

“PERFECT BODIES, IDEAL WOMEN”: BEAUTY, THE FEMALE BODY AND THE  
CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY IN POPULAR WOMEN’S MAGAZINES IN  
TURKEY IN THE 1990s

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by

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## ABSTRACTS

An abstract of the thesis of R. Çiğdem Akanyıldız for the degree of Master of Arts from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History to be taken September 2010

Title: “Perfect Bodies, Ideal Women:” Beauty, the Female Body and the Construction of Femininity in Popular Women’s Magazines in Turkey in the 1990s

This thesis addresses a certain form of media, i.e popular women’s magazines that began to be published in Turkey in the 1990s. These magazines were characterized by their emphasis on beauty, the female body, sexuality and fashion. Therefore they were loaded with gendered discourses, images and meanings from cover to end page. Presenting models and life styles to their readers, they attempted to integrate a specific woman identity into a gendered social space. This study primarily examines how these magazines, which have a specific discourse of beauty and sexuality, played a role in setting beauty ideals and standards, and influenced the relationship between women and their own physical appearance and body. At the same time, the thesis intends to discover the meaning ascribed to beauty and the female body in the 1990s on the basis of the concept of gender. It also deals with how these magazines tried to construct sexual subjectivities and pleasures. Paying particular attention to the economic, social and cultural context of the 1990s, this study underlines the relation between the publication policies and discourses of the magazines, and the economic and cultural values of global capitalism. It endeavors to show how traditional male dominated regime, on the one hand, and global capitalism’s market-oriented liberation discourse, on the other, coexisted in the magazines. These magazines, which never limited their content to beauty and fashion related issues, tried to contribute to the re-organization of gender relations via their discourses. These magazines which had a discourse different than traditional women’s magazines and attempted to construct a different type of womanhood produced a popular version of feminism in their pages as a consequence of the social and cultural transformation in the 1990s. While encouraging women to be stronger and active in private and public spaces, they reduced women’s problems and gender relations that had a historical and social dimension to psychological cases. Likewise, assigning new meanings to the concept of “femininity”, they tried to define “the ideal woman”. One other objective of this thesis is to display how the magazines addressed gender problems, the limits and contradictions of their feminist discourses, and changing femininity discourses, symbols and codes.

Başlık: “Kusursuz Bedenler, İdeal Kadınlar:” Güzellik, Kadın Bedeni ve 1990’lar Türkiye’sinin Popüler Kadın Dergilerinde Kadınsılığın İnşası

Bu tez, belirli bir medya türünü, başka bir deyişle 1990’lar Türkiye’sinde yayınlanmaya başlayan popüler kadın dergilerini incelemektedir. Bu dergiler; güzellik, kadın bedeni, cinsellik ve moda konularına yaptıkları vurguyla nitelendirilmekteydi. Bu doğrultuda, bu dergiler kapaklarından son sayfalarına kadar toplumsal cinsiyetle ilgili söylem, imge ve anlamlarla yüklüydüler. Okuyucularına modeller ve yaşam tarzları sunarak, belirli bir kadın kimliğini cinsiyetlendirilmiş bir sosyal alana dahil etmeye çalıştı. Bu çalışma, öncelikle, belirli bir güzellik ve cinsellik söylemi olan bu dergilerin, güzellik idealleri ve standartları oluşturmada nasıl bir rol oynadıklarını ve kadınların kendi dış görünüşleri ve bedenleriyle kurdukları ilişkiyi nasıl etkilediklerini incelemektedir. Aynı zamanda, bu tez, toplumsal cinsiyet kavramı etrafında 90’lı yıllarda güzellik ve kadın bedenine yüklenen anlamları keşfetmeye çalışmaktadır. Bu dergilerin nasıl cinsel öznellikler ve hazlar inşa ettikleri de bu tezde ele alınmaktadır. 90’lı yılların ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel bağlamına dikkat çekilerek, dergilerin yayın politikaları ve söylemleriyle küresel kapitalizmin ekonomik ve kültürel değerleri arasındaki ilişki vurgulanmaktadır. Bu tez, bir tarafta geleneksel erkek egemen rejim ve diğer tarafta küresel kapitalizmin piyasa merkezli özgürleşme söyleminin bu dergilerde nasıl yan yana yer aldıklarını göstermeye çalışmaktadır. İçeriklerini sadece güzellik ve modayla sınırlandırmayan bu dergiler, söylemleri aracılığıyla cinsiyet ilişkilerinin yeniden düzenlenmesine katkı sağlamayı hedefledirler. Geleneksel kadın dergilerinden farklı bir söylem benimseyen, ayrıca farklı bir kadınlık tipi inşa etmeye çalışan bu dergiler, 1990’larda yaşanan sosyal ve kültürel dönüşümün bir sonucu olarak sayfalarında popüler bir feminizm türü ürettirler. Özel ve kamusal alanda kadınları daha güçlü ve aktif olmaya teşvik eden dergiler, tarihsel ve sosyal boyutu olan kadın sorunlarını ve cinsiyet ilişkilerini psikolojik durumlara indirgediler. Benzer bir şekilde, “kadınsılık” kavramına yeni anlamlar yükleyerek “ideal kadın”ı tanımlamaya çalıştılar. Bu tezin bir diğer amacı da, dergilerin cinsiyet sorunlarını, benimsedikleri feminist söylemlerdeki sınırları ve çelişkileri ve değişen kadınsılık söylemleri, sembolleri ve kodlarını göstermektir.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

I envied how beautiful and stylish the women looked. I loved to read about the steamy romances and relationship problems. I read all the ads that told me their products could make me beautiful too, and I did all the quizzes to see if I was too selfish, or too shy. But most of all, I read all about sex. As young teenagers, my friends and I would hide with a *Cosmopolitan* or *Glamour* magazine, a little too old in content for us, and read about how to please your boyfriend, or get lipstick that wouldn't come off while kissing, or how to know if your man was cheating, and we giggled with excitement about what was to come for us. The magazines showed us the glamorous, sexy women and we wanted to be like them and look like them; have all those fun experiences. Here was a guide to an identity, but not one as a daughter, or a Catholic, or a girl, but one of a girlfriend, a business associate and most of all, a beautiful, sexy woman.

On a website on the Internet, giving her own experience as an example, a young woman with the pseudonym “Fissyput” describes the function of popular women’s magazines as given above in the quotation.<sup>1</sup> As clear from those statements, women’s magazines seriously influence qualities of readers and their roles as girls, as women. Full of discourses on female body and roles of women as mother and wife, such magazines, which became widespread in the West in the 1970s and in Turkey in the 1990s, have attempted to teach female readers how to have a desirable body and transform it into a social instrument and how to become “feminine.” By the agency of these magazines functioning as role models for women and advertisement heroines displayed on numerous pages of the magazines, women learn, or at least they are expected to learn, how to dress themselves, care for their bodies, transform into an object of desire in addition to the ways of being “beautiful” and “sexy.”

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<sup>1</sup> FissyPit (pseudonym). 13 June 2008. [Women's Magazines: The Contemporary Guide to Feminine Subjectivity](http://fissypit.wordpress.com), <http://fissypit.wordpress.com>. (July 2008).



In this thesis I analyze the discourse and practices related to female beauty, body and sexuality, and how the popular media and cultural forms were intended to construct contemporary femininity in Turkey in the 1990s. In other words, the aim of this thesis is to indicate how the popular women's magazines that began to spread rapidly in the aforesaid period influenced women with respect to beauty, body, and femininity. These popular women's magazines, as the main sources of this study, are *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, and *Kadınca*, which started to be published in the late 1980s and in the 1990s.

In the 1990s in Turkey, women's magazines became primary sources in the effort to construct a female identity in accordance with the ideals of contemporary culture, determined by consumerism and changing gender roles. These magazines had an important role in making women as subjects in the pursuit of beauty, slenderness, fitness, and perfect appearance. They also tried to provide women with the technologies of body management and way of disciplining their body in conformity to the construction of contemporary femininity. Through those popular women's magazines this thesis examines how bodies are thought and managed, and also to examine how a certain type of womanhood, under the name of "the New Woman," was sought to be constructed in the beginning of the 1990s in Turkey, a period when neo-liberal policies and a new style of life became widespread.

### The Role of Women's Magazine in Constructing Gender Identities

Many scholars have emphasized the role of the media in constructing and maintaining gender identities and roles. The messages and symbols presented by the media to its audience obviously contribute to shape our value judgments and perspectives, and help to produce meanings of masculinity and femininity, and produce ideal types of men and women and make them internalized. By shaping how we dress, apply makeup, behave, and consume, the

media constructs the dominant social codes or legitimizes the dominant behaviors and discourses and makes them adopted.

As Liesbet van Zoonen says, the media has always played a vital role at the heart of feminist critique, blaming the media for constructing a certain image or model of women.<sup>2</sup> The early popular culture studies of feminists emphasized the role played by the media in reproducing male dominance. These studies criticized the masculinist language and discourse applied by the media and examined how gendered subjectivities were constructed.<sup>3</sup> In particular, beginning from the 1970s, feminist studies began to be focused on commercial media as an area in which ideal womanhood, femininity and gender symbols were constructed and/or widespread. TV serials, films, advertisements, photo romances, women's programs on the TV and women's magazines were assessed from this perspective and the significant role they played in constructing gender identities was pointed out.<sup>4</sup> These studies, which dealt with the function of the visual media in internalization of the subjectivities, desires and sexual differences attributed to women, also addressed the actual spectators and analyzed their response to such cultural products. As an extension of popular culture criticism, the feminist criticism of the 1970s argued that especially women's magazines served the purpose of consumption culture and contributed to commercialize the female body.<sup>5</sup>

In this respect, women's magazines have an indisputable influence on the dissemination of the dominant cultural codes and discourses in which they actually occurred.

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<sup>2</sup> Liesbet van Zoonen, *Feminist Media Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 1994), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Myra Macdonald, *Representing Women: Myths of Femininity in the Popular Media* (London: E. Arnold, 1995); Ros Ballaster et al., *Women's Worlds: Ideology, Femininity, and the Women's Magazine* (London: Macmillan, 1991); Joke Hermes, *Reading Women's Magazines* (Oxford: Polity and Blackwell Press, 1995); and Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines* (London: Pandora Press, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Angela McRobbie, *Jackie: An Ideology of Adolescent Femininity* (Birmingham: The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1978); and CCCS Women's Studies Group, *Woman Take Issue* (London: Hutchinson, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> Süheyla Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm: Türkiye ve Britanya'da Kadın Dergileri* (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 2007), p. 26.

Popular women's magazines that have emerged as an important component of cultural life especially in the last 30 years, reconstruct certain female and male identities according to their publication policies, and have played a remarkable part in leading the readers and spectators as consumers from a hegemonic perspective. Angela McRobbie's analysis of *Jackie*, the British teenage magazine, is a good example of popular culture analysis in terms of ideology. She concentrates on how media products, here a magazine, operate ideologically in a hegemonic context. McRobbie indicates that the publishing company of this magazine and many others are seeking profit and they also attempt to conform to the dominant order in terms of "femininity, leisure and consumption."<sup>6</sup> What is as important as this construction of identity is that *Jackie* gives weighted importance to the "self-improvement" of girls. Fashion, cosmetics and beauty are presented as central components of a girl's life. Prescriptive instructions are readily given to the service of girls so that they can glorify their bodies. This is one other code of the magazine as to shape and manage a visible image of femininity. Though not fully grown up yet, the adolescent female body still needs to be cared for and improved.

Whether McRobbie's study can be criticized or not from various aspects, she seems to have pinpointed an essential core of the media by courtesy of a magazine to the extent that she draws attention to the media's role in constructing an identity on certain levels. It is remarkable that no matter the time period and irrespective of the age of the addressees, there is a continuous attempt to construct a recognizable image of femininity and beauty ideal. The female body continuously and increasingly needs to be maintained and improved.<sup>7</sup> Therefore one of the main purposes of this thesis is to analyze the specific role of popular women's magazines in constructing a certain type of womanhood in the 1990s in Turkey.

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<sup>6</sup> McRobbie, *Jackie*, p.87, quoted in van Zoonen, *Feminist Media Studies*, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> van Zoonen, *Feminist Media Studies*, p. 25-26.

## The 1990s: Social, Economic and Cultural Context

This thesis is closely related to the economic and cultural context of the 1990s. As neoliberal economic policies and the development of global consumption society are central to the thesis, the economic and cultural context that characterized the 1990s will be discussed separately below. Methodologically, I will look for an answer to the question of whether there is a connection between the economic policies that changed in the world and in Turkey after 1980, the transformation in global consumption patterns and the penetration of the private sector into all parts of life, and the increased spending of time and money by women for the sake of beauty and body. In the same vein, under what economic and cultural conditions these magazines were circulated and acknowledged is associated directly with this context. To sum up, I aim to ascertain whether there was an overlap between the economic and cultural atmosphere in Turkey in the 1990s, and the publication goals, policies and discourses of these magazines.

From the 1970s onwards, women increasingly took better control of their fertility as birth control methods were enhanced. Women became more educated than ever before when compared to previous periods. In parallel with the increase in educational and employment opportunities, the number of women employed and the efficiency of women in business life perceptibly increased. Thus women went beyond a life limited to housework and childcare and they became much more visible in social life. Again in this period, women began to consume more products other than those for household. Therefore, pursuing a career, economic independence, participation in civil activities and consumption for their own sake began to be an important aspect of the middle-class women's identity. This change paved the way for the emergence of a "new woman" myth in the media and other areas. This thesis is also designed to discuss the part played by the media in the construction and adoption of this

new type of woman. However, I am interested not only in the media's role, but also in questions like what type of a woman this new woman was and what meanings were assigned to her.

The social and economic transformation experienced by women radically affected both production conditions and the consumption of gender-based magazines. An editor and a board of writers who went through these conditions in person prepared these magazines for publication. Depending on market opportunities, big media companies considered the commercial value of popular women's magazines and made large-scale investments. Under the social conditions outlined above, the topics covered in the magazines were regarded by women, both as consumers and females re-thinking their identities, as pleasant and enjoyable to read. Correspondingly, women's magazines acquired a big market beginning from the 1980s and especially in the 1990s.

Just as Duygu Asena, the feminist editor of *Kadınca* and *Kim* magazines in the 1990s, said, the primary goal of popular women's magazines is absolutely commercial.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, they cannot be considered independently from capitalist market relations. However, these magazines are related to capitalism not only because they are a commercial commodity. The place they occupied in the advertisement market and their influence in the escalating global consumption values sets an important dimension of market-media relations. There is high correlation between the rise in consumption discourses and practices in Turkey and across the world in the 1990s, and content and advertising strategies of the magazines. The beauty, sexuality and values attributed to "new woman" that we find on the magazine pages are in direct relation to the development of global consumer society. For instance, it is necessary to note that beauty industry has become a giant sector.<sup>9</sup> Beauty has been managed and drawn by

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Duygu Asena by Kırca-Schroeder in *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 270.

business in the last century. As Kathy Peiss says, selling beauty as a commodity after 1920 became much more self-conscious, systematic, and widespread.<sup>10</sup> Mass media, companies, televisions, shops and global firms presented beauty as a commodity and sold it as a commercial service especially to women. Magazines, TV programs, newspapers, or leaflets were all put to work in order to spread news about the new trends through incentive words, vivid images, colorful ads, or prescriptions, keeping women busy with reading and applying what they read.<sup>11</sup>

Janice Winship argues that gender definitions have been linked to the development of consumer culture and emphasizes that women's magazines set a good example as to how they were used in the twentieth century to inspire and publicize certain forms of femininity by representing the practices of consumption. She illustrates in a study of British women's magazines that women readers' role constructed as mother, housewife or wife in the early or mid twentieth century was transformed into a feminine individual with emphasis on appearance, sexuality and glamour towards the end of the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it is possible to argue that business enterprise was now combined with femininity and outer female beauty. The case was no different in Turkey. Praising and appreciating inner beauty or moral values, there emerged a concurrent tendency to highlight physical appearance with the advent of consumerism and neo-liberalism which encouraged consumption.

The anxiety felt about physical appearance not only by celebrities and women of the upper classes, but also by ordinary people to the extent that they turned it into a question of

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<sup>9</sup> On economic dimensions of beauty, see Philip Scranton, ed. *Beauty and Business: Commerce, Gender, and Culture in Modern America* (New York: Routledge, 2001); and Paula Black, *The Beauty Industry* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Kathy Peiss, "On Beauty...and the History of Business," in *Beauty and Business: Commerce, Gender, and Culture in Modern America*, edited by Philip Scranton (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Janice Winship, *Inside Women's Magazines* (London: Pandora Press, 1987) quoted in Celia Lury, *Consumer Culture* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 132.

existence has supported the growth of the cosmetics and aesthetic surgery sectors.

Advertisements, images and features full of beauty tips in the magazines that I have analyzed so far encourage women, who are already under pressure to be beautiful, to consume more and more. In other words, I think these magazines help the idea that beauty is an opportunity that could be attained to be internalized, and that the female body needs to be re-shaped, re-defined and reconstructed. It is definitely something to be worked on. Persuading more women to diet, have plastic surgery and use cosmetic products is a development that has a commercial and economic meaning all by itself. Consequently, one other aim of this thesis is to consider the economic and cultural contexts together, and show how women's concern for beauty and body contribute to form an economic value.

### Discourse on Female Beauty and Body in Popular Women's Magazines

As indicated by the figures in Chapter 2, women have been intensely anxious about their physical appearance especially since the 1980s. The number of women who do not feel happy about their faces and body sizes and therefore resort to the extreme use of cosmetic products and plastic surgery has dramatically risen. There lies, as mentioned above, the “beauty industry” in front of our eyes. Fashion and makeup have almost become equivalent to being a woman. What is more tragic is that concerns for physical appearance have given rise to new types of diseases in our age: anorexia, bulimia, and other eating disorders. Stick thin models as representatives of the idealized body sizes have actually become unapproachable physical “objectives” for most women. As Bordo draws attention, women in western culture are more tyrannized by the contemporary slenderness ideal than men are, as they typically have been by beauty ideals in general. It is far more important to men than to women that their partner be

slim. Women are much more prone than men to perceive themselves as being too fat.<sup>13</sup> The dominant beauty ideology that defines beauty standards and norms has redrawn the male-dominant line which turns the female body into an object of pleasure for men.

Ideals of beauty essentially are shaped by social relations and institutions, by other cultural categories and practices, and by politics and economics. Fostered by cultural, historical, or social contexts, the perception of beauty or beautiful can differ and attribute alternative meanings or values to these concepts.<sup>14</sup> This thesis also is designed to show the function of popular women's magazines in the establishment of idealized beauty standards. Not only do they set the standards but also convince the readers to absolutely have them, and guide them accordingly. Therefore, in this study, I aim to find answers to questions such as how beauty norms have been developed by contemporary culture; how certain social, political, cultural, and personal experiences of women have been constructed by beauty standards; and what role beauty standards and ideals defined by these popular women's magazines have played in the construction of feminine gender identity in the 1990s.

What I want to present as an argument in the related chapters of my thesis is that the female image shaped and idealized in visual culture and the media influences millions of women, and transforms the relations they establish with their bodies and faces, and forces women to change themselves. Features and photography oriented to the body proliferate the idea that female body is an object of display and invite every woman, but especially those from the middle-class, to be aware of and be conscious displayers of the display.

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<sup>13</sup> Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (California: University of California Press, 1993), p. 210.

<sup>14</sup> Peiss, "On Beauty," p. 9.



### Sexuality in Popular Women's Magazines

Helen Brown, who developed *Cosmopolitan* into its present line, essentially dealt with sexual issues and was first to cover women's sexual life in a bold and daring way. There are those who believe it conveys "a half-feminist message."<sup>15</sup> It is no doubt that it is the message with respect to dealing with the female body and sexuality beyond conventional limits. Just as McMahon states:

In *Cosmopolitan*, sex was discussed as a function of the public sphere, in the context of the workplace, and in explicit terms of the marketplace. While sexuality was no longer defined exclusively in terms of the home, as domestic and procreative, may be considered as a step toward more freedom for women, talking about sex as a function of market exchange may not be liberating.<sup>16</sup>

Sexuality, which had become an indispensable theme of popular women's magazines since the 1960s, characterized a significant dimension of the "new woman" image. The demand to experience female sexuality freely was presented by the magazines as an indicator of female independence. Going beyond conventional family-oriented femininity discourses, they highlighted the emancipation of women from subordination in terms of sexuality.

Criticizing a study conducted in this field may help to better demonstrate certain points. It is highly problematic that Süheyla Kırca-Schroeder, who has analyzed the feminist discourse of women's magazines in Britain and Turkey, attributes the fact that popular women's magazines, *Cosmopolitan* in the first place, covered sexuality more than ever before to feminism's influence on women's magazines. It is more interesting that she claims that they even surpassed feminists in this respect, as, according to her, the second wave of

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<sup>15</sup> *The New York Times Magazine*, 11 August 1974, quoted in Kathryn McMahon, "The 'Cosmopolitan' Ideology and the Management of Desire," *The Journal of Sex Research* 27, no. 3, special issue: Feminist Perspectives on Sexuality (August 1990), p. 382.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

feminism was inclined to restrain discussion of issues like sexual desires and pleasures<sup>17</sup> It would be somehow understandable if she had limited her comment to *Kadınca* issued in Turkey but, in my opinion, it is quite a notable mistake to confirm and fail to question the approach of magazines like *Cosmopolitan* to sexual desires and pleasures. Kırca-Schroeder takes that these magazines lead women to greater success as a pro-feminist attitude.<sup>18</sup> She is also aware of the problematic relation that such magazines established between being successful and being sexy. For her, these magazines treat being sexy and feeling oneself to be strong correspondingly as qualifications that bring self-confidence to women in order to succeed in all person-to-person and business relations.<sup>19</sup>

Could any form of feminist approach, popular or not, associate the female body and sexuality with personal or social success? It means to turn a blind eye to misemployment by the media and the market of female sexuality that started in the 1970s and nearly deached its highest point in the 1990s. The following sentences, quoted by Macdonald from *Cosmopolitan*, summarize how the editors who represent the New Woman conceive of feminism: Feminism “is not about dungarees and hating men. Feminism is... Relevant. Positive. Powerful. Sexy.”<sup>20</sup> However, Macdonald, well read and quoted by Kırca-Schroeder, interprets this feminist perception of *Cosmopolitan* as “struggle is out: sexiness and power are in.” According to her, despite its feminist claim, “the tone is distinctly post-feminist,” as the terms used in these magazines in which sexuality were discussed were not primarily those of feminism.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 163-164.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 165.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> *Cosmopolitan* (British edition), October 1993, quoted in Myra Macdonald, *Representing Women*, p. 172.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 171-172.

Kırca-Schroeder says that she brings forward the question of whether these magazines, prioritizing sex appeal, define sexuality from men's or women's viewpoint but gives a paradoxical answer. On the one hand, she observes magazines cover issues related to sexuality that have not come to light yet as a form of feminist boldness and, on the other hand, she claims they do not aim to change prevailing patriarchal values "despite this optimism."<sup>22</sup> However, examples analyzed in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, and *Votre Beaute* indicate that sexuality is defined in masculine terms and from the viewpoint of males. Could we say that questions like "how do you make your man fall in love with you?" or "how do you please men in bed?" and advisory articles giving codes for these are a part of a liberating discourse about female sexuality? Is it a liberating discourse to only say "women have their own sexual lives", or "they also need to be pleased", or "they also have the right to do something forbidden and enjoy themselves"? To approve of it as such means failing to see the continuity of the sexist and consumerist discourse in the magazines.

Therefore, what I want to highlight in this thesis based on the data in women's magazines is that the "liberation" discourse challenging unequal sexual discourses and practices at first sight has been unable to escape the male-dominant interpretation. As Janet Lee puts forth, reducing female liberation to sexuality and love affairs means the construction of women's struggle for emancipation as to serve men's sexual desires.<sup>23</sup> In the same manner, popular women's magazines lacked a standpoint to define female sexuality independently from masculine terms and the male viewpoint. Put another way, they failed to escape from being a ground on which masculine values were reproduced. For that reason, this "liberating" discourse was limited to male dominance on the one hand, and market rationale and commercial concerns on the other.

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<sup>22</sup> Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 165-166.

<sup>23</sup> Janet Lee, "'Care to Join Me in an Upwardly Mobile Tango?' Postmodernism and the 'New Woman,'" in *The Female Gaze: Women as Viewers of Popular Culture*, edited by Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment (London: The Women's Press, 1988), p. 169.

The coverage of sexuality to the limit that it extends to pornography is not valid for the magazines analyzed in this study, but the common point is that sexuality is the primary theme. On the one hand, it refers to a challenge to the tradition in the sense that female sexuality is freely discussed, and to an absolute transformation of the female body into an object of display, on the other. Regarding women as sexual objects, or as eye pleasing objects has long been conceptualized by these magazines along with many other media components. What is more, this consumption object has been, and still is, a tremendously profitable commodity within the market principles. Hence, the most important point I want to emphasize is that the role of gender-based media lies at the point where function of women's magazines dealing with "free sexuality" in turning woman into an eye pleasing object, and its objectification as a consumption product overlap.

#### Popular Feminism, "Feminine Feminism" or Post-feminism?: Contemporary Construction of Femininity

Though *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire* allocate a significant amount of space in their layouts to elaborate on sexual relations, the magazines never are limited solely to beauty and sex. Business life, personal development, health, city life, travel, trends, hobbies, etc., are among essential issues. The female image in sexual existences is incorporated into the to-be-adopted identity presented to the reader. Based upon this very basic point of analysis, I argue that the women's magazines of our time, or those that belong to the time period on which this study is focused or earlier times, promote and invite their reader group to adopt a recognizably shared series of styles, likings or tastes. The femininity constructed in these magazines is leveled to achievement in career, social and personal life, beauty and glossy physical appearance, never-ending youth, and sex appeal. Most of them are important components in constructing a

certain type of female identity, as frequently said, the “New Woman.” I discuss what this new type of woman is and how it is constructed, and its economic and social context, the editors’ role and related topics in the section on the construction of femininity or the new type of middle class woman in 1990s Turkey.

As the image of the dominating woman, the “New Woman myth” emerged in the 1970s. Though the New Woman image, and the values and meanings ascribed to her change with the new period, as a cultural construct she has always represented a social change and carried the message of the possibility of upward mobility. As Carolyn Kitch says, she conveyed opportunities for upward social and economic mobility and new social, political, and economic possibilities for womanhood.<sup>24</sup> She also served as a model and as “a cultural commentator through whom certain ideals came to seem ‘natural’ in real life.”<sup>25</sup>

The magazines always emphasized that they paid regard to “the actual needs of present time women”: beauty, health and happiness, good state of mind, success and satisfying sexual life. Subtitles that come under these are makeup, cosmetics, beauty centers, fitness, diet, yoga and meditation, psychological support, personal education and so on. Here it should also be stressed that issues such as domesticity, child care, and motherhood take up very limited space in the magazines unlike earlier versions of popular magazines in which women were represented as ideal wives and mothers.<sup>26</sup>

As will be discussed in the related chapter, the new type of woman promoted by the popular women’s magazines of the 1990s was more “feminine.” I believe there is a close relationship between the glorification of a new type of “feminine” and hostility towards radical feminism in the media. The second wave feminism that gave radical criticism to topics

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<sup>24</sup> Carolyn Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover: The Origin of Visual Stereotypes in American Mass Media* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> For a comparison between women’s magazines in terms of women representations and gender roles, see Ros Ballaster, et al., *Women’s Worlds: Ideology, Femininity, and the Women’s Magazine* (London: Macmillan, 1991), especially pp. 98-102; 144-148.

such as the commercialization of the body, beauty ideology, and male dominated sexuality was faced with severe criticism and mockery in the media in the late 1980s, but especially in the 1990s. The dominant media was then applauding the feminine type of woman, but not the feminist one, and was caricaturizing the radical feminists. Also in Turkey, the female figure called the feminist in TV serials was portrayed as a freak that was a defiant all the time and did not care about her physical appearance. Therefore it is noteworthy to underline the enmity of social and cultural environment that transformed feminism against the second wave feminism. In an article that appeared in *Time* magazine was proclaiming that “much of feminism has devolved into the silly... a popular culture insistent on offering images of grown single women as frazzled, self-absorbed girls.”<sup>27</sup> It announced in the late 1980s that “feminine clothing is back; breasts are back; motherhood is in again.”<sup>28</sup> Kitch properly asks “why did the ‘death’ of feminism make the cover of a national magazine?” The claim put forth by *Times* and other forms of popular media that feminism was transformed into femininity sets a good ground for a discussion on the hegemonic woman type promoted in the 1990s. As Kırca-Schroeder states, feminist discourses based on liberation and independent women gained such a presence in popular women’s magazines that the contrast between femininity and feminism became more flexible and ambiguous.<sup>29</sup> It is striking that McRobbie has argued that the previous form of contrast that located feminism on one edge of the political spectrum and femininity on the other is no longer (and perhaps never was) a true way of conceptualizing experiences of young women.<sup>30</sup>

As mentioned above, unlike the previous magazines that located women inside the house, popular women’s magazines of the 1990s appreciated a type of woman who was free,

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<sup>27</sup> *Time*, 29 June 1998, quoted in Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 30-31.

<sup>30</sup> Angel McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 158, quoted in Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 34.

brave, “sociable,” dedicated to her independence, and had a career. In this respect, they undertook to function as a guide to construct a certain type of individual who was particularly taken within the framework of liberation. In other words, themes related to women’s liberation took a weighted place in the pages of these magazines. In this period, some feminist researchers asserted that they also began to enjoy reading women’s magazines. However, just as the writers said, this pleasure was not naïve and unquestionable.<sup>31</sup> McRobbie interprets this confession of feminist researchers as a blurring of the line between feminist and “ordinary woman,” and femininity and feminist.<sup>32</sup> According to Kırca-Schroeder, such a change could be considered as a factor that played a part in the popularization of feminism.<sup>33</sup>

So indeed, we observe that popular women’s magazines adapted a specific feminist discourse in parallel with the emergence of a women’s movement remaining distant from Kemalism, and the social transformation experienced by women in the late 1980s in Turkey. At first glance, it may seem as a paradoxical argument to put the rise of femininity against feminism on the one hand, and the rise of feminist discourses on the other, however, the social and cultural atmosphere of the 1980s and 1990s provided an opportunity to integrate femininity into a feminism that did not have a collective political objective. In other words, a type of feminism that was not hostile towards femininity found place among the “new woman” ideals. At this point, one other point on the agenda of this thesis is to discuss whether it is possible to interpret the emphasis of popular women’s magazines on liberation and independence as a form of popular feminism. First and foremost, I try to understand what these magazines perceive of feminism, how the feature writers differentiated themselves from the conventional radical feminists, and what kind of a feminist discourse was used to deal

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<sup>31</sup> Ballaster, et al., *Women’s Worlds*, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> McRobbie, *Postmodernism and Popular Culture*, p. 194, quoted in Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 28-29.

