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THE CHILD IN THE ORHAN KEMAL'S OUTPUT
(set against the background of his literary development from socialist
realism to the psychological novel)

Orhan K e m a l (lit. Mehmed Raşid Ögütçü, 1914-1970) is the main representative of the realistic trend in Turkish literature. His vast literary work - thirty eight volumes of short stories and novels - is vivid and full of compassionate involvement by the writer in the problems of his heroes. The favourite heroes of Orhan Kemal are a worker, a poor craftsman, a modest clerk and a simple and overworked woman. By showing the daily toil, honour and honesty of these people, Orhan Kemal contrasts their values with the hypocrisy and cruelty of those who subordinate them - employers, bosses and rural landlords. The author describes his heroes and their lives with optimism and a deep sympathy. This is underlined by his biographer Nurer U ğ u r l u who wrote that, "there is nothing but patriotism and deep sympathy with the people in the output of Orhan Kemal"¹ and also by C. R a t h b u n who writes: "For the most part fiction shows the so-called 'little man' with sympathy and often humor; his short humorous dialogues are often set against a background of bitter hardship./.../ Orhan Kemal's characters express more optimism than, for example, the characters in Kemal T a h i r's work. No matter how exploited or deceived, Orhan Kemal's 'little man' is left with his honor and his hope for the future."² Orhan Kemal himself says: "I am a writer who loves the people."³

The following short biography of the writer will throw light on the genesis and character of his output. It should also explain why these and not any

other social strata mostly appear on the pages of his works.

Although he belonged to a rich family (his father, Abdülkadir Kemâli Bey, was a landowner, attorney and representative to the Great Assembly), fate did not save him from hardness in life. Undoubtedly the events of World War I and the occupation had stamped the psyche of the future writer. An especially significant event in his life was emigration to Syria in 1931, necessitated by his father's need to escape for actively opposing the government. First in Syria and then in Lebanon the young immigrant survived a year full of humiliation. He discovered the tragedy of unemployment, hunger, cold, helplessness in the face of illness and the bitterness of begging.⁴

After returning to Turkey in 1932, when crisis had reached its peak, he tried to finish school while working in the spinning factories of Adana. However, during those years he was mostly unemployed.⁵ He spent a few years in prison for his leftist ideas, sharing for some time a cell with Nazım Hikmet.⁶ During his imprisonment (1938-1943) he started to write: first poems, and soon, short stories. Years later he would say: "Prison was for me a kind of university. It was there where my literary talent was discovered and developed."⁷ He passed through a pattern of development similar to many of the greatest Turkish realists: from juvenile poetry, through short stories to the highest glory and skill in novels. The same was true of Kemal Tahir, Demir, Orhan Hançerlioğlu, Reşat Enis Aygün, İlhan Tarus and Samim Kocagöz. As the authors of Historia Literatury Turckiej write, the process of passing from short story to novel was a natural phenomenon in the development of realism. Greater interest of readers in social problems and their political, economic, social and psychological aspects forced the authors to change their literary medium, as the short story was not able to cover so many topics.⁸ He was (and still is) a widely read writer, as a large quantity of his works prove. Some of his novels, e.g. Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde, El Kızı, Suclu and the collection of short stories Ekmek Kavgası were edited in the eighties for the ninth time, which is a great deal, in terms of contemporary literature. Although he wrote and edited extensively, all through his life he suffered material hardships and troubles with supporting his family of five, because - as Ş. Aktaş writes - he sold his works to editors dirt-cheap and could never ask for more money.⁹ He was often unemployed and in search of a job. It was only in the sixties that he could survive by writing: making screen plays and quickly editing new

books. He wrote only about what he had seen himself. He loved to walk down the streets of the poor part of the city and to watch the lives of the people he loved most: overworked, simple citizens of the Istanbul quarters, Fener and Cibali. He died inopportunely in 1970, at the height of his popularity.¹⁰

The topic of the present work originates from the reading of Orhan Kemal's complete works. Reading them one comes to the conclusion that the writer "evolves" through the thirty years of his creativity. This is shown by his slow passing from the position of a leftist critic of social relations to the author of short stories and novels of a moral type - stripped of strong social themes for the benefit of character analysis. The turning point must be considered to be the year 1964 - the year of silence, when Orhan Kemal did not publish any books. Bir Filiz Vardı, the book which may have been written then (ed. 1965) opens a new period in his works.

The output of Orhan Kemal covers a wide scope of Turkish society with many human types and problems. For this paper only one topic has been selected - "the child" - a vast and most suggestive topic appropriate for illustrating the thesis of the writer's evolution.¹¹ The English translations not being available, the author of the paper uses her own translations from the Turkish originals (with the exception of two quotations from C. Rathbun's The Village in the Turkish Novel and Short Story. The titles of the collections of short stories are given between parentheses ().

