

Portraits (1960)

Yusuf Ziya Ortaç (1895 – 1967)

OVERVIEW

Author and work Yusuf Ziya Ortaç is the son of an engineer, Süleyman Sami. Since his father is an engineer, he is successful at scientific courses. His only entertainment is being able to correctly answer the math questions asked by the magazine called *Fen*. However, because of his literature teachers, he starts to be more involved with words. When his teacher reads aloud his poem in class, he feels honored. He doesn't want to remain as the poet of Vefa High School. He sends his poems to magazines called *Rûbab* and then *Safahat*. Although his poems are accepted, they aren't published because the magazines are closed down. Finally, he wins the poetry competition of the magazine *Kehkeşan*. Thus, he steps into the literary world. In his book called *Portraits*, he shares his observations and memories of the names he met, worked with and influenced by in the literary world in a non-chronological order. He sees the effects of aging on the great poet Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan in his last years. Although he never has the chance to meet Tevfik Fikret in person, he admires him from afar. Since Cenap Şahabettin is a character who mocks young people instead of supporting them, it is difficult for them to get along. Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil is a great writer who hosts literary meetings. Although Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın evokes different feelings as his position changes, Yusuf Ziya admires his courage. He remembers Süleyman Nazif as a man who doesn't hold back his words. Rıza Tevfik is both his neighbor and the person who introduces him to Ziya Gökalp. Although he meets Mehmet Akif, he remains as someone he knows from afar. Celal Sâhir is his friend who often hosts him. Abdullah Cevdet is the boss famous for his stinginess. Mithat Cemal is the famous poet he befriends later in life. Ahmet Haşim is his grumpy but also cheerful colleague. Emin Bülent is a secret poet who has preferred an obscure life. Ziya Gökalp is the most influential literary figure of the Unionists. Although Mehmet Emin Yurdakul is known as the "national poet," he doesn't remember him that way. Ömer Seyfettin receives military training but holds on to life through literature. Enis Behiç Koryürek is someone who has achieved great success at a young age but is defeated in politics. Yahya Kemal Beyatlı is an inconsiderate poet who thinks he is entitled to everything. Ercüment Ekrem Talu is Yusuf Ziya's friend with whom he loves to spend time. İbrahim Alaaddin Gövsa is both a researcher and a politician. Halil Nihat Boztepe has built his world in Istanbul and Ankara thanks to his admiration for the right person. Reşat Nuri Güntekin is a cheerful and easy-going writer. Mahmut Yesari is an unhappy writer due to his physical appearance. Mahmut Kemal İnal is a literary historian whom Yusuf Ziya describes as both religious and spiteful.

CHARACTERS

Abdullah Cevdet	Physician, poet, and translator
Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan	Diplomat, poet, and writer
Celal Sâhir	Poet, writer, and politician
Cenap Şahabettin	Poet and writer
Enis Behiç Koryürek	Poet, teacher, bureaucrat, and diplomat
Ercüment Ekrem Talu	Journalist, writer, and politician
Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel	Poet, politician, and teacher
Halil Nihat Boztepe	Poet and politician
Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın	Journalist, writer, and politician
İbrahim Alaaddin Gövsa	Poet, writer, educator, and politician
Mahmut Kemal İnal	Writer, historian, museum curator, and sufi
Mahmut Yesari	Writer
Mehmet Emin Yurdakul	Poet and politician
Mithat Cemal Kuntay	Writer, poet, and lawyer
Ömer Seyfettin	Soldier, poet, writer, and teacher
Reşat Nuri Güntekin	Writer and teacher
Süleyman Nazif	Poet, writer, and bureaucrat
Tevfik Fikret	Poet and teacher
Yahya Kemal Beyatlı	Poet, writer, politician, and diplomat

SYNOPSIS

The first portrait belongs to Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan, a great poet whom Yusuf Ziya admires. He briefly describes how aging makes this great poet feel. Although Yusuf Ziya doesn't know Tevfik Fikret personally, he offers some events that make him admire his character. Cenap Şahabettin, as an intelligent and knowledgeable literary figure, incurs the wrath of the young Yusuf Ziya, but they later reconcile. Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's villa in Yeşilköy hosts literary meetings with various treats during the difficult days of the war. Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın takes his place in Yusuf Ziya's world as a brave writer. This place is shaken from time to time, but doesn't change. Süleyman Nazif, as an outspoken person, doesn't hesitate to say his word either to Abdülhamid or a high-ranking soldier. Rıza Tevfik is Yusuf Ziya's neighbor in Bebek and the person who introduces him to Ziya Gökalp, making him give up aruz meter. Mehmet Akif Ersoy remains a poet he doesn't spend time with often. Celal Sahir is his close friend who often hosts him and holds literary meetings. Abdullah Cevdet is the stingy owner of *İçtihat* where advocates of secularism gather. Mithat Cemal is a famous poet and Yusuf Ziya's close friend. Ahmet Haşim is his grumpy but cheerful colleague of whom he feels obliged to take care because he has no one. Emin Bülent is a hidden gem who prefers to stay in the background even though he loves writing poetry. Ziya Gökalp is the name that encourages Yusuf Ziya to write syllabic poems. Mehmet Emin Yurdakul is known as the "national poet" but especially after becoming a member of parliament, he remains as a wannabe in Yusuf Ziya's mind. Ömer Seyfettin is an entertaining writer who enjoys attending the meetings at Celal Sahir's house and sharing his literary texts with his friends. Enis Behiç Koryürek is a poet and statesman, influenced by Ziya Gökalp just like Yusuf Ziya, but he can't find what he is looking for in politics. Yahya Kemal Beyatlı is a great poet but a very little person for Yusuf Ziya. Ercüment Ekrem Talu is Yusuf Ziya's colleague whom he meets at a late age. İbrahim Alâaddin Gövsa is one of the writers of *Akbaba* but later becomes a member of parliament. Halil Nihat Boztepe from Trabzon, thanks to his admiration for Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil, first enters the literary circles in Istanbul and then becomes a member of parliament. Reşat Nuri Güntekin publishes a humor newspaper to rival *Akbaba* but is unsuccessful. However, instead of feeling sad, he mocks his failure. Mahmut Yesari is a writer of *Akbaba* who often suffers from depression. Yusuf Ziya is forced to complete the novels he leaves unfinished when he disappears. Mahmut Kemal Inal is a literary historian whom Yusuf Ziya meets at a young age and whose respect he gains as he gets older.

