

**TRACING MODERNIZATION IN THE OTTOMAN LITERATURE: THE NEW
IDEAL IN OTTOMAN TURKISH AND ARMENO-TURKISH NOVELS**

by

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2016

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Abstract

The primary aim of this thesis is to use Ottoman literature to shed light on the “modernization” of the Ottoman Empire through different lenses. Since the Ottoman novels pursued all social-political hot-news; it is quite possible to follow crises, conflicts, and negotiations of the era in literary works. Another purpose of this study is to examine crucial social issues like gender roles, women’s lives in public and private spaces, and novels’ role in positioning the woman in the Ottoman society. With this respect, I argue literary productions of three different groups of writers; Ottoman Muslim male writers, Ottoman Armenian male writers, who penned Armeno-Turkish novels, and Ottoman Muslim female writers. I find Armenian writers more receptive regarding the westernized way of modernization while Muslim writers were struggling identity crises at the same time. The portraits of female characters also have an agency compared to literary works of the male Muslim writers.

Acknowledgements

It would have been impossible to finish this thesis if I did not get the support of the great people in my life to whom I am very thankful. I appreciate my supervisor Assist. Prof. Tolga Esmer for his guidance, reviews and patience throughout my thesis. I wish to thank Professor Viladimir Petrović for his understanding and eagerness to teach. I also want to thank Aniko Molnar for her kindness and helps. I am also grateful to my family and friends for their endless support and beliefs. I am also thankful to the history department as this one-year long adventure was priceless.

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INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this thesis is to use Ottoman literature to shed light on the ‘modernization’ of the Ottoman Empire through different lens. In doing so, I will utilize Armenian writers’ novels that were written in Turkish but with the Armenian alphabet. In dealing with such as large topic like modernity, I also challenge the generally accepted understanding that Ottoman literature includes only Ottoman Muslim writers’ texts in the Ottoman Turkish language. Armeno-Turkish¹ novels were among the first novels written in the Empire targeted to reach and educate members of their specific communities; therefore, I plan to compare them with those written by their Muslim counterparts, who also wrote in didactic tone and aimed to teach and manipulate mostly the Muslim community. Even though there are also important novels of Greek, Bulgarian, and Jewish writers penned in the same period, due to my limited knowledge of these languages, I will analyze the Ottoman Armenian writers’ novels in comparison with the Ottoman Muslim ones. Since these novels pursued all social and political hot-news; one can follow crises, conflicts and negotiations of the era in this literary works.

Along with inter and intra confessional relations between the different groups and the effects of new political, social, and legal regulations that were discussed in the novels, this thesis also aims to examine crucial social issues like gender roles, women’s lives in public and private spaces, and novels’ role in positioning the woman in the Ottoman society. In this way, I hope to contribute to Ottoman Studies with providing a larger portrait of the Ottoman Empire during the modernization including non-Muslim and Women’s experiences and agency. Looking at the same picture from the different and mostly silenced people’s point of view will hopefully provide a different perspective.

¹ Armeno-Turkish novels are written in Turkish language but with Armenian alphabet.

In the last decade, scholars have begun to focus on the importance of different communities and the multi-cultural form of the Empire in the historiography of Ottoman literature. However, until now mainstream studies discuss the position of the text, which were written in Turkish but with different alphabets in the literary historiography, and it is not possible to encounter a detailed analysis of these novels and their role ‘during the long nineteenth century’². Johan Strauss’s exemplary article “Who reads what in the Ottoman Empire?”³ is one of the only contributions to this field of study. Laurent Mignon is also an important scholar, who supervised two contributing PhD dissertations on the Ottoman Armenian literature. One of his students, Mehmet Fatih Uslu, studied the Armenian theatre in the Ottoman Empire and its primary features. Murat Cankara, on the other hand, researched the importance of Armeno-Turkish novels and their interactions with the other Ottoman texts. Şeyda Başlı and Erkan Erğinci also contributed to the field respectively with a book and an M.A. thesis, which introduce the Armeno-Turkish novels.

Different from the studies that I mentioned above, I would like to analyze specifically the agency of women and their public and private spaces in the Empire. In doing so, I will handle three different categories of novels, respectively: the first novels written by Ottoman Armenian male writers in the mid-nineteenth century, the first novels written by Ottoman Muslim male writers’ in the late nineteenth century, and the first Ottoman female writers’ novels.⁴ A comparison concerning the different approaches of all these three groups to women in Ottoman society is quite important in order to examine the process of

² İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En uzun Yüzyılı (The Longest Century of the Empire)*, (Istanbul: Hil printing house), 1983.

³ Johann Strauss, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Kimler Neleri Okurdu (19. ve 20. Yüzyıllar)? (Who Reads What in the Ottoman Empire (19th and 20th Centuries)?)*, *Kritik 2*, (Fall 2008), 205-265.

⁴ The first Ottoman Turkish Novels are classified as Tanzimat novels. Tanzimat Literature does not involve non-Muslim literature in. Moreover, this literature was separated into two different timeframes in itself as first and second Tanzimat novels. All Muslim women writers’ texts are included in the second group since their participation in novel writing was delayed.

modernization as well as the ideological and personal concerns of the writers themselves in writing about these contentious issues. Writers' varied approaches can also shed light on the elite and leading class of the Empire since all these writers are important political and social figures. The novels that I am going to deal with in this thesis are: Muslim male writers such as Namık Kemal's *Intibah (Rebirth)*(1873-76), Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ve Rakım Efendi (Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi)* (1875), Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası (The Carriage Affair)*(1889), Şemsettin Sami's *Taaşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat (The Love of Talat and Fitnat)*(1873); Ottoman Armenian male writers' works such as Hovsep Vartanian's *Akabi Hikayesi (The Story of Akabi)*(1851), Hovhannes Balıkcıyan's *Dikran, Güllünya ve Karnig'in Dehşetli Vefatleri (The Horrible deaths of Dikran, Güllünya, and Karnig)* (1863), Hovsep Maruş's *Bir Sefil Zevce (A Miserable Wife)*(1868); and Ottoman Muslim female writers' novels such as Emine Semiye's *Sefalet (Poverty)* (1897) and Fatma Aliye's *Muhaderat (Pitfall)*(1892). I selected these writers as they produced the first samples of the novel genre in their own groups. Comparing and contrasting early works would help to examine the publishing process much comprehensively and systematically.

In the following part of this chapter, I will provide a historical background of the modernization of the Ottoman Empire, methodology and framework of the thesis, and a brief outline of the following chapters. It is almost a necessity to mention the theme of “modernization” if the topic is the nineteenth century of the Ottoman Empire. Before dealing with Ottoman modernization, a brief discussion on the different opinions regarding the theme might be helpful to understand the general debate in the literature. Classical historiography in Turkey generally considers “modernization” and “westernization” as the same concepts and takes them for granted in the case of the late Ottoman era. Until the last quarter of the twentieth century, the image of the Sick man of Europe was omnipresent and uncontested in western historiography on the Ottoman Empire. All military, administrative and institutional

changes were accepted as an impact of the West and these studies ignored the agency of the Empire in first place since they considered that the only policy of the Empire to survive was imitating⁵ the West.⁶ The mainstream Ottoman historiography classifies the process in three major groups: “liberalizing” Tanzimat reforms of 1839-1876 are followed by a ratchetting effect of “authoritarianism,” a stress on Islamic identity, and “religious sectarianism” in the Hamidian era (1876-1908), which are in turn followed by “secularization,” “positivism,” and “Turkification” in the Young Tur era, lasting from 1908 until the collapse of the Empire.”⁷

The situation in the historiography of the Balkans and Middle-East was also quite similar as many new nation-states were trying to justify their independence in these regions after the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. In order to strengthen the national feelings and to create a national identity, which was independent of the Ottomans, the Empire was discredited and represented as alien and oppressive.⁸ The Republic of Turkey also tried to create an identity distinct from Ottomanism with a strong emphasis on Turkishness and the weakness of Ottoman technology, education and politics in comparison with those in the West. As Avi Rubin states: “Albeit the differences between these various genres, they all shared the notion that the Ottoman Empire was lacking real agency in the nineteenth century; it was lagging behind the West and was responding to change, rather than initiating it.”⁹

⁵ With reference to the changes in the legal system after the proclamation of Tanzimat, Milan Petrov states “...even the most dedicated “Westernizers” balked at the idea of an outright attack on the authority of Islamic law. It would be misleading; therefore, to describe the process of creating Tanzimat legal codes as one of wholesale “borrowing” from European (Usually French) models.” Milan Petrov, “Everyday Forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864-1868,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, v. 46, no. 4, (Oct. 2014), 709-759, 741.

⁶ Suggested readings: Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

⁷ Scott Rank, *Disputing Religion, Empire, and Modernity: Christian and Muslim Polemics in the Ottoman Print Sphere, 1861-1915*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation, (Budapest: Central European University, 2015), 6.

⁸ Avi Rubin, *Ottoman Nizamiye Courts: Law and Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3.

⁹ Ibid, 3.

Indeed, today scholars maintain that there is more than one form of modernization.¹⁰ This recent approach emphasizes the possibility of different interpretations of Western modernization all around the world. Eisenstadt defines the notion of multiple modernities as the following:

The actual developments in modernizing societies have refuted the homogenizing and hegemonic assumptions of this Western program of modernity. While a general trend toward structural differentiation developed across a wide range of institutions in most of these societies—in family life, economic and political structures, urbanization, modern education, mass communication, and individualistic orientations—the ways in which these arenas were defined and organized varied greatly, in different periods of their development, giving rise to multiple institutional and ideological patterns.¹¹

All in all, there are multiple levels of modernity and different applications of it concerning the various needs of the different generations. At this point, I will talk about modernization in the Ottoman case, the administrative structures of the Empire that the Westernized reforms were primarily applied to, and the various forms of application. Constitutionalization was a milestone of modernization in the Ottoman context. Though the date is debatable, conventional historians identify the promulgation of the Rescript of Gulhane in 1839 as the beginning of the constitutionalization of the Ottoman Empire.¹² The Empire, which had been ruled according to the Sharia and customary law, in the legal perspective guaranteed equality in front of the law to every citizen for the first time. Following the promulgation of the rescript, the royal edict of reform was also declared in 1856 to strengthen the ideals mentioned in the first promulgation. Different from the rescript of Gülhane, 1856 reforms directly targeted appeasing non-Muslim groups in Ottoman society to protect unity in the Empire. Studies on the constitutionalization of the empire mostly range from those that focus on royal reforms to “Kânûn-ı Esâsî” (the Ottoman basic law - 1876), that latter being the first formal constitution of the Empire. However, in order to understand the whole portrait of the

¹⁰ Suggested Reading: Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹¹ S. N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Dedalus* 129, (2000), 1-29, 2-3.

changes in the nineteenth century, it is very important to focus on non-Muslim societies' experiences and alterations on the minor level along with the major alterations in the Empire.¹³ Along with non-Muslim groups in Ottoman society, the position of women is also very important considering the Muslim male-dominant environment of the era, since the modernization process provided significant novelty such as; the right of succession and divorce in the case of women. In this regard, while I will discuss the Armenian Constitution which was promulgated just after the royal reform in 1863, I will also examine *Mecelle* (Ottoman Civil Code) which was prepared between 1863 and 1876. All these promulgations were decided and applied by the authorities of Ottoman Empire and Russia, England, France, which demonstrates there were both internal and external reasons that led to all alterations.

In the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was struggling with the risk of disintegration. Following the successful Greek Revolution that ended in 1829, other Balkan national groups wanted to separate from the Ottoman system. The rise of nationalism in the West was the main reason behind it; however, the intervention of the Great Powers into Ottoman internal politics and their impact on non-Muslim societies were also important. Russia was asking for extended rights for Orthodox Christians; whereas, America had missionary movements especially in the Greek and Armenian communities, France protected Catholics and minorities; and England and Italy were protecting Christians especially Greeks. In this kind of environment, after the independence of Greece and rebels in the other Balkan regions in addition to the devastating financial agreement (Baltalimanı) which was signed with Britain in 1838, the Empire was compelled to promulgate the Tanzimat edict in 1839. "The Gülhane edict was intended to attract British support as the Ottomans fought the Egyptians and to assert greater central control over the provinces in order to prevent the

¹³ With the terms "minor" and "majors", I am not referring to the specific groups or communities such as; Armenians and women. I refer to the events whether they influence all strata of the Empire or only a restricted circle.

disintegration of the Empire.”¹⁴ Even though the political difficulties of the Empire led to this negotiation with Britain, it caused more important financial problems. Non-Muslims were very active in both domestic and international trade. The increasing inflow of foreign products, which were cheap and serialized, in local markets, restricted the efficacy of domestic producers.

The most drastic changes took place after the proclamation of the royal edicts in 1856 concerning the non-Muslim communities in the Empire. Inter- and intra-confessional relations in general and specifically in the Armenian community intensified, and some solutions for these conflicts and a new way for negotiation were looked for. The Tanzimat edict promised equality, protection for all people, and equal rights in front of the law; however, different from the rescript of *Gülhane*, the 1856 reforms directly targeted non-Muslim society to protect unity in the Empire. This edict was also a consequence of other external interventions. In order to not to lose some territories after the war with Russia, the Ottoman state had to proclaim another edict to satisfy the Great Powers. The main emphasis of this edict was on the taxation system in the Empire in first place. “According to the promise of the *Hatt-ı Şerif* non-Muslims were to serve equally with Muslims in the armed forces, but the Muslims could hardly accept Christians as their officers.”¹⁵ In order to prevent conflicts between the two communities, the Empire required for a special tax from the non-Muslims in lieu of military service. “In 1956, with the *Islahât fermânı*, that the principle was fully adopted, and the *cizye* converted to *bedel-isleri*”¹⁶ as the great powers reacted against the inequality between non-Muslims and Muslims in the taxation system. In order to strengthen the centralization of the Empire, councils were established in every region

¹⁴ Elizabeth Thompson, *Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45*, 464.

¹⁵ Ibid, 51.

¹⁶ Halil İnalcık, *Application of the Tanzimat and Its Social Effects*, (Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1976), 12.

including Arab lands. Nevertheless, it might be said that instead of drastic changes, the new social order after the edicts was established gradually.

Furthermore, all these changes did not emerge in the beginning of the nineteenth century all of a sudden. On the contrary, for centuries, some reforms were established in the legal system. The most radical changes, on the other hand, took place in the military system, which paved the way for the “westernized” model of modernization of the Empire. The reactions against the central power and its counterattacks to these reactions with new reforms gradually increased. After the proclamation of both *Tanzimât* and *Islâhat* edicts, initially Muslims reacted against the reforms since they lost their privileges in the Ottoman society against the Non-Muslims. Furthermore, Non-Muslims were also dissatisfied since there was a hierarchy among different confessions in the social order. For this reason, even in the case of the taxation system, there were some Christians, who were uncomfortable about the new law. “The principle of equal taxation and the ensuing abolition of all exceptions and privileges were strongly objected to by the Christian notables (çorbacı) as well, who until then had been paying very little or no taxes at all.”¹⁷ All the efforts were to protect the maintenance and the authority of the Empire; however, the consequences did not meet the expectations of the reformists, and the Empire became more open to western intervention after especially these two edicts. Reforms not only caused trouble for the Muslim members of the administration system but also some non-Muslim individuals’ authority as well, which triggered the disintegration.

Classical Ottoman historiography generally skips from the 1856 edict to the *Kânûn-ı Esâsî*, which is the first constitution of the Ottoman Empire that was promulgated in 1876 and maintained until 1878 as a first attempt. However, concerning constitutionalization, it is important to mention non-Muslim communities’ efforts of modernization and

¹⁷ Ibid, 13.

constitutionalization, which took place earlier than the general reforms of the Empire. After the promulgation of *Tanzimât* reforms in 1839 and especially the proclamation of *Islâhat* edicts in 1856, the most dominant three non-Muslim communities – Greeks, Armenians, and Jews – asked permission for the promulgation of their own edicts.¹⁸ Moreover, some of these edicts include some constitutional traits, as well.

New constitutions for the principal Non-Muslim millets of the Empire were the first fruit of the Porte's efforts for basic administrative reform. In 1862 and 1863 the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Gregorian communities were placed under organic laws which diminished the power of the clergy and increased lay influence correspondingly. Ottoman Jews received a similar charter in 1865.¹⁹

Regarding the constitutionalization process of non-Muslims, I will mainly focus on the Armenians' efforts to reform their own communities. Along with the *Tanzimât* edicts, the Armenian Patriarchate lost a considerable amount of its authority due to the establishment of mixed tribunals that include the civil powers of the *millet* leaders.²⁰ Another important change took place in the administrative level which was the position of *Amiras* in the society. *Amiras* were active members of the Patriarchate who had very strong relations with the Ottoman dynasty as well. They were the aristocracy of the community who funded almost all communal events such as the establishment of the new schools and hospitals. After the collapse of old taxation system, they lost their power to Artisans and Young Armenians.

Armenians, like their Muslim counterparts, started to study abroad in Europe during the nineteenth century. The relations between the western countries and Ottoman Armenians started way before the relation of their Ottoman-Muslim counterparts with Europe. The first student, who went to Europe in this case to Italy to get education, was Mxitar (1676-1749)²¹.

¹⁸ Artinian states that the Armenian (Edict) *Nizamnâme* has the features of a constitution.

¹⁹ Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876*, (New York: Gordian Press, 1973), 114.

²⁰ Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1863: A Study of Its Historical Development*, (Istanbul, 1988), 52.

²¹ After Mxitar, every Armenian student, who was funded to study especially in Italy, went to the Mxitarist Church for the education. Mxitar was the leading figure for the modernization and European education of the Ottoman-Armenian community. One of the writers that I will discuss in this study; Hovsep Vartanian, also studied in Mxitarist School in Italy. Mxitarist School played an important role in the rise of Young Armenians.

Mxitar is also an important figure, because he is remembered to have brought single-handedly Catholicism to the Armenian community in the Ottoman Empire, which gradually led to sectarian strife within the Armenian community. This sectarian strife between Gregorian and Catholic Armenians is the topic of *Akabi Hikâyesi* (The Story of Akabi), which will be discussed in this thesis. Young Ottomans²², who were educated in Europe and active in Arab Lands, organized against Abdülhamit II's suppressive regime and took the first steps for the general constitution process; Young Armenians also represented key players in the modernization of the Armenian Community through their promulgation of the *Sahmanatrutyun*.²³ Hovhannes Balıkcıyan, chose the Armenian constitution and the chaos it created in the Armenian community as the topic of his first Armeno-Turkish novel *The Horrible deaths of Karnig, Gülnünya ve Dikran*.

