect and sympathy for his father's person with a profound disapproval of the older man's opinions. At one point, the author wrote that his father always had lived in worlds that had ceased to exist some two hundred years earlier.³⁰ Abdülaziz Efendi was profoundly hostile not only to the republic but even, as noted, to the secular schools instituted in the late Ottoman Empire; or at least that was his opinion during his earlier years. We cannot evaluate whether or to what extent Hanife İkbāl's insistence was instrumental in Aziz Nesin's entry into a state primary school. However, the knowledgeable dervish Galip Efendi, a close friend of Abdülaziz, clearly was a driving force as well. Aziz Nesin described Galip as immensely knowledgeable in religious and secular studies, but unable to secure steady employment at a reasonable salary.³¹ For some time, Galip Efendi worked in a factory, where he was miserable, and he probably convinced Abdülaziz that his son would suffer a similar fate unless he acquired the diplomas now required for a decent job.

Loneliness and Self-Fashioning

Among very poor people, the road to education is a lonely one, and loneliness is a major feature of Aziz Nesin's childhood story. After all, the author had no brothers, one sister died in infancy, and the other one, probably much younger than the author, only appeared briefly when Nesin mentioned her self-sacrificing role as a nurse to her mother during the last weeks of the latter's life.³² Presumably, the author's absence at the Darüşşafaka School prevented any closeness between the siblings. Furthermore, the conscious separation of the young boy from the milieu in which he grew up, which his parents had initiated and Nesin later adopted as his own mode of living, meant that he had few friends, and he was liable to lose even those that seemed about to get close.³³ A typical case was the story of a boy, whose name remained unrecorded, with whom the author had shared the excitement of passing the first stage of the entrance examination to the Darüşşafaka. However, the budding companionship ended a short while later, when the other boy failed to take the last hurdle before admission, a lottery among the candidates who had been successful in the examination: visibly, chance had as great a role in the selection process as knowledge and intelligence did. Nesin ended the story with the

²⁷Ibid., 63.

²⁸Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika: "Orientalism *alla turca*: Late 19th /Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim 'Outback,'" *Die Welt des Islams* 40, no. 2 (2000): 141–95.

²⁹Nesin, *Yol: Böyle Gelmiş*, 389–91.

³⁰Ibid., 51.

³¹Ibid., 147–50.

³²Ibid., 475.

³³Ibid., 352–55; see 414–15 for the disappointing end of another gifted boy.

disappointed potential friend walking away without looking back, and he could say only, “I do not know, was he able to pursue his studies?”³⁴

Any autobiography, and any ego-document, has the self-fashioning of the author as a major feature. In this case, we see that during the years covered by the first volume of his autobiography, the author’s ties to the people most important to him as a child loosen or even dissolve entirely. The lessons from Galip Efendi recede into the past, as both teacher and student feel that the joy has gone out of the experience, and the former dervish is now a simple factory worker cut off from his milieu, a discarded remnant of a bygone era. As for any interaction with the director of the Darüşşafaka School, for whom the young boy had felt a profound reverence, Nesin knew that the deception concerning his father’s supposed death could not continue for much longer, and that he would leave the Darüşşafaka behind. Moreover, the author had suffered the temporary loss of his father and, at the end of this volume, the permanent loss of his mother as well.

Even so, we encounter the young Nesin, now close to adolescence, “pulling himself together” (*ne yapıp edip okumalıydım*) and pursuing his education despite the slew of discouraging problems that he had encountered.³⁵ Readers of Charles Dickens’s *David Copperfield* may see a passing resemblance between the two figures.³⁶

³⁴Ibid., 355.

³⁵See *ibid.*, 494–95, for some of the last words of Hanife İkbāl, “Gözlerim açık ölmüyorum” (I die without major worries), because she believes that her son is in school. Although the boy assumes that the Darüşşafaka teachers will not take him back after his repeated absences, this scene motivates him to pursue his studies, against all odds.

³⁶Not being a literary historian, my inspiration comes from “Literary Devices: Definition and Examples of Literary Terms” (<https://literarydevices.net/bildungsroman>, accessed 27 September 2020); and Sakchai Lunlaporn, “David Copperfield and the Bildungsroman: Their Contribution to Charles Dickens’s Reputation,” *Manusya: Journal of Humanities Regular* 18, no. 1 (2015): 58–72, <http://www.arts.chula.ac.th/~manusya/journal/index.php/manusya/issue/view/11>.