The fate of the child is woven into the main motif of Orhan Kemal's output - the struggle to survive. It is significant that the first collection of short stories is entitled Ekmek Kavgası (Struggle for Bread). This title became the symbol for Orhan Kemal's later output. The writer describes the struggle in a very clear way. Sometimes it is hopeless; in suburb slums, in factories giving hunger wages for exhausting work, in alcoholic families, in dark lanes where little girls sell themselves to passers-by for a penny or in the streets where little beggars ask for mercy.

Unemployment.

The fate of the little heroes is often influenced by the horrible social phenomenon of unemployment. It is the most frequent topic of his works of the forties and fifties. In many of them children appear. The

tragedy of unemployment touches the young heroes of the short stories: Kitap Satmağa Dair (from the collection Ekmek Kavgası), Dönüş (Ekmek Kavgası), Korku (Kardes Payı), Nermin (Arka Sokak). The first two, like many other of Orhan Kemal's short stories, are of the recollective type. The family described here reminds the writer's own family in the forties - the period when Orhan Kemal suffered his greatest financial hardships and frequent unemployment. The short story Korku describes in a masterful way, the panic and fear of loosing one's job. The title heroine of Nermin is a young mother who decides to take a job in order to support her child and unemployed husband. A similar motif can be found in the short story Dönüş and the autobiographical novel Dünya Evi whose heroine (the prototype was the writer's wife) agrees to harvest cotton without her proud husband's knowledge. The cruelty of unemployment is described in the novel Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde. Long unemployment led rural workers to the edge of poverty:

Aç çocukların feryadı göğe yükselir. Önemli değildir. Peygamberler Allah adına sabır getirmişler ya, hiç önemli değildir aç çocukların göklere yükselen feryadı. Ölsem bile ne? Öte dünya vardır, birer kuş gibi uçacaklardır Cennet-i âlâ'ya. Cennet-i âlâ'da yağdan, baldan dağlar, sütten ırmaklar.¹² [The cries of the hungry children reach the sky. It's unimportant. The Prophets brought patience, in God's name, so it is not at all important that hungry children's cries reach the sky. What even if they die? There is the other world, they will fly to paradise like birds. In paradise, there are mountains of butter and honey, rivers of milk.]

It is noteworthy that unemployment and the consequent poverty are the leading motifs of most of Orhan Kemal's works of the forties and fifties. Later, the motif of unemployment seldom appears. We can find it in only two of the short stories: İssiz (İssiz) and its changed version Beye Kapıyı Göster, edited in the collection Grev in 1968. They tell us about the illusory hope of the unemployed, this being the attempt to find a job through connections.

The problem of unemployment holds a very serious place in the first period of Orhan Kemal's works. It is considered often and with poignancy. In the second period it becomes a marginal problem. As the present paper

will show, basic social problems depicted strongly in the first period (e.g. unemployment, orphanhood, hard child labour and prostitution) are replaced by new, less painful topics.

Education.

Orhan Kemal frequently examines the problem of learning (or lack of learning). Many young heroes acquire knowledge through the effort and selfsacrifice of the whole family. We find the most relevant example of such a family situation in one of Orhan Kemal's best novels, Murtaza.¹³ In the main hero's family of eight, everything is subordinated to the only goal - the education of the two oldest children. The mother is a factory worker (for twelve hours a day), even though the youngest child is only a few months old. Two younger sisters (twelve and thirteen years old) also work very hard in a factory all day. In one of the author's earliest short stories - Dilekçe (Sarhoslar) a similar subordination of all goals to the child's education is depicted. In order to educate the only son, the parents give everything. They even decide to live in separation. The father works in the baths, sleeping and eating there. For this, he needs no money for himself, nor clothes and shoes. What does he need shoes for if he does not leave the baths? A similar topic appears in the novels Suclu and Sokakların Cocuğu. A young Greek from Istanbul, Kostî, is in the background but he appears in the action of both novels and engages the sympathy of the reader more than the hero, who lacks persistence in an honest struggle to survive. After his father's death, Kostî leaves the school he liked very much and becomes a peddler in order to help his elder sister continue her education. In the later period of Orhan Kemal's output we do not find the motif of such drastic family sacrifice for a child's education.

Orhan Kemal often writes about children having no admittance to education and does it with great compassion. This proves the point that the writer's plots are strictly connected to his own experience, that is, the fatal entanglement in political events and the subsequent emigration to Syria which did not allow him to finish grammar school. Later on, his lack of education closed the doors of many institutions where he tried to find a job. Therefore one finds in his work such a deep commitment to the possibility of education for children.