<sup>33</sup> Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 29.

with and present liberation issue. The related chapter is also intended to indicate the limits and contradictions of the feminist discourses of the popular women's magazines analyzed in this study.

The call for a departure from domestic issues and going beyond their identities as housewives and mothers carried a feminist tone in itself. In the magazines analyzed, there is quite a low number of articles regarding how wonderful it felt to make and raise a child. Again, the articles related to traditional family ties and child love are so rare that it seems as if the addressees were, so to speak, young single women. Criticism regarding the subordination of women in society projected a kind of feminist perspective. As discussed above, popular women's magazines challenged the approach of traditional women's magazines with respect to topics like women's sexual desires and pleasures. It is possible to find in all these a popular feminist or, according to some writers, post-feminist agenda and perspective.

Another point that characterized the feminism of the magazines in question is their emphasis on success, self-confidence, and career. These magazines that discussed the difficulties experienced by women in private and public life aspired for increased visibility of women. While encouraging women to become stronger and more active in public and private spheres, the magazines reduced women's problems and gender relations, which had historical and social dimensions, to psychological situations. The solutions they offered to women's problems mostly appealed to middle-classes, and they presented the feminism that they had adopted as a lifestyle, but not as a collective political movement.

Almost all of the women's magazines were still issued by female editors and writers. In other words, the administration, office work, human resources, topic selection and cover design were all in the hands of editors.<sup>34</sup> In addition, these editors claimed that they adopted various versions of feminism. However, the boundaries of the popular feminist critique

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 145-146.



reflected in these magazines were not only drawn by the editor and writers. The fact that advertisement as an important component that was (and still is) mostly occupied by male administrators (let us call it male-dominated concerns and discourse) and its designation entirely according to market conditions and commercial targets (let us call it capitalist concern) directly influences the content, function and messages of the magazines. This refers to how magazines were/are girded by two main concerns and discourses: the traditional male-dominant regime on the one hand, and the market-based liberation discourse of global capitalism on the other.<sup>35</sup> Analyzing the relationship between post-feminist discourses and consumerism, Macdonald argues that the quasi-feminist goals of freedom and self-fulfillment were combined by popular women's magazines with commodity and service consumption.<sup>36</sup> Commercial concerns exploiting women as consumers and the male-dominant discourse demanding the continuation of traditional gender roles and inequalities set the limits for the feminist discourse in the magazines.

On the other hand, I do not argue that editors and writers were not feminist “enough” due to the conditions limiting them. Doubtlessly, their perspectives on gender relations, beauty, body and sexuality were highly important. It is those perspectives that produced the discourses that are analyzed and criticized in this thesis. I should underline that my goal is not to discuss why these magazines were not “full” feminist. By referring to the contemporary construction of femininity, in this thesis, I attempt to show the limits of feminist discourse and critically define the woman type promoted by popular women's magazines in the 1990s within its own context. I argue that while these magazines were encouraging women to raise

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<sup>35</sup> Kirca-Schroeder's attention to commercial concerns and its effect on publication policies is significant to my discussion. However, I cannot say that she could detect the inconsistencies in the editors' approaches as successfully as she did in the former. Above all, she is not sufficient at spotting the discourses opposite to feminism as world apart.

<sup>36</sup> Macdonald, *Representing Women*, pp. 90-91. According to Macdonald, three forms of c-option of the feminist ideas and ideology that emerged in consumer discourses in the 1980s and 1990s were: (i) The appropriation of quasi-feminist concepts; (ii) The redrafting of 'caring' to make it compatible with self-fulfillment; and (iii) The acknowledgement of female fantasies.

their social visibility and power, they served to construct a specific female image in accordance with the male-dominant understanding of pleasure and also with capitalist market concerns in a certain social, economic and cultural context. Hence, I underline the concept of construction of a certain type of femininity rather than a feminist discourse. As Ballaster and others say, albeit within a different context, what really mattered was not pursuing a feminist agenda, but being “suitably feminine.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ballaster, et al., *Women's Worlds*, p. 157.

## CHAPTER 2

### BEAUTY, THE FEMALE BODY AND FEMININITY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the conceptual framework of the thesis for the concepts of beauty and beautiful, and the historical and social construction of the values attributed to these concepts. It is designed to analyze the dominant discourses and practices of beauty and female body in contemporary culture. Particularly, how the idealized beauty norms and standards in contemporary society have been formed will be discussed and inquired on the basis of gender concept. Again in this chapter, I will also examine the reasons underlying women's inclination to take an interest in and worry about their physical appearance and to transform their bodies into a social instrument more than in previous historical periods. The perception of beauty concept merely as an unchanging aesthetic and biological concept, which is independent of gender identity, will be discussed critically, and additionally, the relationship between patriarchal social order and beauty will be addressed.

In this chapter, the role that the discourses and practices pertaining to beauty and body in our culture play in constructing femininity will be discussed. The term "construction" here refers to how dominant culture "creates" women. To put it another way, today in popular media, advertisements, films, company leaflets and other communication instruments, there is a direct reference to how an ideal woman is drawn, what qualities she should have and how women "create" and "construct" themselves under the influence of dominant culture. These contemporary discourses that determine the relationship women establish with their own bodies are central to my research. Therefore answers will be sought to questions as to how

and by which cultural instruments the desire of especially middle-class women to look beautiful is formed. In short, I will attempt to show how it is the cultural environment that makes women feel obliged to be chic, attractive, impressive and sexy, and urges them to behave accordingly designating contemporary femininity.

The analysis and discussion in this chapter are oriented to form a theoretical framework for this thesis that addresses the image of woman drawn, shaped and idealized in the visual culture and media in terms of beauty and body. An extensive outline will be presented of the historical, social, economic and cultural conditions that have fostered the discourse about beauty, female body and femininity in the popular women's magazine, which I will be dealing with in the analysis chapters.

The term contemporary in "contemporary culture" and "contemporary construction of womanhood" refers to the period of time beginning in the 1980s and extending to the present day. As will be seen in another chapter, this period, which could be called late modernity, late capitalism or the neo-liberal period has been regarded as age of consumption, media, television or communication. The development of a global consumption society also corresponds to this period. It is again a period of time when the visibility of women increased in business and social life both in Turkey and in the world. There is a close relation between the newly emerging type of townswoman who is employed, engaged in regular activities of consumption and feels independent, along with new popular feminism and popular women's magazines appealing to this section of population. In a nutshell, the term "contemporary" refers to such an economic and cultural context.

### Female Physical Appearance as a “Problem”

We live in an age in which appearance-oriented judgment is the most common and acceptable behavior. Not only women but also men strive to gain a place in social and business life with their physical appearance. However, women, whose bodies have been historically considered to be at the disposal of men, in any case feel this pressure the most. The distinctive feature of contemporary culture is that idealized beauty standards and body sizes have almost been catholicized and have begun to influence the whole society.

It is as easy to see women dedicated to adorning and beautifying themselves, who are conditioned to rush to plastic surgeons, beauty centers, and coiffeurs. Today thousands of women want to have plastic surgery on their faces and bodies, use thousands of cosmetics, and go to beauty and fitness centers, etc. Women want to feel more beautiful than ever, and spend more time and money on their bodies. Slimness, the capability to do good make-up, having a fit body, and attracting all males are now equally considered to be an absolute part of female subjectivity by women from almost all social segments. These are by no means free from gendered meanings. In other words, beauty is not a neutral concept, or rather a definition, in regards to gender.

Female beauty and body care were also important in previous periods of time. Viewing and interpreting the female body as a sexual object, which can be traced back to these older times, is a fruit of the male dominant mentality and practices.<sup>38</sup> However, on the other hand, the female audience, influenced by the beauty standards of contemporary society, is much wider than ever before. Not only in quantitative terms, but the social meaning attributed to being a woman is centered on physical appearance and body more than ever

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<sup>38</sup> For the examples of historical studies examining beauty, female body and physical appearance, see Arthur Marwick, *Beauty in History: Society, Politics and Personal Appearance, c. 1500 to the Present* (Gloucester: Thames and Hudson, 1988); and Peter N. Stearns, *Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

before. High rates in the use of cosmetics, the enormous rise in plastic surgery, popular women's magazines allocating most of their pages to beauty, body care, fashion and make-up, the increase in the number of beauty centers, and the frequent conversations we have about similar topics in daily life in addition to advertisements that never come to an end are, one and all, characteristics of the capitalism of the last 30 years.

Today because of idealized sizes and form, as Craig J. Thompson and Elizabeth C. Hirschman write, female bodies have become "a social problem" for women that should be overcome by way of diets, cosmetics, plastic surgery etc. in order to transform their bodies into more desired forms.<sup>39</sup> Each and every piece of advertisement that we see in city life calls on women to re-create themselves from the scratch. Fashion icons, sexuality bursting out of magazines and television, the bodies of celebrities and their representation of contemporary popular culture appear to have convinced women (and men as well) that beauty is an indispensable power in human life.

A survey carried out by Dove, a well-known cosmetic company, in 11 different countries in 2005, clearly indicates the concerns of women about their physical appearances. For instance, on a global scale, nine-tenth of women want to change themselves physically. According to the aforementioned survey, 97% of young girls assert that they would feel much happier if they could have a change in their bodies or faces as they wished.<sup>40</sup> Additionally, young ladies begin to complain about their bodies at a very early age. Accordingly, the average age that they begin to feel concerns about physical ugliness is as early as 13.<sup>41</sup> The feeling of "inadequacy" begins dramatically earlier in another research. Philosopher Susan

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<sup>39</sup> Craig J. Thompson and Elizabeth C. Hirschman, "Understanding the Socialized Body: A Poststructuralist Analysis of Consumers' Self-Conceptions, Body Images, and Self-Care Practices," *Journal of Consumer Research*, no. 22 (September 1995), pp. 139-153.

<sup>40</sup> The Research Report implemented by Dove Company ("Beyond the Stereotypes: Reconstructing the Basis of Beauty Beliefs"), quoted in Yasemin İnceoğlu and Altan Kar, "Yeni Güzellik İkonları: İnsan Bedenin Özgürlüğü mü Mahkumiyeti mi?" in *Dışılık, Güzellik, ve Şiddet Sarmalında Kadın ve Bedeni*, edited by Yasemin İnceoğlu and Altan Kar (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2010), p. 72.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Bordo says as many as 80 % of 9-year old suburban girls are concerned about dieting and their weight.<sup>42</sup>

Dove's research reveals interesting results on the appearance aspects that teenage girls and women want to change. In the age range between the 15 and 17, results for teenage girls in Japan who wish change their appearances are as follows; 63% weight, 57% body shape, 54% neck, 41% face features, 34% eye shapes. Likewise, teenage girls from Saudi Arabia (38%), Canada (34%) and Brazil (31%) strongly wish to change their hair, while teenagers in Canada (22%), Germany (21%) want to change their skin colors.<sup>43</sup>

The same research reveals that women in the age range of 15-64 want to change an aspect of appearance quite different from the teenage girls in the same country. To give an example, weight is what 50% of the American women and 55% of the Canadian women want to change about themselves. This ratio is quite high among Japanese women (49%) as well. The ratio of the women that are not satisfied with their body shapes is revealed as the most desired change in the appearance aspect again in Japanese teenaged girls (57%). The ratio of Canadian females who want to change their height is (35%) and again this is the highest among the Japanese females (38%). Among the ones who want to change their hair are the Brazilian (33%), Japanese (32%), Chinese (33%) and Saudi Arabian (33%) women. Women who want to change their face appearances are primarily the Japanese (26%) and Canadian (22%). The highest ratio of Chinese women (25%) want to change their skin colors and with the 21% of highest rank, the Japanese women are again the ones who want to change their eye shape.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Susan Bordo, "The Material Girl: The Effacements of Postmodern Culture," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 29, no. 4 (Fall 1990) pp. 653-657, quoted in Jacqueline Urla and Alan C. Swedlund, "The Anthropometry of Barbie: Unsettling Ideals of the Feminine Body in Popular Culture," in *Deviant Bodies*, edited by Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 277.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Dove research report; İnceoğlu and Kar, *Kadın ve Bedeni*, p. 77.

In the same vein, 70% of women do not get involved in activities, such as meeting with men, engaging in physical activity or going out because they believe they are not beautiful enough. Therefore, they prefer to stay at home, sleep and spend time sitting in front of the TV where they find the stars who they imitate at every moment.<sup>45</sup>

There are numerous examples that illustrate the fact that the normalized cultural ideals of physical beauty, pumped up by the media in particular, lead women to turn their self-reflections into anxiety. For instance, Thompson and Hirschman, who have analyzed the consumption patterns of women and men at different ages from the middle- and high-middle classes, and the perception of their bodies through in-depth interviews, present striking examples. The statements of a young woman, age 21, among the participants sets a good example of how the female body is transformed into a social problem:

I never felt that I looked right. The styles that I always want to wear, I always feel like I look fat. I always have to wear like a long skirt or sweater or at least baggy pants and a tight shirt. Like, I can see outfits that I'd love to wear, but I know that I could never wear them. I probably could wear them and get away with it, but I'd be so self-conscious walking around that I'd be like, 'Oh, my God.' Like, I always try to look thinner and I guess everybody does.<sup>46</sup>

Many other studies show that there has been an enormous boom in plastic surgery. For instance, Tseelon states that plastic surgery substantially increased in the 1990s. Quoting a Californian doctor/surgeon: "In the past it would have had to be a pretty God-awful nose, but now we are seeing any teenager who does not like their nose."<sup>47</sup> Men also resort to plastic surgery more than ever. But what is the meaning of the big chasm in between in terms of gender differences? According to Tseelon, one significant difference is that men mostly are

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>46</sup> Thompson and Hirschman, "Understanding the Socialized Body," p. 147.

<sup>47</sup> Efrat Tseelon, *The Masque of Femininity: The Presentation of Woman in Everyday Life* (California: Sage Publications, 1995), p. 81.



motivated professionally. “Looking more youthful and fit is like wearing a fashionable suit.”<sup>48</sup>

It is the fact that in Britain cosmetic surgery is particularly popular with men in marketing and sales jobs. However, the very same thing is thought to be “about shaping a new identity” for women. For example Tseeolon quotes a woman who has had plastic surgery:

I knew I would never be popular and successful because I wasn't pretty. I wanted a new face and a new body. And I got it. My partner's very happy with the new me. I no longer have to dress to disguise problems with my figure or use make-up to disguise my nose.<sup>49</sup>

Examples given by Catherine G. Valentine from student journals show that female identity is defined from others' perspective on the basis of physical appearance. A young woman tells about her worries regarding her appearance under the influence of the media and advertisements:

I have noticed just recently I have been focusing on my energies toward being thin and having 'that' look. But what changed inside my 'self' that makes me believe I have to look good to be happy? [...] The 'way I look attitude' is engraved in my head every day of my life. Through commercials, magazines, clothing stores...I am made to believe that I have to be better looking, better everything.<sup>50</sup>

One other young woman expresses how the society, media and advertisements set “unrealistic” standards and thus lead women to be dissatisfied with their bodies, and the close relationship established between happiness and physical appearance:

When I was bulimic and overeating, I wanted so badly to conform to what I believed society wanted me to look like that I was willing to destroy myself to attain such 'unrealistic' standards... when other people, men, and women stress that women are not worthy if they are not thin and attractive, then many women will continue to destroy their minds and bodies while looking for acceptance... Advertising helps to perpetuate the idea that beauty... gives a woman a better chance at happiness. Advertising makes women believe that

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. For a history of plastic/cosmetic surgery, see Sander L. Gilman, *Making the Body Beautiful: A Cultural History of Aesthetic Surgery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> *Observer Life*, 28 November 1993, quoted in Tseeolon, *The Masque of Femininity*, p. 81.

<sup>50</sup> Catherine G. Valentine, “Female Bodily Perfection and the Divided Self,” in *Ideals of Feminine Beauty: Philosophical, Social, and Cultural Dimensions*, edited by Karen A. Callaghan (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. 115.

certain products will make them more appealing on the outside which, in turn, is supposed to make a woman feel better about her.<sup>51</sup>

There is no need to give more examples to illustrate the extent of women's efforts to alter their physical appearance under the influence of the media and contemporary cultural climate. Above all, what strikes us the most is how an ideology of beauty and appeal is effective and influential by means of the media. As Tseelon says, the ideology of the construction of sexual difference through appearance is promoted by opinions created by the media, on the one hand, and the scientific community, i.e. surgeons, science of cosmetics, on the other: "The first is the propagation of the 'new woman' myth. The second is scientific research which reinforces 'the physical attractiveness myth.'"<sup>52</sup>

### Beauty As a Gendered Category

But why? Why must women look beautiful and sexy? What are the social and historical conditions that put women under such pressure? Pursuant to what are beauty norms or standards set? Has beauty been defined in the same way for each society and era? Put differently, is beauty a given fact, or is it a consequence of human biology or evolution? What is the value attributed to beauty and what is its social function? Finally, what characterizes the time frame that we are going through with respect to female body and beauty? Within the scope of these questions, I will examine below the meanings of beauty and female body with respect to gender concept. My aim is to discuss the historical construction of beauty norms and standards idealized in contemporary culture in terms of gender identity.

Above all, beauty is a feminine concept. Put it another way, it is private to women and it is needed by women. In other words, appearance is emphasized and valued more in females

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Tseëlon, *The Masque of Femininity*, p. 81-82.

than in males. From early ages gender is constructed socially through appearance. The fairy tales told to girls and the toys they own lead them to see the connection between physical appearance and gender at a very early age. To give a striking example, one of my friends told me about how deeply the Barbie doll she had as a child affected her beauty perception. When beauty or beautiful is mentioned, that Barbie doll directly comes to her mind. Now whenever she puts on even a little bit of weight, she feels anxious about losing her beauty. The connection she has established between this fear and the Barbie doll is quite interesting. On the other hand, boys are imbued with gender concept, to give an example based on toys, by way of figures identified with masculinity like soldiers or heroes. Briefly, from an early age, girls are conditioned to grasp the role that physical appearance plays in the formation of their own identities.

As Efrat Tseelon says, beauty is not a gender-free concept; in other words, beauty appears to be a gender-related category. Surely appearance is important for men as well, but it is “a defining feature for the woman both in terms of how others respond to her, and how she experiences her own self.”<sup>53</sup> As we know well, the word “beauty” itself in Turkish as well as in English is attributed to women rather than men.

One other important point on the concept of beauty is that it has been the most significant characteristic attributed to women in many societies and historical periods. For example, beauty mostly refers to the positive in terms of social symbols and meanings, i.e., beauty ideals and representations are not free from moral intensions and implications. For instance, beautiful characters are good and virtuous people at the same time. It is observed that a role model portrayed in such literary representations is frequently beautiful and has a slim body. Just as Anthony Synott points out, Cinderella is a beautiful and good person. In

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

*Beauty and the Beast*, Beauty is both good and intelligent.<sup>54</sup> No matter which culture or era we are talking about, have you ever seen an angel represented as ugly or a devil as beautiful? In short, beauty, which is not a gender-free concept, is always affirmed, and the reverse is labeled to be the undesired other. Therefore, woman's desire to be beautiful is a social affirmation, acknowledgement and desire for success at the same time.

Rather than being natural, beauty is regarded as a power to be gained. In other words, women "can and must succeed" at being beautiful. They have to make effort in order to achieve it. For the last 30 years, we have been witnessing the fact this effort should be put forth and there have been massive efforts to that end. As will be shown below, the popular visual products of media analyzed in this study confirm the hypothesis and generalizations here.

As Karen A. Callaghan stresses, feminist critics and scholars have paid attention to the connection between patriarchal images of female beauty and women's oppression. Beauty norms are regarded by these critics as obstacles to women's liberation.<sup>55</sup> Such an argument means a challenge to the essentialist and patriarchal understanding of beauty and femininity, claiming that beauty, body and femininity are not natural, apolitical, ahistorical phenomena. As the editor says, all chapters of the book *Ideals of Feminine Beauty: Philosophical, Social, and Cultural Dimensions*, support the view that beauty is socially constructed mechanism of patriarchal social control. According to Callaghan, beauty is a socially constructed normative standard which supports a discourse of feminine oppression and male dominance.<sup>56</sup> Arguing that beauty is essentially nothing, she stresses that "for women in patriarchal systems beauty norms serve as a locus of control over the most fundamental aspects of identity: the self, the

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<sup>54</sup> Anthony Synnott, "Truth and Goodness, Mirrors and Masks Part II: A Sociology of Beauty and the Face," *The British Journal of Sociology*, no. 41 ( March, 1990), p. 57, quoted in Elifcan Karacan, "Women under the Hegemony of Body Politics: Fashion and Beauty" (MA thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2007), p. 50.

<sup>55</sup> Karen A. Callaghan, "Introduction," in *Ideals of Feminine Beauty: Philosophical, Social, and Cultural Dimensions*, edited by Karen A. Callaghan (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), p. vii.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. ix.

body, and inter-subjectivity.”<sup>57</sup> The woman who cannot or does not conform to beauty standards is seen as deviant. As she is not the object of male’s affirmative looks in a given patriarchal system, she does not meet what is expected of her.<sup>58</sup> Getting out of these conscious or unconscious power relationships may mean exclusion or self-exclusion in social terms. Therefore, all women are expected to conform to social standards of beauty, which serve as a specific tool of social control over gender identity. And the social itself is already gendered.

Likewise, Naomi Wolf, the leading figure of the third-wave feminist movement, argues that the beauty myth, as a violent backlash against feminism, is a way of oppression for women like motherhood, domesticity, chastity. She also argues that beauty, as a normative value, is entirely socially constructed, and that the patriarchy determines the content of that construction in an effort to reproduce its own hegemony.<sup>59</sup> She says as women released themselves from domesticity, the beauty myth took over its lost ground. This myth has taken its place among other myths of motherhood, domesticity, chastity, and passivity that surround women. Wolf argues that the most dominant ideology that surrounds women in contemporary cultures is the ideology of beauty:

The beauty myth tells a story: The quality called “beauty” objectively and universally exists. Women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it. This embodiment is an imperative for women and not for men, which situation is necessary and natural because it is biological, sexual, and evolutionary: strong men battle for beautiful women, and beautiful women are more reproductively successful. Women’s beauty must correlate to their fertility, and since this system is based on sexual selection, it is inevitable and changeless.<sup>60</sup>

For Wolf, none of these is, however, correct; beauty is like the gold standard which is determined by politics. Beauty standards are culturally imposed as expressions of power

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (New York: Vintage, 1991), p. 10-11.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

relations. The beauty myth is not about women at all; it is, however, about the institutions and institutional power of men.<sup>61</sup>

Standards and norms are not independent of social and cultural meanings and implications. Variables like social status, skin color, and income level determine the conditions that one has in order to achieve the idealized norms. As Urla and Swedlund properly argue, in a society stratified by race, class, gender notions quantitatively defined ideal types or standards are both biased and oppressive.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, every type of “scientific” or “discursive” generalization about beauty and body standards will be oppressive by their very nature.

Tseëlon says, “the patriarchal regime of the woman defines and judges her [the woman] through a fantasy model of beauty.” That is to say that the physical self of the woman becomes the center of her conception of herself. Tseëlon’s argument is that for women physical attractiveness takes on a “master status,” which “situates the woman as spectacle, the man as spectator, and naturalizes the process by making it appear.”<sup>63</sup>

Tseëlon also argues, as mentioned above, that a certain climate of opinions created by the media, on the one hand, and the scientific community, on the other, helps promote the ideology of the construction of sexual difference through appearance: “The first is the propagation of the ‘new woman’ myth. The second is scientific research which reinforces ‘the physical attractiveness myth.’”<sup>64</sup> For instance, establishing a direct relation between physical appearance and social advantages, dominant psychological theories and discourses legitimize

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Urla and Swedlund, “The Anthropometry of Barbie,” p. 293.

<sup>63</sup> Tseëlon, *The Masque of Femininity*, p. 88.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 81-82.

and make gender discourses that belong to a certain period. In the same manner, plastic surgeons provide “scientific” motivation for efforts to “become beautiful.”<sup>65</sup>

In addition female beauty is defined primarily for men’s pleasure. This means that the woman who makes effort to achieve an aesthetic ideal does so not for self-actualization, but for masculine approval.<sup>66</sup> Women, being looked at and watched by men, watch themselves being looked at. From earliest childhood they are taught to survey themselves continually, and so they come to consider themselves as objects or things. Therefore, as Lury asserts, “looking and to be looked at are important components of femininity.”<sup>67</sup>

At this point, one can make such an objection to it. In contemporary life, women do not improve their physical appearance only due to the male gaze upon them or to get their approval, but also, even most frequently, they feel “responsible” to the other women around them with respect to appearance. It is doubtlessly correct. Women are not only under the gaze of men but also of other women. In contemporary life, women’s attempt to present themselves as beautiful and well-groomed females is mostly in direct relation to rivalry to which they have entered with other women. However, it should not be taken as a reason, but as a consequence of gender relations. If a woman is not a lesbian, she will not be in an attempt to attract other women’s emotional or sexual interest. Consequently, there is a difference in motivation for a woman who improves her appearance due to men’s gaze. In my opinion, women’s engagement in talking about each other’s beauty directly results from the fact that it is a field of rivalry. When beauty norms that are constructed to please males become components of a culture, relations among people of the same sex in a society also are influenced by these norms. On this point, Catherine G. Valentine draws attention to the fact that the social control of women works not only because “men police women,” but also

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>66</sup> Callaghan, “Introduction,” p. ix.

<sup>67</sup> Lury, *Consumer Culture*, p. 141.

because women watch other women. For her, self-policing is a key form of social control.<sup>68</sup> Likewise, Spitzack says that “through internalization of male gazes and values, women evaluate themselves as they are evaluated by men.”<sup>69</sup>

The argument highlighted up to this point is that values attributed to female beauty are not independent of gender relations and roles in a given society. In other words, discourses on beauty and female body are not eternal. Like all other socially constructed values, it has been “discovered” under certain conditions. For instance, based on anthropological studies, Naomi Wolf has shown how different a social meaning beauty has among the Nigerian Woodabes when compared to modern societies. In the example of the Nigerian Wodaabes, women hold economic power and the tribe members are obsessed with male beauty. Wodaabe men spend hours together in elaborate makeup sessions, and compete in beauty contests judged by women.<sup>70</sup> Giving such an example, Wolf means that there is no legitimate historical or biological justification for the beauty myth.

Likewise the encounters between the first generations of European colonialists and native peoples indicate how the later had no gender hierarchy and understanding of beauty that the former did. For example, in an effort to present the various beauty treatments and European concepts of beauty, Ben Lowe’s analysis of medieval and early modern European treatment of Amerindian (the indigenous people of the Americas) women indicates that failure to conform to beauty standards represented reaction, or rebellion, against the dominant social order, as these women had not been socialized in a European, “civilized” manner. In this sense, Lowe documents that the newly developing colonial powers could not find a

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<sup>68</sup> Valentine, “Female Bodily Perfection,” p. 120.

<sup>69</sup> Carole Spitzack, *Confessing Excess: Women and the Politics of Body Reduction* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1990), p. 53, quoted in Valentine, “Female Bodily Perfection,” p. 120.

<sup>70</sup> Valentine, “Female Bodily Perfection,” p. 113.



perception of beauty and gender similar to that of their own civilization on the continent they had conquered.

This article, indicating that there was not a pattern of European gender hierarchies among the Amerindian peoples, reveals how the colonial powers treated the local peoples by means of a “civilizing mission,” which was an attempt to transfer civilization to the colonies on the basis of the European, therefore patriarchal beauty concept. To give an example, the first colonialists that considered nudity a deviant behavior that was not eye-pleasing took prohibitive actions against it. In the accounts in which they conveyed their experiences, it is possible to see how they came into contact with local people according to their own beauty and gender perceptions.<sup>71</sup> The indigenous women did not fit what the female figure should be according to their perceptions. It was surprising for the colonialists to see that the native women carried out male duties such as carrying heavy items. They were also much more modest and colonialists found it very hard “to incorporate into their sex-beauty images, which stressed congruence between prescriptive outward appearance and inward behavior.”<sup>72</sup> In short, through an interesting fragment of colonial encounters, Lowe shows how beauty images in medieval and early modern Europe were the products of a longstanding patriarchal gender system.

### Historical Perspective on Female Beauty and Body

All these above-mentioned examples show that the values attributed to beauty are historical. Though every historical age and each culture has had its own ideas about what is thought to be beautiful, as an autonomous characteristic, beauty perception of our age and its penetration

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<sup>71</sup> Ben Lowe, “Body Images and the Politics of Beauty: Formation of the Feminine Ideal in Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” in *Ideals of Feminine Beauty: Philosophical, Social, and Cultural Dimensions*, edited by Karen A. Callaghan (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), especially pp. 30-33.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

into the lives of ordinary women have basically come to the fore recently. According to Wolf again, the beauty myth is a modern invention and cannot be understood without regarding industrial capitalism: “Most of our assumptions about the way women have always thought about “beauty” date from no earlier than the 1830s, when the cult of domesticity was first consolidated and the beauty index invented.”<sup>73</sup> For her, before the Industrial Revolution the average woman did not have the same feelings about beauty that modern women do as she was exposed few images outside of the church because of the lack of mass production technologies such as photography.<sup>74</sup> As the work unit of the family was destroyed, the middle classes expanded, and the standard of living and literacy rose, a new class of literate and idle women developed most of women’s assumptions about the way they have thought about beauty changed.

As the history of patriarchy is not limited to capitalism, in which framework should we put the beauty perception of previous eras? We will need to look at the pre-capitalist era, if we say that the beauty and values, meanings and social functions attributed to beauty are products of male dominancy in a given society and if we have proof that indicates there are a range of traditional and settled perceptions and discourses on female beauty that can be traced back to earlier times.

Examining the concept of beauty as it was understood in eighteenth century Britain by focusing on philosophical and cultural texts, and artistic products, Robert W. Jones, for instance, puts forth that the beauty problem occupied a strikingly significant place among the eighteenth century discourses in Britain.<sup>75</sup> Though Jones uses the beauty concept in a broader sense and examines the aesthetical value attributed to everything, whether living or non-

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<sup>73</sup> Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, p. 15.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>75</sup> Robert W. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain: The Analysis of Beauty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

living, within the framework of the cultural formation of taste, she indicates how the terms of beauty and beautiful were transformed into a vocabulary for pointing to the proper and the obscene nature of feminine display. For her, in the eighteenth century the discussion of beauty became a means of thinking about the woman and judging her socially and morally. However, Jones's work indicates that discourses on women's physical appearance were limited to an aristocratic environment and in many respects the constructions of femininity existed in a close relationship with the formation of middle-class identity.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, we do not exactly know the role of concepts beauty and beautiful in construction of identities of women from lower classes unlike the fact that, as it will be discussed later, ordinary women have been under the pressure of idealized beauty norms since the mid twentieth century and the 1980s in particular.