After both the promulgations of *Tanzimât* (1839) and *Islâhat* (1856), *Sarraç-Amiras* began to lose their existing powers against the artisans, who built strong relations with the western countries concerning the international trade. Young Armenians also sided by artisans in this conflict. Artisans were the new classes that emerged in the Empire after its financial relations became stronger with the West. Since the Amiras were aristocrats, they existed mainly in the capital of the Empire. This conflict between the *Amiras* and bourgeois-who were close to Young Armenians, in other words, 'constitutionalists,' occupies a primary space in the plot of Armeno-Turkish novels. Since the writers of these novels were also actors of socio-political changes that took place in the era, their work is important in examining the sectarian strife, the proclamation of the Armenian Constitution (1863), and the conflicts between the unionist and separatist groups in the Armenian community.

²² "Young students, mostly sons and relatives of wealthy families, came into intimate contact with western life and thought in various European, particularly French and Italian, institutions of higher learning." Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1863: A Study of Its Historical Development*, (Istanbul, 1988), 59.

²³ The first Armenian Constitution (1863).

In the nineteenth century both Ottoman Muslim literature and Ottoman Armenian literature discussed all these reforms in the Empire, with specific emphasis on the women. In every Armeno-Turkish novel that I will examine in this thesis, there is an impossible love in the center due to the religious or political disagreements between the characters' relatives and the community they belong to. The political positions of male characters are decided according to their attitudes towards women. In Ottoman Muslim novels also emphasizes the women still with utilizing love stories. However, this time writers use "binary opposition" to define female characters whether they are good or bad. In the Armeno-Turkish novels; on the other hand, women are always good but male characters' personality is decided according to their opinions about the women's rights.

In this respect, this thesis includes two main chapters. In the first chapter, the male writers' novels will be discussed with the comparative perspectives. I will analyze three Ottoman Turkish novels; Namık Kemal's *Intibah (Rebirth)*(1873-76), Ahmet Mithat's *Felâhî Bey ve Rakım Efendi (Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi)* (1875), Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası (The Carriage Affair)*(1889); and three Armeno-Turkish novels Hovsep Vartanian's *Akabi Hikayesi (The Story of Akabi)*(1851), Hovhannes Balıkcıyan's *Karnig, Gülünya ve Dikran'ın Dehşetli Vefatları (The Horrible deaths of Karnig, Gülünya, and Dikran)* (1863), Hovsep Maruş's *Bir Sefil Zevce (A Miserable Wife)*(1868) in order to understand the writers' positioning themselves as the Ottoman citizen. Moreover, I will examine how they utilize the literature to reach the Ottoman society and to impose them "the new ideal" image of the Ottoman citizen, which emerged with the modernization.

In the second chapter, I will have three different sub-chapters including the male Muslim writers, male Armenian writers, and female Muslim writers' novels concerning the agency of woman. I will include an extra novel of the Muslim male writers; Şemsettin Sami's

Taaşşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat (The Love of Talat and Fitnat)(1873) that I did not discuss in the first research chapter. I will also examine two Muslim female writers' novels Emine Semiye's *Sefalet (Poverty)* (1897) and Fatma Aliye's *Muhaderat (Pitfall)*(1892). The women's writing experience in the nineteenth century and the agency of women in public and private spaces will be the main issue of this chapter.

CHAPTER 1: The Rise of the Novel in the Ottoman Empire

In this chapter, I will discuss the representation of modernization in the Ottoman novels. Modernization is a very large theme; hence, I will examine the dialogue between the writers of the different communities, their positioning themselves as citizens of the Ottoman Empire, and their use of literature as a tool for distributing the “ideal” type of modernization. Whilst doing that, I will focus on the writing techniques that were used in the novels including the form of narrator, characters, and the topic of the novels since these are also part of a new (western) genre (novel), which penetrated Ottoman society.

In the introduction, I briefly explained modernization in the historical context; from now on I will draw attention to the role of literary genres -specifically the novels of the era- as a tool of bureaucrats and public figures to reach large masses. I will touch upon the translation activity along with the Ottoman writers’ original works concerning the modernization discussion; whether the novel writers just imitated the western literature or they adapted these genres in their traditional literature. In order to begin the novel analysis, first I will explain some aspects of the Tanzimat literary period followed my take on the form of these texts, the way they were distributed, their target audiences, as well as mostly who read this literature. After providing this context for Tanzimat literature, I will follow the traces of modernization in Armeno-Turkish and Ottoman Turkish novels in order to compare their respective approaches to morality, the new (modernized) ideal citizen, and the recreation spots, that all give some clue regarding the writers and different communities’ positions against the changes that emerged in the “modernization” period. All the technical aspects including the choice of language are fundamental elements to understand the approaches to the “westernized” way of modernization.

The application of reforms mentioned in the introductory chapter was implemented at the public level mostly during the reign of Abdülhamit II²⁴. As all these regulations were ordered from the top down, it took some time for ordinary people to first acquaint themselves with and understand, and then, utilize them in their daily lives. The promulgation of the Tanzimat edict in 1839 accelerated the alteration process, and put it in more formal and bureaucratic form in the Empire compared to primarily fiscal and military reforms of the eighteenth century. The first Ottoman Turkish novels, which were published between the years of 1876-1898, were named as Tanzimat due to the Tanzimat edict also has a symbolic importance.²⁵

In general Tanzimat literature started with the publication of the first Ottoman Turkish novel, Şemsettin Sami's *Taaşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat (The Love of Talat and Fitnat)*, which was written in 1873. Nevertheless, just like in the classical historiography of the Ottoman Empire, historiography of the Ottoman literature ignored non-Muslim authors who produced important works before their Muslim counterparts. I am putting specific emphasis on the role of religion because Şemsettin Sami himself was also originally a Christian Albanian who converted to Islam. I am not sure whether his novel was accepted as Ottoman if he did not convert his religion to Islam as we do not have any Christian writer in contemporary Ottoman literary historiography. Hence, it is not difficult to claim that the religion is determinant whether a text belongs to major or minor group in Ottoman literary historiography. Today, the Armenian writer Hovsep Vartanian's *The Story of Akabi* (1851), which was the first Turkish novel (with Armenian alphabet) that published in the Empire, is still not accepted as

²⁴ Abdülhamit II came to the reign with the promulgation of the first Ottoman constitution. With the constitutionalization, people expected to find much freer space for publications. The first Ottoman Turkish novels emerged during the reign of Abdülhamit II.

²⁵ Berna Moran and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar referred the first Ottoman Turkish novels as the Tanzimat novels. The literature in general was also named as Tanzimat Literature in their leading Ottoman literary historiography studies.

a first Ottoman novel due to religious restrictions, politics in Turkey concerning the Ottoman history, and the hybrid language in which the novel was written.

The novel as a new genre initially came to the Empire in the form of translations of adaptations of Western novels such as Chateaubriand's *Atala* and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul and Virgine*, which were serialized in journals or newspapers that were also considerably innovative tools to reach society. In classical Turkish historiography on literature, Yusuf Kamil Pasha's *Telemaque* (1862) is accepted as the very first translation²⁶ in the Ottoman Empire; however, Johann Strauss demonstrated that earlier versions of the same text were translated in different languages of the Empire.²⁷ The first translation of *Telemaque* in Greek was in the eighteenth century, and it was translated in Armenian in 1826 by the Mxitarists copy house in Venice.

Ottoman non-Muslim communities' encounter with Western literature started well before their Muslim counterpart's. Since their financial and political relations with the West were stronger than Muslims, many publication houses were established in Europe, which distributed Greek, Armenian, and Hebrew novels in the Empire. The existence of non-Muslim copy-houses marks closer relations between Europe and non-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman Empire different than those of their Muslim peers. In this sense, the first Modern Greek novel *Philotheou Parega* was published in Vienna in 1800 even though it was written in Istanbul in 1718 by Nikola Mavrokordato.²⁸ Publishing houses in Europe for Armenian

²⁶ The translation works in Ottoman Turkish language are much closer to adaptations. In order to attract Muslim audience, the translators could change the religion and name of the characters or they could change the place, which is narrated in the novel, into somewhere else in the Ottoman Empire. Ahmet Mithat in the preface of his first "naturalist" novel *Müşahedat (Opinions)* states that "Every nation should write novels according to the conditions in their community and the literature should refer to its audience. For us, we understand the novel writing and to write novels as much as we need." Ahmet Mithat, *Müşahedat (Opinions)*, (Ankara, Turk Dil Kurmu press, 2000), 7. He also thinks that direct translations of the western novels are not suitable for the Ottoman readers. That's why he mostly adapts them to the Ottoman culture.

²⁷ Johann Strauss, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Kimler Neleri Okurdu (19. ve 20. Yüzyıllar)? (Who Reads What in the Ottoman Empire (19th and 20th Centuries)?*, *Kritik* 2, (Fall 2008), 205-265, 224.

²⁸ Ibid, 221.

texts were also in Padua and San Lazzaro Island, which is very close to Venice. The first student Mxitar Sebastatsi, who went to Europe for his education encountered Catholicism and established the first Catholic Church in Sivas, played an important role in Armenian literature.²⁹

Empire and the Discussion on Being “Majority” and “Minority”:

Studying the literatures of different *millets* helps us understand what claims they made in their writings and how they positioned themselves in the Empire. Discussing this issue will also shed light on the social hierarchy, their relations with Muslims, as well as tensions within their own ethnic community. Imperial governments mostly have the power to decide who is an insider and who is an outsider, who is civilized and who is barbarian. As Faith Altuğ suggested that Ottoman Empire was the center of a traditional imperial order; however, in a space in which modern imperial actors English, French, and Russian began to play increasingly larger roles, the Ottoman provinces became a new order.³⁰ While the rank of the “second-class citizens”, who were non-Muslim people, increased in the Ottoman social hierarchy due to their strong relations with global imperialism, the “dominant citizens” lost their power both in internal and external arenas since an identity crisis emerged.³¹ The identity crisis emerged when the dominant Muslim elites in the Empire decided to be part of the modern imperial order and adopted new forms of governance.

The writers of different millets found themselves in the middle of a similar situation, as being in-between of Europe and the Ottoman tradition. As the literatures of different

²⁹ Murat Cankara, “İmparatorluk ve Roman: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Romanları Osmanlı/Türk Edebiyat Tarih yazımında Konumlandırmak,” (Empire and Novel: Positioning Armeno-Turkish Novels in the Ottoman/Turkish Literary Historiography), unpublished PhD dissertation, (Ankara: Bilkent University Turkish Language department, 2011), 325.

³⁰ Fatih Altuğ, “19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Romanında İmparatorluk, Medeniyet, Yerlilik, Yabancılık ve Din” (The Empire, Civilization, Indigenosity, Foreignness, and Religion in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Novel), *Tanzimat ve Edebiyat: Osmanlı İstanbul’unda Edebi Modernleşme*, (Istanbul: İletişim Press, 2014), 65-115, 70.

³¹ Ibid, 4.

communities were fragmental at this time, it is not possible to talk about a common literature in the Ottoman Empire; however, their anxieties became more similar with the modernization. Even though, common topics and common anxieties were reflected in the literary products of the writers, the differences regarding the different writers' perspectives on the similar cases were obvious. Though Ottoman elites tried to introduce a supra-national Ottoman identity (Ottomanism) to its society as a whole in order to compete with other nationalist movements that threatened the sovereignty of the empire, various non-Muslim groups tended to cling to the nationalist frameworks their own communal leaders emphasized concomitantly. In this atmosphere, some Ottoman Muslim writers like Namık Kemal never gave up believing that a common language and building a common Ottoman identity were the main solutions for preventing disintegration of the Empire. Contrary to the consensus of Turkish Scholars such as Orhan Koloğlu, non-Muslim presses like the Armenian press likewise encouraged people to embrace Ottomanism in order to prevent the disintegration of the Empire. It is unfounded to say all non-Muslim writers exuded separatist ideas in their newspapers.³²

Today, Ottoman-Armenians around the turn of the nineteenth century were generally perceived as the most dangerous threat to the unity of the Ottoman Empire. Many Muslim scholars approached their fictional and non-fictional literature through prejudiced lens. In contrast, Armenian bureaucrats considered themselves as Ottoman citizens until the late first quarter of the twentieth century. Even Zable Yeseyan expresses her surprise at how her own government and neighbors attacked Armenian people in Cilicia in the 1909 Adana massacre. Even at this time, she was still searching for a way to assuage tensions by emphasizing the unity of the Empire, the considerable rights the Armenian community enjoyed, and the

³² For more detailed information about the topic, one can look at Murat Cankara's article "Çifte Mğduniyet". "Çifte Maduniyet, Çifte İşlev: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Basında Dil ve Kimlik" (The Dual Exclusion, Dual Function: Language and Identity in Armeno-Turkish Press).

brotherhood between Muslims and non-Muslims.³³ Murat Cankara stated that Armenian people did not understand “Ottomanness” and “Armenianness” as separate identities. They can be both Ottoman and Armenian at the same time in the same level. In addition, these two categories are not conflicted identities for them.³⁴

As westernized models of literature, bureaucracy, and social regulations penetrated into the Ottoman Empire, the central power also struggled with deciding on the new ideal model of the Ottoman citizen. Until this time, Sunni-Muslims were superior to every other citizen. With the imperial relations with western countries, first the statue of non-Muslim people both financially and socially developed. After encountering the nationalist movement, which emerged with the French Revolution, on the other hand, the importance of one single national language and ethnicity became obvious. The use of different languages caused some problems in the social hierarchy of the writers and public figures of the era, and this conflict was reflected in their columns in the newspapers.

Namık Kemal, as an example, was very disappointed about the language politics of the Ottoman Empire, because Turkish was not successful in rendering “minor” languages, thus becoming a common vernacular for all citizens of the empire. In one of his most famous articles “Lisân-ı Osmanînin Edebiyatı Hakkında Bazı Mülâhazatı Şâmildir” (“Some Comprehended Ideas Concerning the Literature of Ottoman Language”), which was published in *Tasfir-i Efkâr* newspaper, Namık Kemal insistently defended how the Arabic language dominated even the Greek language in the past and Arab identity surpassed other identities as a result of it.³⁵ More than just a mere conflict between “minority” and “majority”

³³ Zabel Yesayan, *Yıkıntılar Arasında (Among the Ruins)*, (Istanbul: Aras Press, 2015).

³⁴ Murat Cankara, “Çifte Maduniyet, Çifte İşlev: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Basında Dil ve Kimlik” (The Dual Exclusion, Dual Function: Language and Identity in Armeno-Turkish Press), *Ilef journal*, (autumn, 2015), 105-130, 120.

³⁵ Namık Kemal, “Lisân-ı Osmanînin Edebiyatı Hakkında Bazı Mülâhazatı Şâmildir” (“Some Comprehended Ideas Concerning the Literature of Ottoman Language”), *Tasfir-i Efkâr*, 2.

in the Empire, he believed that a common Ottoman identity would solve separatist's problems that emerged during the period. Some of his ideas supported even the assimilation of the non-Muslim people and their languages. According to him the most important thing for the maintenance of a nation is language. He attributed the same importance to the literature, as well. For this reason, it was quite disappointing for him that the Arab language "protected" itself and somehow surpassed Greek, whereas, Ottoman Turkish could not even absorb Albanian and Laz speakers whose languages did not even possess an alphabet.³⁶

In the case of the language of Armeno-Turkish works, on the other hand, Murat Cankara has important findings. These novels have also a controversial position in the hierarchical order of languages. Since Armeno-Turkish novels carry a hybrid identity of Turkishness, Ottomanness, and Armenianness, they were not accepted as a part of Ottoman Turkish literature. Armenian literary historiography likewise excludes them from national Armenian literature. According to Cankara, the novels and all other genres, which were written in Turkish with the Armenian alphabets, had a dual exclusion and dual function. On the one hand, these writers used a very simple Turkish, which was considered rude among the elites, to reach large masses.³⁷ But since a nation can have only one national language, Armeno-Turkish writings were later excluded from both Armenian literary historiography and Turkish Literary historiography. Since historiography on Ottoman literature was likewise dominated by Turkish nationalist scholars in the Republic of Turkey, these texts never found a space for themselves. Nevertheless, the Armenian writers were aware of Muslim people who were also following Armeno-Turkish newspapers and articles as much as Armenian people. Writers who used the Armeno-Turkish language, therefore, tried to build a bridge between their own community and the other communities and ethnicities in the Empire;

³⁶ Ibid, 2.

³⁷ Murat Cankara, "Çifte Maduniyet, Çifte İşlev: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Basında Dil ve Kimlik" (The Dual Exclusion, Dual Function: Language and Identity in Armeno-Turkish Press), *Ilef journal*, (autumn, 2015), 105-130, 116-117.

hence, Armeno-Turkish literature functions both inside and outside of the Armenian community.

Another argument between Münif Paşa and Hovsep Vartanian, the latter being the author of *The Story of Akabi*, is much more important since it represents the positioning of these writers themselves as “major” or “minor” citizen in the Empire. In contrast to Namık Kemal, Münif Pasha does not shy away from declaring the superiority of Sunni-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman Empire. The dialogue between him and Hovsep Vartanian exhibits being ‘major’ or ‘minor’ group in the Ottoman society with emphasis on the mass media such as; newspapers. This dichotomy affects the target audience of newspaper articles. Newspapers became the most important tool to communicate in the nineteenth century; therefore, the awareness between the writers of different communities increased in this time. Münif Pasha became very uncomfortable when he recognized how the Armenian, Rum and Jewish writers can easily criticize and talk about Ottoman politics. He discussed his anxieties in an article, which is published in *Ruznâme-i Cerîde-i Havâdis* newspaper. He was very surprised and upset due to the ability of non-Muslim writers to express their thoughts openly on politics, as it was very dangerous to talk about political issues in Ottoman Muslim newspapers at the time. This situation clearly represents a crisis in Muslim society concerning the loss of their power, freedom, major voice, and dominance.³⁸

Regarding Münif Pasha’s concerns, Hovsep Vartanian published an article in *Mecmuâ-i Havâdis*³⁹, which provided some counter-arguments about the freedom of talking about the political issues that non-Muslim writers have in their articles. In this discussion, Vartanian also positioned himself as a second-class and less important citizen at some point:

³⁸ Ali Budak, *Münif Paşa*, (Istanbul: Kitabevi Press, 2004), 158.

