

THE ISSUE OF EDUCATION IN OTTOMAN WOMEN’S PERIODICALS (1869-1895)

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ABSTRACT

“The Issue of Education in Ottoman Women’s Periodicals (1869-1895)”

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This thesis examines late Ottoman women’s periodicals (1869-1895) and tries to reveal what kind of discourses these periodicals created and how women received them. It looks at male writers who were the first to publish periodicals for female readers, seeking to educate them in domestic matters such as motherhood and scientific housewifery by holding these roles important for the well being of the individual and the community. It draws attention to the empowering side of this discourse and suggests that women wanted to enlarge their sphere of activity by using the same discourse, by linking their domestic and social roles to the well-being of their community. Parallel to this empowerment and as a result of the Ottoman State’s educational investments for its female subjects, in late Ottoman society women were in the public sphere through their criticism, through philanthropic activities, and through their promotion of the interests of their fellow women and nation.

KISA ÖZET

“Osmanlı Kadın Dergileri’nde Eğitim Meselesi (1869-1895)”

Ayşe Bozkurt

Bu çalışma, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda 19. yüzyılın ikinci yarısında (1869-1895) kadın dergilerinin hangi kaygılarla yayınlandığını hangi söylemleri ürettiğini ve bu söylemlerin kadınlar tarafından nasıl yorumlandığını incelemektedir. İlk kadın dergileri erkek yazarlar tarafından yayınlanmış ve bu yazarlar kadınların annelik ve ev işleri ile ilgili rollerini bireyin ve toplumun refahı için önemli add ederek kadın okuyucularını bu konularda eğitmeyi amaçlamışlardır. Bu söylemin sınırlayıcı olduğu kadar kadınlara güç atfeden bir yönü de vardır ve kadınlar kendi rollerinin sınırlarını genişletmek için aynı söylemi kullanmıştır. Söz konusu dergilerin kadınların toplumsal ve milli bilincinin artmasında etkili olmasıyla ve de Osmanlı Devleti’nin kız çocukları için açtığı okulların neticesinde, son dönem Osmanlı toplumunda kadınlar, hayırseverlik, sosyal ve gündelik olaylarla ilgili eleştiri, önerileri ve kadınlara yönelik talepleriyle kamusal alandadır.

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to all my teachers.....

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes late Ottoman women's periodicals published between 1869 - 1895. It seeks to understand why the publishers and writers of these journals needed to address women, what kinds of discourses they created and how such discourses were received by the targeted audience.

In the period under study, the nineteenth-century, Ottoman State and society were undergoing changes in different realms of life. The state became more influential in the daily lives of its subjects through regulations concerning education, public health, finance, the police force and so forth. While it tried to deal with the European powers more intensively, it struggled to keep the country, with its various religious and ethnic communities, together. The press as a medium of communication entered the daily life of subjects by official and non-official means. Intellectuals started to discuss the status and role of women in society. So, women's periodicals give us chance to look at, broadly speaking, from society's perspective, to pinpoint the concerns of Ottoman male and female subjects, to analyze the results of the state's reforms and the attitudes of the subjects to such reforms, and to understand Ottoman subjects' reactions to the changing world around them as well as their ways of positioning themselves vis-à-vis Europe. These sources can also provide us with answers about why and how the male writers dealt with the issue of women and how women responded to it. Were female writers and readers passive receivers of these periodicals or were they an active audience?

In the field of late Ottoman history, women's studies have mostly concentrated on the second constitutional period and the previous period has been explained in

general and descriptive terms. Women's studies have usually referred to the late nineteenth century as a period in which feminist consciousness started to be shaped especially by means of the writings of Fatma Aliye and Emine Semiyye, who were from the upper class and both the daughters of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha. The sources from this period have not been examined in detail except by Frierson, who has studied the longest surviving periodical, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Newspaper for Ladies) (1895-1908), and has shown how Ottoman women tried to deal with modernity.¹

One reason for the interest in the period after 1908 is of course, the availability of sources, but also I think that assumptions about the rupture in 1908 and the attribution of liberating power to this date are also responsible. After 1908, the number of women in the public realm with feminist viewpoints, political concerns and demands increased, but it seems that neither the debate about progress nor the assigning of political significance to the domestic roles of women was restricted to the second constitutional period.² Moreover, studies on late Ottoman women have tried to show the existence of a women's movement with little contextualization or a conceptual framework.³ These sources describe which periodicals were published for women and what kinds of associations women founded. The studies about the press have been far from offering a conceptual analysis and are all based on descriptions of published materials along with an emphasis on the severe censorship

¹ Elizabeth Frierson, *Unimagined Communities: State, Press and Gender in the Hamidian Era* (New Jersey, Princeton University, Ph.D. diss., 1996).

² Ayfer Karakaya Stump discussed how the discourse of *Kadın* (Woman) ascribed to women's traditional roles a political awareness and significance and she distinguished the periodicals of Hamidian period as homogenous and apolitical: "Debating Progress in a 'Serious Newspaper for Muslim Women': The Periodical *Kadın* of the Post Revolutionary Salonica, 1908-1909" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, no. 30 (November 2003) pp. 155-181.

³ Some of them are Şefika Kurnaz, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını (1839-1923)* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1997); Leyla Kaplan, *Cemiyetlerde ve Siyasi Teşkilatlarda Türk Kadını*

of the reign of Abdulhamid II.⁴ Yet I think that the content of press materials should be examined with contextual perspective rather than looking at legal regulations and making generalizations, not only for Hamidian press but also for the press of other periods as well.

The periodicals examined for this study were the first eight ones addressed to women; almost all folded after short runs. I am aware of their limitation in examining women's issues which requires analysis of different sources for a period or periods. Nevertheless, through these periodicals, we can follow the discourse of men and women at the same time, the similarity or differences of their ideas about women's position and roles. Again, we can follow their discourse for about 20 years and from another province apart from İstanbul. Among the periodicals, *Ayine* (Mirror) was published in Salonika, and all the others were published in the capital city, İstanbul. While the first periodicals were authored by male writers and *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (Information for Ladies) was authored by both men and women, *Şüküfezar* (Flower Garden) and *Parça Bohçası* (Bundle of Clothes) were published and written by women. The periodicals are, chronologically, *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (Progress of Women) (1869), *Ayine* (Mirror) (1875), *Vakit Yahud Mürebbi-i Muhadderat* (Time or the Educator of Women) (1875), *Aile* (Family) (1880), *Şüküfezar* (Flower Garden) (1887), *Mürüvvet* (Humanity) (1887), *Parça Bohçası* (Bundle of Clothess) 1889, *(Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (Information for Ladies) (1895). I exclude *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Newspaper for Ladies) (1895-1908) due to the simple

(1908-1960) (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1998). Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1996).

⁴ Just two examples: Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Türkiye'de Matbaa, Basın ve Yayın* (İstanbul: Literatür Yayıncılık, 2000); Hıfzı Topuz, *II. Mahmut'tan Holdinglere Türk Basın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Remzi, 2003)

reason that it includes a huge quantity of material and is subject of another study in itself.

When we look at the periodicals, we see that the women's issue came on the agenda of male publishers and writers, once women were believed to be the educators of all individuals. With this belief, all of them promoted the literacy and education of women, especially in domestic matters, in child rearing and housekeeping. Based on this observation, my first argument is that the domestic discourse of male writers provided women with a power base and a national consciousness through which they laid further claims. For this approach I was particularly inspired by Afsaneh Najmabadi, who deciphered the reconfiguration of women as managers of their homes in Iran in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ She discerned that male intellectuals advocated the education of women in order for women to become better mothers and wives and linked the progress of women, through motherhood, to the progress of society. She suggested that this discourse on education had both disciplinarian and empowering sides. The empowering side rested in the sense that women in Iran made demands for education and for equality by using the same discourse. Similarly, when we look at Ottoman women's periodicals, we see that the male editors and writers focused on the domestic roles of women, motherhood and housewifery, but by connecting such roles to the well being of the community and by reconfiguring family as the foundation of state and society. They emphasized not only collective happiness but also individual well being, and accentuated a quest for knowledge by configuring a relationship between the mode of well being (*saadethali*) and knowledge (*ilim ve maarif*).

⁵ Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, edited by Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

Knowledge or education implied for them not only scientific but also religious principals, and moral values which they wanted to disseminate to every individual of society, including women, for the prosperity of the individual and by extension, of society. With these beliefs, they provided women with information about methods of child rearing through which they were expected to bring up children who would contribute to themselves and society, and with methods of scientific housewifery through which they were supposed to contribute to the economic development of their country. The idea of economy or efficiency was one of their main concerns that they aimed for in the household and by extension, in society and the state budget. Further, information about running the household and rearing children was also accompanied by the presentation of Ottoman history and information about the social and political events of the Ottoman Empire and the outside world, all of which became influential in developing a national consciousness or an imagined national sphere in the minds of female readers as well.

I suggest that this discourse, which was centered around domesticity and collective well being, had both disciplinarian and empowering sides. On the one hand, the male authors focused on women's domestic roles but at the same time assigned women a power base and public consciousness through which most women wanted to enlarge their spheres of activity. Putting their aim as "progress" at the level of nation and humanity, women wanted to be educated, to enter into other professions and to educate their fellow women through journalism. They also participated in public discussions on the best ways to achieve "progress and civilization" for the Ottoman Empire and its subjects.

Observing women's willingness to participate in public discussions in search of ways to secure the common good of the Empire and its subjects, I will argue that women were active in the public sphere through journalism in the late Ottoman period. Especially in the 1890s, they were present in the public sphere through their criticism of daily and social matters such as men's improper conduct, the economic or cultural influence of Europe on the lives of Ottoman subjects, and through their promotion of the interests of their fellow women and community for various reasons. Here, I use the concept of public sphere in line with Frierson's interpretation. Public sphere is a concept originally developed by Habermas but its meaning has been revised and expanded by many scholars. For Habermas, the public sphere is a realm in which public opinion can be formed about matters of general interest, in which access is guaranteed to all citizens and, which is, in principle, critical of the state.⁶ Frierson puts this concept in an Ottoman context and claims that in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, the producers, consumers and regulators of the printing sector created a public sphere in which criticism was directed at Western states and societies and not to Ottoman Sultan.⁷ She comes to this conclusion drawing on her research about the longest surviving women's periodical, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Newspaper for Ladies) (1895-1909). According to her, the writers and readers of this periodical articulated criticism of Europe and America to construct an Ottoman identity by domesticating and rejecting certain features of the foreign and by promoting literacy and education. Readers of the journal were guided to accept as well as to reject various Western influences, and to adapt the acceptable influences

⁶ Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultural: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century" in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Edited by Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996) pp.290-331.

⁷ Elizabeth B. Frierson, "Gender, Consumption and Patriotism: The Emergence of an Ottoman Public Sphere" in *Public Islam and the Common Good* Edited by Armando Salvatore and Dale F. Eickelman (Leiden: Brill, 2004) pp.100-125.

according to Ottoman and Muslim norms. In other words, for Frierson, these women, by means of their discussion of the lives of foreign women, foreign fiction and foreign products tried to create an Ottoman/Muslim female image out of their Ottoman heritage as educated mothers, journalists, skilled workers, scientific housewives, schoolteachers and partners in nuclear households.⁸

This thesis is organized in three chapters. In the first one, the basic developments of the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire concerning the state apparatus, female education, the press, women's status and the intellectual atmosphere are laid out. The Ottoman state's regulations concerning education and the inheritance rights of women are touched on, both of which became influential in leading women into public life and enhancing their position in the family and society. The active printing life of the Empire and the activities of Ottoman women in the late nineteenth century are also discussed. In the second chapter, women's periodicals are analyzed in depth by looking at their rationale and at what kind of discourse they created around the themes of house management, child rearing, fashion and news. I will discuss how male editors and writers promoted literacy and education of women by configuring them as the manager of the household, that is, by perceiving women and family through their roles of motherhood and housewifery, as the foundation of state and society. Suggesting that this discourse gave women a power base and a national consciousness to voice further demands and to enlarge their spheres of activities, I will also show how female editors and writers promoted the education of women by

⁸ See also Frierson, "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In: Domestication and Rejection of the Foreign in Late Ottoman Women's Magazines, 1875-1908." In *Women, Patronage and Self Representation in Islamic Societies*. Edited by D. Fairchild Ruggles. (New York: State University of New York Press.) pp.177-204.

holding themselves responsible and by giving themselves the right to do something for the happiness of their “nation”.

Chapter Three focuses on the readers of the periodicals, looking at how they received and responded to the periodicals. I will examine how female readers were an active audience and how they were in the public sphere through their bringing up new issues concerning women’s lives. I will touch partly on the literacy rate of Ottoman women, which was important for readership and which relatively increased due to establishment of modern schools for girls, especially during the reign of Abdulhamid II. We can observe the results of such reforms in the pages of the women’s periodicals where they expressed their pleasure about such schools. As a result of these reforms, in the 1890s, an increasing number of women contributed to the periodicals by sending letters to the editors and spoke with the sense of being a member of the Ottoman state and “nation”. We can also observe through such letters the concerns of these women, their problems, expectations, and, indeed the public consciousness through which they addressed the problems of their fellow women and nation and offered solutions. They voiced demands for education, productivity, working, entertainment, and public security, while initiating high-minded discussions especially about the cultural, economic and social influences of Europe on Ottoman society. In the 1890s, they focused on such influences as the manner of dressing, fashion, foreign nannies, and foreign products, with a critical eye and with an effort to adapt or reject these phenomena, not totally, but under certain conditions. They tried to bring together the scientific, technological and economic developments of Europe with their Islamic/ Ottoman manners, values and customs (*adab-ı milliye*) in the belief that “civilization” (*medeniyet*) can be imitated. They named the scientific

and technological power of Europe and America as “civilized” and they preferred to follow such developments instead of a simple imitation of European mannerisms.

CHAPTER 2

The SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT AND THE PRESS

The period under question is, partly, the *Tanzimat* (1839-1876) and the Hamidian (1876-1908) era, a period during which the Ottoman state and society underwent various changes in the political, social and economic spheres. Facing the political, military, economic power of Europe and domestic-separatist rebellions, the Ottoman state tried to redefine its governing practices. The central state became more influential in everyday lives than ever before. Ministries of trade and commerce, health, education and public works emerged, staffed by persons who were trained specialists in their fields. As a part of this process the State redefined the status of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects in a series of enactments. With the 1839 decree, the state undertook to guarantee the basic individual rights - life, security, property - of all citizens, while at the same time, it aimed to eliminate the differences among its subjects by making male subjects equal in every respect, in appearance, matters of taxation, bureaucratic and military service. All these comprehensive reforms, initiated by Mahmud II and continued during the Tanzimat and Hamidian periods, in institutional, administrative, legal and political spheres have been interpreted as the emergence of a new governmentality which reconfigured state and society relations in the way of broadening social rights and the state's increasing involvement in the surveillance of the population.⁹ In other words, the state attempted to know its population and tried to mobilize its human resources in order to govern more

⁹ Cengiz Kırılı, *The Struggle Over the Space: Caffehouses of Ottoman İstanbul (1780-1845)*, (Ph.D diss. Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2000) pp.279-286

effectively. Cengiz Kırılı states that toward the mid-nineteenth century a new governmentality underlined Ottoman polity, which was conditioned by a multitude of factors, ranging from the reconfiguration of the power blocks to the expansion of the capitalist world economy. The state's increasing appeal to the public and public opinion by means of spy reports, the visibility of the ruler through his travels to the provinces, the public display of his portraits and the advertisement of his mundane activities in the press demonstrated this new mentality. It is a will to know incorporating the realm of the populace, from their mood to their health into the exercise of governance.

Public education was part of this process and the Ottoman state began to educate its citizens. In 1857 the Ministry of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti*) was founded and in 1869 Regulation of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) was passed. The Regulation of Public Education provided a legal, institutional framework for Ottoman public education which would last until the Young Turk period, although the period between 1838 and 1869 was the early stage of Ottoman educational reforms, where reform measures were taken on an individual basis or without considering the administrative, financial and professional aspects as a whole.¹⁰ The purpose of opening new schools at secondary levels (*Rüşdiye ve idadi*) was to train the necessary personnel for the new bureaucracy, which was in the process of reform. Yet, the purpose of primary schools (*iptidai mektepleri*) which were opened after 1870 was to raise the level of literacy and to train citizens obedient to the sultan, religion and state.¹¹ It seems that the education of women came on the agenda of the Ottoman Empire within this context. A possible reason for

¹⁰ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, (1839-1908) Islamization, Autoracy and Discipline* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2001) p.51

¹¹ Ibid, pp. 2-62

the increasing concern of the government for female education was revealed in an article which appeared in the official gazette *Takvim-i Vekayi* in 1861.¹² According to this article secondary (*Rüşdiye*) schools for girls would teach women about religion and worldly issues in order to preserve their own chastity and to provide their husbands with comfort in domestic matters.

A different kind of concern for female education could be found in the opinion of Sadık Rıfat Paşa, an ideologue of the early *Tanzimat* period.¹³ Probably toward the end of the 1840s, a decade before the foundation of the first female *rüşdiye* schools, he argued that the state should provide “good upbringing” (*hüsn-i terbiye*) for female children since personal maturity (*kemalat*) was among the “honorable ornaments” for girls. In addition, he stressed that the motherly embrace was indeed the earliest school for the human being” (*Aguş-ı mader insanın en evvelki mektebi olmakla*), therefore “it would be a great service for one’s nation and humanity” (*milletine ve insaniyetine pek büyük hidmettir*) to raise mothers who would provide their children with religious and moral education while nursing them.¹⁴

Though these motives clearly displayed political features, to train female subjects in line with the state’s ideology, giving women a fair level of education seemed to become a matter of concern for the late *Tanzimat* ruling circles. Accordingly, schools for girls were opened on the primary, secondary and university levels which were steps in leading women into public life. Indeed, education was not totally a new phenomenon for Ottoman women since, in previous times girls had had a chance of acquiring literacy and basic religious knowledge in traditional primary

¹² Ibid, p.57

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

schools (*sıbyan mektepleri*) and women who had been members of the *ulema* circle had been mostly privately tutored.¹⁵ In those years, while traditional schools and other opportunities of education had depended on the initiative of the community, in the modern period the state undertook the task of training its female citizens. The first school for girls was a midwife training school opened in 1842 and the first schools on the secondary level were *Rüşdiye* schools that were opened in Istanbul in 1858. Apart from these, with the Regulation of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) it was decided that primary education for girls became compulsory- at the age of six-, a curriculum for female education was drafted and schools were established in the provinces.¹⁶ The period of education in the primary and secondary schools was four years. The curriculum of these schools included embroidery, sewing, basic religious knowledge, mathematics, history, geography, morality and calligraphy among other things. In later years, in 1870, an education faculty was also opened and the first women teachers were trained. Abdulhamit II perpetuated this investment and around 1908 in almost every city center and in most of the districts; girls had the chance to obtain a modern education.

Together with educational developments, the *Tanzimat* ruling circle enacted reforms about the inheritance rights of women and the slave trade. The 1858 Land Law (*Arazi Kanunu*) extended and consolidated women's rights so that women had rights to inherit lands equal to those of men.¹⁷ Imperial decrees which tried to

¹⁵ İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (İstanbul: Hil Yayınları, 2002) p.235.

¹⁶ Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı Modernleşme Döneminde Kız Eğitimi" *Kebikeç*, n. 10, (2000) pp. 223-238.

¹⁷ Şefika Kurnaz, *Cumhuriyet Öncesinde Türk Kadını (1839- 1923)* (İstanbul: MEB,1997) pp.51-52.

abolish female slavery were issued in 1854 for white slaves and 1857 for blacks and were ratified by international treaties in 1880 and 1890.¹⁸

At around the time of these institutional changes, from the mid –nineteenth century onwards, intellectuals began to discuss the domestic and social role of women in the press and in their novels. All of them promoted education for women, at the same time perceiving this education as a kind of contribution to society. Among them, Namık Kemal, who was a member of the Young Ottomans and an editor of the first liberal opposition newspaper, was the first to produce publications addressing women in 1862. In his article entitled “*Terbiye-i Nisvan Hakkında Bir Layiha*” (A Proposal on the Education of Women), he called for making education accessible to women and giving them productive roles in line with their abilities and changing socio-economic conditions.¹⁹

Şemseddin Sami (1850-1904), journalist and lexicographer, was another figure who tackled women’s issues by ontological questioning. Sami claimed that although women had less physical power than men, there was no difference in terms of their intellectual capacity.²⁰ Women could do men’s jobs, they could be successful and they should be educated for motherhood as well as for other productive professional realms, such as medicine, tailoring etc. In his booklet entitled *Kadınlar* (Women) (1882), he tried to convince his readers about the education of women that was, for him, necessary for the progress of society (*cemiyet-i beşeriyenin terakkisi*)

¹⁸ Deniz Kandiyoti, “End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey” *Women, Islam and the State* ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1991) p. 27.

¹⁹ Elizabeth B. Frierson, “Unimagined Communities: Women and Education in the Late- Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909” *Critical Matrix*, v.9, n.2 (1995) p.66.

²⁰ Şemsettin Sami, *Kadınlar*, hazırlayan İsmail Doğan (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1996). His book was published firstly in 1296/ 1882. Şemsettin Sami, *Kadınlar* (Mihran Matbaası, Cep Kütüphanesi, aded 3, 1296); see Agah Sırrı Levend, *Şemsettin Sami* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1969). pp.9-35.

and for a happy life. Apart from these writers, Şinasi and Ahmet Midhat Efendi criticized social practices that were not usually in favor of women.²¹ Şinasi's satirical play *Şair Evlenmesi* (The Poet's Wedding), written in 1859, can be considered as one of the earliest criticisms of the arranged marriage system. Ahmet Midhat Efendi strongly advocated changes in women's position and denounced the practices of forced marriage, concubinage and polygamy as "social ills." His works, *Diplomalı Kız* (The Girl with a Diploma), *Felsefe-i Zenan* (Women's Philosophy), *Teenhul* (Marriage) and *Eyvah* (Alas) touch on a wide range of such concerns.

Not only male intellectuals, but also women were involved in the discussion of women's issues. Not so much differently from their male counterparts in seeing education as the first step for women's progress, they also advocated further demands. Especially from the 1880s onwards an increasing number of women writers were in the public sphere by means of their ideas,²² thanks to educational development and a relatively widespread press. The first such woman was Fatma Aliye (1864-1936), daughter of Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1823-1895), who was an important figure as statesman and historian and had a literary career as a translator, novelist and essayist. Fatma Aliye, in her articles published in the journal *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (The Newspaper for Ladies) criticized men as being obstacles to women's advancement in the field of knowledge.²³ She further looked at the position of women in Islam and demonstrated the presence of women in the public sphere in Islamic history, in the thirteenth century (*Meşahir-i Nisvan-ı Islam*). She showed this historical situation as an example for Ottoman women. For her, literary Ottoman

²¹ Deniz Kandiyoti, *End of Empire*, pp.25-26.