In the same manner, in eighteenth century Europe, especially in Britain and France, the remarkable rise in erotic and pornographic products, texts and images was also in close relation to a social transformation pursuant to the function and representations of the female body. Definitely, the content of these products was, as Karen Harvey states, masculinist. She stresses that the understanding of bodies, sex, and gender celebrated male force and pleasure.<sup>77</sup> For Harvey again in the eighteenth century, women's bodies were thoroughly sexualized through erotica.<sup>78</sup> What we can understand here is that female beauty became more central to the social discourse. What is equally important is that beauty and body care had spread among aristocratic women and had not been embraced by ordinary women yet. It seems that that would occur in the nineteenth century. It is no doubt that it was possible with

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 209. Karen Harvey is yet another historian who analyzed the change in gender roles in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and emergence of a new type of middle-class woman. Please see *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). As is seen in her bibliography, there has been a serious rise in interest in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the field of women and gender history for the last 20 years. For a short review of the studies in this field, see *ibid.* p. 4-12.

<sup>77</sup> Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 34 and p. 123.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 222.

the enlargement of the public sphere, the development of cities, the establishment of the media and the development of the consumption culture.

Tseelon says, “it is a Victorian belief which imposes that a person’s character can be seen through their appearance and that physical beauty reflects spiritual beauty.” Then, how did the Victorian period change the understanding and discourse of female beauty? As Susan Bordo remarks, in the late nineteenth century, in other words, during the Victorian period, body management became a middle-class practice of having an ideal appearance. Whereas in the culture of Ancient Greek and early Christianity fasting and other forms of diet had been practiced to achieve excellence of spirit, since the Victorian period various forms of diet and body technologies came into the service of body rather than the soul.<sup>79</sup>

In the West, towards the end of the nineteenth century, with the rise of a puritan performance ethics, there has also been a radical change in the perception of the body: Fatness started to be correlated with laziness. Contrary to this, thin bodies began to represent achievement and knowledge.<sup>80</sup> With the nineteenth century again, concerns about being overweight and dieting were an important turning point in middle-class life, particularly of women. As Peter Stearns points out, dieting and guilt about not dieting became an increasing practice of private life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century America.<sup>81</sup> As Bordo indicates, tie corsets, self-starvation among elite women, beauty and cosmetic shops, beauty contests, diet, etc. were the discoveries of the Victorian age in the West.<sup>82</sup>

There is a correlation between the transformation of the female body from an aesthetical discourse into a daily object of marketing and consumption, and the development of market society in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, Kathy Alexis

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<sup>79</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, p. 212.

<sup>80</sup> İnceoğlu and Kar, *Kadın ve Bedeni*, p. 77.

<sup>81</sup> Peter N. Stearns, *Fat History: Bodies and Beauty in the Modern West* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 3-24.

<sup>82</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*.

Psomiades indicates that the beautiful woman, as a figure for the aesthetic, became associated with mass culture and consumer culture and entered the domain of advertising in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>83</sup> From that date onwards, female physical appearance and bodies became frequently consumed objects of a market society. Depending on the development of capitalist society, the transformation process from an artistic object into a commercial one can be called “the commercialization of the feminine body,” a fact to which this study gives a particular importance.

Mary Lynn Stewart, who analyzed publications and activities regarding beauty and body care in France from the late nineteenth century to the 1900s, says that a new genre of advice literature started to explicate the new beauty ideals for bourgeois women at the beginning of the 1880s in France. Likewise in the same period many doctors/physicians published health and beauty guides to teach women how to become and preserve their beauty and health through a conscious body care and self-control. What is more important is that there emerged “more democratic beauty guides” that did not take efforts put to achieve beauty as a privilege of aristocrats and upper classes.<sup>84</sup> It was quite a remarkable development. On the one hand, female body was no longer only an aesthetical object, but had been turned into a “public” consumption object at the end of the nineteenth century, and on the other hand, efforts to become beautiful were penetrating through other strata of the society.

In the same period, beauty contests, beauty institutes, and cosmetic companies flourished along with those publications. For example, from the late nineteenth century until 1936 in Paris alone there were 66 beauty institutes and 101 cosmetic companies. The advertisements of these institutes and companies filled the pages of women’s magazine as another source of information on “how to be beautiful.” The first French beauty contest

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<sup>83</sup> Kathy Alexis Psomiades, *Beauty’s Body: Femininity and Representation in British Aestheticism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

<sup>84</sup> Mary Lynn Stewart, *For Health and Beauty: Physical Culture For Frenchwomen, 1880s-1930s* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p. 13.

emerged in the 1890s. What is more, for the first time and unlike their American versions, the photographs of faces of the contestants were published in an illustrated magazine and asked readers to vote for their favorites.<sup>85</sup> As Stewart indicates, in the same period bourgeois girls and women adopted many bodily ideals and practices, bathing more often and buying more beauty products since “they were attracted by the message that they deserved to take care of their bodies and themselves.”<sup>86</sup> Firstly, all these show that “beauty” efforts and body care gradually became daily practices of the middle classes in the society. Secondly, it was acknowledged in public instruments by wider society that the female body was a created, shaped and managed object. Thirdly, a market of beauty and body care was then established.

Stewart calls attention to an equally significant fact: such an increase in “beauty consciousness” coincided with and challenged the second wave of feminism and “new women.” Beauty advisors and counselors labeled feminists “ugly and unfeminine.” However, it is interesting that all the feminists labeled as such did not get into a counter-fight in respect to beauty. Stewart says that “many feminists were drawn into the discourse about beauty.”<sup>87</sup> For instance, a feminist women’s magazine, *Le Fonde*, accepted advertisements for hair dyes, perfumes, and thyroid medications to stay thin. In addition at the beginning of the 1900s another feminist journal allocated a regular column on beauty secrets. By 1914 a supporter of women’s suffrage in France again wrote in a beauty guide justifying cosmetics: “if we are happier because we are prettier, more masterful, and more gracious.”<sup>88</sup>

In short, the cultural idealization of femininity and beauty, and “decisiveness” of physical appearance had broad repercussions among the feminists. More strikingly, I have observed that every type of new “brave” discourse on the female body, beauty and femininity

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

is associated with women's independence and liberation. As will be seen in the forthcoming chapters, popular women's magazines that boomed in the West in the 1970s and in Turkey in the 1990s regarded themselves as new feminists of some sort. They claimed that they sided against traditional values regarding the female body and sexuality, and it was exactly what they did. However, these magazines full of advice that conditioned women to take care of their physical appearance almost obsessively created, as emphasized above, a new oppressive and patriarchal discourse.

The 1960s was a decade when beauty "came to power" up to the hilt. As Marwick says, beauty was universally praised in the 1960s and sought after. It achieved a kind of parity with wealth and status.<sup>89</sup> Beauty ideals also became global from this period onwards. The English model Twiggy became as the icon of thinness in the 1960s and it is exactly this time when the idea and culture of thinness began to spread. In fact, the Twiggy represented such a thin type of woman that there were writers who regarded her as an anti-woman character: "She was so skinny it was hard to tell she was a woman at all. Instead of a shirtwaist, she wore a skirt no bigger than a proper lady's pocket handkerchief."<sup>90</sup>

This model that reversed the conventional feminine image would ignite later an age of fight against excessive weight, torturing diets, and eating disorders that totally affected all women. The 1960s was also a time when this new woman type occupied all the magazine pages, and a sort of beauty ideology began to be spread by popular women's magazines. Women's magazines based on themes like fashion, beauty and sex that conveyed fresh new ideals regarding womanhood noticeably increased. But there emerged another medium that began to be more influential: Television.

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<sup>89</sup> Marwick, *Beauty in History*, p. 343.

<sup>90</sup> Susan Cheever, "Twiggy: A Stick Figure," *New York Times Magazine*, 24 November 1996, quoted in Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, p. 185.

The television started to fuse rapidly into the lives of people and usurped the role of popular magazines as the most influential and pervasive medium.<sup>91</sup> However, magazines never lost their popularity and continued to elaborate on themes that would otherwise irritate people with continuous coverage on the TV. As will be discussed in later chapters, the role and function of popular women's magazines would take up new forms in America and Western Europe in the 1970s and in Turkey in the 1990s.

In the 1960s the Barbie-doll-like-looking women were more than often on television, hugely increasing the number of young people in trouble with eating disorders within just 38 months. At that time, in the late 1960s, results from the research of anthropologist and psychiatrist Becker conducted with young women and men indicated that 74% of the participants had complained about their physical appearance and thought they were fat and ugly. It is also necessary to note that 62% of the participants immediately had gone on a diet.<sup>92</sup>

As will be discussed in the following chapter, the 1960s was the time period when there was a great change in the editorial staff, content and advertisement perception of gender based women's magazines, particularly *Cosmopolitan*. Correspondingly, not only did the readers of the magazines change with respect to social status, but also there was a boom in their circulations. These magazines were then highlighting the importance of physical appearance that they considered to be a part of sexual freedom, the independent woman and female identity, and they almost entirely diverged from domestic issues. I will touch upon this issue once again in the following chapter.

One other indicator of the discursive and symbolic change of women's physical appearance in the 1960s is the Barbie doll, a popular doll, which was first marketed in the West but then spread around the world and has kept its symbolic meaning until the present

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>92</sup> İnceoğlu and Kar, *Kadın ve Bedeni*, p. 76.



time. This toy, symbolizing the perfect female beauty and body, shows not only how gender roles are constructed on the basis of symbols, but also the relationship between beauty and market society. In this respect, it sets a perfect example for my thesis. Therefore, it will be useful to elaborate a little more on this beauty-icon commodity.

The Barbie doll was launched first in the market in 1959. It quickly became the best-selling doll and toy everywhere. Just as Jacqueline Urla and Alan C. Swedlund, who conducted an anthropological study on Barbie, stated that the doll was thought to symbolize hopes for prosperity, strict gender roles and domestic containment, which were all characteristics of newly rising postwar consumer economy.<sup>93</sup> Marketed as the first teenage fashion doll, Barbie was thought to symbolize hopes for prosperity, strict gender roles and domestic containment which were all the characteristics of newly rising postwar consumer economy. Therefore Barbie's rise in popularity coincided with, and contributed to the postwar teenage lifestyle.<sup>94</sup> Urla and Swedlund argue that the way in which she prompts girls to consume limitlessly with the achievement of femininity and the appearance of an appropriately gendered body is what stars Barbie as an icon of the late capitalist constructions of femininity.<sup>95</sup>

Owning and playing with Barbie dolls almost always requires the owner to buy Barbie accessories as well, such as shoes, extra clothing, housing materials, and jewelry. Barbie seems to have been created with a lust for shopping and consumption. This obviously creates an identity for the doll but more importantly for the owner of the doll. It's no doubt that a realm for the Barbie doll was created to encourage the purchase of Barbie materials, which contributed to constructing a certain way of presentation for the doll but once again constructed the way in which the owner would be presented to the society. As a teenage girl

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<sup>93</sup> Urla and Swedlund, "The Anthropometry of Barbie," p. 280.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 281.

played and spent time with a Barbie doll, she indulged in an act of following Barbie advertisements, pictures or cartoons which clearly led the girl to get into contact with certain beliefs and conducts of femininity, and learn how to become a successful and well-groomed female.<sup>96</sup>

In this sense, Barbie clearly illustrates how gender was made into a “commodity” itself, i.e, “something we can buy into... the same way we buy into a style.”<sup>97</sup> As Susan Willis states, toys like Barbie for girls and HeMan for boys construct a narrowed image of masculinity and femininity, establishing a link with consumer activity.<sup>98</sup> In this way, we can argue that these toys contribute to construct a common but gendered identity among girls and boys who own the toys.

In the seventies, as the women’s movement was more influential, the sexist and gendered portrayal of women was criticized. Parents worried about the possible effects that toys could have on their children, with no exception of Barbie. There was a dramatic decrease in sales of the toy and Mattel, the producer, chose to add diversified careers and forms of identity to the doll in an attempt to create a more up-to-date persona for Barbie. Throughout years, Barbie was transformed into a ballerina, stewardess, athlete, designer, animal rights volunteer and even a marine or astronaut.<sup>99</sup> Mattel argued that the dolls were transformed into different positions or career holders in order to “reflect the activities and professions that modern women are involved in.”<sup>100</sup>

Even if the dolls are produced in different skin tones, ethnicity or costumes at certain times, they look identical, bringing difference into a framework of unity and complying with

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Susan Willis, *A Primer for Daily Life* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 23, quoted in Urla and Swedlund, “The Anthropometry of Barbie,” p. 280.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 282-283.

<sup>100</sup> *Harpers*, August 2, 1990, p. 20, quoted in Urla and Swedlund, “The Anthropometry of Barbie,” p. 283.

the acknowledged standards of feminine body and beauty. It is also striking that the acknowledged standards of female body size, beginning from the seventies in the world, are now pushing women to become thinner and thinner. It is also noteworthy that these standards are obviously repressive, applying a control mechanism on women and forcing them to conform to the already set standards even if in unhealthy ways. In our gendered society, Barbie has become an ideal that most women from different walks of life and age try to achieve though this ideal is somewhat unfeasible. Despite the fact that body size, and molded beauty and facial features of the doll have been “normalized,” in Foucauldian terms, they are obviously excessively artificial and far beyond reality. Put it another way, the Barbie doll is an idealized icon that constructs women’s bodies as hopelessly imperfect.<sup>101</sup> Women get rid of and are emancipated from the bodies they were originally born with, but meanwhile they become exposed to and fall a prey to gendered techniques of cosmetics, surgeries, aerobics, spas, etc. Women seem to be empowered while going through these processes in an attempt to become and remain young and beautiful, yet their bodies become a kind of battleground for identity and gender construction, definitely employed in the service of consumerism and global markets as female bodies are taught to consume and be consumed in return.<sup>102</sup>

From the 1980s, the part that popular women’s magazines and TV played in proliferation of the idealized beauty definitions, body sizes and images into all walks of society expanded. The point at which beauty and body discourses meet a vast industry designates cultural practices based on the physical appearance of our age. As Iris M. Young argues, in male-dominated, patriarchal, capitalist and media-oriented societies, female bodies are objectified, i.e, valued as objects. No matter what the body actually tells us or proves us with its fleshy structure, the media rave about perfect looking body parts through TV channels, magazines, advertisements. They present ways or urge us to do exercises or use

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<sup>101</sup> Urla and Swedlund, “The Anthropometry of Barbie,” p. 305.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 305.

cosmetics to look firm, sexy or beautiful, or tell what to wear or how to stand in order to achieve this non-existent component, even though the addressees may never achieve that idealized look.<sup>103</sup>

Beauty pageants are a good example in this respect. After the 1980s but especially in the early 1990s in the world, beauty pageants were conveyed to hundred millions of people by means of TV. These contests provided an important platform to spread the beauty criteria of contemporary culture. With transnational contests held, they also interlaced local and universal understanding of beauty.<sup>104</sup>

Before concluding I would like to add a few words on how a group of women who have undergone plastic surgery define “beautiful” in our day. According to a field research conducted by İnceoğlu and Kar among women who recently had wanted to change their appearance or had had plastic surgery, beauty has been defined as such by the participants. Above all, beauty was related to the physical appearance for the participants: Proportional body size; big, colorful and bright eyes; full lips; long legs (almost every participant agrees); shining, flat white teeth; slim, thin body with thin bones; beautiful, long hair; bright, lucid skin (white); tall; circular and lifted buttocks; and a wasp waist.<sup>105</sup> The key words that are indicative of the participants’ beauty perception are the same as familiar slogans in visual media and advertisements: Well-groomed, “24-hour care as if going on a stage at any time,” fit, smiling eyes, charismatic, cool, not a loser type, attractive, smiling face, self-confident, self-assured, noble, sex appeal, fashionable.<sup>106</sup> It is no doubt that these definitions were given having been inspired by the beauty icons of our times. The same participants listed the names

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<sup>103</sup> Iris M. Young, “Breasted Experience,” in *The Politics of Women’s Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance and Behaviour*, edited by Rose Weitz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 126-127.

<sup>104</sup> On beauty contests, see Colleen Ballerino Cohen, Richard Wilk, and Beverly Stoeltje, eds., *Beauty Queens on the Global Stage: Gender, Contests, and Power* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>105</sup> İnceoğlu and Kar, *Kadın ve Bedeni*, p. 80.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, p. 80-81.

identified with their definitions this way: Monica Belucci, Charlize Theron, Angelina Jolie, Catherine Deneuve, and so on.

As a conclusion, there is no need to write a great deal in order to prove the influence of media on beauty definitions and discourses. However, what needs to be highlighted is that women have been interested obsessively in and concerned about their physical appearance more than ever especially for the last 30 years. There is yet another equally important fact that the female body is the most important object that becomes prominent in discourses on women in a consumption society and in the media age. A wide range of studies mentioned above reveal that women go through a depressing experience with their bodies under the gaze of others. They have to take great pains for this purpose, but in the end most women come to realize that they will never be able to have idealized body sizes and face features. Nevertheless, diets, plastic surgery, eating disorders, various cosmetic products and many others have become a routine part of daily life for the last 20 years.

In this chapter, I tried to present a conceptual framework related to discourses and practices about beauty and female body in contemporary society. I have emphasized that beauty is not independent of gender relations in a given society, underlining the fact that beauty norms are not eternal, and are constructed in the existing gendered cultural environment. Additionally, I argued that women who try to turn their physical appearance into a part of their social identity under the gaze of others are surrounded by a beauty ideology. Put it this way, beauty norms and standards function as a social control mechanism for women. Focusing on the most prominent magazines issued in the 1990s in the forthcoming chapter, I intend to present the vital role that popular women's magazines played in setting the beauty ideals and norms discussed here and infusing them into women almost as an ideology.

## CHAPTER 3

### OVERVIEW OF TURKEY IN THE 1990S: NEO-LIBERALISM, THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSUMER SOCIETY, THE NEW MIDDLE CLASSES, AND THE POPULAR MEDIA

This thesis examines a certain form of media, i.e, popular women's magazines published in the 1990s. Just like any other media form, women's magazines emerge in a specific economic, social and cultural context. It is only possible under particular conditions for these magazines to circulate, gain acceptance and establish a place in the market. As these magazines carry a commercial attribute, there must be economic dynamics, above all, that will allow the emergence of a new market or launch of new products into the already existing market. It is not rational for any producer to produce a magazine, i.e, a commodity, which is not demanded. Publishers choose to launch a magazine that they believe will be consumed in some way. The risk of failure is always there, but if they can gain profit or achieve their goals, it will mean that they have received an economically logical result. If two of the magazines studied here, *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire*, and a few others that have similar content could survive so far, we can argue that publishing companies have attained their goals in some way. Then what was the economic, social and cultural background that helped these magazines, though not profitable, to survive in the market? Why not in a different time period, but in the late 1980s and 1990s did they emerge and become widespread? Why did women show an interest in these magazines? Is there a connection between women's social composition and economic activities, change in their cultural interests, and magazine's publication policy and expansion? As these magazines became widespread in all parts of the world other than England and the USA in the 1990s, can we talk about a global context? In

this chapter, I am trying to answer these questions. In a nutshell, I aim to form a solid context for the existence and expansion of these magazines. Hence, I will discuss the social and economic transformation obviously experienced in Turkey and describe the background of specific cultural forms in general terms. While doing so, I will concentrate more on points that relate to women and the content of the magazines. Throughout this chapter, I will base my analysis on a certain number of secondary sources except for statistical resources and reference to the magazines.

Turkey witnessed a great social, economic and cultural transformation in the 1990s. The country underwent many new things that they never saw before. If we put the Single Party period to one side, the word “new” was perhaps used the most in this period. Many products, facts, institutions that have become ordinary parts of our lives now were developments that symbolized a big revolution at the time. In this period, Turkey began to be familiar with the free market, free currency, privatizations, perpetual loans taken from the IMF and the WB, shopping only with dollars, private TV and radio channels, private universities, brand new “life style magazines,” tabloid journalism, big shopping malls, fresh new global brands, the advertising sector, new forms of consumption, world cuisine, new distinguished spaces, and many other things. All these followed by others, became a permanent element of Turkish economy, society and culture. However, I should note that as this transformation simultaneously emerged all around the world, it was not a unique and authentic case of Turkey.

### Demographical Change

Above all, there was absolutely a change in the demographic structure. The rate of population increase in the early 1990s, especially in the period from 1990 to 1994, was higher than the

following years. On average, it was above sixteen-thousandth.<sup>107</sup> However, the rate came down late because of population planning and because middle class families consciously began to have fewer children than previous generations. But what is more important here is that as Turkey's population regularly increased in those years, its city population exceeded its rural population. For the first time, it reached 51.32 percent in 1990.<sup>108</sup> And it meant that Turkey's cities and city population expanded more than ever before. The number of provinces and towns along with population density in cities went up.<sup>109</sup> Naturally, this demographic change brought along a process of urbanization that had already started in the 1950s and continued in the 1960s.

The ratio of young population in the total population of Turkey was above that of previous periods.<sup>110</sup> Average life expectancy of men and women regularly increased. An indicator, which is important for our topic, is the stable and fast rise in the literacy rate of women and men. Especially with the advent of the 1990s, the number of literate people rapidly increased in the total population.<sup>111</sup> While the ratio of the literate was 67.48% in 1980, it was 87.32% in 2000.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK), *Nüfus ve Kalkınma Göstergeleri*, Available online at <http://nkg.tuik.gov.tr/form.asp?id=1>. See also, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK), *İstatistiki Göstergeler, 1923-2008* (Ankara: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2009), p. 5 and 8.

<sup>108</sup> TÜİK, *Nüfus ve Kalkınma Göstergeleri*.

<sup>109</sup> TÜİK, *İstatistiki Göstergeler, 1923-2008*, p. 8.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. pp. 17-20.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. p. 21.



### Women in Demographical Figures

The transformation in demographic structure did not mean a quantitative increase in the population of women. The female population was obviously subject to a change qualitatively as well. Just as other segments of the population, the population of women residing in cities increased. The ratio of unmarried women above the age of 15 in the total population began to increase regularly from 1975 and reached 23.8% in 2000.<sup>113</sup> It means that the number and ratio of single women in the total population increased; in other words, the marriage rate decreased. The crude divorce rate was in eclipse from 1996 to 2000.<sup>114</sup> Considering this figures, we can argue that women were able to behave more independently in their choice of partners. The divorce rate was high when compared to pre-1980, but lower than 2000. The average marriage age went up for women and men but could only stay around 22-23.<sup>115</sup>

One more important indicator was that the number of women who benefitted from educational opportunities increased. While women's literacy rose, the ratio of women who received higher education also increased. In 2000, 80.64% of women were literate. Between the years 1990 – 2000, the rise of women's literacy was higher than that of men.<sup>116</sup> This means that women who had educational opportunities increased in those years. Women began to receive education and get specialized in fields identified with men such administration, marketing, law, politics, international relations. As a direct consequence of this, women began to be much more active and visible in business life when compared to past.<sup>117</sup> The number of

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p. 35.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>117</sup> See for more, The World Bank (WB), *Turkey: Women in Development*. (Washington, D.C., The World Bank, 1993); T.C. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü, *Cumhuriyetimizin 75. yılında Türkiye'de Kadının Durumu* (Ankara : T.C. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü, 1998);

women who were employed in agriculture like men decreased as from the 1950s. Thus the ratio of working women in the total population seemed to be declining because women who immigrated to the cities either worked in the informal sector or became housewives. In addition, the increase in women receiving education, and women who were above 15 and still studied must have been effective. However, women's employment in other sectors went up.<sup>118</sup> What is more significant is that the ratio of women employed in financial institution, insurance, transportation, manufacturing, social and personal services sector dramatically rose. The increase rate was higher than that of men.<sup>119</sup> The number of households with women as the head of the family also increased.<sup>120</sup> After all, it meant the expansion of the population of middle class women population. In other words, there emerged a mass of women who were educated, had occupations and careers, resided in cities, could speak many languages, imbibed in global values, refused to marry at an early age and consumed more. This also meant that the social visibility of women, and their effectiveness in business life and public sphere increased, and the reader groups of the magazines studied here were grounded in such a social basis. The rise of young and educated women who were employed, wanted to build careers and move up the social ladder signified a social and cultural change and the emergence of discourses accordingly.

### The Economy of the 1990s: Neo-Liberalism in Turkey in Brief

Turkey liberated its economy and financial policies in the 1980s in a similar way to the radical break emerging previously at the end of the Single-Party period after the Second

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and T.C. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü, *Çalışmaya Hazır İşgücü Olarak Kentli Kadın ve Değişimi* (Ankara : T.C. Başbakanlık Kadının Statüsü ve Sorunları Genel Müdürlüğü, 1999).

<sup>118</sup> TÜİK, *İstatistiki Göstergeler, 1923-2008*, p. 24-25.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

<sup>120</sup> TÜİK, *Nüfus ve Kalkınma Göstergeleri*.

World War and economic liberalization experienced in the DP period. The 1980s is a time known as neo-liberalization period in Turkey, just like in many parts of the world. Within the Turkish context, neo-liberalization referred to a liberal foreign trade regime, an increase in imports, the devaluation of the local currency, inflationist policies, the privatization of state-controlled entities gradually, foreign borrowing, minimum intervention in domestic market and the suppression of wages.<sup>121</sup>

The first steps of economic liberalization were taken on January 24, 1980 with the enforcement of the economic plan, also known as the “January 24 Decisions,” by Turgut Özal, Prime Ministry Undersecretary at the time. Özal, who had worked as the state minister in charge of the economy during the military regime and then was Prime Minister until 1989, is known as the architect of neo-liberal politics in Turkey. The “Özal years” were a time when Turkish economy opened to foreign countries and became internationalized. The national development policy was left aside, and international institutions began to be more effective in the Turkish economy. During this process, limitations on interest rates were removed in 1981, exchange selling and purchasing was liberalized in 1984, and foreign exchange controls were completely removed in 1989 and domestic capital movement was liberalized. Thus financial markets in Turkey became open to global competition. This period also referred to the abandonment of the growth model based on import substitution and the adaptation of an economic model centered on importing under open economy conditions.<sup>122</sup>

At the end of this process, the national economy became more foreign dependent, the real production structure was pushed to fluctuate, and rent-seeking behavior was fed, thus leading to an unbalance in income distribution in favor of the upper classes. For that reason,

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<sup>121</sup> For a detailed analysis of neo-liberal economic policies in Turkey, see Erinç Yeldan, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Türkiye Ekonomisi: Bölüşüm, Birikim, Büyüme* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002), pp. 54-62; and Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi, 1908-2002* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2005), pp. 145-169.

<sup>122</sup> For a brief summary, Şevket Pamuk, “Economic Change in Twentieth-Century Turkey: Is the Glass More than Half Full?” in *Turkey in the Modern World*, edited by Reşat Kasaba, The Cambridge History of Turkey 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 286-289.

the Özal years also are known as the time when “the rich became richer.” The incomes of businessmen, industrialists, administrators and technocrats increased. Big companies expanded and monopolization increased. The two sides of liberalism in Turkey was formed, on the one hand, by the dramatically rising wealth of a narrower population segment of elites who could benefit from health and educational services and who lived in new buildings, and took advantage of the economic policies of the time, and on the other hand, by the masses who directly limited themselves to interest payments of domestic debts, and were far from getting a sufficient share from a capital budget.<sup>123</sup>

Leaving aside the technical details, Turkish society went through a great economy-oriented social transformation. The adaptation of a more liberalized trade regime revolutionized both production and consumption forms. In this period, the term “market” was at the heart of all economic and political discussions. The economy was at the center of daily life in every way. Likewise, words like “holding,” “company,” “stock exchange,” “foreign exchange market,” “dollar,” “mark,” “inflation,” and “personal investment” became a part of daily life. “Class” (*klas*), “elite” (*seçkin*) and “privilege” (*ayrıcalık*) implied an affirmation in any case. As Meltem Ahıska and Zafer Yenel point out, this new age was a time of personal pursuits and individualism. Life rapidly became more commercial, and consumption was the main target, and opportunism, the desire to become successful and rich in the quickest way by watching for an opportunity, was no longer a thing to be condemned.<sup>124</sup> In such a time period, there is a close relation between the existence of popular women’s magazine and the commercialization of the female body, the improvement of cosmetics and fashion industries and the representation of global lifestyles as ideal models.

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<sup>123</sup> Yeldan, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Türkiye Ekonomisi*, pp. 155-157.

<sup>124</sup> Meltem Ahıska and Zafer Yenel, *Aradığınız Kişiyse şu An Ulaşılamıyor: Türkiye’de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri, 1980-2005* (İstanbul: Osmanlı Bankası Arşiv ve Araştırma Merkezi, 2006), p. 56.

## The Development of Consumer Society

The new economic order experienced in Turkey after 1980 pushed up the income level of the middle and upper classes and thus the middle class began to expand.<sup>125</sup> With the introduction of a new liberal import regime, products that had been found rarely before and had been considered luxury consumption began to be brought into Turkey. Markets in Turkey were full of imported products more than ever before. For instance, the sale of foreign cigarettes and alcoholic beverages, which had been banned from entering the country due to *TEKEL* (Turkish Monopoly) in the markets, imported cars, the introduction of the newest European and American brands into shopping places, the emergence of exchange offices, the use of dollars and marks in the real estate market in the big cities were the most striking symbols of the transformation.

Turkey became acquainted with the term “consumer society” in this period. It is no doubt that the history of consumer society is parallel to the history of capitalism. The consumption of goods and services apart from vital needs, though limited to the privileged classes only, is even older than capitalism itself. Here the main difference is that production variety goes up and consumption becomes a social activity all by itself.<sup>126</sup> What has changed in neoliberal times is that all segments in society shape their lives according to consumption values as a result of media, advertising and marketing techniques.

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<sup>125</sup> What I mean by “middle class” is not civil servants and bureaucrats but company managers, consultants, engineers, stock market experts, etc. The growth of private sector, the expansion of free market, enlargement of the media and advertising and new production organizations paved the way for the emergence of a new “white collared” population in Turkey just as in the world that were not “rich by birth,” but were the children of middle class families and had good education. Administrators closer to the upper classes, who are now called CEOs, have become the new elites of Turkey.

<sup>126</sup> See Don Slater, *Consumer Culture and Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: Sage Publications, 1998); Lury, *Consumer Culture*.