³⁹ Hovsep Vartanian’s own newspaper published in Turkish but Armenian script

In short, the “minor” millet’s thought cannot outbalance the “major” millet’s thoughts. However, major millet’s ideas cannot be compared to it. The newspapers, which belong to major *millet* cannot be opposed to the government. All newspapers and writers of major millet are considered as authority because it is the newspaper of the major millet. Therefore, minor millet’s newspapers do not and cannot have the responsibility that major millet’s newspapers have. Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian, and Jewish newspapers target their own community and Ottoman newspaper targets public and the minor one does not have authority. Everything in the “minor” and “major” issue is like that. For instance, the treatment of police is different and soldier, landowner, teacher’s treatments are different. For this reason, in order to satisfy its consumer, due to its “minor” status in the society, “minor” millet can form a view freely.⁴⁰ (My translation)

In this quotation, Vartan Pasha attributes a huge responsibility to the “dominant” millet’s newspapers, which was established by Muslim figures since they were in interaction with every single person. Obviously he also accepts hierarchical order between the non-Muslim and Muslim societies as granted and repeated that the center of power in Ottoman society was ruled by Muslim people. He positioned himself as a second class citizen under the rule of Muslim domination. On the other hand, he was aware how he can use the differences between the social strata on behalf of his own community, and he plays the freedom of speech card at this point. He defends non-Muslims’ rights for discussing political and critical issues in their newspaper, since they do not target all communities and each citizen as their audience in the Empire. Their audience was only their own community as he claimed, he was nonetheless also aware that Muslims were also reading the newspaper he published. Nevertheless, he repeatedly stressed the limited number of readers that non-Muslim newspapers have in order to legitimize and protect the larger space for acting freely that both non-Muslims’ newspapers and their communities gained.

⁴⁰ Vartan Pasha, Velhasıl millet-i mahkûmenin efkârı hiçbir vakit millet-i hâkimenin [efkârına] galip gelemmez. Lâkin millet-i hâkimenin efkârı buna kıyas olunamaz, bu millete mahsûs olan gazeteler hükümetin efkârından çıkamazlar ve çıkmamalıdır. Millet-i hâkime her kaç gazete olsa ve her kimler yazsa cümlesi resmî makamında tutulur; çünkü millet-i hâkime gazetesidir. Onun için bunlarda olan mes’uliyet millet-i mahkûme gazetelerinde yoktur ve olamaz. Rum ve Ermeni ve Bulgar ve Yahudi gazeteleri kendi milletine ve Osmanlı gazetesine ise umûma söyler ve mahkûmun hükmü olamaz. Bu hâkim ve mahkûm bahsinde her şey böyledir; meselâ zabitanın muamelesi başka ve neferin başka, ağanın başka, hocanın başka, şakirdin başka. Onun için ceride müşterisinin canı sıkılmasın, millet-i mahkûmenin serbestâne beyân-ı efkâr etmesi mücerred mahkûmluk sayesinde. Fatih Altuğ, “19. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Romanında İmparatorluk, Medeniyet, Yerlilik, Yabancı(lık) ve Din” (The Empire, Civilization, Indigenoussness, Foreignness, and Religion in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Novel), Tanzimat ve Edebiyat: Osmanlı İstanbul’unda Edebi Modernleşme, (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2014), 65-115, 72.

Münif Pasha's reaction to Vartanian's article is also worth mentioning, since he brings the topic to a more global frame and makes stronger emphasis on the "second-class" and "dominant" *millets* discourse. He totally disagrees with the idea that the condemned people of the Empire have more space to talk and act freer than the dominant people. He starts criticizing this issue by providing an example regarding the relations between colonialized Morocco and France. He highlights the similarities between the colonialized Moroccan people and non-Muslim citizens of the Ottoman Empire. In order not to offend his non-Muslim readership and avoid causing any conflict in the Empire, he makes euphemizations since he is aware of the very negative impression that colonialization has.⁴¹ Ottoman elites consider colonialization as an act of civilizing and organizing underdeveloped societies. Münif Pasha's wording in this article presents how the Muslim elite identified themselves with the colonizers and consider themselves superior to all other ethnic and religious groups. Nevertheless, Münif Pasha also tries to choose soft words to euphemize these hierarchical relations in the Ottoman Empire in order to not insult non-Muslim subjects and to protect the existing balance in society.

The constitutionalization attempts in the nineteenth century provided extended free space to non-Muslim communities to question state-politics, their position and rights, and this situation caused changes in the hierarchical social order of Ottoman society. In theory, the clear boundaries between 'major' and 'minor' citizens disappeared; however, the loss of their superior position in society caused considerable resentment and insecurity among Muslim elites. Nineteenth century novels also reflected writers' anxieties and efforts to protect the Ottoman traditional order and their own position in this system. At this point, analyzing these writers' novels concerning the topics and character choice in the novels might be helpful to understand the picture much more clearly.

⁴¹ Ali Budak, *Münif Paşa*, (Istanbul: Kitabevi Press, 2004), 166-67.

The Choice of Language, Narrator, and Characters:

The hybrid nature of Armeno-Turkish novels' language faced disapproval in both literatures. Until the beginning of the twentieth-first century, both Turkish and Armenian scholars ignored both respective community's literature as well as their shared past. Turkish nationalist historiography on literature privileged Ottoman Turkish literature written in the Arabic script, and it excluded all non-Muslim literature even if some of them were written in Turkish with different alphabets.

The first novel of Ottoman literature was written in Turkish but with an Armenian script (in other words Armeno-Turkish) by an Armenian bureaucrat Vartan Pasha. Considering Vartan Pasha's language preference highlights the Armenian citizens clearly know Turkish better than Armenian. A brief analysis of Armenian literature makes it obvious that the intention of Armenian writers is to reach a wider range of readers by using Armeno-Turkish. In the introductory part of his work, Hovsep Vartanian explains why he chose to write an Armeno-Turkish novel instead of an Armenian one: "Since the number of people who know Turkish better than Armenian is higher than the people who know Armenian better than Turkish, we have to respect the majority and publish this text in Armeno-Turkish."⁴²(my translation). He is not targeting all subjects of the Empire here, only the Armenian community. The number of people, who know Turkish, is higher as colloquial language. Armeno-Turkish novels language is much closer to the daily Turkish. The writers obviously aim to reach ordinary people, either. On the other hand, the Arabic alphabet is not as accessible to the Armenian community; hence, he uses the Armenian script.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, Armenian intellectuals were educated in schools and monasteries in Venice, Padua, Trieste, Vienna, and Paris. During this period, the

⁴² Hovsep Vartanian, *Tarih-i Napolyon Bonapart Imperatoru Ahalii Fransa*, Vol I (Istanbul, 1855), 8-9.

classical language *krapar* was institutionalized and located as the language of the elites. As a result, the gap between the local language *aşkarapar* and *krapar* widened in Armenian society.⁴³ The Armenian writers of the *Tanzimat* period who were affected mainly by the movement of romanticism wrote their novels in Turkish in order to reach a wider audience among Armenians. The modernization of all nations in the Empire occurred in a similar manner, but not in the same exact way, and in many cases, they reflected their own perspectives and experiments in literature. Vartan Pasha went to school in Europe, and when he came back to his country, he started to share everything that he saw in the West. Most of the people in the Armenian community were very integrated to into Ottoman society and frequently interacted with other groups. Turkish was the most common language among all Muslim and non-Muslim people. For this reason, even though there was a gap between intellectual and ordinary people in the sense of different dialects of Armenian (*Krapar* and *Aşkarapar*), the use of Turkish could reach every stratum of the society at that time.

While it is now clear why Armenian authors chose Turkish in their writing, it is now necessary to comment on the nature of the writers' audiences and writers' motivation of writing novels during this era. The type of novel characters, narrator and narration is also just as important to discuss, since every nineteenth-century Ottoman writer utilized the new western genre 'novel' as a tool. The writers' main purpose was not writing a novel but making use of the novel to achieve their social-political projects; for instance, they try to convince people concerning the positive sides of the modernization and the importance of westernized model of education. In nineteenth century novels, characters mostly do not have the chance to express themselves without the voice of narrator. At this point it is important to show the differences between the notions of "character" and "type" in Ottoman novels.

⁴³ Mehmet Fatih Uslu, "Melodram ve Komedi: Osmanlı'da Türkçe ve Ermenice Modern Dramatik Edebiyatlar", (Ph.D. Dissertation, Bilkent University, 2011), p. 34-37.

Character can be described as a unique figure in the novel that is independent. A character can be introduced to the reader with both positive and negative characteristics, and s/he does not have to necessarily represent a single side of the society. They learn, they realize, and they change. On the other hand, types do not have individualistic features. They symbolize common features of a social stratum. In a novel, they only have a role in order to represent a specific stratum. For this reason, they are not described in detail in the text. In this regard, figures in nineteenth-century Ottoman novels mostly belong to the second group, which means most of them can be defined as a type. The inner worlds of the protagonists are not examined in detail. In this way, the writers can provide a model of ideal person and bad person in their novels by the help of binary oppositions. As their characters have no agency, the writer-narrator can exemplify a group of people with reference to only one figure in the novel. For instance, Rakım Efendi symbolizes Ahmet Mithat's ideal image for a Muslim man in the novel *Felâhî Bey and Rakım Efendi*, while Felâhî is representing the superficial westernization.

The position of the narrator does not allow characters to express themselves. Narrators in these novels have a limited capacity to demonstrate the true feelings of the characters; hence, in these cases exaggerated acts and especially illnesses are very helpful to express characters' inner worlds. To make this claim much clear, it is necessary to explain the general structure of the narrator in the texts of nineteenth-century novels briefly. Nineteenth century Ottoman novels are mostly thesis novels, which mean they discuss social and political issues with regards to an ideology, a thesis. The author defends an idea and tries to prove it. For this reason, there is an omniscient narrator that has power to manipulate both the characters and the perception of the readers. As Berna Moran states, there is some dangerous sides of the thesis novels: "the writer forces the relationship between characters and the course of events

in accordance with a thesis” (my translation).⁴⁴ The ideology of the narrator decides the course of events, actions of characters, and the reasons behind the characters’ actions. Inner thoughts of characters and focalization on the mind of characters occur very rarely. For this reason, the reader can know only what the narrator wants to tell him. The acts and speeches of characters are very limited and completely dependent on the thesis of the text and the ideology of the narrator. On the other hand, in some critical part of the novels characters begin to express themselves by attempting to suicide, getting ill and losing their minds.⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the representation of the political change is more obvious in Armeno-Turkish novels compared to Turkish novels in Arabic letters like in the case of the newspapers. The political issues they discussed are also only referring to Armenian community. It is not possible to find any criticism concerning the Sultan or Ottoman bureaucracy in the novels. The politics that argue are mostly the separations in the Armenian community itself. Writing in reference to social and political events, writers try to shape public opinion. As it is obvious in these three novels a social crisis takes place in the center of the novel, and there are also some sub-events that feed the main conflict. The topic of women’s place in society is one of the indispensable topics I will address in the following chapter. In Muslim literature, on the other hand, the social and political crises are not that important; the important thing is that the characters, which are defined “good” or “bad” and their positions in the end of the story. Women are still important in these novels; however, in the center of the text, there is always a young man, who gets a very good education in family, and his story of survive after the loss of his father and the bad people who try to manipulate him.

⁴⁴ Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış 1*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), 102.

⁴⁵ Meltem Şafak, *Hysterical Men in the Ottoman Novels*, unpublished M.A. thesis, (Istanbul Sehir University Comparative Literature, 2015), 22-23.

Another technique, which was used by writers, is to create a dialogue between the narrator and narratee in the novels. While narrator was representing writers' thoughts and speaks for himself/herself, the narratee mostly took place as a representative of the audience in the novel. S/he asks questions to narrator on behalf of the reader and sometimes it makes some opposition to create a space for the narrator to convince readers about her own opinions. This situation is quite common in both of the literatures that I focused on in this study, as all writers wanted to teach their own "ideal" way of modernization to the society.

The following passage from *Akabi Hikayesi* demonstrates a dialogue between the narrator and narratee on the topic of important figures and innovations of western cultures:

Narraatee: -It is not necessary to entertain with successful paintings or to awake the mind with the thoughts of historical philosophers. Who is the Great Frederik? What kind of man is Platon? All these questions are tiring for the mind of people.

Narrator: -But, a person who likes Frederik comes very rare, or Platon provided European philosophers improve themselves with the help of his knowledge and ideas.

Narraatee: -Some say "All of them are unnecessary. There is a rude impression; 'is there any benefit of them for starving?'"⁴⁶

In this quote, the narrator has a discussion with the narratee about how important it is to know important figures in the Western mythology or literature. Hovsep Vartanian becomes visible in this section as a writer-narrator and tries to impose his perspectives on Western culture to Armenian readers. In contrast to Muslim writers from the era, he intensely defends adopting all cultural, social, political innovations that emerged in the West to Armenians in order to encounter the types of problems that confronted the community. His receptive tone concerning modernization becomes stronger in this dialogue to convince his reader that modernization is a solution for the bigger crises such as; sectarian strife, that stemmed from the traditional norms and conservative people.

⁴⁶ Hovsep Vartanian, *Akabi Hikâyesi (The Story of Akabi)*, pre. Andreas Tietze, (Istanbul: Eren Press, 1991), 7.

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Modernism and Writers' Questioning "True Westernization":

The topics of "morality" and "true westernization" were the most frequent topics that were used by the Ottoman writers. The ensuing discussion does include not only the writer's manhood crises but also his definition of an ideal Ottoman man and woman. As already mentioned, writers wanted to dictate to society the ways in which they should modernize and lift themselves up from conservatism and ignorance. Whilst doing that, "role models" and their "counter-models" were produced by the writers, and writers often identified themselves with these characters, who were also educated in European schools but still maintained their Ottoman identity. This section will deal with examples of "the ideal Ottoman citizens" and the motivation of writers behind producing and disseminating this "the new ideal".

As I discussed in the introduction, the general consensus among Ottoman historians concerning the modernization process is that the modernization of the Empire was predicated upon imitating the West. On the other hand, when we look at literary works of the era, the struggle of Muslim and non-Muslim writers alike with protecting their Ottoman identity against the Western elements are quite strong. These writers do not reject all thoughts and practices from the west wholesale; however, they were also not willing to imitate everything they saw, read or experienced about Europe. This effort to create a balance between east and west caused an enormous conflict, which became obvious in the writer-narrators' personality and in their novel characters. This hybridity, which means contradictory identity crises sometimes become obvious in the form of narrator, but most of the time, the identity crisis emerges in the novel's characters or course of events in the novels. Writers' ways of representing "inbetweenness" and modernization crises can change according to their political position as well as the community to which they belong. In this sense, there are some obvious differences especially between the first Armeno-Turkish novels and Turkish novels in the Arabic script. Woman writers I will deal with below mostly imitate their male precursors and protect the patriarchal language and norms in their writings. I will deal with the representation of woman and women writers' novels in the following chapter since this topic has never been studied properly. Here, I will provide examples of the common form of the narrator and characters in the Ottoman Turkish literature, and I will now provide examples of the common form of the narrator and characters in Ottoman Turkish literature and compare them with those written in Armenian Turkish texts. I will do so in order to shed light on how these different authors commented on politics during this era.

Narration is an important facet of studying literature, and Armeno-Turkish novels exhibit important differences from Ottoman Turkish novels. Nineteenth-century Ottoman novels are mostly thesis novels that discuss social and political issues with regards to an

ideology, a thesis: the author defends an idea and tries to prove it. For this reason, there is an omniscient narrator that has power to manipulate both the characters and the perception of the readers. Hence, when we do close readings and interpret both Armenian and Arabic script Turkish novels, we can observe how their approaches to modernization different from each other. My findings, which I will discuss in detail in the following part, reveal that Muslim Ottoman writers were less receptive to the ideas of modernization than Armenian novelists, who generally accepted the process of modernization as a solution to the social crises of their community. It is hard to equate the hybridity of Armenian writers with those of their Muslim counterparts. They were inbetween individuals since they were both integrated into Muslim tradition yet more receptive to modernization on many levels. As Nurdan Gürbilek claims that writers reflect their own anxieties concerning to modernization to their novel characters.⁴⁷ The authors were raised by traditional codes and their works were affected by traditional Eastern writers of Persian and Arabic literature. In addition, they attended European style schools, and this influenced their understanding of literature. They met French and English writers' texts and they were influenced. As a result, they tried to protect their personal originalities at first; but they also tried to be protected by the incomings of the western culture at the same time.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Armenian writers turned back to their traditions at first stage of the modernization; hence, according to them, modernization was the solution for each crisis.

Forms of narration provide important clues about the relations between the West and Ottoman Armenians when we deeply analyse them within their historical background. Mehmet Fatih Uslu refers to three different periods in Armenian literature, which were affected by, respectively, Classism, Romanticism, and Realism. In Turkish literature only Romanticism and Realism have been taken into account, since there are no strong boundaries

⁴⁷ Nurdan Gürbilek, *Kör Ayna Kayıp Şark: Edebiyat ve Endişe*, (Istanbul: Metis Press, 2010), 56.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 98.

with western literature as much as Armenian literature during Classism.⁴⁹ Since Armenian literature was affected by Classism, their narrations are more close to the play (theatre). Before the rise of novel, in western literature the common genre was the play, for this reason the use of intensive dialogues are very frequent in the first Armeno-Turkish novels. On the other hand, these novels were written by intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire, so we need to examine some case studies in order to understand the position of ordinary people in the process of modernization, even though we can interpret the possible perspective of common people by the main conflicts among the narrator and novel characters.

Modernization and morality together were very sensitive issues for Ottoman writers. In contrast to the belief that modernization was merely imitating Western countries, these writers were struggling with Western culture and their own “westernized” personalities and identities. Of course, the feeling of modernization and its representations in the morality were different for Armenian and Muslim writers. It might be accepted as the biggest difference between these two literatures in the Empire. As an example, Hovsep Vartanian’s ideal male figure Hagop is quite similar to Ahmet Mithat’s anti-hero Felatun. Hagop studies in Europe and is against traditions. Muslim writers; on the other hand, are eager to protect traditions including traditional educational system. Vartanian’s Hagop is somehow an imitator of the West; on the contrary, Ahmet Mithat was always against to imitate West wholesale.

