

**THE ROLE AND POWER OF SYMBOLS IN THE IDENTITY
FORMATION OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE AND POWER OF SYMBOLS IN THE IDENTITY FORMATION OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

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This thesis analyzes the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members. With regards to different sociological traditions it discusses the concepts of symbol, identity and community in three chapters and makes analyses via employing three specific samples i.e., of dressing, Cross and language mainly from the view point of semiology and symbolic interactionism in the following chapter by integrating the three concepts elaborated separately to indicate and emphasize the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members. In the conclusive chapter it presents an overall remark of the whole study by emphasizing the effect and influence of the concepts of symbol, identity and community on each other. The thesis argues that consciously or not everyone convey their messages through the use of symbols. Therefore, from dressing to managed speech and interaction everyone come on the stage fully equipped and

loaded with these symbols, which would in the last analysis be definitive in determining the borderlines of this symbolic world within their specific community which is nothing but a pool of symbols.

Keywords: Symbol, Identity, Community, Semiology

ÖZ

TOPLULUK ÜYELERİNİN KİMLİK OLUŞUMLARINDA SEMBOLLERİN ROLÜ VE GÜCÜ

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Bu tez çalışması topluluk üyelerinin kimlik oluşumlarında sembollerin rolünü ve gücünü incelemektedir. Farklı sosyolojik gelenekler çerçevesinde sembol, kimlik ve topluluk kavramları üç bölüm halinde tartışılmakta ve takip eden bölümde ayrı ayrı incelenmiş olan kavramların biraraya toplanması suretiyle tüm çalışmanın ana vurgusu olan topluluk üyelerinin kimlik oluşumlarında sembollerin rolü ve gücü, özellikle göstergebilim ve sembolik etkileşim kuramlarının bakış açısıyla, giyim, Haç ve dil örneklerinin irdelenmesi ile verilmektedir. Son bölümde sembol, kimlik ve topluluk kavramlarının birbiri üzerindeki etkisi vurgulanarak çalışmanın ana kaygısı özetlenmektedir. Tezde, bilinçli ya da bilinçsiz, herkesin mesajlarını semboller yolu ile aktardığı tartışılmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, giyimden ifade şekillerine ve karşılıklı etkileşime değin her konu ve buna

baęlı olarak herkes sahneye sembollere bezenmiř ve sembollerle ykl olarak ıkmaktadır ki bu da son tahlilde sembol havuzundan bařka birřey olmayan topluluęun sembolik dnyasının sınırlarını izmekte belirleyicidir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Sembol, Kimlik, Topluluk, Gstergebilim

To My Family

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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CHAPTER 1

FOREWORD

Even though we might not be always fully aware of it – if we can talk of an awareness at all - in the course of our daily lives, all of us try to interpret the universe around us through the use of symbols that we acquire in the community that we belong. We talk with these symbols, we walk with these symbols, and we even act or refrain from acting again with these symbols. Therefore, in our specific community we learn and use these symbols and name them in the most general term as ‘our culture’, which we would like to present as a prerequisite for our identity formation and would argue to constitute an important part of our social identity. Nevertheless, we never stop creating and recreating this culture, and therefore, continuously construct and deconstruct the already existing symbols in our given community, - since in our understanding, community is to be accepted mainly as an important repository of symbols where the world around us is attributed a meaning. Thus, the relation or else the role and power of symbols as we would like to present in the identity formation of the community members seem to be inevitable and stronger than it might be assumed as it shall be tried to be presented throughout this study.

Symbols, in the most general sense are usually defined as “something – be it an arbitrary or conventional sign, an object or act or sound - that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention or

accidental resemblance”¹. Therefore, the most general meaning of symbol is that it is something that represents something else. As for Charles Peirce – one of the founding fathers of semiology – symbols essentially serve the purpose of communication between the members of a given community, since the communication is the *sine qua non* of any human society. Whatever function symbols might fulfill, either from the view point of anthropologists and sociologists who mainly tend to focus on their function in social cohesion and rituals or from the perspective of philosophers, structuralists and semiologists who are more concerned with the relationship between the symbol and what it stands for, it is evident that the symbols make possible for human beings to send and receive messages, first within their specific community and then with the whole world, and therefore, to establish relations with their overall social surroundings.

As has been stated before, in this study the role and power of symbols, - or else to say the question of symbolism – is to be analyzed *vis à vis* the formation of ‘the identities’, specifically the social identity as shall be argued with regards to the conceptualization of Jenkins who was defining it as the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference. Therefore, within the scope of our given study, the symbols need to be considered from multiple dimensions, covering all the conflicting discourse and theories of the disciplines employed throughout, since the argument of this study is to present that the members of a given community make use of different symbols, - consciously or unconsciously – to form their identities and therefore to create common or distinctive features with whom they name as ‘the others’ through established relations of similarity and difference by employing the symbols valid in and derived from their given communities.

¹ Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary

Even though the main concern of this study is to analyze the role and power of symbols in the identity formation *vis à vis* different sociological traditions, it is not the sole concern, since it is aimed to examine the mechanisms they trigger, i.e., the community's formation via the identity formation of its respective members. Therefore, in general, the focus of the study is more analytical and descriptive than practical; however, this does not imply that the findings might not be applied to the achievement of empathy and/or sympathy amongst those individuals who would like to consider themselves as a member of a global communal identity and who would like to establish a similar link as we do in between these three concepts.

Before briefing the content of the chapters, it should be noted once again more explicitly that the aim of this study is threefold. First of all it is aimed to introduce a basic understanding for the three important concepts, i.e., symbol, identity and community, excessively used in sociology; secondly, it is aimed to introduce a stand point in analyzing these concepts which seem to belong to different and contradictory traditions; and thirdly, to try to present that the symbols and thus their semiological and theoretical analyses provide an essential and inevitable understanding for the identity formation of community members.

If this study would be criticized for failing to cover all the existing literature on these three concepts, it should be noted that the reason for not getting in great detail of specific *écoles* or fields rest with the orientation and the target of the author to present the link between these concepts and wishing not to be methodologically inconsistent – merely because a certain literature exists. We hope this study to be a starting point and an introduction to the relation between the concepts of symbol, identity and community and considering them at an interdisciplinary level led by the findings of semiology.

Now, to brief the content of the chapters, the opening chapter sketches out a framework for the whole study via arguing the nature of symbols from different perspectives. It provides the conceptualization of the symbol, the differentiation of the symbol from the sign and two arguments concerning the usage, one being from the field of language, thus language as a symbol - and the other, as the symbols making up a nation. The reason for these specific arguments rest with the usage of language as a sample throughout the study from its symbolic value to its being a marker of identity, and the latter being attributed a decisive role in determining the borderlines of the study *vis à vis* the community understanding as well as the identity formation of the community members.

The third chapter discusses the concept of identity both as a cultural cliché and a technical term from the interpretive vocabularies of social and psychological analysts. Therefore, not only as who or what one is, but also as to the various meanings attached to oneself by self and the other. It presents a historical context as well as an introductory frame for imagology studies, which is extensively used in chapter five for the analyses of inter-effective samples to present the way the concepts of symbol, identity and community are co-treated.

The fourth chapter focuses on the community as has been argued by Nispet as a fusion of feeling and thought, of tradition and commitment, of membership and volition. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that the main argument of this study is not to discuss the community as an urbanized, class-based, rationalized social structure of industrial society but to be able to present that it is an outcome of a sense of belonging, i.e., ‘community spirit’, which owes much to the symbols, values, ideologies, norms and moral codes of its specific members with the sense of identity created in them. Moreover, as in

the case of identity, it presents a historical context and in addition makes use of a sample case study conducted on a sample group of Turks living in Vienna to back the argument of the author with regards to the community understanding and formation.

Last but not least, the analytical chapter five makes an overall remark of the whole study by integrating the three concepts elaborated separately to indicate and emphasize the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members, which would be conducted through the usage of three samples, specifically of dressing as an expression of social construction of identity by being treated as the display cabinet of identity wishing to be presented; of the religious symbol of Cross as an expression of social construction of identity to present that religious symbolism plays one of the most determining and influential role in the identity formation which is employed at a practical level, - by showing the material aspect of symbolism in denoting something immaterial, contrary to the expectation of some preferring not to treat it as a practical symbolism; and finally of language as an expression of social construction of identity which is argued from the perspective of identification with regards to three authors chosen amongst contemporary Turkish writers for the practical aim of familiarity to be able to present a common identity formed in the light or with the contribution of their literary genres and target audience to be able to present a full picture from the terrain of language discussed in every chapter with its effects on both identity and community, to be followed with a conclusive chapter six in which the overall aim of the study is summed up.

In all these chapters the underlying concern is to present that consciously or not all of us convey our messages through the use of symbols. Therefore, as shall be read in the conclusive chapter six, from dressing to managed speech and interaction everyone come on the stage fully equipped and loaded with

these symbols and reflect them as an internal part of their identity on others. Moreover, those who are exposed to these models might understand or fail to understand these symbols and thus the identity wished to be presented due to their competence or the ignorance of the symbolic pool used by specific community members, which would in the last analysis be definitive in determining the borderlines of this symbolic world and as shall be stated the undeniable role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members.

CHAPTER 2

SYMBOLS

As has been stated in the foreword if the symbols are accepted as per dictionary definitions as “something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention or accidental resemblance”ⁱ than the argument that wants to be manifested in this study might be simplified. Since, as it shall be argued, this is believed to be a bilateral relation during which the symbol acquires a certain meaning but at the same time enabling the performer’s and/or speaker’s and/or actor’s acquiring an identity by making use of that specific symbol in the context of that specific community, which might be explained in different words as the signified’s being indicated by the signifier but at the same time indicating the signifier in different associations. After this remark it is on one hand side self evident, yet worth stating that the epistemological approach followed in this study to dwell into the world of symbols might be falling under mainly the approaches of semiology and symbolic interactionism; however, it needs to be stressed that it has yet its distinctive features from either of the two by its stress on the cultural aspect of symbol codifications which are attributed more a hybrid relation of identity and community as shall be tried to be discussed in the conclusive chapter.

However, it is considered important to discuss these two overarching epistemological approaches determining the backbone of our study before elaborating on our conceptualization of symbols which shall be detailed with various samples. The starting point of any semiological study is the distinction between the ‘signifier’, the ‘signified’, and the ‘sign’. The

signifier can be a physical object, a word or a picture of some kind; the signified is the mental concept indicated by the signifier; and the sign is the association of both the signifier and the signified. For example the photograph of a beloved one carried in the wallet indicates the signified relatively straightforwardly. However, in other cases what the signifier indicates as the signified might be related largely with the social conventions, or in other words arbitrary, as in the case of language indicated by de Saussure, - or in other cases the signifiers might indicate different signifieds at different levels. These different layers of meaning are discussed by Roland Barthes as the second level of signification. He states that the two ways in which signs may function might be firstly in the form of myths in which the sign stands for a whole range of cultural values or by its association to different feelings in us which proves that the signs not only denote but also connote.ⁱⁱ

Coming to symbolic interactionism, which has its roots in the concept of self as developed by George Mead who argued that reflexivity was crucial to the self as a social phenomena, our interest lies in the empirical researches made in connection with semiologists which resulted in a more sophisticated grasp of the basic concept of symbol. Before elaborating on this aspect of the studies it is worth mentioning that

... symbolic interactionism mainly refers to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or define each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their response is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions.ⁱⁱⁱ

Therefore, this emphasis made on the interpretative nature which had later been developed in the descriptive translation theories of Gideon Toury and the semiological studies focusing on language studies which benefited from

symbolic interactionism bases the backbone of our methodology as it shall be simplified.

Now coming to our conceptualization of the symbols, they, as shall be argued, are variant and numerous and at least to be differentiated from signs as it is loosely used in most of the theoretical studies. First of all, starting from the language we use, to our routine daily performances, everything we experience in the course of our daily lives can be accepted a symbol, which makes the studying of symbols even more important since they are public and convey shared emotions, information and/or feeling and may therefore function for social cohesion and commitment. With this respect, it is also no wonder that our values and lifestyles as well manifest themselves through the use of symbols. Thus, these symbolic markers in any community serve the members the means to distinguish themselves from other communities, which can be reduced down to the familiar jargon of 'us and them'. Moreover, as shall be argued in the following pages these symbolic pools used by the people act as a far more important determinant in their respective identity formation than that of any possible determiner.