²² This statement is based on my observations on the articles written by women in the women's periodicals. For a cursory look see *İstanbul Kütüphanelerindeki Eski Harfli Türkçe Kadın Dergileri Bibliyografisi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1993).

²³ Serpil Cakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, (İstanbul: Metis yayınları, 1994) p.29.

women were successors to the literary fame and political accomplishments of their own great grandmothers, and they were partners to Ottoman men in the effort to bring progress into the Ottoman realms.²⁴ Apart from Fatma Aliye, other women discussed a wide range of topics in the public arena through periodicals especially those published for women and authored by male and female writers, which appeared as early as 1869.

The press, first official and then non-official, became part of the daily life of Ottoman society in the *Tanzimat* period.²⁵ The first official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, published in 1831 for the purpose of informing state officials, accordingly created a public opinion in line with the idea of the center.²⁶ Then, *Ceride-i Havadis* appeared as a semi-official newspaper in 1840 and *Tercuman-i Ahval* in 1860 as a private one. One of the features of the publications of this era was their educational character. İlber Ortaylı states that newspapers became a kind of popular teacher for all communities of the Ottoman Empire in history, geography, literature, economy and sociology.²⁷ For instance, *Takvim-i Vekayi* published articles on economy in its first issues concerning Malthusian theory.

The publication of periodicals, as an economic and cultural undertaking, increased in the following decades, which points to the existence of an active printing life throughout the Empire and familiarity of Ottoman subjects with this culture. The rise of publications was seen especially after the 1860s, together with legal regulations and other infrastructural developments such as a postal system, telegraph connections and railways. The quantity of periodicals in the Hamidian period exceeds 290; 100

²⁴ Frierson, *Unimagined Communities*, p.75

²⁵ İlber Ortaylı, "Tanzimat Devri Basını Üzerine Notlar," *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İktisadi ve Sosyal Değişim: Makaleler I* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2000) p.489

²⁶ Orhan Koloğlu, "Osmanlı Basını: İçeriği ve Rejimi" *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol.1 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985) pp. 68-93

were published outside Istanbul and 19 appeared as provincial newspapers.²⁸

Parallel to the ethnic and linguistic variety of the Empire, periodicals were also published in different languages.

Periodicals for women and children appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century again with an educational character and mostly focusing on domestic matters. The promotion of domesticity was also common in the women's periodicals of Europe and America in the same period, although they had flourished there already for more than a century.²⁹ Over 250 magazines for women existed in England and France alone in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although there were significant variations between the periodicals of different countries, they shared a general interest in family, marriage and promoted domesticity.³⁰

In the Ottoman case, the first periodicals for children and women were published, not surprisingly, in the same year, in 1869, since the first women's periodicals widely addressed the role of motherhood. Some of the periodicals for children were *Mümeyyiz* (the Examiner), 1869; *Hazine –i Etfal* (the Children's Treasure), 1873; *Sadakat* (Loyalty), 1875; *Etfal* (Children), 1875; *Arkadaş* (Friend), 1876. Soon others followed addressing children, one of the considerations of which was informing children about the general conditions in their country.³¹ The ones for women up to 1908 were *Terakki-i Muhadderat* in 1869 (Progress of Women), *Vakit Yahut Mürebbi-i Muhadderat* in 1875 (Time or the Educator of Women), *Ayine* in 1875 (Mirror), *Aile* 1880 (Family), *İnsaniyet* (Humanity), *Şüküfezar* (Flower

²⁷ Ortaylı, *Tanzimat Devri Basını*, p.490

²⁸ Elizabeth Frierson, *Unimagined Communities*, p. 55

²⁹ Beth Baron, *The Women's Awakening in Egypt: Culture, Society and the Press* (London: Yale University Press, 1994) pp.60-61.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *Toplumsal Tarihte Çocuk*, yayına hazırlayan Bekir Onur, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994) p. 112.

Garden) in 1887, *Mürüvvet* (Humanity) in 1887, *Parça Bohçası* (the Bundle of Clothes) in 1895, *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* in 1895 (Information for Ladies), and *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* in 1895-1908 (Newspaper for Ladies). The majority of these journals were published in Istanbul, except for *Ayine* which was published in Salonica.

Although most of these women's periodicals folded after a run of about a year, *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* survived for fourteen years, from 1895 to 1909, circulating throughout the Ottoman Empire, in British occupied Egypt and in the Muslim areas of the Russian Empire. It was authored exclusively by female writers who were not only from the upper classes but were also those who identified themselves as schoolteachers, graduates of Ottoman secondary schools or as new businesswomen mostly in the clothing sector.³²

In the following years, during the second constitutional period, women were effective again by means of the press and associations. The issue of women was also on the agenda of the Unionists as part of their social revolution.³³ The equality of men and women and the nuclear family were advocated along with institutional changes regarding women's access to higher education and the enhancement of their position within the family. Periodicals such as *Demet* (Bouquet), *Mehasin* (Virtues) (1908) and *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World, 1913-1921) continued to be published for female readers. Together with journalism, women empowered themselves to organize associations for a common goal often oriented toward uplifting their fellow women. Founded with philanthropic, nationalist and feminist

³² Frierson, "Mirrors Out, Mirrors In: Domestication and Rejection of the Foreign in the Late Ottoman Women's Magazines (1875- 1908)" in *Women, Patronage and Self- Representation in Islamic Societies*, (State University of New York Press, 2000) pp. 177-204.

purposes, these organizations became the proper grounds for them to engage in public life, to gain organizational skills and to construct a power base. The first association was founded in 1876, with the initiative of Midhat Pasa, for the purpose of providing relief to soldiers fighting on the Balkan front.³⁴ Women's organizations increased especially after the promulgation of the Constitution in 1908. As wars followed one another, women's associations provided social services for the needy, raised funds for the Red Crescent, nursed the wounded, and collected garments for the soldiers.³⁵ The Women's Central Committee of the Red Crescent Society (*Osmanlı Hilal-ı Ahmer Cemiyeti Kadınlar Heyet-i Merkeziyesi*), the Society for Aid to Needy Soldiers' Families (*Muhtaç Asker Ailelerine Muavenet Cemiyeti*) and the Ottoman Ladies' Committee for National Defense (*Müdafaa-i Milliye Osmanlı Hanımlar Heyeti*) were the leading philanthropic societies.

Along with philanthropic associations, other associations were founded with feminist goals for the betterment of the living conditions of women.³⁶ Often by publishing periodicals to voice their agendas, women aimed at educating women, creating business opportunities and teaching the arts. The Women's Section of the Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Kadınlar Şubesi*), the Society for the Protection of Women (*Kadınları Esirgeme Derneği*), The Society for the Defense of Women's Rights (*Müdafaa-i Hukuk-ı Nisvan Cemiyeti*) and the Ottoman Islamic Association for the Employment of Women (*Osmanlı Kadınları Çalıştırma Cemiyet-i Islamiyesi*) were among the major feminist organizations of the time.

³³ Zafer Toprak, "The Family, Feminism, and the State during the Young Turk Period, 1908- 1918" *Première Rencontre Internationale sur l'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne* (Istanbul –Paris: Editions ISIS, 1991) pp. 442-452.

³⁴ Nicole A.N.M Van Os, "Osmanlı Kadın Dernekleri, Geçmişten Gelen Kaynaklar, Gelecek için Kaynaklar" *Toplumsal Tarih*, 17 no. 99 (2002) p. 8.

³⁵ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, pp.43-56.

³⁶ Toprak, *The Family*, p. 447; Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, pp. 57-78.

One of the most radical changes affecting women's lives in these years was World War I. The war and human losses on the fronts created a labor vacuum and women were invited to enter professions previously regarded as the exclusive domain of men.³⁷ They were employed as governmental and municipal clerks, as factory workers, as street cleaners, and even as barbers in many districts of Istanbul. Women from the outskirts of Istanbul brought their products to the city market. There was even a bazaar in Galata assigned to women merchants.³⁸

Although the First World War was a dramatic occasion for women's access to different jobs, in previous periods Ottoman women had not been isolated from work or from public life. Studies on specific times and places, such as Lower Egypt, Aleppo or Anatolian towns in the nineteenth century, show that women were well integrated into the economy of their time.³⁹ Although there was a good deal of specialization by gender, women were very much part of the economic lives of their communities as craftswomen, petty traders, and providers of various services, and therefore very much affected by the changes resulting from European economic penetration. Ottoman girls and women played an integral role in textile manufacturing in different parts of the Empire such as Bursa, Izmir, Adana and Salonica etc.⁴⁰ They made yarn and cloth at home for immediate use by household members and for the market, and they labored in workshops away from their home. A female workforce sustained the three most important export industries in the nineteenth century: silk reeling, lace-making and carpet-making.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Margaret L. Meriwether & Judith E. Tucker, ed. *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Middle East* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1999) pp.6-7.

⁴⁰ Donald Quataert, "Ottoman Women, Household and Textile Manufacturing, 1800- 1914," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender* ed. Nikki R. Keddie & Beth Baron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) pp. 256-267.

In sum, from the late nineteenth century onwards we can hear women's voices better. The period witnessed the questioning of women's position in society, and feminist movements not only in Ottoman Turkey, but also in other parts of the Middle East -Egypt, Iran – as well as in other parts of the world including the United States, Europe, and India etc. One of the tools of these voices became the women's press which emerged at around the same time in the Middle East, first in Ottoman Turkey (1869), and then in Egypt (1892), and Iran (1910). Most of the women's periodicals in the Middle East during the early years restricted their coverage to topics such as the home, domestic work, child raising, education and fashion ⁴¹ as was the case in Europe in the same years. For most writers involved in women's issues, the improvement of women's position in society was essential for the advancement of society.

Ottoman male and female writers often articulated their demands for better conditions for women by linking the roles of women to the well being of society. In the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, Ottoman women from different backgrounds expressed their demands in the fields of education, work, legal and later in politics; while at the same time perceiving such potential changes as a kind of contribution to the welfare and progress of their country. This can be observed in women's periodicals such as *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Newspaper for Ladies), ⁴² *Kadın* (Woman), ⁴³ and *Kadınlar Dünyası*

⁴¹ Ellen L. Fleischmann, "The Other "Awakening": The Emergence of Women's Movements in the Modern Middle East, 1900- 1940" *A Social History of Women and Gender in the Middle East* edited by Margaret Meriwether & Judith Tucker. (Boulder, Colo:Westview Press, 1999) p. 101

⁴² Elizabeth B. Frierson, "Unimagined Communities: Women and Education in the Late- Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909" *Critical Matrix*, v.9, n.2 (1995) pp. 55-90

⁴³ Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "Debating Progress in a Serious Newspaper for Muslim Women': The Periodical *Kadın* of the Post – revolutionary Salonica, 1908-1909" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* no. 30 (November 2003) pp. 155-181

(Women's World)⁴⁴ and in the journals examined for this study that will now be discussed.

⁴⁴ The readers and writers of the journal, *Kadınlar Dünyası* (The Women's World) published from 1913 to 1921, strongly voiced such issues. See Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994)

CHAPTER 3

EDUCATING WOMEN

This chapter explores how the editors, publishers and writers of women's periodicals created a discourse of domesticity and at the same time provided women with national awareness and a power base that most women depended on for their claims. The periodicals promoted education, literacy, reading, belief in science and knowledge, endeavor, philanthropy, hard work, sense of responsibility, the raising of healthy children and efficient house management. Pursuing an educational goal, they, in a way, sought to initiate a social mobilization and assigned these duties and values to ordinary subjects of the Ottoman Empire for the common good. The publishers first targeted the female subjects, and mostly focused on their domestic roles of motherhood and management of the house by ascribing these roles a political significance or by perceiving the performance of these duties as a kind of contribution to society. I will suggest that with this discourse and by linking the domestic roles of women to the well being of the community, they gave women a power base and most women voiced their rights and demands or entered the public realm with the same discourse.

All of the periodicals examined for this study opened their pages by talking about why education was so important, with the aim of creating public opinion in its favor. They expressed that the undermining of women's education was old fashioned and that in their times the importance of education was recognized and even their Sultan established schools for girls. They spoke of the importance of knowledge in general and then touched on women's training by ascribing to education a magical

transforming power. For them, education (*tahsil-i ilim ve maarif*) was the instrument of meeting all needs, of earning one's living, of technological developments, of science, of learning one's religious principles and proper behavior.⁴⁵ Further, it was believed to be a human attribute which differentiated them from animals. Although the writers did not specify any kind of knowledge or education, they implied almost every kind, scientific, religious and moral. While the editor of *Terakki-i Muhadderat* mentioned the importance of knowledge, he gave the examples of electricity, steam ship and telegraph which point to science. Another editor stated in the context of the necessity of literacy and education that "the first thing that should be learned is religious principles."⁴⁶ They did not give priority to any field over the other, which shows their belief in the power of knowledge and also shows that religion was still an important part of their worldview. Even the editors of the first two periodicals, *Terakki-i Muhadderat* and *Ayine*, encouraged readers by stating that "learning or education is a kind of religious obligation (*farz-i ayin*) for everyone, men and women alike"⁴⁷

Simply, they perceived knowledge and education to be the source of happiness and the dignity of humanity (*Servet ve saadet ilim ve marifet sayesinde kazanılır*) in this and the next world. Apart from religious and scientific knowledge, moral values were also put forth as important parameters of happiness. Şemseddin Sami explained these parameters, saying "science and technology contribute to happiness only if

⁴⁵ *İlimden mahrum olan zilletten bir vakitte masum olamaz. Bilmeyen bilene her zaman muhtaçtır. İlim ve marifet düzce servettir. Adamı ihtiyaçtan bu kurtarır. Nasıl servet pek büyük bir devlettir dünya ve ahiret bunun sayesinde mamur olur. Servet ve saadet ilim ve marifet sayesinde kazanılır.* (Those who are deprived of knowledge can never save themselves from lowness. The one who doesn't know always needs another who knows. Knowledge simply means prosperity. It meets all of one's needs. Prosperity is thus such a big fortune which flourishes through this and the next world. Prosperity and happiness are acquired by means of knowledge and education) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n. 1, 15 Haziran 1285/ 26 June 1869.

⁴⁶ *Ayine*, n. 36.

they are based on morality”.⁴⁸ In other words, two underlying motivations, the belief in knowledge and a sense of patriotism became influential in the publication of these periodicals through which they wanted to educate other members of their community, including women. We can follow the relation between education and happiness and the social concerns of these editors in an article about “civilization” (medeniyet). The editor of *Terakk-i Muhadderat* defined *temdeddün* as “every kind of well being and self-esteem” and then expressed his concern about the development of education in Ottoman realms, that must be realized by the efforts of both men and women:

Now, the meaning of *medeniyet* is used by scholars in the sense to mean every kind of well-being and self-esteem. Thus, the one who does not want prosperity and happiness acts in opposition to his/her nature. The happiness and prosperity of the human being can be provided by means of knowledge and education. That is why scholars say that the civilization level of a nation is in proportion to its education and knowledge levels. In a nation, if education develops sufficiently, that is, if the men and women, everyone, work for education, then the benefits of knowledge and education can be seen, and progress of education can be attained.⁴⁹

As can be understood from the above sentences, the patriotic feelings and civic consciousness of the publishers and editors became influential in publishing these periodicals. In other words, they had a sense of being members of a larger community and state to which they felt a responsibility to serve and to guide. They explained their motivation for publishing the journals as “serving the state, the

⁴⁷ *Tahsil-i ilim etmek zükür ve nas herkes için farz-ı ayindir. Terakki-i Muhadderat, n.1, 15 Haziran 1285/26 June 1869; “taleb-i ilim erkek karı cümleye farz-ı ayin olup, Ayine n.1, 2 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/14 November 1875.*

⁴⁸ *Aile, n.1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/26 May 1880.*

⁴⁹ *Şimdiki arif-ı nasda medeniyet lafzı enva-ı izzet ve saadet manalarını şamil bir manada mütearif olmuştur. Buna göre izzet ve saadeti arzu etmeyen insan mukteza-yı hilkatinin hilafında bulunuyor demektir. İnsanın mertebe-i iz ve saadete vüsulu ise ilim ve marifet tahsiliyle olur. Onun için şimdiki manaca medeniyetin mertebe-i aliyelerini vasil oldukları hal ve eserlerinde malum olan adamlar her milletin medeniyeti ulum ve maarifi nispetindedir diyorlar. Bir millette maarifin terakkisi ise tamamıyla vücud bulur yani erkek kadın herkes ilim ve maarif tahsiline say ederler ise ilim ve marifetin o vakit faidesi görülüyor. (.) Terakki-i Muhadderat, n.16, 28 Eylül 1285/ 10 October 1869*

nation, the fatherland or the Ottoman family.”⁵⁰ Further, we can follow their sense of affiliation to their community in the comparisons that they make with Europe. The writers sometimes compared themselves to Europe in order to give a sense of collective endeavor. We can decipher that their campaigns were not only in the name of education but also in that of zeal, endeavor, and hard work which were promoted not only for women, but also for men and children. In these comparisons, they did not mention specific nations or countries but just referred to Europe or “Frenks” which represented, in their minds, scientific and technological developments as well as economic power. They did not go into the details of how such discoveries and developments had become possible. They evidenced no sense of inferiority, on the contrary; they had confidence but with a critical perspective on their own society. For them, knowledge and science were a universal phenomena that could be acquired by persons or societies that tried hard enough. For the editor of *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, “the progress of Europe was not divinely inspired but the result of the efforts of its people in the name of education and science.”⁵¹ Again for the same editor, Europeans had studied science and worked day and night and made progress especially in technology: electricity, the telegraph, steamships, railways, sewing machines etc. On the other hand, (Ottoman) men were wasting their time in

⁵⁰ The editor of *Parça Bohçası* wrote that “*bu mecmua-yı aileyi Osmanlı ailelerinin menafine hizmet-i hüsnede bulunmak üzere tesis ettim.* (I publish this journal in order to serve the interests of Ottoman families.) N.1, 1305/ 1889; the editor of *Aile* wrote: *Bu mecmuanın tahririnden arz ünvanından dahi anlaşılacağı üzere aileye yani familyalara bir hizmet etmektir* (The aim of writing this journal, as can be understood from the title, is to serve households, that is, families) N.1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/26 May 1880; the editor of *Terakki-i Muhadderat* wrote: *Gazeteler arasında vatan hadimi namıyla müftehir ve mübahir olan Terakki bu hizmeti dahi kendine ilave-i vazife ederek badema beher Pazar günleri muhadderata mahsus olmak üzere mukayyed ve veciz makalat ve hukuk-ı zevceye ve sair adab-ı lazımeye nasihat-amiz hikayat neşr ettik.* (*Terakki*, which has the reputation of serving the fatherland among newspapers, has taken up this service as an additional duty upon itself to publish concise articles for women and about the rights of couples and other related matters.) N. 1. 15 Haziran 1285/27 June 1869.

⁵¹ *Asrımızda görülen bunca terakkiyat Avrupalılara Hakk tarafından mücerred ilhamat olmayıp belki tahsil-i ulum ve fûnun için gösterdikleri ikdamattan vücuda gelen mahsulattır.* (All the progress that we have seen in our age was not divinely inspired to Europeans but the result of their efforts in the name of science and knowledge) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, N.1, 15 Haziran 1285 /27 June 1869

coffee houses and women in their houses doing nothing but chatting. Otherwise, “there was no difference in terms of the intellectual capacity between Ottoman men and women and European men and women.”⁵²

The editor called on Ottoman subjects, speaking in the form of plural “we” to work in the name of science to read and to perform philanthropic activities for educational investments. He criticized society, saying that no one established schools on their own, although they strove for educational development. He declared that “the one who does not know always is in need of another who knows.”⁵³ In another context, the same editor even referred to European technological developments and economic welfare by reminding the readers of relative economic weakness of the Ottoman state compared to Europe. For him, the power of Europe was based on the efforts of its people as they strove for the development of science - knowledge of agriculture, industry and trade through which they had prosperity.⁵⁴ So, Ottoman subjects should study and work day and night in the same way, for the welfare of the Ottoman Empire. Similiarly, we can observe the sense of collective endeavor in another periodical, *Ayine*. The editor of *Ayine*, encouraged women to help needy girls in their neighborhoods⁵⁵ and initiated philanthropic campaigns for the soldiers who were fighting in the war between Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and the Ottoman Empire.

⁵² İşte Frenklerin yaptıkları şeyler bizim hayran hayran baktığımızın sebebi onların vakitlerini zayiğ etmeyip fûnun ve sanayiğe dair telif olunan kitapları okuyup gece gündüz çalıştıkları ve bizim erkeklerin kahvede ve kadınların evlerde toplanıp ne dünyaya ve ahirete yarar birtakım lakırdılar ile çene yarıştırdıklarımızdır. Yoksa gerek erkek ve gerek kadın Osmanlılar’ın akıl ve dirayetçe Frenkler’den ve kokonlardan hiçbir farkları yoktur (The reason for the Frenks’ success which we look at with appreciation is that they do not waste their time, but read books about industry and science and work day and night; while our men in the coffeeshouses and women at home are chatting about matters which are neither useful to this world or to the next. Otherwise, there is no difference in terms of intellectual capacity between Ottoman men and women and European men and women) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n. 8, 3 Ağustos 1285/ 15 August 1869.

⁵³ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.1, 15 Haziran 1285/ 26 June 1869.

At this point, it is important to decipher the limits of patriotism and social mobilization, since the Ottoman Empire consisted of various communities. Indeed, writers did not make any differentiation, implicit or explicit, while addressing women. They used the term Ottoman women or just women and more general concepts such as nation and state or society (*cemiyet-i beşeriye, mülk ve millet*). Although there were occasions addressing and discussing the conditions of Muslim women, the line was not always clear. Interestingly, readers brought other communities into the picture and mentioned their educational projects as good examples from which Muslims should derive a lesson. This larger concern or flexible approach might be related to the influence of Ottomanism which was on the agenda of intellectuals and the Ottoman state at the time. *Tanzimat* reformers promoted Ottomanism whose main ideal was to turn various ethnic, religious, social, and regional groups into one homogeneous political block by making all the subjects of the Sultan Ottoman citizens and equal before the law regardless of faith, origin and language.⁵⁶ The enactment of the citizenship Law of 1864, (before that, no one outside the imperial dynasty had legitimately been called Ottoman, *Osmanlı*) the constitution and parliaments of 1876 and 1878 were part of the drive to establish Ottomanism. The Ottoman State appealed to this ideology in order to keep the Empire in its integrity and attempted to do it by means of the above mentioned enactments and educational policies as well⁵⁷. So, the publishers and the writers of

⁵⁴ Ibid, n.35, 19 Nisan 1285/ 1 May 1869, for Ottoman version see appendix

⁵⁵ *Ayine*, n.23, 11 Nisan 1291

⁵⁶ Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford University Press, 2001) pp.314-315.

