



## **A COMPARATIVE GLANCE AT THE CONCEPTS OF INTELLECTUALISM IN JAMES JOYCE AND OĞUZ ATAY'S MODERNIST TEXTS\***

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### **STRUCTURED ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** In this study, the portrayals of modern intellectuals in Joyce's and Atay's modernist works are examined in the light of the two authors' cultural, social and political backgrounds. With this objective in mind, the similarities and differences in the portrayals of modern intellectuals in major works of the two authors are comparatively analysed. This paper emphasizes that Atay, though highly influenced by Joyce, does not simply copy Joycean concept of 'intellectual' in his works. He develops his own concept of intellectual by adjusting Joycean intellectuals into Turkish cultural, social and historical context. Atay and Joyce can be compared in terms of literary styles, subject matters and artistic stances although they are from distinct cultural and social backgrounds. As such, the present paper aims to analyze Joyce's influence on Atay, emphasizing the thematic and stylistic similarities between the two authors. Firstly, Atay's transgression of Joycean influence to create his own unique concept of the intellectual will be explained. Then, we will discuss to what extent Atay's and Joyce's portrayals of modern intellectuals have certain similarities and differences. Lastly, we will argue that Atay, rather than blindly imitating Joyce, develops his own, unique idea of intellectualism out of Joycean influence.

**Conceptual and Theoretical Framework:** A comparative study of literary texts from different nations and different periods of time is significant when their contributions to an ongoing tradition are taken into consideration. Furthermore, reflections of literary movements on the literatures of different nations may indicate certain similarities, especially when the initiators of a movement in a nation's literature are followers or readers of another nation's literature. For instance, the modernist literary movement influences Turkish literary circles decades later than Western Europe. Nevertheless, modernism manifests itself in

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Turkish literature as it does in British or French literature. Just like their European contemporaries, writers like Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Oğuz Atay and Yusuf Atılgan integrate in their fictions themes such as alienation from society, lack of communication between human beings, spiritual paralysis and the meaninglessness of life. Stylistically, too, they imitate Western European literature, especially the British using techniques like 'stream-of-consciousness', 'interior monologue', distorted dialogues and fragmentation.

There is a common agreement that modernism signifies a paradigmatic shift and major revolt against the prevalent literary and cultural traditions of Western Europe. Modernism is still a vague term and signifies multiple meanings. It is easier to limit the argument with literary modernism, though still there are challenges. Modernism in literature is a movement associated with writers like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence. Yet the term has nothing to do with the biography of these writers. It is rather a new medium and structure of English language and very much related to the experimental formulation of narrative, a new idea of aesthetics and coherence. Great changes take place in modern society after the two world wars. Literature of the pre-war Europe is challenged and seen as inadequate to represent the multiplicity of realities and perspectives in the modern world. The post-war Europe develops a new concept of individual who has a different state of mind. In addition, some scientific and psychological developments like Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis show that every single human being has his distinctive character traits shaped by his interactions with other identities. Modernist writers like Joyce and Woolf emphasize 'private selves' and the 'undividable' nature of the individual. To meet the intellectual needs of the new reading public and to most faithfully reflect contemporary state of mind, modernity creates the identical human being who is tempted and limited by technology.

**Findings:** Although Atay adopts some of Joyce's narrative techniques, he appropriates the idea and role of intellectuals to his own purpose. The major difference between Joyce's and Atay's intellectual characters is that Atay's 'disconnected' intellectuals have a strong social consciousness and feeling of responsibility for the future prosperity of their nation whereas Joycean modern intellectuals escape into a world of aesthetics which creates a critical distance between themselves and the public. In particular, the idea and role of intellectuals in Atay's works have significant differences from Joyce's. Atay's intellectuals are the voice of their nation in the process of crisis and development. The crisis urges Atay to create a socially responsible intellectual type who can guide the public to salvation. Thus, Atay's intellectuals are scapegoats whereas Joyce's are irresponsible, escapist artists. Besides, Atay's sense of intellectualism sounds much more humane and intimate than Joyce's scowling, distanced, escapist and cold-hearted intellectualism. In the end, Atay's 'disconnected' intellectuals either commit suicide or lose their sanity. On the other hand, Joyce's modern intellectuals evade their national and social responsibilities. They ignore oppression and poverty and subject to spiritual paralysis. They isolate themselves into their ivory towers rejecting all social institutions like religion, family and education. In this respect, isolation or

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'disconnectedness' can be taken as a virtue for Atay. Joyce's intellectuals, on the other hand, are morally and spiritually weaker. Yet, it has to be stated that Atay's intellectuals are weaker than Joyce's in terms of aesthetic development. There is an inevitable degree of influence; yet Atay creates his unique style and perspective in his works.