The problem is looked at more frequently in the early stages of his output. In the short story Ayşe ile Fatma (Çamaşırcının Kızı) there are two little girls, prison guards' daughters. They pass entire days in prison making friends with the prisoners (autobiographical features). The parents

are too poor to send their daughters to school. The hero of the short story Harika Cocuk (Arka Sokak) leaves school after his mother's death to support his younger brothers as their alcoholic father makes no effort to help them. Arslan Tomson (Kardeş Payı) is a brief story of a boy who takes on the burden of family support and faces the family's economic hardships. Leaving his beloved school he becomes a peddler (such peddlers are frequent guests among the pages of Orhan Kemal's works). Necati (Kardeş Payı) is a short story from the same collection. The title hero, a young boy, is an orphan and earns his livelihood at the prison. He cannot go to school, but in his free time he reads everything he can get his hands on. Reading is his passion. Can Sıkıntısı (Grev) depicts an episode common to numerous families. The eldest son - an extremely talented pupil - will probably have to leave school in order to earn money. The young hero of the short story Fırlama (Dünyada Harp Vardı) leaves school after the fifth grade to earn money for further education. He works hard for a whole year and saves his money. The hero of the novels Suclu and Sokakların Cocuğu also faces the necessity of leaving school when his stepmother forces him to find a job. Like many of Orhan Kemal's heroes, he becomes a peddler.

The motif of leaving school in order to take job appears later only twice: in the short story Önce Ekmek (Önce Ekmek) and in the novel Kötü Yol. The short story heroine is a very talented girl who leaves school under the pressure of her alcoholic father. With great sorrow the girl leaves her dreams of medicine and becomes a factory worker. She does it only to help her overworked mother who is supporting the family. In reading this short story one is led to believe that the same motif of leaving school has one background in earlier works and another in later output. In the sixties the author writes about the same situations of poverty that are found in his earlier works, but now poverty no longer necessitates leaving school "for bread" as it does in the short stories Harika Cocuk, Arslan Tomson, Fırlama. The author dwells longer on a description of the girl's hesitation to leave school when her dreams are so strong. In the novel Kötü Yol we can find similar hesitation in a boy who is the best pupil of his class. İhsan, for five years after father's death, watches with a torn his mother, as she washes the clothes of other people day and night.

Bir sabah annesi el çamaşırını leğeni başında boş bir
çuval gibi bayılınca, ortaokulun son sınıfında boş verdi
öğrenime, iş buldu. Ekmekti, önce ekmekti. Sonra ötekiler.¹⁴

[When one day his mother fell like an empty bag at the

wash basin, he left the last grade of grammar school and
found himself job. Bread. Bread was the most important.
And later on everything else.]

In summary, the problem of education (besides the problem of hard work and that of unemployment) is the most frequent in the first stage of Orhan Kemal's output. Two aspects of this topic are to be stressed. The first is the problem of the child being educated with the whole family's support. Here one sees self sacrifice of the family. Sometimes the parents have to make the painful decision as to which one of the children will study and which one will have to work (see Murtaza). The second aspect is the necessity of leaving school due to the lack of the financial support needed for the child to continue its education.

Orphanhood.

Among the pages of Orhan Kemal's early writings, the painful social phenomenon of orphanhood is a frequent guest. In the short story Mavi Esarp (Çamaşırcının Kızı) we meet an infirm, old woman and three of her grandchildren - orphans. In the short story Bir Ölüye Dair (Ekmek Kavgası) we find another three orphans, whose future seems bleak. Their mother hung herself in poverty and despair and their father is in the army. In the novels Suclu and Sokakların Cocuğu we meet a thirteen -year -old Gypsy orphan. She is looked after by an old Gypsy woman who wants to send her into prostitution. The heroine of the novelette Küçük is an orphan as well. Left by her fiancé, she strays from morality. The tragedy of orphanhood is also shared by a little Gregorian girl named Virjin (autobiographical novel Baba Evi). She will probably go astray, as after her mother's death, she is left to the care of a cheap prostitute from the suburb slums. The hero of the short story Necati is also an orphan (see chapter Education).

In the later output of Orhan Kemal the topic of orphanhood appears only once. The novel Sokaklardan Bir Kız is the complicated and unrealistic story of a wandering actor and actress's daughter. Due to a tragic coincidence the girl is left alone and ends up in her relatives' home where a real tragedy begins for the orphan. Yet after several incredible events, the girl finds her happiness. It is a novel typical of the late period in Orhan Kemal's output: lacking critics of social relations, yet with many moral problems (maybe even too many for one novel: marital conflicts,

unfaithfulness, a child left by its mother, the fate of an orphan staying with strangers, procurement, murder of a wife's lover and homicide in one's own defense).

The problem of orphanhood is typical of the early stage of Orhan Kemal's output. It appears alongside other painful problems found in Turkish society. In the second period of his works, these poignant problems give way to other, softer topics, mainly of an ethical sort.

Child labour.