⁵⁷ Akşin Somel, “Osmanlı Reform Çağında Osmanlıcılık Düşüncesi (1839-1913)” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Cumhuriyet’e Devreden Düşünce Mirası-Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi*. vol.1, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001) pp.

women's periodicals might have had the sense of Ottomanism and the sense of nation which, in turn, might be the result of Ottoman State's successful policies.

Now, we can look at the periodicals in depth to examine the rationale for their treatment and perception of women's education. Even the titles of the periodicals give clues about their concerns. *Terakki* (Progress) *Mürüvvet* (Humanity or Generosity), *Mürebbi-i Muhadderat* (Educator of Women), *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (Information for Women), *Şüküfezar* (the Flower Garden), *Ayine* (Mirror) clearly reveal their consideration for education, knowledge, progress and devotion, while reminding womanhood and gender difference. It seems that women's education was particularly important for the writers since women were first and foremost the potential and real educators of every individual in their capacity as mothers. Both male and female editors promoted the education of women by reminding their readers that women brought up the children who would contribute to society. Indeed there was an assumption that women's primary roles were those of mother, wife and housekeeper. Some male editors even initiated their discourse with a division of labor, assigning to women the duties of child rearing, of managing the house and of being companions to their husbands, while men were responsible for making a living, which was believed to be difficult and reserved to men due to their physical strength. Yet, they exalted the duties assigned to women and linked them to the well being of the community. Women as mothers bringing up children would serve and contribute to society, and women as the managers of homes would help the economic development of the country. Male writers dealt very much with the methods of spending money carefully, emphasizing the difficult conditions of earning money in their time. They tried to make women conscious consumers and efficient housewives by setting a parallelism between the financial

power of the state and the budget of households. Although there is no question that women's primary roles were domestic,⁵⁸ there was no strict discourse claiming that women could do only that. Occasionally, male writers and more often female writers, encouraged women to take up other professions. The male editor of *Mürüvvet* (1887) stated that women should not be restricted to the home but should hold other professions through which they could contribute to society.⁵⁹ Similarly, the male editor of *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (1869) encouraged women to pursue higher education, in the Teacher's School,⁶⁰ and to secure their financial well being.

The first women's periodical, *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, was published for 48 issues during 1869- 1870 in Istanbul. As was the case for most women's periodicals, its owner, Ali Raşid, was at the same time the editor and author of the periodical. The editor of *Terakki-i Muhadderat* initiated his discourse by the division of labor and stated that women needed education more than men "since everybody is brought up in their embrace." (*Herkes onların aguş-ı terbiyelerinde perverde olageldikleri için*)⁶¹. Further, he viewed men and women as partners, claiming that God created man and woman not as burdens but as necessary companions to each other, and for good relations each couple should be educated. An educated mind would make a better companion and women should know the best methods of running the household and raising children.⁶²

Five years later, in 1875, another periodical, *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat* (Time or the Educator Women), claimed that the changing conditions of the era

⁵⁸ "Kadınlar eğer fikirlerini de terbiye ederler yani okuyup yazarlar ise işlerini daha ala görürler. Ev idaresini ve çocuk terbiyesini daha güzel öğrenirler." (If women read and write they can perform their work better. They can learn household management and child rearing better.) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.12, 31 Ağustos 1285/12 September 1869.

⁵⁹ *Mürüvvet*, n.5, 14 Mart 1303/ 26 March 1887.

⁶⁰ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n. 35, 19 Nisan 1285/ 1 May 1869

⁶¹ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.1,

made the education of women indispensable.⁶³ Indeed, there is a sense that the times were different and required a different kind of training for bringing up children. According to the editor, while the training of children had previously been on the shoulders of fathers and had taken a long time, now the children could learn necessary principles and values within a shorter time from their mothers. So women should not be deprived of these methods. In the same year, the editor of another periodical published in another province, in the developing commercial and port city, Salonica, opened its pages by talking about the importance of the duration of childhood education as an obvious fact. Accordingly, the editor stated that women must learn the methods of training children who would be beneficial to society, and that the education of women was necessary “to attain a happy community.”⁶⁴ Declaring that education had not been sufficiently developed in their country, he pledged his journal as a contribution.

Similar discourses followed in other journals. The owner, editor and author of *Aile* (Family, 1880), Şemseddin Sami, emphasizing family life, again established a correlation between the condition of family, society and the power of the state. For him, society and state consisted of families who brought up every individual including important persons. He saw the family as the foundation of community and state and defined the house as “a small fatherland”. He expressed the parallelism he perceived as follows:

The family is a school of learning for mankind. The family is the factory that produces human beings. The more perfect a family becomes and the more proper its management becomes, the more perfect humanity

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ *Vakit Yahud Mürebbi-i Muhadderat*, n. 1, 14 Eylül 1291/26 September 1875.

⁶⁴ *Kadınların dahi tahsil-i ilim ve kemal ile fezail-i insaniyeyi iktisab etmeleri cemiyet-i medeniyenin saadetini müstelzem olduğu ecilden.* (The education of women through which they gain the virtues of humanity is important to ensure the happiness of society.) *Ayine*, n.1, 2 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 14 November 1875.

becomes. The more perfect the family becomes the more happy the community becomes, and the more power the state has.⁶⁵

Sami, after placing the family at the core of human training, perceived women, who would fulfill such goals, as the most important component of the family unit. Although he referred to the family, he did not talk about the duties of the father but addressed women as the managers of the house, the family and “the educators of all people.”⁶⁶

As I have argued, some female writers entered the public realm with similiar ideas. The female editor of the periodical, *Parça Bohçası* (Bundle of Clothes 1895), Hatice Semiha, claimed that “each component of the family has to be educated for national progress, since the nation consists of families.”⁶⁷ She devoted her journal to the education of women, especially to child rearing and house management. In line with the level of women’s education, the children would get a better education and in the long run they would work for the “nation’s progress” (*milletini terakki ettirmek ve saadet haline çalışmak*), and if women were educated well, the happiness of the family would increase.

Similiarly, the female editor of *Şüküfezar* (Flower Garden) defined women’s roles broadly, again for the same purpose, for progress. Appearing in 1887, it was the first periodical authored by women and it opened its pages by talking about the

⁶⁵ *Aile nev-i beşerin mekteb-i terbiyesidir, aile insan yetiştirir bir fabrikadır, aile ne kadar muntazam olursa idaresi ne kadar yolunda bulunursa bu fabrikadan çıkan insan o kadar mükemmel olur. Aileler ne kadar muntazam olursa o ailelerden mürekkep olan ümmet o kadar mütemeddin ve mesut ve o ümmeti idare eden devlet o kadar kuvvet ve nüfuz ve şevkete malik olur.*”⁶⁵ *Aile*, n. 1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/26 May 1880

⁶⁶ “Erkek ve kadın bütün insanların terbiyesi kadınların elindedir.” (The education of all people, men and women, is in the hands of women.) *Aile*, n.2, 24 Cemaziyelahir 1297/2 June 1880

⁶⁷ “Bir millet ailelelerin birleşmesiyle hasıl olur. Bir millet terakki etmek ve ilim ve fen öğrenip bunlardan tamamen istifade edebilmek için aileyi terkip eden cüzlerin birlikte terakki ve iktisab-ı ilim eylemesi lazımdır.” (A nation consists of families. For the nation to be able to progress and to develop in science and knowledge and to benefit from its yields, each component of the family should be educated and allowed to make progress.) *Parça Bohçası*, n.1, 1305

importance of education (*maarif*) and work (*say ve ikdam*) which, according to the editor, a person needed throughout his/her life. She, too, established a relationship between education and well being and the dignity of humanity saying “ education is the source of progress, if there is no education, then, there is no progress; if there is no progress, then, the dignity of humanity cannot be realized.”⁶⁸ Then, she stated that “men and women should serve the progress of humanity together and equally” by means of work and education.⁶⁹ For her, every job was valuable as long as it was in line with one’s own chastity, but the most valuable ones were those which were related to science such as medicine.⁷⁰ Accordingly, she devoted her journal to encourage her readers in the name of education, learning science, zeal, hard work. She spoke in the name of women in the plural “we” and claimed that they (women) once known as “short -minded and long haired” (*aklı kısa, saçları uzun*) could strive to contribute to the “progress of humanity.”⁷¹ So, by perceiving themselves as responsible and willing to take part in the path of progress, women indeed claimed citizenship, as Najmabadi puts it.

As seen, the editors sometimes defined their aims directly as progress. Indeed, progress (*terakki*) and civilization (*medeniyet*) appeared in every woman’s journal and were understood as a state of well being, as mentioned before. They used these concepts sometimes interchangeably, progress was mostly understood as going

⁶⁸ *Maarif terakkiyatın maderidir. Maarif olmayınca terakki olmaz, terakki olmayınca beşeriyetin şan ve şerefi görülmez. Şüküfazar*, n.1, 1303/ 1887

⁶⁹ “Bu kadar keşfiyat bu kadar terakkiyat hangi sayede vücud bulmuş? Say ve ikdam sayesinde değil mi? O halde mütemadiyen çalışmak ve o nispette ilerlemek şayan-ı iftihar bir şey değil mi? Terakkiyat-i beşeriyeye,- beşer olduğu hasebiyle- hizmet etmek hususunda kadın ile erkeğin hiçbir farkı olmadığı cihetle bila-istisna bir azm-i ciddi ile mütehadden ve mütesaviyen say ve gayret etmeliyiz.” (What is the source of all these discoveries and developments? Is it not because of work and zeal? Then, is it not admirable to work continuously and make progress in the same way? We should work and show zeal equally since there is no difference in serving the progress of humanity -just because it is human-between men and women) *Şüküfazar*, n.1, 1303/ 1887

⁷⁰ *Sa’yin en eşrefi en makbülü tahsil-i ilim ve maarife münhasır olan saydır.* Ibid.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

further, something better, while education was placed at center stage. The usage of these concepts became more frequent even by ordinary readers in the 1880s during which civilization was used, this time, mostly to designate the material developments –scientific, technological economic - of Europe or America. One of the readers of *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (1895) defined “civilization of Europe as trade, industry, railways, ships”⁷² and other scientific developments.

Although not much is known about the understanding of certain notions in the Ottoman realm, it seems that the discussions about progress and civilization were part of the wider debate of the nineteenth century. *Tanzimat* intellectuals mostly articulated and thought about progress, civilization, science, technology, law and freedom, which were left as a legacy to the later generations. According to the *Tanzimat* ruling circles, the acquisition of science and technology (*ulum ve fünun*) was one of the most important ways to contribute to the progress and civilization of the Ottoman Empire.⁷³ While “civilization” as a term began to appear in Ottoman texts in the 1830s and was used within the context of human training, in the 1850s, it was matched with another term, *medeniyet*,⁷⁴ which was understood in its broadest sense as the conditions that provide people with welfare and prosperity.⁷⁵ “Progress” and “civilization” were mostly used together with similar connotations. The material aspects of these conditions were science, railways, industry, business associations, urbanization, which as in Europe, could be acquired in the Ottoman Empire if the necessary reforms were undertaken. Progress was the common denominator even for the liberal opponents who called themselves the Young

⁷² Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat, n.21

⁷³ Gökhan Çetinsaya, “Kalemiye’den Mülkiye’ye Tanzimat Zihniyeti” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce: Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet’in Birikimi* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002) pp.54-71

⁷⁴ Tuncer Baykara, *Osmanlılarda Medeniyet Kavramı ve 19. Yüzyıla Dair Araştırmalar* (İzmir: Akademi Kitabevi, 1992) pp. 15-32

Ottomans in the 1860s, such as Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ali Suavi, who understood progress as economic and military power.⁷⁶

Returning to the periodicals, the writers and editors also supported their arguments about education for both individual and collective well being or for progress by reminding their readers of the concrete developments taking place throughout the Empire in this field. When the Ottoman state started to undertake the education of its subjects, the writers mentioned it with a sense of admiration and loyalty to their Sultan, which in a way shows the success of the educational reforms, in training loyal and obedient citizens. All of the periodicals, without exception referred to the newly established schools for girls which they interpreted as a sign of increasing literacy, education and progress that resulted from the efforts of their Sultan.⁷⁷ Indeed, they not only admired but attempted to contribute to the training of their fellow subjects by turning their periodicals into forums with which to inform women about various issues.

Household Management (*İdare-i Beytiyye*)

⁷⁵ Gökhan Çetinsaya, Kalemîye'den Mülkiye'ye, p.56.

⁷⁶ Şerif Mardin, "19. yy.'da Düşünce Akımları ve Osmanlı Devleti" *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, c.2 (İstanbul, 1985) pp.342-351

⁷⁷ The editor of Parça Bohçası wrote: *padişahımız veliyyinimetimiz efendimiz hazretleri milletin ve memleketin feyz ve terakkisi esbabını ikmal etmek için küçük ve kadın erkek umum teba-yı sadıkesinin saadetlerini tesis etmek için huzur ve rahat-ı hümayunlarını feda ediyorlar. Yeni yeni mektepler açılıyor. Türlü türlü vasıtalarla etrafa ilim saçılıyor.* (Our benevolent Sultan abandons his comfort to ensure the progress of nation and country and to ensure the happiness of all of his subjects, children, men, and women. New schools are opening. Knowledge is spreading through various means.) N.1, 1305/1889; the editor of Vakit Yahud Mürebb-i Muhaderat wrote: *Velliyyinimetimiz padişahımız maarifperver efendimiz hazretlerinin neşir ve tamim-i hüner ve marifet hususunda çeşm-i iftihar ile gördüğümüz himeme müfadat-ı müteveliyye-i cenab-ı şehriyarileri maarifin her sınıfa şiddetle lüzumunu meydana koydu. Bir iki seneden beri kızlara mahsus birçok Rüşdiye mektepleri açıldı. Dersaadet'de bir de Dar'ül-muallimat küşad olundu.* (Our benevolent Sultan has affirmed the necessity of education for everyone. For a few years, secondary schools have been opened. A Faculty of Education has been opened for girls in Istanbul as well.) N.1, 14 Eylül 1291/ 26 September 1875

There is a good deal of information in the periodicals about domestic matters described with such terms as *idare-i beytiyye*, *ev idaresi*, *hane idaresi* (house management) or *umur-i beytiyye* (house work.) Male and female writers were preoccupied with domestic matters and intended to professionalize house work by ascribing these responsibilities to housewives and not to servants. Their main concern was to teach women how to run the house most efficiently through productive skills, cost efficiency and the rationalization of house work. They linked such productivity and order to real savings in the household and the national budget. Housewives were supposed to manage money, be careful in spending, keep the house in order, sew the clothes of family members and raise children. In addition to efficiency and economizing efforts, family companionship was perceived as the cement of family life. This discourse gave women a more active position and a power base in the home and, by extension, in society. Ottoman women as the mothers of modern Ottoman subjects were supposed to train children who would acquire a sense of social responsibility, while with the role of scientific housewives they would be prepared to contribute to the economic development of their country.

Indeed, economizing was a particular imperative for the writers who experienced and explicitly reminded their readers of the difficult conditions of making a living at the time. The Ottoman economy experienced its highest inflation rate between 1780- 1850, when prices rose twelve to fifteen times.⁷⁸ The financial crisis deteriorated with foreign debt especially after the Crimean War. Ottoman finances were in debt and even declared bankruptcy in 1875. At around the same time, partly to find solutions to these problems, the Ottoman government tried to instill the idea

⁷⁸ Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi (1500-1915)* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005) pp.191-230.

of economy in its citizens by adding a course on economics to the curricula of secondary and higher schools.⁷⁹ The economics course taught at the *Mekteb-i Mulkiye* expanded to other schools and, in 1868 *Istanbul Sanayi Mektebi*, in 1870 *Kız Sanayi Mektebi* and other high schools, and in 1874 the Law School had the same course.

In the periodicals, economic well being or economic power was emphasized with special importance that it should be realized at both the level of households and the state. The editor of *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (Progress of Women) (1869), Ali Raşit, while talking about the necessity of literacy and knowledge, reminded women that they should spend the money their husbands earned carefully. He made an analogy to show the difficulty of earning money: earning money was like carrying a stone to the top of a hill, while spending it was like rolling the stone down. Similarly, he demanded that the readers look for ways of earning more money and becoming wealthy. Being rich was possible if men would acquire knowledge in science and industry and if women ran their houses well⁸⁰ (*Hüsn-i idare*). He even recommended a book, entitled '*ekonomi politik*' by saying that it was written in very clear Turkish, available at all newspaper stands and useful to both male and female readers since it discussed how individuals could earn money, and how wealth could be attained at a society-wide level.⁸¹

The same editor provided instructions in his journal, titled *idare-i beytiyye* (household management), which had been translated from French. He stated that he

⁷⁹ Rıfat Önsoy, "Tanzimat Doneminde İktisadi Düşüncenin Teşekkülü" *Tanzimat'ın 150. Yıldönümü Uluslararası Sempozyumu, 1989, Ankara* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1994) pp. 95

⁸⁰ *Zengin olmanın çaresine bakmalıdır. Zenginlik ise erkeklerin fînun ve sanayide terakkisine ve kadınların hüsn-i idareye dikkat ve riayet eylemesine mütevakıftır ki bunların ikisi de tahsil-i ilim ve kemale muhtaçtır.* " (One should seek ways of being rich. Being rich is possible only when men attain progress in science and industry and when women manage their houses well, both of which require education) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.2, 22 Haziran 1285/4 July 1869.

published it since he believed that the lessons contained valuable information for “Ottoman women.”⁸² The compiler of lessons defined *idare-i beytiyye* as “a science of using the mind, time and money properly.”⁸³ In the courses, she basically dwelled on the rational use of time and doing housework. She suggested planning every morning in advance what needed to be done that day; keeping everything in its place; going to invitations on time⁸⁴; and keeping track of what had been done or not done at the end of each day.⁸⁵

Other journals, *Ayine*, *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat*, *Aile*, *Parça Bohçası* discussed the same issue again by addressing women as the managers of their houses. The editor of *Ayine* (Mirror, 1875), Mustafa, stated that running the house was one of the responsibilities of women who were the managers of the house.⁸⁶ He added that the proper training of children and servants (*hüsn-i terbiye*), keeping the house clean, keeping everything in its place and avoiding over expenditures were all responsibilities of women, and were all necessary for a happy life.

Among the periodicals, the author of *Aile* (Family, 1880), Şemseddin Sami, dealt with house management by establishing an explicit relation between the national budget, welfare (*servet-i umumiye*) and house expenditures. He claimed that an increase in the national budget depended on the careful expenditure of each house

⁸¹ *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n. 4, 6 Temmuz 1285/ 18 July 1869

⁸² *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.40, 24 Mayıs 1285/ 5 June 1869, see appendix

⁸³ *İdare-i beytiyye akli, vakti ve nakti yolunda sarfetmek fennidir. Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.40, 24 Mayıs 1285/ 5 June 1869

⁸⁴ *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n. 47, 19 Temmuz 1286/

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, n.46, 5 Temmuz 1286/

⁸⁶ “Bir hanım hanımı olduğu evin hanenin hem emiri, hem müdiresi, velhasıl evinin her türlü işinin sahibesidir. Gerek evladın, gerek hizmetkarın hüsn-i terbiye ile alışması hanesinin temiz tutulması, ve her şeyin yerli yerinde bulunması ve masrafça israf ve safahat vükuu bulmaması bi'l-cümle hanımın dirayetine aiddir. Güzel geçinmek ve güzel yaşamak için en evvel gözetilecek vazifeden olduğu ecilden hane idaresini hepsinden evvel düşünmek lazımdır.” (All the work about the house is the responsibility of the woman of the house. The education of children and servants, keeping the house clean, spending carefully to avoid over expenditure are all her duties. House management first should

rather than the proper use of the state's budget, since national welfare was equal to the sum of each house's financial resources.⁸⁷ Accordingly, he defined house management in order to show the ways of making proper expenditure while at the same time taking into account the health and taste of the household members together with the aesthetic appearance and comfort of the house. According to him, house management didn't mean poor dressing, poor nutrition or poor decoration of the house; rather, house management meant dressing nicely, healthy nutrition, a tasteful decoration of the house and the accomplishment of all of these with as little expenditure as possible.⁸⁸ He suggested that women should do household tasks like cooking, sewing and taking care of the children themselves or that at least that they should supervise the servants. He gave detailed information about the methods of healthy nutrition, proper dressing, house structure and decoration. On the subject of nutrition, he advised eating the most nutritious foods at certain times and in sufficient quantities by reminding his readers of the importance of health and the importance of a healthy nutrition during childhood and youth.⁸⁹ He even gave menus for dinner and disapproved of eating many different kinds of food at the same time. For him, it was proper to have two to five kinds of food at one meal and interestingly, he advised eating more meat and fewer vegetables. In addition, he explained the ways one could understand whether meat was fresh or not.

On the issue of clothing, he suggested wearing outfits according to the season and climate and stated that people's, and especially women's desire to dress nicely

be taken into account to ensure a happy life and good relations.) *Ayine*, n.2, 9 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/21 November 1875.

⁸⁷ “*Servet-i umumiye evlerin ayrı ayrı olan servetlerinin mecmuatından ibaretir. Bunun için servet-i umumiye devletin kuvve-i maliyesinin hüsn-i istimalinden değil belki evlerin idaresi yoluna konmaktan tevellüt ve tezayüd edebilir.*” (National welfare is the aggregation of each house's welfare. That is why national welfare could be raised through the good management of the houses rather than proper use of the state's finances.) *Aile*, n.1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/26 May 1880.

⁸⁸ *Aile*, n.1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/ 26 May 1880.

and properly was quite natural.⁹⁰ For the house plan and decoration, by defining the home as “a small world and fatherland” and criticizing the current state of houses, he gave advice about the decoration of houses by taking into account the practical use, comfort and the aesthetic appearance of the home.⁹¹ Actually he again expressed his economic concern by adding that if the house was not kept in order there would be extra expenses in addition to the difficulty of doing work. Each room of the house should be used for a specific function like eating or sleeping. Houses with a garden and courtyard should be preferred and the kitchen should be within a courtyard rather than on a basement floor in order to keep the house clean and to keep it from the danger of fire.

Sami dealt not only with material aspects, but also with the emotional aspect of family life, to which he attributed even greater importance. He defined the family as “consisting of a married couple and children.”⁹² After mentioning the importance of family life and house decoration for happiness and for training a person which in turn was important and necessary for the well being of the community and the state, he compared the running of a family to the management of the state. For him, “managing a family was more difficult than managing the state since the former

⁸⁹ *Aile*, n.2, 24 Cemaziyelahir 1297/ 2 June 1880.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*.