Canan Barlas, who followed the change experienced in Turkey in the late 1980s and supported this change, applauded the rise of a consumer society in Turkey in two separate articles:

Today ANAP establishes the motto go-getter rather than a defense of an ideology. It is a matter of bringing service instead of an ideology. To an extent, it attaches importance to personal values, and presents consumer society. *It brings forth people who differentiate by consuming.* One day the coffeehouses in İstanbul will be like the ones in Paris... People from İstanbul will be like those from Paris and enjoy being people from different worlds.<sup>127</sup>

We are on the verge of a night without return... While Turkey is checking over secularism on the one hand... it displays characteristics of becoming a 'consumer society' on the other. *Bayram* breaks turns into summer holidays of the masses and trillions are spent for that purpose... A country that has not completely set its infrastructure but moves heaven and earth to become a consumer society.<sup>128</sup>

One should not think that the expression "moving heaven and earth" has a negative connotation. Authors like Barlas interpreted Turkey's efforts as moving towards a more elite world. From the standpoint of the elites for whom they took over as sort of spokes people, they welcomed Turkey's integration with neo-liberalism.

Similarly, Güneri Civaoglu described the relationship between the transformation in Turkey in the 1990s and the media by way of the following example:

It was prior to 1980. The editor of the *New York Times*'s supplement, which was called cash cow because it brought in the highest advertisement income, was in İstanbul for holiday. We were sipping a glass of rakı on the balcony of Hotel Sheraton and chatting away while watching İstanbul. The man asked for a cigarette. He smoked Marlboro. We could not find it. After meal, he was said to have asked for coffee, and it could not be provided either... There were no cigarettes, light bulbs or oil at that time. He told me 'I

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<sup>127</sup> Canan Barlas, "Paris Kahveleri ve Bireysellik," *Güneş*, 15 Temmuz 1987, quoted in Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayat'tan Life Style'a*, p. 32. "Bugün ANAP bir ideolojinin savunması yerine 'işbiricilik' sloganını yerleştiriyor. Burada bir ideoloji yerine hizmet götürme meselesi ortaya çıkıyor... Bir ölçüde bireysel değerlere önem veriyor. Tüketim toplumunu sunuyor. Tüketererek farklılaşan insanları gündeme getiriyor. Günün birinde İstanbul'daki kahveler Paris'teki gibi olacak... İstanbullular Parisliler gibi olacak ve farklı dünyaların insanı olmanın tadına varacak."

<sup>128</sup> Canan Barlas, "Dönülmez Akşamın Ufkundayız," *Milliyet*, 15 Eylül 1990, quoted in Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayat'tan Life Style'a*, p. 32-33. "Dönülmez akşamın ufkundayız... Türkiye bir yandan laikliği gözden geçirirken... bir yandan da 'tüketim toplumu' olma özellikleri gösteriyor. Bayram tatili kitlelerin yaz tatili biçimine dönüşüyor ve trilyonlar bu uğurda harcanıyor... Altyapısı tamamlanmamış bir ülke ama tüketim toplumu olmak için çırpınıyor."

understand your economy. No currency but the underground sector has not been improved either. In a metropolitan city, at such a hotel, even if you do not officially offer coffee, or cigarettes, you should do it under-the-counter. You have so few restaurants, bars, and the entertainment sector is not developed as well.’ ‘Tabloid journalism does not work under such conditions. Your paper sales also would be low,’ he commented... Over the years we have come to own them all...<sup>129</sup>

Actually, Civaoglu was writing about the “backwardness” of the 80s instead of the media.

However, it is remarkable that the guest editor started with the lack of certain products and led up to tabloid journalism and the ineffectiveness of the media. The fact that Turkey began to have foreign cigarettes, coffee, luxurious restaurants and tabloid journalism all at once in the 1990s indicates a close relationship between them. One should always remember that newspapers that offered dinner sets and other enticements to encourage privatization and imported products only, the placement of “end cover girl” on the back pages and entrance of magazine news everywhere are all fruits of the same period.

What, how and where individuals consume is definitely a social activity and its social attribution changes from time to time. Since consumption habits and forms can be learned, changed and oriented, trends, fashion and advertisement have a significant place in capitalist societies. Advertising income sets the main source for every type of media form that has a commercial purpose, but consumption is not shaped only through advertisements. The media does more than that, and in this sense, the media of the 1990s represents a turning point for Turkey.

Especially in contemporary societies, life styles cannot be dissociated from consumption. Certain forms of life styles are symbolized by the subjects and activities

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<sup>129</sup> *Sabah*, 6 January 1993, Bali, *Tarzi Hayat'tan Lifestyle'a*, p. 58. “1980 öncesiydi. New York Times'ın en çok ilan geliri sağladığı için ‘nakit ineği’ (cash cow) denilen ekinin editörü tatil için İstanbul'daydı. Sheraton Otel'i'nin balkonunda birer kadeh rakı yudumluyor, İstanbul'u seyrederek laflıyorduk. Adam sigara istedi. Marlboro içiyordu. Bulamadık. Yemekten sonra kahve istemiş, o da yokmuş... O zaman ne sigara ne ampul ne de benzin var. Bana ‘Ekonominizi anlıyorum. Doviz yok, ama yeraltı sektörünüz de gelişmemiş. Bir metropolde, böyle bir otelde, kahve, sigara resmen yoksa bile tezgah altında bulunmalıdır. Restoranlarınız, barlarınız az, eğlence sektörünüz de gelişmemiş’ demişti. ‘Böyle bir ortamda magazin gazeteceliği de olmaz. Gazete satışlarınız da az olur’ gibi yorumlar yapmıştı... Yıllar içinde işte hepsine sahip olduk...”

consumed. One of the differences that characterize the media of the 1980s in Turkey and the world is that they established close relationships with the market and oriented towards “life style” publishing. Not only the popular women’s magazines studied in this thesis, but all commercial media forms mediated to shape contemporary culture and disseminate consumption ideals. The media, offering lifestyles and facilitating their diffusion consequently functions as a carrier of specific symbols, values, products and brands. For that reason, it is necessary to consider both the newly emerging life style publishing and the transformation of traditional media in Turkey of the 1980s and 1990s within the context of neoliberal capitalism requirements and strategies. In this respect, the change that occurred in the Turkish media in the 1990s is inevitably related to Turkey’s experience of neoliberal transformation.

In conclusion, existing by way of consuming and shopping became a social phenomenon in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s. Imported products secured a place in shop windows with the enforcement of free market economy. New places and new shopping centers where everything could be consumed at the same time emerged. They were all indicators of not only an economic, but a cultural change as well. Using these new places was a cultural indicator for the new middle classes. The new shopping malls became symbols of complying with Western life and global trends. As Ahıska and Yenal state, desires and ideals were indexed to consumption more. Life was consumption and consumption meant existence.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ahıska and Yenal, *Türkiye’de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri, 1980-2005*, p. 82 and 84.



### The New Urban Young Middle Classes

“The Özal years,” also implied the emergence of a new type of middle class in Turkey.

However, what described the new middle class as new was their culture rather than class constitution, political choices or geographical distribution.<sup>131</sup> It is possible to define this new young middle class as those cheerful, cynical, white-collared staff employed in the middle-high level administrative positions of multinational companies in financing, banking, insurance, and stock exchange markets who come from middle class families. They mostly studied management, economics or engineering departments at the distinguished schools of Turkey, and most probably received MBA degrees abroad or in Turkey. They can speak foreign languages, follow global trends, and continuously wish to climb the social ladder. Though the segments of this class that were employed at lower positions later noticed, especially at the time of economic crises, that they were a sort of white collared workers, they were envied by the new generation in the 1980s and mid-1990s. Management, economics and engineering were the most popular departments at universities. Those who studied in these departments believed that they had secured the ability to move up the social ladder.

The media of the 1990s in Turkey particularly created a number of typologies, ideal characters and profiles, and thus produced various cultural identities. These were definitely a reflection of specific global, but rather of an American based, movements and discourses. Yuppie, urban, hick, contemporary woman, contemporary man, new woman, lowbrow man, and metro-sexual man were only a few of them. “Yuppie” was one other word that settled in the cultural atmosphere of Turkey in the 1980s. This word was coined in the US with the first

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<sup>131</sup> Please take a look at these studies that have acquired an important place in literature with respect to conceptualisation of “new middle classes” or “new elites” and social and cultural profile of this class: Ali Şimşek, *Yeni Orta Sınıf* (Istanbul: Leyla ile Mecnun Yayıncılık, 2005); Can Kozanoğlu, *Yeni Şehir Notları* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001); Hayri Kozanoğlu, *Yuppiler, Prenslar ve Bizim Kuşak* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993); Ahıska and Yenal, *Türkiye’de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri*; and, Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayat’tan Life Style’a*.

letter of the words “young, urban, professional.”<sup>132</sup> Yuppie referred to a new middle class that worked in the administrative positions of private companies, were keen on consuming, and were in search of global trends. This term quickly became established in the daily language in many countries in addition to Turkey. Such terms solidly indicate the rapid dissemination of global cultural values.

The fact that R. N. Bali interprets as “desire to be elite” is the ideal and effort of a young mass that come from educated middle class families. Bali underlines that the press had played an active role in that. Going beyond the function of breaking the news, the press informed readers of how and where to consume from the end of the 1980s, and thus kept the desire for a more privileged life fresh.<sup>133</sup> The main objectives of this young group were to spend more, get possession of things that very few people could afford, consume more, emphasize their difference, and visit the best places.

In this sense, the consumption patterns adopted were one of the most important characteristics that made the new middle classes familiar. As mentioned above, consumption had not been an activity carried out by a person to meet needs in the 1980s and 1990s but had become a symbol and an indicator of cultural capital. While it was always like that for upper classes, consumption became a unit of class belonging to the middle classes as well in the 1990s. Owning specific brand products, dressing up in the latest fashions, following the trends and creating a style set the content of consumption. As Ahıska and Yenal mention, what was more striking was that upper class life styles, tastes, values and ideals became hegemonic in society in general.<sup>134</sup> The media, especially the private TV channels and gender-based

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<sup>132</sup> Ahıska and Yenal, *Türkiye’de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri*, p. 60. For the most notable study regarding Yuppies, see Kozanoğlu, *Yuppiler, Prensler ve Bizim Kuşak*. For a short description of Yuppies and a comparison with their successor, the new privileged class, *bobos* (Bourgeois Bohemian, or Bourgeois Boheme in French), see Kübra Parmaksızoğlu, *Bobos in Turkey: Manifestations of the Bourgeois Bohemian Lifestyle in Istanbul* (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2009), pp. 47-54.

<sup>133</sup> Bali, *Tarzı Hayat’tan Lifestyle’a*, p. 57-58.

<sup>134</sup> Ahıska and Yenal, *Türkiye’de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri*, p. 65.

magazines that emerged in the 1990s, played significant roles in the fact that all segments of society had their eyes on specific styles and ideals.

### Discovery of the Concept of “Life Style,” Fashion, and Popular Media

“Life style” was one of the key words that entered into the vocabulary of the 1980s. In the 1990s, there was a frequent emphasis on a new age. “New” or “new age” was mostly used when economy and culture were in question. It appeared that people believed the most significant novelty was the one in lifestyles. The modeling of life styles was a product of this period. Life styles constructed across the world could be taken to localities, turned into a fashion or sold in this period because culture and market had already been integrated.<sup>135</sup>

Clothes, cosmetics, food and beverages, spending spare time and entertainment venues, weekly and monthly magazines, and holiday preferences all referred to a life style. Consumed goods, body and outer appearance were defined in specific social and personal virtues.

As Ahiska and Yenal point out, we live in an age when everyone is continuously after novelties. New concepts, new words, new values, new ideals and new trends are on the rise.<sup>136</sup> In the meantime fashion forms one of the most “innovative” areas. New concepts, products and brands unceasingly are produced in the fashion world. If life style was one of the key words of the 1990s, then the best way to indicate life style was to dress up and act in conformity with fashion. Clothes were presented in the market and consumed as indicators symbolizing existence. Commodities were personified and referred to a belonging through brands. Young women and men who wanted to make certain cultural practices and thus identify themselves with cultural identities prompted by the media and market, in other words,

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. p. 370.

who want to join the “contemporary culture community,”<sup>137</sup> became addicted to following fashion and brands. This process, completely in conformity with global capitalist strategies, was principally directed by the “life style media.” For that reason, the place allocated by the magazines to fashion totally was associated with the global cultural logic of the 1990s. As femininity and female subjectivities are constructed on the basis of fashion, it is necessary to mention separately the influences of the magazines on women. Turkey did not become familiar with fashion and fashion magazines in the 1990s, but it was exactly from this time forward that they became most influential.

Life styles principally are pumped or transformed by means of the new popular media in Turkey and on a global level. Above all, the removal of the state monopoly on TV broadcasting in the early 1990s paved the way for a new market. Cultural trends, discourses on the body, and ideal types reached every segment of society thanks to the media. The owners and managers of private TV channels, founded to gain profit, took global practices as an example and developed various policies and strategies in order to further keep the audience attached to the TV. More sensational, interesting and absorbing programs were given priority. For that purpose, life stories, personal lives, life styles and the feelings of celebrities, in the first place, and then of ordinary people became almost like a public issue. Making an appearance on TV was regarded as a privilege. Therefore “seeing”, “showing” and “appearing” tremendously changed content of contemporary culture.<sup>138</sup> It is necessary to analyze the media forms in the 1990s and existence and publication policies of the magazines examined in this thesis within the context of this boom in vision.

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<sup>137</sup> Zygmunt Bauman conceptualizes the individuals’ wish and insistence to define themselves with a community in contemporary culture as neo-tribalism, see, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), quoted in Ahiska and Yenal, *Türkiye’de Hayat Tarzı Temsilleri*, p. 244.

<sup>138</sup> Two important works on seeing and showing are pioneering for contemporary cultural studies: Guy Debord, *The Society of Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995); and John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972).

Similarly, in parallel with the enormous growth of the media and its proliferation into every part of life, ordinary people began to be informed of almost everything about celebrities ranging from income to marital status, tastes in holidays, and personal choices to political opinions. The fact that they were all in the public eye principally pushed ordinary people to imitate their lives. Choices that seemed to be personal indeed such as dressing style, accessories, cosmetic products and places they visited began to be perceived as a sign for a specific ideal. When it becomes a desire for everyone to attain this ideal, cultural values rapidly change. It is undoubtedly valid for womanhood ideals. The media in the 1990s set the most important platform for re-discovering and establishing femininity.

The popular women's magazines examined in this thesis emerged and gained recognition of readers in such an economic, social and cultural context. During such a transformation period, these women's magazines, which had a specific discourse on female beauty, body and sexuality, functioned as carriers of American and European-based global values, sent out feminist or post-feminist messages based on individualization, liberation, self-confidence and career, and attempted to construct the "ideal woman" of the 1990s, largely occupied a permanent place in Turkey's market.

## CHAPTER 4

### CREATING “IDEAL BODIES”: DISCOURSES ON FEMALE BEAUTY, THE BODY AND SEXUALITY IN POPULAR WOMEN’S MAGAZINES

The objective of this chapter is to analyze the discourses on female beauty, body and sexuality produced in the 1990s by the popular women’s magazines under scrutiny in this study.

Primarily, I discuss the part played by these magazines in construction and dissemination of the meanings and values attributed to female beauty. I question the anxiety aroused in women about their physical appearance by these magazines that give beauty and body care tips and recipes to readers, i.e women in vast majority. I highlight that the magazines produce a paradox in the sense that they advise women to liberate and re-discover their selves, on the one hand, and impose on them beauty norms that are externally determined. In sections related to the body, depending on textual analysis from the magazines, I draw attention as to how the body is perceived as an enemy and regarded as an “object” to be disciplined in contemporary culture when it is not in a desired and ideal form. In the sections dedicated to sexuality, I take an interest in the “sexual liberty” discourse of the magazines and what kind of a sexual subjectivity they intended to construct. These three points give us the opportunity to discuss representations of the body, sexual function of which is underscored in contemporary culture. Before moving on to analysis, I prefer to give general background information about the magazines.

When we make a theme-based categorization in the content of the magazines, *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire*, the mostly covered ones, are beauty and sex, body care,

fashion, women-men relationships.<sup>139</sup> Other topics may vary, but these are primarily advice, tips, “styles” or alternatives for travels, city life, entertainment, cinema, music, food culture and so on. In general, there is a monthly or bimonthly coverage of feature articles, research or interviews related to the social, economic, and psychological problems of women. Though rarely, topics like the women’s movement, women’s role in politics, and feminism also are treated. Almost in each monthly issue, *Cosmopolitan* allocates space to columns such as Cosmo Form, Cosmo Health, Cosmo Beauty, Cosmo Music, Cosmo Travel, and Cosmo Book. In these columns, we observe tips, advice, formulas or recipes which were outstanding characteristics of popular women’s magazines especially after the 1980s, and of course product promotions from related areas but mainly related to beauty and body care. Since its inception in Turkey, *Marie Claire* has been printing unchanging columns dedicated to topics like “New Beauty” or “New Fashion” in order to serve a similar purpose.

When we consider the page number, the advertisements between the sections take up the most space. Predictably cosmetics, clothing, jewelry and accessories, and though rarely, household appliances are featured. The language, symbols and content of advertisements, no doubt, make up a research subject all by itself. A considerable part of gender studies have been focused on how gender identities are constructed or represented in advertisements.<sup>140</sup> In this study, I am not separately scrutinizing the advertisements in the magazines but I am particularly interested in the “total/combined” texts that emerge as texts regarding beauty, body and sex most often are connected directly by the magazine administration to the products presented in the advertisements.

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<sup>139</sup> For instance, in *Cosmopolitan* issue March 1996, some headings can give an idea to the readers of topic distribution: *Kadın Olmak Güzeldir*; *Cosmo Seks Araştırması Sonuçları*; *Türkiye’de Cosmo Kızları ve Seks*; *Kıyasıya Rekabet* (about competition among women); *Bu Gece Onu Baştan Çıkarın*, *Gardrobunuz da İlgi İster*; *Cosmo Kariyer*; *Cosmo Güzellik (Dudaklarınız Sizi Ele Veriyor!)*; *Cosmo Stil* (about hair styles); *Yıldızların Güzellik Sırları*; *Bir Asi Güzel*; Cindy Crawford (interview). These sections occupy three fourths of the magazine.

<sup>140</sup> See, for example, Winship, *Inside Women’s Magazines*.

In addition to common points, there are certain differences between these two glossies. For instance, *Marie Claire* allocates a certain amount of space to cultural and social issues along with beauty, love and sex. It is possible to find in each issue a section concentrated on issues like topics like war and women, environmental problems, the women's movement, current political problems, alcoholism, urban planning and urbanization, the problems of university education, and political ideologies. The magazine can offer you a chance to read interviews with academic scholars such as Ayşe Öncü, Ünsal Oskay, İlhan Tekeli, or though very rarely, feminists' articles. *Marie Claire* does not give as much space as *Cosmopolitan* to sexuality, and any part of an article related to sexuality is distinctly different from that of *Cosmo* in terms of content and language style. For instance, it is not possible to find in *Marie Claire* a piece on sexual fantasies or how women should please a man. It is not so easy to read a single issue of *Cosmopolitan* that does not deal with sex but it is common that *Marie Claire* does not treat sex or sexuality for several months. However, it is still likely that there is an article about things much as the secrets of being sexy, orgasm, or male sexuality. *Marie Claire* places more emphasis on beauty tips and formulas, and thus beauty, cosmetics and fashion sometimes make up the greater part of the magazine. More than half of these pages are naturally left to special advertisements or collection promotions.

The sales rates of the magazines are highly different from those of the sister editions published in Europe and America. The average circulation of *Cosmopolitan* in 1995 was 24,371 while it was 8,747 for *Marie Claire*. *Cosmopolitan* sold nearly 420,000 in Britain almost around the same date.<sup>141</sup> In its own category, *Cosmopolitan* was the most widely read magazine along with *Elele* in Turkey. Circulations of the magazines reflect almost the same figures in our time. According to 2006 figures, *Cosmopolitan* is still one of the 10 most

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<sup>141</sup> Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, pp. 283-286.



widely read magazines. Among them, *Elle* is also relevant to our discussion.<sup>142</sup> However, we can assume that reader profile can vary as these magazines are put to display for clients to pass time in coiffeurs, beauty centers, tailor shops, boutiques, dental clinics or doctor's offices.

As for the reader profile, according to the statics given by *Cosmopolitan*, 50.7% of *Cosmopolitan* Turkey readers are in the 18-24 age range, and 29.6% are in the 25-29 age range. While 53.5% are employed women, students make up 35.2% of the readers are student. Again, according to the same results, 69.4% of the readers are unmarried women/spinsters while 76.4% are single at the time.<sup>143</sup> When the content and discourses of the magazine are taken into account, it is obvious that the target audience is young and young-middle aged, city dwelling, educated, middle class women. When we take into account that there is a vast mass of readers who do not buy the magazines but chance upon them in several places, we can argue that the reader profile can vary.

Two of the magazines I analyze in the thesis, *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire*, were and are published with the identical name in various countries in Europe, America and Asia as franchises of the USA and France-centered media monopolies. Some of the articles in the magazines were included in all country editions in the same month while some were dedicated to local issues. Despite variety of topics, we observe that there was a common discourse, language and topic selection in the magazine. For instance, when we consider the American edition of *Cosmopolitan*.<sup>144</sup> Therefore magazines of this type became widespread across the world especially in the 1990s, and mediated not only to construct contemporary womanhood but also to expand global economic and cultural discourse, viewpoint and values.

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<sup>142</sup> Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı Bilgi Toplumu Stratejisi, *İletişim Stratejisi Çerçevesi* (Ankara: T.C. Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2006), p. 31. According to 2006 figures, *Cosmo Girl*: 23,562; *Cosmopolitan*: 28,781, *Marie Claire*: 9,440, *Elle*: 27,512, *Elele*: 14,763.

<sup>143</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1996

<sup>144</sup> For a comparison, see Jui-shan Chang, "Refashioning Womanhood in 1990s Taiwan: An Analysis of the Taiwanese Edition of 'Cosmopolitan' Magazine," *Modern China* 30, no. 3 (2004), pp. 361-397.

These magazines, drawing a specific type of woman, never get attached only to national borders. For instance, nationality had until that time been absolutely emphasized since the 1890s when portraying a new type of woman in the media: The American woman, the Frenchwoman, etc; however, these magazines as the representatives of global movements and connections could go beyond national discourses. The new type of women, women of the 1990s, women of the year, the most successful 100 women etc. have never been selected within a single national border. This illustrates how global values, symbols and inclinations have been spread by way of the media, and projects how they have been constructed as well.

The density of topics like body and sexuality, and the way these topics are treated are determined on the basis of a balance kept between how far editors can go and to what extent readers can accept to emulate them. In a sense, the editorial board try to push the limits as far as possible and readers expand the limits as much as possible. Properly speaking, magazines are full of varieties and contradictions just like the societies in which they emerge. The fact that they address a specific audience of women does not necessarily narrow the topic variety or tips. For that reason, they sometimes choose to tell women “how to keep their men,” or sometimes assert that “break-up and loneliness are not boring at all.” They are sometimes inclined to make propaganda of sex or sometimes rave about love. This contradictory attitude is related to the variety of things that women experience throughout their lives, but especially when they are young.

The magazines try to embrace all of them, but there is a limit to the variety. They are not speaking to every woman and they are not talking either in a language that every woman can understand. They have a certain standpoint towards womanhood, femininity, gender, beauty, body, and sexuality. As will be discussed in the next chapter, an amalgamation of all these correspond to the image of “new woman” applauded in the 1990s.

Such magazines aim to teach, or at least give advice on how, their readers should participate in the social life of which they are a part. In other words, all these women's magazines try to ensure the participation of a particular female identity into a gendered social sphere.

### The Secrets of Beauty

Isn't it remarkable that a magazine of 116 pages dedicates 50 pages to beauty? It is only an average example, and there are issues with many more pages allocated for beauty. What is more, if we consider the fact that 32 out of these 116 pages directly come with advertisements, it will clearly indicate how important a role beauty plays in the magazine.<sup>145</sup> If a magazine abstains from categorizing itself a magazine of beauty and fashion, or women and beauty etc. but declares itself to be a women's magazine, then how can we explain their inclination to leave almost half of their total page number to the "matter" of beauty? A rough analysis can help us to understand in a little while one of the primary goals sought by these magazines: bringing to light any possible recipes that will help women achieve an ideal face and body. In these magazines readers will find the secrets to become a healthy, beautiful, sexy and successful. In this respect, the pages in the magazines are nearly loaded with tips and advice, and it would not even be incorrect to call them an overload of orders. When the reader exactly complies with this advice, she will be able to catch up with the form of woman idealized in contemporary culture. In addition, the assumption is not covertly or implicitly presented. The reader will immediately notice in the very first pages how gender is constructed through a body discourse. It is no doubt that there is always a mass of women who questions this discourse. However, it is equally no doubt that these magazines deeply

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<sup>145</sup> See *Marie Claire*, February 1990.

influence the relationship that readers establish with their own bodies, and their own gender perception.

Women's magazines underscore such an argument: though they claim the opposite, men first look at women's physical appearance. So what should be done? If women lend an ear to the secrets, formulas, recipes and tips given by the magazines, they can create their self and manage their relationships with the opposite sex "in the desired way." In an article featured in *Cosmopolitan*, it says "for a man, a trip with the lover at the weekend may only mean a two-day rest, but for a woman it definitely is a two-week massive preparation."<sup>146</sup> But why? Why do the two sexes differ so much in terms of their preparations for a trip? The magazine does not question it and takes sexual differences as they come. So to say, woman behaves as such by her very nature. However, a trip or holiday, and getting ready for a holiday or this preparation as a burden for women are all fruits of a very recent past. Such examples can help to understand the media's contribution to construct a gender identity.

So what are those involved for women in this period of preparation as in the example? The magazine actually comes to mean "there should be" when it says "there are." "Steps to perfection" starts with an appointment with the coiffeur (to get rid of body hair) and the emotional support of girl friends. Clothes, lingerie and diet come next. "Creams that soften the body and sweep away the cellulites are sought" and various kinds of cosmetic products are purchased. In the final stage, a new suitcase is bought, and a final check for hair and a clear and soft body. This process is thoroughly described in the magazine. Though caricaturized a little in narration, each step still summarizes the concerns of women about their physical appearance in contemporary culture. If you fail to follow this given sequence while getting ready for a holiday, it still works as most of the steps given in the checklist are relevant to

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<sup>146</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, April 1996.

women: a body free of hair, a flat tummy, shiny hair, sexy lingerie, and all sorts of cosmetic products are, so to say, parts of the female identity.

According to a feature writer of *Cosmopolitan*, beauty, as one of the steps to success, is “actually a qualification that you can acquire just like cooking or playing tennis. Purely, it is enough to know what should be done.”<sup>147</sup> The writer will tell you what you should do in the magazine. Again in the same magazine, when we give heed to an article titled “Beauty Secrets of Celebrities” saying, “if you think that celebrities are beautiful from birth, you are totally mistaken. They all have little secrets to conceal their *defects*. Would like to learn how your favourite stars *transform* themselves into a Venus?.” We see that it shows female face and body are “instruments” that can be juggled and shaped.<sup>148</sup> The most famous figures of the time resort to various methods in order to conceal what they perceive as “defects”: “small eyes can be made to look bigger with eye shadow,” “eyelid disadvantages can be resolved with dark mascara,” and so on.

As will be discussed below, the popular women’s magazines analyzed as part of this study also put a special emphasis on the independence of the 1990s women and invited women to become free in their sex and work life. There was a paradox between these magazines with a tone of instructor and an overload of tips and advice, and their call to women for independence. While constantly telling women “it is your body,” the series of tips presented appear to be a power to which women should surrender. While invited to be herself, she is actually forced to obey rules that she had not really set. In a similar way, the discourse of independence sets a clear paradox here because these magazines reveal that their tips and secrets appeal to please men’s eyes, or put it differently, they acknowledge by definition that they motivate women to present their bodies to men. Thus the most remarkable contradiction

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<sup>147</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, May 1997.

<sup>148</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1996.

exhibited by these magazines is between beauty norms, externally defined and imposed, and independence discourse.

In a similar vein, in a feature article titled “A Beauty Manifest,” two aspects of the new woman image are put forward: Being yourself and courage.<sup>149</sup> While beauty standards and norms are set by the magazines we are dealing with and other media forms, how can a woman manage to be “herself”? It is totally rhetorical because a human does not have an essence. How can women’s magazines invite women to be themselves while, at the same time, giving hundreds of tips and recipes to them to become beautiful? It is a paradox as in the discussion on independence.

### You Women! Consume for Your Beauty and Body!

As underlined above, magazines are packed with recipes and formulas for beauty and body care. And formulas could not function without instruments. Magazines’ advertising strategies and their function in motivating to consume come at the point where these instruments are presented to readers. In fact, women have been bombarded by such these magazines with advertisements and commercials for weight-loss products, cosmetics, make-up materials, beauty centers since the 1980s. In a triangle of contemporary capitalism, consumption and popular culture, the rising concerns of women about their physical appearance led them to consume more and more. As Kathy Peiss stresses, selling, marketing, and projecting beauty became more important to the workings of a global, media-oriented economy. Commerce, in turn, linked goods, looks, status, and identity to influence how cultures defined the norms of appearance for women and men.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> *Marie Claire*, December 1990.

<sup>150</sup> Peiss, “On Beauty,” p. 20.

Winship suggests that the advertising in women's magazines has an important role in redefining beauty's meaning. She further claims that this advertising business has promoted the idea that beauty is not a "natural given," but a qualification that any women can attain, but only by courtesy of the correct aids or products.<sup>151</sup> To that end, every part of the female body, every single organ or feature, is taken separately to be improved, shaped, managed and constructed. As Winship puts forth briefly and to the point, through advertising, woman is represented as "the field of action for various products."<sup>152</sup>

But how does advertising drive women to buy? In other words, how can advertising ignite the desires of women to consume in order to attain the beauty they dream of? Again Winship has a quick but clever answer to this question: anxiety.<sup>153</sup> A woman anxious about not being liked because she is not as perfect as others is whom the advertisement targets. If women cannot measure up to perfectness or idealized standards, they will not be appreciated. All those seductive pictures and commodities presented in exciting formats are there set to work to perfect and glamourize your bodies so that you can compete when there are all other bodies around already perfected. So there is an ideal of beauty and physical appearance to be attained, which is imposed on women, through an endless variety of products and work on each and every part of the body. Every single part of the female body is now open to consumption and the market.

In this sense, tens of pages of advertisements, images and texts, presented products that will "help" women in line with the constructed beauty standards. Mostly there are messages such as "every woman can be pretty if she consumes the given products," "you also have the right to be beautiful!", "well-groomed and conscious women really know which instruments to use." The audience to which they are speaking is the target group of beauty and

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<sup>151</sup> Lury, *Consumer Culture*, p. 134.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

cosmetics industry. The fact that not only famous and rich people but also ordinary people turn physical appearance into an essential concern or even a matter of existence has provided a social basis for magazines' function to urge to consume.