In the first period of Orhan Kemal's output we meet the startling description of child labour very often. The title heroine of the short story Sevinc (Çamasırcının Kızı) is forced into hard labour by her alcoholic parents. The girl amuses the passengers of an Istanbul ship by her acrobatic tricks. She has only one eye - having lost the other at the hands of her drunken father. The girl remembers her stay at the hospital as the happiest time in her life... Everybody loved her there so much... The twelve-year-old hero of the short story Harika Çocuk (Arka Sokak) must work hard to support his siblings. We find an alarming picture of destructive child labour in the short story Uyku (Ekmek Kavgası). Factory workers, including young boys, are asked if they could stay at work until the next morning, as the factory has received a big order. All accept, as the unemployed crowd before the gate... Boys stagger with hunger and lack of sleep and hurt themselves at the machines... Child labour is depicted in the novel Cemile, the plot of which illustrates Adana in the thirties (the capital city of the region famous for its fertile soil and cotton fields). In this factory discipline and terror reign, yet the workers are afraid to lose their precious jobs, eagerly anticipated by the unemployed multitudes behind the gate: crowds of children and old men. The writer describes work at the cotton factory eleven years later in the novel Kanlı Topraklar. The plot of this novel, as in Cemile, takes place in the region of Adana in 1934. These two novels are similar in their illustrations of exhausting work at the cotton cleaning machines and their descriptions of the feudal relations between employers and employees. The second novel also depicts the tragic situation of peasants, entirely due to the local "aga", living in extreme poverty in the most fertile region of Turkey. In that novel, placed between the two periods of Orhan Kemal's output, the problems of morality which he previously only sketched, such as: being forced into crime, marital dishonesty, agitating the peasants for the purpose of making

a profit, all they appear in full sharpness. The two daughters of the title hero of the novel Murtaza also work at the cotton cleaning machine. They are twelve and thirteen years old, pale, sleepy-eyed, and hard work from dawn until dusk has taken their appetites and smiles. Thirteen-year-old Cennet from the short story Kel Tahir (Arka Sokak) suddenly becomes the head of the family when her father kills her mother and is sent to prison. The girl must work hard at the factory and takes on all of the household responsibilities.

In the later period of Orhan Kemal's output we do not find such a startling descriptions of child labour.

Beggary.

A child sometimes earns its livelihood not through work, but by begging. We meet this phenomenon only in Orhan Kemal's early writings. It is through begging, that a young cripple, the hero of the short story Propagandacı (Ekmek Kavgası) - earns his livelihood. We also find an incident of child beggary in the short story Teber Celik'in Karısı (Ekmek Kavgası). Little Kasim is only four, yet from early morning he peddles around his quarter and begs, as there is no food at home.

Child harlotry.

The theme of harlotry of children and young girls appears occasionally in the early stage of Orhan Kemal's output. In the short story İki Kız (Çamasırcının Kızı) the author describes his meeting with young, eight or nine-year-old prostitutes. In the autobiographical novel Baba Evi we meet an eleven-year-old orphan named Virjin. After her mother's death she has found shelter in a shack of the suburban slums of Beirut. The shack is divided into two parts by a rag. The girl stays on one side and her guardian who is a prostitute, "works" on the other side... Young Virjin will probably follow in her suit... The novelette Küçükük is an account of the debasement of a young girl's morality. In the sequel novels Suçlu, Sokakların Cocuğu the "work" of an old Gypsy woman is depicted. She wanders from inn to inn with a group of musicians and three girls, the youngest of which is twelve years old. When they come to an inn she orders the girls to dance while she looks for their clients.

In the later works of the author we do not meet the problem of child harlotry. The second period of his output is free from such drastic social phenomena.

The country child.

Country life is not a leitmotif in Orhan Kemal's output, as it is in the writings of the two other "greats" of Turkish realism (Yaşar Kemal and Kemal Tahir Demir), and the problems of country life are depicted mainly in the theme of the "exodus" of poor peasants to cities, where they join the working class. C.R a t h b u n writes: "In fact, the villager as a member of the urban lower classes is one of his most frequent portrayals in his stories."¹⁵ Yet there are some fragments in Orhan Kemal's writings where the action takes place in the country. Doğum (İssiz) is a short story from the later period. Here the case of a Kurdish peasant woman named Gulizar is related. Working until the last moment, Gulizar finally goes to a deserted place - a ditch full of lizards under the hot sun and in front of a huge hungry dog - to deliver her fourth baby. In the short story Ayşe Hoca (Sarhoşlar) the author describes the problem of the difference existing between the education and upbringing of children in the country and children in the city. In the short stories Recep (Çamasırcının Kızı) and Cocuk Ali (EkmeK Kavgası) he depicts warmly and heartily the country boys who get sent to prison. The short story Kamyonda (Sarhoşlar) is a touching account of a little country girl's love for her deathly ill mother, whom she does not want to leave for a promise of wealthy life.