**Originality / Value:** Modernist authors like Joyce and Atay write about subjects and themes with a strong emphasis on individuals' spiritual paralysis, isolation from society, feeling of 'nothingness', existential questionings, lack of communication and consequences of urbanization. In particular, such themes are also celebrated by Woolf, Proust, Faulkner, Kafka and Dostoyevsky despite the geographical and cultural differences. Joyce has been a leading figure of influence on many modernist authors from different nations. For instance, Oğuz Atay, much under the influence of Joyce, creates intellectual characters with an emphasis on the intellectuals' isolation from society and social institutions, though with different preoccupations. Due to their distinct national and cultural backgrounds, Joyce's influence on Atay has not been extensively studied. In particular, Atay's intellectual responses to Joyce are left in the wilderness. Yet, comparisons have been made regarding the thematic and stylistic aspects of the two authors' works. This study is the only one, among many, with the claim, in spite of powerful influence and certain likeliness between Joyce and Atay, that the latter has managed to come up with his own style and his unique conception of intellectualism.

**Key Words:** Modern intellectual, modernity, modernism, James Joyce, Oğuz Atay

## ÖĞUZ ATAY VE JAMES JOYCE'UN MODERNİST ESERLERİNDEKİ AYDIN OLGUSUNA KARŞILAŞTIRMALI BİR BAKIŞ

### ÖZET

Modernist edebiyat evrensel bir olgudur. Dünya çapında birçok yazar modernist eserlerinde modern bireyin ruhsal bunalımı, toplumdan soyutlanması, hiçlik duygusu, varoluşsal sorgulamaları, iletişimsizlikleri ve kentleşen dünyanın kötü yansımalarını vurgulayarak benzer konulara değinmişlerdir. Modernist edebiyatın yukarıda bahsedilen temaları coğrafi farklılıklara rağmen Joyce, Woolf, Proust, Faulkner, Kafka, Dostoyevsky ve Atay gibi ünlü yazarların eserlerinde özellikle göze çarpmaktadır. Bu yazarlar arasında James Joyce'un modernist edebiyata katkıları oldukça büyüktür ve yazarın farklı uluslardan birçok yazarı etkilemesini sağlamıştır. Örneğin, kendisi de ciddi bir Joyce okuru olan Oğuz Atay benzer konuları yine Joyce'un eserlerine metinler arası göndermeler yaparak ve bunları Türk toplumuna uyarlayarak yansıtmıştır. Her iki yazar da eserlerinde modern aydının toplumdan ve toplumsal kurumlardan soyutlanması ve bunlara yabancılaşması sorununa farklı açılardan da olsa yer vermiştir. Bu çalışma, bu iki yazarın kendi kültürel, politik, sosyal ve ekonomik

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ortamlarında modernleşme sürecinin modern aydın tipi üzerindeki etkilerini yansıtmadaki farklılıklarını ve benzerliklerini araştırmaktadır. Bu amaçla, söz konusu yazarların eserlerinden seçilmiş belirli modern aydın tiplerine modernizm ve modern birey teorileri ışığında bir çözümleme uygulanmıştır. Burada amaç, Atay'ın Joyce'dan büyük ölçüde etkilendiğini gözler önüne sermek ve onun Joyce etkisiyle sınırlı kalmayıp onun aydın anlayışını kendi kültürüne, toplumsal ve ulusal yapısına uyarlayarak kendi aydın tipini yarattığını göstermektir. Bu çalışmada iki yazarın eserlerindeki aydın portrelerinin topluma ve toplumsal kurumlara mesafeleri ve bu denli bir soyutlanmanın nedenleri üzerinde durulmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Modern aydın, modernite, modernizm, James Joyce, Oğuz Atay

## 1. Introduction

As Eliot argues, “every nation, every race has not only its own creative, but its own critical turn of mind” (Eliot, 1992, s.36) adding that there is a “long-lived literary tradition” which all generations of literary artists must pay homage to and are influenced by: “No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him for contrast and comparison, among the dead.” (Eliot, 1992, s.36). A comparative study of literary texts from different nations and different periods of time is significant when their contributions to an ongoing tradition are taken into consideration. Furthermore, reflections of literary movements on the literatures of different nations may indicate certain similarities, especially when the initiators of a movement in a nation's literature are followers or readers of another nation's literature. For instance, the modernist literary movement influences Turkish literary circles decades later than Western Europe. Nevertheless, modernism manifests itself in Turkish literature as it does in British or French literature, and writers like Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Oğuz Atay and Yusuf Atılgan integrate modernist themes such as alienation from society, lack of communication between human beings, spiritual paralysis and the meaninglessness of life just like their European contemporaries.<sup>1</sup> Stylistically, too, modernist Turkish writers imitate Western European literature, especially the British. They also use techniques like ‘stream-of-consciousness’, ‘interior monologue’, distorted dialogues and fragmentation.