However, coming back to our conceptualization of the symbols, as has been argued by Jenkins

... by definition, symbols are abstract to a degree, imprecise to a degree, always multifaceted, and frequently implicit or taken for granted in their definition. As a consequence, people can to some degree bestow their own meanings on and in symbols; they can say and do the 'same' things without saying or doing the same things at all.^{iv}

Or in some cases might just be the contrary that people might believe to say the same thing which might mean something totally different in their given context of space and/or time and/or community. The best example for this can be the symbolic representations in any given language which creates

tremendous difficulties of ‘equivalence’ while being translated into another language as has been discussed by Gideon Toury in his studies as translations being facts of target cultures, thus, even though might constitute a subsystem of their own should always pertain the characteristics of the target culture despite whichever label might be used for them such as transfer or translational relationship or even in worst situations the pseudotranslations.^v For example if the source text is talking about fish as a cheap diet but if this signifies a rich diet in the target culture, the translator should consider the equivalence and translate it *p.e.* as bread into the target text knowing that space, time and community variables in any given language should always be considered even though they might be under heavy influence of habituation despite the awareness of the readers.

Since the influence of habituation within the context of language has been stated it is worth mentioning about Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ in here. In his book *In Other Words*, Bourdieu states that

... habitus is both a system of schemata of production of practices and a system of perception and appreciation of practices. Habitus produces practices and representations which are available for classification, which are objectively differentiated; however, they are immediately perceived as such only by those agents who possess the code, the classificatory schemes necessary to understand their social meaning. Habitus thus implies a sense of one’s place but also a sense of place of others.^{vi}

In this sense habitus strongly differs, however overlaps with our understanding of symbols, since we believe it to be the role and power of symbols that give the people a sense of belonging. In our understanding, habitus might lead to similar symbols, however, it needs to be emphasized that the interpretation of these symbols can neither be considered solely as a social procedure nor as an individual one. It is a mixture of both.

To back our argument for the dual role of symbols we would like to refer to Norbert Elias. Elias argues in his book *The Symbol Theory* that “languages, thoughts, memories and all the other aspects of knowledge complexes are both social and individual at the same time.”^{vii} As a consequence, a possible misunderstanding of the symbols utilized by the others might severely hamper any potential for dialogue before it might ever start, both from the social and individual perspectives. Again with reference to language, Whitehead explains this by saying that “language itself is a symbolism. Mankind, it seems, has to find a symbol in order to express itself. Indeed expression is a symbolism.”^{viii} However, any symbol can make sense and only be meaningful in relation to other symbols. Nothing means anything on its own. Therefore, there should always be a given context which might be considered as a system and actions or actors within it which can be considered as the components, and this should be a familiar context for both the speaker and the hearer. In other words, symbolic practices have value only for those who can recognize them. Therefore, if you are a foreigner to that practice, you would either lose the value or worse to say would misinterpret the whole practice with your own symbolic repository. This argument should yet not be considered within the realm of Habermas’ theory which says that valid knowledge can only emerge from a situation of open, free and uninterrupted dialogue and that the ideal society permits unconstrained communication and encourages free public debate since what is emphasized in here is more an interaction question which is based on the ability and willingness to empathy/sympathy by the awareness of the existence of the different symbolic pools used by the others. In other words this means that it should be refrained to make any *ad hoc* presumptions what a symbol might or should mean but tried to analyze the symbol in its cultural and communal context since in the last analysis our symbols constitute our culture.

Nevertheless, saying that an object, an act, an utterance can be a symbol does not mean that it has to be like that at all times and/or that there is something inherent in it to be accepted as a symbol. But more it means that the individuals interpret it in that way despite all the arbitrariness carried in its nature. This is why the symbols might shift their values in time and may serve a totally different meaning in a different community – if they serve at all. The Germanic runes can be the best examples for that. This is why symbols are considered to be more effective in understanding ‘the other’ than language itself – even though we believe language to be a symbol by itself as well - since we might make use of the same symbol pool individually even though we might talk no language or several different languages effectively at the same time but still fail to communicate with the other due to our failing to follow the symbolic pool being utilized in the given community of the hearer.

At this stage we would like to refer to sign and symbol differentiation since as it had been stated at least it needs to be conceptually recognized that they do not refer to the one and the same thing and than to deepen the discussion of symbols by elaborating on the linguistic aspect to indicate our conceptual similarities and differentiations on our epistemological models of semiology and symbolic interactionism, which would like to be argued as the symbolic role of language.

2.1. Signs and Symbols

Many semiologists argue that symbols are not just a kind of sign. Symbols for them have special qualities. Pierce identifies sign “as something that

stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity which should stimulate its recipient into making some response for the object signified". However, symbol is for him a conventional sign depending upon habit.^{ix} To Roland Barthes, everything that has signification is a sign, whereas for Nauta "every conventional form functioning as human communication is a symbol"^x. For Mounin a symbol is a sign produced by its interpreter^{xi}, while for Hayakawa symbolic process is the means whereby men can make one thing stand for another. To him the symbol differs from the sign in being "plurisituational" meaning the same thing in many differing contexts.^{xii} Ernst Cassirer in his *Essay on Man* argues that symbols cannot be reduced to mere signs. Signs and symbols belong to two different universes of discourse; a sign is a part of the physical world of being, while a symbol is the part of the human world of meaning.^{xiii} Mach explains this as "the symbols are emotionally loaded and are connected with ideas which are the most fundamental for human thought and culture, and the most difficult to grasp and express."^{xiv} In *Rethinking Symbolism*, Sperber says that "symbols are not signs. They are not paired with their interpretations in a code structure. Their interpretations are not meanings."^{xv} If there is this much of a difference between sign and symbol than how can we conceptualize them? The best distinction might be argued to be made by Edmund Leach. For Leach, a signal is a sign where there is an intrinsic prior relationship between two elements – a representing and a represented – because they belong to the same cultural context. For example, given the context of European political traditions in which the principal item of the ruling monarch's regalia was a crown, a crown is a sign for sovereignty.^{xvi}

Again for Leach, symbolic representation consists in a relation between firstly the concept in mind; secondly, the sense image; and thirdly, the object or event in the external world. In Leach's view the basic differences between a sign and a symbol consist in fact that in a sign both elements of a signifying

relation – the signifying and the signified – belong to the same context, are parts of the same conceptual system, while in a symbol they belong to a different context and therefore, the act of representation and interpretation requires transformation of one context into the other. If this would like to be simplified with the same sample of crown and monarch of Leach, the crown worn by the boys being circumcised in the Turkish culture might be given. The crown worn by a boy celebrating his circumcision does not mean his nomination as the future king of any monarch but only as a symbol for the importance given to the practice in the Turkish culture and thus as a signifier for the importance and value given to both the actor and the action within this cultural context as has been expressed as the second level of signification by Barthes like mentioned before.

Before elaborating on the symbolic nature of language as it had been stated, would like to detail this conceptual difference between a sign and a symbol with a familiar poem to the Turkish intelligentsia and the readers, which might also enable us the bridge to linguistic nature of the symbols.

In 1937, at the age of 23, Orhan Veli was writing in *Varlik* magazine^{xvii} that “all of our concepts, not merely our conception of beauty, must change. We should find new elements, new substance, and new forms of expression”. Actually what he was meaning was to trigger the symbolic reference which might lead to *ad hoc* presumptions. Thus, in 1940 Veli was writing in Epitaph I that:

He suffered from nothing in the world
The way he suffered from his corns;
He didn't even feel so badly
About having been created ugly.
Though he wouldn't utter the Lord's name
Unless his shoe pinched,
He couldn't be considered a sinner either.

It's a pity Süleyman Efendi had to die.^{xviii}

The reason of choosing this sample was not to lead to a smile on the faces but to pinpoint a significant rupture in Turkish literary context with the old established clichés and symbolic repositories of pain, which is both a concern with regards to sign and symbol differentiation and to the linguistic aspect of symbols. To brief, it is known that in the medical context, corn might be defined as the sign for the dead skin as a result of skin friction and hardening especially in areas such as the hands and the feet, however, in this context it had been a symbol of all earthly pains and on the secondary level to daring ugliness that would be pronounced. Whitehead explains this by saying that

... a word has a symbolic association with its own history, its other meanings, and with its general status in current literature. Thus a word gathers emotional history in the past; and this is transferred symbolically to its meaning in present use.^{xix}

From a different perspective, if we would like to paraphrase the Epitaph with reference to Whitehead who was defining the symbolic reference as the transition from the symbol to the meaning, Veli was creating a new transition from the word 'corn', which is nothing but a symbol not only with regards to his Epitaph, but also by the sole nature of 'corn' being a word, - since in the last analysis every word is a symbol, not merely a sign.

2.2. Language as a Symbol

Whitehead explains language - written or spoken - as a deeper type of symbolism. He says that "the sound of the word or its shape on the paper is indifferent".^{xx} Both evokes the same message in the mind, - which is the

meaning of the word constituted by the ideas, images, emotions or simply by the education, or to put in different words, they refer in the last instance to the common experiences of the people. Therefore, the words express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share, which is expressed as “language’s expressing cultural reality” in ‘Language Studies’^{xxi}. However, it is not only these words which act like a symbol from the part of the speaker. The way in which people use the spoken, written or visual medium itself creates a meaning that are understandable to the group they belong. For example, the tone of the voice, the usage of vocabulary, accent, conversational style, using slang or colloquial and many other variants carry symbolic reference for the listener, which is expressed as the “language’s embodying cultural reality” as well as the mere words uttered by the speaker. Therefore, in the language usage there exists a double symbolic reference, which makes it more elusive and difficult, not mentioning the speaker’s viewing their language as a symbol of their social identity, which is to be covered in the following chapter.

However, this might not be considered the sole difficulty in interpreting language as a system of symbols. As has been stated by Elias “anything that is not symbolically represented in the language of a language community is not known by its members: they cannot communicate about it with each other”^{xxii}, which also coincides with the theory of linguistic relativity and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. To brief what these mean for those not familiar to this hypothesis, we can sum up that the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that the structure of language one habitually uses influences the manner in which one thinks and behaves, as has been stated by the theory of linguistic relativity arguing that the linguistic structures people use influence what they think. Thus, one may find that the languages of some societies possess symbolic representations of items of knowledge which those of other

societies are lacking, the typical sample of which can be the tens of different adjectives used by the Eskimos to define the thickness and the nature of snow and ice – especially when language is treated not only as a symbolic pool but also as a survival tool. As this well known example also proves on the other hand side if speakers of different languages do not understand one another it is not only because their languages cannot be mutually translated into one another, but because they do not share the same way of viewing and interpreting the world around them and thus attribute different values to the concepts underlying the words.

Nevertheless, even for the nations speaking the same language, the words and phrases would have different symbolic representations and thus would differ for the two. Whitehead explains this by saying that

... in addition to its bare indication of meaning, words and phrases carry with them an enveloping suggestiveness and an emotional efficacy. This function of language depends on the way it has been used, and on the proportionate familiarity of particular phrases, and on the emotional history associated with their meanings and thence derivatively transferred to the phrases themselves.^{xxiii}

This might easily be sampled with numerous nations claiming to use the same language such as France and the French speaking Canada. In French speaking Canada anyone's talking about his/her new *cheval* which is a piece of art and technology would be interpreted quite irrelevant – if not funny – in France. Since in France, *cheval* has been used only for horse driven carriages whereas in Canada it still means the *voiture* which is a modern technological car. As to Kramsch this proves that

... culture can be defined as membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history and imaginings and [therefore] even when the members leave this community they retain their system of perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting^{xxiv}

which might be resistant to different experiences shaping the language and meaning construction on different space and time contexts.