EVENTS

Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan: With the Great Poet

When Yusuf Ziya is eighteen, he writes a review of Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan's work *Finten*. After his article is published in *Türk Yurdu*, Abdülhak Hamit invites him to his house. Yusuf Ziya examines him closely and thinks how European his manners are. He tells Yusuf Ziya that he is the critic who understands him best. Yusuf Ziya is very happy to hear this from him at that age. He last sees him at his house ten days before his death. When he and Mithat Cemal go to visit him, Abdülhak Hamit tells him that he has written a poem. He hands his notebook to Yusuf Ziya. When Yusuf Ziya sees nothing but a few lines and dots in the notebook, he says that he isn't used to his handwriting and that he doesn't have his glasses with him. Abdülhak Hamit hands the notebook to Mithat Cemal. Mithat Cemal, seeing the notebook, remains silent. Abdülhak Hamit has the light turned on, takes the notebook, puts on his monocle and looks at it for a long time. Then he tosses the notebook and cries; "I am not afraid of death, I am disgusted by it!"

Tevfik Fikret: Admiration from Afar

While Yusuf Ziya is walking in Bebek in the August heat of 1914, he sees Tevfik Fikret walking with an umbrella in his hand. He follows him for a while until he disappears. That day, he sees Tevfik Fikret for the first and last time.

When Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın becomes the principal of Vefa High School, he is made to take an oath of allegiance to Abdülhamid, as per tradition. After Tevfik Fikret learns of this, he sends an insulting card to Hüseyin Cahit. Later, when the Union and Progress Party offers him the position of Minister of Education, he replies that he can't undertake the job while there is a writer like Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem. However, when he is offered the position of principal of Galatasaray High School, from which he graduated, he immediately accepts it.

One day, he sees a student signing in the corridor of the high school. He directly walks towards the boy. As the boy expects him to slap him, Tevfik Fikret only erases the signature on the wall. Another day, a jug is broken in the high school cafeteria. He asks the guilty student who breaks it. The student says he didn't break it. When Tevfik Fikret says a student wouldn't lie and believes him, the student tearfully confesses that he lied. During the 31st of March Incident, he stands in front of the high school and fearlessly confronts the Islamist-led rebels. He dies of diabetes in 1925 at the age of forty-eight.

Cenap Şahabettin: Against the Arrogant Poet

Yusuf Ziya comes to know and love him through his poems written for *Servet-i Fünun*. He first sees him at the tea meetings organized by *İçtihat* on Wednesdays. Cenap Şahabettin is a physician, speaks French very well and likes to show off his knowledge. Yusuf Ziya says that it is impossible not to admire him but also to love him. Because he thinks that he uses his intelligence not to enlighten a person but to belittle him. He also states that he has suffered for relying on his own intelligence and knowledge.

During the First World War, Cenap Şahabettin is a guest at Cemal Pasha's headquarters in Syria with Süleyman Nazif. The Syrian president rewards these two men of letters. However, Cenap Şahabettin loses the small fortune he earned there in the stock market. Secondly, he doesn't support the War of Independence thinking that it won't be successful.

During Yusuf Ziya's youth, Cenap Şahabettin writes articles mocking him and his friends. Yusuf Ziya responds by telling a joke implying that the real reason for his attitude towards young writers is old age. Cenap Şahabettin is so offended by this comment that when Yusuf Ziya greets him, he shouts, "I don't want it!" However, when Yusuf Ziya comes across him at a party after he starts publishing the humor newspaper *Akbaba*, he treats him more politely than ever.

When he dies in the winter, very few people attend his funeral. While Yusuf Ziya and a few friends are returning from the funeral, their car gets stuck in the snow. Faruk Nafiz sticks his head out of the car and his hat disappears in the blizzard. Mithat Cemal offers the driver some money and sends him to a nearby barracks. Later, soldiers come, take them to the barracks.

Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil: Literary Conversations during War Days

Yusuf Ziya is invited to a meeting at the City Theaters to read his play *Binnaz* to the literary committee during the difficult days of World War I. Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil is also at the long table in the meeting room. Yusuf Ziya recognizes him from his works and considers him the father of Turkish novels written in a European style. Later, he begins to attend the literary meetings Halit Ziya organizes at his villa in Yeşilköy on Fridays. While everyone is barely able to find food due to the war, all kinds of food and drink are available at these meetings. Everyone has eaten their fill. In the evening, Halit Ziya's son plays the piano and prepares them for their departure.

When Halit Ziya becomes Sultan Reşat's secretary, Sultan Reşat expresses his happiness because Halit Ziya gets along well with his chief chamberlain, Hurşit. Thereupon, Halit Ziya says that they are like brothers. Sultan Reşat, tired of the sibling fights in the dynasty, corrects him saying, "You are not like brothers, you are like friends!"

Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın: Emotions Coming and Going

Yusuf Ziya saves up money to buy his works and reads them with pleasure. He especially states that Hüseyin Cahit's story called "Bruised Bonito" summarizes his philosophy of life. The fisherman in the story takes a bruised bonito from among the fish he caught and gives it to his child passing by saying, "Take this home." As they have no right to eat good things.