The European modernist influence on Turkish writers needs further discussion. The discussion should start with Joyce since he is the topic of our study. Joyce blends stream-of-consciousness technique to write about lack of communication between his characters and society. He embodies Irish culture in general, almost as a national figure of Ireland and locates Dublin into the centre of the world. His personal experience of unending strife and the feeling of paralysis in Dublin: its pubs, industrial life, isolated citizens gain almost universal appeal. Thus, we assume that Joyce's fictional world reflects the view of ‘the’ modern urbanization and mechanization of human life from an aesthetic point of view. He also fictionalizes metaphysical experience of ‘epiphany’ (moment of revelation) together with characters' state of paralysis. For instance, *Dubliners* celebrates a detailed tableau of a modern city with its own outcast lives. Apart from that, Joyce's highly autobiographical novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), intends to place art as ‘the’ medium of expression. As Schiralli states, readers do not only find a psychologically

<sup>1</sup>See: Sarıççek, “*Ulysses ve Tutunamayanlar*’ın Karşılaştırmalı İncelemesi / A Comparative Study on *Ulysses* and *The Disconnected*”, 531-532.

intriguing profile of the developing artist, but also a highly suggestive philosophical account of the nature of art in Joyce's writing (Schiralli, 1989, s.37-38). Then, it can be argued that Joyce aesthetic discourse give voice to Joyce's understanding and reflection of modern life together with the place and the roles of modern intellectuals in the modern world.

Very much like Joyce, Atay also experiments stream of consciousness technique in his works to write about contemporary Turkish society.<sup>2</sup> While doing this, Atay preoccupies himself to reflect such problems via his characters' state of mind. In *The Disconnected*, Atay deals with the conflicts between traditional and modern Turkish society. Besides, Atay re-appropriates his life-memory into fictional narrative like Joyce. For instance, the motif of committing suicide in Atay's *The Disconnected* can easily be read as an allusion to his friend Ural who committed suicide before the beginning of Atay's career as a writer and to whom Atay dedicates his novel. Other instances like Selim's, one of the protagonists of *The Disconnected*, childhood and high-school memories or his father's insistence that he should be an engineer in the future show that there are some patches of Atay's own life-story in Selim's character.

Atay and Joyce, thus, can be compared in terms of literary styles, subject matters and artistic stances although they are from distinct cultural and social backgrounds. As such, the present paper aims to analyze Joyce's influence on Atay, emphasizing the thematic and stylistic similarities between the two authors. Firstly, Atay's transgression of Joycean influence to create his own unique concept of the intellectual will be explained. Then, we will discuss to what extent Atay's and Joyce's portrayals of modern intellectuals have certain similarities and differences. Lastly, we will argue that Atay, rather than blindly imitating Joyce, develops his own, unique idea of intellectualism out of Joycean influence.

## 2. Modernist Literature and Intellectualism

There is a common agreement that modernism signifies a paradigmatic shift and major revolt against the prevalent literary and cultural traditions of Western Europe (Eysteinson, 1990, s.2). As Levenson states, modernism is still a vague term and signifies multiple meanings. It is easier to limit the argument with literary modernism, though still there are challenges. Modernism in literature is a movement associated with writers like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and D.H. Lawrence. Yet the term has nothing to do with the biography of the named writers. It is rather a new medium and structure of English language and very much related to experimental formulation of narrative, a new idea of aesthetics and coherence (Levenson, 1984, vii). Great changes take place in modern society after the two world wars. In addition, some scientific and psychological developments like Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis indicated that every single human being has a unique traits shaped by his interactions with 'the other'. Literature of the pre-war Europe is challenged and seen as inadequate to represent the present mood in the modern world. As such post-war Europe develops a new concept of individual. The new readership also expects new "opportunities and perspectives that may open their minds to experiences, dilemmas, time periods, places and situations that would otherwise be closed to them." (Keen, 2007, ix). Thus, contemporary writers emphasize the individual experience. To meet the intellectual needs of the new reading public and to most faithfully reflect their psychological conditions, Joyce, Woolf and Atay use parody to unmask the limitation of 'the individual' by technology. As Berman argues, "modernity is constituted by its machines, of which modern men and women are merely mechanical reproductions" (Berman, 1988, s.29).

<sup>2</sup> See: Odacı, "Ulysses ve Tutunamayanlar'da Bilinçakışı Tekniği / The Technique of Stream-of-consciousness in *Ulysses* and *Tutunamayanlar*", 615.