Therefore, human beings do not only need to acquire a language as a prerequisite of communication but also the intricate expressed symbolism of language and of act, which is spread throughout the community. This should also be considered within the context of Atatürk's reforms in Turkey. Knowing the strength of relation in binding a nation together, it was no wonder that Atatürk's reforms were starting with language studies including the script and the purification of the spoken language from foreign elements, which might be defined in Language Studies as the 'linguistic nationalism' associating one language variety with the membership in one national community that shall be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter.^{xxv}

Thus, language appears as an important national symbol, yet not the only one since as has been stated by Scheffler

... we live in a world of symbols as well as other things, and our commerce with them is itself continually mediated by symbols. As it matures, our thought increasingly grows in its capacity to wield appropriate symbols in reflecting, acting, reasoning, and making.^{xxvi}

Therefore, starting from the 'tree' of de Saussure everything is a symbol even though there is no natural necessity linking the sound pattern 'tree' to the object in the forest, which it symbolically represents. However, there might be a social necessity since there seems to be a social consensus in every society on the meaning of words so that the people might understand the same concept when that specific word is used, which is explained by Skorupski as the "arbitrary symbol of ideas"^{xxvii}. This consensus does not of course exist only with the words and their symbolic representations, - there are also some other symbols in every nation which serve as national symbols

such as the national flag, national anthem, which would like to be discussed as symbols making up a nation evoking the same feeling and thus being a common signifier. Yet, it still needs to be remembered that we should not make *ad hoc* presumptions what a symbol might or should mean but try to analyze and interpret it in its given cultural and communal context as shall be argued below.

2.3. Symbols making up a nation

When we talk of national symbols the first two that always come in minds – if we would leave aside the language which is the most important in our understanding for a minute - are in general the national flag and the national anthem. However, as has been argued by Hobsbawm and Canetti there are others. Hobsbawm argues that monuments (architecture), sports, holidays, etc. might all be symbolically used to construct a national identity.^{xxviii} When we consider this again in the Turkish community context we might give familiar samples such as “wrestling is the traditional sport of Turks”, or the war memorials and Atatürk statues almost in every village, the celebration of national holidays to commemorate the victories achieved during the Independence War and so on. Yet there are still others.

In his book *Crowds and Power*, Canetti writes about the national crowd symbols. He comments that “it is a general tendency to find the right definitions for what a nation is and thus adducing it to language or territory, written literature, history, form of government or so-called national feeling^{xxix}, - all of which are definitely correct but missing since at the end there is something peculiar in each and every society. Thus, what the member

of a nation or else community feels himself/herself related is always a crowd or a crowd symbol such as the sea, forest, corn and etc. He argues that

... these crowd symbols are never naked or isolated and every member of a nation always sees himself, or his picture of himself, in a fixed relationship to the particular symbol which has become the most important for his nation and this consciousness changes when, and only when, its symbol changes.^{xxx}

When we follow the samples provided by Canetti for English or German society with sea or forest this seems far easier than for a society as Turkey. The only crowd symbol that might be agreed upon for Turkish nation and society with its tremendous geographic, climatic, religious and even linguistic variations - just to name a few - seems for us to be the 'enemy image'. This argument raised in this study might sound quite a challenge for some, however, we would like to back our argument with the study of Herkül Milas^{xxxii} who has explored the Greek image in the Turkish national identity through studying the novels from Ottoman to the Republican times with various approaches such as the class-based approach, Anatolian approach, Islamic approach, nationalist approach etc. What seems to be common in all these approaches from different times appears as using the Greeks as the 'other', which is in the last analysis nothing but defining yourself by telling what you are not.

Backing our argument on a study made on the novels might sound irrelevant or not very scientific for some. However, we would like to legitimize our argument again by confirming that the language is the most important symbolic representation that can be thought of in the national sense – not to mention all. Therefore, considering the novels as the 'display cabinet' of language, there could be no better sample than the study conducted by Milas. Or else with reference to Skorupski, we can say that words are nothing but a

“veil of ideas” which enables the link between language and reality and finding its existence in our understanding in the best effective way in novels.

However, a different aspect of national crowd symbols as has been exemplified in the study of Milas shows that the meaning attributed to these symbols are not definite but also subject to change with regards to context/space or time. If we would put this in Bourdieu’s words

... culture and language change because they survive in a changing world: the meaning of a line of verse, of a maxim or an entire work changes by virtue of the sole fact that the universe of maxims, lines of verse or works simultaneously proposed to those who apprehend them changes: this universe can be called the space of ‘co-possibles’.^{xxxii}

In the last analysis this means that if a group starts making too much use of a symbol to be able to identify himself/herself with that group, the initial symbol might shift in its value.

The shifting values of symbols as national crowd symbols can also be interpreted as an evidence to material aspect of symbol in representing or denoting something immaterial. This can best be exemplified with the tool ‘hammer’. Hammer is a tool known to all of us; - however, we would name it in our different languages. Therefore, with its linguistic capacity of representing an instrument we already consider it symbolic. However, as had been stated before with the dual aspect of language symbolism and in relation with nation creating symbols hammer is a widely known symbol as in the ‘Hammer and Sickle’. This proves, as has been elaborated in the symbolic structures of Peacock^{xxxiii} that not only acts and objects are symbolic but also the meaning attributed to them by different nations and societies might be symbolic, which can be shifting its value and meaning in time. As Sperber says we cannot find anything inherent in symbols assuring them to be

interpreted in a specific way. Individuals from different societies might interpret them differently in their respective space and time.

Moreover, within time the symbols do not only get naturalized but also world-wide conventionalized. For example, words like ‘democracy’, ‘freedom’, ‘choice’ and etc. when uttered by politicians in Western democratic rhetoric have become political symbols. Not only them but also signifiers like the ‘French Revolution’, May ‘68, and ‘the Holocaust’ have come to simplify an originally confusing amalgam of historical events into conventional symbols – even though their remaining with the same signifying value in time can never be guaranteed considering the symbolic shifts in time and space contexts.

To conclude, various symbols be it from the terrain of language or, nationalism, or etc. serve always as a determining factor in the identity formation of community members. So far, we have tried to conceptualize our basic understanding of symbolism; in the coming chapter the same shall be done for the ‘identity’ concept and all these shall be counter argued with their interactive and inter-influential relation in the analytical and conclusive chapters as had been stated.

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- ⁱ Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary
- ⁱⁱ Barthes, Roland, *L'aventure sémiologique*, Points Essais, Seuil, 1991.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Blumer, Herbert, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, University of California Press, California, 1969.
- ^{iv}^{iv} Jenkins, Richard, *Social Identity*, Routledge, London, 1996, p.107.
- ^v Toury, Gideon, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, John Benjamins Publishing Co., Philadelphia, 1995.
- ^{vi} Bourdieu, Pierre, In *Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Stanford University Press, California, 1994, p.131.
- ^{vii} Elias, Norbert, *The Symbol Theory*, Sage Publications, London, 1995, p.12.
- ^{viii} Whitehead, Alfred North, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effect*, Capricorn Books, New York, 1959, p.62
- ^{ix} Pierce, Charles S., *The Essential Writings*, Prometheus Books, New York, 1972.
- ^x Nauta, Doede, *The Meaning of Information*, Mouton, Paris, 1972.
- ^{xi} Mounin, George, *Introduction à la Sémiologie*, Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1970.
- ^{xii} Hayakawa, S. I., *Language in Thought and Action*, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., New York, 1964, p.25.
- ^{xiii} Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1944.
- ^{xiv} Mach, Zdzislaw, *Symbols, Conflict and Identity: Essays in Political Anthropology*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993, p.25
- ^{xv} Sperber, Dan, *Rethinking Symbolism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p.85.
- ^{xvi} Leach, E., *Culture and Communication: The logic by which symbols are connected*, Cambridge University Press, 1976, p.14.
- ^{xvii} *Varlık Magazine* was first published by Yasar Nabi Nayir in 1933 and was serving as the meeting point for Turkish intelligentsia both on the author and the reader side, the Magazine still continues its life today.
- ^{xviii} Kanik, Orhan Veli, *Just For The Hell Of It* (tr. Talat Sait Halman), Multilingual, Istanbul, 1997.
- ^{xix} Whitehead, Alfred North, *ibidem*, p.84.
- ^{xx} Whitehead, Alfred North, *ibidem*, p.2.
- ^{xxi} Widdowson, A.G., *Introductions to Language Study*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.
- ^{xxii} Elias, Norbert, *ibidem*, p.3.
- ^{xxiii} Whitehead, Alfred North, *ibidem*, p.67.
- ^{xxiv} Kramsch, Claire, *Language and Culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p.10.
- ^{xxv} In 1928, the Latin alphabet was adopted. After the barrier of the Arabic alphabet had been overcome, a new barrier was encountered: this was the excessive number of Arabic and Persian words which had entered the language during the course of eight centuries under the literary influence of those languages; this had given birth to two Turkish languages: the palace language, full of Arabic and Persian words, which was spoken by the upper classes; and the popular language, or the more pure Turkish, which was despised by the erudite. With Atatürk's instructions, the Republican Government decided to take measures to bring back its ancient beauty and originality to the mutilated national language. As a first measure, from September 1929, the teaching of Arabic and Persian was forbidden in the schools, which were the last places in which these lessons had remained.
- ^{xxvi} Scheffler, Israel, *Symbolic Worlds: Art, science, language, ritual*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p.11.
- ^{xxvii} Skorupski, John, *Symbol and Theory: A philosophical study of theories of religion in social anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976, p.122.

xxviii Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.

xxix Canetti, Elias, *Crowds and Power*, Penguin Books, London, 1995, p.197.

xxx Canetti, Elias, *ibidem*, p.199.

xxxi Milas, Herkül, *Türk Romani ve Öteki: Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmaji*, Sabancı Üniversitesi Yay, İstanbul, 2000.

xxxii Bourdieu, Pierre, *ibidem*, p.104.

xxxiii Peacock, James L., *Consciousness and Change: Symbolic Anthropology in Evolutionary Perspective*, Halsted Press Books, New York, 1975.

CHAPTER 3

IDENTITY

As per the dictionary definition, the word identity has derived from the Latin root '*identitas*' - from *idem* meaning 'the same' - and has two basic meanings.^{xxxiv} The first is a concept of absolute sameness, which can be stated as A's being identical to B. The second is a concept of distinctiveness which presumes consistency or continuity over time. Conceptualizing the idea of sameness from two different perspectives, the notion of identity simultaneously establishes two possible relations of comparison – one being that of 'similarity', and the other that of 'difference'. To further exemplify, the verb 'to identify' is another supplement of identity, which further integrates an active nature to the word with the necessity of being established with regards to certain categorizations as has been stated in Oxford English Dictionary. Thus, it has two further functions which need to be considered – one being that of 'classification', and the other 'association' with something or someone. Nevertheless the concept denoting the sense of the self, of personhood, of what kind of a person one is cannot be simply defined with any dictionary definitions and the mass usage in the sociology literature presents the concept in couple of different but related contexts, which we would like to further elaborate below.