When Ali Kemal, the Paris correspondent of *Sabah*, who is a supporter of the sultan and the Allied Forces, publishes an article about what he saw at the ball given at the Palais de l'Élysée, Hüseyin Cahit realizes that the same article has been published in French in *Figaro* and that Ali Kemal has plagiarized. This revelation attracts so much attention that even *Malûmat*, a magazine supporting the sultan, makes fun of it. His arguments with Ali Kemal continue in the newspaper *Tanin*, which he later publishes.

An interview with Hüseyin Cahit while he is working in the commission established to prevent black marketeering during the First World War causes Yusuf Ziya to lose interest in him. In the interview, it is explained in detail that Hüseyin Cahit's house is decorated with expensive and luxurious items. It is written that he feeds the candy he takes from a crystal bowl to his dog. Upon reading this, Yusuf Ziya gets angry because he has to drink his tea with raisins since sugar is very expensive. After the British exiles Hüseyin Cahit to Malta during the Armistice, his feelings begin to change. However, he doesn't like his aggressive attitude in Lausanne. Later, when he defends his own ideas against Atatürk at the Language Congress held in Dolmabahçe Palace, he is happy to see his beloved Hüseyin Cahit again. As he is tried in the Independence Tribunal, his admiration for him flares up again because he has the courage to say, "I would rather be a prisoner than a judge in such a court!"

Süleyman Nazif: A Man Like a Tiger

On the morning of February 9, 1919, an article titled "A Black Day" is published. An hour later, the French general gives the order to shoot the author of this article. The author is Süleyman Nazif. Yusuf Ziya first sees him at the Faculty of Letters. When he speaks, he reminds Yusuf Ziya of a tiger. When Süleyman Nazif is in his early twenties, he hears that it is planned to establish Armenia in the eastern provinces. Upon this news, he sends a fearless telegram to Abdulhamid. During his years as governor of Baghdad, he gives an ironic response to the telegram from the Third Army Commander Hafız İsmail Hakkı Paşa requesting sugar and tea within twenty-four hours, stating that the telegram he wrote to the Chinese emperor has been sent to him by mistake. Since he is a proud man, he first quits smoking and then drinking raki as he can't afford them. His oldest friend Cenap Şahabettin is his son's father-in-law.

Rıza Tevfik: The Man Holding a Grudge

When Yusuf Ziya moves to a house in Bebek with his mother after his father's death, they become neighbors with Rıza Tevfik, who is a physician, poet and philosopher. He is a man who loves to imitate everyone. However, he is a sharp-tongued person. When he is an MP for Edirne, he is injured in the head by the Unionists. When the enemies come to Çatalca during the Balkan Wars, he writes a couplet criticizing this. "The daughter of the one who curses my mother has taken the seed of a Bulgarian infidel!" Yusuf Ziya states that although these expressions seem hostile, they actually express his spite against the Unionists. Since he doesn't support the national struggle in Anatolia and argues that it isn't possible to fight against countries that won the First World War, he is sent into exile when the national struggle is successful. He can return to Istanbul as an old man.

Mehmet Akif Ersoy: A Man Who Does Not Look Like a Poet

Yusuf Ziya boards the same ferry with Mehmet Akif for two years and sits across from him. Thus, he secretly listens to Mehmet Akif's conversations with his friends. He likens him to a clerk, a merchant, an imam, a landowner, but never to a poet. When they meet two years later at Mithat Cemal's house, Mehmet Akif has him read poetry. After that, he sees him once at Nurettin Artam's lodge, which he has inherited from his father, and twice again at Mithat Cemal's house. Apart from these, they always run into each other here and there.

Mehmet Akif's father, Mehmet Tahir, migrated from his village in Kosovo to Istanbul and becomes a teacher in Fatih. He is known for his good intentions by his circle. His mother, Emine is the daughter of a family from Bukhara. Although Mehmet Akif seems rude, he is polite but quick-witted. One day, when he goes to Tevfik the Ney Player's place, known for his drunkardness and sharp tongue, for dinner, after washing his hands, Tevfik hands him a towel. Mehmet Akif doesn't take the towel. Instead, he takes out his handkerchief. Tevfik asks why he doesn't take the towel, he says that he has just cleaned his hands and can't get them dirty again.

He becomes a Burdur deputy in the First Grand National Assembly and supports the national struggle in Anatolia. Rumors arise that he avoids wearing a hat because of the Hat Law as he spends the last years of his life in Egypt. However, Yusuf Ziya says the truth is different. Abbas Halim Paşa has prepared a comfortable life for him in Egypt, away from the worries of making a living, so that he can write a play about Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub. This is the reason for his departure. Moreover, the Egyptian government asks him to teach Turkish literature at the university. Yusuf Ziya sees him for the last time in his sickbed.

Celal Sâhir: Permanent Host

Yusuf Ziya meets Celal Sahir through his poetry book called *Beyaz Gölgeleler* (White Shadows). He is known as a "feminist poet" because Celal Sahir introduces himself as such. Before World War I, Yusuf Ziya starts attending the meetings organized by the Knowledge Association. In the second week of these meetings, he reads his first poem written in syllabic meter. As he is about to leave the meeting Celal Sahir calls out to him to say that Ziya Gökalp, who has encouraged him to abandon the aruz meter for national reasons and use the syllabic meter, wants to have his poem published in *Türk Yurdu*. On the evening of the day the poem is published, Yusuf Ziya is coming down the stairs when Celal Sahir calls out to him again. He takes him to a room. The director of the magazine gives Yusuf Ziya a gold coin in exchange for his poem.

Celal Sahir is the son of Ismail Hakkı Pasha, the governor of Yemen. His mother, Fehime Nüzhet, is also a poet. Celal Sahir begins his literary career with the *Edebiyatı Cedide* (New Literature) members organized in *Serveti Fünun*. Later, he joins the Fecri Âti (Dawn of the future) movement that emerged as a reaction to the *Edebiyatı Cedide* movement and eventually writes free verse poems. During the armistice years, writers who gather under his leadership publish a book every month; First Book, Second Book, Third Book... They often gather at his house and chat. At night, Celal Sahir gives his bed to Yusuf Ziya.