Along with the structure of language, modernity also challenges the idea of authorship and aesthetic creativity. In the lack of collective consciousness and traditional identity, modern writers like Joyce, Eliot and Woolf excavate the changeable and unstable realities of the individual minds. The enlightenment idea of an artist poses a self-sufficient, autonomous and unique personality. Modern artist, however, is not a man of satire, not a public figure; but an alienated self dwelling on the aesthetic pleasure reconciled to the interested mind. Thus, there is an inevitable distance between the public and the outcast artist. Rejecting the conventional morals and manners of the contemporary society, a modern artist is an individual (un-dividable self) facing the meaninglessness of existence. The current situation leaves the artists in a state of complete hopelessness. As a result, worlds of men become “increasingly alien: physically, socially, and intellectually [offering] little continuity and consolation.” (Crasnow, 1991, s.369). Thus, contemporary writers celebrate this situation using alienation, social isolation, depression, spiritual paralysis, search for meaning and lack of communication. Fjeld argues this as follows:

If the authors are alien, chances are that their characters are, too. Not only are they alien because their creators insisted on their own uniqueness; they are also often depicted as aliens in a disrupted post-war society. Added to this is the pessimism of the authors; the inability or reluctance to suggest acceptable solutions to their characters’ problems, and an often too explicit need to criticize or lament circumstances (Fjeld, s.7).

There is a deliberate blurring of the mind to emphasize the relativity of human judgments. Well-defined types are replaced by self-contradictory, unstable and fragmented personalities sometimes having multiple split selves or realities. The readers do not follow the action as if through the lenses of a camera any more, but are taken on a voyage through the canals of the human brain trying to follow what passes through the consciousness of the characters.

“Modernity is experienced as a distressful concatenation of threatening phenomena characterizing modern life, [and] it seems evident that the sense of crisis may also be linked to reflections upon reification, urbanization or the mechanization of industrial society.” (Fjeld, s.12). The industrial power produces metropolitan characters with multiple layers of consciousness, identity, split-selves and fragmented mentality. Ironically, such characters are more likely to experience ‘epiphany’ than the locals. That is why “most of the descriptions of the novel’s self-estranged characters express a sense of deformed corporeality.” (Nabholz, 2007, s.116). Stephen Dedalus, for instance, tears down all the walls around him for the sake of his artistic maturity and denies his pre-established ties with his nation, religion and family. For instance, Joyce’s characters reject religion, family and education. Atay’s characters end up with alienation from society or even from himself, though with an urge to be socially serviceable. Joyce’s Little Chandler, in “A Little Cloud”, is alienated from his nation and family as a result of the reification, Atay’s Coşkun Ermiş, in *Those who Live by Games*, questions his own inadequacy and assumes a responsibility to save society and nation out of their underdevelopment. Joyce and Atay, using the same structure of modernism, develop certain attitudes to represent similar problems in modern society.

### 3. Joyce and Atay: The Degree of Influence, Similarities and Differences

Oğuz Atay writes during the cold war period when “intolerance evolve[d] into official suppression and violence. The political leaders of the country used to impose their policies on the ordinary citizens in Turkey.” (Şahinler, 1999, s.55). Atay is among the intellectuals of such a chaotic period who feels responsible for making decisions and promotion on behalf of his nation to find a way out of this deadlock. This is one of the reasons why Atay looks for a possible narrative discourse of European writers including Joyce. He is in search for a new and powerful narrative to excavate and write about the current political turmoil of Turkey. This search for and

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experimentation of the Western modernism in literature becomes the most remarkable achievement with Atay's publication of *The Disconnected*. Influenced by Joyce, Kafka, Dostoyevsky, Nabokov and Proust, Atay develops his unique style and becomes one of the forerunners of the stream of consciousness technique in Turkish literature. In particular, Joyce's influence on Atay is obvious in Atay's literary achievements. Moran, though particularly concentrating on Atay's *The Disconnected*, agrees that Atay "turns his back on the 19<sup>th</sup> century realism, one foot on the modernist soil and the other on the post-modernist one. The main reason behind this must be that he has been massively influenced by a great modernist author, James Joyce and a great post-modernist one, Nabokov." (Moran, 1990, s.199). Similarly, Ecevit draws attention to the point that Atay is one of "the forerunners of modernist fiction in Turkey. [...] His *The Disconnected*, for instance, bears the traces of the cultic modernist novel *Ulysses* by James Joyce, whom we assume Atay has read extensively." (Ecevit, 2001, s.86). However, Atay does not slavishly imitate and adopt Joyce's themes and style; rather, he adapts them to his nation's cultural and political atmosphere; and, in the end, he comes up with a virtually authentic literary style overcoming the Joycean influence.