The topic of the novels is also very illuminating in the sense of main conflicts in Armenian community and their approach to the modernization. When we try to interpret these novels, we can reach Armenian society’s approach to modernization and their relations with other Ottoman communities. One of the most interesting issues is that it is almost impossible to understand that these novels are telling a story in Ottoman Empire. All novel

⁴⁹ Mehmet Fatih Uslu, “Melodram ve Komedi: Osmanlı’da Türkçe ve Ermenice Modern Dramatik Edebiyatlar”, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Bilkent University, 2011), p. 3.

characters are Armenians, and there is no interaction with other communities in the Empire. There might be two reasons behind it; first this is a period in which all writers were afraid of censors and the consequences of what they published. Second, as Armenians did not consider themselves as citizens of the Ottoman Empire, they might reflect their feelings in the novel with creating a pure Armenian state atmosphere. In my view, the first option is much reliable. Even though stories mostly take place in Istanbul, it seems like an environment only Armenian people live in. In addition, the conflicts that are handled in the novels are also very specific to Armenian community. For instance, in three Armeno-Turkish novels, which were written in the nineteenth century *Akabi Hikâyesi (The Story of Akabi)*⁵⁰, *Bir Sefil Zevce (A Miserable Wife)*⁵¹, and , *Karnig, Gülünya ve Dikran'ın Dehşetli Vefatleri Hikâyesi (The Deaths of Karnig, Gülünya and Dikran)*⁵², respectively the topics of sectarian strife between Gregorian and Catholic Armenians, the conflicts among traditional and young Armenians, and Armenian constitution are discussed.

Since there are parallels between the male protagonist of Vartan Pasha's *The Story of Akabi* and Ahmet Mithat's *Felâhî Bey and Rakım Efendi*, I would like to begin a discussion with a comparison of these two novels. Before starting to compare them to each other, I would like to give some background information about these novels. The topic of *Akabi Hikâyesi* is the sectarian strife between Catholic and Gregorian Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. This conflict is reflected on a love story of Akabi –a Gregorian Armenian woman- and Hagop –A Catholic Armenian man. Peter Brook comments on the melodramatic form of this novel:

The desire to express all seems a fundamental characteristic of the melodramatic mode. Nothing is spared because nothing is left unsaid; the characters stand on stage and utter the

⁵⁰ Hovsep Vartanyan [Vartan Pasha], *Akabi Hikâyesi*, Yay. haz. Andreas Tietze, (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1991).

⁵¹ Hovhannes Balıkcıyan, *Karnig, Gülünya ve Dikran'ın Dehşetli Vefatleri Hikâyesi*. (İstanbul: Minasyan Basmahanesi, 1863).

⁵² Hovsep Maruş, *Bir Sefil Zevce*, (Asitane: H. Mühendisyan Tabhanesi, 1868).

unspeakable, give voice to their deepest feelings, dramatize through their heightened and polarized words and gestures the whole lesson of their relationship.⁵³

Melodrama is a very theatrical form of writing that relies on diametric binaries such as good and bad characters; hence, the characters of *The Story of Akabi* are also separated from each other sharply according to their understanding of morality and good versus bad personalities. Against the negative and separatist attempt of Rupenig, Fasidyan (a priest in the Catholic-Armenian Church), and Akabi's uncle, who want to maintain the segregation between Gregorian and Catholic Armenians, the love between Akabi and Hagop represent the unity, which is expected and supported by the writer-narrator in the Armenian community. The writer-narrator tries to show the different personalities of Hagop and Rupenig as representatives the writer's ideal Armenian versus an immoral, snobbish Armenian man. Nevertheless, the main story focuses on relations between Akabi and Hagop, since their relationship symbolizes the potential future of relations between different sects in the Armenian community.

In *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi*, on the other hand, even though the topic of love is still important, the main issue discussed in the novel is the story of Felatun and Rakım, who symbolize two different lifestyles: one of them is an ideal-Muslim Ottoman, whereas, the other is "superficially westernized" Ottoman man, who adopts everything western wholesale uncritically. The difference starts from even their appearance, their knowledge of French and the kind of woman with whom they are in relationships. These figures are defined as types more than characters since they represent a specific group of people. Felatun Bey in *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi* and Rupenig Aga in *The Story of Akabi* are in the same group in this sense because they are immoral, uneducated snobs who live solely on their fathers' wealth. In both cases, education is very important to designate the ideal characters; however, the type of

⁵³ Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama, and the Mode of Excess (with a new preface)*, (New Haven ve Londra: Yale University Press, 1995), 4.

education constitutes the difference between Ahmet Mithat and Vartan Pasha. For Vartan Pasha, the ideal Ottoman-Armenian man should be educated in foreign schools, from a good family, and westernized as much as he is possible. The only way of modernization was westernization according to him. For Ahmet Mithat, on the other hand, the ideal man should maintain his Ottoman identity and approach to westernization critically. More than in the snob figures, the main conflict between Vartan Pasha and Ahmet Mithat's thoughts become obvious in their ideal characters Hagop and Rakım since Vartan Pasha's ideal male character exhibits very similar features to Ahmet Mithat's snob character in the sense of imitating the West uncritically.

Recreation areas are another point discussed in the novels and separate them from one another. The effects of modernization were more obvious in city parks since most of the people were meeting in these places to exhibit their new attire or carriage. In most of the Tanzimat novels, love at first sight between the characters starts in Çamlıca, which was the most famous recreation spot in the nineteenth century. In twentieth century Tepebaşı took place of Çamlıca in novel installments in the important literary journal *Servet-i Fünûn*. The perspectives of writer-narrators concerning these places also give clues about their understanding of morality and modernization.

For example, in *Akabi Hikayesi*, the dialogue between the narrator and narratee discuss how young women should not be forbidden to go these places to socialize:

- Why would I introduce my daughter to someone that I don't know if I don't have any expectations? This is unacceptable.
- Woman! Don't be afraid. If you educate your daughter well, nothing happens to her. If they want to see each other, they can find a way for meeting without your permission.
- What are you saying? Why would? someone meet with my wife? What about my authority?
- No, don't be afraid. There is no problem with your authority. If everybody acts properly in meetings, there would be no need for any restriction. Even people can have a good time.

- I don't need this kind of entertainment. Isn't this kind of entertainment the dream adolescents? They want everybody to become alafranga and unveil their wives or daughters; however, they will never achieve that as long as we are alive.

- However, if our community is not educated in European ways, they will never become successful.⁵⁴⁵⁵ (my translation).

In this quotation, the narrator's position is clear: he is very supportive of modernization, and he considers all religious and traditional attempts to impede progress in the Armenian community as dangerous for the future of Armenians. He also admits in overall parts of the text that the Islamist atmosphere in the Empire affected every group of subject and pushed them to live under the same conservative moral norms in many senses. At some point the narrator even talks about the different sections of the house, which were divided according to the gender of the household like in the case of Muslim houses: "We are explaining if it is awkward to read that 'Anta Ram serves in the 'harem' part', since it is obvious that some wealthy Armenians still have a 'harem' and 'selamlık' in their houses".⁵⁶

Even though the sectarian strife between Gregorian and Catholic Armenians is the main topic of the novel, the solution, which is presented by the narrator for this problem, is modernization in general. The cruel characters- who reject any alteration- in the novel were conservative and separatist including Rupenig –even though he is only an uneducated snob man, who follows the words of his father. On the other hand, Hagop and Akabi represent the

⁵⁴ Hovsep Vartanyan [Vartan Pasha], *Akabi Hikayesi*, Ed. Andreas Tietze, (İstanbul: Eren Press, 1991), 12.

⁵⁵ - Ka, vay bana, niçin kızımı tanımadığım ademe göstereceyim, bir umudum olmadıktan sonra, hiç öyle şey olur, çok şey, daha neler.

-Kadın, kızını tanımadığın adem görür is eve terbiyeside var ise, korkma, bir keder olmaz. Zira anler birbirilerini görmek mürad itdiklerinde, size süal itmeyerek pek eyi görüşürler. (...)

- Ne demek dir, benim karım ile başgası niçin görüşün, ben bunda şeymiyim.

-Hayır, korkmayın bir şey deyilsiniz, her kes ırzı vakarı ile meclisde davranır ise bir şey lazım gelmez ve hatta güzelce eylenir.

-Bana lazım deyil o eylence. Amma topu delikanlıların müradı bu deyil mi, her kes büsbütün alafrankaya meyl itsin, ve meclisler Evropa usuli olsun, ve bunlardan mada feraceler çıksın, lakin hiç biri olmaz biz sağ kaldıkça.

-Öyle amma milletimiz bulunduğu halden içbir vakt ileru gidemez, ta kim Evropa terbiesini bir eyice tehsil itmedikçe.

⁵⁶ Hovsep Vartanyan [Vartan Pasha], *Akabi Hikayesi*, ed. Andreas Tietze, (İstanbul: Eren Press, 1991), 37.

unity of these two communities and fight for it against all negative figures in the plot. Hagop is educated in European schools and according to the traditional people, who are opposed to unity of the Armenians; he has very dangerous thought in his mind, which can harm the Catholic Armenian community. In the following quote a Catholic priest emphasizes how Hagop's education caused all these chaos (he is referring to the relationship between Akabi and Hagop) in their lives when he talks to Hagop's Father Viçen Ağa: "Don't be surprised. He grew up with these thoughts in the school that you sent him to because of his mother's wish, and he learned science and independence in French schools. He attracted many people with his enormous ideas. Now he met a woman, who shares the same opinions with him, and do you find it weird that he wants to marry this woman?"⁵⁷

Even in Akabi and Hagop's first encounter, they start talking about a French novel *Atala*. Their love is an intellectual love; it emerges not only because of the beauty and physical attraction but also their common taste of literature and music. Akabi is attracted to Hagop's knowledge and impressive comments on the book she was reading when they met. Akabi is also a unique character since she fights for her right of education and learned French and many other things with support of her mother, whose identity is kept secret during the novel until her death, since she also suffered due to sectarian strife when she fell in love with Akabi's father, who was a Gregorian man. Akabi and Hagop met in a park, which is a very westernized space in the Empire, and their relationship is also far from traditional norms since they do not ask permission of their parents to be together. In general, only in the case that parents approve a relationship between two lovers, could it such liaisons be acceptable in society. Moreover, such meetings were supposed to be the basis of arranged marriages, a traditional practice heavily criticized by most Armenian writers.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 82.

On the contrary, there is criticism directed towards going to Kağıthane because of both the crowd there and people approached such recreation areas as places they could meet people from the opposite sex in Ahmet Mithat's *Felâatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. According to the narrator all men go there to watch carriages and flirt. The virtues of women who go there are mostly questioned since they are portrayed as making themselves available for relationships with men. In this sense, all European styles of entertainment are criticized, and Muslim men are also approached and urged to go to parks only to eat during the weekdays when it was not crowded. Rakım (the ideal Muslim) and Canan (Rakım's concubine) are idealized in this case, since Rakım does not let Canan go out alone. Canan actually does not like going out. Instead she enjoys studying, playing the piano, and gardening at home. In contrast, Vartan Pasha supports men and women going out together for entertainment and clearly rejects arranged marriage. Vartan Pasha, as noted above, believes that European culture and morality can provide an ideal social order and the development of the Armenian society.

Carel Bertram describes Ahmet Mithat's political perspectives in his novel with these words in *Imagining the Turkish House*:

"The difference between what was perceived as the essentials of Western civilization and the essentials Ottoman civilization, as well as the issues of the "blind" or "over- Westernization" of upper-class Ottomans, became the topics of novels as the Tanzimat period came to close and the repressive era of Abdülhamid II opened.(...) Ahmet Mithat Efendi was a Young Ottoman whose works cross over between these two periods, and in which perhaps the most important cultural paradigm emerges, that is, a polarity between the East and the West as a divide between a moral or spiritually superior West. This concept was later "simplified" by emphasizing the positive, and characterizing the East as spiritual(-istic) and the West as material(-istic).⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Carel Bertram, *Imagining the Turkish House: Collective Visions of Home*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 130.

In this regard, *Felâtn Bey ve Rakım Efendi* is an important novel to juxtapose the houses of Eastern and Western societies, *alafranga*⁵⁹ houses' features, and the lives of European women and concubines in the Ottoman Empire. Felatun's father Mustafa Meraki Efendi's *alafranga* house is described and obviously criticized in the beginning of the novel. He moves in a house in Beyoğlu which is the most *alafranga* neighbourhood. Actually, Ahmet Mithat does not oppose the stone buildings. On the contrary, he goes to Europe in order to examine and bring brick and marble to the Empire since the wooden houses would burn easily. However, he opposes tasteless buildings which were haphazardly erected between *alaturka* and *alafranga* architecture. He believes that *alaturka* and *alafranga* cultures should have been learned perfectly in order to improve not only society but also architecture.⁶⁰ Another problem of Meraki Efendi's house is that the servants were neither Arab nor Muslim in general, but rather, non-Muslims like Armenian and Rum (Greeks). In addition, the daughter of Meraki Efendi Mihriban Hanım does not know how to knit since she is raised according to *alafranga* traditions.⁶¹ In this sense, Felatun Bey's all family members, the environment he grew up in, and his lifestyle are criticized by the writer-narrator since the beginning of the novel.

Of the way Ahmet Mithat constructs his narrative, one can deduce that he believed that Ottoman culture was superior to European culture, and this becomes most clear when English Ziklas family wants to visit Rakım's house. The Ziklas family represents real European ideals for the Ottomans. In the case of Felatun's silliness, in order to defend

⁵⁹ *Alafranga* means the new manners that are borrowed from European cultures. The opposite term *Alaturka*; on the other hand, references manners that belong to Ottoman culture and tradition. People are also described as *alafranga* or *alaturka* in respect to their clothes, wording, and approaches to the events. Meltem Şafak, *Hysterical Men in the Ottoman Novels*, unpublished M.A. thesis, (Istanbul Sehir University Comparative Literature, 2015).

⁶⁰ Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmed Midhat Efendi*. (Ankara: Baylan Matbaası, 1975), 92.

⁶¹ Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Felâtn Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları: 2007), 27-32.

Rakım's acts and thoughts, the narrator consults approval of this family to exalt Rakım's "perfect example of true westernization". Furthermore, since this family represents Europe from top to toe, the narrator make them compare West and East in order to convince reader that the East is much beautiful. This English family always accepts the superiority of the Ottoman culture and way of life. During visit of Ziklas family there are some ridiculous moments which are manipulated by the narrator. For instance, the English family cannot achieve to eat according to alaturka culture and in this second the narrator begins to compare Ziklas family to a Turkish man who tries to eat in alafranga way for the first time.⁶² He tries to legitimize the difficulty of adaptation to both European and Ottoman cultures.

Ahmet Mithat's anti-ideal character Felatun Bey becomes a lazy man who does not go to work and goes to recreation areas every day in order to meet women. He orders all latest publications in order to exhibit them in the library; however, he never reads them. All his books are signed as A.P, which symbolizes his real name Ahmet's initial letter and Platon's initial letter to exhibits his knowledge on philosophy. Felatun Bey does not know anything about Ottoman Turkish or French languages and always is offended by Rakım Efendi in public, especially in front of non-Muslim societies. Not only his knowledge of literature but also his behavior is the elements of comedy in the novel. All his acts are described as silly, meaningless, and shameful. He is the most ridiculous person in the novel representing the negative effects of ignorance about Ottoman morality and tradition.

Even though the writers of the era were bureaucrats, Ahmet Mithat was a tradesman. In this sense he was closer to the public and public opinion; hence, his writings reflect the perspectives of ordinary people mostly. He could think like an ordinary citizen and that is why he could write in a much effective way compared to his counterparts. The role of money is really important in his character-making and establishing a comparison in the novel.

⁶² Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Felâtun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları: 2007), 154.

Money has special importance in his works because he believes that an ideal citizen should work for the benefit of the Ottoman Empire. For this reason, he never forgives the laziness of Felatun and always appreciates Rakım in *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi*, as Rakım earns and protects money even though he is not a perfectly moral man.

Ahmet Mithat frequently utilizes European characters in the novel to legitimize the superiority of the Ottoman culture and takes the approval of all these figures. Another important character in this sense is Yosefino—a French middle-age woman, who also has an affair with Rakım. Rakım invites her to his house. They plan to go a recreation area in the morning with all household including Rakım’s concubine Canan and his Kalfa. They drink some morning coffee together and watch sun-rise. Yosefino’s reaction to their way of spending morning time as following:

Yosefino: I like it so much. Rakım, to be honest, Turks in every state are better than Europeans.

Rakım: No Madam! That is not so true. Actually in every morning in winter, we try to enjoy. Nevertheless, is the enjoyment of West bad?

Yosefino: No Rakım, I am not lying. I am very honest. There is entertainment also in Europe; however, it is monotone. (...) It is not possible to find Turkish hospitality in Europe.⁶³

After this dialogue, the narrator intervenes and adds that “Everything (Yosefino) said about Europe was true because she is an intellectual personality. She understood the difference between Europe and Ottoman Empire much better since she experienced these two different cultures by herself”.⁶⁴

The competition in *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi* between West and East continues in literary works they produced as well. In *The Story of Akabi*, *A Miserable Wife*, and *Carriage Affair*, characters read a western novel, which affects their world view. However, in the case of Ahmet Mithat, one more time, Eastern literature is superior to the Western poetry

⁶³ Ibid, 117.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 118.

and the daughters of English Ziklas family appreciated Hafız's success in poetry, who is a Persian poet. They accept that there is no one that can compete with him in the world literature. One of the Ziklas' daughters Can states that "English poetry gives no fewer and passion to the reader. I like French poetry more; however, after beginning to learn Turkish, I gave up on French poetry either".⁶⁵

The comparison between the European culture and Ottoman culture is so obvious even concerning the dominancy of Muslim women to Europeans. In addition, if the perception of morality is observed, it is possible to say that in many ways there is no Islamic moral rule in Ahmet Mithat's novel. The moral codes of Ottoman society mostly belong to the united cultures in the Empire and traditions of different groups, not directly to the Islam since Rakım can drink alcohol or have sex without marriage. This is another proof for the lives of Muslim women (and most of the time non-Muslim women) are not controlled by the restriction of Islam but the moral codes which are stem from different sources at first stage. The moral codes of Ottomans do not allow Muslim women to go out; in addition, represent women who go to recreation areas as available for relationships with men; therefore, it is easy to say that women are segregated from public spaces in Ahmet Mithat's novel, as well. Different from Vartan Pasha, Ahmet Mithat tries to prove the superiority of the Ottoman culture and support the adaptation to the more filtered form of modernization.

Another difference between *The Akabi's Story* and *Felatin Bey and Rakım Efendi* is the ends of the novels, which also give clue about the position of the narrator. As a symbol of unity in the Armenian community Hagop and Akabi's relationship is prevented by the separatist and cruel people. Bad people are much more powerful and fight against their love and modernization, which is supported by their love. Narrator also emphasizes the pain of this young couple and creates a very tragic end, which is quite similar to the end of *Romeo*

⁶⁵ Ibid,79.

and Juliet. He does that to affect the reader as much as he can and to show negative outcomes of the sectarian strife. His main intention is being convincing concerning the positive effects of modernization, education, and being progressive and open-minded to the alterations in the community. The narrator of *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi*; on the other hand, is very optimist about the future of Ottoman people. There is no tragic event during the novel and even the snob character Felatun begins to listen to Rakım and starts working and earning money. There is always hope for the future and to make it more obvious instead of tragedy, Ahmet Mithat prefers to write comedy.

Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası (the Carriage Affair)* is also very unique narration in the sense of modernization. He is also an Ottoman Muslim writer and tells the story of a man, who falls in love with a woman in a recreation spot. The interesting part is his love is actually for the carriage, not woman herself. There is no pain and tragedy in this novel like Ahmet Mithat's; however, for this time the narrator does not interrupt the narration. Compared to *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi* and *The Akabi's Story*, the narrator's opinions become obvious quite rarely. For this reason, this novel is accepted as the first sample of realist writing. Before that all literary works were under the effect of romanticism; hence, the narrator was more dominant and the didactic discourse was more obvious. Ekrem; at this point, does not criticize or support modernity but he tries to show the possible consequences to the reader by the help of main character Bihruz Bey.

Ekrem himself lives like the snob figure he describes in the novel; nevertheless, this similarity does not stop him to criticize "superficial modernization". Considering this attempt of Ekrem, Nurdan Gürbilek claims that:

Hence the Young Ottomans leaned on a "Bihruz opposition" in their political struggle against the upper bureaucracy, blaming the Tanzimat advocates for creating a new nobility and forgetting the man in the street. The opposition was instrumental rather than spontaneous and became an instrument in the hands of these intellectuals who themselves were advocates of

modernization, an instrument of mobilizing the masses under their own limited and rather conservative modernization project. Thus the “Bihruz opposition” was a common denominator of the traditional upper-and lower-class cultures. It was product of the estrangement of both the community and the communitarian Ottoman ruling elite from the new consumption regime.⁶⁶

Except *The Story of Akabi*, two different Armeno-Turkish novels *Bir Sefil Zevce* (*A Miserable Wife*) and *Karnig, Gülünya ve Dikran’ın dehşetli Vefatleri* (*The Horrible Deaths of Karnig, Gülünya, and Dikran*) were also published in the mid-nineteenth century. The flow of these novels is quite different from the novels that I discussed until now since the emphasis on political events. These novels mainly discuss the inner-conflicts of the Armenian people. Still it is possible to see some traces of snob characters; however, for this time their uneducated personality symbolizes the dangerous political side. The difference between the good and the bad is so strict and strong as it is in *The Story of Akabi*; however, this time there is more emphasis on the conflicts in the Armenian Community. Modernization is considered as the start of all these arguments; however, every discussion between two different communities ends up with the conflict between “conservatives” and “modernists”.

The Hovhannes Balıkcıyan’s novel *The Horrible Deaths of Karnig, Gülünya, and Dikran* is about the *Sahmanatrutyun* in other words Armenian Constitution (1863) and the conflict between the Young Armenians and conservative *Sarrafi Amiras* that was originated from the promulgation of the Constitution. Quite similar to the separation between the Catholic and Gregorian Armenians, the conflict between the constitutionalists and anti-constitutionalists caused a great separation.

Barsoumian explains this disagreement as following:

The constitutionalists, known as *lusavoreal* (the enlightened), represented the young, educated generation, which was imbued with progressive, democratic principles and doctrines. In the opposing camp was the group of traditionalists and conservatives, composed of *Sarrafi Amiras*

⁶⁶ Nurdan Gürbilek, “Dandies and Originals: Authenticity, Belatedness, and the Turkish Novel”, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, (Duke University press, Spring-Summer, 2003), 559-627,661.

and their adherent, called *xavareal* (obscurantists). The conflict between these two antagonistic groups was not only political; it was cultural, economic and social.⁶⁷

Murat Cankara suggests to think the proclamation of the Armenian Constitution as the end of Sarraf-Amiras' dominant power in the Armenian community.⁶⁸ Amiras led the cultural awake of the Armenian community. They built many schools and funded students to study in Europe along with their financial supports to the publishing houses. On the other hand, they had the political power, which dominated all stratum in their society as they have strong relations with the Ottoman Sultanate. Amiras were a bridge between the Ottoman central power and the Ottoman Armenian society. They could make patriarch whoever they wanted and manipulated internal politics. Artinian explains the *Sarraf Amiras'* collapse with these words:

The most significant reforms touching the administrative structure of the Armenian patriarchate were brought about by the limitation of the banker amiras' economic powers and influence. With the abolition of tax-farming the Armenian bankers and moneylanders, who previously could secure the purchase of the farm taxes by advancing funds to Ottoman officialdom was accordingly decreased. Within their millet the prestige of these magnets, who until then had assumed the major portion of the operating expenses of the patriarchate and the charitable blow from which they never really recovered.⁶⁹

Then the question comes: what is the portion of Young Armenians in this disagreement? When a new Armenian generation, who studied in Europe especially in France and Italy, came back to their homeland, they were all full of the scientific knowledge and ideas of democracy. The struggle for the Armenian millet's central administration between the artisans and the banker amiras continued at this time. When banker amiras lost their administrative power, a new financially powerful group Artisans emerged in the Armenian community. Artisans had very good relations with the Western powers; hence, they had important position in the international trade. With their financial power, they began to take

⁶⁷Hagop Barsoumian, "The Dual Role of the Armenian Amira Class within the Ottoman Government and the Armenian Millet (1750-1850)", Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (1982), 171-184, 180.

⁶⁸ Murat Cankara, "İmparatorluk ve Roman: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Romanları Osmanlı/Türk Edebiyat Tarihyazımında Konumlandırma," (Empire and Novel: Positioning Armeno-Turkish Novels in the Ottoman/Turkish Literary Historiography), unpublished PhD dissertation, (Ankara: Bilkent University Turkish Language department, 2011), 337.

⁶⁹ Vartan Artinian, *The Armenian Constitutional System in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1863: A Study of Its Historical Development*, (Istanbul, 1988), 53.

responsibility of improving Armenian educational system and culture. In many cases, they conflicted with Sarraf Amiras, who still wanted to protect their dominancy, and finally by the Armenian Patriarch, they had equal number of members in the parliament. When Young Armenians came back to Istanbul, they took side next to Artisans as they were also reformist. In order to protect their old-influence on the Armenian Community, Sarraf Amiras were emphasizing the importance of tradition and turned against the constitution until the intervention of the Armenian Patriarch.

The disagreement between these two groups “Young Armenians” and “Sarraf Amiras” is presented by the help of the novel characters, who support the Armenian Constitution and who do not in the nineteenth century novels: *Karnig*⁷⁰ and *A Miserable Wife*. The writer-narrator’s side in this disagreement also becomes obvious from his tone when he starts introducing the novel characters. The crisis begins when the female protagonist Gülünya’s father Guğos Aga insults his daughter’s lover Karnig in front of the parliament members in one of the meetings due to Karnig’s reformist ideas. Gülünya’s lover Karnig is a big supporter of the Armenian Constitution and Gülünya takes side next to him in this argument. Karnig cannot stand Guğos Aga’s insulting words in this meeting and dies a week after this fight. Dikran, who is a friend of Karnig from the parliament and a supporter of the Constitution, visits Karnig’s grave and meets Gülünya there for the first time. They promise each other to protect their ideology and *Sahmanatrutyun* until the day they die. Karnig and the Armenian Constitution unite these two young reformists against the conservative *Sarraf Amiras* including Gülünya’s father Guğos Aga.

⁷⁰ I am going to use *Karnig* in order to refer to Balıkcıyan’s novel *The Horrible Deaths of Karnig, Gulunya, and Dikran* from now on.

Ğugos Aga is described by the writer-narrator as very conventionalist. Since he does not want to marry his daughter to one of the Young Armenians, he tries to search a groom for her. He looks for some specific features in his future groom as following:

Insallah, I will like a young man, who is agreed with me all the time. Every time he comes in front of me, he should button up his jacket, every single word I said, he should memorize as a quote from Holy Book, he should listen to me and obey all the time, if I say something is good, he should agree with me and if I say it is bad, he should approve me. Now, a new group of illiterate young men is called as educated. They do not like the old-men. I curse all of them. I will not let them come in my home as long as I live.⁷¹

As he is against all reformists, he refers to Karnig and Dikran with these words. He is aware of his daughter's political position. That's why he finds a "suitable" husband-material, who is conservative and uneducated for her daughter; however, the one he found turns into a very horrible person. He is alcoholic, gambler and disrespectful to the women; hence, Gölunya's mother does not want him as a husband to her daughter. However, as his groom is very respectful to the traditions; in addition, in front of the old men he always acts and speaks carefully, for this reason Ğugos Aga likes him so much.

As Murat Cankara also emphasizes, Ğugos Aga is somehow afraid of losing his authority due to this new reformist generation.⁷² Young Armenians do not like and respect to the conventional people and this situation directly affects Ğugos Aga's authority in the Armenian community. He wants to protect his benefits with supporting the traditional system. Ğugos Aga's friend approves his words with these words: "You, who did not know what newspaper is in your lifetime, are afraid of due to this. These newspapers open the eyes of today's ignorant young men (Young Armenians). Don't you want to say that they try to teach us and do not respect us at all? I am the guarantor that your future groom does not know how

⁷¹ Hovhannes Balıkcıyan, *Karnig, Gölunya ve Dikran'ın Dehşetli Vefatleri Hikâyesi*. (İstanbul: Minasyan Basmahanesi, 1863), 76.

⁷² Murat Cankara, "İmparatorluk ve Roman: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Romanları Osmanlı/Türk Edebiyat Tarihyazımında Konumlandırma," (Empire and Novel: Positioning Armeno-Turkish Novels in the Ottoman/Turkish Literary Historiography), unpublished PhD dissertation, (Ankara: Bilkent University Turkish Language department, 2011), 343.

to read newspaper, there is no evil thoughts in his mind like that”.⁷³ The illiterate and conservative men are exalted by the Ğugos Aga and his friend. On the contrary, the narrator thinks totally in a different way. Ğugos Aga is represented almost like a monster by the writer-narrator.

Balıkçıyan uses the motive of “love” to unite Dikran and Gülünya against the people who are uneducated, reactionary, and anti- *Sahmanatrutyun*. Moreover, the lovers are serious and loyal characters compared to *Tanzimat* novels. In this regard, “love” is a serious phenomenon, which brings two people together that share the same ideology and same interests. Even Gülünya emphasizes the importance of sharing the same ideology in the following words: “Because you know well that people who do not share same ideas cannot feel love for each other in their hearts. My lover and father also had conflicted ideas, they did not have any skill except for patronizing”⁷⁴ (my translation). The main issue that is discussed in this novel is again another conflict in the Armenian community. The writer-narrator supports the education and modernization as a solution for the unity of Armenian community.

Hovsep Varuş’s novel *A Miserable Wife* is about another conflict that emerged specifically among the Catholic Armenians. The event explains in the novel as following: “during the period we are talking about in this novel, there was a huge argument among Catholic Armenians. The reason behind this conflict was an institution, which is called as *Hamazkyat Ingerutyuni*. The mission of this corruption was building a school for female students to improve education”.⁷⁵ One more time, around a romantic relationship, a social crisis among Armenians is discussed.

⁷³ Hovhannes Balıkçıyan, *Karnig, Gülünya ve Dikran’ın Dehşetli Vefatleri Hikâyesi*. (İstanbul: Minasyan Basmahanesi, 1863), 84.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 37.

⁷⁵ Murat Cankara, “İmparatorluk ve Roman: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Romanları Osmanlı/Türk Edebiyat Tarih yazımında Konumlandırmak,” (Empire and Novel: Positioning Armeno-Turkish Novels in the

Even though the narrator states in the beginning of the novel that he tells only the events and does not take a side in this discussion, the characters tell us what the position of the narrator is in this argument. Characters, who are well-educated, modernized, and educated in Europe, are supporter of this institution; on the other hand, conservative and ignorant characters are against it. To sum up, the supporters of the institution are “good” and the ones, who against it are represented as “bad”.

At this point, it is necessary to give some background information about this conflict in Catholic Armenian community. Boğos Levon Zekiyan talks about the “religious fights” that took place between the years of 1867-1880. This crash was originated from a disagreement between the Cilician Armenian Catholic Patriarch Andon Hasunyan (1809-1884) and Istanbul Patriarch. This disagreement is also known as “Hasunyan/ Anti-Hasunyan”.⁷⁶ According to Zekiyan, “this is the last attempt to change the religious language of the Armenian Church in Latin alphabet”.⁷⁷ Mxitarists reacted against Hasunyan. The nineteenth century writer Beshiktasliyan (1828-1868) is an important figure in this disagreement as he led the rebel against Hasunyan. He tries to stop sectarian strife as he wants to bring unity to the Armenian community and make good relations with Europe. With this mission, he established *Hamazkyats*.⁷⁸

The plot of the novel that I will analyze is about an Armenian woman Vartug, who lost her parents in a boat trip from Russia and was adopted by a wealthy Russian man Sergey Petrov after the incident. She comes to Istanbul in order to find her parents; however, when

Ottoman/Turkish Literary Historiography), unpublished PhD dissertation, (Ankara: Bilkent University Turkish Language department, 2011), 340

⁷⁶ Ibid, 341.

⁷⁷ Boğos Levon Zekiyan, *Ermeniler ve Modernite: Gelecek ve Yenileşme/ Ögürlük ve Evrensellik Arasında Ermeni Kimliği*, tr. Altuğ Yılmaz, (Istanbul: Aras Press, 2001), 98.

⁷⁸ Murat Cankara, “İmparatorluk ve Roman: Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Romanları Osmanlı/Türk Edebiyat Tarih yazımında Konumlandırma,” (Empire and Novel: Positioning Armeno-Turkish Novels in the Ottoman/Turkish Literary Historiography), unpublished PhD dissertation, (Ankara: Bilkent University Turkish Language department, 2011), 342.

she loses her hope to find them, she gets married Mardiros Aga, who is son of a Sarraf Amira. Vartug is a well-educated woman, who is also very active in the intellectual meetings and social events. She can speak almost four European languages and is very intellectual person. As she cannot find her parents, she decides to get married Mardiros Aga, who is lazy, ignorant, and conservative man. Mardiros Aga is a Sarraf Amira, who tries to protect static in the community as it is advantageous for his works. Even though his financial collapse is represented as the outcome of his bad personality in the novel, actually his financial situation gets worse since the *Iltizam* (tax-farming) was forbidden in the Empire. As he wants to protect the existing order, he is against the *Hamazkyats* institution. His failure as *Multezim* is explained with following words in the text: “It is well-known that *Sarrafs* are included in *Iltizam*. Even though some of them get wealthy, most of the time *Iltizam* makes them financially collapsed. Generally they cannot find responsible people, who are hard-working and honest, to collect taxes. Since Mardiros Aga is also very ungenerous, he makes some unreliable people responsible for collecting money. In the end he lost all his properties”.⁷⁹

The ideal male character of the novel is Muhib Sebuḥ Bey, who is the supporter of the institution. While Mardiros Aḡa is trying to steal his wife Vartug’s inheritance, Muhib Bey tries to protect her from Mardiros’ conspiracies. He is a tradesman, who studied in European countries like England and French. He also speaks more than one European languages similar to Vartug. Vartug and Muhib Sebuḥ have an affair; however, they are still represented by the writer-narrator as moral characters as Vartug never has sexual intercourse with her husband after she starts seeing Sebuḥ and Sebuḥ also tries to avoid of this affair for a long time. In order to secretly communicate, this couple uses English language that represents their superiority to their enemies as none of them are that well-educated.

⁷⁹Hovsep Maruş, *Bir Sefil Zevce*, (Asitane: H. Mühendisyan Tabhanesi, 1868), 66.

Even there is an opposition between the proficiency of the male characters. As I said before Mardiros Aga is a Sarraf Amira. Muhib Sebu; on the other hand, is a trademan, who supports the *Hamazkyan* institution. After a meeting, the members of Hamazkyan including Muhib Sebu talk about their enemies: “Some of the primary enemies’ names were called in the meeting and Mardiros Aga was decided as one of the biggest enemy. Until the end of the meeting, people who know him said true or not many negative things about him that shows him as a very evil person”.⁸⁰

Quite similar to the other Armeno-turkish novels, the comparison of Muhib and Mardiros’ education level in order to identify their personalities is strongly emphasized. The writer-narrator’s support for the unity of the Catholic Armenians and the *Hamazkyan* institution becomes obvious from his way of describing these two male characters. Sebu Muhib Bey is introduced as “Sebu’s father shows many efforts to educate Sebu well. He sent him to schools in England and France. When Sebu was 23, he gained already the European morality”.⁸¹ The efforts of Mardiros’ father; on the other hand, are described as following: “When Mardiros became 5, his father brought a teacher to their home and continued his son education according to the tradition of that time. In this era, there were very few people, who can speak European languages. Someone could be considered as educated if he knows little bit Armenian and Ottoman along with a bit algebra”.⁸²

The writer-narrator constructs an opposition between these two characters according to their education and level of modernization; hence, one more time “an ideal model” and “snob figure” are presented as the sides of the disagreement. As in all other Armeno-Turkish novels, the characters, who are supported by the writer-narrator, are always supporters of the

⁸⁰ Ibid, 29.

⁸¹ Ibid, 144.

⁸² Ibid, 35.

modernization, well-educated, and moral figures (moral is not according to the Armenian tradition but according to the writer-narrator's own perception of morality).

When one puts these three Armeno-Turkish novels chronologically according to their writing times, s/he can reach enough information concerning all major conflicts in the Armenian community. Ottoman Muslim writers' novels do not provide that much historical information. Actually, it is quite hard to find any political criticism and opposition in their writings until the Young Turk era. Sometimes they praise the Sultan to give some information about the time they are talking about in the novels; however, they could not go further to give detailed information under the regime.

Chapter 2: Women in the Novels and Women's Novels in the Empire

This chapter aims to examine Ottoman women's agency in public and private spaces and their representation in the nineteenth century novels. Not only female novel characters but also female writers themselves will also be the topic of this chapter. First women's writing experience, the difficulties they encountered, and the main differences in male and female writers' approaches to women's agency⁸³ will hopefully shed light on females' role and positions in a changing Ottoman society.

Creating an "ideal citizen", a "role model" for Ottoman men and women was one of the main didactic roles of the nineteenth-century Ottoman novel. The patriarchal tone in Ottoman Muslim male writers' works were always dominant except a very few examples like Şemsettin Sami's *The Love of Talat and Fitnat*. In most cases, female writers also adhered to patriarchal norms and encouraged women of the era to fulfill the ideal of being a good mother and wife. They try to educate women, who are rearing the future generations of the empire. Nevertheless, in the sub-text of woman writers' novels, there was always an attempt to make the woman more independent and confident. The decade between 1898 and 1908 is also very important for Muslim female writers, as there was a large shift in concern over female character's agency in Ottoman novels. The woman figure gets new dimensions and characteristics such as in their education, work life, and romantic relationships. When comes to Armenian women's novels, however, in contradistinction to their female Muslim counterparts' works, the level of feminism and woman's voice drastically increased during this period. The approach of Armenian female writers consider equality between man and

⁸³ I will take agency as an opposition to the system that suppresses women. Hence, in order to have agency, women should struggle and change something in the course of events.

woman not so much as a gift that can only be given by male authorities, but rather, a human right.