For instance, *Marie Claire* refers to the growth of the beauty industry and says “we see that care products have been incredibly improved in the last ten years.”<sup>154</sup> One other issue draws attention to the relationship between the change in beauty perception and production strategies of the beauty industry:

Women have changed ... So beauty perception also has to change. It means that beauty products should be of the type that can meet the new demands, the new needs of women. What do women want? More freedom, more activity, more capacity to move. And the beauty perception of the future is hidden behind these words. Nobody has time to spin wheels, and everyone is after the benefit. Beauty perception is hidden behind these words. Beauty perception is entering the age of “benefit.”<sup>155</sup>

Absolutely there is a brand or product promotion not only in advertisement sections, but also in every piece of article related to beauty. Such advertisements sometimes refer to the whole sector or to a specific product or brand at times. Basic concerns or the most common “problems” regarding physical appearance are pushed forward, and the “solutions” of the industry are explained accordingly. For instance, an article says “Some people are luckier by birth. They do not have an extremely sensitive, thin or dry skin... How unfair it is! Luckily, cosmetics come to rescue us...”<sup>156</sup> Here is another one that asserts, “The latest techniques work a miracle in your fight against wrinkles. Whatever you may wish to know about skin lifting: Whatever your age is, women of our time can *regenerate her face* with ‘al a carte’

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<sup>154</sup> *Marie Claire*, August 1990.

<sup>155</sup> *Marie Claire*, February 1990. “Kadınlar değiştiler... Demek ki, güzellik anlayışı da değişmek zorunda. Demek ki güzellik ürünleri de kadınların yeni taleplerine, yeni ihtiyaçlarına cevap verecek tarzda olmalı. Kadınlar ne istiyorlar? Daha fazla özgürlük, daha fazla etkinlik, daha fazla hareket edebilme kabiliyeti. İşte geleceğin güzellik anlayışı da bu sözcüklerin arkasında gizli. Nafile şeylerle uğraşmak vakti kalmadı kimsenin, herkes yararlı olanın peşinde. Güzellik anlayışı da bu sözcüklerin arkasında gizli. Güzellik anlayışı da “fayda” çağına giriyor.”

<sup>156</sup> It is not an advertisement extract but comes from a “cultural” article about faces.



methods such as creams, injections, electric treatment and surgical operation.”<sup>157</sup> Likewise, a combination of a scientific article about cellulite and an advertisement with the motto “Goodbye Cellulite”<sup>158</sup> immediately on the next page is an example for the simplest advertising technique.

The “Cosmo Address” column in *Cosmopolitan* shows where readers can find the products covertly or overtly promoted in advertisements or texts, and thus clearly reveals the relationship between the market and consumption, and magazine content. Likewise, announcing the results for the 1990 and 1991 Beauty Products Awards, *Marie Claire*, “serves” the purpose of cosmetic companies more than an advertisement does, and also helps readers get hold of “jury certified” cosmetic brands.<sup>159</sup> For instance, there is a “New Beauty” column in *Marie Claire*. This column essentially is based on promoting cosmetic products. It is hard to find an article that is completed without an advertisement in these magazines. All “beauty formulas” are supported by one or more than one commercial product: “There is a perfect solution for those who complain about wrinkles: Rosa Graf Liposome Repair Complex ampoules...”<sup>160</sup> In the same manner, an article says “Without much trouble, it is possible in three steps to have a brighter and firmer body.” “(1) A diet program, (2) gymnastic program, and (3) creaming programs”<sup>161</sup> are all you need to that end. All programs are always fostered by product promotion. To repeat once more, there is no single page related to beauty and body that is without an advertisement!

“Breast Lifting Methods: Do not have blind confidence in those who say there is no other way than surgical operation. In extreme cases (!) an operation is undoubtedly needed but

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<sup>157</sup> *Marie Claire*, December 1992.

<sup>158</sup> *Marie Claire*, February 1990.

<sup>159</sup> *Marie Claire*, January 1991; *Marie Claire*, February 1992.

<sup>160</sup> *Marie Claire*, August 1990.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

there are some other ways to lift and tighten breasts.” We understand here that it is compulsory to make a change. We either need an operation or continuous care. Surgical operation unquestionably makes one suffer, and so one should resort to it in “extreme” cases. Fortunately, the advice of the magazine can “save” women without pain. We live and breathe our breasts, and what is more, they are the symbols of our femininity, are not they? They are objects of sexual pleasure and incitement, are not they? Therefore we should take “care” of them. Consequently, we have to consume for all!

In one issue, *Marie Claire* presents formulas for active, modern women in business life to readers: “Body care recipes of active women! Good nutrition, gymnastics, regular monthly care sessions, makeup (not excessive).” The message reads as such: look, they are happy, successful and modern because they all take care of themselves, and they have their formulas! Apply the formulas and be as happy and successful as they are because beauty is everything in business life. The cosmetic products used by these role models who are all managers, creators or owners of big companies or brand are also introduced. It almost takes ten pages to tell about the body and face care rituals of these “beautiful” women in detail, and each and every product they use is highlighted. The contemporary advertising sector has taught us that it is a good strategy to identify a product with well-liked figures. The same strategy works here: Advices from Sandra Erer is given, and here is her care ritual: “for body care she prefers Nivea Body Lotion, and removes her makeup with Jeanne Gatineau cleaning lotion, and receives a skin care program in Janine once every three or four months.” “The beauty secrets” of another six figures are unveiled by courtesy of a product. It is hard to understand that the secret is inside a product launched for anyone who pays for it.

### Discovering the Body, Discovering the Self

An almost obsessive order always appears in popular women's magazines: Women! Know yourself, discover your body, and make yourself over! Why is it not desirable for a woman to stay as she is? Why are these magazines in conflict with the existing form and condition of women? Of course this does not mean that I approve of the existing condition, but we have to look at "where we are invited" and "the aim to invite."

Body as a powerful symbolic form, as Mary Douglas argues, is a cultural form and a medium of culture.<sup>162</sup> Needless to say, the representation of the body, which is not neutral, in regards of gender relations and codes, is based on a certain social discourse and practice of gender. Our bodies, as Susan Bordo notes, are trained, shaped, and impressed with historical forms of masculinity and femininity.<sup>163</sup> Popular women's magazines play a significant part in the perception of body as a managed, re-constructed "thing," and a founding component of the female identity. These media forms as a part of contemporary culture contribute to infuse in women the idea that it is normal to transform the body into an object of presentation and display.

Women's magazines encourage women to an internal psychological "reconstruction" instead of an external moral compromise with respect to the body and sexuality. This sort of individualism is realized by way of one's self-discovery and the re-construction of oneself according to one's own needs. However, if men and women do not have an essence, or in other words, if everything is bounded up by culture and language, then there is no "self" to discover. The "self" glorified here is actually a construction of these magazines, and therefore a product of the dominant culture.

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<sup>162</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York: Pantheon, 1982).

<sup>163</sup> Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, pp. 165-166

### Everything Starts with the Body

Referring to recent *Cosmopolitan* issue published in France, Sylvette Giet gives a striking example as to how everything starts and finishes with the body in women's magazines.

Readers are given photographs of a group of women and men, and they are asked to make a guess about characters or tempers of those people by looking at their appearance: "Find out about your lover's character just after the first kiss!", "Find who is the boss and who is the employee!", "Looking at their faces, can you find when these women had sex and how it was?". It is so expressive that the plumpest and straight-faced woman is the one who has not had sex for seven months. One of those two women who have smiling faces had sex yesterday and the other had it a month ago.<sup>164</sup> These tests in the magazine are a manifestation of contemporary capitalist society in which everything is associated with physical appearance. Bodies are nearly headless, and we can only identify the spirit and mind by means of the body. The magazines are pioneers of a new type of discourse that is based on how everything starts with the body, i.e, the sensual one. In this discourse, the body has become the basic "material" and determinant of the relationship between people.

The most important qualities of celebrities praised to the skies in *Cosmopolitan* also start and finish with the body: "Mole on top of her lip, shapely body", "strong nose and mouth", "breathtaking body", "long legs", or "a body that one would die for."<sup>165</sup> The fact that what characterizes a person is not independent of the body in contemporary culture significantly provokes the concerns of ordinary women as well. Therefore it gives cause for the body to be regarded as a problem, or even an enemy, as will be discussed below.

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<sup>164</sup> *Cosmopolitan* (French edition), May 2003, Sylvette Giet, *Özgürleşin! Bu Bir Emirdir: Kadın ve Erkek Dergilerinde Beden*, trans. İdil Engindeniz (Istanbul: Dharma Yayınevi, 2006), p. 97.

<sup>165</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, November 1996.

## Our Bodies Our Enemies! Controlling and Disciplining the Body

Beginning from the editorial introduction, readers are reminded of how unbearable their suffering will be if they fail to shape their bodies into the desired form. Women always must be on the alert, attentive, disciplined and programmed for the sake of their bodies. Otherwise not only their daily lives but their whole lives will be ruined. After all, an overweight body, wrinkles, signs of aging, outdated clothes, and non-seductive body are all sources of unhappiness and put womanhood at risk.

For instance, the writer gives voice to her conflictual relationship with her body since her childhood in an article titled “My Body Is an Enemy to Me.” For her, women must cope with the tricks their body plays on them from their birth. In this approach based on a dilemma of body and spirit, problems regarding their body deeply affect their mental development.<sup>166</sup> Acne, a skinny body, excess weight, our belly and so on. The writer dramatically proceeds with the following sentences:

[A]nd there is the belly thing. Before I understand how it does so, a potbelly settles down between me and other people in time. It never leaves me again. *It is not possible to forget about it, not even a moment.*<sup>167</sup>

Likewise in another article titled “Summer Care for Hips”:

[W]hat is in fashion this summer makes one’s blood boil: perfect firm, smooth and lifted buttocks exhibited by tiny bikinis and transparent clothes!.. Once you hear it, you immediately abandon yourself to *despair* and *hate* your body fattened the whole winter long. But numerous methods that work a miracle are readily at your service!”<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, January 1997.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid. “Bir de göbek meselesi var. Ben nasıl olduğunu anlamadan, insanlarla arama bir göbek gelip yerleşiveriyor zamanla. Bir daha da beni terketmiyor. Onu bir an bile unutmak mümkün değil.” Emphasis mine.

<sup>168</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, July 1997. “[B]u yaz insanın son derece kanına dokunan her şey moda: Ufacık bikinilerin ve transparan giysilerin gözler önüne serdiği sımsıkı, pürüzsüz sarkmamış harika bir popo!... Bunu duyar duymaz hemen umutsuzluğa kapılıp, kış mevsimi boyunca yağlanan vücudunuzdan nefret ediyorsunuz değil mi? Oysa mucize yaratan sayısız yöntem emrinize amade bekliyor!” Emphasis mine.

In an article titled “How Can I Deceive the Scales? (*Tartıyı Nasıl Aldatırım?*) in *Cosmopolitan*, it asks “...what other reason may we have while going on the damned thing [scales]?” and the ways of *Cosmo* girls to deceive the scales are explained.<sup>169</sup> The social/cultural medium that makes weight a problem brings such funny and tragic agendas to women. What really matters is that the women’s magazines under scrutiny help women establish a conflictual and alienating relationship with their bodies in contemporary culture.

In such a cultural medium, woman begins to see her body apart from herself and externalizes it. The body that she looks at cannot be hers. Body is a “thing” that must be controlled and disciplined. Considering body as an enemy means waging war against it. Therefore we witness that the magazine offers women tens of formulas and methods as to how they will “train” their bodies. Calls for being in possession of one’s body and obsessively caring about physical appearance bring in a discourse of self-control and discipline.

For instance, *Cosmopolitan* says: “... a lucky minority enjoys eating anything from chocolate to pizza to their hearts’ content. It is impossible not to envy these happy and inherently slim people. Why do some people snack by the hour ... but do not put on even a gram of weight? Our metabolism has the answer to it. If we get to know it well and *train* it, we can join the group of lucky and slim people.” At this point, getting to know and training the metabolism successfully represents the two functions that the magazine has assigned to itself. Those women whose metabolic functioning is a disadvantage will be able to train it and become happy with the help of these magazines. Magazines play such a vital part in perpetuating gender discourses based on body and physical appearance.

An article titled “Who Fears Cellulite?” (*Kim Korkar Selülitten?*), which gives instructions on how to get rid of cellulite, manifests the gendered meanings of the female body by saying “If the men in our lives also had similar problems (like cellulite), perhaps we

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<sup>169</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, November 1996.

would not feel so bad.”<sup>170</sup> This extract also sets another good example for perception of the body as a problem. Though cellulite is a natural, biological fact that many woman experience, it has been reduced to a problem in contemporary culture. If women did not live as part of such a culture that transforms their bodies into objects of gaze, cellulite would only be considered an organ or time effect. However, it is the cause of great concern, and magazines, at this point, propose to remove this anxiety by their recommendations for an abundance of products and services.

In a similar vein, as is understood from the amplitude of files and recipes dedicated to the topic, emphasis placed on being fit and in form is the basic characteristic of the magazines. The approach that associates beauty with being in form is again a product of the understanding based on self-control oriented towards the body itself. However, use of “healthy life”, a “concept” that only a few people can deny, gives the impression that slenderness and body in form are taken not only within the scope of aesthetic norms, and this is how the body discourse applied by the magazines is further legitimized. Being in form is reflected not only as a body problem in the magazines. It brings along a mental balance and self-respect. As Giet properly indicates, if being form helps one find oneself and express one’s identity, then in any case expression of one’s existence is possible by means of the body.<sup>171</sup> If we possess a controlled body then it means we are mentally in good condition because the body, declared to be the enemy, is no longer an obstacle. This attitude summarizes the body politics of our time in a pure and simple way.

It was argued above that the call of the magazines in question for independence carries a paradox in itself. The self-control discourse also refers to another paradox. On the one hand, women are invited to get away from the limits or chains of traditional value judgments, they are imprisoned by a relentless call for self-control, on the other. Every type of practice,

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<sup>170</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, April 1996.

<sup>171</sup> Giet, *Kadın ve Erkek Dergilerinde Beden*, p. 95.

such as plastic surgery, diet, and make-up required for bodily perfection is something that could be attained only when women can have self-control and discipline. For woman, such self-control and discipline corresponds to a biting and formidable wall if she really obeys them. Though self-control, a product of the contemporary culture, is presented as a preference, it actually has a tremendously oppressive and authoritative aspect.

### Sexuality in the Magazines: Creating Sexual Subjectivity and Sexual Desires for Women

Sexuality was offered for consumption presented as one of the most important themes in the popular women's magazines of the 1990s. These magazines, which remarkably put sexuality at the center through use of content, discourses and symbols, are a reflection of the sex boom that emerged in popular culture in the 1990s. Sex was more intensely treated in the first years of *Cosmopolitan*, between 1993-1995, in particular. Almost three quarters of the topics handled and files prepared were related to sex.<sup>172</sup> This inclination to treat sexuality as one of the primary themes in the magazine continued in later years. In most of these issues, there are issues like "free sex," expanding the limits of sex, how women can "liven up" their sex life, and women are given tips accordingly. For instance, in various issues *Cosmopolitan* explained "All You Need to Know about Male Orgasm" (*Erkek Orgazmı Hakkında Bilmeniz Gerekenler*),<sup>173</sup> and stated that "Man Should be Horny" (*Erkek Dediğin Azgın Olur*) in a

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<sup>172</sup> For instance, let us take a look at the topics in *Cosmopolitan*, issue March 1995: "What If A Woman Abuses" (*Kadın Taciz Ederse*), "How Do Men Understand That They Have Found the Women They Have Been Looking For" (*Erkekler Aradıkları Kadını Bulduklarını Nasıl Anlarlar*), "The Best Suggestion For Good Sex: Passionate Foreplay" (*İyi Bir Seks İçin En İyi Öneri: Ateşli Bir Ön Sevişme*), "Bisexuality" (*Biseksüalite*), "We Are Hopelessly Looking for the 'Right Man'" (*Umutsuzca 'Doğru Adanı' Arıyoruz*), "Fierce Sexuality (*Vahşi Cinsellik*), "Make Correct Use of Your Sexual Power: It Is Wonderful to Be Powerful: Then Why Do Women not Want Power?" (*Seks Gücünüzü Doğru Kullanın: Güçlü Olmak Müthiş Bir Şey: Öyleyse Kadınlar Neden Gücü İstemiyorlar?*), "What If Old Friends Do Not Like the New You" (*Eski Dostlar Yeni Sizi Sevmeyse*), "The Reality of the 13<sup>th</sup> Zodiac Sign and Changing Characters" (*13. Burç Gerçeği ve Değişen Karakterler*."

<sup>173</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, December 1994.



“scientific” article about males’ sexual “performances,”<sup>174</sup> and made an observation such as “Sex Does Not Age but Mature” (*Seks Yaşlanmaz Olgunlaşır*) in an article about middle age sex life,<sup>175</sup> and expressed faith that “Sex Can Change Everything” (*Seks Her Şeyi Değiştirebilir*),<sup>176</sup> and issued a call for masturbation such as “Girls, Masturbate” (*Kızlar Mastürbasyon Yapın*).<sup>177</sup> In three separate issues the magazine provided a special supplement titled “Secrets of Sex” (*Sevişmenin Sırları*),<sup>178</sup> and explained “What Men Find Sexy in Women” (*Erkekler Kadınlarda Neyi Seksi Bulur?*).<sup>179</sup>

The women’s magazines analyzed in this study dealt with every type of theme related to female sexuality with an unprecedented level of courage that had not been shown in any form of the media in Turkey before the 1980s. The magazines invited women to liberate themselves, and criticized the control imposed on female sexuality and “raised the awareness” of women on the most confidential issues. The common emphasis was placed on how women also should experience sexuality freely and thus they needed courage and knowledge about it. The magazines assigned themselves the mission as the source to instill courage and knowledge in women. They attempted to construct a specific sexual subjectivity through articles on sex that sometimes occupied almost all the space for free-topic articles. The writers intended to direct sexual pleasures and desires with long-winded articles on how to have sex and points to consider during sex, how to give pleasure to one’s partner and what men particularly like. Each and every example presented below exhibits what part the popular

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<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, February 1995.

<sup>176</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, April 1995.

<sup>177</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, May 1997.

<sup>178</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, October, November, and December 1994.

<sup>179</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, October 1994.

women's magazines that I analyzed played in constructing sexual subjectivities, pleasures and desires.

The fact that sexuality is treated to an extent challenging traditional discourses proves that these magazines pioneered a specific discourse and practice. However, these magazines should not be evaluated as having been avant-garde independent of a certain social and cultural medium. The social change experienced by women in Turkey in the 1990s also altered their perspective of sexuality. This mass of women, more educated city-dwellers who did not get married at an early age and had more chances to acquire global values, are both the producers and consumers of these magazines. Therefore there was a social correspondence to the discourses produced for sexuality or others, and a mutual medium that brought producers and consumers together. This medium fostered the proliferation of sexuality as a “boom” into every corner of public sphere particularly from the 1980s onwards. Moreover, sexuality, which has always occupied a central place in human life, became a profitable “theme” for sectors like the media, cinema, tourism, fashion and cosmetics. The women's magazines under scrutiny both tried to strengthen their popularity and meet their commercial concerns by investing in readers' sexual curiosity and pleasures. It is definitely possible to argue that they really succeeded at doing so. However, the magazines not only attempted to satisfy the interests and curiosity of the readers, but also intended to direct their sexual pleasures and desires, and construct sexual subjectivity with the tips and “information” provided. In this respect, I think that the magazines took a part in constructing a female identity in line with the “new/contemporary woman” type in their own envisagement.

## Sexual Freedom

An article entitled “Sex for Sex” in *Cosmopolitan* victoriously announces that “sexuality is no longer a thing for women that they can experience in a marriage or long-term relationships. At the present time, women also can experience sexuality only to make the most of the moment without thinking about the future or wishing to know anything about the man. It is only an ancient belief that a woman who is not in love cannot take pleasure in sex.”<sup>180</sup> The article begins with the fictionalized sex experiences of three women with men, not based on love, and each story ends with a motto respectively: “sex is medicine,” “sex is an adventure,” and “sex is sex.” It is not surprising that the article is initiated with “sexual revolution.” For the writer, it had been 25 years since the revolution took place but female pleasure was an unsolved problem. It is clearly understood from the rest of the article that the writer did not say yes to the question “is it because of female nature that satisfactory sex is possible only when there is love?”. For her, the traditional order that “has reduced women to a porcelain vase” can change if women could also “zip up and go” just like men did, i.e, if they also could have sex freely. It is because “women also want to have sex.” In the article, “sex adventures,” which I think are fictionalized by the editor, of “free” young women who run through one-night stands without an emotional attachment suggest an alternative womanhood to the readers.

In the same issue of *Cosmopolitan*, female sexual independence is underlined as such:

Women also want sex: It is already out of date to listen to preaching about what type of sexual pleasures you should experience.

Many of us think that women also should be as free as men in sex. We may also have crazy dreams and fantasies. We also may wish to score our man.

A woman who can express freely that she loves sex is the one who is aware of her sexual urges and is at peace with herself. These women can understand

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<sup>180</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, April 1996.

their own passions and do not get attached to a man only for satisfaction. In general, they are already desirable women. They can act freely in bed as well compared to others.<sup>181</sup>

Of course, I do not take women's extramarital sexual affairs as immoral or incorrect behavior. On the contrary, I approve their challenge to the male-dominant control imposed upon female sexuality. With many articles and images like this, the magazines presented their own "popular feminist" perspective. What I want to discuss is to what extent the sexual freedom discourse of the magazines was able to go beyond the male-dominant sexuality perception.

We see that the article entitled "Men as Sex Objects" (*Erkekler Seks Objesi*) suggests that certain male subjectivities should be appropriated by women for women's liberation.<sup>182</sup> Making males into sex objects is put forward as a female response to male dominant sex. These magazines which produced dominant cultural discourses adopted a popular feminist discourse from their own perspective by way of problematizing the parties instead of objectification itself in dealing with gender relations. The article speaks out as such:

In our grandmothers' generation, women's liking focused rather on men's gazes. These eyes helped them understand whether men were rakes, dawdlers or honest. Of course our grandmothers had a liking for male bodies, but it was not an issue to be frequently talked about other than figure and stature. Women were really far from being the party that "likes" at that time, and their effort was to be the 'liked' one instead of the 'liking' one. Without considering whether they personally have a potbelly, bald head or are short, now they may fearlessly comment on the beauty or ugliness of women, and shake their confidence. Recently women begin to learn that not only women's, but also men's attraction and beauty can be liked, and men (just as women spend tons of time, money and energy for the sake of their beauty) should look after and groom themselves.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid. Respectively: "Kadınlar da seks ister: Ne tip cinsel zevkler yaşamanız gerektiği hakkında vaaz dinlemenin zamanı çoktan geçti." "Birçoğumuz, artık kadınların da sekste erkekler kadar özgür olması gerektiğini düşünüyor. Bizim de çılgın hayallerimiz, fantezilerimiz olabilir pekala. Karşımızdaki erkeği biz de çıtır çıtır yemek isteyebiliriz." "Seksi sevdiğini özgürce ifade edebilen bir kadın kendi dürtülerinin farkında olan ve kendisiyle barışık bir kadındır. Bu kadınlar, tutkularını anlayabiliyorlar ve sadece tatmin için bir erkeğe bağlanmıyorlar. Genelde bu kadınlar zaten arzu edilen kadınlar oluyor. Yatakta da diğerlerinden daha özgür davranabiliyorlar."

<sup>182</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, October 1996.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. "Büyükkannelerimizin kuşağında kadınların beğenisi daha ziyade erkeklerin bakışlarına yoğunlaşıyordu. Erkeğin çapkın mı, serseri mi, dürüst mü olduğunu anlamalarını sağlıyordu bu gözler. Büyükkannelerimizin de erkeklerin vücutlarına dair beğenileri vardı elbet, ama yine de boy pos, endam dışında pek üzerinde konuşulan

As is clear from the example, women' magazines were aware of the male dominant control on female sexuality. The "New Woman" must speak about and have sexuality in more freedom. Why would they not make the male body into a sex object in a women's magazine? In fact, the writer was also cognizant of how women were repressed to be beautiful and attractive and knew that it rose from gender relations that had emerged in a certain society. Instead of discussing why women experienced this oppression, she appealed to the "power" discourse of the 1990s.

In a similar manner, in *Marie Claire*, issue September 1991, a short framed text asked "Are Men also Becoming Sexual Objects?" (*Erkekler de mi Cinsel Obje Oluyor?*) and argued that men were more attentive to their physical appearance and that the male body had been transformed into a commodity. For the writer, the quality and dimensions of nudity were changing, and men were posing in the nude for women's magazines.<sup>184</sup> So indeed, despite the fact that mostly women were displayed on the cover pages of women's or men's magazines published on a gender basis, there were a few exceptions to it. Some women's magazines gave space on certain pages, though not on the cover page, to famous, handsome and attractive men so as to please "women's eyes." For instance, in a column entitled "Chick of the Month" (*Ayın Fıstığı*), *Kim* exhibited men symbolizing the popular culture.<sup>185</sup> One other example is the supplement "Cosmo Man," not published on a regular basis, which portrayed a handsome, half-naked young man.<sup>186</sup>

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konular değildi bunlar. Kadınlar o zamanlar 'beğenen' olmaktan çok uzaktı, çabaları da zaten 'beğenen' değil 'beğenilen' olmak yönündeydi. Kendilerinin göbekli, saçsız veya kısa boylu olduklarına bakmaksızın erkekler şimdi de öyle ya, kadınların güzellik veya çirkinlikleriyle ilgili pervasızca yorum yapabiliyor, güvenlerini sarsabiliyorlardı. Yeni yeni kadınlar öğrenmeye başlıyorlar ki yalnızca kadınların değil erkeklerin cazibe ve güzelliklerine dair de beğeniler oluşabilir ve erkekler de (nasıl kadınlar güzellikleri uğruna tonlarca zaman, para ve enerji harcıyorlarsa) aynı ölçüde kendilerine bakmak, çeki düzen vermek durumundalar."

<sup>184</sup> *Marie Claire*, September 1991.

<sup>185</sup> See Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, pp. 181-192.

<sup>186</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, November 1996.

Touching upon the file “Cosmo girls and sex survey” in the issue March 1996, Leyla Melek, the *Cosmopolitan* editor, asserted it was very nice that 56.92% of the Cosmo girls in Turkey thought sex was “splendid”. On the other hand, she found it remarkable that 30.6% of them did not masturbate. The readers could detect a sort of regret. Comments on the content and results of this survey based on a sex questionnaire conducted in 29 countries in which *Cosmo* was published is an indication of the magazines’ obsessive interest in sex. The questionnaire involved questions that were not possible to be included in a traditional women’s magazine, such as which position young women liked the best, whether they had sex with other women, the average number of sex partners, use of sex toys. What is striking here is that the results were evaluated by reference to the participants’ national identities. Statements like “the Taiwanese masturbated less”, “31% of the Czech girls were accustomed to using condoms”, or “Greek girls preferred to have sex in the daytime” were introduced as a “national character” rather than the participants’ answers. The reader could not desist from making a comparison especially between “developed countries” and “underdeveloped countries” because the way the results were presented was convenient to do so. It is possible to claim that affirmed behavior and opinions regarding sex were infused as a “model” through the questionnaire results of developed countries. A crucial part played by such global franchise magazines as from the 1990s is that they fostered the penetration of global cultural values.

### Creating Sexual Subjectivities for Women

Doubtlessly, the fact that women’s sexual lives were treated beyond conventional approaches was a challenge to the dominant discourses on female sexuality. Handling female sexuality as such should be approved in a society that perceives women’s willingness to have sex,

introduce demands or express dissatisfaction in sex as “frivolity” or “unchaste”. However, it is not possible to argue that the language and approach that set the “sexual liberation” discourse of popular women’s magazine went beyond the scope of male dominance. As will be understood from the examples below, while women were taught how to “keep their men,” “use their sexual power and feminineness” and “be attractive and irresistible,” women were positioned according to males’ sexual pleasures and desires. This “liberating” discourse that did not spot that the “femininity” concept was a direct result of gender relations in a society is in fact the fruit of the “sexuality boom” that emerged from the 1980s. Women’s magazines also tried to construct and orient women’s desires and pleasures by means of abundantly discussed sexual themes, which definitely referred to the commercial targets pursued by the magazines as well.

These magazines, which located the body at the center in women-men relations, explicitly described the secrets of how to excite their partners. We shall look at an example from *Cosmopolitan*: Women were primarily taught the ways to “start the first fire” in an article entitled “Seduce Him Tonight” (*Bu Gece onu Baştan Çıkarın*).<sup>187</sup> So woman should both show willingness and her openness to man’s demands. At this stage any word should come out in “fiery whispers” through her lips. “A seductive meal” is a must. Woman should not flinch from making the effort to find a piece of lingerie that would seduce her lover,” or in other words, she should comprehend the “charm of lingerie.” Woman should choose a fragrance in accordance with the “role that she wants to play that night, or the image she wants to take up.”<sup>188</sup> She should pay strict attention to lighting. Stirring her partner up is among her most important duties: “Give him a massage, arrange some nice music and sit next to him!” Just like in a recipe, the massage steps are explained in depth. Readers are almost not

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<sup>187</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1996.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. My emphasis.

allowed to imagine it. Each detail is pre-determined: “Definitely dab cream”, “start with the nape”, “go over each bone”, “never stop touching”, and “never rush...” And here is the final:

...it is time to get rid of your clothes. What matters here is that you should feel comfortable and sexy while undressing in front of him. Move as if you are making love [...] You may put on some powder on your shoulders or some blusher between your breasts, but foundation is not a suitable make-up material for the night at all [...] Take off your clothes slowly and let them slip away and go down to the floor, and then unbutton slowly. After you take your clothes, go on dancing with your lingerie and garter...”<sup>189</sup>

There might be a few women who would read and do exactly what it said. Probably the editor and the writer were also aware of it. However, there must have been a reason and meaning for them to include it. For one thing, it is an engaging topic under the above-mentioned conditions and readers can enjoy it. In addition, it is narrated in a style arousing sexual pleasure in readers as well. The reader may put herself in place of the “model woman” and imagine herself as the “seductive.” This article manifests some of the sex symbols of the contemporary culture as well, such as massage, garters, and fragrance. These lines, written in a didactic tone, affirm the guiding mission of the magazines once again. The reader is taught even how to “strip and push down” her night dress. Tactics, styles and instruments are presented as weapons for a woman to successfully manage her action of “seduction”. Moreover, as emphasized in the quotations, it is openly expressed that woman plays a role and takes up an image that night. This role or image is absolutely drawn by *Cosmopolitan* and similar magazines.