Due to the distinct national and cultural backgrounds, Joyce's influence on Atay has not been extensively studied. In particular, Atay's intellectual responses to Joyce are left in the wilderness. Ecevit, in her interview with one of Atay's university friends, writes that Atay is interested in and greatly admires Joyce's works. He has a particular interest in Joyce style and narrative in *Ulysses* (Ecevit, 2011, s.71). Atay admits that he imitates the techniques and characters of *Ulysses* in his first novel *The Disconnected*. It is also possible to find some traces of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in Atay's first novel. For instance, the childhood memories of Selim in *The Disconnected* are similar to Stephen's in Joyce's autobiographical novel; pandying of the school teachers, both being the jellyfish in the eyes of their friends and the necessity of proving oneself to have backing from the others. Just like Stephen Dedalus, Selim Işık stands for his creator Atay, as he identically reflects Atay's memories. Apart from the major themes, the subject matters and technical aspects of their works are also identical. Atay, like Joyce, extensively uses the modernist techniques of 'self-talk', 'interior monologue' and 'stream-of-consciousness'. Similar to Joyce, Atay uses almost no chronological story line; instead the readers are left with the major characters' flow of thought. Moran also contends that what brings Atay's style closer to Joycean style is that he includes various dialects (Ottoman Turkish, Modern Turkish, Pure Turkish) and genres such as biography, encyclopaedia, diary, poetry, drama and letters in his novels. This variety, which provides his novels with a richness and encyclopaedic broadness, also contributes to Atay's famous irony." (Moran, 1990, s.270). Imitating Joyce, Atay uses neologisms and Homeric epithets abundantly and invents new words by joining separate words together to increase the impact and originality of his language. Atay's creation of statements like 'state-of-being-Selim' (Atay, 2012, s.329) or 'don't-care-about-them-just-believe-my-eyes looks' (Atay, 2010, s.214) reminds the readers of Joyce's epithets like "sugar-sticky girl" (Joyce, 1998, s.144) or "the scrotumtightening sea" (Joyce, 1998, s.5). Atay also imitates Joyce in the long chapter in which he uses no single punctuation mark in *The Disconnected*.<sup>3</sup>Ecevit also observes such an interaction between Joyce and Atay, emphasizing the fact that Atay digests and customizes Joyce's writing style with his unique creativity and imagination (Ecevit, 2011, s.260-261). What shape the vivid and authentic nature of the two authors' styles are their strong attachments to their traditional cultural and linguistic background. Atay's references to Ottoman or even early central Asian Turkish past especially in chapter 7 of his *The Disconnected* echo Joyce's attachment to the Gaelic-Irish origin, especially in expressions like 'Yerra' (Joyce, 2008, s.98). meaning 'O God!'

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 18 in Joyce's *Ulysses* and Chapter 15 in Atay's *The Disconnected* look alike in terms of the authors' use of no punctuation mark for more than 70 pages.

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'banshee' (Joyce, 2008, s.123) meaning 'beautiful lady' or Stephen's feeling of a stranger among those Gaelic "heaps of dead language." (Joyce, 1963, s.178). Atay's use of songs embedded in the long 'stream of consciousness' lines may also be compared to Joyce's frequent verse passages especially in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

In spite of powerful influence and certain likeliness, Atay has his own style. Different from Joyce, he creates imaginary companions for his protagonists to competently reflect their inner-feelings. Each character may have a double-ganger like Turgut's friend Olric and Hikmet's mentor Colonel Tambay or the fragmented selves like Hikmet's multiple identities; Hikmet I, Hikmet II or Hikmet III. In addition, Atay tends to waste more space and time on social issues. He is preoccupied with the advancement of his nation. Thus his social concerns sometimes overwhelm the aesthetic ones. In his diary he states that the "indifference and distance of our people upset me. [...] Why don't they understand what I write? Why is there not a single person around to understand me? Perhaps I did not write anything to be understood, or valued." (Atay, 2012, s.218-220). He is too much disappointed with the readers and can sometime confess this. He says: "They snap up foreign books and do not even know about me. And I am still expecting a mass of readers from the men of this sort. Silly me!" (Atay, 2012, s.222).

