

INFLUENCE OF AHMED MIDHAT EFENDI ON THE FORMATION OF FATMA
ALIYE'S INTELLECTUAL WORLD

by

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Submitted to the Institute of Social
Sciences in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Sabancı University

March 2017

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ALIYE'S INTELLECTUAL WORLD**

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DATE OF APPROVAL: 24.03.2017



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ABSTRACT

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Turkish Studies M.A. Thesis, March, 2017

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Keywords: Ottoman Muslim Women, Woman and Literature, Fatma Aliye, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, 19th Century Ottoman Empire, Tanzimat

Fatma Aliye was the only woman accepted and became a popular voice in the Ottoman Empire in context of the Ottoman modernization, a period when change was loved and frowned upon at the same time. The fact that she was accepted and popular in the literary scene, which is completely predominated by men at the time, is not a coincidence. Hence the expression "accepted" is used to introduce Fatma Aliye. Popularity was not something easy to achieve; best selling authors in Istanbul were all males at the time. Therefore, the influence of the name who wrote, sold and influenced the era the most, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, and the analysis of Fatma Aliye's relationship with him is the essential route we must take in this analysis. His intimate connection with Fatma Aliye, as evidenced by their choice of being the spiritual daughter (*manevi kız*) and spiritual father (*manevi baba*) of each other is an indication of this inseparable connection.

ÖZET

FATMA ALİYE'NİN ENTELEKTÜEL DÜNYASININ OLUŞUMUNDA AHMED MİDHAT EFENDİ'NİN TESİRİ

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Türkiye Çalışmaları Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Mart 2017

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Yusuf Hakan Erdem

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Müslüman Kadınları, Kadın ve Edebiyat, Fatma Aliye, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, 19. yy'da Osmanlı Devleti, Tanzimat

Fatma Aliye değişimin hem arzu edilip hem de burun kıvrıldığı Osmanlı modernleşmesi safhasında, kabul görmüş ve son derece popüler ilk Osmanlı kadın yazardır. Tamamen erkek egemen bir edebiyat dünyasında tek popüler kadın ses oluşunun bir tesadüf olması fikri imkansız görünmektedir ki bu "kabul görmüş" tabirini kullanmamızın ana sebebidir. Popülarite de küçümsenecek bir kavram değildir çünkü popüler yazarlar da yine erkeklerdir. Bu sebeple en çok yazan, satan ve okunan yazar Ahmed Midhat Efendi ve Fatma Aliye ile olan ilişkisi bir analize ihtiyaç duymaktadır, bu yazının takip ettiği yol da budur. Ahmed Midhat ve Fatma Aliye'nin ebedî bağları ki kendilerinin birbirlerini manevi kız ve manevi baba görmeleri ile niyet edilmiştir, aralarındaki kopmaz bağın bir göstergesidir.

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INTRODUCTION

Fatma Aliye is one of the few female writers of the Tanzimat period, which makes her also an important woman in the Ottoman Modernization process. She was a “woman” of the Tanzimat period, ceasing to produce literary works after 1908, the Second Constitutional Period. Ahmed Midhat Efendi was a very important figure in Fatma Aliye’s intellectual development, exchanging letters with her, mentoring and supervising, and even creating boundaries for her. Despite all this, Fatma Aliye went beyond Ahmed Midhat’s control, and gained some individuality. The focal point of this thesis is the influence of Ahmed Midhat over Fatma Aliye as a father figure, in the light of the letters exchanged between them. The individuality and subjectivity of Fatma Aliye is going to be discussed, which will be beneficial to understand the spectrum of Ahmed Midhat’s influence and its limits.

Jale Parla, in her book, *Babalar ve Oğullar (Fathers and Sons)*, claims that authors of Tanzimat period were after a lost father, and during this period, father-son relationships emerged as a continuity relationship rather than a conflict relationship. Parla calls writers of this period as authoritarian children who had to undertake guardianship over themselves in search of a lost father.¹ One of the greatest representatives of intellectuals in this period was Ahmed Midhat who felt like reestablishing the fatigued father authority. Midhat Efendi was not inclined only to be the father of Beşir Fuad (1852-1887) but also the father of all female writers of the period. Fatma Aliye was one of the most known figures of these female writers. While Midhat Efendi addressed her as ‘my daughter’, Fatma Aliye in return called him “my father” and “my master” (*Üstâdım*).

Parla, while describing Midhat Efendi’s generation, shows Islam as the source of the authority that these writers depended upon. She asserts that the Ottoman modernization movement was based on the world view of Islam and the East with their moral and cultural dimensions. The most important supporter of this opinion, the Sultan, refers the father in the family.²

However, the major question that should be asked here is that “which Islam?”, which is still often asked. In Midhat Efendi’s letters to Fatma Aliye, his approach to Islam and

¹ Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993).