Kacak is the last of Orhan Kemal's novels. The main characters are a mother and her little son. The novel attracts attention because of its contrast to the earlier novels Vukuat Var and Hanımın Ciftliği, although their plots are similar. The first of the novels (Vukuat Var) explores the most abased conditions of the workers in Adana and has its continuation in Hanımın Ciftliği where the action shifts to the country, shaken by bloody discord. The action of Kacak is developed in an entirely different way. Here the author forsakes criticism of social relations and relates the perplexities of a young woman. The woman is left by her husband and waits for him for seven years, finally to accept another man. In the second scene of this psychologically attractive novel, the reader observes a seven-year-old boy who misses the father he has never met. The child is sad, as are the children of Orhan Kemal's early works. However his sorrow does not come from poverty, hunger, lack of education or the necessity of earning a livelihood. His sorrow comes from the longing for a father and envy of his peers whose fathers buy them toys.

Country motifs are rare in Orhan Kemal's output. Yet the country themes pass through the same changes as the city themes. A good example is

the novel Kacak, the style and contents of which are distinct from the style and contents typical of social realism.

Marriage of young girls.

When speaking of Turkish village life one cannot ignore the problem of young marriages. Such cases still happen very often. Young girls, sometimes still children, must become women and mothers very quickly.

Bu kızlarda çoğu, daha memeleri kabarmadan gebe kalırlar.

Doğurur, anne olur, gene gebe kalır, gene doğurur, gene gebe, gene doğum. Sonunda ya tanınmayacak kadar çirkinleşir, ya da yeni dostlar ardında koşan kocalarının tekmesiyle elden ele dolaşır. En sonunda da babaları yaşında birinin kahrını çekmek zorunda kalırlar. İçlerinde kerhanelere düşenler de olur. Düşmiyenlerse, kimbilir hangi pamuk tarlasında çapa çapalarken, sıtma ya da güneş çarpmasından, bir deri bir kemik, genç yaşlarında ölür giderler.¹⁶ [Many of these girls are pregnant before their breasts develop. They give birth, become mothers, get pregnant again, give birth again, pregnant again, birth again. In the end they become unrecognizably ugly, or they are passed around by their husbands, who are chasing new loves; in the end they have to put up with domineering old men their fathers' age. Some among them end up in brothels. The rest of them die young from malaria or sunstroke, worn out from working on some cotton field.]

In the short story EkmeK, Sabun ve Ask (EkmeK Kavgası), one of the recollective prison stories, we find the account of a fourteen-year-old girl forced into marriage. The girl, unhappy in marriage and evicted from home by her husband, must walk the streets in order to survive. This, in turn, leads to her imprisonment.

Peasant migration to cities.

The predominant topic of Orhan Kemal's output in the fifties and early sixties is the migration of peasants from the country to the cities. There are many reasons why the peasants leave their villages and go to the cities. The most important reason is lack of land. The poorest country

families try to change their fate this way. C. R a t h b u n writes: "For the villager, making his way in the world outside his village by becoming a skilled laborer is one answer to the problems of landlessness and poverty in the village."¹⁷ The heroes of many of Orhan Kemal's short stories about workers are just such requalified peasants, shown in a warm and sympathetic way. The problems of migration and the awkward adaptation of country people to city life are reflected in the novel Gurbet Kusları. The scene of this novel, written in 1962, is Istanbul in the fifties, among the immigrant peasants from Anatolia. Orhan Kemal as a witness to the immigrants' assimilation in Istanbul,¹⁸ depicts in detail the problems of the peasants' adaptation to new conditions of life and work. In a very drastic way he presents the matter of illegal slums ("gecekondü"). The novel is ended by a description of the destruction of such a settlement. Before crying women and children a group of watchmen levels the houses to such a degree that not even the materials they were built with could be reused.

The topic of peasants' migration to cities occurs in Orhan Kemal's output written during the climax of this phenomenon, i.e. in fifties and early sixties. It was the time of the prime minister Menderes, a time of prosperity for the urban middle class and rapid, sometimes uncontrolled city expansion. Unnumbered building lots and factories needed many hands, which encouraged the mass migration of the poor from Anatolia to Istanbul. The novel Gurbet Kusları was written after Menderes's dismissal, so the author could afford to make scathing criticisms of the government. The critique touches first of all upon the social policy towards the immigrants (employment under very bad conditions, lack of housing, the destruction of the "gecekondü" slums). The author criticizes wanton destruction of Istanbul's old buildings in order to build modern structures in their place.

Alcoholism.

Alcoholism is a very frequent theme among the pages of Orhan Kemal's early writings (maybe even too frequent, considering the rareness of this phenomenon in Turkish society. However it may indicate the significance the author saw in this addiction and its influence on society, especially when found among youth). In his output of forties and fifties alcoholism is shown as a fatal addiction ruinous of family life and the happiness of children, and degrading people to the depths of poverty. The short story