3.1. Conceptualizing identity in Historical Context

First of all the identity concept in sociology was influential in shaping five different sociological traditions, which can be listed as: (1) the symbolic interactionism of the Chicago School, which emphasized the processual and emergent nature of social reality; (2) the symbolic interactionism of Iowa school, which emphasized the structural and fixed nature of social reality; (3) the sociology of knowledge and interpretive sociology; (4) the structural functionalism; and (5) the critical theory.^{xxxv}

In the Chicago school of symbolic interactionism, which emerged out of the American pragmatist tradition rooted in the work of philosopher William James and the semiologist Charles Peirce, the social reality was accepted to be continually created by humans through the names and meanings – i.e. symbols – they attached to things when communicating with one another. In Iowa school – founded by Manfred Khun - for studying identity, quantitative instruments were employed, namely the ‘Twenty Statements Test’ - also called the ‘Who Am I?’ test in which the respondents were asked to provide 20 statements in response to the question. In the sociology of knowledge and interpretative sociology, the nominalist and realist assumptions to understand the dialectic between physical reality of human existence and the nominalist social world in which humans live were combined, and identity was interpreted as both subjective and objective. In the structural-functionalist tradition, the places for social identity in the institutional structures of society were determined. The importance of the functionalist perspective was the level of analysis’ being a system level of culture not reducible to the level of individuals or mental processes. Last but not least, in critical theory, which has highly benefited from the contributions of Jürgen Habermas, the identity was viewed as grounded in the relationship between individual and societal

development and was seen as embedded in social experience, symbolic communication and reflection of institutional processes.^{xxxvi}

With the post modernist and late modernist perspectives, identity referred to who or what one was, to the various meanings attached to oneself by self and other. Both to self-characterizations individuals made in terms of the structural features of group memberships, such as various social roles, memberships and categories; - and to the various character traits in individual displays and others attribute to an actor on the basis of his/her conduct.^{xxxvii} Therefore, 'identity' has come to be both a cultural cliché and a technical term in the interpretive vocabularies of social and psychological analysts – as has been elaborated above and stated in the foreword.

However, as far as our research can uncover, the term indeed is propelled from Erikson's written formulations and collegial networks. Moreover, since the beginning of 1960s, the social and psychological turmoil of World War II provided a historical context in which what we may call the identity question was asked in three different situations. First, a nation of immigrants asked what it meant to be American, both during a war against the mother countries of many of its citizens and in the following period of prosperity and anxiety, punctuated by emancipatory social movements. Second, an intellectually and geographically migrating team of scholars moved across the national boundaries of German and English speaking worlds and across the intellectual boundaries of psychoanalytical and social anthropological paradigms. Finally, a small group of sociologists working within a version of American pragmatism were trying to develop a more adequate sociological psychology for understanding human action as essentially social. Fueled by these three sources, identity was 'in the air' by the 1960s and on everyone's tongue by the 1970s.^{xxxviii}

By the 1980s, identity has become a stock technical term in sociology and a widespread social label as Michael says.^{xxxix} Moreover, in our current day, its theoretical, empirical and cultural importance shows no sign of decrease as the social scientists, the clinicians, the historians, the psychologists, the philosophers and the more tricky, the media continue to apply, dispute and develop the idea; - and especially the latter sometimes in the most vulgar sense.

Still the precursors to the concept of identity had been mainly developing in the domains of sociology, anthropology and psychology as Weigert and Teitges say. The research and theorizing in these disciplines gave central importance to such concepts as self, character and personality, respectively through the period of World War II. Moreover, one of the historical and biographical moments in the emergence of identity appeared as the necessity to balance the tension between becoming hundred percent American and remaining loyal to the family for the children whose parents spoke little or no English.^{xl}

Similar cases are also observed for the Turkish living in the German society. If we would have been living in isolated, homogenous societies like the Trobrianders studied by Malinowski^{xli}, we could still define group membership according to common cultural practices and daily face to face interactions. However, in modern, historically complex, open societies it is much more difficult to define any particular social group and thus the cultural identities of its respective members. Let us take group identity based on race for example. It would seem rather easy to define genetic differences; however thousands of differences might be stated amongst the White or the Black races as well. If we think of regional identity, it is equally contestable as indicated in many known discourse as “Our country is not a multinational

state: it is one nation, the product of a long history...” The national identity does not ease these definitions as well especially when we think of the example of carrying a Turkish passport and needing to ascribe to yourself a Turkish national identity if you were born, raised and educated for example in Germany and become a native speaker of German and happen to have Turkish parents – sometimes not talking a single word of German. Benedict Anderson names this as ‘long distance nationalism’ and argues that with the passing of years these people start living in an imagined community rather than the actual present day of their home country.^{xlii}

As in the case of Americans in the Post World War II era, these children were *ipso facto* exposed to the process of socialization into a new society in their adopted country, the conditions, the understanding, the values, the symbols – or to the threat of oversimplifying the situation – the overall culture of which has limited or no similarity with that of their country of origin – especially when we consider culture as a symbolic construction through which we think and express our thoughts and feelings. However, reserving this discussion to the conclusive chapter let us return back to our conceptualization of identity after providing various traditions and interdisciplinary understandings.

3.2. Conceptualizing Identity with regards to Identity Formation of Community Members

As shall be argued the best conceptualization of identity overlapping with the identity formation of community members within the frame of this current study seems as the ‘social identity’. Identity can in fact be understood as a process - as certain amount of sociological work has concentrated - as a sense

of belonging in process. As Jenkins argues when it is said ‘social identity’, the expression refers to

... the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities. It is the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference.^{xliii}

This *ipso facto* makes identity very much a feature of the imagination. Individuals imagine themselves as belonging to some wider entity, such as local community. In doing so, they implicitly do not belong to other entities, - as has been widely employed in public debates. Moreover, social identity is a game of playing the *vis à vis*. In the most simplified form it is people’s source of meaning and experience. Thus, again in Jenkin’s words “it is our understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people’s understanding of themselves and of others [which includes us].”^{xliv}

This on one hand side can be realized as has been argued by Mead as a process of negotiation between the self and external agencies, especially when we consider the other’s definition of what our confirmed identity means, such as Muslim, socialist, Harvard graduate, etc. Yet, there is always the danger of leading to “identification reactions” as Korzybski names it.^{xlv} To simplify with a relatively common reaction, if one has hostile identification reactions to women drivers then all women who drive cars are identical in their incompetence. Of course numerous other identification reactions might fall into the category of protective mechanisms inherited from the necessities of survival under earlier and more primitive conditions of life, however, in the last analysis if we start locating the ‘others’ on our social maps for identifying them than this might be nothing but erroneous due to our *ad hoc* symbolic identification markers.

To combine this approach with that of Goffman's who was arguing that individuals present an image of themselves to others, who are free to accept or reject that image, which might be simplified to denote a series of masks put on for different audiences than we can draw the ultimate conclusion that if identity is a necessary prerequisite for social life, the reverse is also true. Individual identity – embodied in selfhood – is not meaningful in isolation from the social world of other people. To the threat of simplifying, as suggested by Mead when we look at ourselves we also see ourselves from the perspective of others, which are all done through symbols – as has been argued in this study. Thus, we try to present an image of ourselves that we believe to coincide with the image the others might have in their mind. Therefore, identity, whether individual or collective, is always symbolically constructed. To put in other words, as has been commented by Jenkins “we seek to be and to be seen to be ‘something’ or ‘somebody’; and not only do we identify ourselves, but we also identify others and are identified by them in turn.”^{xlvi} Yet, as has been discussed by Manuel Castells identity as has been defined mainly from reflexivity perspective must be clearly distinguished from what, traditionally, sociologists have called roles, and role-sets. Roles, for example, to be a mother, a worker, a neighbor, a socialist militant, a union member, a basketball player, a churchgoer, and a smoker, at the same time, are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of society.^{xlvii}

Since institutions are mentioned, it is worth stating that amongst the more important contexts within which identification becomes consequential are institutions. Institutions are established patterns of practice, recognized as such by actors, which have force as the way things are done. This role and power in creating identities might also be considered in relation to Hobsbawm's *Invention of Tradition*^{xlviii} where the individuals were acquired

especially a national identity, which in the last analysis should be considered as a variety of social identity procedure mentioned by making use of either certain crowd symbols as has been discussed by Canetti or symbols such as national flag, national anthem, national holidays, monuments and etc. Moreover, to legitimize our conceptualization of national identity as a part of social identity it is important to state that social identities exist and are acquired such as the national identities, yet, the later should be more considered within power relations whereas the former might happen either at the conscious or unconscious level in our understanding. When the concept of power relations is used, it is to be stated that the concept is not used in the Weberian sense mainly referring to the probability that a person in a social relationship will be able to carry his/her own will in the pursuit of goals of action, regardless of resistance, or as in the Marxist discourse regarding the power as a structural relationship, existing independently of the wills of the individuals, or as in Parson's definition as a positive social capacity for achieving communal ends. It is more in the sense of Foucault referring to local and micro-manifestations which are worked on to reach to a certain end in time by creating an identity concept in the minds of individuals through deliberate symbol usage. Therefore, in the last analysis it should always be remembered that the construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations as has been argued by Castells which is nothing more than an intermingle of various conscious and unconscious sources.

In short, identities are important sources of meaning for the actors, and they are even stronger than roles, because of the process of self-construction and individuation that they involve. In simple terms, identities organize the meaning while roles organize the functions, which we argue to happen

through deliberate usage of symbols. Within this frame we find Anthony Cohen's model of the symbolic construction of communal and other collective identities as useful and suggestive. In his study, Cohen^{xlix} tries to understand how people construct a sense of themselves and their fellows as belonging in a particular locality or setting and with – if not to – each other. Community membership for Cohen depends upon the symbolic construction and signification of a mask of similarity which all can wear, an umbrella of solidarity under which all can shelter. Reserving this conceptualization of Cohen for community understanding as a reference point, we shall elaborate on this point in detail in chapter four, and consider it within the frame of the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members in the conclusive chapter. However, it is deemed a necessity to look at language and identity relation within the frame of imagology studies before going to the next chapter, since language constitutes an important component of social identity as our conceptualized identity understanding for the given study.

3.3. Language and Identity within the Frame of Imagology Studies

Before elaborating on the link established between language and identity let us draw our epistemological framework of imagology by asking the simple question of 'What is Imagology?'

The concept 'imago' generally refers to the popular, however, mostly one-sided or incomplete notion a person has of other nations, countries and cultures. Therefore, imagology is a part of sciences that deals with these notions. It can be claimed that a great many students and researchers of various human sciences are bound to meet each other within the framework of imagology, *p.e.*, historians, psychologists, philologists, anthropologists,

sociologists, experts in press and communication sciences, translators, etc. Thus, imagology is not a science in its own right, but an aspect of, or an auxiliary science in various other disciplines. Still, imagology does come to the fore as a clearly defined and important study field in such sciences as ethnological psychology, translation studies and comparative literature. To simplify with the latter which comes mainly from the investigations of the French school of 'La littérature comparée' and J.M. Carré¹, it might be simplified as all the caricatural images used in literary studies with other nations, such as snobbish French, Yankee Americans, arrogant Britishers, hot-tempered Scots, naïve Black Sea people etc. sometimes only by looking at their dialects or way of talking.

Even though there is no one-to-one relation between one's language and his/her social, cultural and/or national identity - as has been commented by Hobsbawm within the frame of proto-nationalism as one of the factors taking role in the formation of proto-nationalism, yet not being a sufficient and necessary condition in the formation of nations; language is the most sensitive indicator of the relationship between an individual and a given social group. As has been discussed in the previous chapter in relation to linguistic relativity, language permeates our very thinking and way of interpreting the world around us.

Language – discourse – is the pre-eminent source of this superimposed order, in the form of ritualized speech, rules and laws, written records, narratives, etc. To simplify, in ancient Greek the outsiders not talking the dialect or talking it distorted were named 'barbaric' due to their inconformity with the language order within the realm of power relations, which is today observed in the dominancy of Standard Language in Language studies. To take it one step ahead of the sample of Standard Language, let us provide another symbolic sample interrelated with power relations and discourse usage. In the

Turkish news, whatever the underlying situation might be or independent of the news being a translation from international news sources, the audience always hear that Turkish soldiers have died martyrs and on the other side the terrorists have been killed, which is exactly the same discourse in the news of other societies to the favour of their soldiers - since this coincides with the overarching identity concept and the process established *vis à vis* the ‘others’.