*Cosmopolitan* and all similar magazines aimed to teach women the rules for “good sex” as well. For example, the article entitled “Change Your Sex Style” (*Seks Stilinizi Değiştirin*) tells the “mistakes” that young women make in sex and invite them to correct

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid. My emphasis. In an article entitled “Do not Drive Men Crazy but Ravish Them in Bed!” (*Erkekleri Yatakta Delirtmeyin Çıldırın!*), the formulas given by women’s magazines to drive men crazy in bed are being mocked: “In recent months, all women’s magazines proceeded to attack. The aim is to give the most proper formulas for ‘fanciful,’ ‘perfect’ sexual affair.” See *Cosmopolitan*, December 1994. Even the magazines could mock at these formulas but for some reason sex advices go on incessantly.



them.<sup>190</sup> An article entitled “Real Sex Is Erotic and Crazy” (*Gerçek Seks Erotik ve Çılgın Olur*) declares the 10 rules set by *Cosmopolitan* for a real and happy sex life: “Be a little selfish, hold your tongue, be able to say no, do not make a fuss about not reaching orgasm, lend an ear to your fantasies, be feckless from time to time, have brain sex, know your demands, pay attention to the final stage of sex, and do not be too good.”<sup>191</sup> In one of its issues, *Marie Claire* featured a test called “How Sexy Are You?” and intended to identify, as the name suggests, what type of a woman the reader was. Those who scored the highest points for each answer were announced to be “intrinsically feminine, a complete woman”.<sup>192</sup>

Though securing a place for the article “The Best Suggestion for Good Sex: Passionate Foreplay” (*İyi Bir Seks için en İyi Öneri: Ateşli Bir Ön Sevişme*), the writers were also cognizant of the sexuality boom and had concerns about the risk of depressing the readers. Nevertheless, they had no thought of brushing aside such a topic of importance and were quite determined to tell the readers the secrets of “perfect sex.” The article says as such:

It is a fact that the *freedom to speak about sexuality*, acquired recently, has taught a lot to the new generation about sex life. The fact that sex is no longer a taboo and *has become an issue which is almost mostly written and spoken about* may lead some people to think that the thread has been lost. However, sex is really an important part of our life... When we look at it from this perspective, it is impossible not to give people the right for their efforts to attain a perfect sex life.<sup>193</sup>

The writer appears to talk about a process in which they are not subjects; that is, tells about the “sex boom” as a phenomenon experienced outside the media. However, as highlighted

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<sup>190</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, June 1997.

<sup>191</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, January 1995.

<sup>192</sup> *Marie Claire*, September 1991.

<sup>193</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1995. Emphasis mine. “Son yıllarda yaşanan cinsellikle ilgili konuşma özgürlüğünün yeni nesle seks hayatı konusunda çok şey kazandırdığı bir gerçek. Seksin bir tabu olmaktan çıkıp neredeyse üzerinde en çok yazılıp çizilen, konuşulan konu haline gelmesi bazılarında ipin ucunun kaçtığını düşündürebilir. Ancak seks, hayatımızın gerçekten de önemli bir parçası... Bu açıdan bakıldığında insanların mükemmel bir seks hayatına kavuşma konusundaki çabalarına hak vermemek imkansız.”

before, the cultural medium that brings together the writer and the reader, the producer and the consumer reproduces itself with the subjectivities of both sides and mutual interaction.

In this article, like many others, couples, but mainly women, were taught how “a real sex life was” and how they could achieve satisfaction. The writer explains that “tender touches, fierce kisses, caressing erogenous zones, dirty talking firstly arouse a woman’s brain and then her body,” and thus tries to teach the techniques to give sexual pleasure. “Some facts about foreplay” serve to legitimize modern sex discourses by means of “scientific knowledge.” Here it says that “men who like women and sex prefer to sleep with women who like sex games and lustfully practice the games. They like women to be active in foreplay...and strive to excite them” or “research shows that couples like this and that the most” in order to construct sexual desires and they accordingly are presented to the readers as a “key to happiness.” In a similar manner, in *Cosmopolitan*, issue April 1995, women were advised to “incite his brain before his penis” and were assisted to discover men’s sexual desire and fantasies. In contrast with the title, the penis was again the target. Inciting the brain meant to send erotic messages to men. The penis stepped in in the second paragraph: “...there is a direct connection between the nipples and penis of most men. Lick, suck or nibble them slightly with your tongue. You will thus ensure a victory.”<sup>194</sup> In this respect, two functions of the magazines published on a gender basis was to construct sexual pleasure and desire and spread related discourses.

*Cosmopolitan* even suggested contemporary fantasies in “Phone Sex” (*Telefonda Seks*): “Who tells you that you have to be side by side for sex? [...] Either in the morning or at night, at work or at home, in the car or on the street... Enrich your sex life and discover your limits of fantasy with your lover on the other end of the phone...”<sup>195</sup> The article offered a number of fantasies:

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<sup>194</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, April 1995.

Sex on the phone both brings you closer and gives you the necessary individualism. So it is *vitally a phenomenon of our times* [...] Researchers (!) believe that sex on the phone is just meant for the 1990s.”<sup>196</sup>

In another 1994 issue of *Cosmopolitan*, sex toys, mostly vibrators, were introduced to women.

These toys were declared to “make your lonely days and nights more enjoyable and exciting”:

When you use your sex instrument, prepare yourself as if you were about to make love with a man. Even put the instrument into the place of the man in your dreams. If you insert the instrument into your vagina before you are completely ready for sex, it may hurt. In order to eliminate such a disappointment, you should fire up your body, i.e. experience foreplay. [...] Stimulate your erogenous zones with little touches. Once you feel that your body temperature has risen and heart beats have stepped up, you can start using your instrument.”<sup>197</sup>

Popular women’s magazines highlighting power re-associated sexuality with female power in the contemporary construction of femininity. “Make Proper Use of Your Sexual Power” (*Seks Gücünüzü Doğru Kullanın*) sets a remarkable example. “Sex is a power. Some women use that power up to the end to win the game. Meanwhile men cannot escape falling prey to these women. [...] Enjoy the power that you have had since the day you were born.”<sup>198</sup> In fact, the article was related to why women fail to use this power and it was written to urge them to use it. It said, “making clever use of your sexual power makes you much stronger, and if you make good use of this weapon, you will have ‘the world at your feet’.” It means that a woman has the power when she” is the side that has the first-mover advantage, and is desired by a man, or when she slavers after a man and receives a response in return, and when she enables

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<sup>195</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, July 1996.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid. “Telefonda seks hem yakınlaştırıyor hem de size gerekli bireyselliği kazandırıyor. Bu yüzden de son derece günümüze ait bir fenomen [...] Araştırmacılar (!) telefon seksinin tam 90’lı yıllara göre olduğunu düşünüyorlar. My emphasis.

<sup>197</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, November 1994. “Seks aletinizi kullanırken kendinizi bir erkekle ilişkiye girecekmişsiniz gibi hazırlayın. Hatta aleti hayalinizdeki erkeğin yerine koyun. Aleti sekse tam anlamıyla hazır olmadan vajinanıza sokarsanız canınız yanabilir. Böyle bir düş kırıklığı yaşamamak için önce vücudunuz ateşlendirmeli, yani kendinize bir ön sevişme yaşamalısınız. [...] Erojen bölgelerinizi ufak dokunuşlarla uyarın. Vücut ısınızın yükseldiğini, kalp atışlarınızın hızlandığını hissettiğiniz zaman aletinizi kullanmaya başlayabilirsiniz.”

<sup>198</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1995.

her partner to have an erection.” For the writer, “if you manage to find the ways to become an attractive woman and use your feminineness, you will win with the power all the time.” Here female social or personal power is associated with her body and sexual function on the basis of constructed gender differences, and it appears to encourage female resurgence against male dominancy, but woman is only reduced to a “body” indeed. At the same time, it becomes more evident by way of otherizing agedness. For the writer, “sexual power slowly vanishes as one gets older, especially after one becomes a mother.” Then what are the representations of the power that is prescribed to women: “a red sports car, diamonds, a cell phone, securities, a Rolex wrist watch, a trip on the Concorde, a laptop, Gucci shoes, Ray-Ban sunglasses.” It would be pointless to look for another piece of writing that outlines the understanding and representations of power based on gender and consumption in contemporary culture.

## CHAPTER 5

### “IDEAL WOMEN”: POPULAR FEMINISM AND THE CONTEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION OF FEMININITY

As seen in previous chapters, the women's magazines studied in this thesis mainly focused their attention on beauty, sexuality and fashion. It is even possible to argue that they were attached obsessively to these topics. However, this type of magazine content is absolutely not limited to them. All of these three magazines took an interest in the problems of women. They addressed issues other than physical appearance and sexuality. In addition, as magazines issued and consumed by women, they gave place to problems stemming from gender inequalities and differences. The emergence of a women's movement independent of Kemalism in the 1980s, in other words, the rise of a new type of feminist movement, and the transformation of women's social position both helped to enlarge women's media and transformed the content of popular publication. While feminism was becoming popularized more than ever before, the newly emerging women's magazines began to give place to feminist thoughts, gender inequalities, female discrimination and oppression.<sup>199</sup> Even most editors of the magazines regarded themselves as “a type of feminist.”

Though they differed in how they dealt with these topics, three of the magazines examined did not position woman as wife or mother at home. They expressed the difficulties that women faced in private and public life. They wanted that their visibility would increase in public life and urged women to do so. They especially highlighted that women should be strong and active in every field, mainly in business life. They refuted or criticized traditional

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<sup>199</sup> For a study addressing the popularization of feminist themes in women's magazines with the concept of post-feminism, see Shelley Budgeon and Dawn H. Currie, “From Feminism to Postfeminism: Women's liberation in Fashion Magazines,” *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 18, issue 2, (March-April 1995): 173-186.

approaches to marriage and sexuality. On the one hand, the female reader group of the magazines, which was increasing in the total female population in the 1990s, began to have a social background which would support these inclinations, and functioned as some sort of a “popular pioneer.” This chapter is designed to examine the feminist discourses in these magazines and what popular version of feminism was represented there. I aim to indicate how these gender-based magazines approached the gender problems that women experienced, what they understood about feminism, what they offered as a solution to these problems, how they incorporated feminism into the popular<sup>200</sup>, and the limits and contradictions of feminist discourses.

Laying place to feminist discourses and themes on the one hand, the magazines emphasized the term “femininity” more than ever before. As briefly mentioned in the introduction, the line between feminism after 1980 and femininity became vague. Especially in the popular media, the second wave feminists were portrayed as characters that did not care about their femininity, who ignored their physical appearance and were mostly poorly groomed. In actual fact, feminists never had one single current of thought about physical appearance and femininity. Insomuch that, as mentioned in Chapter Two, every period in which femininity was re-defined went along with a strong wave of feminism that did not bear hatred against the term itself. The rise of feminism once again in Turkey in the 1980s and change in feminism representations in the media are an example of this. While “the known feminists” were portrayed in the media as ugly, fat, man-haters who did not remove hairs on their legs on the one hand, a women’s movement that did not deal with the “women question” from a Kemalist viewpoint adopted a critical approach towards “state feminism” began to grow stronger.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> I owe this expression to Kırca-Schroder, see *Popüler Feminizm*.

<sup>201</sup> For the concept of “state feminism” or *devlet feminizmi*, see Şirin Tekeli, “1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadınlar,” in *1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar*, edited by Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: İletişim, 1995),

Shortly, in the late 1980s and 1990s, while an approach that tackled gender problems from the standpoint of women and contributed a popular framework to feminism was on the rise both in the world and in Turkey, the term “femininity” was concordantly more stressed. The femininity perception of the 1950s and 60s was still being characterized on the basis of domesticity and dependency. As Susan Bordo says, “career woman” was a dirty term.<sup>202</sup> When the word “woman” or “young girl” was uttered, one was to think of childlike, nonassertive, helpless, domestic, invisible characters. Women were offered a different world in the magazines of the 1990s. Symbols and codes of “being a woman like a woman” had already begun to change. The new middle class woman was not expected to “be ladylike and a proper woman,” “avoid doing a man’s job,” or “be the mistress of her house,” but rather to be free, brave, decisive, conscious, economically independent, consumer, chic, well-groomed and sexy. This new woman type had a number of feminist values as well. Hence the changing femininity discourses, symbols and codes also will be discussed.

It is hard to consider femininity and the new women image apart from “lifestyle”, the rising term of the 1990s. As a consequence of the social and economic context, the media of the 1990s, which was keen on drawing ideal types and making propaganda of these, tried to specify femininity ideals. The effort of the magazines to teach women how they could become “ideal women” is exactly related to it. The magazines being examined in this study promised women an alternative way of femininity. They reminded women of the fact that they were women beyond being ideal wives and mothers. They tried to teach women where, when and how they would consume, what type of places they would go to, what they would wear and eat, how they would attract someone, fashion and trends, ‘in’s and ‘out’s and global cultural

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especially pp. 30-36; and Yeşim Arat, “Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey,” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, edited by Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), pp. 95-112.

<sup>202</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, p. 170.

values. For that reason, in this chapter the ideal woman type constructed by the popular women's magazines in question intermingled with femininity concept will be examined.

### "Women are Changing..."

Though the New Woman image and meanings and values assigned to it has changed in every period, as a cultural construct she has always represented a social change and carried the message of the possibility of upward mobility. As Kitch says, she conveyed opportunities for upward social and economic mobility and new social, political, and economic possibilities for womanhood. She also served as a model and as "a cultural commentator through whom certain ideals came to seem "natural" in real life."<sup>203</sup>

Infact, it may be deceptive to call this image of the dominating woman a myth because a social change corresponding to the type drawn as the New Woman occurred in the late 1960s in the West, and in the 1990s in Turkey. The increase in educational opportunities for women, the active engagement of women in business life, a strong women's movement, the increase in women's public visibility helped to create a female mass that could speak out sonorously. Thus the reader group investigated in this thesis, the professional, economically independent, educated and urban women, formed the social basis for the New Woman image. This kind of a social change paved the way for the emergence of professional publishing that would spread this type of discourse and for the fact that editors and authors could find response to their discourses in accordance with global consumption strategies.

The social and economic change experienced by women in the 1990s was on the agenda of the magazines all the time. Terms such as "the woman of the 1990s", "the New Woman", "the woman of the age" all definitely referred to the fact that women were going

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<sup>203</sup> Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, p. 8.



through a desired transformation or they should go through such a transformation. The editors presented this type of woman as the female group they wished to see; however, they believed that it was a newly emerging change. For instance, *Marie Claire* discussed whether women had changed or not. For the author, there was “a slight movement” on women’s side in recent years. “Then what is changing from the point of women in business life, sexual life, at home? How does it affect men? ... or do they not believe in the presence of a “danger” that may shake their seat?” she asked.<sup>204</sup> She quotes how French historian and thinker Elisabeth Badinter who visited Istanbul at the time described Turkey as “the youngest feminist country” because women’s problems had been seriously discussed in public in Turkey for the previous 15 years. The author explains that despite all of the legal regulations women did not really have a presence in politics, which was viewed as a negative indicator at that time. Women walked into business life at full speed and rose to senior positions and had sexual experiences that had been oppressed for long years. The author highlighted that this change naturally did not affect Turkey entirely, but women had climbed up half of the ladder.<sup>205</sup>

*Marie Claire* conducted a series of interviews to see how men felt about this advancement. The affirmation of social transformation but exclusion of rural women was the common thought. For instance, according to Engin Noyan, musician, women had begun to use their actual rights. The liberation of women in business and sexual life gave the chance to housewives who did not have that freedom to be stronger and the way business women presented themselves on TV and media’s more extensive coverage of business women urged housewives forward.<sup>206</sup> Hincal Uluç, who passes a remark in every respect the same today as it was yesterday, summarizes a fact with his opinion:

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<sup>204</sup> *Marie Claire*, April 1992.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

The overall picture of women living in Anatolia remains much the same. That is to say, women in little towns live today in the same way as they did fifteen years ago. But there is a difference. Women in Anatolia have kept abreast of everything with expansion of television... They are informed of sexuality by means of women's programs, and they find out about senses, the name of which they did not know. There are quite significant developments in big cities. Business life is naturally the first. Fifteen years ago, a number of women's occupations came to one's mind, such as secretary, hostess. Today there exists a term like women's occupation no more. We are beginning to see women in administrative positions at high levels. A female image has taken over the image in workplaces. Concordantly, roles began to change at home. Women who iron and cook for their husbands do not even exist in slum areas. The age to begin sexual experience has dropped way below.<sup>207</sup>

In a nutshell, many of them thought that women's sexual life had been influenced by their advancements in business life, and they had become more active, broke taboos, and changed their perceptions. On the other hand, it was emphasized that middle-class women in Turkey had changed on a large scale, and their fellows in rural areas were preparing for it, and they were going through a transformation at least. There is no doubt that it was welcomed as a favourable development. *Marie Claire* shared this change with readers and announced that they wished for women's active participation.

### Awareness of and Interest in Women's Movement and Feminism

As distinct from *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire* and *Kadınca* frequently made use of the term "feminism". In every issue, both magazines allocated a place to women's problems, gender inequalities and the women's movement. For instance, *Marie Claire* gave a place to Ayşe

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid. "Anadolu'da yaşayan kadınlarda genel görünümde pek fazla bir değişiklik yok. Yani kasabadaki kadın on beş yıl önce nasıl yaşıyorsa, bugün de öyle yaşıyor. Ama bir farkla. Anadolu'daki kadın televizyonun yayılmasıyla her konuda bilgilendi... Kadına yönelik programlar sayesinde cinsel açıdan da bilgilendi; adını dahi bilmediği duyuların varlığını öğrenmeye başladı. Büyük kentlerde ise oldukça büyük gelişmeler var. Birincisi tabii iş hayatı. Bundan ön beş yıl önce kadın meslekleri diye birtakım meslekler akla geliyordu. Sekreterlik, hosteslik gibi. Bugün kadın mesleği diye bir kavram ortadan kalktı. Üst düzeylerde yönetici kademelerinde kadınları görmeye başlıyoruz. İş yerlerindeki görüntü dışı görüntü halini aldı. Buna paralel olarak evdeki roller farklılaştı. Bugün artık kocasının ütüsünü yapan, yemeğini yapan kadın gecekondularda bile kalmadı. Büyük kentlerde cinsellikle tanışma yaşı çok aşağılara indi."

Düzkan, a radical feminist.<sup>208</sup> In an article entitled “What Do Feminists Say,” Düzkan broadly wrote about how historiography had forgotten women with concrete examples. She even specifically analyzed how the women’s movement had been integrated into Kemalism in the early years of the Republic in Turkey, and how they had laid their ideals on modernization but the next generations, especially in the 1980s, had stepped out of that Kemalist influence. For her, women had come to know how to express themselves in the 1980s and early 1990s: “The married ones could think of getting divorced,” “we began to revolt against those who attempted to use our femininity against us.” According to Düzkan, then there had come to be a women’s organization in Turkey with all its failures and weaknesses. “I am proud of being a feminist from Turkey. What about you?” she asked.<sup>209</sup>

In short, even in a magazine like *Marie Claire*, which was more focused on beauty and fashion, feminists, and most importantly a radical feminist like Ayşe Düzkan could introduce readers to the agenda of the feminist movement. The publication of such an extensive article written by Düzkan is absolutely related to the month of march. Here we should add that in the first years of *Marie Claire* there was a section entitled “Woman” in the magazine content. It was possible to find articles regarding feminism, women’s rights, gender problems and agenda of women’s movement.

The article entitled “Women are Now on the Agenda” (*Kadınlar Artık Gündemde*) said that women had become conscious and advanced in the previous 10 years, and that there had not been such interest in the women’s question before, and highlighted that women’s rights and feminism were moved up to the top of the agenda.<sup>210</sup> What is remarkable about this article is that it raised an objection to what was understood about feminism. It also emphasized that feminist movement had grown strong in the West after 1968, and that it had become usual and

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<sup>208</sup> See for example, *Marie Claire*, March 1990.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> *Marie Claire*, November 1990

institutionalized in Europe. In Turkey, feminism had begun exercising influence in the 1980s. For the author, however, the public mainly was busy creating typologies for the proponents of this movement instead of listening to what the feminists were really saying. The author raised an objection to the fact that feminists were put in the same pot as “spinster or witch.”<sup>211</sup> But then, when they actually lent an ear to what feminists actually wanted and said, they understood feminists were not wrong. Thus women’s rights, already in law but not effectively put into practice, attracted attention in the early 1990s.

For the author, it was not only by means of feminism that women’s rights, women’s problems and needs were put on the agenda, discussed or any leap forward was attained, but that feminism definitely had a great share in it. Issues like domestic violence, beating, the rape of prostitutes, the dependence of woman’s employment on her husband, were then open to discussion, and were even handled in the courts and put under the protection of the law. Political parties also got involved in women’s issues among the important items on their agenda. In short, “women were after their rights and more aware. The movement initiated by the feminists made a number of forgotten, suppressed questions a current issue, and opened them up for discussion. Women’s rights would not fall off the agenda within the process.”<sup>212</sup>

Somehow *Marie Claire* and *Kadınca* followed up the developments regarding discrimination and inequality against women. They especially made news of the efforts put forth by research centers and women’s organizations to bring women’s problems to the parliament. For instance, in one issue *Marie Claire* announced the declaration of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women by Istanbul University Women’s Problems Research and Implementation Center led by Necla Arat. It condemned the

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

sexist discourses of Iranian politicians and praised the European women's publication.<sup>213</sup>

Similarly it presented the demonstrations held for the "abortion law".<sup>214</sup>

*Marie Claire*, which discussed social problems more than *Cosmopolitan*, asked different figures' opinions about Turkey with women in power. This article presented the answers of well-known female administrators, industrialists, academicians, publishers, advertisers to the question "what would you do if you were in power?"<sup>215</sup> The starting point of the article was to discuss from the viewpoint of women that the men in power did not do their jobs very well and what women would do differently from men. Tansu Çiller, who would become the first female prime minister of Turkey four years later from the interview date, was among the interviewees. Frankly, before starting to read the section, I was expecting to find a women's perspective, perhaps a little utopic, that argued that the male mentality was the reason for problems and a country ruled by women would be much more different. However, the interviewees put forth analyses and suggestions which would also come from men easily, from an exact "real" perspective.<sup>216</sup>

It is remarkable that the interviewees did not approach the problems with any kind of feminist concern. In other words, a set of urgent but stereotyped suggestions listed here may have been put forth by men. For instance, most of the women considered education to be the fundamental problem. I guess it was a characteristic of the middle class in the 1990s as well to put lack of education at the center of all problems and education at the center of all solutions. The population increase was another significant problem. All the participants thought that Turkey was urgently in need of population planning. However, again at this point, the population problem was taken not from a women's viewpoint, but as a general problem. As

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<sup>213</sup> *Marie Claire*, July 1990.

<sup>214</sup> *Marie Claire*, January 1990.

<sup>215</sup> *Marie Claire*, October 1990.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

the rise of Islamic parties in the 1990s led people to think that secularism was under threat, an issue which has always been current in Turkish politics, most women regarded threats against secularism as a problem. There may actually have been a gender-based concern here.

Traditional culture and religiosity as its focal point were the main problems within the context of feminism presented by the magazines examined in this study. It is not really surprising that the interviewees from the middle-upper class, some of whom were after Kemalist ideals, were among those who felt the threat against secularism.

In a nutshell, the answers given to *Marie Claire*'s question regarding the changes if women were in power did not culminate in a criticism of male dominance. At the center of the suggestions lie education, population planning and secularism. Among the interviewees, Şirin Tekeli was the only one who touched upon discrimination against women, and their personal civil and social rights. Exactly at this point, in terms of having adopted a women's perspective, the difference in viewpoints of a feminist scholar like Şirin Tekeli, and upper class women with respect to Turkey's social problems reflected the relation of both popular women's magazines' editors and readers with feminism.

On the other side, *Cosmopolitan* was not totally unaware of women's magazines and the women's movement agenda. A significant difference here was that the term "feminism" was not frequently used, and a "serious" topic like "women's rights and movement" was not continuously discussed. An article entitled "Woman Has the Say" (*Kadının Adı Var*) which referred to Asena's book "Woman Has No Say" (*Kadının Adı Yok*) appreciates the fact that women were making progress in every respect but asked for more. The article was made up of a test. There were questions related to successful women, women's rights, and the first women who had acquired male's occupational and political positions, and thus they aimed to increase women's awareness.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1996.

## Gender Issues and the Magazines

The magazines took a keen interest in women's daily problems or problems rising from gender discrimination. For instance, in one issue *Marie Claire* dealt with the problem faced by divorced women in the article "After Getting Divorced" (*Boşandıktan Sonra*), and drew attention to new kinds of social pressures on widows. The article explained that most divorced women were not supported by their families, and society considered widows a threat, and how divorced women felt in a male-dominant society.<sup>218</sup> This type of article indicates that the magazines dealt with different difficulties experienced by women from the perspective of women. Thus the magazines, but mostly *Marie Claire* and *Kadınca*, functioned as platforms on which experiences were exchanged. Individual personal experiences were presented from which to take lessons, and for instance, advice was presented with respect to overcoming the difficulties faced by a divorced woman.

Though not regularly, *Cosmopolitan* also discussed women's problems in ways different from sexual life and outer appearance. For instance, the article "Caught between Two Fires" (*İki Ateş Arasında*), dealing with the conflicts of working married women between business life and motherhood, both criticized the patriarchal culture that drew women into this conflictual situation and mentioned a number of social rights:

The number of working women is increasing a little more each new day in our country. Until ten years ago, our aim was to make everyone accept that the perception "woman should stay at home" was so wrong. And now we are fighting against the perception "woman should stay with her child". [...] It is a struggle not only against patriarchal culture, but also inside us. It is in our hands to win the fight!<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> *Marie Claire*, July 1990.

<sup>219</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, October 1996: "Ülkemizde çalışan kadınların sayısı her yıl biraz daha artıyor. On yıl öncesine kadar amacımız 'kadının yeri evidir' mantığının ne kadar yanlış olduğunu kabul ettirmektir. Şimdiyse 'kadının yeri çocuğunun yanındır' düşüncesiyle savaşıyoruz. [...] Bu yalnızca ataerkil kültüre karşı değil aynı zamanda kendi içimizde de sürdürdüğümüz bir savaş. Kazanmak bizim elimizde!"

In fact, women did not have to make a preference between career and motherhood. We grow up in a patriarchal culture and it is not so easy to remove its traces. This culture intends to imprison women at home and forces them to make a choice. Even in the 1990s the common opinion was that women should give up their careers and focus on raising children.

Mentioning solutions as well, the article deals with the problems experienced by women within the social context, and informatively presents its economic, social and legal dimensions. Nurseries and kindergartens were one of the solutions, but mothers did not find them a favourable solution as investments were not satisfactory in Turkey. Baby sitters were another solution, but as they were mostly uneducated, they did not give mothers a sense of security. Investments and educational activities would support women. In addition, nurseries should be provided for children in work places, part-time employment opportunities should be increased, bosses and administrators should act more responsibly about working hours, and women should have the security to go back to work after pregnancy. While dealing with a specific problem, this article is remarkable in the sense that it discussed both patriarchal culture and the social context in which women lived. It attempts to present solutions and alternative ways for women to cope with a problem, and urged them to make their own decisions. In this sense, the magazine had a feminist mission, though a timid one.

### What Was the Feminism of the Magazines Like?

The magazines' editors declared that they felt close to feminism in some way.<sup>220</sup> What is more, various feminist themes and discourses always found places in the magazines. But what was the feminism of the magazines like? Why did I observe a popular feminist discourse in these magazines? How did they differ from other radical feminist thoughts? The feminism

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<sup>220</sup> For the interviews with the editors of *Kim* and *Kadınca* magazines, see Kırca- Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, pp. 260-280.



employed in the magazines rather revealed itself with women's strength in business and social life, their liberation, their self-confidence and success. In this respect, the individual, individualization, liberation, strength and self-confidence are the key concepts of popular women's magazines.

In this sense, the individualism that rose especially in the 1990s was one of the common topics that received emphasis in the magazines. Some of the articles in the magazines call women to be aware of their own individualism. Especially in Turkey, a country considered by the editors to be placed in the "developing countries" category, women's ability to extend their capacity to become an individual was taken as a guarantee or prerequisite for their freedom because of the oppressive and inhibitive character of society. In this respect, the individualization and liberation discourses were closely connected to one another.

I think that there is close relationship between the discourse on "becoming an individual" and the inclination of feminists in Turkey to consider the traditional lifestyle to be at the heart of gender inequalities. It appears that the "modernity" concept remained at the center of social discussions in Turkey, as can be seen in the women's magazines in the 1990s. While a new type of woman was constructed on the basis of the "New Woman" image in *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire* versions published in Western Europe and America, "modernity" was the primary concept in Turkey.<sup>221</sup> With *Kadınca* in the first place, in every issue of the magazines in question, it is possible to find expressions affirming modernity such as "modern woman", "modern lifestyle", "thinking in a modern way," "modern clothing." In this respect, the editors and authors seem to be attached to the women's movement and organizations in Turkey, and even Kemalist modernity discourse that dominates a certain

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<sup>221</sup> Kırca-Schroeder draws attention to the emphasis of popular Turkish feminism on modernity (*modernlik*) in the context of *Kadınca*, see *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 177.

form of feminism.<sup>222</sup> I do not intend to say that the editors wanted to show their commitment to Kemalism in this way but rather the case is that modernity-traditionalism dilemma left its mark on the perspective on gender problems in Turkey. The modern thought and life style that promised liberation for women against the role and meaning provided by the traditional order for women, and the pressure and violence caused by this environment, was the main criterion for early Turkish feminism. If we consider the fact that religiosity, in particular, that shapes traditional life has been at the center of social and political problems that emerged in the last 150 years of Turkey, it is quite usual that the issue is at the heart of all discussions in terms of gender question.

The principle cause for the secondary position of women in social terms in the popular feminism employed by the magazines is traditional cultural norms. Though they did not explain it in such a language, marriage, housework, religion, social traditions re-produced this secondary position. For that reason, women had to fight against them. It will be right to assess the magazine's approach to family, marriage and social traditions in this way. For instance, in an article published in an issue of *Marie Claire*:

And of course one should not ignore the influence of Islamic traditions. Just think that it has not even been 100 [*sic*] years passed from the time when woman was kicked to the curb with the utterance by man of '*boş ol*' (be free, divorce) three times. And today, though we live in a secular society, a divorced woman may be scorned due to such perceptions still existing in our culture."<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> See Deniz Kandiyoti, "Kurtulmuş ama Özgürleşmiş mi?: Türkiye Örneği Üzerine Bazı Düşünceler," in *Cariyeler, Yurttaşlar, Bacılar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler*, Deniz Kandiyoti (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1997), pp. 65-83. For an article analyzing the relationship between women's movement, feminist thought and Kemalism in Turkey, see Arat, "Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey ;" and Yeşim Arat, "From Emancipation to Liberation: The Changing Role of Women in Turkey's Public Realm," *Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 1 (Fall 2000), pp. 107-123. Regarding how after 1980 some feminists in Turkey deviated from Kemalist perspective that dominated the "women question", see Yeşim Arat, "Women's Movement of the 1980s in Turkey: Radical Outcome of Liberal Kemalism?," in *Reconstructing Gender in the Middle East: Tradition Identity and Power*, edited by Müge Göçek and Shiva Balaghi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); and Tekeli, "1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadınlar."