⁹¹ “*Ev insan için küçük bir dünya ve küçük bir vatanıdır. Rahat ömür geçirmek istersek kendi elimizde olan evi güzel bir surette yapmalıyız. Bizde evlerin usulü taksimatı pek fena bir yolda olup matlup olan üç şeyden yani rahatlık, suhulet ve hüsn-i manzara maksatlarından hiçbirine tevafuk etmediğinden evlerin taksimatına dair edecek bazı tavsiyelerim vardır.*” (For humans, the house is like a small world and fatherland. If we want to live comfortable lives, we should decorate our houses well. Since our houses are not planned well and they lack three important features, comfort, practical use, nice appearance, I have suggestions about house planning.) *Ibid*

⁹² *Asıl aile hasbe’l tabiye beyinlerinde akd-ı izdivaç etmiş bir erkekle bir kadından ve onların dünyaya gelmiş evladından ibarettir, Aile*, n.1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/26 May 1880

depended on bonds of emotion, affection and companionship, while the latter depended on law.”⁹³

Similarly, the female authors of *Parça Bohçası* (Bundle of Clothes, 1895) Hatice and Semiha, showed family affection (*aile muhabbeti*) as the only source of happiness.⁹⁴ They also addressed women as the managers of the house and established a direct correlation between the order of a house and happiness. They suggested that women should know the methods of establishing order within the house: doing everything on time and using and keeping everything in its place. The editor discussed the importance of working and added that she would give information about cooking, sewing and needlework. The periodical, however, was closed after only one issue and she was able to give information about only cooking and needlework.

Another periodical was successful in publishing information about sewing to which would provide women with productive skills. In *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (Information for Ladies, 1895) instructions for seamstresses were presented by Anton Efendi. The author explained the reason for these instructions by stating that in Europe there were booklets which explained how to sew, while in the Ottoman Empire, there were not enough courses about sewing even in the girl’s schools.⁹⁵ Furthermore, each woman should know how to sew in order to avoid spending money outside the home. The instructor, Anton Efendi, wrote that he worked by taking measurements and thus he achieved perfect results. He gave

⁹³ Bir aileyi idare etmek devleti idare etmekten daha güçtür. Çünkü devleti idare için kuvvetle icra olunur bir kanun bulunduğu halde aile ancak terbiye ve hüsn-i ahlak denilen bir rabita-i maneviye ile idare olunabilir. *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Parça Bohçası*, n.1, 1305/1889, see appendix.

⁹⁵ *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat*, n. 8, 15 Ağustos 1895.

instructions for a short jacket through 16 issues of the journal accompanied by figures.

The same periodical, *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat*, also published instructions about language and writing, which shows again the belief in literacy and knowledge. The grammar rules of the Ottoman language and the methods of writing good compositions were given with detailed examples. The training was given in almost every issue by Nazif Sururi who stated that reading and writing gave one access to knowledge and raised one's self esteem.⁹⁶

As shown, these periodicals (*Terakki-i Muhadderat*, *Vakit Yahud Murebb-i Muhadderat*, *Ayine and Parça Bohçası*) were preoccupied with house work and with the logic of management. They aimed at providing housewives with productivity; the house with order and comfort; the family with bonds of affection and companionship. They wanted to create a home and family which would be managed by women and would be a proper sphere that would provide family members with happiness and by extension, the community with happiness and the state with power. In other words, they believed that collective well being would be realized if each house or each family would be in a proper order in terms of finance, affection and comfort.

Rearing Children (Terbiye-i Etfal)

The writers and publishers gave great importance to the training of children as they viewed it as bringing up a new generation. As stated before, it might be claimed that the rationale of some of these periodicals was based on this logic certain periodicals contained writings for children as well. İlber Ortaylı argued that in the

⁹⁶ Ibid, n. n. 9 (24 Safer 1313/ 15 Ağustos 1895).

nineteenth century, Ottoman subjects understood and admitted the need to change in a changing world and accordingly appealed to child rearing and education as a necessary step.⁹⁷ Yet we do not know much about the details of the changes in child rearing techniques or ideologies. We know that periodicals for children emerged at a high frequency at around the same time⁹⁸ that periodicals for women appeared. Further, some booklets were written to teach children what kinds of manners they should have or not.⁹⁹ From women's periodicals it can be observed that the male and female writers wanted to bring up a generation of hardworking, healthy, productive individuals with a sense of social responsibility. For the training they held both the father and the mother responsible, but mostly addressed mothers as the first teachers of a child. Accordingly, they proposed the equipment of women with pedagogical information and assigned to women the role of bringing up new Ottoman subjects who possessed the proper characteristics. They focused on child rearing with the explicit consciousness that an individual's personality would be shaped according to the training (*terbiye*) he /she takes in his/her childhood.¹⁰⁰ What they aimed at through this training was that a child, and in turn, a person, should acquire good traits in order to contribute to himself /herself as well as to society and to state. For these writers, the physical and moral development (*hüsn-i ahlak*) of the children was equally important.

The editor of *Terakki-i Mahadderat*(1869) addressed both fathers and mothers at the same time and insisted that children be sent to school for by reminding them that children who had *hüsn-i terbiye* (good upbringing) would be beneficial to their

⁹⁷ İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Aile* (İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2000) p.108.

⁹⁸ For the bibliography of children's journals see Cüneyt Okay, *Eski Harfli Çocuk Dergileri* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1999).

⁹⁹ İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Aile*, pp.109-110.

¹⁰⁰ *Terakki-i Muhadderat* n. 1, 15 Haziran 1285/ 27 June 1869; *ibid*, n. 8, 3 Ağustos 1285/ 15 August 1869, see appendix.

parents in this and the next world.¹⁰¹ He also paid attention to the healthy growth of children and gave quite scientific information about feeding babies. He cited a doctor's suggestions about the importance of breast-feeding. He suggested that mothers breast-feed their children for the first five months. If the baby did not feed well, then cow milk could be given mixed with water. If the mother became ill, wet-nurses could be found. Babies needed baths once a week as well as comfortable clothes and well ventilated rooms.

The same periodical also used traditional Islamic sources as guides for child rearing. The writer gave quotations from Gazali's work, *İhya-yi Ulum'd-din*, about the manners that children and their parents should adopt.¹⁰² According to Gazali, the child was inclined to both bad and good and he was like a precious stone that would be shaped by exterior interventions. He suggested that children should be kept away from bad persons and should be prevented from being selfish. He especially talked about eating manners (*adab-ı taamme*) and said that children should eat slowly, and properly. Moreover, if the child makes a mistake, he/she should be warned when he/she is alone; and should be rewarded when he/she behaves properly.

The editor of another periodical, *Ayine* (1875), also emphasized the duration of the influence of childhood education and addressed his periodical to both children and women. Addressing mothers and fathers, he stated that children should have *hüsn-i ahlak* (proper moral values) and a craft or profession, all of which could be acquired again by means of education. The author's suggestion was that parents should take care of their children by devoting much time to them. Parents should help with their

¹⁰¹ *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n. 9, 10 Ağustos 1285/ 22 August 1869; see appendix.

¹⁰² *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.18, 12 Teşrin-i Evvel 1285/ 24 October 1869.

children's home work at home and children should not spend much time playing or in the streets.

The same writer addressed children directly and gave them advice about hard work, education and especially moral values. He stated that education is the first necessary condition of being human that differentiates human beings from animals and that it is also necessary for overcoming financial problems at later ages.¹⁰³ The writer made his periodical into a forum for the cognitive development of children and asked mathematical questions and awarded those who answered correctly by subscribing them to the journal. Along with this cognitive training, moral values were seen as a very important part of raising children, especially values which threatened one's economic well being and social solidarity. The writer discussed certain attitudes and behaviors that not only children but also other readers should avoid. Children should not have bad friends (*su-i karin*) who might lead them in the long run to waste their money, and people should avoid envy (*haset*), haughtiness (*gururlanmak*), discord (*nifak*) and gossip (*ayıpcılık*). The author justified his suggestions by supplying personal, social and religious reasons, saying that these features were harmful to those who had them and harmful to others, and that "God, and others did not like them."¹⁰⁴

The moralistic discourse of *Ayine* also reminded children of their responsibilities. An article, which talked about the importance of having *hüsn-i ahlak*, counted a

¹⁰³“Ey çocuklar şu levazım-ı insaniye dediğimiz ilim ve hüner zaman-ı tıfiliyette yani çocukluk zamanında tahsil olunabilir. Eğer şu zamanınızda tahsil etmez iseniz büyüdüğünüz halde yiyip içmekten ve yatıp kalkmaktan başka bir şey bilmeyen hayvan mesabesinde kalırsınız. Bir çocuk bu taze aklını tahsil-i ilme sarf eder ise sonunda zahmet çekmez.” (Education and training, which we call the condition of being human, can only be learned in childhood. If you do not learn now, when you reach maturity you will be no different from an animal that does not know anything apart from eating and sleeping. If a child devotes his or her young brain to education, she/he will not face a struggle later on), *Ayine*, n. 36, 29 Ağustos 1291/10 September 1875

circle of responsibilities of a person. Although we learn to whom a person is responsible we cannot learn exactly what they are, since the journal was not published further enough to give details. According to this circle, a person was responsible to himself/herself, his/her family, teachers, society, fatherland and religion, while fulfilling such responsibilities was the indication of having *hüsn-i ahlak*.¹⁰⁵

Moral values were also given in another context by means of stories. In his periodical, Şemseddin Sami wrote short stories for children, in which he tried to give them a sense of social solidarity and obedience to their parents. The characters of the stories were children, parents and teachers. In one of the stories, the mother wanted to buy new shoes for her daughter because she was hardworking.¹⁰⁶ When the mother expressed her idea to the girl, the girl suggested buying a blanket for a refugee woman who was cold outside. The mother accepted her idea and bought a blanket for the woman. When the girl gave the blanket to the refugee woman, she became very happy and prayed for her. Actually, the author most probably chose his plot consciously as the date of this story, 1880, is one in which the Ottoman state

¹⁰⁴ *İnde'l-nas mezmum olduğu misullu Allah da böyle kimselerden hoşnud değildir, Ayine*, n.17, 29 Şubat 1291/12 March 1876

¹⁰⁵ “Bunun içindir ki yani hüsn-i ahlakın her bir şeref ve meziyete olan takdiminden ötürüdür ki bu dünyaya şimdiye kadar gelmiş geçmiş bi'l-cümle müellefinin asarı hep ahlaka hizmet maksadıyla telif ve tahrir olunmuş yani halkı hüsn-i ahlak faziletiyle şerefletirmeye çalışmışlardır. (It is because of the superiority of proper moral values to all other merits that most writers compose their works to serve morality, that is, try to adorn people with the virtues of proper moral values.)

İşte çocuklar bizim de bu mukaddimeyi yazmaktan muradımız bu esasa mebnidir. Buna binaen ileride yazacağımız makaleler insanın vezaif-i diniyesiyle, valideynine, muallimlerine, ebna-yı cinsine, nefisine, ulu'l-emrine, vatanına, hayvanat ve sair mahlukata karşı olan vezaifiyle, bir adam yaşadığı memleketin kavaninine olan riayetinin vücub ve teferruatını beyandan ibaret olacaktır” (O children, we are writing this article for the same reason. Thus, the articles that we will write later on will be about responsibility of the individual towards his religion, parents, teachers, his fellows, himself, governors, fatherland, animals and other creatures; along with an explanation about the details of the rules of a country that a person should obey./Ayine, n. 37, 5 Eylül 1291/17 September 1875.

¹⁰⁶ *Aile*, n.1,17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/ 26 May 1880.

and society suffered the disaster of the Ottoman –Russian War of 1877-78 and the ensuing migrations and financial problems.

Indeed, the moralistic discourse of the periodicals gives clues about the meaning ascribed to education. Education is not only a kind of training that provides the individual with technical skills, but also moral training. Understanding education in both respects was also the case at the institutional level and in the curriculum of government schools. Akşin Somel pointed out the inculcation of moral values in primary and secondary schools during the *Tanzimat* and Hamidian eras. Somel observed that, in the education proposals, the term *maarif* was used in the sense of instruction, while *terbiye* was used in the sense of education which encompasses the meanings of bringing up, raising, training and chastising.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in the periodicals *terbiye* was used in the broadest sense (physical, moral, religious, professional training etc), while, *tahsil-i ilm ve maarif* was understood as instruction. Further, literacy or education was almost counted along with *hüsn-i ahlak* (good manners or having proper moral values) or *hüsn-i terbiye* (good upbringing), which revealed both aspects of education. In addition, Şemsettin Sami explicitly stated the importance of moral principles for a happy life:

The source of happiness is good upbringing and morality. Science and technology contribute to happiness only if they are based on morality; otherwise science and technology lead to harm and disorder¹⁰⁸

The issue of child raising continued to be the topic of other periodicals such as *Parça Bohçası* and *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* which were published in 1895. A female author of *Parça Bohçası* made her suggestions by reminding her readers that

¹⁰⁷ Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in Ottoman Empire., Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline, 1839-1908*, pp. 58-59.

¹⁰⁸ “İnsanları bahtiyar ve mesud edecek ilim ve fûnun değildir, o saadet ve bahtiyarlığın esası terbiye ve hüsn-i ahlaktır. İlim ve fûnun ancak güzel bir terbiye ve hüsn-i ahlak esası üzerine mebni olursa insanın bahtiyarlığını tezyid etmeğe sebep olabilir, bunun aksi olursa ilim ve fen fesad ve muzırratı artırmaktan başka bir şeye yarayamaz.” *Aile*, n.1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/26 May 1880.

women raise the children who will in the long run contribute to the well being and progress of their nation.¹⁰⁹ She especially noted the importance of healthy nutrition in childhood that would prevent the health problems of children at later ages.¹¹⁰ She gave a schedule for feeding babies and discussed how babies should be fed only with breast milk until five months old. She also suggested that children should get used to reading books like other kinds of entertainment, and plays. Similarly, the editor of *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* suggested finding games that would help the cognitive development of children. Babies should go to sleep early and have a bath every morning, and parents should be patient and teach them affection for animals.

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In the periodicals there was another warning and comment concerning child raising and motherhood, involving abortion. The male authors of *Terakki-i Muhadderat*(1869) and *Ayine* (1875) did not support abortion and tried to convince women not resort to this method of birth control. Indeed they touched on this issue due to their belief that abortion prevents the life of a potential child who would in the long run contribute to his nation.¹¹² They tried to explain the illegitimacy of abortion by counting its possible negative effects on the health, social relations and religious lives of women.¹¹³ To discourage this practice, they published the precautions the government took for the prevention of abortion. According to this announcement, the government gave drugstores the right to investigate those women

¹⁰⁹“*Hakikat bir millette kadınlar ne derece malumatlı olurlar ise aguş-ı terbiyelerinde büyüyecekler bi'l- ahire milletini idare etmek terakki ettirmek ve saadet haline çalışmak vezai fiyle mükellef olan evlad-ı vatan o mertebe ali hüsn-i terbiye görür*” (Indeed, in a nation however many women are knowledgeable, then, the children of the fatherland who are responsible for working for the progress of their nation, will be educated in the same degree.) *Parça Bohçası*, n.1, 1305/1889d

¹¹⁰ *Parça Bohçası*, n.1, 1305/ 1889.

¹¹¹ *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat*, , n. 10 (10 Rebiyyülevvel 1313 / 31 Ağustos 1895).

¹¹² *Ayine*, n.5, 30 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 12 December 1875.

who sought drugs for abortion. Then, another official would interrogate women about the reason for this decision and he would punish those who were found guilty, no matter who they were, whether others had compelled women to resort to this practice or the women themselves had decided to.

So, on the issue of child raising, both male and female authors wanted parents and particularly women to raise children who would be healthy, hardworking, equipped with moral values, educated and would have a sense of social responsibility. In this way, each person trained from the beginning of childhood would contribute to himself/herself and to society, indeed to the Ottoman nation, as a proper citizen. In a way, the house, whose manager was women, was recognized as a social space to bring up proper citizens of the Ottoman Empire

Fashion

Fashion was another theme on the agenda of the writers of the periodicals examined in this study and was discussed almost in critical discourse. It seems that it became the center of attention since it was related to spending money and to the morality of consumption. Both male and female writers criticized fashion or *alafranga* (in European manner), mainly because of its expense, wastefulness and because they associated it with a display of wealth and ostentation. Spending money for fashionable and supposedly expensive products was held to be an economic burden on the budget of both household and country. Yet the authors did not totally reject fashion but tried to adapt it to their incomes and tastes. They, implicitly and explicitly, recommended that the readers seek moderation, harmony and appropriateness to their own persona in their choice of clothes. Furthermore, the

¹¹³ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n. 7, 27 Temmuz 1285/ 8 August 1869; *Ayine*, n.5, 30 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/12

writers and especially the readers encouraged Ottoman subjects to produce and to buy local products instead of foreign ones. The female subjects were thus supposed to take into account the economic condition of their husbands and their country while spending money, by being productive and by being conscious consumers.

The fashionable items were the new style of clothes and fabrics for women and men that were also described as *alafranga* (European style) and European products. Indeed, European products had begun to penetrate the Ottoman market, especially after the 1820s, and by the First World War, Ottoman foreign trade had increased ten times.¹¹⁴ The Empire imported mainly finished products in the textile sector such as cotton and wool yarn and cloth. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the subjects of the Empire in Anatolia and other parts began to wear clothes which were manufactured either with imported yarn or fabric. Accordingly, fashion was also a phenomenon that was infused into the daily lives of Ottoman subjects especially in the late nineteenth century, and something which was observed in the streets and on the bodies of women. According to a study on fashion in the Ottoman Empire, the later nineteenth century created the necessary conditions for the development of a mass fashion system that required substantial means of production, an effective distribution system with the ability to disseminate rapidly changing fashion ideals, and a mass consumer public that had both the income and social mobility to support such a system.¹¹⁵ Although dress forms borrowed from the fashion system were imposed in the nineteenth century as part of the reforms of Mahmud II, Ottoman dress remained essentially traditional in character until the economic and social

December 1875/; n. 27, 16 Mayıs 1291/ 28 May 1875.

¹¹⁴ Şevket Pamuk, *Osmanlı Türkiye İktisadi Tarihi (1500-1915)*, p.210.

¹¹⁵ Charlotte Jirousek, "The Transition to Mass Fashion System Dress in the Late Ottoman Empire" *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922*. ed. Donald Quataert (Albany: State University of New York, 2000) pp. 201-241.

alterations of the later nineteenth century. Even then, this phenomenon was limited to an urban elite, until the establishment of the Turkish Republic spread both dress reforms and changing economic patterns to the general population.

What we observe in the women's periodicals is parallel to this statement and we can follow discussions about fashion in the journals published after 1875 and especially in the 1890s. In the periodicals, the male author of *Ayine* (1875) discussed fashion within the context of wasteful expenditures and imitation (*sefahat, taklid*) with an intention of producing local clothes. The author, Mustafa, claimed that the yearly cost of a woman's clothing which had been 300 or 400 guruş had increased seven or eight times because of fashion or *alafranga* tastes.¹¹⁶ According to the author, following the *alafranga* dressing style was not a good imitation and instead of that women and men should imitate other useful things. Men should learn to make new shoes like the *fotin* and *kundura* (boot) instead of making old ones, while women should learn to sew *ferace* (a type of overcoat for women) and shirts instead of needlework. In doing so, he continued, they would prevent men from spending money on foreign (Frenk) tailors.¹¹⁷

Most of the discussions held women responsible for their desire to follow fashion and to spend a lot of money. This issue became the topic of fictional conversations between wives and husbands in which women wanted new dresses with powerful voices, while the husbands tried to convince them that they did not need them. By means of these conversations, the authors tried to give message to their female readers that they should not spend money without taking into account the financial condition of their husbands who made money under such difficult conditions.

¹¹⁶ *Ayine* n. 6, 7 Kanun-i Evvel 1291/ 19 December 1875.

¹¹⁷ *Ayine* n. 6, 7 Kanun-i Evvel 1291/ 19 December 1875, see appendix.

While the periodical *Ayine* was making such criticism in Salonika, in the same year, 1875, in Istanbul, *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat* had a similar discourse. The author of *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat* claimed that although everybody complained about the difficulty of making a living, women continued to buy new clothes, the *mesires* (urban spaces for women's entertainment and sociability) were full of people and men spent their money on leisure.¹¹⁸ The male author of the same journal reinforced his agenda with a conversation between a wife and husband in which the woman demands *bayramlık* clothing from her husband who has no money even for essential needs.¹¹⁹ The woman insists on the new dress mainly because she is worried about other people's opinions of herself, if she does not wear new clothes. (*Halk ne der?*). The inclination to ostentation is criticized again in another article in which the author claims that women are going to invitations not to visit their friends but to see and to be seen.¹²⁰

Along with ostentation, preferences for foreign products continued to be criticized, again with economic concerns. In the same periodical, the author criticized the use of wigs of European origin (*ariyet saç*) that he claimed were as a waste of money. He claimed that "Europeans are always seeking ways of earning money by selling their products, while the Ottomans are looking for ways to spend their money."¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat*, n. 1, 14 Eylül 1291/ 26 September 1875.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, n.4, 5 Teşrin-i Evvel, 1291/ 17 October 1875.

¹²⁰ *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat*, n. 6, 2 Teşrin-i Sani, 1291/ 14 November 1875.

¹²¹ "Biz daima acaba yeni çıkmış ne var çarşıya gitsek de alsak deyu elimize geçen parayı harc etmeyi düşünürüz. Frenkler de gece gündüz ne yapsak ne bulsak da halka beğendirip satsak deyu para kazanmağı tefekkür ederler. İşte bizden bu rağbete Frenkler tarafından ol vechle sarf olunan say ve gayrete binaen Avrupa'dan hergün bin türlü şey gelmekte ve paralarımız akıp gitmektedir. Frenklerin bu yolda yaptıkları para tuzaklarından biri de biraz vakitten beridir şenyon namıyla zuhur etmiş olan başbelalarıdır. Gittikçe rağbet artıp birbirini görerek zengin züğürd her kadın bir tanesini almak takmak sevdasına düşmekle evlerde bir de şenyon dırılısı peyda olmakta ve biçare erkeklerin bu yüzden de başları derde uğramaya başlıyor." (We are constantly looking for ways of spending our money on new products. Europeans, on the other hand, seek to earn money by producing new goods and gaining the attention of the people. For both reasons, our interest and the effort of the Europeans, a lot of things are coming from Europe and our money is flowing away. One of the money traps that Europeans have prepared is the wig. Increasingly, every woman, poor or rich wants to wear one and is

He tried to convince his readers by describing the negative effects of wigs on health so that the readers would not use it.

Another discussion concerning fashion and aesthetics is about the wearing of rings over gloves. A woman author of *Şüküfezar* (1887), Fatma Nevber, criticized this style of ring wearing since she believed that it was an indication of ostentation¹²² and something that violated natural beauty. A reader of the journal disagreed, responding that rings could be worn over gloves if that was the fashion.¹²³ The author responded, yet again, with the same argument that it was an indication of ostentation.