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- xxxiv Oxford English Dictionary
- xxxv Coté, James E. & Levine, Charles G. *Identity Formation, Agency and Culture*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, London, 2002.
- xxxvi Coté, James E. & Levine, Charles G. *ibidem*.
- xxxvii Coté, James E. & Levine, Charles G. *ibidem*.
- xxxviii Weigert A. J., Teitge J. S., Teitge D. W., *Society and Identity*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1990.
- xxxix Michael, M., *Constructing Identities: The Social, the Nonhuman and Change*, Sage Publications, London, 1996.
- xl Weigert A. J., Teitge J. S., Teitge D. W., *ibidem*.
- xli Malinowski, Bronislaw, *Ethnography of Malinowski: Trobriand Islands 1915-18*, Routledge, London, 1979.
- xlii Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 1983.
- xliii Jenkins, Richard, *Social Identity*, Routledge, London, 1996, p.4.
- xliv Jenkins, Richard, *ibidem*, p.5.
- xlv Hayakawa, S. I., *Symbol, Status and Personality*, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., New York, 1963.
- xlvi Jenkins, Richard, *ibidem*, p.22.
- xlvii Castells, Manuel, *The Power of Identity*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts, 2000, p.6-7.
- xlviii Hobsbawm, Eric and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993.
- xlix Cohen, A.P., *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Routledge, London, 2000.
- ¹ Soenen, Johan, "Imagology and Translation" in *Multiculturalism: Identity and Otherness = Multiculturalisme: Identité et Altérité*, Bogazici Un. Pub., Istanbul, 1997.

CHAPTER 4

COMMUNITY

Community is mainly defined as a unified body of individuals such as the people with common interests living in a particular area; an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location; a group of people with a common characteristic or interest of living together within a larger society; a group linked by a common policy; and a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic and political interests.^{li} When these definitions are further analyzed it is observed that these definitions might be further grouped in three sublevels which might be defined as (1) a geographical expression, (2) a local social system and (3) a type of relationship.^{lii} When community is referred as a geographical expression, this denotes a human settlement located within a particular territory or a particular space, but does not necessarily comment about the nature or level of their interaction – if there is any. When community is referred as a local social system, this denotes a set of social relationships taking place wholly or mostly within a locality, which can also be interpreted as networks amongst the people who know each other and interact in various ways and levels, however, does not comment about the nature or quality of their interaction. Finally when community is referred as a type of relationship, this denotes some sort of common identity or the idea of a spirit of community, which also exists in the word ‘communion’ sharing the same linguistic root – as it is often used in sociology to talk about this sense of community. Yet, whatever are the definitions, community might be argued to be reduced down to have double meaning, - firstly signifying a bounded

system and secondly the social association in general. When we consider the second, the social system association especially with a specific locale or territory it can be argued, as has been specified by Giddens^{liii}, within the frame of structuration theory. However, what is of interest to us in Giddens argument is what Giddens mentioned briefly as a feeling amongst the members of the society that they have some sort of a common identity, thus belonging to a definite collectivity without agreeing that this is necessarily right and proper. This argument coincides with our theory that this is to be claimed as the power of symbols common to the community members – even if they might not be aware of it.

Moreover, as has been stated in the foreword, the conceptualization of community has been based on the approach of Nispet who has defined the term in his book *Sociological Tradition* as something “encompassing all forms of relationship which are characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time”.^{liv} Or, as has been stated before, as a fusion of feeling and thought, of tradition and commitment, of membership and volition.

4.1 Conceptualizing Community in Historical Context

Many nineteenth century sociologists used the concept of community - explicitly or implicitly – and while doing this they have mainly operated with dichotomies between pre-industrial and industrial, or rural and urban societies. F. Toennies, for example, in his distinction between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, treats communities as particular kinds of society which are predominantly rural, united by kinship and a sense of belonging, and self contained.^{lv} After considering all aspects of life, *p.e.*, political, economic, legal, family, art, religion and culture, the construction of selfhood and

personhood as well as the modes of cognition, language and understanding, Toennies reaches to the conclusion that societies characterized by *Gemeinschaft* relations, which is usually translated as ‘community’, are homogeneous, largely based on organic ties, and have a moral cohesion often founded on common religious sentiment, which is regarded by Toennies as the expression of real, organized life. Whereas *Gesellschaft*, or civil society, is an artificial social arrangement based on the conflict of egoistic wills.^{lvi}

For many nineteenth century sociologists, the term was a part of their critique of urban, industrial society. Communities were associated with all the good characteristics that were thought to be possessed by rural societies. Urban societies, on the other hand, represented a destruction of community values, which has come to be replaced today mainly by rural-urban continuum instead. However, the term has recently started to be used to indicate a sense of identity or belonging that may or may not be tied to a geographical location. In this sense, a community is formed when people have a relatively clear idea of who has something in common with them and who has not. Thus, they are mainly mental constructs formed by imagined boundaries between groups. Yet, it needs to be stressed once again in here that the main argument of this study is not to discuss the community as an urbanized, class-based, rationalized social structure of industrial society but to be able to present that it is an outcome of a sense of belonging, i.e., ‘community spirit’, which owes much to the symbols, values, ideologies, norms and moral codes of its specific members with the sense of identity created in them.

In his book *Community: A Critical Response*, Gusfield clearly warns his readers against these strict boundaries and states that

... rather than conceiving of ‘community’ and ‘society’ as groups and/or entities to which persons belong, it would seem more useful

to conceptualize these terms as points of reference brought into play in particular situations and arenas.^{lvii}

Therefore, community should not be considered solely as an entity deriving a sense of belonging via the ties established between the individuals and the groups, but also between people and places. In *Place and the Politics of Identity*, Keith^{lviii} states this in the most convincing way that most of the citizens of one country have often experienced a clear sense of their national membership only when living in another country. This might of course be considered as a necessity of establishing a sense of identity or sharing a spirit of community. However, it might also be considered as Cohen argues “community membership’s being depended upon the symbolic construction and signification of a mask of similarity which all can wear, an umbrella of solidarity under which all can shelter.”^{lix}

Since we have made reference to Cohen it seems to be crucial for us to interpret his understanding which would provide an epistemological framework in our treatment of the term *vis à vis* the concept of identity and be useful in the case study provided below.

4.2. Cohen’s Conceptualization of Community

Cohen conceptualises the community as “that entity to which one belongs, greater than kinship but more immediately than the abstraction of society. “He argues it to be “the arena in which people acquire their most fundamental and most substantial experience of social life outside the confines of the home.”^{lx} Therefore, for him it is nothing more than the place where one learns and continues to practice how to be social. On the other side, emphasizing the symbolic construction of community, Cohen advances

three arguments in his book *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. First he says that symbols generate a sense of shared belonging, such as the sports team, shared rituals, and etc. Second, he argues that community - and its analogues in other languages – is itself a symbolic construct upon which people draw, rhetorically and strategically, which coincides with the linguistic arbitrariness of de Saussure still signifying the same signified in the last analysis. Third, Cohen argues that community membership means sharing with other community members a similar sense of things, participation in a common symbolic domain.^{lxi} To paraphrase, the symbolic nature of community arises from its implying different meanings for different people. Therefore, he further claims that

... whether we are talking about symbols of community or community as a symbol, the power of the notions and the images thus mobilized depends on the capacity of symbols to encompass and condense a range of, not necessarily harmonious or congruent, meanings.^{lxii}

The importance of community's symbolic rallying points are recognized precisely because they are polyvalent, providing an all-embracing concept which can contain the multiplicity of individual objectives and expectations.^{lxiii} Cohen interprets community always in relation to wider cultural and social processes, consciousness of the world beyond is the catalyst for the recognition of one's own community as discrete entity, wholeness is always defined in relation to otherness. Social and physical boundaries and the rituals that define them therefore become of paramount importance to the construction of community.^{lxiv} Furthermore Cohen says, most convincingly, that the similarity emphasized by collective identities is a social construction, an ongoing historical contrivance, reminiscent perhaps of Bourdieu's 'cultural arbitrary' and this totally coincides with his conceptualisation of community as a "phenomenon of culture which is

meaningfully constructed by people through their symbolic prowess and resources.’^{xxv}

As it is presented above with the arguments of Cohen the symbols are attributed a key role in the formation of communities. Symbols are taken as the most effective in enabling people to talk a ‘common’ language, behaving in similar ways, participating in same rituals, treating their beloved ones in the same way, wearing similar clothes and so – the latter of which would like to be treated separately in the analytical part. Still we would like to further elaborate on the topic with a familiar folk story from Turkey.

One day the rich landlord receives a group of gypsies in his territory. The leader of the gypsies’ come and request from the landlord to allow them to stay on his land for a couple of months since his wife was to deliver their baby and they would not further travel. Having his wife in the same position, pregnant for their baby, the landlord sympathises with the gypsy leader and accepts this request. Couple of weeks later the gypsy’s wife delivers their son. The landlord comes to congratulate them and sees the gypsy leader throwing the new born baby into the water of ice-cold river running through his land. When he asks the gypsy leader what he is doing he gets the answer that the gypsy was ‘stealing his son’. Couple of weeks later the son of the landlord gets born and he runs to the river to practice the same ‘ritual’ hoping that his son would be very strong and healthy. But unfortunately the baby gets ill and passes away in a couple of days. The landlord gets so angry that he goes to accuse and throw the gypsies out of his land. But he gets this answer from the gypsy leader: “My lord, has your

grandfather been steeled? Has your father been steeled?
Have you been steeled to try this on your son?’^{lxvi}

This folk story proves the power of habituation in our lives on one side, however, on the other side, as Cohen says shows “the reality of community lying in its members’ perception of the vitality of its culture.”^{lxvii} Communities share certain practices which they regard as a part of their ‘welfare’. They treat these practices as an internal part of their rituals, habits, or way of living which constitute their differentiation with other communities. Last but not least, through this the people construct their individual community heavily loaded with symbols, and as Cohen claims “they make it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity.”^{lxviii}

After this conceptualization of our community understanding in line with the arguments of Cohen let us provide a sample case study to denote whether the ‘community membership is really depended upon the symbolic construction and signification of a mask of similarity which all can wear, an umbrella of solidarity under which all can shelter’ as has been stated in the last paragraph of part 4.1.

4.3. A Case Study : Community Understanding and Formation of Turks Living in Vienna

The below findings are based on a number of interviews made with the representatives of mainly the three different community sub-groups of Turkish, and Viennese having intense contact with Turks and talking Turkish to support our argument of community and its impacts on identity as is discussed in this study. These interviews were done to present living samples and were not done with the intention of statistical justification reasons.

Therefore, it does not need to be justified that the interviewees were not randomly selected but asked to collaborate upon the request of the author. The sample composed of twenty persons was chosen to represent the a.m. sub-groups, with the intention to present their different identity markers for community membership. Moreover, in the interviews the term Viennese and the criteria of living in Vienna was preferred to be used to be able to embrace everyone living in Vienna regardless of their different national, religious, ethnic, educational, regional, linguistic, etc. backgrounds. Only the Turkish citizens living in Vienna were referred as Turks even though they constitute a part of the Viennese population despite their different backgrounds for the sake of categorization purposes. Even though the former consent of the interviewees have been obtained to use the data gathered from them, it had been convincingly advised by our professors to ensure anonymity and to refrain using names to the extend possible. Therefore, except for a few cases where the real names of the persons were uttered to acknowledge our sincere thanks for their significant contribution, the interviewees and their respective data were presented as an anonymous supporting commentary.

The overall findings of the interviews enabled us, as has been stated above, to categorise the Turkish community living in Vienna mainly as (1) the community composed of non-migrant Turks mainly represented by the officials; (2) the community composed of migrant Turks mainly represented by the workers and; (3) the community composed of semi-migrant Turks mainly represented by the students and professionals despite their internal differences in community organisation as shall be elaborated below.

We would like to start our commentary with the first interview made with Mr. Binali Ciner from Turkish Embassy Vienna and with this means would like to extend to him and all the other contributors from the Turkish Embassy

our sincere thanks for their valuable comments and information provided here once again.