One night, Ömer Seyfettin reads his new play called *Mahçupluk İmtihanı* (The test of Shame) out loud to everyone at one of these meetings. While reading, he imitates the voices and facial expressions of each character. Everyone laughs heartily at his imitations, tears streaming down their eyes. Months later, when Ömer Seyfettin dies, they sob again at Celal Sahir's house.

Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, in an article about Celal Sahir, says that during the armistice days when all the crimes are attributed to the Unionists, he fearlessly says that he is a Unionist. Ahmet Ağaoğlu also writes that the only person who writes a letter to him while he is in exile is Celal Sahir. Yusuf Ziya runs into him one rainy day. When he realizes that he has a fever, he forces him to return home, but Celal Sahir says he will return after visiting Ziya Gökalp, who is under arrest. Since he is someone who values the thoughts of the people around him, he even becomes the headman of Hobyar, where he lives, upon request. After the declaration of the Republic, he becomes a member of parliament for Zonguldak. He smokes dozens of cigarettes every day and doesn't live long. He dies at the age of fifty-two.

Abdullah Cevdet: A Stingy Boss

Abdullah Cevdet is the owner of the magazine called *İçtihat*. *Türk Yurdu* is the magazine of nationalists, *Sebilürreşat* is the magazine of Islamists and *İçtihat* is the magazine of secularists. Yusuf Ziya sends his first poems to *İçtihat*. A year later, when he starts attending the meetings held every Wednesday in the magazine, he meets Abdullah Cevdet. Abdullah Cevdet is a doctor and a poet. He fights against reactionaries. However, he is a complicated person. When Arabic letters are in use, he wants Latin letters, and when Latin letters replace them, he complains that he can't find the exact equivalents of Arabic letters in Latin letters. He also has a flaw; he is stingy. He uses the cheapest paper in the cheapest printing house. One day, Yusuf Ziya asks him for the payment for the poems he has written for a few years without payment. When Abdullah Cevdet hears this, he almost faints. He leaves the room and returns a short while later. He says that he is giving him everything in the magazine's safe and puts some money in his pocket. Yusuf Ziya tries to guess how much he gives by the jingling sound falling into his pocket. As soon as he returns from the street of the magazine, he reaches into his pocket and takes out the money. It is only twenty-three cents.

A poem written by Abdullah Cevdet during World War I is printed with a printing error. "Öksüz" means orphan while "öküz" means ox in Turkish. When the letter "s" in "öksüz" isn't printed, the word turns into "öküz." The "s" in his sentences "I am the "öksüz" (orphan) of the homeland/I am the eye of the "öksüzs" orphans" isn't printed. So, "öksüz" (orphan) becomes "öküz" (ox). Everyone who sees this mistake makes fun of him for years.

Mithat Cemal Kuntay: The Poet Who Lives Beautifully

One day, during World War I, Yusuf Ziya boards the ferry. His friend nudges him and points to the person sitting across from them. This person is Mithat Cemal. His clothes are clean and ironed but worn-out. His shoes are also patched. A few years later, Yusuf Ziya is invited to a tea party Mithat

Cemal hosts. Mithat Cemal is a notary now. After this, they meet at other people's houses or restaurants.

On a summer day, Mithat Cemal is sunbathing in the garden of the Anatolian Club when he sees Yusuf Ziya and invites him over. While they are chatting, their teas arrive. As Yusuf Ziya sees that he has just put exactly eight sugars in his tea, he warns him. Mithat Cemal replies that he has put eight sugars because there is no more sugar. They laugh, and this laugh makes them friends.

On the fifteenth anniversary of the Republic, he writes the poem that is etched in people's minds with the words "Land is a homeland if there are people who die for it." In another poem he writes to a woman after losing his wife, he says, "I looked for an altitude without cliffs/ I found that peak in you today." However, he holds back because the woman he loves is rich. Mithat Cemal isn't rich but he lives a beautiful life. He lives in a beautiful house, drives a car most of the time, eats at the Abdullah Efendi restaurant but travels around penniless. He goes to Europe for the first time in 1951. They spend the summer of 1955 together again, but this time Mithat Cemal is a little calm. He thinks of all kinds of illnesses but never thinks that he has cancer. One winter day, he enters the room where his wife died, lies down in her bed and never wakes up again.

Ahmet Haşim: A Fierce and Lonely Friend

Yusuf Ziya writes an article in *Akbaba*, making fun of the poem "Half Way" written by Ahmet Haşim. In the evening, Ahmet Haşim comes to his room laughing. That's how they become friends. Ahmet Haşim is a bit of a grumpy man. Yusuf Ziya thinks the reason for this is that while almost all of his friends are deputies or ambassadors, he is a low-paid French teacher. While Ahmet Haşim was fighting in Çanakkale, one of his friends was Cemal Pasha's aide-de-camp in Syria. The other was in Switzerland to receive treatment for his lungs. He lives in a small apartment in Kadıköy. He is brave while writing, but as soon as he sees his writings published, he almost dies of fear.

One day, Yusuf Ziya is sunbathing on the beach in a red swimsuit when he comes up to him with his hat and walking stick, saying that he looks like Mahmut Şevket Pasha's Turkish flag wrapped coffin. Yusuf Ziya thinks that he wants to make people forget that he is the one who looks ridiculous in a place where everyone is wearing swimsuits. He doesn't wear a swimsuit because he is embarrassed to show his body to others.

One day, Yusuf Ziya and his other friends go to his house to take him to the hospital because he is sick. They wait for half an hour later, but Ahmet Haşim doesn't show up. They search all the rooms in the house and finally find him in the kitchen. He is eating a pot of tomato rice. When Yusuf Ziya asks what he is doing, he says that he can't eat anything but boiled zucchini in the hospital, and that he will die anyway, and that he wants to eat something good before his death. After a month of treatment, he returns home more tired. While he is in his sickbed, he marries for the first time and sarcastically says that he too can leave a tearful widow behind.