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Although there were criticisms, fashion was not totally disregarded and writers tried to reconcile their taste and income with fashion. Indeed, this approach shows that they were not rejecters nor passive receivers of the changes around them, but that their relations were much more complex. *Hanımlara Mahsus Mahumat* (1895) published the pictures of the latest fashionable items, such as dresses, slippers, and fans, which were taken from French illustrations. The editor presented them with little descriptions by adding that they were plain and easy to wear and proper for young women.¹²⁵ Actually, the discussions about dressing and buying patterns were not restricted to the authors of the journals. The readers participated in the discussions with similar concerns and this will be discussed in the next chapter. The concern of these periodicals to make women conscious about consuming and being

causing trouble in their homes as they disturb their husbands.) *Vakit Yahud Mürebbi-i Muhadderat*, n.7, 16 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 28 November 1875.

¹²² “Bundan anlaşılıyor ki hanımlarımız zevk-i selim ashabına nefret bahş olan bu adatı mücerred kıymetli yüzüklerini aleme göstermek ve bu cihetle zengin olduklarını anlattırmak için iltizam ediyorlar.” *Şüküfezar*, n.3, 1303/1887.

¹²³ *Şüküfezar*, n.4, 1303/ 1887.

¹²⁴ *Şüküfezar*, n. 5, 1303/1887. see appendix

¹²⁵ *Hanımlara Mahsus Mahumat*, n. 8, 15 Ağustos 1895/15 August 1895

productive was also paralleled by the news about the events going on within and outside the Ottoman Empire.

The News

The informative agenda of the journals included daily, social and political events that took place in the Ottoman Empire. News were reported not only from within the Empire but from outside, especially from Europe and America where the writers could follow developments in technology and developments concerning women as well as threatening political situations. The presentation of the news became influential in developing the imagined national sphere and national awareness in the minds and hearts of female readers who, for instance, showed their affiliation by means of philanthropic activities for the sake of the fatherland. Indeed, women readers were familiar with news from the very beginning of the publication of newspapers. As one of the female readers of *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat* (1876) pointed out, there were women who followed serious newspapers and political news, and even preferred them to women's periodicals.¹²⁶ Among the periodicals *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (1869), *Ayine* (1875), and especially *Mürüvvat* (1887) gave the news under the title of *havadis* (news), presented with practical and political concerns.

The daily events which were reported such as accidents, crimes etc, were given with the practical purpose that the readers should derive lessons and be more careful

¹²⁶ *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat*, n.3, 27 Eylül 1291/ 9 October 1875.

in their daily lives. For instance, *Ayine* wrote that a baby died because the mother had fallen a sleep while she was breast feeding, and the baby suffocated.¹²⁷

The news from outside the Ottoman Empire included interesting daily events and social developments. Most of them were about changes taking place in favor of women, such as statistical records of American women's entry into different professions, educational conditions and feminist movements, most of which were presented without or with few comments. Indeed the presentation of these events without or with few comments might be interpreted as silent support or encouragement for the changes in favor of women. For instance, a translated article discussed the struggle and success of women's entry into the House of Commons (the right to watch the discussions from the open rooms) in England. After presenting this information, the author of *Terakki-i Muhadderat* commented that "when we see that Europeans, men and women are making progress together at such a level, we Ottomans want to cry."¹²⁸ Another translated article introduced the issue of women's education in America. The author was quite proud that women could receive education in all fields and at all levels in America, while in England, women were fighting for suffrage and entry to the House of Commons. The editor of *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (1895) published a statistical record of the increasing number of American women entering different professions between 1870-1890, and presented it as the progress of American women.¹²⁹

Concerning the news related to the Ottoman political agenda, some were about the upheavals occurring in the Balkan Peninsula and were presented with patriotic

¹²⁷ *Ayine*, n. 22, 4 Nisan 1291/

¹²⁸ "Frenkler kadın erkek şu derecelere derk-i terakki ettiklerini gördükçe Osmanlı ashab-ı cemiyetinin ağlayacağı geliyor." *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n. 2, 22 Haziran 1285/ 4 July 1869

¹²⁹ *Hanımlara Mahsus Mahumat*, n. 10, 31 Ağustos 1895

feelings that were intended to create the same feelings in the readers. The periodicals that were published in 1875 gave brief information about the upheavals in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. *Vakit Yahud Terakk-i Muhadderat*, published in Istanbul, wrote that certain Christian subjects in Bosnia- Herzegovina had revolted on the pretext of the unjust application of tax collection.¹³⁰ The author requested his female readers to pray for the success of the Ottoman troops and to console those who had lost their husbands, sons or fathers.¹³¹

At about the same time, *Ayine* published in Selonika, not only gave information but also called on its readers to get involved in philanthropic activities for the sake of the fatherland. The author announced that the soldiers were fighting in Herzegovina in order to protect their lives and country, in order to prove their affection for these soldiers, they had decided to send “gifts to the soldiers for the sake of the fatherland.”¹³² He appealed to his readers to show their generosity and to send shirts and socks to the “children of the fatherland.” The author gave examples of charitable activities undertaken in Istanbul and encouraged his readers to do the same by adding that he would publish the names of donors in the journal.

¹³⁰ *Vakit yahud Mürebb-i Muhadderat*, n.1, 14 Eylül 1291/ 26 September 1875, see appendix

¹³¹ *Vakit Yahud Mürebbi-i Muhadderat*, n.7, 16 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 28 November 1875, see appendix

¹³²“*Hanımları hayra davet: askerlerimiz bizi ve vatanımızı düşmandan muhafaza etmek için canlarını feda edencesine Bosna ve Hersek’te uğraşıyorlar. Eğer padişahımızın saye-i merhametinde askerimizin yiyeceği içeceği giyeceği ziyadesiyle mevcut olup hiçbirşeye muhtaç değilseler de askerimizi sevdiğimiz kadar sevdiğimizi göstermek için buradan dahi vatan namına bir hediye göndermek hatıra geldi. Çünkü İstanbul’da kimisi hırka ve kimisi fanila ve mintan toplayıp hediye edeceklerini gazetelerde gördük. Biz de kudretimiz yettiği kadar böyle bir şey yaparsak pek ala olur. Siz dahi vatan evladına vatan hediyesi olarak hırka, fanila, mintan, çorap gibi şeyleri gönderirseniz büyük sevap kazandıktan sonra insaniyet aleminde şan olursunuz”.* (Inviting women to philanthropy: Our soldiers are giving a struggle in Bosnia- Herzegovina in order to protect us and our country from the enemy. Although our soldiers do not need anything thanks to our sultan’s compassion and their food and clothing have been provided, we have decided to send our soldiers some gifts in order to show and prove our affection to them because we have seen in the newspapers that in Istanbul people have donated undershirts and shirts. As such, it would be better for us to do the same thing, as much as we can. If you send a shirt, socks, undershirt or coat, you will get God’s reward and get your dignity) *Ayine*, n.3, 16 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 28 November 1875.

Readers actually responded to this call. They sent shirts and socks and their names were published in the journals. The donations of women continued for six weeks and in total 36 women sent 135 socks and 35 shirts. In the list, the names of women were given as the daughters or wives of men whose professions were sometimes noted.¹³³

	Socks (çorap)	Shirts (mintan)
Ömer Paşazade Ahmet Bey Efendi Haremi	5	5
Ali Örfi Efendi halilesi hanım efendi tarafından	2	2
Miralay merhum Hayri Bey'in haremi tarafından	15	
Divan-ı Temyiz Vilayet mümeyyizlerinden faziletli Süleyman Efendi'nin haremleri	3	3
Merhum Hacı Ahmet Ağa'nın Haremi	3	3
Vilayet ser mühendisi Refetlu Selim Efendi'nin haremleri	2	2
Vilayet tarik katibi Hamdi Bey'in Validesi	2	2 ¹³⁴

Ayine repeated its call when Serbia and Montenegro declared war on the Ottoman Empire (1 July 1876). On 9 July 1876 the periodical declared that the Ottoman State needed the help of its subjects in the form of cash, since it had spent

¹³³ *Ayine*, n. 4 (6 Zilkade 1292/5 December 1875) n. 5 (13 Zilkade 1292/12 December 1875) n 6 (20 Zilkade 1292,/19 December 1875) n. 7 (27 Zilkade 1292/ 26 December 1875)

¹³⁴ “ Bu Hafta Gönderilen Hediye ” *Ayine*, n.5, 30 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 12 December 1875.

enormous amounts on the war with Serbia and Montenegro. Indeed, the call of *Ayine* was just part of the *iane- i harbiye* (donation for war) that the Ottoman government initiated in order to finance the expenditures for the Russo- Ottoman War (1877-78). The upheavals in the Balkan peninsula were used as a pretext by Russia and Austria-Germany to intervene in Ottoman politics¹³⁵ and became the premises of the Russo –Ottoman War. During this disaster, the Ottoman state appealed to its subjects, since it was in financial crisis and had even declared bankruptcy a little while earlier, in 1875. On 8 July 1876, the *iane-i harbiye komisyonu* was founded in order to organize donations. Ottoman subjects donated 336, 837 liras within a short time.¹³⁶ It seems that the publishers of *Ayine* took this call seriously, stating that “state and nation are part of the same entity, and men have made the necessary donations that are actually a kind of due of all people to live in security.”¹³⁷ Men, in doing so, “proved their love for their *vatan* (fatherland)” and women should do the same.

The author also tried to shape public opinion by exalting the mothers of martyrs (*şehid*) and by giving examples of the philanthropic activities carried out in Istanbul. For instance, he wrote of a girl who gave a shirt to the *iane* commission without informing her parents. He added that Mithat Pasha’s wife had founded a charitable association and suggested that women in Selonica found a similar one. After the author’s encouraging call, women sent clothes and rifles. In total, 59

¹³⁵ Charlotte Jirousek, “The Transition to Mass Fashion System Dress in the Late Ottoman Empire” *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550-1922*. ed. Donald Quataert (Albany: State University of New York, 2000) pp. 78-95.

¹³⁶ Ali Akyildiz, “*Para Pul Oldu: Osmanlı’da Kağıt Para, Maliye ve Toplum* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2003) p. 174.

¹³⁷“ *Hersekliler, Sırp ve Karadağlılar için duçar olan masarîf-ı fevkaladeden dolayı Devlet-i Aliye teba-yı sadıkasının nakden ianesine arz-ı ihtiyaç etmesiyle ve devlet ve millet ikisi de bir cisimden ibaret bulunmasıyla cümlemizin selameti için borçlu olduğumuz ianeyi Selanik ve Zaman*

women sent 221 shirts, 221 underpants, 50 units of cloth for bandages and 57 rifles (*tüfek*).¹³⁸

The news in the periodicals were not only about wars. There was information about other internal and external political developments as well. Among the periodicals, the editor of *Mürüvvet* (Humanity) assigned most of its contents to the news under the title of weekly political events (*bir haftalık politika icmalı*) and internal and external news (*havadis-i dahilliye, havadis-i hariciye*). *Mürüvvet*, which was published in 1887 for nine issues, tried to inform women readers about the meaning of politics and about the problems that the Ottoman State encountered in the international arena.

The author, after stating his general aim to be show his readers the world, first touched on the condition of the Ottoman Empire among the Great Powers.¹³⁹ Before starting, he defined politics as well administration (*hüsn-i idare*) and said that those who ruled the country were responsible for protecting it against exterior and interior threats. If the state became weak, enemies would attack it and they would even lead the people within the boundaries of the country to revolt. In each state there was a foreign department responsible for following the policies of the other states and for setting relations with them.

After this introduction, he stated that there were important issues with which the Ottoman State had to deal such as the Eastern Question, financial difficulties and

gazetelerinde gösterildiği vechle erkekler hamiyetleri nispetinde 5 liradan 800 liraya kadar verdiler. Vatanlarına olan muhabbetlerini sadakatlerini ispat eylediler.

Ayine, n.29, 28 Haziran 1291/ 10 July 1875.

¹³⁸ *Ayine*, n. 33 (22 Recep 1293/12 August 1876), n. 34 (29 Recep 1293/19 August 1876), n. 35 (7 Şaban 1293/ 27 August 1876) n 36 (21 Şaban 1293/10 September 1876)

¹³⁹ *Mürüvvet*, n. 1, 15 Şubat 1303/27 February 1888

Bulgarian problems. He elaborated on the Eastern Question and Bulgarian problems by explaining that they were illegitimate problems.

According to the author, the Eastern Question was a source for other problems and he described it as a kind of game created by the foreign powers.¹⁴⁰ Then he counted the parts of this problem as the presence of England in Egypt and Cyprus, that of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia Herzegovina, and the interest of France in the southern part of the Ottoman Empire. He explained, with the intention of creating trust in the Sultan, that Sultan Abdulhamit was working much more than previously to overcome these problems and to attain the well being of state and society.

Domestic investments and developments which were believed to be in favor of Ottoman subjects and realized by the efforts of the Sultan were presented. Of these investments special importance was given to schools that were being opened for girls. In the first issue of *Mürüvvet* the lists of *Ruşdiye* (secondary) schools which were opened in Istanbul and in other provinces were given 'with great honor', together with the names of their teachers.¹⁴¹ News of other developments, like the construction of a steamship for Van Lake, the construction of a railroad between Bursa and Mudanya, and the bringing of the children of a deceased governor to Istanbul with the support of the Sultan were presented with a sense of trust in the Sultan and the State.¹⁴² Accordingly, there was also news about the Sultan's Friday

¹⁴⁰ "Şark meselesi dendiği vakit mevkimiz Avrupa'nın Şark tarafında bulunduğundan kinayeten bizim memlekete ve devlete münasebeti ve alakası olan ne kadar işler varsa onlara Şark Meselesi demek Avrupa'da adet hükmüne girmiştir. Velhasıl Şark meselesi Osmanlı Devleti muazzamsının başına ecnebi devletleri tarafından çıkarılan bir gaile bir fırlıdaktır." (The Eastern Question is known in Europe as all the matters related to our country and State, since our location is to the east of Europe. Well, the Eastern Question is a kind of trouble and game created by the foreign powers about the Ottoman State.) *Mürüvvet*, n.3, 29 Şubat 1303/12 March 1888.

¹⁴¹ *Mürüvvet*, n.1, 15 Şubat 1303/27 February 1888.

¹⁴² *Mürüvvet*, n. 2, 22 Şubat 1303/ 5 March 1888; n. 8, 6 Nisan 1303/

prayers (*Cuma Selamlığı*), during which, according to the periodical, the Sultan became the center of the attention of his subjects.¹⁴³

In addition to news, the periodicals also presented basic history and geography instructions which would be influential in reinforcing the sense of common Ottoman identity. *Ayine*(1875), during 9 issues, published a short history of the Ottoman Empire for its women readers with the explicit concern that “each nation should know its history in order to protect itself.”¹⁴⁴ In another periodical, *Mürüvvet*, a woman teacher from a *Ruşdiye* school wrote a short history of the Ottoman Empire for the purpose of “providing a service to her fellow citizens,”¹⁴⁵ while another teacher gave basic geographical information.

The writers thus wanted to raise women’s consciousness about the political developments taking place in the Ottoman Empire and the outside world. While the news was presented with patriotic feelings and reinforced by philanthropic campaigns, all of these most probably were influential especially among women in the construction of a common, loyal Ottoman subjecthood and national awareness as well as an awareness the existence of other communities. Indeed, all of these

¹⁴³ *Mürüvvet*, n.3, 29 Şubat 1303/ 12 March 1888, see appendix

^{144c} *Tarih insanların yaratıldıkları günden beri her türlü adetleriyle aralarında geçen vukuatı bugüne gelinceye kadar haber veren ilme derler ki bu tarîfin beyan ettiği tarihe tarih-i umumi derler. Bir de yalnız bir milletin ahvalini bildiren tarihler vardır ki ona da tarih-i hususi vayahud o milletin adına nisbetle fılan tarih denir. İşte biz de ilm-i halimizden sonra bilinmesi üzerimize lazım olan tarih-i Osmaniden hulasa vechle malumat verecek yolda şu makaleyi yazmağa add ettik. İnsan yukarıda söylediğimiz gibi en evvel kendi ilm-i halini öğrenmeye dinen mecbur olduğu gibi milletini muhafaza edebilmek için kendi milletinin tarihini bilmelidir.”* (History, the science that tells all of the events and traditions that people have experienced from their creation until today, is also called general history. There is also a history which tells only the story of a nation, and this type of history is defined with reference to that nation. Now, we have attempted to write a history of the Ottomans in brief, which should be known after our basic religious principles. As stated above, man first and foremost has to learn his religious principals, and in order to protect his nation; he has to learn the history of his own nation.) (*Ayine* n.19, 14 Mart 1291/26 March 1875.

¹⁴⁵ “*Arzu-yı acızanem kudretsiz ve liyakatsızlığımı galebe ederek vatandaşlarıma bir ufacak hizmet olmak üzere tarih-i mukaddeseden suret-i muhtasarada bazı şeyler yazmağa ictisar ettirdiğinden nezd-i edibanelerinde kabul buyrulduğu halde ceride-i müfidelerinin bir köşesine de derci maksud-ı aciziye müvafık bir mürüvvet add olunur.*) (My desire has led me to write a short history in order to

were on the agenda of the publishers and authors of the periodicals. It is another question how the female readers received them.

be of service to my fellow citizens. I will be glad and my purpose will be realized if you publish it in your newspaper.) *Ayşe Nazire. Emirgan İnsan Rüşdiyesi 2. Muallimi" Mürüvvet*, n.5, 14 Mart 1303.

CHAPTER 4

THE READERS

This chapter looks at the readers' perspective by examining the letters they sent to the periodicals. I will argue that women were in the public sphere by means of their writing through the promotion of the interests of their fellow women and community and through their criticism of daily events and social issues. Seeing periodicals as a good opportunity to express their ideas, female readers enlarged the agendas of the periodicals by expressing different demands and criticisms about women and public issues. Their demands were diverse and for various reasons both within and outside of their traditional roles, and both within and outside of the discourses of the journals. They advocated more and better conditions for women in areas such as education, work, entertainment, and security. Moreover, in the 1890s, female readers mostly touched on matters such as fashion and foreign nannies which were generated by the economic and cultural influence of Europe, with the desire of having an economically and scientifically powerful Empire. While they were making demands and addressing certain problems, they spoke not in singular but in plural form, in the name of and by addressing their fellow women. In other words, there was a sense of female unity and public and national consciousness, or a sense of solidarity with their fellow women and community. This relationship can be seen in the women's willingness to write in order to serve their fellow women, to speak in the name of others, in their participation in philanthropic activities, their expectations from the state and their participation in discussions, as public figures, about social issues. In doing so, indeed, they claimed citizenship, and although their

numbers were modest in scope, they most probably became influential in the formation of public opinion.

Indeed, readership depends on the level of literacy and the interest of the targeted audience in the published materials. As stated before, before the publication of women's periodicals, the Ottoman state had started education investments by opening new kinds of schools for girls. Reading was not a completely new phenomenon for Ottoman women since girls had the chance of learning to read in traditional elementary schools and female members of *ulema* families were privately tutored.¹⁴⁶ This was also affirmed by one of the female readers of a periodical, who noted that they read books (on religion and morality) in their childhood with the help of their parents and most women continued to be educated with tutors in such areas as history, literature and language.¹⁴⁷ Yet if we look at the modern schools established for girls in Istanbul around 1875, there were nine secondary (*Rüşdiye*) schools, and one Faculty of Education (*Darulmuallimat*). The total number of students in these schools was 294.¹⁴⁸

The investment in education in the following years relatively increased the literacy level among women, especially towards the end of the century most of the provinces and cities had modern girl's schools. Yet the increase was only relative, and estimates suggest that the general Muslim literacy rates of about two to three percent in the early nineteenth century rose to fifteen percent by its end.¹⁴⁹ In what remained of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century, nearly 5,000 state primary schools enrolled over 650,000 students and less than ten percent of

¹⁴⁶ İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Toplumunda Aile*, pp. 54-57.

¹⁴⁷ *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n.4, 6 Temmuz 1285/18 July 1869.

¹⁴⁸ Mahmut Cevat Ibnus-seyh Nafi, *Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti Tarih-i Teşkilat ve İcraatı* (19. Asır Osmanlı Maarif Tarihi) pp.125, 144

these were girls. There was also an increase in the number of books and newspapers being published. Before 1840, only eleven books were published annually in Istanbul, while that number had increased to 285; produced by ninety –nine printing houses in 1908. Two of the leading newspapers in Istanbul printed 15,000 and 12,000 copies daily during Sultan Abdulhamit II's reign.¹⁵⁰

As for the interest of the readers, it seems that women were not indifferent to the periodicals. Although it is not known exactly whom these periodicals reached and how all the readers received them, we can answer the question of reception to a certain extent by looking at the letters that women sent to the periodicals. In general, the readers welcomed the periodicals and expressed their ideas on a wide range of topics, such as education, work, fashion, child rearing, men's behavior and so on by addressing them to the editors, to members of society and even to the government. They also contributed to the journals by means of their literary products, poems and stories. In general, in the early years of the women's press the letters mostly touched on different issues, while in the 1890s, the letters were a forum for ongoing debates, which clearly demonstrates increasing female literacy and the interest of the readers in public as well as women's issues. Among the periodicals, in *Terakki-i Muhadderat* (1869) there were 28 letters most of which carried the name of the senders. In *Vakit yahud Murebb-i Muhadderat* (1875) there was one, in *Ayine* (1875) nine, while female readers determined most of the content of *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat* (1895).

Indeed, the editors of the periodicals encouraged their readers to send in letters and almost every periodical contained an editorial note saying that it would publish

¹⁴⁹ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire (1700- 1922)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp.167-168.

readers' letters. That means that the editors were in favor of dialogue, not monologue, and called for the active participation of readers in the periodicals. The readers, on the other hand, responded to the discourse of the periodicals sometimes by questioning, sometimes by approval and usually by bringing up new issues. Most of the readers expressed their gratitude for the appearance of periodicals just for women and perceived this as a sign of the increasing importance ascribed to women and as a kind of contribution to their education. They even expressed their willingness to contribute to the periodicals by means of their letters. One of the readers of the first periodical, (*Terakk-i Muhadderat*, 1869) Belkıs Hanım, after expressing her gratitude, added that she would like to subscribe to the journal and send letters for the purpose of serving her fellow women. She even would like the periodical to be published more than once a week.¹⁵¹ What we should keep in mind is that the editors might have published only the correspondences that they found parallel to their views, since sometimes similarities can be observed between the discourse of the journals and their readers. Even that was the case, they are worth interpreting and I will try to analyze them, since, after all, they were the voices of women and tell more about women than men's arguments or opinions. I prefer to interpret this mode of participation as a way in which women used the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid

¹⁵¹ “Bizim için bir gazete çıkarmağa başladınız. İki nüshasını gördüm. Aşırı memnun oldum. Ben şimdilik gazetenizi elden alıyorsam da inşaallah teala yakın vakitte bilhassa müşteri olacağımı şimdiden vaad ile beraber bu gazeteyi neşre vükubulan himmet ve müriyyetinizden dolayı hasıl olan sürur ve şükranıyeti kendi haddi destimde alenen beyan ederim. Ben dahi her hafta gazetenize derc olunmak üzere bir kağıt gönderirim ve bu kağıtlarda aklımın erdiği ve kalemim döndüğü derecede şeyler yazıp hemnevime hizmet ederim. Ve icab eden ihtaratı ve güzel hareketi ilave ve beyan eylerim ve bir de şurasını rica ederim ki bu gazetemizi haftada bir kere tab ve neşr olunacağı cihetle bizim için mertebe-i kifayede görülemez. Lütfedip bunu daha tevsî ediniz ki ihtiyacatımıza kafi olsun” (You have started to publish a newspaper for us. I have seen two of its issues. I am very glad. Although I am buying your newspaper from the vendor, I promise to subscribe to it soon. I would like to express my gratitude for your effort and zeal to create this journal. I will also send a draft every week to be published in your journal and in these drafts I will try to do my best to serve to my fellow women. Further, I would like to add that since your newspaper is published weekly, it is not sufficient for us. Please publish it more frequently to address our needs.). *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.3, 28 Haziran 1285/ 10 July 1869.

discourse of the periodicals as a power base to make further demands. Further, some letters which almost repeat the discourse of the periodicals (about house management) with a didactic style are omitted because they could be fictive. For the most part, the letters were written in a relatively simple language and contain a diversity of demands and criticisms, which increases the probability that they were the genuine products of the female readers.