First Mr. Ciner provided statistics concerning the population and demography. He stated that according to the last census results of 2001, Austria's population is 8.292.000, with about 2.072 million people, approximately 25 percent of the total population, living in Vienna (on one half of one percent of the country's area). 92% of Austrians are German-speaking and the country has a diverse ethnic mix. According to the official statistics Austria includes six officially recognized ethnic groups and an immigrant community amounting to almost 250.000 people, amongst which the Croats, Czechs, Hungarians, Roma/Sinti, Slovaks and Slovenes take the lead position. However, it also has a significant number of immigrants from other countries, many of them refugees from the former Yugoslavia, and *Gastarbeiters* from Turkey – as foreign workers are called in Austria. Yet, it was emphasized that the Turkish population was not only consisting of *Gastarbeiters*, but also of students who came to enrol at university (a significant part of which is composed of the graduates of St. Georg High school in Istanbul, the diploma of which is officially recognized in Austria) and some of whom later decide to stay and pursue careers as bankers, business persons, architects, doctors, etc. Last but not least, it was also stated that there are Turkish officials and diplomats some working at the UN headquarters placed in Vienna. It was estimated that one-third of Austria's Turkish immigrants live in Vienna amounting to 13.000-14.000 people – not considering those who are not registered to the Embassy which might be minimum one fifth of this figure.

After these statistical figures, when it was asked whether it could be claimed as an institution representing the Turkish State in Vienna that there exists a

distinct Turkish Community living in Vienna it was first stated that minimum 60% of the Turkish population were intermingled with the Viennese but at the later stages of the interview it was more and more evident that the groups intermingled were the professionals, students and the later generations of *Gastarbeiters*, the criteria of being intermingled mainly happening through their linguistic capacity of German and undifferentiable dressing habits. The remaining population was stated to socialize amongst themselves and mainly in coffee houses or under the umbrella of mosques for which official attempts have started to take place within the frame of Copenhagen criteria for EU membership of Turkey. Especially the illiterate migrant population of women constituted a determining factor in this comment due to their lack of language competence and more conservative – not to say religious – outlooks.

This last comment can be further checked in the study of Christina Sue Augsburgberger who had studied the lives of women of Turkish descent in Vienna, the role Islam plays in their lives and the manner in which religious ideas are employed and formulated through participation in social-political organizations or leadership positions in the community.^{lxix} Moreover, it was found out that Islam is by far the most important mark of belonging and identity in the Turkish immigrant community, even though many other such ties exist.

Nevertheless, as has been claimed by Ms. Arzu Wernhart the community understanding was not realized through the criteria of being Turkish but by falling into one of the above mentioned sub-groups, which are not very much in contact. Furthermore, the migrant population in Vienna do not react any different than in Turkey with the recreation of all the social, political, religious and ethnic cleavages with those whom they feel the we-ness, a community formed by the relatively clear idea of who has something in

common with them and who has not, through associations, federations, clubs, mosques or etc.

Mr. Ibrahim Yilmaz, supermarket owner and a community leader in the eyes of Turks at Naschmarkt was stating this as “we are religious people. We enjoy talking about religion and the future of our kids. We have nothing to do with the others except for business. Whether they talk Turkish or German makes no difference for us, since they appear all the same.”

These comments were in a way proving that despite the official discourse of the Embassy the Turkish community as it was observed by the Viennese was significantly differentiated and more serving as an identity marker for certain community groups, especially through the criteria of religion.

Further analyses based on the resources of the Embassy covered that the invited lists for the receptions were confirming this. Certain professional associations, religious groups, alumni associations, etc. were constituting the main body of the guest list which was not presented as a list of names covering every registered member of Turkish population to be able to talk of a unanimous Turkish community as well as its presented identity.

Thus, it was evident that the complex social phenomenon of Turkish immigration created a distorted self-image and un-identical individual and collective identities both in the eyes of Turkish population as well as the Viennese. Therefore as Ural Manco argues the community ties were mainly determined by economic exclusion, cultural marginality - which is asserted notably by the persistence of ethnic family traditions such as the code of honour and finding a spouse from one's parents' village, the widespread lack of mastery of the host country's language, and the clustering in underprivileged neighbourhoods that are highly ethnically structured.^{lxx}

While the socio-economic and cultural problems experienced by the various

Muslim immigrant groups in Europe are similar, as Dr. Robert Hunt claims the Turkish immigrants differ from other Muslim immigrants, primarily from North Africa, by their rural origins, geographical concentration, family-based structure, preservation of the native language, lack of economic qualifications, and the creation of regional ties '*hemsehrilik*' organizations.^{lxxi}

To paraphrase all these arguments in one sentence, it had been aimed to show with the above case study made on various representatives of Turkish community members in Vienna that the 'community membership is really depended upon the symbolic construction and signification of a mask of similarity which all can wear, an umbrella of solidarity under which all can shelter' and national identity might not be considered sufficient to provide this as has been argued in the third chapter with the legitimization of choosing the social identity for the conceptualized identity understanding of this given study, since the people prefer to share the community of those whom they believe have common values, norms, rituals, politics, appearances, accents, etc. with those of themselves.

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- ^{li} Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary
- ^{lii} Lecture 1 18-25 September 2000: *The Concept of Community*, <http://staffweb.itsligo.ie/~staff/pshare/cs/lectures>
- ^{liii} Giddens, Anthony, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. 164-5.
- ^{liiii} Nispet, R.A., *The Sociological Tradition*, Heinemann, London, 1973, p.47.
- ^{liv} Toennies, Ferdinand, *Community and Civil Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
- ^{lv} Toennies, F., *ibidem*
- ^{lvii} Gusfield, Joseph R., *Community: A Critical Response*, Harper Colophon Books, New York, 1975, p.41.
- ^{lviii} Keith, Michael and Steve Pile, *Place and the Politics of Identity*, Routledge, London, 1993.
- ^{lix} Cohen, A.P., *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Routledge, London, 2000, p.105.
- ^{lx} Cohen, A.P., *ibidem*, p.15.
- ^{lxi} Cohen, A.P., *ibidem*, p.106-7.
- ^{lxii} Cohen, A.P., *ibidem*, p.107.
- ^{lxiii} Keith, Michael and Steve Pile, *ibidem*, p.129.
- ^{lxiv} Keith, Michael and Steve Pile, *ibidem*, p.129-30.
- ^{lxv} Cohen, A.P., *ibidem*, p.38.
- ^{lxvi} This folk story, the sources of which is unknown to me has been told during my childhood by my grandmother Mihriban Uluözen to whom I extend sincere thanks for her skills and patience in teaching me language and literature. You will never be forgotten grandma.
- ^{lxvii} Cohen, A.P., *ibidem*, p.118.
- ^{lxviii} Cohen, A.P., *ibidem*, p.118.
- ^{lxix} The study of Augsburgers 'Gender, Nationality and Religion Among Women of Turkish Descent Active in the Muslim Community in Vienna' has been submitted as a PhD thesis to the University of Vienna Anthropology Department in 2002.
- ^{lxx} Manco, Ural, "Turcs d'Europe: de l'image tronquée à la complexité d'une réalité sociale immigrée" in *Hommes et Migrations*, n°1226, July-August 2000, Paris, pp. 76-87.
- ^{lxxi} Dr. Robert Hunt, a Pastor working in the English Speaking United Methodist Church of Vienna engages himself in researches concerning popular attitudes towards Islam within the Turkish community in Vienna.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSES

Analyzing the relation between symbol, identity and community via samples

In this analytical chapter, as had been stated before, it shall be provided the relation between symbol, identity and community via the use of samples and the role and power of the former, i.e. symbols, in the identity formation of community members – as they may claim themselves to be and or to belong – shall be tried to get uncovered. Three samples of symbol, which are found to be strong denominators in the identity formation, shall be used for this reason. The first symbol shall be ‘dressing’ as the display cabinet of the social identity. The second symbol shall be the ‘Cross’ with its established relations to dressing habits as well as the religious culture behind by denoting the material aspect of symbols to represent something immaterial, and the third symbol shall be the language in general and the discourse analyses of three Turkish writers in particular, as the audience associate themselves with the symbols they utter in their respective identity formations.

To start with, as stated in detail in chapter two, a symbol is a device for enabling us to make abstractions. Therefore, totems, uniforms, Cross, flags, body modifications, language, in short everything can be a symbol. However, some has more specific ‘instrumental value’ as Firth^{lxxii} says than others in conveying this message. For example with political and religious symbols the instrumental value is especially clear. Flag, national anthem, church painting, scriptural text, national dress, even style of headgear can evoke powerful

emotions of identification with a group and be used as rallying points of collective action.^{lxxiii} Thus, such communities constructed through collective action and preserved through collective memory provide the strongest source of identity as argued by Castells.^{lxxiv} This point confirms for us the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of the people as their source of meaning and experience, since people constituting a common community share a system of symbols and meanings, which is an internal and determining part of their social identity and which in the last analysis provide or represent for them the reality of the world in which they live their lives different than those of the members of other communities which have totally different identity formations. To this end, below we shall provide certain samples to back our argument before stating our overall commentary.

The method of analyzing these samples shall be based on de Saussure's classification of the sign, signified and signifier which is widely accepted as establishing the three-part relationship of any sign system, as it is applied to semiology – the science of signs – which would embrace all sign systems.^{lxxv} The aim in doing this shall be, in Roland Barthes' words, “to reconstitute the functioning of the systems of significations in accordance with the process typical of any structuralist activity, which is to build a *simulacrum* of the objects under observation.”^{lxxvi} With this overall view in mind, we shall try to present the link between symbol, identity formation and community membership.

With samples the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members:

Sample 1 : Dressing as an expression of social construction of identity

Joanne Eicher defines the dress as a “coded sensory system of non-verbal communication that aids human in space and time”.^{lxxvii} Therefore, dressing as a symbolic issue should be considered as a supplement to verbal and other communicative expression systems, and should be remembered that as one of the most visible forms about a person it plays a major role in the social construction of identity. In using the concept of dressing it should be clarified that what is aimed is not solely a piece of cloth covering the body, but also the body modifications extending to cover originally very ancient practices such as tattoo, piercing, etc., - in those days more as a ritual evidence of aestheticism and identity. The justification of treating dressing as has been stated above is based on the Yanomamos, the indigenous people of South American Amazon basin as was presented in the ethnological movies of Napoleon Chagnon, considering a piece of leather covering their sexual organs symbolically as a full dress in their understanding. Therefore, whatever modification people go through on their body or put on themselves – in the form of cloth or not – shall be considered as dressing and the role they play in the social construction of identity shall be tried to get uncovered. It also needs to be expressed that the reason for choosing dressing as a sample of symbol owes this to its vast coverage in imagology and semiology studies as the most visible form of social identity and group membership.

To start with, it needs to be emphasized that the costume historians observe mainly two stages in clothing which can be stated as (1) pre-industrial societies in which the clothing behavior indicated a person’s position and social structure and (2) industrial societies in which clothes have gradually lost their economic but not symbolic importance.^{lxxviii} If we would like to paraphrase this, before ready-made clothes were introduced to the market, the clothes were not affordable, thus, not accessible for the vast majority of the

population, by providing the first visible [economic] indicator for the social position and structure. Even though the vast manufacture eased the availability of clothing, it started having more symbolic values – not limited with its being economic – through fashion, brand, style and originality, and started serving more as an identity marker. Yet it should also be noted that, not invalidating what had been said, in both societies and at all times there had been certain costumes such as uniforms – military, police, religious, school etc. – that have always been used to impose social identities. Actually not only uniforms, but also dress codes have also been a key concept for centuries. It had been as if an invisible hand had been ordering what to wear and what not to wear on the more or less willing subjects on certain occasions and certain places which turned more into a concept of authority and habituation on the following stages, - such as the foot binding in China.

This topic which is treated as a part of courtesy rules or appropriate behaving can be observed at every space and time. From the underlying necessities of clothing reform of Atatürk^{lxxxix}, which was targeting a modern uniformed outlook in line with Western standards to popular folk stories of *Pink Caftan with Pearl*,^{lxxx} to invitations to certain occasions during which you are informed about what you should be wearing – at least the color – to Sunday masses, the dress codes exist at any place and time in our lives. However, this last one still in our postmodern world draws a conflicting picture. The invisible hand of authority and power still dominates the clothing habits in religious and/or ‘holy’ places, yet, it has become as common to see ladies in furs and pearls and men in suits, as well as a group in leather jackets and trousers wearing American cowboy boots and preferring silver accessories or piercing to traditional gold and pearls, which they might be more associating with the old generations, bourgeoisie, conservatism, being traditional, and etc. attending next to one another to these masses. A semiological analysis would have easily uncover the attributes of these two seemingly

contradictory dressing style, however, not to lengthen this sample we would like to list a couple of them which are heavily used in imagology studies.