Unlike Joyce, Atay sublimates the chaotic life of his characters. Joyce is an elitist to some extent and undermines the triviality of everyday life for the sake of well-structured and correct language. Atay is not an elitist; he prefers the triviality of daily life. He is even critical of an elitist stance. For instance, Turgut's elitism at the beginning of *The Disconnected* is seen as senseless and discreditable bourgeois habits by Atay. Joyce uses the protagonist of his short story *Araby* as a surrogate for himself to express his abhorrence of the bazaar traits saying "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger." (Joyce, 2008, s.24). Atay, on the other hand, expresses his own discontentedness with the elitist bourgeois life standards of Turgut from Selim's perspective. Selim thinks that Turgut is wasting his life with "petit-bourgeois services he benefited in accordance with the amount of his money." (Atay, 2012, s.26). Another dimension of Joyce's characters, again related to monetary issues and life standards, is that his modern men are always suffer from poverty and hopefulness, as in *Dubliners*. In Atay's works, on the other hand, modern intellectuals rarely talk about financial problems. Atay's major characters are either rich engineers like Turgut Özben in *The Disconnected* or professors like Server Gözbudak in *Science of Action*. Atay feels that it is impossible for an intellectual to realize himself in the artificial and rigid value systems of bourgeoisie standards." (Ecevit, 2011, s.343). For instance, Atay compares Selim to Don Quixote. Like the knight, Selim is in conflict with his own identity and with other people. Gürle also observes that this air of conflict dominates Atay's *The Disconnected*. She states: "The Quixotic existence that determines Selim's nature does not equip him with a sugary optimism. Selim [...] is a Quixote aware of his own otherworldliness, and brings it down to earth through this recognition." (Gürle, 2008, s.65).

#### 4. The Concept of Intellectualism in Joyce's and Atay's Texts

Said argues that "to speak of intellectuals (...) is also to speak specifically of national, religious and even continental variations on the topic, each one of which seems to require separate consideration." (Said, 1994, s.26). The global effect of World Wars, industrialization, colonialism or modernization eliminates the cultural boundaries and blends voices of different society. In spite of radical cultural distinction, Atay and Joyce's voices coincide. Atay, under the influence of European modernism, adopts Joyce's new discourse. From this influence, he develops a new and creative mode of writing which has two basic stages. In the first stage of imitation he blindly and slavishly imitates Joyce and his style. In the second stage of influence, Atay develops authentic themes and perspectives independent of Joyce's influence (Bloom, 1973, s.30). Only after

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achieving the second stage, Atay manages to come up with an authentic literary style and concept of the intellectual.

In the first stage Joyce influences Atay's depictions of intellectuals. For instance, a feeling of inbetweenness dominates the intellectual characters of both writers. A certain degree of involvement in politics is always present in Joycean literature, as he writes during the political turmoil of Ireland regarding the independence from the United Kingdom or a union with it. Especially, the nationalism that Charles Stewart Parnell exemplifies in Irish politics shapes Joyce's whole life and is reflected in his fiction. The question of following either Irish self-governance or British protectionism leaves Irish citizens in a state of confusion, which is reflected especially in the character of Stephen and other Dubliners. This chaotic environment in Ireland can be described as follows:

The economic and intellectual conditions that prevail in [Ireland] do not permit the development of individuality. The soul of the country is weakened by centuries of useless struggle and broken treaties, and individual initiative is paralyzed by the influence and admonitions of the church, while its body is manacled by the police, the tax office, and the garrison. No one who has any self-respect stays in Ireland (Ellsworth, 1964, s.171).

Joyce uses 'epiphanies' and 'feeling of paralysis' to express the chaotic life of his characters. A similar feeling of inbetweenness and paralysis dominates Atay's major characters, but from a different dimension. Atay's characters are almost paralyzed when they feel responsible for the chaotic state of the nation and cannot do anything to change it. Thus, Atay's intellectuals feel more responsible for the political, economic, intellectual and scientific backwardness of the nation. Ironically, this attitude also creates in-betweenness. Reforming the country after the European model of cultural and economic development and keeping the oriental roots of the Turks and Turkish culture cause split-identity. Gürle writes about this as follows:

This is what grants *The Disconnected* universality, and places Selim and Turgut next to other great characters of modern literature, such as Dostoevsky's Ivan Karamazov, or Joyce's Stephen Dedalus. The cultural question behind their identity, that is to say, their approach to the problem of Turkishness as being "disconnected" not only from their own culture but also from the West, is no different from the meanderings of Ivan about Russian melancholy, or Stephen's account of Irish frustration. Selim and Turgut are not local heroes taking part in a "national allegory." On the contrary, in their own way, they try to find an answer to the existential question introduced by the modernity: what happens to the individual who experiences the loss of origin that gives meaning to his existence? (Gürle, 2008, s.77).