Emin Bülent: A Poet Hiding in the Dark

Emin Bülent, known as the poet of *Grudge* during the Constitutional Monarchy period, is the son of Ömer Pasha and the daughter of Marshal Ömer Pasha. He studies at Galatasaray High School and is among those who found the Fecri Âti (Dawn of the future) group. He is a man who doesn't like fame and likes to be alone. He often goes hunting. He volunteers for the Balkan Wars. He also volunteers in World War II. When he returns, he continues to work as a civil servant. When Yusuf Ziya visits him and asks if he has any new poems, he reads his poem The Song of the Giants. However, he doesn't want it to be published anywhere. His last words before he dies remind us of the Balkan War: "We are fighting in Lüleburgaz!"

Ziya Gökalp: An Influential Leader

After Yusuf Ziya becomes Rıza Tevfik's neighbor in Bebek, Rıza Tevfik takes him to the Knowledge Association on a Friday. Until that day, Ziya Gökalp is only the author of the poem "Turan" for Yusuf Ziya. When they go to the association, Rıza Tevfik leaves him alone with Ziya Gökalp saying that he needs to see Abdullah Cevdet. There is a long table in the room and Ziya Gökalp is at the head of it. A little later, Ziya Gökalp gives a speech explaining why it is necessary to write syllabic poetry. Yusuf Ziya brings his first syllabic poem the following week.

After that, he sees him in three different places; at his home, at the Union and Progress headquarters and at the Bekirağa Division, which is a prison. At his home, Yusuf Ziya takes notes as he tells him what he knows about Turkish mythology. His house is very old, and his friends buy his winter wood. They gather at the Union and Progress headquarters every day and discuss an issue. Ziya Gökalp states that the literal meaning of a mosque is a place of gathering, and says that there will be benches and chairs in mosques, and that men and women will sit there to discuss social issues. A prayer room is a place of prostration. Muslims will gather and pray in these places. He is arrested by the British during the armistice days. Yusuf Ziya visits him twice a week until he is exiled to Malta. Since he has no money, his friend Cafer Dikmen gives him a few hundred liras when the ship is about to depart. Yusuf Ziya notes how surprising it is that such a penniless man can later become a millionaire politician.

Mehmet Emin Yurdakul: A Man Who Is Not What He Seems

Mehmet Emin, known as a “national poet,” becomes famous after the Balkan Wars thanks to a poetry book, but his poems are written so carelessly that Süleyman Nazif finds them embarrassing. Mehmet Emin becomes a member of parliament after the War of Independence. When he takes the floor in the parliament, he talks so long that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk warns him to cut it short and get to the point.

A few months after the Hat Revolution, Yusuf Ziya has lunch with him. Mehmet Emin stands in front of him with his striking coat, hat on his head, walking stick in his hand and cigarette in his mouth asking, “Am I completely European?” Yusuf Ziya thinks he is as European as a mannequin dressed in a hat and coat in a store window.

Ömer Seyfettin: The Cadet Taking Refuge in Literature

Ömer Seyfettin is a cadet who responds harshly when a young man attacks him. Then they go to the principal’s office. The boy claims that Ömer Seyfettin hit him with an iron or a stone. Ömer Seyfettin says that he only hit him with his fist. Later, he fights on the front lines in the Balkan Wars. He is held captive in Greece for a year. His only dream is to earn his living with his pen. He joins the Committee of Union and Progress, but he always states that he is disgusted by all of them except Ziya Gökalp. He marries a famous tailor. They have a daughter and then separate. He settles in a mansion in Kalamış. Here, he reads and writes alone. He puts his stories in envelopes on which the names of the stories are written and takes them to the owner of the Zaman Library. He chooses the one whose name he likes and buys it. The price of each story is five liras. When he is told that his stories in *Vakit* have long and boring conversations, he states that the owner of *Vakit*, Hakkı Tarık Us, pays him per line. After this, Hakkı Tarık starts to pay him like the owner of Zaman Library. Yusuf Ziya receives news of his death the morning after a night spent at Celal Sahir’s house. He dies from diabetes like Tevfik Fikret at the age of thirty-six. They bury him in the Mahmut Baba Cemetery in March 1920, but since a tram garage is going to be built there, his body is moved to the Asri Cemetery in Zincirlikuyu.

Enis Behiç Koryürek: The Defeated Politician

While Yusuf Ziya is still a high school student, he reads of Enis Behiç’s aruz rhythmical poems. He meets him at a meeting at the Knowledge Association. That day, he thinks he is proud of the fame he has achieved at such a young age. Enis Behiç has a degree in Political Sciences. He knows French very well. He is a civil servant at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Like Yusuf Ziya, he is also influenced by Ziya Gökalp and brings his syllabic poem to the next meeting. He later collects all his poems in a book called *Heritage*.

He reaches the highest points in his professional life. He becomes the undersecretary of the Ministry of Labor. When the Democrat Party is founded, he resigns and joins the party. But the Democrat Party loses in the 1946 elections. One summer morning, while Yusuf Ziya is sitting with his friends in a place in Ankara, Enis Behiç passes by them. They invite him over but he quietly tells them that he is going to the Democrat Party headquarters. Yusuf Ziya asks him sarcastically why he is speaking quietly. Then he shouts that he is going to the temple of the Democrat Party and leaves. They stare after him. Yusuf Ziya later realizes his mistake. He and his friends are elected MPs of the winning party. Enis Behiç is the losing candidate of the opposition party. When he sees him walking on a street in Istanbul fifteen days later, he immediately goes up to him and apologizes. A few years later, he receives news of his death.