Sevinc (Camasırcının Kızı) presents a picture of the extreme depravation of parents unable to work because of their deplorable habit. The short story Sarhoslar (Sarhoslar) depicts a father of large and poor family who drinks his money away. The novels Suclu and Sokakların Cocuğu are a sharp attack on drinking and cruelty to the family. A very popular novel El Kızı from the year 1960, links social realism and moral literature, with prevailing moral elements. Judging by the large number of editions (nine in the period of 1960-1985), it must be a book, that Turkish readers like. Yet for a European reader, the plot is not to be acceptable: entangled motifs, unrealistically incredible incidents and cultural features of the characters which are perhaps difficult to accept (in particular, the mentality of the title heroine, whose irritating character takes away the pleasure of reading). For this paper, the novel is important for the character of one of the main heroes - a little child. The novel is one of the author's rare works that show a reach strata of society. One of the episodes depicts fatal destiny of a divorced mother forced to leave home without her child. There are some other heroines in Orhan Kemal's writings who, having lost their homes, must walk the streets to survive. From being the wife of a wealthy attorney she becomes a prostitute and is in turn imprisoned. She drowns her longing for her child in alcohol until the end of her short life...

In Orhan Kemal's later output, the influence of alcohol on the fate of the young people is marked in the short story Önce Ekmek (Önce Ekmek) and the novel Bir Filiz Vardı. In both, an alcoholic father tries to force his daughter to abide by his will and wants to decide her fate. He does not consider what could benefit her but only his own desires.

The problem of alcoholism clearly appears more often in the first period of Orhan Kemal's output. There it is depicted poignantly and is strongly criticised. In the second period the problem appears more seldomly and in a moderate manner, without drastic scenes and fatal incidents. The problem of alcoholism in Turkey certainly did not diminish with the passing of time. On the contrary, one could even predict its increase with the development of contacts with the West. For this reason it is striking that the problem becomes marginal and mild in Orhan Kemal's output, when the trend in society went in the opposite direction. We see clearly that the author leaves strong social problems and prefers new topics. We shall try to explain this phenomenon at the end of this paper.

Child imprisonment.

This problem appears in the collections of short stories EkmeK Kavgası and Çamasırcının Kızı and occupies many pages of the novels Suclu and Sokakların Cocuğu. Thus it is a regular topic in the output of the forties and fifties (with the exception of the novel Sokakların Cocuğu which is from 1963 but it is a continuation of the novel Suclu edited in 1957). Descriptions of child imprisonment are shocking. We can only hope that today's Turkish prison is different. The action of the novels takes place in the thirties and the action of the short stories, in forties. Living conditions in Turkish prisons as described by Orhan Kemal are terrible. The worst of it is that even young boys get imprisoned and must suffer the same severity. In Orhan Kemal's writings we even come across ten-year-old children! We meet the horror of the little prisoners' existence especially in the novels Suclu and Sokakların Cocuğu. Violence, hazard, hashish, struggles and black mail are the entertainment of the young prisoners. The younger are forced by elders to serve them, to share their money and food, and to engage to harlotry. The worse a prisoner's crime, the greater is the prisoner's power and respect in the prison cell. The possibility of contacts between the young and expert criminals has its fatal influence upon the young boys. Many of them (as the hero of these novels, thirteen-year-old Cevdet) are imprisoned for slight transgressions but from their stay in prison become dangerous criminals. More optimistic are the short stories: Çocuk Ali (EkmeK Kavgası) and Recep (Çamasırcının Kızı). A first person narrator, an educated prisoner, bears the author's features. One can suppose that these short stories are of a recollective nature.¹⁹ The young heroes of the short stories - two country boys - have more luck than the heroes of the novels. Surrounded by the friendly care of their fellow prisoners and the staff they will pass their time of imprisonment safely. Their contact with educated prisoners enables Recep to become literate and awakens in him a hunger for learning.

The topic of imprisonment is typical of the early stage of Orhan Kemal's output. Prison episodes are authentic - nothing was invented by the author. The perfect knowledge of prison life has its source in the five years which the author spent in different prisons of Anatolia (1937-1943) and later, in the sixties, when the writer was arrested. Thus it is no wonder that the prison short stories are written in the first person - they are autobiographical.

The playground.

The next aspect illustrating the theme of children in Orhan Kemal's output is play and entertainment. Some activities such as football or cinema are above the passing of time and do not change. We meet them in Orhan Kemal's writings during different periods in his life. Cinema and ball are common activities to Turkish children. The method of presenting them does not change with the passing of time. Orhan Kemal's account of passion for films is narrowed down to bad american westerns and crime stories. In many cases it is depicted as the only entertainment for hard-working boys. Football passion is described by the author with great seriousness and expertise. He describes a football match like a professional expert and proves his familiarity with this sport. The autobiographical novel Avare Yıllar assures us of this.