Making Demands

The majority of female readers voiced demands on different issues, for education, productivity, leisure activities, public health and for information about the conditions in the Ottoman Empire. Education was again at the center for the female readers and it was important for them for various reasons: for being productive, for performing religious practices, entering professions, rearing children and for doing housework better. Yet we see that productivity was highest on their agenda, which was justified with economic well being in the household or on the national level, and rarely with a discourse of equality between men and women. The concerns about the education level and economic condition of their country clearly displayed their affiliation with their community and their national consciousness. They tried to create a campaign for literacy and basic education for girls, to extend it to the lower and middle classes, to the other members of their society. In their writings, we can decipher their sense of pleasure in the improving but not sufficient opportunities for women's education which were provided by their Sultan. According to their expressions, in previous times, nobody had cared about the education of women due

to the indifference of men and due to the belief that women could become sorcerers.¹⁵²

In their discussions, women touched on their levels of literacy and the language of the periodicals as well. Some of the readers, especially the readers of the first periodicals, *Terakki-i Muhadderat* 1869, and *Ayine* 1875, found the language of the periodical too embellished and demanded the usage of more simple language. They stated that although they knew how to read, the author of periodical should use clearer and understandable language.¹⁵³ Belkıs Hanım wrote that the education of women was unequal to that of men; therefore the language should be clear.

The same reader not only expressed her gratitude and requests, but went further by questioning the assumptions of men on women's education. She claimed that the periodical aimed at contributing to the education of women, but the education level of women was not so low, as "some ignorant men assume." According to her, most women were raised by their fathers and mothers and in their childhood they read books like the *Muhammadiye*¹⁵⁴ and books about morality and some women even took tutorials in history, literature and Arabic. She continued, saying "the reason for such assumptions is the absence of women's writing in the public arena, but the percentage of women who can read is around 50%."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.6, 20 Temmuz 1285/ 1 August 1869

¹⁵³ *ibid*, n. 3, 28 Haziran 1285/ 10 July 1869, see appendix

¹⁵⁴ A popular book about the life of the Prophet Muhammed written by Yazıcıoğlu Mehmet in the fifteenth century.

¹⁵⁵ "Erbab-ı malumata gizli olmadığı vechle bu gazeteyi çıkarmaktan asıl maksadınız muhadderatı tahsil-i maarife teşvik ve tevsik etmekten ibaret olduğundan şüphe yoktur. Fakat şurası vardır ki bazı cahil erkekler zan ederler ki kadınlar içinde okuyup yazmak bilenler pek azdır. Halbuki iş böyle değildir. Vakıa erkeklere nisbetle kadınlardan yazı yazmak bilenler pek çok değil ise de okumak bilenler yüzde heman elli kadar vardır diyebilirm. Zira bizim ekserimize hal-i sabavette iken valide ve pederlerimiz elifba ve kelim-i kadim ahlak risalesi okutmuşlardır. Ve bazımızın büyüdüğünden sonra dahi okutmasından sarf-ı nazar etmeyip mahsusa hoca kadınlar marifetyle Muhammediye gibi ve daha sair ona benzer harekeli kitapları okutmağa devam ediyorlar. Hatta içimizden bir fırka dahi vardır ki pederleri marifetiyle tarih ve edebiyat kitapları mütalağa etmekte ve Farisi ve Arabi lügatler dahi ezberlemketedirler. Hal böyle iken niçin bizim umumumuzun cehalet içinde yaşadığımız herkesin

Another reader, Hayriye Hanım, agreed with Belkıs Hanım and gave the same ratio.¹⁵⁶ Yet Faika Hanım did not agree with them. She claimed that in Istanbul, the rate of literate women was around five or ten percent. Faika Hanım, accordingly, asked for educational and working opportunities for women. For her, schools and workplaces were necessary for women so that they could learn skills and become productive. Observing that Ottoman women had to buy foreign products and had to give money to foreign tailors, she especially focused on productivity whereby they could save their money and stop spending money on foreign goods.

We know that *kokonas*¹⁵⁷ have been taking money for sewing clothes from the beginning. We are paying liras for products whose actual value is a guruş, just because they are foreign. Before the appearance of fashion, were we naked? Let's say that their products are nice, but are we unable to produce like that? Thank God, we have hands and minds.

We have heard that our Sultan has ordered the opening of schools for us. We should go and work there. Instead of giving money to foreigners, let's spend our money on ourselves. When my father was an official in Balıkesir, I saw that Anatolian women earned more than men with their hard work. What is the meaning of being a lady, if we have no money in our pockets? Let's go to the *ıslahane* and learn sewing, embroidering and not give our money to foreigners¹⁵⁸

eşkarında yerleşiyor.” (It is obvious that the aim of publishing this journal is to encourage women for education. Yet, some ignorant men assume that few women are literate. However, this is not the case. In fact, compared to men, fewer women know how to write, but I can say that the rate of women who know how to read is about 50% because, our parents taught most of us (how to read) primers and books about morality. Some of us have continued our education and read books such as *Muhammediye* by means of private female tutors. Even there are those who study with the help of their fathers in such areas as history, literature and learn Arabic and Persian. While this is the situation, why does everybody assume that we are living in ignorance.) *Terakki-i Muhadderat* n. 4, 6 Temmuz 1285 / 18 July 1869

¹⁵⁶ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.5, 13 Temmuz 1285/ 25 July 1869

¹⁵⁷ The term used to describe foreign, European women, Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1945-1946)

¹⁵⁸ “Kokonalar evlerimize ayak basmadan evvel bir entari dikmesine 5-10 lira verildiği işitilmişti. Frenk işi deyu 5 kuruşluk şeyi liralarla alıyoruz. Bu modalar çıkmadan evvel çıplak mı gezer idik. Diyelim ki Frenklerin işledikleri zarıfdir. Biz onlar gibi işleyemez miyiz? Şükür bizm de ellerimiz vardır aklımız vardır. İşte şevketli efendimiz bizim için ıslahane emr etmişler deyu söylüyorlar. Oraya gidip çalışmalıyız. Hamaratlık edip paramızı kokonalara vereceğimize kendimiz yiyelim. Pederim Balıkesir’de memur iken o zavalı Anadolu kadınlarını gördüm ki çalışa çalışa erkeklerden ziyade kazanırlar. Biz hanımlığı kurup sanki ne olacağız. Cepte para olmadıktan sonra hanımlık neye yarar. İslahaneye gidip kasnak, kanava nakış dikiş öğrenelim paramızı yabancılara vermeyelim” *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.5, 13 Temmuz 1285/ 25 July 1869

While Faika Hanım addressed her fellow women about working, Hayriye Hanım addressed the editor of the journal about ways of acquiring skills. After she expressed her pleasure about the contents of the journal, she requested additional information on tailoring and sewing. She justified her demand with the desire of running her house efficiently and by stating that there was no book in Turkish which described tailoring and house management, therefore, the periodical should translate them into Turkish and publish them for women.¹⁵⁹

Another reader addressed her male counterparts about the production of clothes. She stated that clothes should be produced locally and by means of machines instead of by hand in order to compete with European ready-made clothes. She wrote “while we try to make handmade clothes, the Europeans (Frenks) sew them by machines in shorter periods, and sell them at cheaper prices, and therefore we have to buy foreign products.” She called on the men, saying that men should work at introducing such technology.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ “*Vakıa burada münderiç olan mevadın cümlesi aladır. Fakat bilene hacet olmadığı üzere herkes için idare tarafını bilip harç ve masrafını ona göre eylemek pek mühim olduğundan burasını bir kaide üzere icra eylesek ve biçip dikmenin daha bir nevi kolayını bellemiş olsak elbette daha ala olur. Bu dahi Türkçe’de öyle kitap olmadığından şu himmet-i azimeyi dahi gazetenizden bekleriz. İşittiğimize göre Avrupalılar’ın dikmek biçmek ve hanesini idare etmek misullu işlerine dair kitapları var imiş. Onlardan böyle mühim ve bizim memelketimize uygun ve mülayim şeyleri bizim lisanımıza geçirerek gazete-i muteberinize derc ederseniz evlerin işi başka bir intizam kesb edeceği cihetle buna bizden ziyade erkeklerimiz teşekkür ederler.*” (Indeed, all of the things written here are quite nice. Since it is important to know the methods for providing the house with a balanced budget, it would be better that we should learn easier methods of cutting and sewing. As there is no book in Turkish about it, we expect this support from your periodical. We have heard that Europeans have books about cutting and sewing and house management. If you translate from these books proper ones for our country and publish them in your periodical, the housework would be in order and our men would be more glad than we.) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.5, 13 Temmuz 1285/ 25 July 1869

¹⁶⁰ “*Ancak işittiğimize göre Frenk taifesi bu gibi şeyleri bizler gibi el ile işlemeyip makine vasıtasıyla kolaylıkla vücuda getirdiklerinden fiyatça pek ehven satıyorlar. ... Maarifin kadr ve kıymetini bilmeyen yok ise de bizde o gibi makineleri vücuda getirecek erbab kimseler me’mul olunamıyor. Bu gibi şeyler ise erkeklerin say ve himmetiyle vücuda gelebilir.*” . (However, we have heard that the Frenks do not make these things by hand, unlike us, but produce them by means of machines, and that is why they sell them at cheaper prices. Although everyone knows the importance of education, among us there is no one able to produce such machines. These things can be achieved through the efforts and zeal of men.) *Ayine*, n.17, 29 Şubat 1291/12 March 1876

Again with economic concerns, another reader expressed her criticisms and made suggestions about a social practice, weddings. She criticized the high expenditures on weddings that she had observed both in the provinces and in Istanbul. She stated that in Istanbul, members of the family who arranged the wedding spent extraordinary amounts of money buying dresses from Beyoglu. For her, this was “extravagant and harmful to the budgets of their husbands who earn money with difficulty and who cannot save any money”. Claiming the reason for such expenses was to be “ignorance”, she claimed that “(Ottoman) women could make the same items themselves.”¹⁶¹ Moreover, instead of spending money for the wedding, money should be invested in the professional life of the groom and the wedding should be as short as possible.

Another reader participated in the discussion of education, by referring to Europe and by addressing, with certain expectation, the Valide Sultan. Ismet Hanım thought that “education for all could only be provided by the efforts of State.” In Europe, Queens and Empresses support the education of girls, and in the Ottoman Empire “Valide Sultan should support female education.”¹⁶²

Not all the readers referred to Europe for education and work. Their Islamic heritage also became a reference point for further demands, which shows that they

¹⁶¹ “İşte cahillik adama Beyoğullarında akıllar ermeyecek raddede paralar sarf ettirir ve alınan şeylerin insan yapması olduğunu yani bizim gibi kadınlar ellerinden çıkmış idiğini düşündürmez. Ve bunları nasıl yapıyorlar mevkuf-ı aleyh nedir buralarını hatıra bile getirmeyip yalnız giymek ve taklit etmek iktiifa ettirir. Bir kere tefekkür edilmeğe o kokonalar yazmak okumak sayesinde hergün bir şey icad edip ellerimizden paraları nasıl suhuletle alırlar. Fazla olarak bir de bize gülüyorlar. Yazık değil mi? Biz bu kadar dirayetsiz miyiz? İnsan insan olur da çalışırsa elinden ne kurtulur” (Ignorance is the reason for spending so much money in Beyoglu and it prevents (us) from remembering that all products are the products of human beings and of women just like us. It prevents (us) from thinking of how they produced such things and it only leads to imitation and wearing. If you think you will see that such kokonas discover a new thing each day thanks to reading and writing and they take our money from our hands easily. What is more, they laugh at us as well. What a pity. Are we so incapable? If humans work, everything could be possible.) *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n. 33, 29 Mart 1285/

¹⁶² *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n.5, 13 Temmuz 1285/ 25 July 1869, see appendix

perceived the education of women or the existence of women in the public sphere as a part of their own tradition, and not necessarily as a tradition of Europe that they should appeal to. Adile Hanım criticized the contemporary educational conditions of the Ottoman Empire and held the state responsible for further investments and showed as an example the status of women in the Islamic age. She wrote that during the first four-five centuries of Islam (10th & 11th cc), women were educated and even worked in jobs related to the palace administration. The Ottoman State, on the other hand, “could not provide sufficient opportunities even for the education of men due to intensive wars; but fortunately in the age of knowledge, schools were beginning to be established for the children of the fatherland including girls.”¹⁶³

The readers also gave examples of the educational developments and efforts in other communities in the Ottoman Empire. For readers who were Muslim Ottoman subjects, other communities were standing as a good example from which they could learn a lesson. A female reader, while she was criticizing the practice of *cihaz* (trousseau prepared by girl for marriage), compared the condition of Muslim girls to that of others. She claimed that preparing *cihaz* is an impediment preventing education for girls, basically because it requires time, labor, money, all of which, according to her, should be channeled to education. She holds parents responsible for the lack of education for girls and supports her argument by giving example of the

¹⁶³ “Bu zaman içinde mücerred padişahımız efendimiz hazretlerinin cümle-i muvaffak-i şahanelerinden olmak üzere muntazam mektepler tesis ve teşkil ve etfal-ı vatan tahsil-i ulum ve maarife teşvik ve tergib buyurulduğu gibi işte geçenlerde dahi etfal-i inasa mahsus mektepler açılarak ahval-i atiyemiz için büyük teminat verildi. Bu acize dahi hem nevim olan Osmanlı hanımlarını ahval-i alemden haberdar ve bunların suret-i terbiye ve muhafaza-i iffet ve ismetleri ne yolda icra edilmek lazım geleceğini ihtar etmek tasavvurunda bulunduğumdan kabul buyurur iseniz arasına size mahsus olan gazetenize varaka ifa edeyim.” (As a result of our Sultan’s eminent work and success, schools have been established and the children of our fatherland are encouraged to study. As such, schools for girls are also opened and our future is guaranteed to a greater extent. This humble one would like to send you sometimes drafts to inform my fellow women about outside events and to guide them in their education and the preservation of their chastity.) *Terakki-i Muhadderat* n.3, 28 Haziran 1285/10 July 1869.

efforts of other communities in education. She addresses to Muslim parents as follows:

Let's draw lessons from other communities. They send their daughters to schools and the girls learn various skills by which they support and feed themselves. On the other hand, our poor daughters waste time begging, the rich ones in entertainment, while middle class girls prepare marriage trousseau which give harm to themselves as well.¹⁶⁴

Similarly, Ikbāl Hanım addressed her fellow women to get an education and to inform themselves about the natural sciences, which clearly demonstrate her civic consciousness. She found the natural sciences necessary to bring up children better, to be able to answer the questions of children about natural events. Further, for her, it was urgent to disseminate this knowledge to other women, is a kind of necessity for "public interest." She claimed that "it is not enough to work only for oneself but one should also work for the public interest" or the common good.¹⁶⁵ As examples and with a sense of admiration, she referred to contemporary women journalists and particularly to Fatma Aliye who were contributing to society. For her, Fatma Aliye showed the existence of women in different professions in Islamic age who should be an example for Muslim women.

The letters about education were not only from adult readers but also from children with similar demands. Since the journal *Ayine*, 1875 addressed both

¹⁶⁴ "Aher milletten ibret alalım, onlar kızlarını büyüyünce mektepde terbiye ve talim ettirerek, türlü türlü sanatlar, marifetler öğrenip sanatı marifeti sayesinde kızlar kendisini besler rahat yaşarlar. Bizim ise fukara kızlarımız dilencilik; zenginlerimiz eğlence; orta takımdan olanlar da cihaz tedarik edeyim deyu kendi kendilerine işkence ile vakit geçiriyor" *Ayine*, n.3, 16 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 28 November 1875

¹⁶⁵ "Kendi nefsi için çalışmak kafi değildir bir de menafi-i umumiye namına çalışmak vardır. Bir insan erkek olsun kadın olsun medeniyet tahtında yaşaması her neye muhtaç ise iktibasına çalışmalıdır. Hayat-ı beşer çalışmakla kaimdir. Beşeriyet işçilerden müteşekkil bir şirkettir. Bir eser meydana getirmeli ki ondan teşekkül edecek servet her ne olursa olsun meşru olarak bundan hemcinsini müstefid etmelidir." (It is not enough to work only for oneself. There is also work to be done for the public interest as well. Humans, whether men or women, should work at whatever necessary to live in a civilized way. Life is possible only with work. Humanity is like a company consisting of workers. A service should be created so that it would contribute to his/her fellows.) *Hanımlara Mahsus Mahumat*, n. 24 (12 Cemaziyelahir 1313/ 28 November 1895)

women and children, it contains letters of children along with those of female readers. The letters of the children are actually answers to the mathematics questions that were asked by the teachers of secondary (*Ruṣḍiye*) schools. Accordingly, children who sent letters are mostly students of these schools, including both males and females. From these letters, one is particularly interesting for voicing a request about the education of children. It is interesting to see again a national concern which can be observed in the comparison of Islamic and other communities. It is also interesting to see a demand for more schools and for learning science and technology rather than the traditional professions. This child wrote that primary schools were in need of improvement and other high schools should be set up. He argued that since there was no other kind of school that they could attend and to learn science and technology; children had to work as scribes (*katip*). Observing the efforts of foreigners and other communities, Jews and Christians, for establishing schools and pursuing charitable activities in Selonica, he compared the educational conditions of Muslims and other communities in the Ottoman Empire with a feeling of sorrow:

Is it possible not to become upset seeing all of the efforts and devotions of foreigners and other communities in our country to establish perfect schools; and seeing our backwardness¹⁶⁶

Another reader expressed her ideas about education and work by questioning the ontological position of men and women. She claimed the equality of men and women in every respect and implied that women should have the same rights as men. Indeed, she implicitly advocated women's right to work in different professions by criticizing the delegation of women housework and child raising to women. She

¹⁶⁶ “*memleketimizde sair milletlerin ve ecnebilerin mükemmel mektepleri ve maarife milletçe say ettiklerini ve her bir türlü fedakarlıkta bulunduklarını ve bizim böyle geri kaldığımızı gördükçe dilhun olmamak elde midir?*”

Ayine, n.21, 14 Rebiyülevvel 1293/ 9 April 1876

supported her argument by giving examples of women working in men's jobs in "civilized countries" which affirmed the fact of equal rights.¹⁶⁷

The readers' demands continued in other realms as some of them expected information about the outside world from the editors. They especially wanted to know about the condition of their country, which shows again their sense of interest towards their state and community. A woman who sent a letter to the journal, *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat*, 1875, criticized the contents of the journal by stating that the journal presented "very insignificant mundane stories rather than serious political events of the Ottoman Empire."¹⁶⁸ According to her, women wanted to know about serious news and there were women who preferred other political newspapers to women's journals. She claimed that the editor of the journal should know that "women are much more aware of the outside world than men assume." She asked to see news concerning *ahval-i alem* (the outside world) like the upheaval in Herzegovina, which was going on at the time. The journal took her request into

¹⁶⁷"Hatta kadınların da beşerden maada bir şey olduklarını ve binaenaleyh diğer bir sınıfın malik olduğu hukuka onların dahi müşterek bulunmaları lazım geleceğini takdir etmiş olan bazı memalik-i mütemedinede kadınların bir iki nev-i hizmet ve memuriyet-i ricaliye de istihdam olunmakta oldukları mesmuadır. Demek isterim ki hilkaten nisvan her vech ile rical ile müsavidir." (We have heard that in some civilized countries, which have affirmed that women are also human and thus should have the same rights as others, women have been employed in men's jobs. What I mean is that woman is equal to man in every respect, by birth.) *Şüküfezar*, n. 4, 1303/1887

¹⁶⁸"Bundan mukaddem kadınlara mahsus bir gazete daha çıkmıştı. Her nasılsa devam edemedi memul ederim ki devam eder. Yazdığınız şeyler içinde pek güzel şeyler var. Lakin müsaade ederseniz her yazdığınıza iyidir demedim. Zira bazı can sıkıcı münasebetsiz şeyler var. Burasını avfınıza güvenerek söylüyorum. Gücenmeyiniz. Eğer maksadınız kadınların memnun olacağı surette bir gazete çıkarmak ise öyle bir takım saçma sapan havadis yazmaktan vazgeçiniz. Kadınlara tahmininizden ziyade ahval-ı aleme vakıf nazarıyla bakınız. İçimizde Basiret ve İstikbal ve Vakit ve Ceride-i Havadis gibi politika gazetelerini sizin bu gazetenize tercih edenler vardır. Burasını bilip de yalnız bizi yalnız kurd misalleriyle avuturum zann etmeyiniz. Biz politika havadisi ve tevcihat gibi şeyler de isteriz." (Previously, another periodical was published for women. Yet it was unable to survive. I hope that this one is able to continue. There are very nice points in your periodical. However, let me say that not all of them are meaningful. Because there are some nonsensical, irrelevant matters. I say this do not be offended, please. If your aim is to publish a journal which will please us, give up writing such nonsense news. You should know that women are much more aware of the outside world than you assume. There are some among us who prefer serious political newspapers such as *Basiret*, *İstikbal*, *Vakit* and *Ceride-i Havadis* to your periodical. Do not assume that we would be satisfied with such news. We want news concerning politics and nominations) *Vakit Yahud Murebbi-i Muhadderat*, n.3, 27 Eylül 1291/ 9 October 1875

consideration and gave news concerning the Herzegovina upheavals in the next issues. Likewise, another reader demanded news of the outside world,¹⁶⁹ from another journal, *Ayine*, 1875. The editor responded that he would take this request into account and gave news about the same conflict in Herzegovina.