With regard to the existing literature on women and the novel, there are some controversial studies on woman in nineteenth-century novels that can be basically divided in two different groups. Considerably more conservative thinkers such as Fatma Barbarosoğlu⁸⁴ and Firdevs Canbaz⁸⁵ who limit the agency of their female characters within the confines of mainstream Islamist thought represent the first group. Other scholars in the second group who employ feminist approaches to the texts of nineteenth-century writers like Nüket Esen, however, exaggerate these writers' attempts to fight for women's rights in their novels. As I will argue, anachronism mars the ideological orientations of both camps of thought, since it is quite problematic to claim that these writers were feminists as we understand feminism today or claim that they were religious and conservative people who created an "ideal Muslim women" form only within the confines of Islamic and patriarchal norms without taking any action against these existing social norms.

In this sense, this chapter will mainly discuss the Ottoman women's representations in the novels along with the agency of Ottoman women writers. First, I will compare male Muslim writers and Armenian writers' female characters. Then I will examine the female writer's writing experiences and novel characters. Armeno-Turkish novels will also be an important part of this chapter since even though there are distinct and innovative feminist discourses in these texts, contemporary scholars have neglected female characters and their agency in the novels. The main motivation of this chapter will be to analyze the agency writers imbued their female characters in private and public spheres, as well as their thoughts about the financial situation and rights for female inheritance with reference to the

⁸⁴ Fatma Barbarosoğlu, *Uzak Ülke*, (İstanbul: Timaş Press, 2008).

⁸⁵ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Eserlerinde Kadın Sorunu*, (İstanbul: Timaş Press, 2010).

proclamation of *Mecelle* (Civil Code), concubinage, as well as women's education rights. The novels that I am going to utilize in this chapter are Ahmet Mithat's *Felâatun Bey and Rakım Efendi*, Şemsettin Sami's *The Love of Talat and Fitnat*, Emine Semiye's *Sefalet* and *Fatma Aliye's Muhaderat*, Hovsep Vartanian's *The Story of Akabi*, Hovhannes Balıkcıyan's *The Horrible deaths of Karnig, Güllünya, and Dikran*, Hovsep Maruş's *A Miserable Wife*.

In the nineteenth century, important regulations emerged concerning women's right such as extended rights for divorce and inheritance, even though most of them were not implemented into law immediately. Before the promulgation of the *Mecelle* (Ottoman Civil Code), the *Tanzimat Edict* promised equality between men and women in social and legal spaces; however, this equality should have been according to the Islamic norms, which means, women could not divorce, could not get custody of the children, and two female witnesses were equal to one male witness in *shari'a* courts. In 1847 the *Irâde-i Senîye* (The Sultan's order) guaranteed equal inheritance rights to girls and boys.⁸⁶ In 1856, with the *Islahât Edict*, equal rights were also guaranteed for women along with the non-Muslim citizens. Later that year, buying and selling slaves and concubines was also forbidden.⁸⁷ All these recognized regulations became formalized with the *Mecelle*. Female writers especially strongly emphasized women's financial independence and legal rights in order to disseminate knowledge of these reforms to their larger audiences. Another point to stress is the relationship between the bureaucrat Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, who prepared the *Mecelle* and the leading female writers Emine Semiye and Fatma Aliye, who also happened to be Ahmet Cevdet Pasha's daughters. They considered informing people about women's rights as their sacred responsibility.

⁸⁶ After the tanzimat edict, with law, the concubinage was forbidden in the Ottoman Empire.

⁸⁷ <http://www.atam.gov.tr/dergi/sayi-14/anayasalarimizda-kadin-haklari> (Access date: 05/25/2016).

I will come back to the issue of women writers and the *Mecelle*; however, here I would like to start analyzing the connection between gender and space in Ottoman novels. As mentioned in the work of Ayşen Akpınar, Gönül Bakay, and Handan Dedehayır “*Kadın ve Mekan: Tutsaklık mı? Sultanlık mı?*” (Women and Space: Is Captivity or Sultanate?), the places which belong to women were described in the codes of *Mecelle*, and it relegates women’s spaces to the kitchen, the water well, and courtyards. In addition, it called for the construction of long courtyards in buildings in order to protect households from being seen from outside of the house.⁸⁸ After the seventeenth century, it is well known that women increasingly frequented open recreational areas such as parks and pleasure gardens; however, the *Mecelle* called for restricting women’s access to such places even though they are non-Muslim.

In many cases social norms defied Islamic rules in both public and private spaces in the Empire. Even though Muslim writers frequently talk about morality in their works, this concept of morality did not originate from Islamic epistemology per se. Muslim writers try to explain their own understanding of morality, which is also applicable to all religious groups, as it is also possible to observe the same social norms in Armenian writer’s novels. The issue women’s rights, their position in society in different spaces, and their financial situation are also mostly under the control of the society even after the promulgation of the *Mecelle*.

Silent Women in the Male Muslim Writers’ Novels:

In this section, in order to examine the Ottoman women’s agency in the society, I will utilize the Ottoman-Muslim male writers’ novels written by Namık Kemal’s *Intibah*, Ahmet Mithat’s *Felâh-ı Akıl* and *Rakım Efendi*, Şemsettin Sami’s *The Love of Talat and Fitnat*. Except for Şemsettin Sami’s novel, there is a rigid dichotomy between “good” and “bad”

⁸⁸ Mecellenin yapısı, Avrupalı ama İslama da yakın

characters. Moreover, the “good” female protagonist does not have agency and voice in these novels. As they do not have a personality, they are not “characters,” but rather, “types” that represent a specific group of people. Female figures are idealized Muslim women. On par with the larger Romanticism movement in literature, male writers fashion their female characters only in the form of either “angelic” or “cunning” women. Beyond a good woman’s obeying patriarchy consistently, she does not have any effect on the course of events in novels. Some women have more active roles; however, they are inevitably the origin of the crises and problems created in the plot of the novel. In fact, when women make decisions and act freely upon being granted equality on par with men, they become dangerous for society as a whole in these plots.

Women are portrayed by male writers as vulnerable, weak, and emotional; that is why they are easily impressed by the wrong sides of the westernization. Men are always juxtaposed with their weaker counterparts in a more powerful and rational light. Ahmet Mithat and Fatma Aliye wrote the 1892 novel *Hayâl ve Hakikât* that addresses this dichotomy. It is a love story that is written from the perspectives of female and male protagonists. While Ahmet Mithat wrote the male character’s version of the story, Fatma Aliye narrated from the female character’s point of view. Regardless, the male protagonist always approaches events with logic, whereas, the female protagonist is represented as over-emotional and hysterical, as her feelings and love are rendered as an obsession.⁸⁹ *Hayâl ve Hakikât* itself represents a conflict between feeling and reasoning. At the end of the novel, there is an additional article written by Ahmet Mithat in which he suggests that since especially wealthy women do not partake in physical work, they have too much time to think and get depressed delusions that stem from too much thinking. Reasoning which symbolizes the male world in the novel wins over feminine emotions. Fatma Aliye also accepts these

⁸⁹ Nurdan Gürbilek, *Kör Ayna Kayıp Şark: Edebiyat ve Endişe*, (Istanbul: Metis Press, 2010), 70.

patriarchal doctrines and imbues her female characters with no agency. In fact, the female protagonist's humility is chastised because she cannot control her feelings and allows them to evolve into obsessions, thus affecting those around her (i.e., the rational, grounded male). A very Islamic conception of male reason is therefore exalted and considered as an important defense mechanism against the penetration deleterious mores (e.g., more rights to women) of Western cultures.

Namık Kemal, for instance, provides a very classic patriarchal sample of the “ideal Ottoman woman” in his novel *Intibâh (Rebirth)*. There are two forms of woman in the text: one of them is a pure angel, Dilaşub, and the other one is the evil Mehpeyker. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that these two types of woman are very common in nineteenth-century novels all around the world. They maintain, in fact, that there is no other option for female characters, as they should be portrayed as either good or bad with no grey zone for them in the literature of the era.⁹⁰ According to the writer-narrator, Mehpeyker is a very immoral figure due to her choice of profession, “prostitution.” When someone reads the sub-text, on the other hand, Mehpeyker's life story⁹¹ and her excuses for being a prostitute are very touching and reasonable. Even though she loves Ali Bey as much as Dilaşub because of her profession, she is always considered as dangerous and unsuitable as wife-material.

The reason that the writer-narrator prefers Dilaşub as Ali Bey' wife instead Mehpeyker is also because of their first encounter. As I discussed in the first chapter, Mehpeyker and Ali Bey see each other in Çamlıca park for the first time. At this time, women were allowed to go out with their servants or guardians; nonetheless, most of the nineteenth-century male writers were still opposed to women's appearance in public places

⁹⁰ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and The Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2000), 17.

⁹¹ Mehpeyker's relative began to sell her as a prostitute when she was 13. She lost her parents before that. It was not her choice to be a prostitute but it was an obligation for her. Namık Kemal, *Intibah*, (Istanbul: Özgür Press, 2011), 83.

when they were crowded, especially in weekends. According to this logic, the main intention behind going to the recreational areas is meeting someone of the opposite-sex. Furthermore, the recreation areas represent “westernization,” as this tradition was borrowed from the West around the seventeenth century. The approval of parents was important in the Ottoman traditions; however city parks caused some changes in this matter. The manhood crises that emerged in Ali Bey’s life after his relationship with Mehpeker also symbolize the penetration of western culture into the Ottoman Empire. Ali Bey comes from a traditional, respected Ottoman family and thrived under the protection of his father. But when his father died, Mehpeyker had an active role in his life since he lost his guardian, his father. Jale Parla’s “fatherlessness” thesis in *Babalar ve Oğullar* discusses the parallelism between Ali Bey and the Ottoman Empire in the sense of “fatherlessness” in the nineteenth century. Namık Kemal uses Ali Bey’s ills as a metaphor for Ottoman society, as he tries to show how unguarded decisions, which were made by the inexperienced authorities of the Empire, were leading to demise of the empire. Ali Bey not even cares enough to heed his mother’s warning about Mehpeyker. Furthermore, his mother’s attempts to protect her son only accelerate Ali Bey’s death by the hands of Mehpeyker: the mother figure cannot fulfill the role of the father, and her “meddling” only results in disaster.

The mother still has an important role in the novel especially in constructing the ideal image of Ottoman women. During the story Dilaşub, who is Namık Kemal’s ideal, is so passive, does not have a voice and only serves her man, rarely becomes appear in public. She is a concubine, which means, she is selected as a candidate for getting married to Ali Bey by his mother. In *alaturka* lifestyle, the family’s approval was very important; hence, from the beginning Dilaşub was the most suitable woman to be Ali Bey’s wife as she is selected by his mother. In light of these arguments, the independent and strong woman image is quite dangerous for Namık Kemal. Even though Mehpeyker’s love for Ali Bey is equal to

Dilaşub's in the sense of loyalty and caring, the writer-narrator never treats them equally. Mehpeyker stops seeing other men when she falls in love with Ali Bey. However, the writer-narrator never trusts her or forgives her as she is a prostitute. She stays always an evil according to Namık Kemal. The ideal woman should be silent, obedient, and devoted. In Dilaşub's case, she has no agency in the novel compared to Mehpeyker; the novel portrays the ideal woman as one who can only make the ultimate sacrifice of self for her man.

Ahmet Mithat likewise does not support the appearance of women in the recreation areas in the *Felâtn Bey and Rakım Efendi*; nevertheless, the different dimensions concerning women such as financial abilities and the education of women permeate the novel. This novel also provides more information about European women in comparison with Ottoman Muslim women.

In Ahmet Mithat's writing, the Ottoman culture always dominates European culture as it is obvious in the case between the English Ziklas family and Rakım Efendi's family in the novel. One day, the Ziklas family wants to visit Rakım's house in order to learn *alaturka* culture, and Rakım begins to describe the rules of visiting a Muslim house. He informs them that Muslim women avoid unfamiliar men in the house, it is impossible for unconnected men and women spend time together in Muslim culture. In *alaturka*⁹² visits, only a black woman's hand is seen and serves the men who gather in a separate room from women.⁹³ Normally, there is no separate room for the *selamlık* in Rakım's house; however, when a man comes, a bedroom is separated for him in order to protect women from his gazes. "Evin suggests that 'Rakım's little, three-room house in a traditionalist quarter of Istanbul resembles the

⁹² *Alafranga* means the new manners that are borrowed from European cultures. The opposite term *Alaturka*; on the other hand, references manners that belong to Ottoman culture and tradition. People are also described as *alafranga* or *alaturka* in respect to their clothes, wording, and approaches to the events. Meltem Şafak, *Hysterical Men in the Ottoman Novels*, unpublished M.A. thesis, (Istanbul Sehir University Comparative Literature, 2015).

⁹³ Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Felâtn Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları: 2007), 148.

patrimonial household of the old Ottoman system,' by which he means that it is the patriarch, a Circassian slave-girl, and a Nubian nurse, and that it is not consumption oriented, that it values warm human relations and time spent simply, inside the house."⁹⁴

The concubine Canan is also exalted by the writer-narrator, since she does not like going out and spending time in recreation spots. On the other hand, very similar to Canan, we never see the English Ziklas family's daughters, Margret and Can, outside of the home. As they are young and represented as the role model for "true westernization," they also spend their time inside home reading novels. These English girls are Ottomanized by the narrator, as they learn the Ottoman language, literature, and culture in addition to falling in love with an Ottoman men to boot. They are also representatives of Ottoman social norms at some point, as they adopt for themselves everything they learn. Only Yosefino, who is a Canan's French instructor and Rakım's mistress for a limited time, can leave the house as free as a man. She can have illicit sex and drink rakı with Rakım, since she is well-educated, mature, and a financially independent, European woman. In this case the patriarchal social rules dominate both dogmatic-Islamic and European codes.

At this point, the reading materials and the education of women are also worth mentioning because Ahmet Mithat finds it dangerous that young women read emotional poems and romantic novels. Reading "harmless" novels, which mean traditional and religious literature, are supported by the narrator. He is also very supportive in the case of women's education and believes every woman can improve and be an ideal Ottoman woman under the protection of a moral man. For instance, Felatun Bey's sister, Mihriban Hanım, is defined as a spoiled young lady in the beginning of the novel as Meraki bey could not manage to educate her properly. When she gets married to an Ottoman officer, who is a well-educated

⁹⁴ Caryl Phillips, *Imagining the Turkish House: Collective Visions of Home*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 132.

and authoritative figure, Mihriban becomes a real woman under her husband's control and education. Another important point in her case is wealth: she naturally gives all her inheritance that she gained after her father's death to her husband. He collects the money from her, and the narrator defends this on the grounds that Mihriban is not smart enough to manage this large amount of money responsibly.⁹⁵ Somehow Mihriban never has an independent life. After her father's protection, her husband takes control of everything in her life, and this situation is supported by the writer-narrator, as he believes that a woman can be ideal only under the education of a man.

Rakım Bey also teaches his concubine Canan French, piano playing, and literature. She is very-well equipped as a house-keeper and educated woman at the same time. She is superior to the daughters of Ziklas family with her intelligence and capabilities. The section about Canan is not only important due to the education but also concubinage in the Ottoman Empire. Nearly all the novels in *Tanzimât* Era contain concubines since even though it was forbidden to buy and sell a concubine in the mid-nineteenth century, the practice still lingered in Ottoman society. There were also other strict rules regarding concubinage in the empire. For instance, non-Muslim people could not buy Muslim concubines, and every concubine had a right to leave the house and had a chance to get married to her owner.⁹⁶ The narrator in *Felâtnun Bey ve Rakım Efendi* also legitimizes slavery on the part about Canan. Rakım buys Canan for a hundred gold coins, and when he has the chance to sell her, the value of Canan reaches approximately two thousand gold coins since concubine prices can raise according to their capability in music, poetry, literature, reading the Kur'an, and housekeeping.⁹⁷ Rakım also teaches her to play piano and read French and Ottoman language and literature; in addition, he buys her fashionable clothes and finally he gets married to her. When the

⁹⁵ Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Felâtnun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları: 2007), 130.

⁹⁶ Şefika Kurnaz, *Innovative Ideas of Emine Semiye and Fatma Aliye on Giving Women a Social Identity*, JASSS v.6, (february 2013), 1481-1499.

⁹⁷ Ahmet Mithat Efendi, *Felâtnun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*. (İstanbul: Özgür press, 2007), 40.

daughters of Ziklas family see Canan, they envy her beauty and successes; even their father makes a joke about selling his daughters when he learns the price of Canan.

Şemsettin Sami's *The Love of Talat and Fitnat* is the most reformist novel in the case of feminism among the Muslim male writers' works. This time the male protagonist walks on the street in women's clothes. When he walks alone, many strange men verbally abuse him and he says "how difficult to be a woman in these days".⁹⁸ For the very first time, a man shows empathy towards women. Another important issue in this novel is a man can spend time alone with a strange woman in a private space. In order to see and get in touch with Fitnat, Talat wears women's costume and introduces himself as a woman to both Fitnat and her step-father since her step-father is very despotic and conservative. It was quite radical to be alone with an unknown woman even in fiction at this time according to the social norms. The writer-narrator is also critical regarding Fitnat's step-father since he never lets her go out even to visit a neighbor. Until the age of sixteen, Fitnat never leaves home.

The arranged marriage is also another topic discussed in the novel. Fitnat is forced by her step-father to marry Ali Bey, who is a middle-aged, wealthy man instead of Talat; however, a tragedy occurs just before her sexual intercourse with her new husband. As she does not want to be the wife of this man, she faints after a hysterical crisis. When Ali Bey finds her motionless body, he recognizes a necklace on her neck. He finds a hidden letter, which uncovers the truth that Ali Bey is Fitnat's biological father, in the locket.

Except for Şemsettin Sami, there is nothing concerning women's rights in the Ottoman Muslim writers' novels. They use binary oppositions to define "ideal" female figure; however, except for that women have no agency in men's writings.

⁹⁸ Şemsettin Sami, *Taaşuk-ı Talât ve Fitnat (The love of Talat and Fitnat)*, (Istanbul: Özgür Press, 2011), 38.