In Orhan Kemal's works we find many other games and forms of entertainment. They change in different periods of his output. Thus in the first collection of short stories EkmeK Kavgası (in the short story Köpek Yavrusu) the author depicts cruelty of children towards an animal. Bored boys from a poor neighbourhood are hanging around a corner with nothing to do. A puppy that has had its hind paws crushed by a heavy cart finally gives them some fun. The boys compete in crueler and crueler tricks. A tender reader cannot finish this story... In later output we do not find any descriptions of such brute sports. The next collection of short stories Sarhoslar includes two stories describing child play. In Avse Hoca the author puts his two children - with toys and freedom to choose whichever game they like - with a five-year-old country girl, who never plays. Instead she spends the whole day memorizing the Quran, which she cannot understand. In Küçükler ve Büyüklükler, two youngsters, one poor and one wealthy, show us their games. The poor one plays with empty cigarette boxes in the dust of the street and the wealthy one rides a bicycle. The psyche of the two boys is depicted in a masterly way. The boys look at each other in silent admiration: one admires a bike while the other dreams of playing with dirty boxes in the dust of the street... The next collection, Çamasırcının Kızı, includes an autobiographical short story Avse ile Fatma, in which the author remembers his time in prison. The title heroines (guards' daughters) spend their childhood inside the prison walls, among the prisoners. Their entertainment is playing in the courtyard, visiting men and woman prisoners, carrying their letters, making friends and doing their shopping. In the same year (1952), Orhan Kemal published the novel

Murtaza. Among many plots there is one involving the hard work of two girls in a factory. To escape their boring work for a few moments, they secretly play with stones ("beştaş") which they always carry with them. We also find an account of this type of play in the short story Kel Tahir (Arka Sokak). A thirteen-year-old girl with the responsibilities of home on her shoulders and a laborious job in a factory spends her leisure time throwing and catching stones. In her time it is a very popular game. When the factory whistle announces lunch-time, a crowd of girls pours out. They eat their poor lunch quickly and immediately start to play. From the fifties are also the short stories Balon (Grev), in which children from a large poor family play with a defective condom discarded by their parents, and Üç Arkadas (Kardes Payı) the heroes of which - boys of five, six and seven - spend whole days together, wandering through the city suburbs. The children don't have fathers and they play outdoors from dawn to dusk as their mothers have to work.²⁰

In the output of the sixties the motif of child entertainment appears in the short stories Sevmiyordu, Tarzan, Coni and Sağ İç (Önce ekmek) as well as in the novels El Kızı, Bir Filiz Vardı and Kacak. Here the games have been sanctified from the elements of cruelty, filth and neglect. We can detect freshness in the novel Bir Filiz Vardı - in which the children, during the absence of their parents, who went to cinema (parents going to the cinema is something new in Orhan Kemal's writing as in his earlier output the parents are struggling to survive and have no time for amusement), act as adults, carefully imitating their behaviour. The boys imitate their fathers and the girls imitate their mothers. The last act of this performance is going to bed. The girls take off their pants because they know it must be done though they do not know what for. In Orhan Kemal's last novel, Kacak, there are many toys which we would have to search for in vain in his earlier output, though a large number of them were familiar to the writer in the forties and fifties. Although only the more wealthy heroes possess them, in the words of the poor we can find the hope that they will be able to earn similar toys for their own children: bicycles, guns, tops, toy soldiers, cars and trains.

All the amusement present in Orhan Kemal's output helps to satisfy the eternal hunger for fun and happiness. The development of games begins from the most primitive, filthy and even brute, to clean, didactic but expensive. In all forms of amusement we can feel the presence of the writer looking upon the playing children with affection and great care. We can

even detect this affection in Köpek Yavrusu. The writer does not accuse the boys of being cruel to the animal. He forces us to think about the social source of this phenomenon - why do the boys hang around the corner so much? And why are they bored?...

Conclusion.

In a perusal of Orhan Kemal's works the evolution of the writer's attitude towards the world surrounding him becomes quite evident. This evolution might have been caused by such factors as:

- i) a general development of Turkish society and a growth of welfare
- ii) the change of the reading public's expectations connected with the growing openness of Turkey to the world. As the Turkish reader came into daily contact with the western culture, through cinema and the increasingly popular television, in the sixties Turkish writers are expected to produce something different than sad pictures of poverty, gloom and humiliation as the reader saw in the writings of Mahmud M a k a l, the country epics of Kemal Tahir D e m i r or the early short stories of Orhan K e m a l.
- iii) the regress of socialist ideology all over the world.

These factors forced, not only Orhan Kemal, but also other Turkish writers (e.g. Çetin A l t a n, Fakir B a y k u r t, Atilla İ l h a n, Adnan Ö z y a l ç ı n e r) to leave the leftist standpoint. Cruel and poignant critiques of social relations, present in all his writings of the forties and fifties, loose their venom in the early sixties. The main topics sink into the background, or disappear completely. New problems appear or old but unpopular problems are exposed. The opinion that "the struggle to survive" is the content and symbol of all of Orhan Kemal's output is not accurate. One should only apply this opinion to his output of the forties and fifties. There the struggle to survive is truly the main motive for the actions of the heroes. In the second period, this motif is not so predominant. Of course, we can find it in the fate of a girl named Filiz (Bir Filiz Vardı) who fights for the right to live her own life happily; in the sequence of novels Müfettisler Müfettisi and Üç Kağıtçı where the main hero fights to survive through fraud and swindle; in the novel Yalancı Dünya in which the heroine - a simple girl with a dream of being a