Another woman wrote about the leisure activities of women. She requested a *mesire* (a traditional urban space for women's amusement and sociability) for her fellow women in Istanbul. She wanted a place (*Millet Bahçesi*) like in Üsküdar¹⁷⁰ that she had seen upon her friend's invitation. She tried to convince the audience about her wish by comparing it to other *mesire*, in Istanbul and by counting the reasons for her appreciation. She said that mesires in Istanbul were far from the residential areas and women had difficulty in reaching them, while the *mesire* of Üsküdar was near where the women lived, had places to sit down, and provided the opportunity to listen to music at cheap prices. Her wish was supported by the male editor of the journal since he believed that it was related to the welfare of the country (*mamur-i memleket*).

Another reader, a woman named Nuriye Hanım, addressed a letter to the government about an event she encountered in the streets and found dangerous for public security. She wrote with the consciousness of holding the government responsible for the security of the people and again with expectations about it. Noting that she was writing to the periodical since it had a note saying that it would publish "letters related to public issues /interest,"¹⁷¹ she said that while she had been

¹⁶⁹ *Ayine*, n.2, 9 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 21 November 1875

¹⁷⁰ "Biz de İstanbul'un münasibi vechle birkaç mevkie Üsküdar'da o cennet gibi millet bahçesine benzer bir bahçe tanzimine himmet buyurulmasını gazeteniz vasıtasıyla niyaz ederiz." (We also want, through your journal, to have a public garden in different places in Istanbul similar to the gardens in Uskudar.) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.48, 20 Ağustos 1286/

¹⁷¹ "Menaf-i umumiye dair olan hususatın tabi gazete-i mezkurun serlevhasında münderiç olmakla (since it is written in your journal that issues related to public interest will be published.)

returning to her house in Haseki, a few drunkards driving horse and carriage at high speed, hit a *tablacı* and splashed mud at her and her son. She proposed the abolition of carriages within the quarters of the city.¹⁷²

Another reader touched on the issue of public health by writing about a case she had observed in a *hamam* (Bathhouse for women's public use). She wrote that some women were eating certain foods in front of the children and pregnant women and this was improper and harmful for hygiene, a result of ignorance and lack of care. She disapproved of this conduct and called to other women to avoid such behavior for health reasons.¹⁷³

Criticisms of Men's Improper Conduct

Female readers voiced criticisms of men as well. While some accused men of being obstacles to women's education, others complained about the disturbing behavior of men towards women in public. Indeed, women directly or indirectly advocated their rights through this questioning, by speaking in the name of Ottoman women. One woman brought forth a serious criticism of men who disturbed women at a royal wedding (*sur-i humayun*). She wrote that she had gone to the *sur-i humayun* with her neighbors since they had heard of the fame of the plays and games conducted there. She described the situation she encountered there by commenting that "men who did not know right from wrong" disturbed the women and could not tolerate the participation of women at the wedding. The reader

¹⁷² *şehir içinde at koşturmaklık herhalde muhataralı bir şey olduğundan canib-i hükümet-i seniyyeden bunun men olunmasını istirham ederiz.* . (Since driving a horse within the city is dangerous, we want to request that the government abolish it.) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n. 23, 16 Teşrin-i Sani 1285/

¹⁷³ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.28, 15 Şubat 1285/ 27 February 1870

explicitly advocated the right of “Ottoman women’s” entertainment in public places by asking “was the wedding arranged only for men?” and “why do Ottoman women have to be deprived of participating in any kind of entertainment?”¹⁷⁴ She supported her argument by referring to Europe where men and women went together wherever they wanted. Another reader wrote of a similar problem that she had encountered in the streets. Complaining about men who sat down along the roads leading to the women’s *mesire*, she explicitly wanted them to cease such behavior and to “leave space for women to pass.”¹⁷⁵

Similarly, a woman named Ülker Hanım wrote that some men disturbed women with improper words in the streets. She described such men as indecent (without *edeb*) and added that those who annoyed women should remember that “other men can also disturb their chastity.”¹⁷⁶ Ülker Hanım, in another letter, continued to

¹⁷⁴ “Müşahade ettiğim bazı münasebetsiz haller aşırı derecede teessüfümü celb etti. Şöyle ki iyiyi kötüden fark etmez kendini bilmez bazı erkekler gördüğü kadınlara ağzına gelen saçmaları sarf ettikten sonra bir de el uzatmağa fırsat aramakta olduklarından arasına münaşakalar zühur edip tokat muhabbetlerine girişilmektedir. Hatta ehl-ı ırz bir hanıma bir hizmetkar ağanın esna-yı münazarada “iyi kadın olsa idin buraya gelmez idin” dediğini kulağımla işittim. Sübhanallah bu düşüün erkeklere mi mahsustur. Osmanlı kadınları her nevi eğlenceden mahrum mı kalmalıdır. Avrupa’da kadınlar erkeklerin gittiği yerlerin kafesine gitmekte ve her neresini arzu ederler ise erkekler ile beraber gidip eğlenebilmekte değil midir? Şehzade efendimizin düşüününe biz neden gitmemeli ve bu mesretten ne sebebe mebni mahrum kalmalı imişiz.” (I felt extremely sorry about the improper situation that I observed. That is, some men who do not know right from wrong, said ridiculous things to women and some even attempted to disturb the women physically and some quarrels broke out. I even heard during the quarrel a male servant say to a chaste lady, “if you were a good woman, you would not come here.” “Subhanallah, is this wedding arranged only for men? Do Ottoman women have to be deprived of every kind of entertainment? In Europe, women can go everywhere men can go and they can go together with men, can’t they? Why can’t we go to our prince’s wedding and why do we have to be deprived of it?) *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.43, 14 Haziran 1286/

¹⁷⁵ “Erkeklerle İslam kadınlarının bir yerde karışık bulunmaları ayıbdır. Fakat kadınların تنها olarak bir teneze edecek mahalleri var idi. Onu da bu sene erkekler zapt etti. Artık hiçbir yer kalmadı. Hele bir takım adamlar mezkur kahvenin önüne ve sokak ortasına çıkıp oturuyorlar, hatta geçecek yol bırakmıyorlar. ... Bari öyle yol ortasına çıkmasalar da kadınlara da geçecek yol bıraksalar olmaz mı?” (It is not proper for Muslim men and women to coexist in the same place. We had an amusement place just for women. This year, it was passed to the control of men and there remains no place for us. Some men are sitting in front of the coffeehouses, in the middle of the streets and do not leave us space to pass. They should not appear in the middle of the road and should leave space for us to pass.) *Ayine*, n.18, 7 Mart 1291/19 March 1875.

¹⁷⁶ “ötekinin berikinin ardı arkasında dolaşanlar başkalarının da kendi ırzları ardında dolaşacaklarını iyi bilsinler.” (Those who run after other women should remember that others also run after their own chastity.) *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n.38, 10 Mayıs 1286/

criticize men. According to her men were looking at a woman's wealth and beauty rather than her morality (*edeb ve terbiye*) when they wanted to marry. These men had no right to complain about their wives, since they had already made the wrong choice and their wives would behave contrary to their husbands' attitude.

Another criticism voiced about men was in regard to the duty of husbands. İrfan Hanım wrote of her fellow women's right to be supported by their husbands who were held responsible for supporting the family. She told the story of a man who earned 1,500 gurus in a month, spent it on drinking, and did not care about his children, who could not go to school due to his lack of support. İrfan Hanım commented that "such men cannot fulfill their duties as husbands." She even criticized the journal by stating that it did not give information about the responsibilities of husbands. It should write about the duties of men, since the family is made up of two parties.

Dealing with *Alafranga*

Female readers needed to discuss the issues they experienced and observed around them, basically the cultural and social influence of Europe on the daily lives of Ottoman subjects. In *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat*, 1895, the readers debated these issues and described this influence as aping *ala franga* or *Frankane* manners which revealed on the one hand, the degree of such an influence on late Ottoman society, and on the other hand, the availability and willingness of women to join in these debates through journalism. According to the debates, the influences demonstrated themselves in modes of dressing, in appearance in public, in learning foreign languages, in ways of entertainment, in child rearing methods and in foreign nannies. During the discussions, the readers first and foremost questioned the

possible reasons for the inclination to *alafranga* and proposed alternatives by discussing these daily issues in connection with progress and civilization. They thought that the reason for such inclination was that people behaved in a such a way just because Europeans who had progress and civilization, did it. Yet, for them, these were superficial imitations of Europe or civilization that they did not need. They perceived the scientific and economic developments of Europe as civilization and they believed that it could be imitated. The female and male readers believed that the material developments of Europe or America should and could be taken without changing or influencing their values, manners, behaviors: that is their identities, and they did not see any opposition in having both. They proposed that their Islamic principals (*fezail –i İslamiye*) and national values and manners (*adab-ı milliye, adab-ı Osmaniye*) were necessary conditions for following the scientific and economic developments of Europe and they suggested taking these developments rather than superficially imitating European manners. Indeed they were quite confident about their Islamic identity, their values and manners. So, they tried to find ways to adapt to the changing world around them, neither rejecting it totally nor receiving it passively. Rather, they analyzed it and made suggestions for proper results. In other words, female readers from different backgrounds as public figures, assumed the task of constructing Ottoman identity.

One of the most discussed topics was fashion, or to define it largely, the manner of dressing, individual care and the mode of appearance in public. Fashion was usually believed to be a burden on the budget and harmful to the identities of Ottoman subjects. According to the discussions, women had begun to appear in the streets at certain occasions wearing cosmetics, thin veils and fashionable clothes

and people learning French to speak it with merchants in Beyoğlu, while doing their shopping.

The reactions to these changes were expressed sometimes with the intention of adopting them and sometimes rejecting them with certain conditions. A reader, Makbule Hanım wrote that instead of using “European hair dye”, women should use Ottoman products, which would be “more proper for the health of Ottoman women and the development of industry and trade of the country.”¹⁷⁷ Makbule Hanım’s suggestion was responded to two weeks later by another reader, who was a craftsman. He, expressing his appreciation for this patriotic concern of women, wrote that he had local and healthy products for them.¹⁷⁸ Nadire Hanım suggested choosing fashionable clothes according to Islamic principals, the condition of the times and the appropriateness of one’s own persona. Mufide Hanım did not find cosmetics appropriate and believed that natural beauty was much more proper. Another reader thought that following fashion was improper and extravagant since it changed quickly over time. Reminding that there was no relation between dressing and civilization she recommended that women sew their own dresses since they had learned how to sew in school¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ “Avrupa’dan gelme ve ne olduğu bilinmeyen boyalardan artık vazgeçip burada imal olunacak halis boyaları istimal etmelidir. Halbuki henüz dersaadette bu yolda boya imalatına teşebbüs eder hususi bir zanatkar yoktur. Fakat gayet emniyetli kimya-giran eczacılarımız mevcut olup gayret ettikleri takdirde yeni ve yerli bir boya çıkarıp muvaffak olacakları şüphesizdir. Eğer böyle bir şeye muvaffak olurlarsa hem nisa-i osmaniye’nin sıhhat ve afiyet ve hüsn-i melahatlerine ve hem saçlarının intizam ve letafetine hem de sanayi ve ticaret-i mahaliyeye yeni bir sanat ve menfaat daha ilavesi suretiyle memlekete pek büyük bir faide ve yararlıkta bulunmuş olurlar.” (We should no longer use European hair dye and instead should use local and good dye. Yet there is no specialist craftsman in this field in Istanbul. However, we have pharmacists and if they make an effort, there is no doubt that they will become successful at producing local dye. If they achieve this, they will contribute to our country to a great extent by their contribution to the health and beauty of Ottoman women and through the creation of a new craft in local industry and trade.) *Hanımlara Mahsus Mahumat*, n.8, 15 Ağustos 1895.

¹⁷⁸ Makbule hanım efendinin sanayi ve ticaret-i osmaniyemiz hakkındaki hüsn-i niyet-i afifaneleri cidden şayan-ı takdirdir. Ibid, n.10, 31 Ağustos 1895.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, n.25, 26 Cemaziyelahir 1313/13 December 1895

The comments were not only about women's dressing, but also about men's, again with similar concerns. A male reader, Mehmet Cemal, criticized men, saying that they wanted to wear the new fashionable trousers and jackets just to be fashionable or smart (*şık*). This was "a kind of extravagance and improper imitation of Europe" and instead of such imitation, they should "learn or imitate the science and technology of Europe"¹⁸⁰

The author of *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat*, Manzume Hanım, also participated in this discussion by trying to answer the question of what Ottoman subjects should do about these matters. According to her, much like other women, the inclination to *alafranga* destroyed national moral values or Islamic principals (*adab-ı milliye*, *fezail-i Islamiye*), since each "nation's *adab*" was different from that of the other's. Assuming that people associated fashionable dressing with progress and civilization, she questioned the meaning of progress and civilization as follows:

What is the meaning of progress and what is the meaning of civilization? You cannot understand and you do not know. Progress has nothing to do with a coat or powder. Civilization has nothing to do with *bonjur* or etc. Progress is possible with the preservation of national moral values, and civilization is possible with the acquisition of science, technology and industry.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ "Gelelim erkeklerimize: Avrupa'nın israf ve sefaletini noktası noktasına tatbik edenler pek çok. Mesela bol pantolon eskimeden yeni moda dar pantolon yaptırıyor, ceketin arkasını karma karma diktiriyor, bunları Avrupalılar yapıyor ama iyi mi? yoksa Avrupalılar'ın her hal ve fiilini iyi diye kabul edecek miyiz? işte bunlar israf ve sefaletin birer numunesidir. Buna ne diyorlar? Şıklık! ... Böyle şıklık edeceğiz diye servetimizi mahv edeceğimize Avrupalılar'ın sanatlarını, fenlerini, maharetlerini alsak bizim için hayırlı olmaz mı?" (Let's look at our men. There are many who imitate exactly the extravagance of Europe. For instance, before their clothes are worn out they have new tight trousers made and change the backs of their jackets. Europeans are doing this, but is it proper? Or do we have to follow every behavior and all manners of Europeans, assuming that they are good? Indeed, these are an indication of extravagance. They call this smartness. Isn't it better for us to take the science, crafts, and technology of Europe instead of spending our wealth to look smart?) *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat*, n.14, 7 Rebiyülahir 1313/ 26 September 1895.

¹⁸¹ "A canım hangi bir millet görülmüştür ki diğerinin evsaf ve etvarını taklid ve kendi maişetini tagyir ile bahtiyar olmuştur. Her milletin ancak kendisine mahsus olan adab ve ahlak ve etvarı muhafaza ile mesud olacağından şüphe mi vardır? Maişet-i milliye değiştirilemez, adab-ı milliye tagyir kabul etmez bu müsellemdir. Ama diyeceksiniz ki Frenkler müterakkidir. En ziyade asar-ı temeddün onlarda görülmektedir. Yazık yazık! Terakki ne demektir, temeddün ne demektir.. Anlamıyorsunuz, bilmiyorsunuz, terakki manto ile pudra ile olmaz. Temdeddün bonjur ile filan olmaz. Terakki adab-ı milliyenin muhafazasıyla, temeddün ulum ve fünun ve sanayie vükuf ile olur. Biz Avrupa'nın fünun ve sanayi-i hazire-i müterakkisini bırakıyoruz. Ahlakımızı bozan adab-ı şuhanesini alıyoruz. Bir Parisli

Accordingly, she proposed that they work for science and technology so that the Empire could benefit from the yields of progress and they “would not need Europe anymore”¹⁸²

Another topic of the *alafranga* discussion was foreign nannies. According to the discussions, families had begun to hire foreign nannies, male or female, with the purpose of teaching their children foreign languages, especially French. Believing that the issue exceeded learning foreign languages, the readers perceived this phenomena as a social problem and directed their criticism to the possible effects of foreign nannies on the identity of Muslim /Ottoman children.¹⁸³ The behavior, language and religious identity of the children were assumed to be affected negatively. Indeed, instead of totally rejecting the learning of a foreign language, they proposed a solution and debated the more general issues of child rearing methods and the creation of a science of pedagogy for Ottoman children. They proposed the creation of a pedagogy which would be based on Islamic principals, and national moral values. Moreover, they argued that children should first learn

*gibi giyinmek ve gezmek yaşamak istiyoruz. Bu olur mu? Adat-ı milliyeye tevafuk eder mi? Böyle yapacağımıza bir Avrupalı gibi ulum ve fûnun ve sanayie çalışarak terakki etsek ve onlara karşı olan ihtiyacımızı bertaraf eylesek daha ala ve muceb-i muhsinat bi intiha olmaz mı? ” ? ”(Is there a nation that became happy through imitating another’s behaviors and features or through changing its manners? Is there any doubt that every nation becomes happy though the preservation of its behaviors, morals and manners? It is certain that national morals and manners cannot be changed. Yet you can say that the Frenks have progressed and they have the most civilized things. What a pity. What is the meaning of progress and what is the meaning of civilization? You cannot understand and you do not know. Progress has nothing to do with a coat or powder. Civilization has nothing to do with *bonjur* or etc. Progress is possible with the preservation of the national moral values, and civilization is possible with the acquisition of science, technology and industry. However, we are not interested in Europe’s progress in science and industry and we follow their improper manners that disturb our morality. We want to dress and live like a Parisian. Is that possible? Is it in line with our national manners? Instead, isn’t better to work for science and industry like a European, through that we should have progress and we should not need Europe anymore.) *Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat*, n.12, 13 Eylül 1895.*

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Here, the intended meaning of “Ottoman” is Muslim children, since the Muslim identity of children was mostly emphasized.

their religious and national values and principals and acquire a love for their nation, country and religion; and then study foreign language or languages.

Foreign nannies also became a theme of late Ottoman novels, as did the other issues of social change in late nineteenth century. Huseyin Rahmi Garpınar, in his novel entitled *Mürebbiye* (Nanny, 1898) wrote a plot in which a female French nanny led to the corruption of all the male family members who lived in a large mansion.¹⁸⁴ In women's periodicals, this issue was discussed in terms of the influence on children's training rather than adult male and female relations.

Fahrünnisa Hanım initiated the debate by pointing to the negative effects of entrusting children to foreign nannies. She discussed the issue on the level of nations and thought that "each nation's religion, manners, behaviors and morality" (*din, adab, etvar and ahlak*) were unique. Entrusting children to foreigners led to the disturbance of morality and mind (*fesad -ı ahlak ve ezhan*) and children could look down on their parents and their identity in the long run. Mothers, and especially educated mothers, were responsible for raising their children, who, in the long run would "serve their nation and state." Hence, children should be acquainted "first with religious knowledge and then taught foreign languages."¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Mehmet Kaplan, *Türk Edebiyatı Üzerine Araştırmalar*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1992) pp. 463-465

¹⁸⁵ "Hiçbir milletin terbiyesi diğerinin terbiyesine tevafuk eder mi? Değil Osmanlı ve ecnebi gibi dinen ve halen birbirinin külliye aksı ve zıddı milletler; hatta bir dinden olan Avrupa mil-i muhtelifesinin bile adet ve ahlakı etvar ve adabı yekdiğerine mübayindir. Bir İngiliz bile evladını bir Fransız'ın yed'i terbiyesine tevdi etmek istemez. Birer nev Nihal demek olup her surette meyl ve inhinası sühl olan zavallı masumları asılları nesilleri, huyları, halleri fikirleri hatta sıhhatleri hasılı her şeyleri meçhul müşkül olan ve memleketlerinde taayyüşden aciz kalarak buraya dökülen bir alay adi mahluklara teslim ve tevdi ederek fesad-ı ahlak ve izhanlarına bais olmak terbiye -i suriye yoluna terbiye-i ruhaniyelerini kurban etmek yazık değil midir? Evvela böyle ecnebi muallimlerin yed-i terbiyelerinde bulunan efsalde ekseriya İslamiyet aleyhinde bir fikir bir nefret hasıl olduğu görülür." (Does ever a nation's manners and training correspond to that of another one? Not only Ottoman and foreign nations that are completely different in terms of religion and manners, but also the other nations of Europe that are from the same religion are also different in terms of morality, behavior and manners. An Englishman does not want to entrust his child to the training of a Frenchman. Is it not a pity to entrust these children who are just like young plants which can easily take any shape, into the

A male reader approached this issue in terms of the needs of the people. Admitting the fact that people needed each other by definition, he separated human needs into “spiritual and material” ones. He thought that Muslims did not need any spiritual support from Europeans, but had to take material support since “Europeans have started to live in comfort thanks to their intelligence and efforts.”¹⁸⁶ On the same topic, another reader claimed that children brought up with foreign nannies would end up in a dilemma in the short and long runs.¹⁸⁷

While the discussion was going on, İkbâl Hanım touched on the issue of child rearing in general. She complained about the absence of related sources in the Ottoman/Muslim realm and also criticized the appeal to foreign sources for child rearing. She thought that drawing on just European pedagogical sources were not sufficient for bringing up Ottoman children. Noting that Europeans and Americans had created the science of pedagogy because of the importance of the issue, she proposed the formation of such a science of pedagogy for Ottoman children. Ottoman intellectuals should be acquainted with pedagogy and should formulate a

hands of those ordinary persons whose personalities, ideas, behaviors and even health are not known and who could not make a living in their own countries; thus isn't it a pity leading to the degeneration of these children's morals and minds and sacrificing their spiritual training to a behavioral one?) *Hanımlara Mahsus Mahumat*, n.10, 31 Ağustos 1895

¹⁸⁶ “Biz ki insanlarız halken medeni't-tab olduğumuzdan bir takım şeylere ve bu şeylerin hepsini tedarik ve ihzar etmek yalnız bir ferdin karı olmadığı tabii bulunduğundan birbirimizin marifetine muhtacız. Evvel emirde bu ihtiyacı ikiye taksim edelim. İhtiyacat-ı maneviye, ihtiyacat-ı maddiye. İhtiyacat-ı maneviye terbiye-i maneviye ve ahlak-ı hamidenin istilzam ettiği ihtiyacattan ibarettir. İhtiyacat-ı maddiye, bu cihan-ı fanide yaşamaklığımızın icab ettiği ihtiyacattır. Biz ki Müslümanlarız, ihtiyacat-ı maneviyemiz kamilen ihzar olunmuştur. Biz onları Avrupalı'lardan iktibası katiyen muhtaç bulunmadığımız umur-ı müsellimedendir. Biz ihtiyacat-ı maddiyemizin icab ettiği esbab ve vesaili Avrupalı'lardan iktibas etmeğe mecbur bulunuyoruz. Çünkü onlar gayretleri, zekavetleri sayesinde rahat geçinmeğe başladılar.” (Since we are human and by birth we are inclined to civilization we need some things and we need each other's skills, as one person cannot provide all these needs. In the first place, let's divide these needs into two parts, spiritual and material. Spiritual needs are about what good morality and spiritual training require. Material needs are what we require to live in this world. As we are Muslim, our spiritual needs have been provided completely. It is obvious that we do not have to take them from Europeans. Yet we have to take the methods of providing material needs from Europeans, since they have started to live in comfort thanks to their intelligence and efforts.) *Hanımlara Mahsus Mahumat*, n.14, 7 Rebiyülahir 1313/26 September 1895

pedagogy that was based on traditional Islamic sources and the findings of this science. She added that what she proposed was the meaning of the statement that “civilization is imitable.”¹⁸⁸