To begin with, leather jackets, pants, accessories mainly signify marginality, liberty, revolt against established norms, the life style of a rocker, behaving comfortably ignoring the values. The contrary to this, wearing ties and suits signify conformity with the rules, a standardized life style covering every class, trying to look descent and noble and wishing to get respect similar to those arisen in the minds of many in seeing a uniform as a subgroup to it. Wearing butterflies signifies intellectual elitism and aristocracy; and t-shirts, pullovers etc. more a socialized understanding, egalitarianism, student perspective, easygoingness etc.^{lxxxix} Of course these stock images, which are more or less commonly shared in the Western world falls into the terrain of imagology studies and needs to be detailed with semiological analysis being time and place specific. However, for the concern of this study this much should suffice to uncover the message trying to be conveyed.

Dressing habits, as tried to be stated, especially in the postmodern societies are defined to be more “an interpretation of connections between personal identity and social identity that is conferred by membership in various social groups that wear similar clothing.”^{lxxxii} The same argument is also confirmed by Crane who argues that

... like some genres of popular music and popular literature, clothing styles are significant to the social groups in which they originate or whom they are targeted but are often incomprehensible to people outside these social contexts.^{lxxxiii}

This point can also be considered as an evidence of the role and power of the symbols (in this case dressing) in the identity formation of community members. On the one hand side there should exist a we-ness in the understanding of the applicants *vis à vis* their social identities, and on the

other hand side by applying similar dressing garments they try to lower the barriers of perceived difference and try to establish links with the others whom are not immediate members of their community, probably the most evident example of which is the increasing popularity of body modifications as shall be treated below.

As it had been stated before body modifications are also treated as a part of dressing. Here it might be useful to elaborate a bit more on what is meant with body modifications with reference to Featherstone before continuing. The term body modification refers to a long list of practices which include tattooing, piercing, cutting, binding, bodybuilding and even gymnastics and dietary regimes, which are less slow with their external effects but targeted to modify the body in the long run.^{lxxxiv} However, our concern in this sample lays more with observable garments; therefore, tattoos and piercing are more determinant in indicating sociability with certain groups with constructed identities. Tattooing was brought to Europe by Captain Cook in 1769 from Pacific, especially through his contacts with Polynesian tattoo culture. Etymologically the word tattoo derives from Tahitian *ta tau* meaning to mark. The first applicers of tattooing were mainly marginal groups such as the circus or sideshow performers, entertainers, etc. and thus tattooing was generally associated with criminal classes and seafarers. However, in the mid to late nineteenth century for a short period it became popular amongst European nobility with Edward VIII, the Czar Nicholas, King Frederik of Denmark, amongst others becoming decorated. Today it has more a heterogeneous nature, yet, still continuing its popularity. About piercing, it mainly arrived in Europe around mid to late nineteenth century by sailors from Pacific and Eastern cultures and Middle East by Legionnaires. This practice too was associated with certain subcultures such as gypsies and sailors who had ear piercing. In Victorian times the ‘dressing ring’ or Prince Albert, a genital piercing named after Victoria’s husband was used to chain

the penis to the wearers' leg, to overcome embarrassment with the tight trousers fashionable at the time. Body piercing, except for ear piercing, was only practiced by a small subculture of aficionados until the 1970s when punk reestablished the practice into more mainstream culture.^{lxxxv} In the old days the popular image of the tattooee was mainly young, male and working class. However, this image has been outdated as more and more men and women of various age groups and socio-economic backgrounds choose to enter the tattoo studio. Piercing, too, though once associated with particular marginal or sub-cultural groups, is now popular with an increasingly heterogeneous range of enthusiasts.^{lxxxvi} This can also be observed in the popularity of semi-permanent tattoos for children given together with various candies or piercing appearing accessories or jewelries obtainable from the market. These decorative accessories as some might claim or dressing as we argue, target a certain message wishing to be conveyed with regards to the identity and with the community that the appliers want to belong to, which might be interpreted as an increased freedom, tolerance, rebel against the established conservatist values, and etc. or as AlSayyad would name it a new way of consuming tradition and manufacturing heritage to reconstruct an image of 'nouveau intellectuel' for some.^{lxxxvii}

Not only these two different, however interdependent part of dressing but also traditional or else to say religious outlooks of the Turkish community in Vienna as had been provided as a case study in chapter four form and present a similar identity formation in a given community and or to be treated as a member of a specific community – since the symbols we employ convey messages only to those who share the same symbolic pool. In this case - image wise - the contrary of what might be said for tattoo and piercing which in the semiological analysis might be treated as the opposite side of the equilibrium.^{lxxxviii}

Sample 2 : Religious symbol of Cross as an expression of social construction of identity

Have you ever heard stories such as “a couple was walking on the main street when someone stopped and asked the girl ‘Why on earth are you wearing a plus sign on your neck?’”, or someone went into a local jewelers and asked for a Cross only to be asked “Do you want one with the ‘wee man’ on it or without?” Of course these are made up stories – even though very close to becoming real – yet, make reference to a religious symbol with strong instrumental value as has been stated before, which has wide usage at every field of life from dressing to architecture. Thus, wherever it is employed people should be wishing to convey a message in line with the social identity they want to present within their given community. Before elaborating on the potential signifieds let us briefly uncover how this symbol came into being.

The Cross, represented in its simplest form by the crossing of two lines at right angles goes back to a very remote period of human civilization. According to *Encyclopedia Heraldica* there are 385 different crosses, only nine of which have religious symbolism. The primitive form of the Cross seems as that of ‘gamma’ cross (*crux gammata*) better known by its Sanskrit name *swastika*, which is a very sacred sign in India and is very ancient and widespread throughout the East. It is a symbol of the sun and seems to denote its daily rotation. For some, like Buddhists, it is the symbol of living flame or sacred fire.^{lxxxix} However, as for our interest, it is the symbol of Christian faith, of spiritual rebirth and renewal. Yet it is important to note that the symbol did not always have this instrumental value, but in Jesus’ time the contrary value for the despised means of execution and symbolized betrayal. Only the lowest of criminals, such as robbers, traitors, and rebels were forced to bear it. Therefore, it is no surprise that in paintings and inscriptions much

early Christian symbolism referred to life beyond the tomb, using symbols such as the fish for mystical union with Christ or the vine for heavenly feast, of which the earthly pledge was the Eucharist. The Cross appeared relatively late in the fourth century, the crucifix about the eighth century.^{xc} It may be safely asserted that only after the edict of Milan, A.D. 312, was the Cross used as the permanent sign of Redemption. De Rossi positively states that no monogram of Christ discovered in the catacombs or other places can be traced to a period anterior to the year 312.^{xcii}

In short, the Cross which has come to be associated with Christianity has not been an early Christian symbol but a pagan idol the usage of which has been abhorred and banned in certain circles. However, systematically from the fifteenth century onwards, the fear of the capacity of symbols to stimulate responses caused missionaries to destroy tribal symbols and substitute them with their own. During the nineteenth century in particular, the missionaries of Christianity demolished the phallic and ancestral figures, the gods and idols of the shrines and temples, to establish the Cross as the universal symbol of religion – together with which the authority of the Church has also developed, without acknowledging its own potent, pagan origins.

In an earlier century there was less ambivalence in the use of the Christian symbol. One of the most remarkable of these is a Cross in the form of a letter T which thus served as the emblem of creation and generation before the Church adopted it as the sign of salvation.^{xciii} This point can also be confirmed in the *Dictionary of Mysticism and the Occult* which defines the Cross as “an ancient pre-Christian symbol interpreted by some occultists as uniting the male phallus (vertical bar) and the female vagina (horizontal bar) or as a symbol of four directions and a powerful weapon against evil”, or as the male sexual organ presented as the symbol of symbols by Payne Knight^{xciii} in 1786 as claimed in the *Masculine Cross and Ancient Sex*

Worship written by Abisha S. Hudson with the pseudonym Sha Rocco in 1874.^{xciv}

Whatever have been the origins, the Cross once forbidden as a Christian symbol because of its pagan associations is today so powerful a symbol that few could break a cross on the altar of a Christian church without consciously attempting to destroy that which it symbolizes, which we shall try to interpret. First of all, according to religious discourse, God gave his son, Jesus, to be crucified that all who believe in him might have eternal life. Thus, wearing a Cross for many is the constant reminder of this most precious gift. For others, it symbolizes their religious correctness in their given community, or the eternal life and forgiveness, or in marginal forms such as in tattoos, the determination of not giving up against established norms - just like Jesus did, as it is expressed by a tattoo shopkeeper in Vienna.

To sum up, whatever intention might be in wearing a Cross, it definitely serves as an identity marker for the carrier, first by its determining the community boundaries of the carrier, which is expected to be Christianity except for in the last example given with tattooing which might be applied by non-Christians - but still with the same concern of an identity formation in their given communal context, and secondly, that the person wants to clearly express it as a major part of his/her identity, a determining signified in conceptualizing the reality of his/her life as it is expressed in the symbol of the Cross.

Sample 3 : Language as an expression of social construction of identity

As de Saussure stated, language is a system of signs collectively produced and shared by the people using this self-referential and conventional system.^{xcv} Lehmann describes it as “the means for us to take place in society, to express our wants and convey information, to learn about the people and the world around us”.^{xcvi} Therefore, language is expressed as the means enabling us to live effectively, to develop our capabilities and to satisfy our curiosity about our surroundings. Another important figure for the study of language, Hjelmslev, describes language as “a means that through which we understand or comprehend first by analyzing and secondly by synthesizing”.^{xcvii} This argument brings us to the terrain of symbols since we attribute to them the role of understanding and naming the world around us. Therefore, it can be stated that one of the most peculiar properties of language is its ability to be used to construct entirely symbolic worlds, - sometimes even fictitious universes – thus, an identity for us which might be an alternative to the world familiar to us. To put it in other words, we see that identity, as a recollected content and process, is materialized in language. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that when we say language we cover a vast majority of components varying from the linguistic structure and linguistic usage to phonetics, semantics, morphology, syntax, as well as accents, vocabulary preferences and etc. However, amongst all these certain of them such as the tone of the voice, using colloquial or slang or jargon, or full sentences seem to have relatively a more direct symbolical meaning *vis à vis* the identity of the user than the others. To put it in different words, we might all have heard people saying “I have not understood any word of what he has said” either due to the regional accent or vocabulary preferences such as using a specific jargon, and therefore, the lack of communication and the feeling of uneasiness in certain occasions. This point which is stated on the oral level reaches to a more conscious preference issue when the concerned language is on the written level, especially in the case of literary studies.

Tell me your favorite author and I will tell you who you are.

For this purpose, three of the foremost read author/poet in Turkish literary studies namely Nazim Hikmet, Yasar Kemal and Can Yucel shall be compared and contrasted with regards to their language, popularity, audience and coverage in international literary works especially from the perspective of those not in the literary studies with reference to what image they might project. Especially for those not that much involved in literary studies or in cases such as buying a book as a present for a friend the general tendency displayed is to rely on the stock images of the authors/poets as it might be uncovered in an imagology study. Bearing this tendency in mind it might be claimed that the authors/poets themselves play a role as an identity marker for those who already choose their given community as the community of not only literate but literature favoring people. Therefore, claiming that in literary studies the authors/poets already play the role of a symbol in the identity formation of interested audience we shall try to analyze what this might be, by applying the semiological analysis method.^{xcviii}

The concerns and the underlying reasons of preference amongst these three authors might be purely literary, however, we claim that there are also social and/or ideological reasons and whatever are the reasons they always make use of symbols, which in the last analysis constitute our identity markers. The justification of this argument lays in the semiological conceptualization of Pierce attributing a symbolic nature to language targeting a desired reaction or image for its specific user via the identity presented. Therefore, in line with this understanding, we shall try to interpret Nazim Hikmet, Yasar Kemal and Can Yucel one by one as a symbol.