movie star - steals away from home and misconducts herself; in the novel Kötü Yol illustrating a young man's slow ascent up the ladder of a professional career... But does the struggle to survive, seen in these writings, have the same importance as it does in dozens of short stories and novels from the earliest period? Surely, it does not. Here we can make two remarks about the matter of the struggle to survive in the output of the sixties. Firstly, the motif is depicted far more mildly and the facts related to it are not as painful as the ones, to which the reader grew accustomed when reading the earlier works of Orhan Kemal. Secondly, the motif, although present in the writer's later output, is only one among many and is not the most frequent. Among the writer's later pieces, other motifs are more important.

What are these other motifs? First of all, the problem of marital conflicts - found in Evlerden Biri, Sokaklardan Bir Kız, Bir Filiz Vardı, Yalancı Dünya and Kötü Yol. Orhan Kemal's last novel Kacak consists entirely of a description of a disfunctional family. Here the author does not pause to consider the material concerns of the lonely mother and her child's existence, but shows their inner life and the spiritual problems typical of the incomplete family. The carefree life of the cafe youth is the main topic of the novel Arkadaş Islıkları.

Analyzing the topics of Orhan Kemal's last novels, one gets the impression that the writer is searching for topics which could bring him publicity (that is, money). They start to incline towards serious moral problems, even scandals, of society or marriage, such as: the seduction of girl, extramarital sex, jealousy, betrayal and murder. It is enough just to look at the statistics: among the nine last novels (1964-70) seven have these problems either as a leitmotif or a side motif. These are Bir Filiz Vardı, Yalancı Dünya, Arkadaş Islıkları, Sokaklardan Bir Kız, Üç Kağıtçı, Kötü Yol and Kacak. What is even more interesting is that the last years of Orhan Kemal's life realized a period of milder censorship and a return of the freedom of speech. Exactly in this time, Orhan Kemal softens his critiques and shifts his attention towards other social phenomena, which were not of special interest to him earlier. This fact proves the writer's openness for the readers' changing preferences. This is the secret of Orhan Kemal's great popularity in Turkey - a popularity that has lasted to the present day.

Notes

- ¹ N. Uğurlu, Orhan Kemal'in İkbal Kahvesi, p.88.
- ² C. Rathbun, The Village in the Turkish Novel and Short Story, pp.65, 68.
- ³ N. Uğurlu, op.cit., p.63.
- ⁴ O.Kemal depicted his childhood in the autobiographical novel Baba Evi.
- ⁵ We find youth recollection on the pages of the novels: Avare Yıllar, Cemile and Dünya Evi.
- ⁶ Orhan Kemal writes about his relations with Nazim Hikmet in Nazım Hikmet'le Üç Bucuk Yıl.
- ⁷ N. Uğurlu, op.cit., p.8.
- ⁸ S. Piaskowicka - Rymkiewicz, M. Borzęcka, M. Labęcka - Koecher, Historia Literatury Tureckiej, p.225.
- ⁹ Ş. Aktas, Orhan Kemal, p.40.
- ¹⁰ More about Orhan Kemal's life and output in: 1,2,3,6,7,13,18,20, 21,24,26,27,28 (see Bibliography).
- ¹¹ The child is a very important motif of O.Kemal and occupies much space in his output. According to Ş.Aktas (Orhan Kemal, p.44) "in many O.Kemal's writings starting from Suclu a child is mentioned. The source of that is to be found in his childhood and in the love he had for his own children, being a link with the world for him."
- ¹² O. Kemal, Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde, p.185.
- ¹³ B. Necatigil writes about the artistic value of the work (Edebiyatımızda Eserler Sözlüğü, p.340) underlining especially the masterly use of a dialect put in the mouth of the hero, and the dialogue; also, T. Yücel (Günümüz Türk Yazını, p.219) underlines that the author, in this novel has "a very good style of expression with an intensive, vivid narration, weighted construction and vivid characters."
- ¹⁴ O. Kemal, Kötü Yol, p.7.
- ¹⁵ C. Rathbun, op.cit., p.65.
- ¹⁶ O. Kemal, Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde, p.71.
- ¹⁷ C. Rathbun, op.cit., p.65.
- ¹⁸ O.Kemal moved to Istanbul in 1952 and from then on he describes only the people of this city.
- ¹⁹ A. Bezirci and H. Altınkaynak - O.Kemal's biographers - write in the "Prison" chapter: "Orhan Kemal is a writer whose works are based on his own experiences and his prison stories are an effect of the years he has spent in jail." Orhan Kemal, p.168.
- ²⁰ In fact, the story Üç Arkadaş dates back to 1946 (published in the Gün magazine) and is one of his earliest short stories.

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