Yahya Kemal Beyatlı: A Great Poet but a Small Person

Yahya Kemal, whose first poem is published in the magazine called *Irtika*, lives in France and learns French at a young age. After returning, he becomes a professor, a member of parliament and an ambassador. He builds a place in people's hearts with his poetry. However, Yusuf Ziya states that he isn't satisfied with these. He meets him at the Turkish Hearth. Yahya Kemal is a great poet, but Yusuf Ziya says that you have to give up your own honor to be friends with him.

One day, while they are having lunch at Abdullah Efendi's restaurant, Yahya Kemal sits at his table. As Yusuf Ziya praises his poems, he becomes happy. They eat happily. At the end of the meal, Yahya Kemal brings a bowl to the table and starts to wash his dentures in it. As Yusuf Ziya sees the food residues floating in the bowl, he feels nauseous and tells Yahya Kemal that he has no right to do this. Thereupon, Yahya Kemal replies that he doesn't have to put up with this by never sitting at the same table with him again. Yusuf Ziya points out that he is the one sitting at his table. Yahya Kemal gets up from the table and leaves.

One day, Yahya Kemal asks Halit Fahri Ozansoy how much he gets paid. When Halit Fahri says he gets eighty liras, he laughs insultingly and says that he gets eighty liras from the nation without doing anything. Yusuf Ziya adds that when he says these sentences, he is an ambassador who gets thousands of liras from the nation. And he expresses that with his death, they lost a great poet but a small person.

Ercüment Ekrem Talu: A friend to Chat and Make up Lies With

Yusuf Ziya meets him in person when he asks him to write for *Akbaba*. Ercüment Ekrem accepts the offer immediately. Three days later, he brings a very readable and carefully written story. A few days later, he comes to visit Yusuf Ziya with his wife Feriha, his friend Reşit Halit and a neighbor. They take out the playing cards they brought with them as soon as they have their coffee. They play poker. They laugh heartily when Yusuf Ziya wins. Because they brought the cards thinking that he was a poet and therefore didn't stand a chance of winning.

Ercüment Ekrem, the son of Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem, is a man of the people despite growing up in a mansion. He is very good at imitating. One summer, he and Yusuf Ziya rent a mansion together. Ercüment Ekrem stays upstairs and Yusuf Ziya downstairs. They spend their days in this mansion in Arnavutköy drinking raki.

Ercüment Ekrem holds various civil servant positions but is usually fired because he is sharp-tongued. Then he returns to writing. One evening, Yusuf Ziya sees him worried and asks him what is wrong. *Ikdam* calls Ercüment Ekrem and asks him if he has a novel ready to be published and he says yes, but there is no novel. The newspaper asks him for a name to promote the novel. They come up with a name together: The Arsonist. Ercüment Ekrem will tell the story of a womanizer in this novel. He spends the last days of his life alone. Although he wants to be a member of parliament, the People's Party doesn't nominate him. When Yapı ve Kredi Bank presents him a watch in his fortieth year of art, he is very happy. However, he drinks constantly. Despite having diabetes and heart disease, he continues to drink.

Ibrahim Alaaddin Gövsa: A Quick-witted Researcher

Ibrahim Alaaddin, who writes for *Akbaba* for many years, is actually a literature teacher. He prepares a four-volume Encyclopedia of Famous Men. When he gives the book to Atatürk as a gift, Atatürk starts to leaf through the pages and sees that the famous bandit Çakırcalı Efe is also included in the book. He gets angry and criticizes the fact that he has included both himself and Çakırcalı in the same book. Ibrahim Alaaddin defends himself by saying that the book is about famous people, not great people, and that there are both good and bad celebrities.

In the last years of his life, he suffers from hearing loss. He puts his hearing aid in his ear and the battery in his top jacket pocket. When he sees Yusuf Ziya, he laughs and asks if he has seen another man with his ear in his pocket. He suddenly loses his life.

Halil Nihat Boztepe: The Man Who Admires the Right Person

Born in Trabzon, Halil Nihat has read all of Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's works. He admires him. One day, he learns that Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil is coming to Trabzon and begins waiting for the ship. His friends ask him if he knows Halit Ziya. He doesn't know him, but he will certainly recognize him as soon as he

sees him. He isn't like any other person. However, Halit Ziya leaves the ship and settles in his hotel. He receives a letter written by Halit Nihat Boztepe. Halit Nihat receives a reply to this letter three months later and moves to Istanbul.

Yusuf Ziya meets him shortly before the start of World War I. He also attends the meetings at the Ikbal Coffeehouse. Over time, he becomes known. In fact, he becomes a name sought by every newspaper. He knows Diwan literature, aruz meter, and French very well. After a while, he becomes a member of parliament. Because he loves Ibrahim Alaaddin Gövsa so much, when he isn't nominated again in an election, he asks Atatürk for him. Atatürk doesn't refuse him and makes them both deputies again. Since he doesn't have a partner, he stays at Ibrahim Alaaddin's house after losing one eye. One night, he ends his life by swallowing sleeping pills.

Reşat Nuri Güntekin: An Easygoing Writer

When Reşat Nuri is the principal of a middle school in Fatih, he hears that Yusuf Ziya has written a play and calls him over. Yusuf Ziya goes to the school. They sit at desks in an empty classroom. Reşat Nuri listens to his play carefully. They later meet at *La Pensé Turque*. Halit Carim, who publishes this magazine, is looking for someone to translate the articles from Turkish to French. They recommend Reşat Nuri the European. An invitation is immediately sent to Reşat Nuri and two days later, he shows up. However, since no one knows Reşat Nuri and Reşat Nuri the European, the confusion isn't understood. Reşat Nuri does the requested translations very well.

He doesn't like the humor magazine *Kelebek* meaning butterfly, which he publishes together with a few people, and comes to Yusuf Ziya's room in *Akbaba* and makes fun of his own magazine by saying, "Yusuf Ziya, look at its name and understand how it will struggle with *Akbaba* meaning vulture." The events that anger many people make him laugh.