Atay and his intellectual characters are in conflict with the problems of backwardness and traditional Turkish values. Joyce's intellectuals, on the contrary, are critical of the consequences of the industrial revolution, the oppression of the British government and the effects of the First World War with an intensity of scepticism against the generations that brought about such corruptions. Especially if Stephen is to be taken as a reflection of Joyce's own personality, it is impossible to ignore the feelings of disbelief, mistrust, disappointment and even repulsion, which also exist in Atay's works. Atay's *The Disconnected* is also interwoven with autobiographical elements, and the novel is regarded as the product of "the cultural sub-conscious of Turkish people enwrapped in the West-East dichotomy." (Ecevit, 2011, s.288). Atay's characters, very much like Turkish intelligentsia, feel responsible for the enlightenment and advancement of national development. It is crucial for Atay to become the voice of the whole nation. Therefore, his

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characters, very much like Atay himself, are subject to disappointment, alienation and frustration. Atay's intellectual stance, then, is closer to Saidian one who is "always an outsider, living in self-imposed exile, and on the margins of society. He speaks to, as well as for, a public, necessarily in public, and is properly on the side of the dispossessed, the unrepresented and the forgotten." (Jennings, 1997, s.1-2). Interestingly, Atay also describes the intellectuals as exiled and alienated from society (Atay, 2012, s.128).

Joyce himself and his fictional characters, though critical of the problems of the nation, do not feel responsible for the cultural, political and economic underdevelopment. They have bourgeois attitudes. Joyce's characters are all depressed by the atmosphere and problems of Dublin without assuming any role to change it. Little Chandler, for instance, curses the underdevelopment and powerlessness of his nation. He regrets that there is no opportunity for an artist. Thus he alienates himself from Dublin society. Stephen Dedalus rejects national and cultural values and norms; consequently, he becomes narcissistic. This is what makes Atay different from Joyce. Atay at least attempts to develop collective voice to mirror the problems of his own people and nation. Selim, like Stephen Dedalus, is isolated from his family, friends, love, work, religion and even his own self. However, he does his best to be heard by the disinterested public. He is an intellectual in exile, but with a strong belief in his nation's future prosperity and enlightenment. Although Selim's early childhood can be compared to that of Stephen with his meekness, Atay's character is never completely alienated from social issues. Selim echoes Atay's early attempts to become a respectable writer (Ecevit, 2011, s.255) for the sake of his nation's wellbeing. Turgut also displays Atay's sole purpose in his quest for perfection in art and science. For Turgut, Selim is "the writer of the unwritten novels" (Atay, 2012, s.459) to be the voice of his nation.

Like Joyce's characters, Atay's are also in between two worlds: on the one hand, their own national world of past and present; on the other hand, the new and prospering world of European modernism. Due to this state of mind, they are isolated, alienated, paralysed and exiled.<sup>4</sup> Depressed and disappointed with the dilemma of inbetweenness (One side of the conflict is the East where the whole nation's past glory lies; and the other side is the West which all future prosperity of the nation depends on), Atay's characters face a serious identity-split. This state of mind causes a great conflict for his intellectuals who are condemned to betray the glory of their ancestors for the sake of modernity. That is why almost all disconnected intellectuals in Atay's literature are alienated from society and remain in between the two worlds. Coşkun Ermiş, for instance, calls his nation to a reckoning. As a former teacher of Turkish history, he puts the blame on his people's lagging behind in the political and economic rivalry. He sees his nation as the continuation of the great Ottoman Empire and rejects the idea that the Turkish nation lost its glory. At the same time, he agrees that without rejecting its past glory, Turkish nation could be civilized. On the other hand, Joycean approach to the Irish nation never goes beyond futile discussions about Parnell's nationalism which, in the end, ends up with failure.

One of the basic differences between Atay's 'disconnected' intellectuals and Joyce's modern intellectuals is that Atay has an existential attitude. Like the existentialist, death is the ultimate solution to the feelings of paralysis and frustration in Atay's literary world. Ecevit relates the suicidal tendencies of Atay's characters to autobiographical reflections of his own life and the influence of existentialist writers like Camus and Dostoevsky on Atay (Ecevit, 2011, s.165). Although Joycean modern intellectuals do not choose death in the end or Joyce does not include the tragic ending of his characters in his fiction, Atay always creates catharsis. Selim, Hikmet and Coşkun die whereas Turgut and Server experience a spiritual downfall. Hesse's description of the

<sup>4</sup>For a detailed discussion regarding the theme of 'alienation' in Atay's novels, see: Şahin, "Oğuz Atay'ın Romanlarında Sosyal Yabancılaşma / Social Alienation in Oğuz Atay's Novels", 2315.

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nature of suicides as a dominant motive in modern intellectuals' lives almost recalls the self-annihilation of Atay's 'disconnected' intellectuals. He says:

Suicides present themselves as those who are overtaken by the sense of guilt inherent in individuals, these souls that find the aim of life not in the perfecting and moulding of the self, but in liberating themselves by going back to the mother, back to God, back to the all. Many of these natures are wholly incapable of ever having recourse to real suicide, because they have a profound consciousness of the sin of doing so. For us they are suicides nonetheless; for they see death and not life as the releaser. They are ready to cast themselves away in surrender, to be extinguished and to go back to the beginning (Hesse, 1963, s.11).