<sup>223</sup> *Marie Claire*, July 1990: "Bir de tabii ki İslami geleneklerin etkilerini de göz ardı etmemek gerekli. Düşünün ki erkeğin üç kere '*boş ol*' demesiyle kadının kapının önüne konmasının üzerinden 100 [*sic*] yıl dahi geçmedi. Ve bugün laik bir toplum olmamıza rağmen boşanmış bir kadın kültürümüzde hala varolan bu tür yaklaşımların etkisiyle küçük görülebiliyor."

Likewise, in one of its files on women, *Marie Claire* touched on the decisions taken, institutions established and reports prepared in succession by the ruling party of the time, ANAP, and discussed them in respect of women's civil rights and their attitude towards women.<sup>224</sup> At the heart of discussion lay what the "Turkish-Muslim family type" was. The name of the portfolio was "Muslim-Turkish Family Blockade" (*Müslüman-Türk Aile Kuşatması*). The report prepared by the State Planning Organization essentially dealt with the "breakdown" of the Turkish family structure. According to the report, the higher rates of participation of women in work life had radically changed mother's duty and image, and had begun causing some domestic and social problems. Under these circumstances, a "traditional religious obligation" like disciplining children was not met. Therefore the "Muslim-Turkish model of human" should be represented in music, literature and folklore.

For *Marie Claire*, it was not a coincidence that the Institute for Family Research, Presidency of Women's Status and Problems and Council of Family were established after the report's release. According to Ayşe Çubukçu, who prepared the file, it was a siege and imposed a certain type of family model on society. Imposing an outdated model by means of outdated methods was not acceptable at all. Moreover, it was brought forward at a time when the head of family concept was being discussed and it was planned to make an amendment in the Civil Code (*Medeni Kanun*). In short, *Marie Claire* considered this model a deep trouble with its popular feminist and secular line of thought: "Though the expression 'National Vision' seems to be in fly size within the proposal in question, it is enough to make everyone, and women's associations, in particular, feel terribly sick."<sup>225</sup>

Islam and women were on *Kadınca*'s agenda as well. A portfolio responding to an article written against feminism in an Islamic magazine discussed to what extent the traditionalist conservative people essentially perverted feminism. The discussion focused on

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<sup>224</sup> *Marie Claire*, October 1990.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

sexual freedom. For the author of *Kadınca*, sexual freedom was mistaken in the way that woman could have intercourse with anyone she wanted. However, what was really meant here was that her body only belonged to her.<sup>226</sup>

In every issue, *Kadınca* gave a list of “Those Who Will be Kissed” and “Chili Pepper.” In the first list, those well-known figures who expressed positive opinions about women’s rights or women were praised, but those in the second list were reprimanded. The state minister and vice prime minister of the time was the “Super Chili” of April 1990 issue. The magazine quoted the minister as saying that women were partly entrusted by God to human beings according to Islamic belief. He added that until they turned them, i.e girls, to the owner, they properly brought them up. Explaining that it was not a useful action to bring women’s rights into question exaggeratedly, the minister expressed his disbelief in the feminist movement’s accomplishment.<sup>227</sup>

Shortly, not only in the 1990s but in every period of Turkish politics, the tension between Islamism and secularism, modernity and traditionalism was reflected in popular women’s magazines. The feminist discourses of the magazines manifested itself in the way that women’s place in the traditional society should change, their visibility should increase in the public sphere and they should acquire more rights and freedom. Therefore their agenda deviated from the popular feminist themes of Western magazines at times. Above all, it is necessary to call attention to the difference in problems experienced by women in a country like Turkey. Some phenomena that no longer pose a problem in Western societies still hold true for women in Turkey. I do not refer to extreme examples such as “honor killings”, co-wives or bride price. These already do not pose a daily threat for educated middle class women, but appear to be events and social problems that they angrily follow as a lesson. However, though educated, the problems experienced by townswomen such as that women

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<sup>226</sup> *Kadınca*, April 1994.

<sup>227</sup> *Kadınca*, April 1990.

are sometimes forced by their families to marry, not allowed to go out whenever they want at night, or face sexual abuse and violence almost every day, or cannot speak about sexual issues as they wish have been turned into the primary concern by popular or radical feminists in Turkey. Moreover, we have to take into account how many articles the Turkish Civil Code, amended even as late as in 2002, included against women in the 1990s. Consequently, “gender backwardness in Turkey” necessarily both fed the popular feminist approaches and loosened up the limit between popular feminism and radical feminism. Because even those middle class women who did not adopt a certain feminist attitude and did not participate in collective women’s movement could easily attribute these problems to the traditional social order or male dominancy, which was so easy to prove. It was one other reason for the rise of such popular feminist themes based on liberation and individualization discourses.

Power and Success Centered Feminism: The New Woman... Powerful, Self-Confident,  
Independent

One of the significant messages conveyed by the magazines to female readers involved self-confidence and decisiveness. Emphasizing that the woman of the 1990s was much different from before, the magazines invited women to become this type of woman indeed. Put it differently, “we are not like that anymore” was an implicit call for how women should be. Just as for beauty and sexuality issues, a series of tips were provided for women in these sections. Recipes regarding how to become an independent and successful woman were presented. In other words, the key to self-confidence and independence was hidden in the magazines. Therefore it will be useful to examine the woman type promoted in popular media of the 1990s and analyze how it was presented in the magazines.

We see that the feminism represented in the magazines was based on an emphasis on strength and career. Becoming a “strong and successful woman” was presented as a specialty that paved the way for women’s liberation. What a “feminist” was here was about criticism of women’s impotence against men and ineffectiveness in social life. The key words of all these magazines were “strength” and “self-confidence”.

For instance, an article in *Cosmopolitan* said that women were inherently strong, but could not actualize this power under social pressure. The fact that women were symbolized as “Eve” indicated that the matter was associated with women’s nature in any case:

Eve is actually the symbol of vigilance and always has a side that startles men in this respect. As it startles men, it is confined, hidden, pushed back, locked up at home. Hence the world has become the world of men. And the state of the world where women cannot exercise their active power and walk around with their elegant steps is pretty obvious.” “Woman is strong. Though she has had to live in a male dominant world over the years, it is safe to argue that this argument is correct as she still apparently holds her head high.”<sup>228</sup>

An article titled “I Have the Power Now” (*Güç Bende Artık*) in *Cosmopolitan* called out to women and said, “People who have discovered that their own selves are the only mainstay are the strongest indeed. Discover the power in yourself, and be happy and successful.”<sup>229</sup>

According to the author, the women of the day had a stronger belief in themselves, and thought more positively about how they looked and felt. They were more independent economically and emotionally. In similar articles receiving learned opinion was a media strategy introduced in the 1990s in Turkey. Likewise in this article, an expert psychologist explained the importance of self-confidence and difference from thinking oneself superior. Then tips to cope with lack of self-confidence were presented with the author’s reference to

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<sup>228</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1996: “Havva aslında uyanıklığın simgesidir ve bu haliyle erkekleri ürküten bir yanı vardır hep. Erkekleri ürküttüğü için de kapatılmış, geriye saklanmış, itilmiş, eve tıkılmıştır. Böylece dünya, erkelerin dünyası olup çıkmıştır. Kadının etkin gücünü ortaya koyamadığı, üstünde zarif adımlarıyla gezinemediği dünyanın hali ise gözler önündedir.” “Kadın güçlüdür. Yıllar boyu erkek egemen dünyada yaşamak zorunda kalmasına karşın, hala başı dik dolaşıyor olmasına bakılırsa, bu savın doğru olduğunu iddia etmek, çok da yerindedir.”

<sup>229</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, November 1996.

the connection between women's weak attitude against male dominancy, which still survived though less, and lack of self-confidence. Primarily, women should learn to take pride in themselves. They should not be scared of failure, and learn to take risk. They also should overcome shyness and not ignore their egos. A recipe is attached to the article which put the self-confidence problem at the center:

Increase your self-confidence  
Re-read your previous love letters  
Do fifty crunches  
Eat only salad at lunch for a week  
Get a pedicure  
Buy a pair of trousers one size bigger. (Thus you will feel leaner.)  
Buy a new type of lipstick.<sup>230</sup>

*Kadınca* gave a long list as well, underlining self-confidence and decisiveness. In the article highlighting that people may sometimes lose their self-confidence, readers were advised not to sink into pessimism because there were ways to re-build up self-confidence. For instance, one needs to learn lessons from mistakes, adapting a dressing style in accordance with physical characteristics and life style, etc.

The list of advice goes on. But what about a woman who reads such articles? Does she take notes and try to conform to the advice exactly? What was the readers' response to the article? For this purpose, we need to have data about reader attitude as part of a "response study." It is a separate work item all by itself. However, it is possible to make a few predictions. From my standpoint, most female readers do not take these articles as recipes and do not struggle to comply with the tips completely. In my opinion, what is striking here is that *Cosmopolitan*, as a gender-based magazine, dealt with women's problems in terms of liberation, self-confidence and strength. It is obvious that the magazines simplistically addressed gender relations and gender problems. They even had a reductionist approach most of the time. For instance, freed from social context, mostly happiness and misery of people

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<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

were reduced to psychological cases. With an abstract advice on power and confidence, women were expected to overcome a problem that had a historical dimension. In addition, we should also draw attention to the close relationship between self-confidence and outer appearance. As discussed in the previous chapters, the magazines' attitude to put body and physical appearance at the center was obvious here as well. The self-confidence and power problems of women were taken as a psychological case but, not within the complex structure of power struggle and intersexual relations.

Women's magazines appeared to have adapted a mission to encourage women. On every occasion repeating that women were strong by nature, they attributed certain essences. In addition to power, they regarded values such as freedom, dedication to independence as substance in women that needed to be actualized. It actually bore the influences of a feminist movement that grew stronger after 1980 in particular. For instance, in an article entitled "It Is Good to Be a Woman" (*Kadın Olmak Güzeldir*), an essentialist perception of feminism, which highlighted difference of women and saw women from a different perspective by their nature among feminists as from 1980 in particular, was consciously or unconsciously defended. In fact, not only the feminism represented in this article, but the feminism of the magazines as a whole emphasized women's difference. The article says:

Woman is strong... Woman has a unique world and a perspective different from men... Eve is sensitive and tender, but has her way at the same time. When she declines and pushes aside the roles provided for her, her nature exposes her to fresh new excitements.<sup>231</sup>

Here the characteristics of "having one's way" and "declining the roles provided" are most particularly pointed out. The magazine invited women to liberation on the basis of its own popular feminist discourse. As women's freedom belonged to their own nature, women should discover it and actualize this power. In other words, power, freedom and difference

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<sup>231</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, March 1996: "Kadın güçlüdür... Kadının kendine özgü bir dünyası ve erkekten farklı bir bakış açısı vardır... Havva'lar duyarlıdır, sevecendir, ama aynı zamanda başına buyruktur. Kendisine biçilmiş rolleri elinin tersiyle bir kenara ittiğinde doğası onu yepyeni heyecanlarla karşı karşıya getirir."



were the primary elements of the popular feminist discourses in the magazines. However, the same article turned woman into an aesthetic object and a desired source of love by saying “[woman] is a gift. A surprise and a journey full of unknowns. As she has all these specialties, she is the one who is loved, missed and for whom poems or songs are written.” To my mind, though not in conflict with the above-mentioned liberation discourse, ascribing the essence of “a beloved creature” to woman is remaining within a sexist borderline.

Stressing women’s difference on the one hand, the magazines sometimes advocated the need to “be like men”; on the other, exemplified how contradictory discourses were juxtaposed all together. For instance, the power discourse of popular feminism sometimes reached to a point at which women were regarded as men, and a line of thought, saying “If we behave like men, we will become strong”:

Work life has gone beyond winking at women and nodded head but men’s tactics function more than those of women because it has been in men’s power for centuries. If so, then we will use their tactics.<sup>232</sup>

The tactics were tremendously simple: “tune up your tone of voice,” “if you pick up the phone, say your name and surname when you answer it,” “say I want you to do it instead of can you do it...” There was no need to say that the examples had been chosen for middle class, executive woman.

### The Career Woman

These magazines, which positioned women outside domestic life and encouraged them accordingly, presented power and career attained in work life as a solution to women’s secondary position in social terms. For instance, as Kırca- Schroeder also points out, a well-

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<sup>232</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, November 1996: “İş hayatı kadınlara gözünü kırpmaktan öte başını salladı sallamasına ama, yüzyıllardır erkeklerin tekelinde olduğu için onların taktikleri kadınlarınkinden daha çok işliyor. Madem öyle bizde onların taktiklerini kullanırız.”

known businesswoman, Leyla Alaton, regularly wrote in the section titled “The Column of Working Women” every month in the mid-1990s in *Kadınca*.<sup>233</sup> Alaton gave a lot of advice about business life to women in her column, and answered readers’ questions. Issues handled in this column varied from problems faced by women in business life to job opportunities, personal skills to practical tips like writing a CV. Albeit limited to tips or advice, the column had a feminist sound as to strengthen up women in business life and functioned as some sort of a consultant for women.

Likewise, there was a “Cosmo Careers” column in Britain and the USA editions of *Cosmopolitan*. In Turkey, though not regularly, the problems faced by women in business life and ways to achieve a bright career were discussed under the title of Cosmo Career (*Cosmo Kariyer*). Cosmo’s emphasis on “career” is more evident. This word is almost a key. It could be interpreted in the way that the magazine was more tightly connected to global capitalist terminology. Rather than gender-based inequalities, *Cosmo* invited women to be aware of career goals and success. In this respect, it dealt with and provided solutions to some problems that went for men as well. “Advice language” was also dominant here. Women were particularly invited to be assertive, self-confident, competitive and brave.

However, neither *Cosmo* nor the others were interested in the low-level service sector, working class women, the informal sector or domestic labor that formed the basis of women’s employment. Life and the problems of working women were actually pursuant to waged, mid-level and educated women. Hence it is not possible to find an inclusive feminist criticism and there is almost no room for the exploitation of women’s labor and unequal wages. So what made the feminism of these magazines popular was the stress on power and strength, which showed their critical limits.

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<sup>233</sup> Kırca-Schroeder, *Popüler Feminizm*, p. 197.

One other border of career and success-based feminism is determined by consumer concerns. The powerful woman was a consumer at the same time. For instance, immediately in the early 1990s, *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire* gave place to articles about credit cards and raved about the use of these cards with terms like “power” and “autonomy.”<sup>234</sup> The woman who had a credit card bought anything she wanted and went anywhere she desired was strong and free. Likewise, a woman who possessed certain goods had a strong image. Feminist mottos mostly emerged in various ads in such type of popular women’s magazines with the advent of the 1990s. Exactly at this point, a set of feminist discourses functioned to the purpose of commercial concerns. This is what can be called “commodification of feminist values.” As Macdonald says, “consumer discourses in both advertising and the women’s monthly magazines press now eagerly absorbed the terminology of self-assertiveness and achievement, transforming feminism’s challenging collective program into atomized acts of individual consumption.”<sup>235</sup>

In conclusion, the thesis put forth from the perspective of popular women’s magazines is that “when women grow stronger economically, emotionally and psychologically, they cannot be suppressed by men.” The concept that functions at the center is power and confidence. For that reason, the power-based feminism applied by the magazines is highly characteristic. Declining identifying womanhood with obedience and passiveness, and manhood with dominance and power, the magazines encourage women to struggle in order to be stronger and more active. In this sense, whatever cultural form it may had, criticism of women’s exclusion from private and public life and exposure to secondary position had a feminist tone. A discourse refuting women’s marginal and passive position and producing alternatives accordingly was in dialogue with feminism. However, this type of feminism was problematic as it believed that the way to tip the scales in women’s favor in terms of

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<sup>234</sup> See for example, *Marie Claire*, February 1990 and *Cosmopolitan*, October 1996.

<sup>235</sup> Macdonald, *Representing Women*, p. 91.

intersexual power struggle would be possible by way of psychological superiority and self-confidence in the workplace and personal relations.

### *Kadınca's Feminism*

In this section, I want to discuss certain aspects of *Kadınca* differing from other popular women's magazines. Based on such a comparison, I aim to indicate how feminist discourses diverged from one another in three of the magazines but, at the same time, to show the common points that made them popular. *Kadınca* began to be published in 1978.<sup>236</sup> However, in connection with changing editorial board and authors, it had to follow up different lines of thought at different times. In the early periods, rather than appealing to urban housewives, it took over more of a feminist tone with Duygu Asena's editorship.<sup>237</sup> In this period, *Kadınca* facilitated faster circulation of feminist messages, in particular, when compared to other women's magazines. Almost in every issue, it was possible to find articles and files related to gender inequalities, women's rights and women's movement. When the language and content of the magazine are considered, it is clear that the magazine appealed to women who did not know anything about these issues. In this sense, the magazine appears to have been assigned a "consciousness raising" mission, which was frequently pronounced by the feminists in Turkey in the 1980s. Filiz Koçali explains the historical importance of *Kadınca* from the point of women's magazines and feminist movement:

*Kadınca* is a magazine, among the others published after the Republic, which does not state that "the primary duty of women is mothering" almost for the first time. Further than that, it is magazine that encourages women to take a step, go out of the house and gain strength, and spoke about female sexuality

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<sup>236</sup> According to news spread in the media in July this year, *Kadınca* will be published again.

<sup>237</sup> For an analysis about *Kadınca*, see Kırca, "Turkish Women's Magazines."

for the first time. In this respect, it is a milestone in women's magazine publishing.<sup>238</sup>

As different from other magazines, *Kadınca* urged women more to participate in public space, and get politicized. It attempted to activate women in business life and politics. It was more political and critical, and dealt with gender-based inequalities and discrimination while providing solutions to them. In this sense, during Asena's editorship, at least, *Kadınca* had a feminist line. Therefore it is possible to argue that *Kadınca*, as different from the other two magazines, was more attached to feminist criticism and ideals. Especially the issues published in the early 1990s aimed to politicize women together with all beauty and fashion articles intermingled in the content. Put this way, though within the limits of the market, *Kadınca*'s feminism aimed at struggle against inequalities, discrimination, pressure and violence faced by women in private and public spaces, and had accordingly adopted a publication policy. As a matter of fact, they embraced the slogan "personal is political."

As mentioned above, *Kadınca* presented in every issue a list of "those who will be kissed" and "chili pepper," praising those figures who spoke positively about women but condemning those who uttered discriminative, sexist expressions. Interviews conducted with feminists, women's protest demonstrations, legal regulations pursuant to women, current gender problems etc. were scattered throughout the magazine's pages. The magazine had quite a feminist attitude in highlighting that gender roles and inequalities were socially constructed as opposed to opinions, in particular, that grounded gender discrimination on a biological basis.<sup>239</sup> The gender concept was used quite consciously and was highlighted at times. It must be the most outstanding aspect of the magazine that differentiated it from the

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<sup>238</sup> Filiz Koçali, "Geçmişten Günümüze Kadın Dergiciliği," *Pazartesi*, no. 21 (8 January 1996). "*Kadınca Cumhuriyet sonrası çıkan dergiler arasında, neredeyse ilk kez 'kadınların asıl işi analıktır' demeyen bir dergi. Hatta onun da ötesinde kadınlara adım atmalarını, evden çıkmalarını güçlenmelerini öneren, ilk kez kadın cinselliğinden söz eden bir dergi. Bu anlamda kadın dergiciliğinde bir dönemeç.*"

<sup>239</sup> The reader can, for example, see that article entitled "Yes... The Man is Superior!" (Evet... Erkek Üstündür!), *Kadınca*, April 1990.

other popular women's magazines. After Duygu Asena resigned from her editor position in 1993, followed by her initiative to publish *Kim, Kadınca*'s feminist discourses began to change.

However, it also had a set of characteristics that separated it from other feminist magazines, for instance, the most widely known *Pazartesi*. And it is exactly this aspect of the magazine that made it popular and integrated the political into popular and vice versa.<sup>240</sup> Even during Asena's editorship, it shared many common points with other magazines on the market. Pages dedicated to beauty, cosmetics, fashion, celebrity life and magazine topics along with its perspective on all these were no different than other women's magazines. For instance, if we consider topics covered in any of its issues, we will make the subject matter more concrete. Sections that remained unchanged in *Kadınca* were "Social Life," "Interview," "Fashion-Beauty" and "Health-Gender."<sup>241</sup> It allocated as many pages as other women's magazines, at least, to cosmetics and clothing ads. Topics like losing weight, make-up, fashion and trends, sexuality, women-men relationships, and flirting continuously had an unchanging place in the magazine. Especially sexuality and beauty were topics shared by the magazine with others in terms of content. In other words, *Kadınca* did not aim to be at the heart of feminist discussions. Consequently, it was a magazine that presented products to the market in line with commercial concerns. Hence, readers were not to think that they were holding a totally political feminist magazine such as *Pazartesi*, for instance. As a matter of fact, it is exactly the reason why I view the magazine with respect to "popular feminism." At this point, a comment made by Ayşe Saktanber is summative:

*Kadınca* sets the woman it aims as a modern woman who knows how to manage her husband and man with the least compromise once she gets familiar with herself and sexuality, has a grasp of her rights, is decisive, can stand on her own legs, has self-esteem but can also set a practical European style table,

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<sup>240</sup> Kırca defines it as "the popular meets the political," see "Turkish Women's Magazines."

<sup>241</sup> See for example, *Kadınca*, August 1992.

is careful about various cosmetics, diets and gymnastics, hair, face and body care, follows the fashion of the time, and can do home decoration.”<sup>242</sup>

Feminist messages and discourses along with weight given to beauty, sexuality and fashion did not pose a contradiction for *Kadınca*’s feminism because the feminism supported by Asena and others, just like it rose in the West in the 1980s, did not accept the existence of a difference, or more precisely, a contrast between feminism and femininity. *Kadınca* represented a perception supporting that “feminist is not ugly, uncared or misandrist; every woman has the right to be beautiful and aware of her rights.” I believe that their emphasis on femininity resulted from their attempt to blur the distinction between feminism and femininity. The moderation in the contrast between feminism and femininity in the late 1980s caused a magazine like *Kadınca* which had a more feminist tone to increase interest in femininity.

The weight given by *Kadınca* to sexuality should be perceived within a cultural context specific to Turkey. Sexual freedom came first for the feminists of the 1980s. In a country where virginity, choice of clothes, divorce, and flirting posed problems for women, experiencing sexual freedom was one of the most significant items on the feminist agenda. Therefore, just like *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire*, *Kadınca* concentrated on topics like orgasm, masturbation, and sexual fantasies. For instance, in an interview conducted by *Marie Claire* with Canan Arın equality in sexual equality was brought to discussion thanks to the women’s movement rising in the 1980s, which rose consciousness subsequently. Referring to the share of women’s magazines, Arın stated that the magazines dealt with women’s right to

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<sup>242</sup> Ayşe Saktanber, “Türkiye’de Medyada Kadın: Serbest Müsait Kadın veya İyi Eş Fedekar Anne,” in *1980’ler Türkiye’sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar*, edited by Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: İletişim, 1995), p. 211. “*Kadınca*, hedeflediği kadını kendini ve cinselliği tanıdıkça kocasını ve erkeğini nasıl en az tavizle idare edebileceğini bilen, haklarına vakıf, kararlı, ayakları üzerinde duran, kendine saygılı ve ama aynı zamanda pratik alafranga sofralar kurabilen, çeşili kozmetikler, diyetler ve jimnastikler, saç, yüz ve vücut bakımına titiz, günün modasını takip eden, ev dekorasyonundan anlayan modern bir kadın olarak kurar.”

orgasm and how important it was.<sup>243</sup> When we remember the fact that *Pazartesi*, an entirely feminist magazine, presented a section regarding female sexuality every week along with reader letters related to sexuality in the 1990s, it is clear how privileged it was for the feminists in Turkey.

### Feminism or Femininity

It is remarkable that popular women's magazines did not confront feminism with femininity and they rather laid emphasis on femininity. For instance, in an interview conducted by Ayşe Arman, the *Cosmopolitan* editor defined the "Cosmopolitan woman" as such: "Not feminist but feminine, in other words, womanly. She is the woman who earns money, is not dependent on anyone, pays attention to her physical appearance, but wants to be respected for her mind as well."<sup>244</sup> In fact, they considered a distance between themselves and a certain type of feminism, for instance, feminism as a radical political movement. As mentioned above, they announced many feminist messages to readers through the magazines with an emphasis on power, self-confidence, career, success in business and social life, sexual freedom and individualization. Actually, the editors regarded themselves as moderate feminists. However, the term "femininity" was always "more cheerful and warmer" for them. It is possible to call it a new type of feminism that put femininity at the center, underlining women's difference and glorifying womanhood.

But then why are these two terms categorically placed face to face or one of them is preferred to refer to a certain case? Is feminism not an intellectual, political movement and femininity the characteristics attributed to a certain sex? The answers to these questions lie in

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<sup>243</sup> *Marie Claire*, November 1990.

<sup>244</sup> Ayşe Arman, "Kızgın Feminist Değil, Neşeli ve Kadınsı bir Dergi," *Aktüel*, no. 37, 25 March 1992, quoted in Bali, *Tarz-ı Hayat'tan Lifestyle'a*, p. 227. "Feminist değil, feminen yani kadınsı. Para kazanan, hiç kimseye bağlı olmayan, dış görünüşüne önem veren ama kafasına da önem verilmesini isteyen kadın bu."



the social and cultural context of the 1980s and 1990s, which have been mentioned at different places throughout the thesis. *Cosmopolitan*'s editor actually summarizes the enmity against a specific type of feminism in the popular media. In a similar vein, the *Times* argued that feminism died out in the early 1990s.<sup>245</sup> According to this approach, women-men equality was no longer a problem. When most women became educated, economically independent and culturally conscious, they would be able to defend their rights and be strong. In sexual terms, they had more trust in themselves. What was more, beauty, following fashion, looking smart and openness to global values were all desired by women. The womanhood expected from the women of the 1990s was exactly this: economically independent, free, conscious, consumer, beautiful, charming and cheerful... Therefore the popular women's magazines positioned femininity concept at the center. The common point emphasized by the magazines was that if women placed importance on their femininity, they would feel deserving and become important. They specially pronounced the relationship between beauty, freedom, femininity, and self-confidence.

The popular women's magazines studied in this thesis presented an alternative lifestyle to women. The femininity ideals of the 1990s were being constructed by the magazines. Some part of magazines pages were allocated to this ideal type of woman. But what were these ideals? Who was the ideal "feminine woman"? For instance, while an article in *Cosmopolitan* described the type of woman of whom women were jealous, it was actually defining the ideal woman type of the magazines. This article gives a summary regarding popular media's ideals of womanhood in the 1990s, and even today. Accordingly, the type of woman that drove other "women" crazy had the following qualities. Those women are:

Who catch everyone's attention at first glance;  
Who are successful, creative;  
Who have long and well-cared nails which never break;  
Who have shiny and beautiful hair;

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<sup>245</sup> Kitch, *The Girl on the Magazine Cover*, p. 1.

Who say they are full though they have only eaten a plate of salad at lunch;  
Who speak impressively;  
Who do not have a belly at all;  
Who do not put on weight;  
Who speak concisely;  
Who still look young and beautiful despite having given birth to two children;  
Who have firm legs without cellulite;  
Who definitely like the most expensive and valuable products in the shops they visit;  
Who are adored and overwhelmed with jewels;  
Who succeed in a short time as they know all the tricks of business life;  
Who go out with men who have a yacht, sports car and a big farm in Marmaris.<sup>246</sup>

Implicitly giving the message that everyone wishes to be such a woman, women were told that they could also be like them. Sure enough, it was not written as seriously as an academic text and even the author herself did not believe that everyone could become a woman of that type. Yet this description absolutely gives us a clue about *Cosmopolitan*'s "ideal woman" image. The magazines taught women "in"s and "out"s at the same time. They notably served to spread global cultural trends to women in Turkey: alternative way of life, diet programs, yoga, imported cosmetic products, world music, a new culture of food and beverage, life in building complexes, socialization in shopping malls, etc. They all began to codify the womanhood of economically independent and strong women because the products consumed in consumer society symbolized a certain cultural case at the same time. The "ideal feminine woman" or "New Woman" discourse was codified with such symbols.

Such a discourse actually is related to and in conformity with expectations of global capitalism. The target group of the magazines was a new mass of women who were up for being the potential consumers of products and services such as credit cards, travel, holiday programs, insurance, cosmetic products, and imported luxury goods. These products and services prompted by global cultural trends matched up with the "New Woman", free woman and feminine woman images. Thus it is necessary to evaluate the integration of some feminist

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<sup>246</sup> *Cosmopolitan*, July 1997.

ideals and mottos in advertising strategies within the context of social transformation and global capitalism that occurred in the 1980s.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

In this study, popular women's magazines published in Turkey in the 1990s were examined on the basis of certain themes. These three gender-based magazines, namely *Cosmopolitan*, *Mari Claire* and *Kadınca*, had content similar to their counterparts of the same type. While *Kadınca*, which I particularly chose to analyze in order to make a comparison with respect to the perception of feminism and the co-existence of the popular and feminist themes, had a different tone in its approach, all these magazines began to spread and address readers in America, England and France in the 1970s, and in Turkey and the rest of the world in the 1990s. Therefore *Cosmopolitan* and *Marie Claire* actually set the examples of a specific media form. When we consider the fact that I have examined other magazines carefully during my research, I can easily say that I observed numerous similarities between other examples, such as *Elle*, *Elele*, *Vogue*, and the magazines examined in this study. In short, this thesis is focused on a group of magazines that dealt with similar themes, shared a similar discourse and emerged in a specific social and cultural context. I am totally aware of the fact that I have actually conducted a case analysis and intend to make some generalizations from that point onwards. Consequently, having started with specific examples, I managed to attain those generalizations. But then what did all these similar media forms share? Having started with a few examples, to what sort of generalizations did they lead us?

First and foremost, these magazines produced gender-loaded attributions, images and discourses from the cover to the end page. For that reason, this study aims to go beyond a

simple media analysis, and intends to contribute to women's studies and gender analysis. The magazines I examined allocated a more extensive place to beauty, female body and sexuality when compared to others. It is even a fact that some of the magazines in this range represented, and essentially continue to represent themselves as, beauty and fashion magazines. Hence, I tried to scrutinize the gendered meanings of these themes and discourses about them.