He is a member of parliament for a while, but he is seen in Istanbul more than in parliament. He writes articles under his own name and under some pseudonyms like Firefly. He is a UNESCO representative for a while. While in Paris, a thief breaks into his house at night. The police say that he was lucky that he didn't wake up and confront the thief while he was inside, otherwise the thief would have definitely attacked him.

Mahmut Yesari: Ugliness

Yusuf Ziya meets him in an art magazine called *Nedim*. He doesn't like him right away because he finds him very ugly. However, over time, they start going out together in the evenings. One night, they want to go to a bar with a group of friends, but Mahmut Yesari, a little drunk, starts crying by shouting that he can't see any woman with that face.

A while later, he leaves a novel he started in *Akbaba* unfinished. Yusuf Ziya asks for him but can't find him anywhere. He has to continue the novel himself. Then Mahmut Yesari suddenly shows up and says he is in love. He gets married and then gets separated. After he starts drinking during the day, Yusuf Ziya asks him to tell him the plot of the novel he started before disappearing.

One of his friends works in City Theaters but is looking for an extra job. Mahmut Yesari gets the police chief involved to put him on the payroll. One day, when he runs into the police chief, the chief tells Mahmut Yesari that his friend talks behind his back, reporting everything he does to him in order to deserve the money.

Mahmut Kemal Inal: Religious and Spiteful

When Yusuf Ziya is a seventeen-year-old high school student, one day he sees a man to whom everyone shows great respect in a used-book bazaar. This person is Mahmut Kemal Inal. He is a literary historian. When they meet at a coffeehouse later, Mahmut Kemal asks him, "Are you that devil?" He is pleased that Yusuf Ziya knows Diwan literature, aruz meter, and has a humor magazine. He invites Yusuf Ziya to his mansion. At the mansion, he sees important literary figures of the period. He sits down in a place Mahmut Kemal shows him. They listen to the musicians there together.

Mahmut Kemal knows in detail the birth and death dates and life stories of all the historical figures he is asked. Over the years, he becomes friends with Yusuf Ziya. Yusuf Ziya asks him something and he

pretends not to listen while he answers. His face navigates different emotions, taking on different shapes and makes Yusuf Ziya think that Mahmut Kemal would have been a great actor.

Yusuf Ziya states that Mahmut Kemal is both religious and spiteful, and says that he only eats at the houses of Muslims who value cleanliness. As Ramadan approaches, his friends send him a variety of food. When someone who doesn't know that he doesn't consume cheese sends him cheese, he writes in a letter that he wants to return it and calls cheese "the bastard of milk."

One Ramadan, he is invited to Necmettin Molla's mansion in Cihangir. After iftar, he wants to go to the bathroom. The servant takes him to the bathroom. When he opens the door, he is surprised by the flush toilet he sees for the first time. He calls out to the servant and says, "Come on, what are we supposed to do now? Let's decide together!"

Yusuf Ziya says that he has spent seventy years of his eighty-seven-year life reading and writing, and that he has spent his money neither on food nor on clothes, only on books. However, when he dies, he leaves all his savings to hospitals.

THEMES

APPEARANCE

Deception Yusuf Ziya frequently sees Mehmet Akif Ersoy on the ferry and likens him to a civil servant, landowner, and an imam but never to a poet. He can't find his tough appearance suitable for the emotional world of a poet. However, Mehmet Akif is both a poet and a much more sensitive and gentle man than he seems.

Although Mehmet Emin Yurdakul is known as the "national poet," after being a member of parliament, he stands in front of Yusuf Ziya with his new coat, hat, cane and a cigarette in his mouth and asks if he looks European enough. Yusuf Ziya thinks that he can only be as European as a mannequin.

Look It takes time for Yusuf Ziya to warm up to Mahmut Yesari because he finds him ugly. But later he realizes that Mahmut Yesari is also suffering because he thinks he is ugly. He witnesses how a man's appearance can be his vulnerability.

RELATIONSHIP

Friendship Yusuf Ziya and his other literary friends often spend the night at Celal Sahir's house and discuss literature. They read the texts they have written to each other for the first time at his house. The place where they listen to Ömer Seyfettin's play from his own mouth and the place where they receive news of his death is Celal Sahir's house.

Yusuf Ziya rents a mansion with Ercüment Ekrem Talu in the summer because he enjoys spending time with him. When he doesn't have to go out, they drink raki and chat for hours. When Ercüment Ekrem is asked for a novel by a newspaper, he says that he has written a novel, although he hasn't. He and Yusuf Ziya come up with the title and story of this novel together.

FLAWS

Greed Abdullah Cevdet is such a stingy boss that when Yusuf Ziya asks for the payment for the articles he has written for several years without payment, he gets uncomfortable and gives him only twenty-three cents.

Narcissism Yahya Kemal Beyatlı has such an effect on Yusuf Ziya that Yusuf Ziya thinks that he only wants to stay in relationships where he is the praised party. When Yusuf Ziya is disturbed by him cleaning his dentures at the same table after they eat together, the response he gives to Yusuf Ziya instead of apologizing is a good example of someone who thinks he is entitled to everything. For the same reason, he finds the audacity to make fun of Halit Fahri Ozansoy's salary.

Pride Yusuf Ziya finds Cenap Şahabettin very intelligent and knowledgeable, but thinks that he is a smartass who uses his knowledge not to enlighten people but to humiliate them. Cenap Şahabettin is so confident in his own intelligence that he invests the small fortune he has earned in the stock market and argues that the national struggle can't be successful. However, he is wrong in both. He doesn't

even receive the greeting of Yusuf Ziya, who criticizes him for mocking the youth instead of encouraging them.

Hostility Rıza Tevfik fights with the Unionists during his days as an MP for Edirne. He even gets injured in the head because of this. This hostility becomes so much a part of him that during the Balkan Wars he expresses his spite by writing a poem to the Unionists, who once cursed his own mother, implying that their sisters were raped by the enemies.