Joyce's modern intellectuals are left in a condition of spiritual paralysis after a moment of climax, which is named by Joyce as an 'epiphany'. However, this situation does not take the characters to a physical destruction, at least not at that instant. Atay's intellectuals, on the other hand, internalize suicide as a means of escape from the existential crisis. Atay himself is under the unbearable attraction and power of death and suicide. On a deeper level, Atay embodies suicide as the cost of failure. As opposed to the epiphanies of Joyce, Atay's intellectuals are scapegoats who sacrifice themselves to their nation's wellbeing.

Atay and Joyce's character intellectual attitude towards religion is also different. While Joyce's characters take the church as a source of corruption and enemy of aesthetic creativity, Atay's 'disconnected' intellectuals rarely preoccupied with religion. It is ironical and interesting that Atay's characters' self-sacrifice for the well-being of the others and metaphysical quest for the meaning of human existence give them a Jesus-like stance. Stephen Dedalus sacrifices the church and religion for the sake of art and aesthetic contemplation. The church and Christianity do not provide a remedy for the spiritual crisis of modern intellectuals in Joyce's fiction. Instead, they turn to art as the source of purification. Atay's intellectuals, though not religious in any way, have an obvious spiritual and metaphysical mission. For instance, like Jesus Christ, both Selim from *The Disconnected* and Hikmet from *Dangerous Games* sacrifice themselves for the enlightenment and wellbeing of their people and nation. Atay directly refers to Jesus throughout the two novels to emphasize the intellectuals' spiritual concerns. Selim even writes a letter to Jesus Christ in *The Disconnected* asking for some help out of the meaninglessness of his life as follows:

Dear Jesus,

I am so sorry for what happened. I know that I am to blame. I have been thinking about you all the time for days. I am like glued to your book. You are right in all cases. If yesterday I had known what I think today, everything would be different now. But, if we happen to meet again, you will see how I become a man as you wish. I have changed so much that you will not recognize me. On Wednesday, my parents will not be at home. We can talk in peace if you can come here. Yours affectionately, Selim (Atay, 2012, s.154).

Hikmet, like Selim, is in metaphysical quest to find the secret meaning of existence. Both Selim and Hikmet end up dead in the end and sacrifice themselves to the public. In this respect, Atay's intellectuals are "supposed to risk being burned at the stake, ostracized, or crucified (...) marked by their unyielding distance from practical concerns." (Said, 1994, s.7). This Jesus-like image of Atay's intellectuals also indicates that these characters are not in conflict with religion like Stephen Dedalus. Actually, Atay uses metaphysical and spiritual aspects of religion to display the emotional depth and mental crisis of his intellectuals.

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## 5. Conclusion

In the light of the discussion so far, it can be argued that Atay and Joyce have different ideas of intellectualism. Although Atay adopts some of Joyce's narrative techniques, he appropriates the idea and role of intellectuals to his own purpose. The major difference between Joyce's and Atay's intellectual characters is that Atay's 'disconnected' intellectuals have a strong social consciousness and feeling of responsibility for the future prosperity of their nation whereas Joycean modern intellectuals escape into a world of aesthetics which creates a critical distance between themselves and the public. Atay's intellectuals sacrifice themselves for the sake of their nation's enlightenment and wellbeing. In the end, Atay's 'disconnected' intellectuals either commit suicide or lose their sanity. On the other hand, Joyce's modern intellectuals evade their national and social responsibilities. They ignore oppression and poverty and subject to spiritual paralysis. They isolate themselves into their ivory towers rejecting all social institutions like religion, family and education. In this respect, isolation or 'disconnectedness' can be taken as a virtue for Atay. Joyce's intellectuals, on the other hand, are morally and spiritually weaker. Yet, it has to be stated that Atay's intellectuals are weaker than Joyce's in terms of aesthetic development.

It is clear from the arguments that Atay's drawing on Joyce is not a slavish one. There is an inevitable degree of influence; yet Atay creates his unique style and perspective in his works. In particular, the idea and role of intellectuals in Atay's works have significant differences from Joyce's. Atay's intellectuals are the voice of their nation in the process of crisis and development. The crisis urges Atay to create a socially responsible intellectual type who can guide the public to salvation. Thus, Atay's intellectuals are scapegoats whereas Joyce's are irresponsible, escapist artists. Besides, Atay's sense of intellectualism sounds much more humane and intimate than Joyce's scowling, distanced, escapist and cold-hearted intellectualism.

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