To begin with, when the name of Nazim Hikmet is uttered the first things that come to mind are: poet, novelist, playwright, translator who had long been

banned in his mother country and who had suffered a long exile due to his leftist political views, therefore, a hero for some and a prerequisite in the collections of most western elite and whomever claim to share leftist views. The literary connotations are only secondary such as his being one of the first authors to use free verse and colloquial diction which are revolutionizing the Ottoman literary conventions. Concerning Yasar Kemal, the image is more an author of the rural, of the peasants and underprivileged, of Anatolian tenant farmers and as Elia Kazan says “a spokesman for those who has no other voice”.^{xcix} The secondary literary connotation is his excess usage of descriptions which is considered more an outdated format in modern literary studies, without targeting any metaphorical role, however, especially very favourable in the international literary circles due to the familiar – or else desired - image of Turkey, which is depicted in detail.^c Coming to Can Yucel, he might even be known as the writer of lyrics for songs since a vast majority of his poems have already been used in the compositions of Turkish pop singers who are more referring to the taste of literary elite. For others, he is a translator who had long been criticized to re-write the original poesy and a marginal elite living a bohemian life and thus the preference of mainly the student circles. After these preliminary information, it also needs to be stressed that the author/poet whose works are more available in international markets is Yasar Kemal followed by Nazim Hikmet – but only on special orders with limited number of editions. Despite the vast majority of the translations Can Yucel had made from especially Western literature and volumes of poetry books, it might be quite surprising to note that he is not covered in international literary markets at all.^{ci} Based on these information it might also be argued that these authors provide a specific symbolic meaning also for the international literary circles in line with their own identifications of Turkey and Turkish people. Yet, returning back to the simple question of which one we might offer as a present to our friends, it needs to be stressed that the one in line with the identity that we want to display as well as the one

the target person who shall be receiving the gift displays would be far more determining than any secondary concern. Offering the book of Nazim Hikmet or Can Yucel for a conservatist person whom we know to live his life according to fundamentalist values would not be the best choice – if a book is offered at all. Therefore, like dressing, the books, i.e., the literary studies, i.e., the language carries a very powerful symbolic role in the identity formation of community members.

Last but not least, it should also be remembered that we all perceive reality according to the structure of meanings of the model of the world we create and express our ideas and emotions with symbols that constitute the content of this model. While doing this we employ symbols derived from our community and convey our messages and thus present our social identity, either by something that would be displayed on us, or symbolization of an immaterial thing, or the level of language and thus literary genres we employ for the sake of identification purposes. However, none of this can be - or better to say should be - treated at a practical level as a mere coincidence, but the deeper meaning of identification behind them – conscious or not - should always be remembered and tried to be deconstructed as the power and role of the symbols in the identity formation of community members, - as it shall be tried to be summed up in the conclusive chapter.

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- lxxii Firth, Raymond, *Symbols: Public and Private*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1973.
- lxxiii Firth, R., *ibidem*, p.77
- lxxiv Castells, Manuel, *The Power of Identity*, Blackwell Publishers, Massachusetts, 2000.
- lxxv De Saussure, Ferdinand, *Course in General Linguistics*, Open Court Publishing, Illinois, 1988.
- lxxvi Barthes, Roland, *Elements of Semiology*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1967, p.95.
- lxxvii Eicher, Joanne B., *Dress & Ethnicity: Change Across Space and Time*, Berg Publishers Ltd, UK, 1995, p.1.
- lxxviii Ewen, Stuart, *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, Mouton, New York, 1979.
- lxxix On November 25th, 1925 the Clothing Reform of Atatürk had passed in Turkey and the fez had been outlawed by the Hat Law, as well as discouraging the wearing of veil. Western clothing for both men and women were encouraged. For more information see: Atatürk Devrimleri (Reforms of Atatürk)
- lxxx Seyfettin Ömer, *Pembe Incili Kaftan (Pink Caftan with Pearl)* Masal Yayıncılık, Istanbul, 2001. Seyfettin writes in this book about a messenger in Ottoman times, Muhsin Celebi, who was sent to Shah Ismail and who was ordering the pink caftan with pearl to wear but afterwards leaving it in Shah's palace for using it as a carpet underneath to sit on in front of the Shah.
- lxxxi The argument raised in this sample refers to the imagology class discussions of Nedret Kuran Burcoglu held at Bosphorous University Simultaneous Interpretation and Translation Department in Fall 1995-96
- lxxxii Davis, Fred, *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, p.17
- lxxxiii Crane, Diana, *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000, p.15.
- lxxxiv Featherstone, M., *Body Modification*, Sage Publications, London, 2000.
- lxxxv Klemperer, Michael, *Archaeology of Tattooing*, <http://www.into-you.co.uk/contents/misc.htm>
- lxxxvi Curry, D., 'Decorating the Body Politic' *New Formations* 19, 1993, p.69-82.
- lxxxvii AlSayyad, Nezar, *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, Routledge, London, 2001.
- lxxxviii For the equilibrium understanding and a sample of semiological analysis please refer to Mehmet Rifat's Göstergebilim ve Masal Cözümlemesi (Semiology and Tale Analysis) in *Gösterge Eleştirisi (Semiology Critics)*, Kaf Yayıncılık, Istanbul, 1999.
- lxxxix *History of the Cross*, <http://www.aclc.info/History%20of%20the%20Cross.pdf>
- xc Firth, R., *ibidem*, p.48
- xcı Giovanni Battista de Rossi born at Rome in 1822 and died on Lake Albano in 1894 was a distinguished Christian archeologist best known for his work in connection with the Roman Catacombs; see: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>
- xcii Oliver, Paul, *Shelter, Sign and Symbol*, Barrie & Jenkins, London, 1975, p.19.
- xciii Sir Richard Payne Knight was writing in his book *Two Essays on the Worship of Priapus* about the phallic worship and fertility cults in ancient world of East as well as West.
- xciv Rocco, Sha, *Masculine Cross and Ancient Sex Worship*, Kessinger Co., Massachusetts, 1996(republished).
- xcv De Saussure, Ferdinand, *ibidem*.
- xcvi Lehmann, Winfred P., *Language: An Introduction*, Random House, New York, 1983, p.1.
- xcvii Hjelmslev, Louis, *Language: An Introduction*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1970.

^{xcviii} For a detailed semiological analysis of literary works see Mehmet Rifat's 'Fahriye Abla'nın Anlatısal ve Söylemsel Kimliğine Bir Yaklaşım' (An Approach to the Narrative and Discursive Identity of Sister Fahriye) in *Gösterge Eleştirisi (Semiology Critics)*, Kaf Yayıncılık, İstanbul, 1999.

^{xcix} Mitler, Louis, *Contemporary Turkish Writers: A Critical Bio-Bibliography*, Indiana University Press, Indiana, 1988.

^c A similar argument is raised in the study of Nedret Kuran Burcoglu who claims that the Turkish migrant authors in Europe – specifically Germany – use the motives and contents which are target oriented determined by the taste of the European reader who expects such a view and content from the Turkish immigrant author with their perceived religious, communal and living differences. For further reading look: Burcoglu, Nedret Kuran, "The Image of 'Self' and the 'Other' in the Works of Turkish Migrant Authors", *Multiculturalism: Identity and Otherness*, Bogazici University Press, İstanbul, 1997.

^{ci} This argument can be verified from the University library references of Vienna and Toronto and the translated books archive of Turkish publishers such as Dost.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Throughout the study it was tried to show that the concepts of symbol, identity and community should not be taken at their face value but should be considered with their deeper theoretical and practical roots as they were used and analyzed. With this it was aimed to show that these three concepts, i.e., symbol, identity and community are far more effective and influential on one another than might be expected. That is why the aim of this study was claimed and stated to be threefold. On one hand side the familiarity and knowledge about the concepts of symbol, identity and community were tried to be increased and on the other side an epistemological stand point was tried to be presented for their evaluation and assessment. Yet, last but not least, the most challenging aim remained as highlighting the importance of symbols in the identity formation of community members through semiological and theoretical analyses.

With various samples chosen for this end it was tried to be proved that the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members could be studied at an interdisciplinary level. Moreover it needs to be stressed once again that this should not be considered solely as a discussion of symbols since as it was tried to be presented through deliberate usage of various symbols such as dressing as the display cabinet of identity by having the power and means of showing the regional, intellectual, academic backgrounds and etc.; of language and thus the authors/poets and literary preferences as an issue of identification; and of religious symbolization of Cross to represent or denote something immaterial by using the material

aspect of symbolism the individuals might be able to present themselves in the way they would like and thus might construct a certain identity for themselves which was already expressed as ‘seeking to be and to be seen to be something or somebody and not only identifying themselves but also identifying others and being identified by them in turn’.

This identity, which is a social one and a game of playing the *vis à vis*, as is discussed in chapter three, can be structured and re-structured through deliberate usage of symbols which would provide people a source of meaning and experience. As has already been exemplified, by carrying the dress A or B, or the accessory of C or D, people can evoke a certain image in the minds of the others which is presented as a part of their social identity.

However, this trial only works within a specific community borderline since as it had been argued community determines the content of the symbolic pool used by its respective members and that the associated meanings to the symbols can only lead to a common understanding in that specific community. Moreover, the fourth chapter focused on the community as a fusion of feeling and thought, of tradition and commitment, of membership and volition. Therefore, it needs to be stressed again that the community was discussed not as an urbanized, class-based, rationalized social structure of industrial society but argued that it is an outcome of a sense of belonging, i.e., ‘community spirit’, which owes much to the symbols, values, ideologies, norms and moral codes of its specific members with the sense of identity created in them. As has been stated before people construct their individual community heavily loaded with symbols, and as Cohen claims they make it ‘a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity’. A Chinese proverb reads that “everyone interprets the world to the extend of their knowledge”, thus, if we would agree with this, than, we can claim that our given community constitutes the borderline of our world since we learn

whatever we know in it and through this we manage to wear the mask of similarity and shelter under the umbrella of solidarity with other members of our given community.

Last but not least, it should be remembered that we all perceive reality according to the structure of meanings of the model of the world we create and express our ideas and emotions with symbols that constitute the content of this model. Therefore, we might be empathized or criticized for our modeling of the world and the symbols we make use of for this purpose. Yet, if we want to understand people's behavior and make ourselves understandable, we must find out how they perceive this model and establish their own; that means we must reconstruct their model of the world which is nothing but trying to understand their symbols without making any *ad hoc* presumptions. Making references to a model which is totally outside of their world would make more a misleading interpretation *vis à vis* their symbolic pool than serving as a means of communication and sharing. While doing this we should always remember that whatever message we want to convey with regards to our social identity we make use of the symbols given by our community and thus could never ignore the role and power of symbols in the identity formation of community members.

Therefore, as it had been stated before, throughout the study the concepts of symbol, identity and community were considered in relation to one another in trying to interpret the world modeled by us or the others. Moreover, it should always be remembered that consciously or not, this model is continuously constructed and deconstructed by employing the already existing symbols for the sake of a desired social identity in our given community, which in the last analysis is nothing but an important repository of symbols where the world around us is attributed a meaning.

However, like in every study, the borderlines of this current one was determined by the author's 'symbolic ideology' and the theoretical framework was therefore in consistency by employing mainly the theories in relation to semiology and symbolic interactionism, yet, with its distinct emphasis always made on the cultural aspect of the symbols and thus, with its effect on the identity. Moreover, with this preliminary effort it was tried to uncover the relation between symbol, identity and community to be followed by further analyses of the formation of Turkish identity in communities outside the borders of Turkey with regards to visual, audible and immaterial symbols utilized. It is hoped that this study can provide a backbone for any future argument by presenting the undeniable fact that the symbols play an important role in the identity formation of community members - if we cannot claim it to be already the symbols in the broadest sense of the concept that form identity in any given community.

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