The Profile of the Readers

The readers discussed in this study were from different backgrounds in terms of class and education. Here we can see the diversity of the audience, the interest of women in reading and the results of the newly opening schools for girls which made possible girls' and women's access to printed materials and public life. The diversity can be understood from explicit identification as well as from the content of the letters. While some of them identified themselves as just ladies (*bir hanım tarafından*) or just gave names, others clarified their identities as the daughter of a *nazı* (minister), the grandchild of Sururi Paşa, or just wrote where they lived, such as *Üsküdar*'lı Aişe, *Besiktas*'da sakine Makbule Afife and also from *Darullmuallimat* (Faculty of Education). To a certain extent we can trace their

¹⁸⁷ Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat, n.22, 4 Cemaziyelahir 1313/21 November 1895

¹⁸⁸ “*Terbiye-i etfal mesaili o kadar mühim bir mesele hükmünü almıştır ki aktar-ı medeniyede ezcümle Avrupa Amerika gibi düvel-i mütemedinede insanların cemiyet-i beşeriye içinde mesudane, namuskarane yaşamaları için pedagoji yani fenn-i terbiyet-i etfal namıyla ayrıca bir fen-i mahsus tedvin etmişlerdir. Mahasıl bizde pedagoji fen-i terbiye-i etfale tamamıyla riayet edilmediği gibi bu yolda da neşriyatta bulunulmuyor. Mesela terbiye-i Osmaniyeye mutabık ve dinimiz dairesi dahilinde kavaid-i şeriye müvafık bir eser konulmuyor da yalnız Avrupalı'ların neşr ettikleri kitaplara tatbik-i hareket ediliyor. Vakıa bizce bunun mahzuru pek çok değilse de pek az da değildir. İnsaf edilsin! Din-i mübeyyin-i İslam'ın ahkam-ı celilesi ümmet-i Osmaniye'nin adat-ı milliyesi meydan da değil midir? Bir milletin terbiyesi diğer milletin terbiyesine uyar mı? Şu kadarı var ki akvam-ı necibe-i islam'ın adat, ahlak-ı umumiyeleri dahilinde Avrupalılar'ın vücuda getirdikleri pedagoji fenni gibi biz de Osmanlılara ıslamlara yarayacak bir eser vücuda getirmeliyiz. İzahat-ı salifeden anlaşılıyor ki pedagoji fennine intisab ve onu terbiye-i milliyemize ahlak-ı umumumiyemze mezc ve tatbik ederek kabul edebiliyoruz. Medeniyet taklid ile olur kelamı buna racidir.*” (Training children is such an important issue that in civilized countries such as Europe and America, they have created a science so that they live in prosperity, called pedagogy, which deals with methods of training children. Unfortunately, in our country pedagogy has not been not taken into consideration sufficiently and there are no publications related to it. For instance, no work which complies with Ottoman moral principals and with the framework of our religion has been written, and books written by Europeans are taken as guides. Indeed, in my opinion, this has some negative effects. Be reasonable. Are the eminent principles of Islam and the national manners of the Ottoman community not obvious? Does a nation's method of education comply with that of others? We, too, should create a science of pedagogy, just like the Europeans, which is in line with the manners and moral values of Islam. As

reading habits, educational backgrounds and the circulation of the periodicals. The periodicals reached women's houses through their husbands, daughters or subscriptions. Hayriye Hanım wrote that her husband bought the periodical and she read it.¹⁸⁹ Some noted that they followed the periodicals regularly and subscribed.¹⁹⁰ We learn from the letters that the periodical reached Unye, Sofia and Rumelia apart from Istanbul and also reached the houses of women who did not know how to read through their daughters or husbands. Further, reading was not only an individual, but also a social phenomenon, as one reader expressed that her husband read it aloud and family members listened to him.¹⁹¹

Some of the readers explicitly mentioned their educational backgrounds and private experiences. For instance Hayriye¹⁹² and Ulker Hanıms expressed that they had learned how to read and write with the help of their husbands. Ulker Hanım added that she had even learned French with her own efforts to the extent of being

can be understood from these explanations, we can accept and adapt to pedagogy by putting it in line with our national training and moral values.) Ibid, n. 21, 27 Cemaziyelevvel 1313/14 November 1895

¹⁸⁹ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n.5, 13 Temmuz 1285/ 25 July 1869

¹⁹⁰ *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, n. 23, 16 Teşrin-i Sani 1285/ 28 November 1869

¹⁹¹ *Biz şimdiye dek okumanın kadrini bilmez idik. Çünkü beyler efendiler bize yalnız eksik etek derler idi. Biz de aman eteğimizi uzatalım diyerek iki boyumuzda entariler yaptık. Eğer onlar bize ilminiz eksik deyu haber verseler idi onun çaresine bakardık. İşte sizin gazete bu defa bize onu haber veriyor. Bizim efendi ziyade gazete meraklısı iken daha yakın vakte gelinceye kadar geceleri bir tenhaya çekilir dudaklarını dahi kımıldatmayarak okurdu. Biraz pekçe oku da ben de işiteyim desem sizce bir şey yok deyu cevap verirdi. Şimdi birkaç ay var ki kendi de biz de alışdık hangi gazete alır ise alsın bizi başına toplar ve biz de ana kız oğlan dinleriz.”* (Until now, we have not known the importance of education. Because the gentlemen called us short skirted, we made long dresses. If they had told us that our knowledge was not sufficient, then, we would have looked for ways of increasing it. Now, indeed, your newspaper informs us about this fact. My husband is so interested in reading newspapers and he read them alone and silently until recently. When I said to him to read aloud so that I can hear, he used to reply that there was nothing that interests you. Now, since a few months, whichever newspaper he has, he gathers us around him and I, my daughter and son listen to him as he reads.) Ibid, n. 11, 24 Ağustos 1285/ 5 September 1869.

¹⁹² *İşte şu kadar yazacak ve gazetenizi hemen anlayacak derecede iktidarım rabbim ömrüne bereket versin zevcim veliyyinimetim efendi sayesinde dir. Çünkü kendisiyle tevhidümüz zamanından beri eğlenmekliğimizi bizzat okutup yazdırmağa hasr ederek hakkımda bu inayet-i bi'l-icra akrasını içinde mümtaz etmiştir.”* (Indeed, my abilities to write at this degree and to understand your newspaper is possible thanks to my husband, to whom may My God give long life.) Ibid, n.5,13 Temmuz 1285/ 25 July 1869.

able to make translations.¹⁹³ Kamile Hanım shared the story of how her education in her childhood had not been completed. She wrote it because of the difficulties she experienced while trying to understand the contents of the periodical. According to her story, her teacher had beat her since she was a poor girl and her mother had stopped sending her to school. Kamile Hanım believed that women needed education more than men, but women were not aware of the importance of education and men did not care about it. Yet now, the periodical helped women with their education and perceived women as humans.

Similarly, another woman who sent a letter from Sofia expressed her pleasure about her daughters' literacy, although she herself was illiterate. Leyla Hanım, who had become aware of the periodical due to the interest of her two daughters,' compared the condition of contemporary years to the previous ones in which they had not been able to find a person even to read a letter. She was proud of having girls who were literate due to the newly opened schools. She expressed that she had been especially worried about not having a son who could read the *Fatiha* for her when she died but now her daughters could accomplish much more. She thanked the sultan who provided schools and literacy for girls and also added that she had subscribed to the periodical.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ “*Mahbubeniz gerek say ve ikdamı ve gerek Allah ömrüne bereket versin zevcim tarafından bi-dirîğ buyurulan himmet ve müsaade-i sayesinde u kadarlık tahrir-i meramı ele getirebildiğim gibi Fransızca'da dahi istifhamı mal eyleyecek ve okuduğum şeyi lisanımıza nakl edebilecek kadar meleke hasıl eyledim.*” (I can write to this degree and I have learnt French to the degree of translating what I read into our language thanks to my own efforts and my husband's help, to whom may God give long life.) *Terakk-i Muhadderat*, n.37, 3 Mayıs 1286

¹⁹⁴ “*Asıl şurası pek iyi şey ki zir-i cenab-ı refetinde yaşadığımız şevketli padişahımız efendimizin zaman-ı hilafetpenahilerinde dünyaca çok terakkiyat görüldüğü gibi kadınlar da sevin sin ve insaniyet öğrens in için kız mektepleri açıldı. Orada Arapça ve Farsça'da okutuyorlar. Şimdi bizim eve nasıl mektup gelse içinde ne yazılmış ise kızlarım manasını anlayıp bize de aktarıyorlar. Erkek evladım olmadığ ından ahirete gittiğim vakit bir Fatiha okuyacak kimsem yoktur deyu teessüf ediyordum. Allah padişahımıza ömürler vers in şimdi fatiha değil kızcağ ızlarım yukarıdan aşağıya tekmil hatim bile indirmeyi öğrendiler.*” (Actually it is very good that during the reign of our majestic Sultan great progress has occurred, and as such, schools for girls have been established so that they can learn humanity and be happy. In these schools, Arabic and Persian are taught as well. Now, when we get a

A much more interesting and dramatic story was told by Sıdıka Hanım who noted that she wrote basically because other women “should draw lessons from her case.” The problem was that her husband had divorced her, mainly because they had not had any children. According to her story, her husband had not got along well with her and he had wanted to get out of the marriage at the least possible cost. According to Islamic family law, at the time of divorce the husband has to give to the wife whatever portion of the dowry she has not previously received.¹⁹⁵ So, he had not wanted to pay the required amount of the divorce settlement and resorted to a trick. One day, he had proposed to her to “go to a *hoca*, who supposedly can work a spell and find a solution.”¹⁹⁶ The *hoca*, after looking at a book, had said that their “marriage contract should be renewed”.¹⁹⁷ Then her husband, who did not want to pay the required 1500 gurus, had told his wife that she should claim that she had taken the money in front of witnesses. She had accepted and the first divorce had taken place. Afterwards, the new marriage contract had been conducted with 150 gurus. Yet after living together for one or two months, her husband had divorced her on a trivial pretext.¹⁹⁸

So, in general, the female readers were an active audience of the periodicals, and to a certain extent shaped the content of the journals through their demands, and criticisms which were articulated with the sense of being a member of a larger female and national community. The demands were for entertainment opportunities;

letter my daughters read it to us. I was sorry that I had no boy who would read the Fatiha for me when I died. May God give long life to our Sultan, now my daughters can read not only Fatiha but also the whole Quran.)Ibid, n.6, 20 Temmuz 1285/1 August 1869.

¹⁹⁵ J.L Esposito, *Women in Muslim Family Law* (Syracuse, N.W: Syracuse University Press, 1982) pp. 23-39.

¹⁹⁶ “Günlerden birgün bana filan mahallede bir hoca var nefesi pek keskin imiş ve ne olsa çare bulurmuş kalk seninle ona gidelim çocuğumuz olmadığını söyleyelim bakalım ne der’ dedi” ibid, n.11, 24 Ağustos 1285/5 September 1869

¹⁹⁷ *siz bağlısınız nikahınızı bozup yeniden bir nikah kıymalısınız.* Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

for education which was advocated for multiple concerns, for information to help them to perform domestic roles better, to become productive and to carry out religious practices. They directed criticism towards the men as well, not only for their improper behavior but also if they did not carry out their duties. Further, they tried to deal with the changing world around them, namely the cultural, economic and social influence of Europe on the lives of Ottoman subjects, neither by rejecting it totally nor by receiving it passively.

What I found interesting or important in the readers' participation was the care for the public good or the care for the problems and well being of their fellow women and community. This can be seen in the desires for women's rights, sufficient educational opportunities, local economic development, advanced public health and security, entertainment facilities and in the hope of preserving national values and having scientific and technological power. So, with clear public consciousness female readers contributed to the production of culture in late Ottoman society.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis analyzed the first periodicals published in the late Ottoman Empire, between 1869-1895 that targeted female readership. The period under question was one in which the Ottoman state attempted to encroach upon the daily lives of its subjects by means of centralizing reforms and most importantly by means of education, through which it tried to mobilize its human sources, including female subjects, to raise citizens loyal and obedient to the state and sultan. It was also a period in which the Empire was much more connected by means of rail, telegraph and print culture both within and with the world beyond its borders. Further, the Ottoman state tried to maintain the integrity of its various communities in the face of a Europe that had become much more visible commercially, socially, culturally and politically.

It was observed that within such a milieu, the periodicals were produced with two basic motivations. The first one was the belief in power of knowledge which was deemed essential for the happiness of individual and community, and which was understood in a more comprehensive sense as comprising scientific, religious and moral aspects. The second motivation was the desire to disseminate this knowledge to other members of their community or a patriotic attitude of serving the state, society and the Ottoman family. With these motivations the publishers, editors and writers of these periodicals wanted to educate the female subjects of the Ottoman Empire and attempted to initiate a social mobilization in the name of literacy,

education, hard work, and philanthropy. The male editors, who were the first ones to publish for women, aimed at informing women mostly in domestic matters by referring to women as the managers of their households and by linking the roles of women, particularly motherhood and housewifery, to the well being of state and society. Women were supposed to rear children who would be healthy, productive, hard working, with a sense of social responsibility and moral values and hence contribute to their nation and state. Female subjects were also expected to contribute to the economic well being of the nation by managing their houses efficiently, acquiring productive skills, doing housework rationally, spending money carefully and being conscious consumers. While the male authors proposed these ideas, I suggested that female writers laid further claims with similar motivations, by linking their roles to the happiness of their “nation.” While some focused on informing women through journalism about scientific household care and child rearing methods for “national progress”, others claimed the necessity of working together with men equally for the “progress of humanity”. Still others participated in public discussions to articulate their suggestions about the problems of Ottoman society.

I also argued that there were women who were in the public sphere in the second half of the nineteenth century, although their numbers were modest in scope, through philanthropic activities and through journalism in which they promoted the interests of their fellow women and nation, and criticized the current issues of which they did not approve. Speaking with a sense of being members of a larger female and national community, they demanded better conditions for their fellow women in the name of literacy, education, productivity, work, and entertainment. As an active audience of these periodicals, they also criticized manners such as the disturbing behavior of men towards women in public as well as the state of public health, public

security and *alafranga* (European) mannerisms. They tried to adapt to the changing world around them by discussing the cultural, economic and social influence of Europe on the lives of Ottoman /Muslim subjects. They tried to bring together Islamic or “national values” and the science and technology of Europe and did not see any harm in having both. Through the discussions about modes of dressing, entertainment, fashion, child rearing methods and foreign nannies, indeed, they became influential in constructing an Ottoman identity.

APPENDIX

“Husul-u mamuriyete badi olan yesar ve servetin medar-ı vücudu bulunan ziraat, ticaret, sanat kısımlarının her biri belki bu usul-ı selasenin her bir ferî ayrı ayrı fenlere müstenid olduğu fîru-ı lazimeyi kesb-i ittila olunmadıkça ameliyatta terakki edilmesi mümkün değildir. Avrupalılar işi esasından tutup iktiza eden fenleri evvel bi evvel tahsil eylediklerinden öyle bir dereceye geldiler ki Osmanlılar için Frenkleri geçecek ve oldukça refah ve rahatla geçinecek hemen hiçbir sanat kalmamıştır. Devletimizin bir Evvel husule gelmesi yani memalik-i mahruse-i şahanenin mamuriyetini müstelzim olacak olan sermaye-i hüner ve marifetin desteris olunması için bize birinci derece lazım olan şey ale'l-ittifak intişar-ı ulum ve fûnuna say ve gayret ve geceyi gündüze katarak okuyup yazmağa kemal-i hoş ile” n.35, 19 Nisan 1285/ 1 May 1869

“Osmanlı hanımlarına dahi pek çok faideli mesaili şamil bulunduğundan münasib görülen bazı mebahisin tercümesini ibtida eyledik”. Terakki-i Muhadderat, n.40, 24 Mayıs 1285/ 5 June 1869

“İdare demek az yemek, iyi giyinmemek, evi iyi döşememek elhasıl az ve eski şeylerle geçinmek demektir zann olunur, halbuki bu idare değil idaresizliktir. İdare güzel yemek, güzel içmek, iyi giyinmek, evi güzel döşetmek her şeyi mükemmel ve yolunda bulundurup bunların cümlesini de az masrafla hasıl etmek demektir. Bu müdire bir kadın için kolay ve mümkündür.” Aile, n.1, 17 Cemaziyelahir 1297/ 26 May 1880

“ İnsan ne vakit rahat ve saadet bulur. Ancak aile arasında yani evin içinde akraba ve evladın birbirine muhabbeti hüsn-iterbiye bulunursa peder familyayı hoş tutar, valide çocuklarına zevcine pervane olur, çocuklar mesrur ana baba etrafında dolaşırsa işte o vakit saadet görülür.” Parça Bohçası, n.1, 1305/1889

“insanı insan eden ilim ve marifettir onun da en birinci medar-ı tahsili insanın çocukluğunda gördüğü terbiyettir”, ibid, n. 8, 3 Ağustos 1285/ 15 August 1869

¹⁴“ Malumdur ki bir adamın kamil ve terbiyeli bir çocuğu bulunması gibi alemde ferahlanıp iftihar edecek şey hemen yok gibidir. Terbiyeli evlat anasına babasına sağlıklarında faide ve menfaat göstereceği misullu bade'l- vefat dahi hayır ile yad ettirmeğe sebep olurlar” Terakki-i Muhadderat, n. 9, 10 Ağustos 1285/ 22 August 1869; “ebevynin evlatlarını yazdırıp okutmak hususunda tekasul ve ihmal etmemeleri ve küçüklüğünden çocuklarını zihin açacak şeyler ile ülfet ettirmek tahsil-i ilm ve hünere kendileri de istidad ve peyda eylemeleri müvafık-ı akıl ve hikmettir.” Ibid

“İyi olan taklitler dahi mesela eski zaman lisanında merkub ve yemeni denilen ayakkabılarının zamanımıza göre sürümü pek nadir olup şimdi kundura ve fotin giyilmekte olduğundan o makule sanatlarla meşgul olan esnaf takımının sanatı ıslah etmek için merkub ve yemeniyi kundura ve fotine taklid etmesi ve kadınlarca da oya ve dikiş gibi el işlerini zamanımızda ve Frenk kokonalarının hesapsız paramızı alarak bizim için dikmekte oldukları gömlek ve ferace gibi şeyleri öğrenmesi ve daha buna benzer ve bizim ihtiyacımız cümlesinden olan şeyleri ilerletmek için benzetmesidir ki buna taklit denilse de makbul taklitlerdendir.” (Ayine n. 6, 7 Kanun-i Evvel 1291/ 19 December 1875

“Eldiven üzerine yüzük takılmaz. Göze fena görünüyor. Hüsn-i tabiatı ihlal eder. Kibarlık değildir. Biz zaten moda namıyla yad edilen sefahatı tervic etmiyoruz ki moda olduktan sonra yüzük takılır gibi bir söze itibar edelim”. Şüküfekar, n. 5, 1303/1887

“Bosna vilayetinde Hersek sancağının Hristiyan ahalisi güya aşar ve vergi bedelat-ı askeriye kendilerinden tahsil olunduğu vakitlerde bazı memurlar tarafından haksız ve münasebtesiz muameleler edildiğini vesile edip geçende isyan ettiler.” Vakıt yahud Mürebb-i Muhadderat, n.1, 14 Eylül 1291/ 26 September 1875

“Hanımlar asakir-i şahanenin ayak bastığı yerlerde daima mansur ve muzaffer olmalarını niyazıyla beraber şu muharebe gürültüsünün tiz günde tiz vakitte ortadan kalkmasını gece ve gündüz dua ederek Hakk celle vala hazretlerinden isteyelim. Muharebe olduğunu işittikçe oğulları kocaları, kardaşları kocaları babaları muharebeye gitmiş olan erkek kadın çoluk çocuk ne kadar adam var ise o derece mahzun ve selhun olurlar ki bu tarif ve tavsif-i kalam ile dil ile izah olunabilir şeylerden değildir. Hatırınızda olsun böyle yürekleri yanmış anaları gördükçe teselli verin yüreklerine su

serpip mümkün olduđu mertebe ateşlerini teskin eyleyin.” Vakit Yahud Mürebbi-i Muhadderat, n.7, 16 Teşrin-i Sani 1291/ 28 November 1875.

“Veliyyinimetimiz padişahımız efendimiz hazretleri Cuma günü selamlık-ı resmi aliyesini Hamidiye caminde icradan sonra açık faytona rakip oldukları halde Şişli ve Karaköy taraflarını teşrif buyurmuşlardır. Binlerce teba-yı sadıka-ı şahane azimet ve avdet-i humayun hengamında saf beyte tazim ve ihtiram olarak dua-yı bi'l-hayr hazret-i hilafetpenahilerini tekrar eylemişlerdir.”Mürüvvet, n.3, 29 Şubat 1303/ 12 March 1888

Bize mahsus olan gazetenin gayet selis ve nafris ibarelerle olması iktiza eder. Burasını umum muhadderat namına olarak rica eylerim.”, ibid, n. 3, 28 Haziran 1285/ 10 July 1869

“Avrupa’da tesisat-i nafricanın kaffesi bizzat hükümdarlar canibinden himaye olunup kız mektepleri imparotice ve kraliçeler taraflarından vikaye olunarak asilzedagan madamları dahi onlara etba ederek masrafat olan himmetleriyle marifet günden güne ilerlemekte ve tesisat-ı nafia çoğalıp medeniyet yevm fi-yevm kesb-i irtika eylemektedir. Saray-ı hümayuna mensub bulunan havatin-i selefe dahi daima bu yolda hareket eylemiş ve bulundukları hal ve zamana tevfikeyen pek çok tesisat-i nafiaya muvaffak olmuş olduklarından şu asr-ı maarif-i hasırda pişva-yı nisvan olan Valide Sultan efendimiz hazretlerinin dahi taife-i nisanın talim ve terbiyeleleri zimmında lazım gelen esbabın istikamline bezl-i himmet buyuracakları şüphesizdir.” Terakk-i Muhadderat, n.5, 13 Temmuz 1285/ 25 July 1869

“Ancak bu defa 150 kuruşa bir nikah kıydılar. Ondan sonra 1-2 ay kadar karılık kocalık edip nihayet bir asılsız şeyi bahane ederek o 150 kuruş olan nikahımızı sayıp herif beni boşadı. İşte o zaman aklım başıma geldi. Ama ne çare iş işten geçmiş olduğundan merkumu Allah’a havale eyleyip sükut ettim. Meğerse herifin benimle geçinmeğe gönlü olmadığından 1500 kuruş vermemek için o hoca olacak ile böyle bir dolap kurmuşlar imiş” Terakki-i Muhadderat

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