Magazine discourses on beauty and female body are closely related to what women's physical appearance and bodies mean in contemporary culture. Today women have concerns about their physical appearance and bodies more than ever before. As shown in figures and questionnaires, most women want to get rid of some physical features that they consider to be defective. The number of women going on torturous diets, trying various ways to lose weight, having plastic surgery, and developing eating disorders because of beauty standards externally defined and idealized is quite high. The cosmetic industry has become one of the most profitable sectors in the last thirty years. In the related chapter, I argued that beauty and physical appearance are not gender-free concepts, and women establish a relationship with their faces and bodies in a male dominated order. Under the gaze of men, I argued that women are more under the pressure of "beautification" when compared to the other gender, which has a social attribution defined according to male desires. Though I did not support the idea that beauty has an objective side or is totally unrelated to the nature, I stressed that the beauty standards of women change under specific social conditions from age to age. Historicizing beauty ideals, norms and discourses, this thesis stressed that beauty is an acculturated value based on socially constructed notion of gender. It stressed the cultural expectations of what women should look like, and the power and pervasiveness of certain cultural images and ideology to which women are vulnerable. "Beauty ideology" is undoubtedly one of these ideologies. Hence this study examined the place of an ideology in contemporary culture

which pushed women into competition among themselves on the basis of physical appearance, warranting the existence of a profitable sector, making women perceive their bodies as their enemies and ensuring social control of women.

This thesis also aimed to analyze what beautiful meant in the 1990s, what defined beautiful, was accepted as beautiful, as well as the discussions on beauty and female body. It attempted to discover the social meaning assigned to beauty in the 1990s by analyzing specific cultural products that appeared in the media. The popular women's magazines mediated to establish and disseminate contemporary beauty and body standards. These magazines tried to teach women how they could become beautiful, transform their bodies into a social instrument, and above all things, why it was so important. It was unavoidable for the magazines, which called women to possess an identity that they had constructed, to regard the body as an obstacle and enemy for social superiority because the gap between the model drawn and "reality" necessitated a struggle. The magazines endeavored to teach women "how they would manage this struggle". As a part of contemporary culture, the idea based on normality of turning the body into a subject of presentation and display was produced in the magazines in question along with other instruments.

In the magazines studied here, femininity was mainly defined by means of women's physical appearance and sexual life, hence their relations with men. Women's obligation to meet "the need to be feminine" cannot be discussed independently from the gender roles of contemporary culture. Being feminine is considered equal to being well-groomed, chic and attractive. Consequently, women's social presence in urban life is reduced mostly to her appearance. Similarly, a sexy, beautiful and healthy physical appearance refers to being powerful in magazine discourse. Women were more in need of power more in the 1990s. As this perspective associates the annihilation of women's secondary position in transformation of the body into a social instrument still remained within the male-dominated territories.

However, I should also underline this point: I did not argue that there was a reader group, totally unaware of everything going on, who put into practice whatever they read in the magazines, and were exactly in an object position. In other words, I did not speak about a group of women who did not have even a clue about beauty and body and were totally under the control of the media, on the one hand, and discourses that were imposed by a group of pioneers, on the other. Just as in every form of media, the magazines had a group of producers and a group of consumers. Unless there was a social correspondence of the topics and discourses covered in the magazines, it would have been impossible for them to survive in the market. And it means that there was a group of “demanding” women in respect to beauty, body, sexuality and many other issues. We can understand it in the contemporary social and cultural context to which we are presently bound. In other words, these magazines personally produced and consumed by women were the fruit of the conditions shared by their readers and publishers, and there was an interaction between them. These social conditions were scrutinized in this thesis in reference to ne-liberalism, development of consumer society, commercialization of life styles, and global cultural trends of the middle classes. Thus the economic, social and cultural context of the 1990s was located at the center of this thesis.

In such a social context, the magazines mainly addressed young and early-middle-aged, urban, educated women who were mostly employed or candidates to be employed, single in general, had an income above average, open to global values and wanted to move up the social ladder. All research drew the social profile of magazine readers in this way. In this respect, women constructed by the magazines were not similar to the ones previously constructed by earlier magazines: Free, young, successful, sexy, beautiful, well-groomed and have a career, etc. Different from previous women’s magazines, these magazines did not represent women as good mothers, housewives or wives. For instance, when compared to traditional women’s magazines, the jargon used changed considerably. “Marriage

community” became a “relationship adventure” while woman was referred to as a sexy lover instead of a good mother, and love was both romantic and fleeting.

Actually their attitude towards family was ambiguous and even conflictual at times. On the one hand, the magazines addressed single women only at first glance. Family and domestic issues were so rarely covered that these issues seem to have been considered outside women’s experiences. However, these magazines implicitly assumed that readers would absolutely get married some day, on the other hand. Still, family, children and housework were largely left out of the content. Put it this way, woman was not confined to domestic responsibilities in the magazines of the 1990s. The image of woman intended by the magazines to be constructed, which was rising in the West in the 1970s and in Turkey in the 1990s, was of course not only a mother and lived in a city. Though contradictory at times, there was even an appraisal, affirmation and sometimes a call for single life. It is also possible to argue that they established a positive correlation between women’s freedom and single life due to the image of good wife and mother put into “good woman” category by the traditional patriarchal thought. In this respect, I can say that the magazines were free from domestic issues and drew an alternative womanhood. As a matter of fact, it fit into the social transformation experienced by urban, middle-class women in the 1990s.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the social composition of urban women was changing rapidly. Consequently, the woman image of the media was changing as well. As women began to avoid thinking of themselves as dependent on their house and husbands, passive and obedient, and turned out to be more educated, became active in work life and social life, their visibility increased in the public sphere, produced more economic values, the discourses of the media that addressed them accordingly changed. However, it was the media itself again that told women about the implications of this change, and thus made them more demanding.



There was a complex and mutual relationship. More clearly, while social change brought along new strategies and discourses, new socialites were created by these discourses.

Paradoxically but for obvious reasons, I have above described that women occupied the cover pages of both women's and men's magazines almost every time, and argued that this obsession regarding the female body was directly related to the place of women's identity in social sphere. As a matter of fact, how men are represented in the popular women's magazines that I have analyzed, except for the supplements on "men" of a few *Kadınca* issues, is not clear. While a specific type of ideal woman is defined, there is not much reference to masculinity ideals and image. At this juncture, it is noteworthy to indicate that specific researches to be conducted on masculinity have a particular importance within the scope of gender studies.

Women's magazines are both a gender-based cultural form and an economic value, i.e. a commercial commodity in the market. The reasons for their existence and market needs are tightly associated. In another saying, it is not possible for these magazines to act free from capitalist concerns. It is one of the factors that determine the magazine discourse and content. Therefore, while drawing attention to the effects of the social change, this thesis also underlined the harmony between magazine discourses and global capitalist needs. It called attention to the fact that there is a close relationship between global cultural values that the magazines carry, and global capitalist strategies. For instance, elevating beauty, physical appearance and fashion to a central position deeply affected the magazine content and consumption forms of female readers. In addition to many other things women's possession of new consumption forms are directed by such women's magazines. In consequence, as long as the magazine discourses were in conformity with the needs of the sectors that produced for women, women's magazines had a big market for themselves.

Among these discourses, it is remarkable that the magazines produced a popular version of feminism. The magazines never took an interest only in beauty, sexuality, fashion and spare time activities. Women's problems and women's place in public space, the injustice, violence or suppression that women experience, etc. were put into words, though irregularly and rarely, by the magazines. The magazines tried to contribute to the re-organization of gender relations via their discourses. They called on women to have a stronger faith in themselves, be determinant and active, and cope with the problems of the male-dominated world. That is why I argued that the magazines spread popular feminist messages along with all the contradictions and unique discourses they had. It is clear that there are many types of feminism, but it is possible to talk about certain criteria that define a movement's association with a specific line of thought or movement. We can summarize them as fighting against political, social, economic, and cultural inequality, suppression or discrimination against women, and aspiring to make women more effective in private and public spaces. In this sense, the magazines had a feminist concern and a number of qualities observed in feminism.

In the related chapter, I dealt with the feminist discourses adopted by three popular women's magazines of the 1990s, how they approached gender problems and what type of woman they idealized on the basis of the femininity concept. A power discourse that did not call for collective action characterized the magazines' feminism. Their feminism did not invite readers to a common fight. It was success-oriented, but this success was career-based rather than success in the fight against male dominance and all types of suppression exercised on women. It has all about women's acquisition of knowledge and self-confidence. To this purpose, a personal transformation was a must. It reduced intersexual inequalities and women's so-called obedience to a personal problem. The common point highlighted by the magazines was that if women attached importance to their femininity, they would feel

valuable and become powerful. In a similar vein, workers, women working in the informal sector, housewives, provincial women, pious women and old women were completely off the magazine agenda. Magazine editors ignored or did not stress sufficiently the social causes of intersexual relations. In other words, they failed to see that intersexual differences are socially formed and constructed. This approach that detaches gender problems from the social context sends out a message to women that their emancipation is possible when they discover the power in them. Hence the feminism of popular women's magazines was shaped by an individualism discourse that was "re-discovered" in Turkey and the world in the 1990s. Likewise, the magazines put forth a sort of post-feminist discourse that corresponded to the personalization of the women's movement and its purification from politics. This meant a sort of domestication or taming of feminism. I also argued that while these magazines were encouraging women to raise their social visibility and power, they also reduced feminism to a lifestyle, trend or a matter of appearance.

An important difference of popular feminism in Turkey is that it shows more interest in public and political issues because there are still the most urgent problems to be tackled. For that reason, it is necessary to underline the emphasis placed on individualization and liberation. The women's magazines sent out various feminist messages by dealing with issues like women's civil and social rights, discrimination against women, gender inequalities, sexual harassment, and violence against women. Identically, they attempted to break the taboos regarding female sexuality, the female body and male-female relations. They tried to help women get to know their own bodies and sexuality. In line with this purpose, they considered the religion-based traditional approach the biggest obstacle and regarded it as backward, and believed that women would be liberated in a more modern country. Therefore, it is possible to find in the magazine pages articles about some political divisions and discussions peculiar to Turkey.

The women's magazines represented the mutual interaction of feminism's integration with the popular and vice versa. I claim that feminism's internal change, hostility against a certain type of feminism, i.e, the second-wave one, in the media, the transformation of ultra-commercialized female body into a global domination in the light of liberation led to a popular feminist approach. On the one hand, criticizing gender inequalities, they had their eyes on the greater participation of women in the public sphere, and they made women into objects of pleasure in the eyes of men, and remained within male dominated boundaries.

There is a close relationship between the feminist discourses of the magazines and the "ideal woman" type that they aimed to construct. It is also relevant to the social transformation experienced by middle class women. Femininity was no longer codified as the ideal wife, housewife and mother in the popular women's magazines of the 1990s. Reflecting the changing femininity images, they represented the "ideal woman" type to readers: chic, well-groomed, sexy, brave, self-confident, with an occupation, economically independent, open to global cultural values, both a little bit rebellious and dignified, aware of her rights, a little feminist, but mostly feminine. For that reason, I highlighted in the related chapter that the popular feminist discourse of popular women's magazines actually served to construct a hegemonic female image in a certain social, economic and cultural context.

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Figure 1

# metabolizmanızın

Fazla kilolar,  
pek çoğumuzun sorunu...

Kilo problemi yüzünden  
yoğurt ve krakere mahkum  
yaşayıp, yemeklere  
sırt çeviriyoruz.

Oysa şanslı bir azınlık  
gıkolatadan, pizaya  
cannın çektiğini  
istediği gibi  
yiyor. İşte bu  
mutlu ve kendiliğinden  
zayıf insanları  
kıskanmamak mümkün  
değil. Neden bazıları her  
saat başı atıştırıp,  
üç öğünü de kaçırmadığı  
halde bir gram bile  
almıyor? Bu sorunun  
cevabı metabolizmamızda.

Onu iyi tanırsanız eğitirsek,  
şanslı ve zayıf insanların  
arasına katılabiliriz.

**Aylin**, erkek arkadaşından ayrılmıştı. Bir hafta sonra her zaman giydiği kotun bacağına krampları girmesine neden olacak kadar dar gelmeye başladı. Bu fark etti. Kendi kendine, "Mutlaka birlikte dışarı çıkarsak, bisiklete biner ya da koşarsak. Şimdi yemeğimi televizyonun önünde tek başıma yi-yip, pembe dizileri izlerken de kura-biye ve bisküvileri arda ardına yuvarlı-yorum... Ve kilo alıyorum, sanırım metabolizmam yavaşladı!" diyor. Pek de haksız sayılmaz Aylin... Peki meta-bolizmamızı hızlandırmak için ne yap-malı?

**MINİK AMA KORKUNUÇ DÜŞMAN**  
Anı kilo almalarla vücudun kimya-sal yapısındaki değişimlerin rolü bü-yük. Pek çok doktor, az çalışan tiroid bezlerinin metabolizmayı yavaşlattığı konusunda aynı fikirde. Ve tiroid bezlerinin şizmanlık üzerinde önemli etkileri olduğunu düşünüyorlar. Çün-kü tiroid bezleri besinlerle birlikte alı-nan karbonhidratları, proteinleri ve yağları kullanıma hazır hale getirip enerjiye dönüştürüyor. Ve tiroid bezi-maz az çalıştığı zaman kilo problemi ya-ratan sebeplerin başını çekiyor. Ama ya tiroid bezleriniz sağlamda ve kilo al-maya devam ediyorsanız? Bu koşullar-da büyük ihtimalle sorun metaboliz-mamızda.

Neden kilo alıyoruz? Uzmanlar fa-zla kiloların, organizmamız tarafından tüketilemeyen depolanan fazla kalori-ler yüzünden oluştuğunu anlatıyorlar. Bu da, ya gerektiğinden fazla yeme-kten ya da gerektiği kadar enerji harca-yamamaktan kaynaklanıyor.

Biliyor musunuz, vücudumuzda bulunan her bir yağ hücre, üç yüz elli kaloriye sahip. Ve ne zaman vücudumuzun yakabileceğinden fazla ka-lori alsak, kalçalarımızdaki, basenleri-mizdeki, göbçemimizdeki yağ hücre-le yeniileri ekleniyor. Gram, gram süren bu eklenmeler, kâbusumuz ha-line gelen kiloları doğuyor.

Aylin de harca-yabileceğinden fa-zlasını, patates çipsi ve kurabiyelerle, atıştırma, fazladan 250 kalori demek. Ashında bu ilk bakışta fazla görüme-yebilir; ancak, haftada toplam 1750 kalori diye hesaplasak, vücudumu-zun yağ stokuna katkısını, varın siz düşünün. Altı haftalık tablo korkunç bir rakama ulaşabiliyor. Tam üç kilo.

Uzmanlar, kolaylıkla yapılabilecek, basit hareketlerin bile etkisini küçüm-sememek gerektiğini düşünüyorlar - bunlar merdiven çıkmak, köşede ki markete gitmek ya da ortağı topla-mak bile olabilir- Yapılan her hare-ketle yakılan kaloriler toplandığında; fazla kiloları engelleyecek, hatta tö-müyle ortadan kaldırabilecek bir etki- oluşturuyor. "Ancak televizyon izle-mek bunlara dahil değil. Çünkü tele-vizyon izlerken yakılan kalori sadece uykudayken kaybettirmez kalori ka-dar." diyor Colorado Üniversitesi Bes-


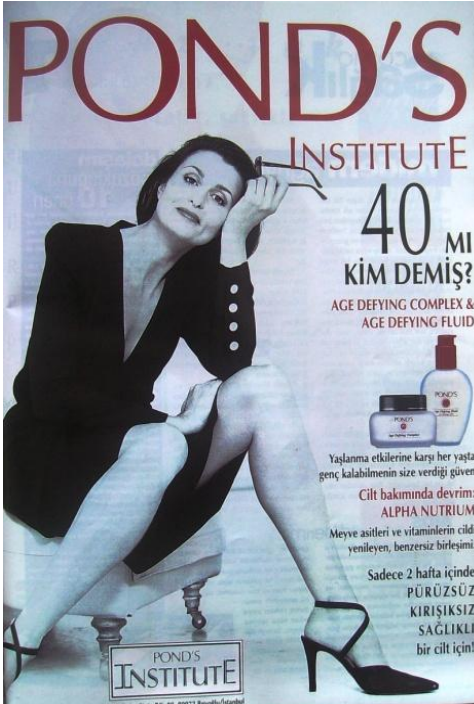
Figure 2

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genç kalabilmenin size verdiği güven

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SAĞLIKLI  
bir cilt için!**

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Figure 3

[illegible]



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6





# bu gece onu baştan çıkarın

Bugün onun doğumgünü ya da tanışma yıldönümünüz ve gece onu her zamankinden farklı olarak karşılamak, onu baştan çıkarmak istiyorsunuz... Ya da belki özel bir gün değil ama siz "özel" olmasını istiyorsunuz... Öyleyse gece için hazırlık yapmanız gerekiyor. Heyecanlı ve tutkulu bir gece için aşağıdaki önerilere mutlaka bir gözatın.

**başlangıç atesini yakmanın yolları**

Önceki sevgilinizin ilgisini çekmek için öğleden sonra, işinin biraz sakrilğini bildiğiniz saatlerde işe rine telefon açın. Seksi konuşmak için çok kıbar ve alçak bir ses tonu kullanmalı, konuşmaktan çok mırıldanmalısınız. Hem istekli davranmalı hem de onun isteklerine açık olduğunuzu belli etmelisiniz. "Bu gece benimle sevişmek ister misin? Birlikte duş almaya ne dersin?" gibi sevgilinizi heyecanlan-

[illegible]

A black and white photograph of a muscular man in a public restroom. He is shirtless, wearing a necklace, a watch, and a black brief with "Calvin Klein" on the waistband. He is leaning against a tiled wall, with a "WC" sign visible on the left and a "Palmolive" soap dispenser on the right.

off  
6  
Nas

**erkek  
göğüs  
sever**

**COSMO  
MAN**  
COSMOPOLITAN'IN ÜCRETSİZ EKİDİR

KASIM 1996

**eyvah  
erkek  
arkadaşım  
fetişist!**

**erkek  
güzelleri  
birarada**

**çapkın  
erkeği  
yola  
getirme  
rehberi**

**264 SAYFA**

**COSMOPOLITAN**

**ask**  
olmadan  
**seks**  
olur

**top**  
modeller de  
**mutsuz**

**ask**  
havada  
kokusu  
var

**ayakkabıya**  
çıldırıyoruz

**MAN**  
ile  
erkekleri  
keşfedin

**altın**  
yürekli  
kadınlar

**selülit**  
veda

**küçük**  
mutluluklar

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1996

# ocak cosmo

**BU AY**

18 Lezbiyenlik Lez-Alet Bir Şey Mi?  
22 Gerçek Seks Erotik ve Çılgın Olur!  
23 Sekse Karşı Aşk Yatak Odası Savaşları  
50 Komikaze Dedğin Güldürerek Öldürür  
Güldüren Erkeklerin Dayanılmaz Cazibesi  
56 Kadınlar! Bekarlık Asıl Bizim İçin Sultanlık  
Yalnız ve Mutlu Kadınlar  
60 Hamilelikte Seks  
Seks Yapmak İçin 9 Ay 10 Gün Beklemeyin...  
92 Eyvahl! Arkadaşımla Aram Açılıyor  
Hiçbir Arkadaşlık Hiçbir Zaman İlmli ve Uyumlu Gitmez

**GÜZELLİK & MODA**

40 Cosmoda  
66 Cosmo Kızı Fem Güçlütürk  
70 Körke Hayır! Güzellik Bir Başkasının Derisini Giymek Değildir  
82 Cosmo Stili Kuzey Kızları  
78 Bir Kış Günü Romansı! Moda Editörü Hakan Öztürk  
96 Elma mı Armut mu?  
98 Eller Güzelliğin Aynasıdır  
100 Güzelliğiniz

[illegible]



[illegible][illegible]

# Vücudun gençliği: Yaşasın diri incelik.

Düzgün, kapitonizim, diri ve ince bir vücut, biçimli ve güzel verici göğüsler. İşte buvün, mutlaka doğu vergin olmasa da kendi kendinize armağan edebileceğiniz güzel bir silüetün anahtarları. Güzelliğin Fransız İdleri Clarin'ın gevşeyeme ve kapitona karışık mükemmel bakunları sayesinde bu yaz vücudunuzun güzelliği ellerinizin arasında.

**Uzun zaman için, kapitonizim de ince.**  
Araştırmış, geliştirilmiş olan bir jirinin seçimiyle 1989 Fiv. D'Yöneliminde, güzellik ödüllünü kazanan Gel Multi Aceli Anti-Capiton Clarin sadece 100 inçlik kollarını bir süper kompresiyonla toplu muhtaktır. Sadece yağların vücudu yermesini durdurmak, ve silüeti incealtmek kolunayn dokularının gerilmesini, sıkılaşmasını, yavaş yavaş ve sürekli olarak kapitonizim oluyunca önlür. Hattı parçalarını ve serin oluyunca yavaşca erimekte daha diri ve daha yumuşak bir cilde zevkini verir.

## Sürekli güzellik için Büyük hırcırları temizlemiş.

Bu silüet güzelli ve diri, sıkı birinci bakımın bir başıdır. Güçlü bakteriler süper süper Gümmüş İnfektan Clarin temizler (Büyük hırcırları) cildinde bir elgi gibi etki gösterir. Cildin derhal silinir, süpür ve sağlıklı bir haldedir. Bu türün hafifletici bir diyet bulur vücudunuzun kullandığı ve silindirmesi için kullanılmak üzere geliştirilmiş, Gümmüş İnfektan hırcırları temizlemeye ve derinleştirilmiştir, cildin derin ve yumuşak bakımını sağlar.

## Güçlendirme yeniden diri ve güzel kollarınız.

Ciltteyazmaya başlıyın, daha diri ve güzel verici göğüsler, daha diri derinliğin güzelliği için korgi baskınlar. Gel Multi-Tenseur Butte'nin süper yağları kolların içindeki gırtlak gırtlaklarını parçalar. Gel Multi-Tenseur Butte Clarin, güzelliklerin formu koruyucu serumdur. Cildin derinliğini ve güzelliğini koruyarak karışık zamanın derin güzelliklerini elinizde bulgı oluyunca derinleştirir ve güçlendirir. Gümmüş İnfektan süper "yemeden paktı yemeyi" olarak kendinizi gösterir.

**CLARIN**  
— P.A.S. —

"CLARIN-ABC, FIV, D'YÖNELİM, BÜYÜK HIRCIKLAR"

CLARIN, FIV, D'YÖNELİM, BÜYÜK HIRCIKLAR, GÜMMÜŞ İNFECTAN, MULTI-ACELI ANTI-CAPITON, MULTI-TENSEUR BUTTE, MULTI-TENSEUR BUTTE CLARIN, GÜZELLİKLERİN FORMU KORUYUCU SERUMDUR. CİLDİN DERİNLİĞİNİ VE GÜZELLİĞİNİ KORUYARAK KARIŞIK ZAMANIN DERİN GÜZELLİKLERİNİ ELİZİNDE BULGILI OLUYUNCA DERİNLİKTİR VE GÜÇLENDİRİR. GÜMMÜŞ İNFECTAN SÜPER "YEMEDEN PAKTI YEMİYİ" OLARAK KENDİNİZİ GÖSTERİR. CLARIN, FIV, D'YÖNELİM, BÜYÜK HIRCIKLAR, GÜMMÜŞ İNFECTAN, MULTI-ACELI ANTI-CAPITON, MULTI-TENSEUR BUTTE, MULTI-TENSEUR BUTTE CLARIN, GÜZELLİKLERİN FORMU KORUYUCU SERUMDUR. CİLDİN DERİNLİĞİNİ VE GÜZELLİĞİNİ KORUYARAK KARIŞIK ZAMANIN DERİN GÜZELLİKLERİNİ ELİZİNDE BULGILI OLUYUNCA DERİNLİKTİR VE GÜÇLENDİRİR. GÜMMÜŞ İNFECTAN SÜPER "YEMEDEN PAKTI YEMİYİ" OLARAK KENDİNİZİ GÖSTERİR.

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## İN

•Pastel renkli  
ojeler

- Uzakdoğu mutfağı
- Antonio Banderas
- Sandra Bullock
- Evlenmek
- Erkeklerde kısa saç
- Kadınlarda koyu saç rengi
- Unisex kokular
- Ev toplantıları
- Avrupa sinemasıyla  
ilgilenmek
- Hafta içi dışarı çıkmak
- Bilardo oynamak
- Bireysel sporlar
- Uzakdoğu felsefesi ile ilgili  
kitaplar
- Tek eşli yaşam

## OUT

- Chanel
- No 18 oje
- Avrupa mutfağı
- Brad Pitt
- Sharon Stone
- Bekarlık
- Erkeklerde uzun saç
- Kadınlarda açık saç
- Kadın-erkek kokuları
- Bar bar dolaşmak
- Amerikan sinemasıyla  
ilgilenmek
- Cumartesi çıkmak
- Bowling oynamak
- Takım sporları
- "Nasıl milyarder olunur"  
gibi kitaplar
- Tek gecelik ilişkiler

58 COSMOPOLİTAN

[illegible]

**marie claire**

FETHİYYE ÖZVER:  
ERKEK MİNCİLİSTE  
BİR KADIN MIYI

ZİNANIN  
DAYANILMAZ  
ÇEKİCİLİĞİ

GÜZLÜK  
ÜRÜNLERİ  
91 GÖRÜŞME

YALANIN  
ANATOMİSİ

ZAVIFLAR KEN  
YAPILAN  
10 YANLIŞ

Moda:  
'92 ilkbahar/Yaz  
Defileleri



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22







[illegible]

# telefonda seks

Sevgilmek için yan yana  
olmanız gerektğini de kim  
sıylardı? Duyularınız,  
düşüncelerinizi harekete  
geçiren, sesinize ile onu  
görmeyen çıkarıyor.  
Unutmayın artık size bir  
telefon kağıdı yakın.  
Farmakolarınız,  
şifalarınız değil,  
sesinizdeki titremiş onu  
heyecanlandırıyor. Zaman  
ve mekan da önemli değil  
artık. İster sabah, ister  
akşam, ister içte, ister  
evde, ister aralıda ya da  
sakatta... Ahlağın ibtidai  
ucundaki sevgilinin ile  
seks yapmanızna birar  
renk katın, hırsızlı  
şifalarınız tanıyın.

# tanrım beni baştan yarat!

Güzellik uğruna çekilen bunca zahmet hep  
ilgimi çekti. Kadınların biz erkekler için daha  
güzel ve çekici olmak istemeleri gururumu da  
okşamıyor değil ama, ne bileyim sonuçta bir ameliyat ve harcanan onca para... Bir de  
yıllardır uçurdukları "iç güzellik" balonu! Neyse, güzellik uğruna neler çektiklerini bizzat  
göreyim istedim ve soluğu ameliyathanelerde aldım... FATİH TÜRKMEÑOĞLU

**"Üstünüzdeki kıyafetleri çıkartıp  
özel ameliyat giysileri giyinceksiniz,  
soyunma odaları aşağıda" dedi Op.  
Dr. Nuri Soysal kendisini beklediği-  
miz International Hospital'in cadde-  
ye bakan pastanesinde. Heyecanlı-  
yım. Fotoğrafları çekecek olan Canan  
Aşık ile birbirimize bakıp merdivene  
doğru yu alıyoruz, kalbimde bir  
çarpıntı...**

apandist ameliyatında göremediğimi  
saymazsak... Jet hızıyla bize gösterilen  
soyunma odalarına dâhiyoruz. Giyin-  
dikten sonra fotoğrafı çekecek olan  
Canan'la ara noktada buluşacağız.

Başımızla boneler, burunlarımız-  
da maskeler ve ameliyat kıyafetleri ile  
halimiz çok komik. "Önce bekleye-  
ceksiniz" diyorlar, "hasta uyutulduk-  
tan sonra 4 numaralı ameliyathaneye

**İŞKİKLARIN ALTINDA**  
Çok geçmeden hastamız uyutul-  
muş olarak masaya yatırılıyor. İşkil-  
ar ayarlandı, antiseptik sıvıyla ameliyat  
bölgesi temizlendi, aletler hazırlandı  
ve hermetik zeminde yerini aldı. Artık  
başlayabilir... (Kaçsam mı acaba?)

Anestezi uzmanı Zafer Ünaler,  
tam olarak yapılacak olan operasyo-  
nun detaylarını anlatıyor. "Sağ göğüs-  
ten başlayacağız"



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

yerler, hafta sonunu birlikte geçirmek için arkadaşlar arasında seçim yapma şansına sahip olmak.

**Güç simgeleri**  
Kırmızı bir spor araba, elmas, cep telefonu, Rolex kol saati, fax makinesi, hisse senetleri, kırsal alanda bir gayri menkul, Concorde'la seyahat etmek, laptop bilgisayar, Chanel küpeler, Gucci ayakkabılar, Ray-Ban gözlük.

**Seks gücüne...**  
Doğurganlığını kontrol altında tutabilmek bir güç göstergesidir. Doğum kontrol hapları kullanmak ve kürtaj kararı almak da öyle... Canın seks yapmak istediğinde, eşinden bunu talep edebilmek, istemediğinde ise "Hayır" diyebilmek... En önemli güç göstergesi ise, çocuk sahibi olup olmaya karar vermektir.

- İlk hamleyi yapan taraf olduğunda...
- Bir erkek seni arzuladığında...
- Bir erkeği arzuladığında ve o erkeğin karşılık verdiğini gördüğünde...
- Partnerinin ereksiyon durumuna geçmesini sağlayabildiğinde...

...sahipsin demektir.




Figure 33

**adres**

Mine Çengeri: Show-room Valide Çeşme Cevizlik sok. No: 9/1 Tel: (0212) 261 78 29 Ra Yekellili Valide nağı cad. No: 73/6 Nişantaşı Tel: (0212) 246 57 28

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Kybele: Akmerkez, Etiler Tel: (0212) 282 05 34

Daphane: Akmerkez, Etiler Tel: (0212) 282 08 55

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Casa Club: Teşvikiye cad. No: 11 Teşvikiye Tel: (0212) 232 22 10

Shoe&Me: Akmerkez, Etiler No: 347 Tel: (0212) 282 02 76/77

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David People: Akmerkez, Etiler Tel: (0212) 282 05 31/32

DKNY(ADAM'S): Teşvikiye, Boşan sok. N 4/1 Tel: (0212) 230 66 86

Louis Vuitton: Abdi İpekçi cad. No: 40 Tel: (0212) 246 69 75



Figure 34

**seks için seks**

Cinsellik artık kadınlar için evlilik ya da uzun süreli ilişkilerde yaşanacak bir olay olmaktan çıktı. Günümüzde kadınlar da geleceği düşünmeden, karşısındaki erkek hakkında hiçbir şey bilmek istemeden sadece o anın tadını çıkarmak için cinselliği yaşıyorlar. Apık olmayan kadın sekssten sevk almayacağı düşüncesi ise artık eski bir inanç...






Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39