POLITICS

Privilege As people have difficulty even finding bread to eat because of the war, Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil, who served as Sultan Reşat's clerk, has a variety of food and drink in his villa in Yeşilköy. Those who attend the literary meetings held here fill their bellies by gorging on food and drinks. As a matter of fact, almost all of them have to eat raisins while drinking tea because they can't buy sugar.

Leadership Ziya Gökalp, who leaves a strong impression on everyone he meets, is one of the most popular figures of the Committee of Union and Progress among the literati. In his meetings with young people, he broadens their horizons by bringing new meanings to everything. Yusuf Ziya and every young poet like him abandon aruz rhythmical poems and begin to write syllabic poems.

PSYCHOLOGY

Devotion Mahmut Kemal Inal is a respected figure who has memorized the life stories of historical figures throughout his life. He spends most of his time reading and writing. So much so that even his living expenses are covered by others.

Courage Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın is one of the names that Yusuf Ziya admires for their courage. Although his feelings towards him change from time to time, he continues to admire him because he has the courage to say, "I would rather be a prisoner than a judge in such a court!" during his trial by the Independence Tribunal and because he defends his own views without hesitation against Atatürk.

Quick-wittedness When Ibrahim Alaaddin Gövsa presents the Encyclopedia of Famous Men to Atatürk, Atatürk gets angry because the famous bandit Çakırcalı Efe is also included in the book along with himself. Thereupon, Ibrahim Alaaddin Gövsa defends himself by saying that the book doesn't tell about "great" men but only about well-known men.

Self-respect Süleyman Nazif is a man who doesn't hesitate to defend the truths he believes in. He is successful in reminding people of their limits. For example, when he is the governor of Baghdad, he gives an ironic answer to the Third Army Commander Hafız İsmail Hakkı Pasha, who demands tea and sugar from him within twenty-four hours, by saying that the telegram he wrote to the Chinese emperor was sent to him by mistake. In the last years of his life, he gives up habits that he can't afford anymore.

Shame Tevfik Fikret is someone who knows very well how to embarrass others. When Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın becomes the principal of Vefa High School, he sends him an insulting letter because Hüseyin Cahit expressed his loyalty to Abdulhamid in the traditional oath he was made to take. When he becomes the principal of Galatasaray High School, he makes the students admit their mistakes not by pressuring them but by embarrassing them.

Enis Behiç Koryürek stands as a candidate of the Democrat Party in the 1946 elections but is defeated. Yusuf Ziya and his friends unknowingly embarrass him as the elected deputies of the winning party.

Mithat Cemal Kuntay falls in love with a woman after his wife passed away. Although he lives a good life, he isn't a wealthy man, but the woman is wealthy. He writes poems for this woman, but doesn't marry her because he is afraid of people gossiping about him that he marries her because of her financial means.

Easygoingness When Reşat Nuri Güntekin doesn't like his own humor newspaper *Kelebek*, he visits Yusuf Ziya, the owner of *Akbaba*, a successful humor newspaper, and makes fun of his own newspaper. Things that make many people angry are a reason for him to be cheerful. So much so that he jokes with words by saying that it is not possible for *Kelebek* meaning butterfly to defeat *Akbaba* meaning vulture anyway.

Loneliness Halil Nihat Boztepe, born in Trabzon, is a fan of Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil. Thanks to this admiration, he joins the literary circles in Istanbul and later becomes a member of parliament, but he is a lonely man. When he loses one eye, he has no one to look after him, so he becomes a guest at his friend Ibrahim Alaaddin Gövsa's house. In the end, he commits suicide.

Ahmet Haşim, unlike his close friends, doesn't have a high-ranking job. He has a simple life as a teacher. When he gets sick, his friends take care of him because he doesn't have a wife to look after him. He even celebrates his marriage because he can now leave behind a "tearful widow."

Alienation Ömer Seyfettin is a tough young man from the military. He is captured in Greece during the war and remains a prisoner there for a year. He is a member of the Union and Progress Party, but among the Unionists, he sympathizes only with Ziya Gökalp, who is interested in literature. Although he is trained to be a soldier, the military alienates him from himself. For this reason, he wants to earn his living with his pen. In this way, he will be closer to himself.

LIFE STAGES

Old age When Yusuf Ziya and Mithat Cemal visit Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan, he asks them to read his last poem. However, Yusuf Ziya sees nothing but a few lines and dots in the notebook. The great poet, who begins to lose consciousness, thinks that these lines and dots are a poem he wrote.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Although all of the people mentioned in this work are related to the world of literature, a considerable number of them served as deputies or ambassadors. What does this tell us about the relationship between literature and politics in the period in question?
2. Yusuf Ziya Ortaç conveys that Ziya Gökalp, a figure who influenced many people, argues that the literal meaning of a mosque is a place of gathering, and that it should be separated from a place of prostration, and should gain a more social meaning. What can we say when we consider Gökalp's nationalist ideology together with Yusuf Ziya's observations on "being European" or "looking European"? (Let's not forget that Yusuf Ziya Ortaç praises Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan in this respect, while finding Mehmet Emin Yurdakul to be an imitator).
3. When Yusuf Ziya Ortaç meets Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan at a young age, he thinks how European he is. Indeed, Abdülhak Hamit Tarhan says that he is the critic who understands him best. In the last years of his life, he loses consciousness to the point that he thinks the dots he draws in his notebook are poems he is writing. Yusuf Ziya, who witnesses this situation, tries not to upset him. However, when Mahmut Kemal Inal gets older, he makes him angry by asking him some questions and pretending not to listen to his answers. He enjoys watching Mahmut Kemal Inal's facial features change. Based on Yusuf Ziya's behavior towards these two different people, can we think that what he calls "European" is related to the way people process and express their emotions?