Looking for Women's Rights in Armeno-Turkish Novels:

As I argued in the first chapter, Armeno-Turkish novels mostly aim to solve the political crises specifically in the Ottoman Armenian community; together with the modernization and its preliminary effects on the community. Most of the time there are two different groups “conservative Armenians” and “Young Armenians” and their conflicts and manhood crises as the main discussion. On the other hand, the women also help to show the good side between these two conflicted groups in the society. If someone cares about women and fights for their equality and freedom, this man is considered as reformist. Writer-narrator always supports reformists in three Armeno-Turkish novels. Hence, all three Armeno-Turkish novels, which are discussed in this thesis, put strong emphasis on women's experiences. Compared to Ottoman Muslim writers, their call for equality between man and woman is stronger and the ideal woman is independent and a well-educated character. “Conservatism” and “tradition”, like in many other cases, are the biggest enemy of women's right and opposite to them, only “modernization” provides a proper life to an Armenian woman. The “conservative Armenians” are represented as the monster and the enemy of women, whilst “Young Armenians” support women's rights and provide a free-space for women's voices and activities.

Hovsep Vartanian's *The Story of Akabi* is quite parallel with Ahmet Mithat's *Felâhî Bey and Rakım Efendi* in the sense of the snob and ideal male characters as is handled in the previous chapter. However, the perception of modernization and the woman issue is discussed in completely different in these two writers' works. In *The Story of Akabi*, the writer-narrator has a discussion with the narratee to advise the audience concerning giving space to their wives and daughters to go out freely since women are independent people and have the right to entertain as men do in public spaces.

- Why would I introduce my daughter to someone that I don't know if I don't have any expectations? This is unacceptable.
- Woman! Don't be afraid. If you educate your daughter well, nothing happens to her. If they want to see each other, they can find a way for meeting without your permission.
- What are you saying? Why does someone meet with my wife? What about my authority?
- No, don't be afraid. There is no problem with your authority. If everybody acts properly in meetings, there would be no need for any restriction. Even people can entertain very well.⁹⁹

The writer-narrator tries to convince the “conservative” narratee that the women’s going outs do not affect the authority of men. In addition, the narrator states that suppression can cause much more dramatic consequences since women can always find a way to go out without permission. An educated and modernized woman knows how to act and talk in public spaces; hence, there is nothing to worry for their male protectors if they educate their daughters and wives (according to the writer-narrator).

After this dialogue, a conversation between Rupenig and Fasidyan also takes place specifically on the same topic in the novel. What these characters say about the women’s appearance in public is exactly opposite to the narrator’s point of view. Since these two characters are conservative, uneducated, and evil men, their disagreement with what the writer narrator suggests also proves the importance of modernization in the novel. Hovsep Vartanian tries to convince his readers about the freedom of women and the necessity of modernization with very strong and tragic examples. The moral codes in *The Story of Akabi* and *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi* are so different from each other. For instance, Felatun is criticized because he allows his lover to meet another man and appears with her in public very frequently; in contrast, when Rupenig and Fasidyan talk about Rupenig’s beloved Fulik, Rupenig says that if he marries her, he never gives permission to her to go out without veil, it is horrible for him to make his wife appear in public.¹⁰⁰ Vartanian tries to struggle with ignorance and inequality in the society and to make this argument clear; he criticizes

⁹⁹ Hovsep Vartanyan [Vartan Pasha], *Akabi Hikayesi*, Ed. Andreas Tietze, (İstanbul: Eren Press, 1991), 12.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 116.

traditional educational system with the help of novel character Rupenig's ignorancy. For Vartan Pasha, women also have the right to appear in public and make their own choices as we see in the case of Fulik, who is Rupenig's crush. Fulik is compelled to get married to Rupenig by her parents, they do not ask or care about her own decision.

The relationship between Fulik and Rupenig also shows how the arranged marriage can cause great sorrow for women. Fulik does not have any feelings for Rupenig; on the contrary, she hates his attitudes from the beginning. Rupenig; on the other hand, is obsessively in love with Fulik and interprets everything she does as a positive response to his feelings. He convinces his father and mother of this marriage with the help of Fasidyan, who is a Catholic Priest in other words representor of the religion and tradition. Since Fasidyan is a religious figure, he makes all the marriage process more traditional and formal. Fulik's mother and father also become very satisfied with this arranged marriage as Rupenig comes from a well-known and wealthy family. The writer-narrator criticizes the attitudes of Fulik's mother and father as following:

Andon Aga and Terezia Dudu accepted the marriage offer without thinking and even they became very happy about it. They did not ask Fulik's opinion at all and just informed her about their decision regarding the marriage. Fulik tried to oppose to their decision; however, she could not resist to her father's physical attack and her mother's complaints and had to accept this marriage.¹⁰¹

The father figure is passive, non-existent or a very monstrous character in Armeno-Turkish novels in general. The image of the father mostly represents "tradition" in almost every patriarchal society. Since all Armenian writers were reformists, they used the father image as an evil, who causes all crises in the novels. In *The Story of Akabi*, this figure is not exactly Akabi's father but her uncle, as he is the only authority and representor of the Patriarch in Akabi's household. Hagop's father also shares the same role with all other

¹⁰¹Ibid, 117.

fathers in the Armeno-Turkish novels; he prepares the death of his own son with his wrong and despotic decisions. With reference to Jale Parla's "fatherlessness" thesis, the Armenian writers targeted re-building the existing system. They were all opposed to tradition and against the fathers, they suggest supporting new ideas and modernism, which are represented by the sons (new generation that educated in European way). The writer-narrators try to convince reader to be like sons instead of fathers as the modernization is a necessity for the future of the Armenian community.

The issues of arranged marriage and the father's position are discussed even more strongly in Balıkcıyan's *The Horrible Deaths of Karnig, Gülünya, and Dikran*. The main crisis emerges when Ğugos aga wants to marry his daughter Gülünya to a "conventional" man he does not know well. The reason behind this marriage is only to keep Gülünya away from *Sahmanrutyun* and Young Armenians. Ğugos Aga causes Karnig's death in the beginning and never regrets it. Moreover, as he is a despotic man, he tries to hurt Dikran either, who supports reformist activities and the Armenian constitution. Ğugos Aga's ideal groom is defined in the novel as someone who obeys his every word, deeply respects traditions, and who is not well-educated.¹⁰²

While Ğugos Aga plans this marriage, all negative characteristics of traditional and uneducated people of the society are demonstrated in the narration. His evil characteristics become more apparent when Gülünya's mother Pupul Hanım expresses negative opinions about her potential groom in front of a Ğugos aga's friend. Ğugos Aga's friends are much like him, they do not respect women and humiliate them. For this reason, with the encouragement of his friend, Ğugos Aga gets angry and attacks physically his wife and daughter since they object to his decision about the groom. While he is beating his wife, he

¹⁰² Hovhannes Balıkcıyan, *Karnig, Gülünya ve Dikran'ın Dehşetli Vefatleri Hikâyesi*. (İstanbul: Minasyan Basmahanesi, 1863), 80-81.

insults her in words such as, “acüze... fahişe... elinden yandım tütüm...” (beldam... whore... I burned in your hands...) in order to humiliate her more.¹⁰³

Ğugos aga is depicted as an uncontrollable monster, not only in this scene but also when Gülünya attempts suicide because of her father’s despotism. When Pupul Hanım passes out due to Gülünya’s death, Ğugos aga shouts to her and treats her in an inhuman way: “Wife... I am saying to you, behave yourself (...) not only crying and fainting but even though you die like your daughter that underlying carcass, I do not give up my belief, I am in this opinion” (my translation).¹⁰⁴ His badness has no limit. Since the narrator wishes to expose negative feelings about people who are opposed to modernization and European education to the reader, he uses exaggerated motifs for describing Ğugos aga; even, he becomes an inhuman figure.

Different from the first two Armeno-Turkish novels, there is no despotic father figure in Hovsep Varuş’s *A Miserable Wife*. This role is taken by uneducated, ignorant, and easily-manipulated husband Mardiros and his evil friend Mikayel Aga. These two men fight against to Vartug Dudu –the female protagonist-, since they want to take all her money and make her dependent to their patriarchal power. Mikayel Ağa is a very dangerous man, who is in love with Vartug Dudu. In order to have her, he uses Mardiros Aga’s silliness and eager to steal all her wife’s belongings.

Compared to previous two Armeno-Turkish novels, there is a different image of woman in *A Miserable Wife* as Vartug Dudu does not know her biological father and is raised by a wealthy Russian man, who represents Europe itself. In the previous novels, the ideal characters of the narrator mostly study in Europe and learn this culture after learning Armenianness and Ottomanness. In Vartug’s case; on the other hand, both the idealized male protagonist Muhib and female protagonist Vartug live and grow up in Europe from the

¹⁰³ Ibid, 129.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 210.

beginning. They are the complete representors of modernization. The level of modernization is highest in this novel along with financial independence of women which is also very effective motif for the freedom of the female character.

Vartug is an independent woman, who can have radical decisions such as; extramarital relationship with Muhib and having a child with him when she is married to Mardiros Aga. As she is a wealthy woman, she can take control of her life. There is no restriction for Vartug, which prohibits her to appear in public space. In almost every nineteenth century novel, it is forbidden to leave home for middle-upper class women. They always send their servants or concubines for their outside duties; however, Vartug has no restriction in this sense and even she has space to build a tunnel to her lover Muhib's house to sneak in. With the power of her money, she hires a man to build this tunnel and arranges everything by herself.¹⁰⁵

Even all these things that she dares to do are very contradictory to the social norms of the Armenian community in the nineteenth century; the writer-narrator never judges or denigrates Vartug's personality and behaviors. With the higher level of her Europeanness, the dimensions of the morality are also re-formulated by the narrator. The narrator finds her husband Mardiros responsible for her infidelity and affair with Muhib Bey. In the following quotation, the writer-narrator clearly states how women sometimes are right to leave their husbands:

Until now man people write about the women's nature. Some of them praised women while some of them were insulting their nature. We assume that if one thinks about the relationship between husband and wife, S/he understands that women are not the only responsible for the divorces. Even women try so hard to maintain their marriages, and their efforts sometimes make us emotional.¹⁰⁶

Following this part, the writer-narrator also states that women have the right to expect love from their husbands; hence, if their husbands lose their interests in their wives, then women

¹⁰⁵ Hovsep Maruş, *Bir Sefil Zevce*, (Asitane: H. Mühendisyan Tabhanesi, 1868), 222.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 156-157.

can leave them to find love. With these words, the text basically defends what Vartug Dudu did to reach a loving relationship with Muhib Bey. The writer-narrator never blames her for cheating on her husband as regarding to narrative Mardiros Aga deserves her infidelity.

One of the main discussions in the novel is one more time about the arranged marriage, which is parallel with the previous novels. All the trouble of Vartug Dudu faces in the novel actually originates from her marriage to Mardiros Aga. The writer-narrator criticizes her for marrying a man, who she has never met before. It is obvious that since Vartug Dudu is a well-educated modern woman, the narrator expects her to be more open-minded: “We understand that some people are very surprised due to Vartug Dudu’s marriage with a man, who she does not know anything about, even though she is a wealthy and educated woman”.¹⁰⁷ In order to strengthen the negative outcomes of the arranged marriages, Vartug Dudu dies in the end of the novel as her husband gives her extreme sorrow. He incarcerates her in a cave and wants to kill her and her child from Muhib Bey in order to obtain her estate including the inheritance, which is left from her Russian step-father.

Connected to the inheritance issue, Vartug’s financial situation is an important motif in the novel. In the previous novels including both Muslim and non-Muslim literature, wealthy women are restricted in domestic spaces and always their male guardians have the right to control their properties. For the first time, a woman is the only owner of an enormous amount of money. After her marriage with Mardiros, Vartug keeps all her property for herself by law. When Mardiros becomes indebted to Mikayel, he cannot sell Vartug’s estates since he needs her allowance and signature first. Furthermore, there is a very crucial condition in the document concerning the inheritance that was bequeathed by Vartug’s step-father, Sergio. According to this pre-condition, only Vartug and her child can use the inherited properties.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 62.

That is why Mardiros and Mikayel try to kill Vartug and her child. As Mardiros is her only living relative, in the end he is the only inheritor after Vartug and her child.

Vartug's financial power, education, and modernized image make her a powerful woman figure compared to the other female characters, which were discussed before. She can defend herself against her husband. She has a strong voice different from all other female characters. In the Ottoman literature, until the women's writing and *Servet-i Fünûn* literature, the voice of female characters is missing; hence, *A Miserable Wife* is an important work concerning women's agency as it focuses on a female character even though the writer-narrator has a male voice. This novel lets this woman figure express her freely.

Nevertheless, all these women have something in common, even though it is in different levels. In all Armeno-Turkish novels, the unity between the female and male protagonists is established on an ideology or art. Murat Cankara names this kind of romantic relationships as "intellectual love". For instance, Akabi and Hagop's first dialogue is on a French novel *Atala* and separatist ideology. Karnig and Gülünya meet in one of the meetings of Young Armenians about the Armenian Constitution. Gülünya and Dikran meet Karnig's graveside just before Gülünya's attempted suicide. They get united to maintain Karnig's political fight for *Sahmanatrutyun* against the conventional citizens. Finally, Vartug and Muhib initially meet in a theater and following that they coincidentally wear costumes from a French opera in a costume ball.

Even though the levels are different, all of these women are educated enough to penetrate the men's world and create a danger for patriarchal order. For instance, Akabi in *The Story of Akabi* has a political position about the sectarian strife between Catholic and Gregorian Armenians. She supports unionists and her agreement on the topic with Hagop strengthens their relationship. Gülünya in *The Horrible Deaths of Karnig, Gülünya and Dikran* has different relationships with two different men, who are part of the same political

party. These men support the Armenian Constitution and the modernization against the conventional Armenians including Gülünay's father Goğos. Gülünay also takes sides next to her lovers against her father. After the death of her lover Karnig, her belief in the case (Armenian Constitution) gathers them together in a romantic relationship with Dikran. Their love represents the unity of Young Armenians. All these women have a political side, which makes them part of the men's world.

Muslim Women Educate Their “Sisters” via Literature:

In this sub-chapter, we will compare three female writers and the issues concerning women that writers discussed in their works. Female characters and fundamental differences among them will also be in the center of the argument. I will look for the agency of women, women's rights to divorce, inheritance, and education in the novels. The writers I am going to focus on are respectively; Fatma Aliye and Emine Semiye. Fatma Aliye and Emine Semiye are an important Ottoman bureaucrat and elite Ahmet Cevdet's daughters, who also wrote the civil code. As daughters of *Mecelle*'s creator, the two sisters aimed to emphasize women's problems in the Empire and tried to reach a female audience as much as they could in order to educate them.

Fatma Aliye begins her writing experience with translation of a French novella *Meram* in 1880. In an environment that the writing and publication sectors were under the men's dominancy, she publishes her translation with the signature of “a woman” with the help of Ahmet Mithat, who is her literary father. Her biological father Ahmet Cevdet lets her and her sister Emine Semiye study French along with their brother when his instructors come home.¹⁰⁸ This situation is kind of a privilege for women as the facilities were so limited in the nineteenth century for women's education.

¹⁰⁸ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Eserlerinde Kadın Sorunu*, (Istanbul: Timaş Press, 2010), 42.

There is a dichotomy concerning Ottoman Muslim writers over whether they were feminist or obeyed the patriarchal norms and Sunni Islam. Firdevs Canbaz briefly states that Fatma Aliye cannot be defined as a feminist writer since “feminism” does not explain her motivation and her literary works. According to Canbaz, she is a conservative Muslim writer. I find this approach a bit problematic as it is always risky to make strong and rigid statements. If she reacts against the claims of “feminism”, trying to define her only with “conservative Muslim” is also very restricted. In order to make her argument more convincing, Firdevs Canbaz reads and quotes prejudicially from Fatma Aliye’s writing. For instance, Canbaz claims that “No difference is observed in Fatma Aliye’s adventure of writing.”¹⁰⁹ In my opinion, on the other hand, there is a big gap between her first novel *Muhaderat*(1892) and the last one *Enin*(1910) regarding the agency of women.

In the beginning of her writing experience, Fatma Aliye needs to obey the patriarchal order as the writing and publication sectors were dominated by men. In addition, Ahmet Mithat helped her to appear in public, which made her dependent on him for some time. Some specific topics such as; women’s education and Sunni Islamic norms are protected until the end; nevertheless, when she becomes famous and has her own audience, her female characters turn into more independent, rational, financially powerful, and working women.

Fatma Aliye’s sister Emine Semiye never becomes as famous as her sister. Kadriye Kaymaz attributes this consequence to Fatma Aliye’s good relations with important male figures in publishing sector.¹¹⁰ Emine Semiye is much more radical than her sister concerning the women’s rights and state politics on the issue. She plays an important role in the women’s branch of the Committee of Union and Progress and the Ottoman Democrat Party. In this

¹⁰⁹ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye Hanım’ın Eserlerinde Kadın Sorunu*, (Istanbul: Timaş Press, 2010), 46.

¹¹⁰ Kadriye Kaymaz, *Gölgedeki kalem Emine Semiye: Bir Osmanlı Kadın yazarının düşünce dünyası*, (Istanbul: Küre press, 2009).

chapter, even though we will provide a general portrait concerning their literary works, the main novels we are going to focus on are Fatma Aliye's first novel *Muhaderat* and Emine Semiye's *Sefalet*.

When I read Muslim women's novels for the first time, I expected to see some significant differences compared to Male writers' literary works as women's inner world was narrated by a woman, who experiences the atmosphere in the Empire as one of her female characters. Even though the novels did not meet all my expectations in this sense, I admit that there are important differences between the images of women in female and male Muslim writers' texts that one cannot ignore. First of all, women gain the decision making capacity and an active role in the course of events. While doing so, they have a personality, a characteristic, which makes a woman different from others. The interesting thing is when a woman, not an ordinary woman but an "ideal Ottoman woman", finds a place in men's world and gets power to manipulate their lives, with "deconstruction", some characteristics that are generally attributed to men in the Ottoman society are undertaken by these women. As an example, they become rational more than emotional, they can easily give up on their romantic relationships in order to make things right. Male characters, on the other hand, are represented as over-emotional, hysterical, and financially weaker than women in the novels.

The female protagonist of Fatma Aliye's *Muhaderat*, Fazıla, is Mukaddem's fiancée since her childhood; however, because of her evil step-father Calibe, she is compelled to get married to Remzi, who is a womanizer that does not respect women and consider his wife as a servant. Creating a character like Remzi is crucial to show the 'ideal man' in this case regarding men's attitudes towards women. As fazıla is a very moral woman, she can control her feelings and love her husband Remzi instead of Mukaddem. The writer-narrator explains this attitude with "as she keeps her love for her husband until the time she gets married, she

buried her old-love (for Mukaddem) (...) Some other girls can also control their feelings like Fazıla. They think about whether the things that make them feel happy rational or not.”¹¹¹ In Fatma Aliye’s latest novel *Enin* also the female protagonist says these words: “Now I can let myself to love you”.¹¹² The feelings of ideal women are always under their control. In contrast, male characters are vulnerable, and easily impressed. In this crisis moment, male figures get sick as they cannot struggle with the problems. For instance, Mukaddem gets tuberculosis after Fazıla’s marriage with another man. Men are not only physically but also psychologically weaker than female characters; they intend to suicide or faint since their emotions dominate their reasoning.

Use of binary oppositions like “evil” and “angel” to show the features of Ottoman ideal citizen is common in Fatma Aliye’s novel similar to the Muslim male writers’. Still there are important differences between the “angel” in men’s writing and women’s writing as female characters in the women’s novels have the power to stand against the existing system and some sides of the patriarchal order. Nevertheless, quite similar to male Muslim writers’ novels, there is no agency of “good (ideal) women”. In the Muslim women’s novels, for instance, in the evil female character Calibe’s story is established to show how a woman can destroy her life with acting according to her feelings. Calibe wants to own everything and the writer narrator shows us there is always a limit for women. Caliber first marries an old man- Fazıla’s father- for money even though she is in love with Süha; who is her cousin. Money is not enough to satisfy her; hence, she has an affair with Süha in Fazıla’s house, in other words, under the same roof with her husband. As Calibe follows her desires and focuses on satisfying herself, her personal story ended in the most tragic way. Even though Süha is

¹¹¹ Fatma Aliye, *Muhaderat*, (Istanbul: Kumsaati Press, 2011), 171-173.

¹¹² Fatma Aliye, *Enin*, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2005), 178.

responsible for this affair as much as Calibe, the writer-narrator does not torture him since there is always a legitimization for men's sexual desires.

The interesting part is, Fazıla is not an innocent character either even though she is idealized. She sees and knows everything happens around her; however, she keeps her silence and never informs people around. The writer-narrator's "ideal woman" Fazıla is represented as silent, moral, obedient, and passive; however, her decisions and acts actually affect the plot from top to toe. Her silence and secrets shape the plot. She never warns her father about Calibe's betrayal to him, she fools her husband Remzi in order to take some information about his affairs. She listens to Remzi's profligacy as she enjoys hearing about the other women. Fazıla compels her ex-fiancee Mukaddem to marry Enise, even though he says that he is still in love with Fazıla. Then when Fazıla becomes a free-woman after her husband's death, she spends so much time together with Mukaddem and his wife Enise as Mukaddem wants to divorce her to be with Fazıla after her divorce. As Fazıla is an "angel", she never lets him divorce and leave Enise. Mukaddem, Enise, and Fazıla spend all their time together since Mukaddem satisfies when Fazıla is around him. Mukaddem and Fazıla keep their romantic history as a secret from Enise to not to hurt her. Even though Fazıla is represented as loyal, honest, and passive figure, from the beginning of the text she keeps lying and manipulating people around her. Like in the case of Namık Kemal and his character Mehpeyker, the writer-narrator tries to convince reader about something; however, the text itself tells a different story.

The same story is repeated in Emne Semiye's *Sefalet* either but in a quite different way. The female protagonist Sabite and her cousin Hayati are fiancée since they were child. When Sabite's father dies, her other cousin Mahir defrauds her and convince people that he is Ruhi Bey's biological child instead of Sabite. Because of that, Sabite loses all her inheritance

and since she becomes poor, Hayati breaks up with her and gets married to Kesibe, who is both Hayati and Sabite's best friend, for money.

Even though Emine Semiye also wants to show moral norms by utilizing binary oppositions, she does not limit it in the “ideal” man and woman images. Although the female protagonist Sabite is represented as honest and moral, she is not an angel, she shows some signs that she is still human, not an angel. Her weaknesses also take place in the story-line different from Fatma Aliye's novel. The writer-narrator in *Sefalet* only feels sorry for the character but do not try to legitimize her acts and feelings. Although Sabite is a married woman, her love for ex-fiancée Hayati never ends. The writer-narrator insstently tries to show Sabite's romantic feelings for Hayati because love cannot suddenly disappear. This aspect of the novel increases its realism. Emine Semiye's message is, in order to be moral and an ideal, women do not have to give up on their feelings. The writer-narrator emphasizes the importance of being good-natured and helpful instead of highlighting the superiority of reasoning to feelings. Furthermore, Emine Semiye criticizes apathy that men show towards women. For instance, when Hayati does not show any love to his wife Kesbiye, Sabite feels hatred towards him.¹¹³ In this novel, the writer-narrator does not try to deconstruct the socially accepted roles of men and women; on the contrary, she directly exalts the features that are attributed to women like being emotional. Nevertheless, while Hayati's feelings for Sabite turn into hysteria at some point, Sabite can protect her emotions at the same level. She combines reasoning and feelings in one body. The superiority of female character to male character is still strongly empohasized. Men are represented weaker than women because men do not know how to handle their emotions; hence, consequently they lose all their capability of reasoning.

¹¹³ Emine Semiye, *Sefalet*, (İstanbul: Antik Dünya Klasikleri, 2010), 68.

In the end of the novels, both Fatma Aliye's Fazıla and Emine Semiye's Sabite do not end up with their first loves; on the contrary, they move on and get married to other people. In my view, this new deconstructed form of romantic relationship, which is dominated by women's decision and reasoning, is show of strength. Fatma Aliye and Emine Semiye try to break the routine with a new image of women and a new form of the romantic relations.

Furthermore, while Fazıla in *Muhaderat* is keeping her silence, Sabite in *Sefalet* shows her reactions and expresses herself. Fazıla affects the course of events secretly; on the contrary, Sabite has no secret. She defends herself and fights against her enemies. Her voice is strong enough to earn everything she lost –like money, social class, and authority- back. Emotions like ambition, anger or hatred are not attributed to ideal women in the Muslim writers' novels in most of the cases. Since these feelings need an obvious action to be reflected. Emine Semiye tries to create a strong woman, who can also act and express her feelings freely. The writer-narrator shows Sabite's anger for Hayati with these words: "Sabite stands under the stairs and rages like a female lion".¹¹⁴ The reader do not used to this kind of reactions of female characters form in other novels.

The divorce issue is also handled by these two writers with different perspectives. An ordinary woman Nazife in Emine Semiye's *Sefalet* divorces twice. The only mission of this character is to show the audience that women can divorce if they are not happy in their marriages. In her non-fiction works, Fatma Aliye also talks about divorce and supports women if they are tortured in their marriage. On the other hand, in her novel *Muhaderat*, she does not let her female protagonist Fazıla divorce her husband. The divine justice solvesFazıla's problem when her husband Remzi dies accidentally. Even though Islamic motifs are quite common in these writers' works compared to male writers, their

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 48.

understanding of Islam is like a combination of Ottoman social norms, which is originated from the tradition, and Islamic norms. For instance, Fazıla decides to attempt suicide when both her husband and father reject her; however, since it is forbidden in Islam, she gives up and runs away from Istanbul to Beirut. Nevertheless, there is nothing about the worship like their practices of pray and etc.

Emine Semiye's *Sefalet* is also important due to the class issue and its effects on women's daily lives. The main character of the novel Sabite belongs to an upper-class family; however, after her parents' death, some relatives take hold all her inheritance. Sabite and her Arab kalfa Gayret began to live together with Sabite's nannies in a small house after her loss. The difference of this novel from the ones I mentioned before that Sabite is free to go out until she takes her inheritance back. When she gets her money back, she begins to use her servants for her duties outside of the home. She and Gayret walk in the streets of Istanbul in order to find a lawyer and get her money back. In addition, both of them go to the school until Sabite becomes at the age that she has to wear a veil.

Multecimzade Ruhi Bey's *Konak* is quite flexible concerning spaces inside of the house that men and women can communicate each other freely. For instance, Hayati and Sabite spend a lot of time together before their engagement. This situation can be legitimized because they are also relatives; however, Sabite's friend Kesbiye can as a stranger come and spend time with male hosts Mahir and Hayati in the Konak. It is possible to say that the notions of Haremlik and Selamlık have begun to change in the nineteenth century especially in upper-class families. Selamlık can be described as a room that men meet and discuss political and social issues; nonetheless, this novel exhibits that women also spend time in Selamlık. The segregation between men and women in the house is not so strict in Emine Semiye's novel.

In the novel the dress-codes of the Ottoman society is also handled. Necibe and Nesibe who are the sisters of Müştak (husband of female protagonist Sabite) are not veiled in the beginning of the novel. One day, Müştak sees a drunk and chic man who annoys Müştak's sister. He directly attacks him to protect his sisters; however, the drunk man defends himself with these words "I am drunk! If this man wants to protect his sisters, why he lets them go out with these indecent clothes." Müştak Bey defends his sisters "They are only thirteen year-old children"; however, the power of narrator legitimizes the drunk man's attitude and encourage him to defend himself as following "I find unacceptable the childhood of these girls since they seem really mature physically."¹¹⁵ It is obvious that the narrator supports the veiling for young girls whether they are physically attractive enough. Dress-codes are important in the case of class differences, as well. For instance, when Necibe and Nesibe see the good quality of Sabite's underwear in Turkish bath, they decide to behave well to her.¹¹⁶ The clothes of people play important role to determine his/her respectability even though s/he is not a nobleman.

In addition, one part of the novel represents the life in a regular Harem in an ordinary Konak. The owner's wife, mother, daughter, concubines, and Nazife who is the spouse of the owner live all together and have multiple conversations during the narration. The elder people who are mother and sister of Nazife's husband and naughty daughter of Nazife dominate her. Melman mentions about the hierarchical system of Harem with these words: "The husband's mother was at the top of the domestic hierarchy. (...) The büyük hanım (literally great lady), or first wife, was undisputed ruler of the household."¹¹⁷ We have many signs about the hierarchy in the Harem. For instance, in Müştak Bey's konak, after the death of father the

¹¹⁵ Emine Semiye, *Sefalet*, (İstanbul: Antik Dünya Klasikleri, 2010), 69-70.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 216.

¹¹⁷ Billie Melman, "The Haremlik as a Bourgeois Home: Autonomy, Community and Solidarity", *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718-1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press), 1992.

most authoritative figure is the mother of Müştak who is called “büyük hanım”, as well. In addition, usually the groom moves in the house of bride’s house in the novel. For instance, Sabite convinces Müştak to live in Mültecimzade konağı which belongs to Sabite’s father. Sabite also helps Şeker Hanım to live with her married daughter and she buys a new house next to her husband’s house; as a result of that the families of bride and groom begin to live together.¹¹⁸ It is obvious that the hierarchy is not only about the gender but also the age and the class; therefore, women are also separated from one another according to their roles in the house.

Fatma Aliye tells a similar story in *Muhaderat* but with a different chronological order. Fazıla is also an upper-class woman and it is forbidden to go out for her until she runs away from her husband and becomes concubine in Şebib Bey’s (her future husband) house in Beirut. When her former fiancée Mukaddem encounters her in Beirut, she says the following words “I am freer now than when I was a lady. It is enough to say my lady that “I need to go somewhere” to leave home”.¹¹⁹ There is no strict segregation between *Haremlik* and *Selamlık* in Fatma Aliye’s novel either. Süha and Calibe have an affair easily because they can live in the same house and stay in the same room together even though they are not relatives.

The concubinage is also another issue that female writers put emphasis on; moreover, they show their support towards it. In Emine Semiye’s novel, Gayret is given to Sabite as a gift. More than master and servant, they are friends. Gayret goes to school with Sabite and when Sabite has to veil, they both leave school together. Gayret has some manly features. She beats men on the street if they try to hurt Sabite. She is like a guardian for her. There is an obvious exaltation concerning the concubinage in this novel as Gayret speaks Ottoman Turkish very well and she is a moral person, who is like a role model.

¹¹⁸ Emine Semiye, *Sefalet*, (İstanbul: Antik Dünya Klasikleri, 2010), 195.

¹¹⁹ Fatma Aliye, *Muhaderat*, (İstanbul: Kumsaati press, 2011), 259.

In Fatma Aliye's novel either, the concubinage has a good reputation. After left her husband, she becomes concubine in Beirut. As she is very hard-working, everybody likes and respects her. However, there is an aristocrat tone in her wording when she criticizes the concubines, who are treated badly. According to her, the masters insult their concubines solely whether they are lazy and talkative. Hence, concubine should serve without talking. If she is insulted by her masters, this is all her fault. Even though buying and selling concubine were forbidden with the law in mid-nineteenth century, as it is obvious, this did not stop even the educated elites to exalt concubinage in the end of the century.

Another important thing that is emphasized in these two novels is the financial superiority of women. For instance, Sabite in *Sefile* is richer than her husband Müştak. She does not need his money after their marriage. Even though *İltizam* was forbidden with *Tanzimât* edicts, Sefile inherits an *İltizam* and becomes a *Multezim*. The emphasis on law system is also important. When Sabite lost her money, she seeks help from law. All these elements refer to the accessibility of women to the certain spaces.

Female writers' novels are very rich concerning the social, financial, and political regulations in the Ottoman Empire. Even though we know the tax-farming was banned in early nineteenth century, these novels tell us that it was still active in late nineteenth century. Even though, in the case of women's rights like many other male writers they emphasize the importance of education for women to raise good future generations, still they gave a voice to the female characters that normally we get used to read their silences in male writers' novels.

On the other hand, it is impossible to ignore the active participation of women in social crises in the Armenian novels, which does not exist even in female Muslim writers' literary works.

CONCLUSION

This thesis tried to fill a gap in the Ottoman literary historiography as non-Muslim literature still cannot find a place in it. The primary aim of this research was to focus on “modernization” with different perspectives including the writings of “silenced” groups such as; non-Muslim and female writers. In the introduction part, I provided a brief historical background of Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and highlighted some dichotomies concerning the modernization and how it was perceived by the Ottoman writers.

In the first research chapter, I compared the novels of Muslim male writers and Armenian male writers with specific emphasis on the most common topic, the forms of characters –if there is any difference concerning the ideal man image between Muslim and Armenian writers-, writers’ emphasis on social crises, the use of motifs such as: recreation areas that refer to the modernization in writers’ minds. My findings revealed that the use of binary oppositions is very common in both literatures. Every writer designates an “ideal” and a “negative” figure to describe a solution to the conflict in the novel. In Ottoman Turkish novels, this conflict is mostly about “superficial westernization” that the writer-narrator tries to show negative sides of adopting everything that is western without asking. As Ottoman Muslim writers’ also had “anxiety of influence”, according to Nurdan Gürbilek, they reflected their own crises to their male characters. Muslim writers grew up in a traditional atmosphere, and then they went to Europe for education and borrowed new ideas in their home. They are somehow inbetween: they could not turn their back to the Ottoman tradition as they grew up with reading Eastern literature and religious discipline; on the other hand, they learnt another life order in west that was much developed.

It was observed that the ideal image in Armeno-Turkish novels do not reflect only the modernization crises but also the political disagreements between the different Armenian groups. All three novels I handles, told the present social crises among the Armenians in the writing time of the novel. They discussed sectarian strife, the conflict between the constitutionalists and anti-constitutionalist and the conflict between unionists and anti-unionists. Even though they were much more political texts compared to Muslim writers' works, these writers never touched upon the general crises in the Empire, which affected all stratum including Muslim, Jews, or Greeks.

This research highlighted also the reactions to modernization was quite different in the Armeno-Turkish novels compared to their Muslim counterparts. While Ottoman Muslim writers were criticizing adopting modernization without asking and describing these kinds of characters as snob, Armenian writers were supporting the acceptance of modernization without any criticism. Furthermore, they described it as solution for all their big issues as sectarian strife, and separatist movements. One of the main reasons behind it was their belief in education. According to Armenian writers, European way of education could enlighten the Armenian community and in a nation, which all members are educated, the conflict between different groups would disappear. In all three novels, the conflicted groups are separated from each other according to their education levels. Hence, the unity in the community is only possible with the same education, which creates modern, open-minded people.

The second research chapter of this thesis focused on the representation of women in writings and women's own writing experience in the Ottoman Empire including social issues such as: gender roles. The main aim was to understand the agency of woman in public and private spaces. Hence, I highlighted the issues like the concubinage in other words hierarchical order, financial power of women, their visibility in public spaces, their position

in domestic places, and the rights to inheritance and divorce that they gained after the promulgation of the Civil Code. This chapter included three different sub-chapters as I examined Ottoman Muslim and Ottoman Armenian male writers' novels along with the Ottoman Muslim Female writers' novels.

This research demonstrated that in Ottoman male writers' works women have no agency. They only serve to show the ideal image of the Muslim women. They do not have a voice and personality at first place. Their only mission is to be quiet, obedient, and good; in addition, they devote their lives for their men. It is also observed that, binary oppositions like "angel" and "evil" are also quite common when every woman is good or bad, there is nobody inbetween. Only Şemsettin Sami's novel makes a difference in this sense, because he tries to identify himself with women in the public space and feels sorry for them.

In Armeno-Turkish novels; on the other hand, a very different use of female image was discovered. In many cases, women were still restricted in private space; however, they could find an important place for themselves in men's world. They had political missions as their relationships were also symbolizing the unity of the Armenian community in each novel. Still writers use female protagonist as a tool to reach a conclusion like how bad to want to maintain the sectarian strife; however, still they have voice and agency in these works.

Two female Muslim writers are discussed in this study. Both of them are the daughters of Ahmet Cevdet Pasha; who prepared the Ottoman civil code. Some differences were observed between these two writers even though they came from the same social background. As Fatma Aliye took her behind Ahmet Mithat's support, who was dominating the publishing sector, she became more famous than Emine Semiye. However, Emine Semiye's novel was a bit more radical than Fatma Aliye's *Muhaderat*. Emine Semiye was

much independent and active in political arena. This difference is reflected on their writing experience in the early periods. Even though in many cases Muslim female writers protected the patriarchal norms in their writings, their female characters were trying to seek for justice in most of the cases, which is not possible to see in male Muslim writers' novels. For instance Emine Semiye's Sabite never gave up struggling to get her properties back.

All in all, obviously all these novels represent both writers' individual and society's more general problems. They tried to touch upon the main crises in the Ottoman community with emphasis on the different issues. Some of them focused on the insular problems of their own community, some of them highlighted mainly women's experiences, and some of them ignored all political crises; nevertheless, none of them did not avoid of touching upon a huge and endless transformation of the Ottoman society with modernization in their works.

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