² Ibid.

assessments towards Islamic law vary in some respects. For example, he says “we are not Ebussuud’s grandchildren, are we?”³ which asserts that he was not as orthodox as he might be thought of. In another letter, he wrote that Quran needs a new legal interpretation.⁴ Undoubtedly, Fatma Aliye’s Islamic women were different from perspective of previous generations. Just like her “master”, Fatma Aliye approached various issues related to women’s rights with a historical understanding of Islam. It is quite clear that this point of view is related to modernity. Fatma Aliye also stands together with Midhat Efendi, whom she considered mainly as her master and for whom she accepted to be his spiritual daughter (*Manevi Evlad*). It is possible to clearly see that Fatma Aliye laid her intellectual foundations starting with her own father Ahmed Cevdet Paşa and continuing with Ahmed Midhat Efendi. In her work, *Nisvan-ı Islam* (Women of Islam), she discussed Islam just like her master from a similar point of view. Fatma Aliye’s Muslim women were outside Gazzali and Birgivi’s doctrine, namely their life purpose was not in service of their husbands and domestic activities. By frequently giving examples from history and “*Asr-ı Saadet*” that is regarded as the “Golden Age” of Islam, she attributed foundations of ‘modern, educated, working Muslim woman’ to Islam. However, here Islam emerged as a basis for authority, namely a new tool.

As can be seen from letters used in this thesis, Ahmed Midhat Efendi continued to write in accordance with government authority. In his teacher-student, father-daughter relationship established with Fatma Aliye Hanım, Ahmed Midhat Efendi used means of authority that Louis Althusser defined as ideological tools of government. Althusser indicated in his ideological apparatuses of the State Theory that, in order to maintain its existence, the source of authority should use ideological apparatuses defined as the religious ISA (ideological state apparatus), the educational ISA, the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA, the communications ISA and the cultural ISA. According to Althusser, there can only be one tool of pressure by the State or source of authority, but there are many ideological apparatuses.⁵

Note: All the English translations from Turkish in this thesis are the work of the author of this thesis unless otherwise indicated.

³ “*Bizler dahi Ebussuud’un torunları değiliz â?*”

Fatma Samime İnceoğlu and Zeynep Süslü Berktaş (Eds), *Fazıl ve Feylesof Kızım Fatma Aliye’ye Mektuplar* (İstanbul: Klasik, 2011), 381.

⁴ *Ibid.*,178.

⁵ Louis Althusser, *İdeoloji ve Devletin İdeolojik Aygıtları*, translated by Alp Tümertekin, (İstanbul: İthaki, 2003), 63-64

During the last period of the Ottoman Empire, many novelties were implemented compatible with the developments in the West. Government policies intensified in the fields of family, education, culture, press-release area. Here, it is possible to see ideas of Ahmed Midhat Efendi, who had an important role in the training of Fatma Aliye as an intellectual woman trained during the late Ottoman period, on how he wrote with state discourse using ideological tools of the State including the fields of family, culture, education, communication and on how to train Aliye within these boundaries. Ahmed Midhat emerged as the ‘intellectual’ figure of this period.

A separate problem that emerges is that Ahmed Midhat was mentioned as being ‘an intellectual’. Hilmi Ziya Ülken mentions about the existence of two types of intellectuals while describing intellectual typology. The first one can be called determinist intellectuals and the second one libertarian intellectuals.⁶ While determinist intellectuals produce political/social theories that can meet social needs of the period; liberal intellectuals make an effort to produce political/social theories at universal scale independently from the period they live in.⁷ Although Ülken did not directly divide intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire as determinist and libertarian intellectuals, he evaluated that the deterministic category was dominant among Ottoman intellectuals. Ülken also indicates that philosophical discussions emerging in the West were approached artificially by the Ottoman intellectuals in general.⁸ Although Ülken indicates that he considers Ahmed Midhat one of the leading thinkers and authors in the Ottoman Empire,⁹ it is possible to consider Ahmed Midhat in the category of determinist intellectuals. As will be described in the following pages of this study, the following lines by Ülken used for describing Ahmed Midhat can help us understand the position of Ahmed Midhat as ‘an intellectual’: “He used to stand up for discipline against anarchy in thought, moralism against realism in literature and oppression against liberty. During the reign of Abdulhamid II, Ahmed Midhat had a significant role in terms of spreading this new vision that prevailed among educational social circles.”¹⁰ While defining ‘hesitant modernist intellectuals’ including Ahmed Midhat, Ülken

⁶ Evren Altınkaş, “The Uniqueness of the Ottoman Modernization: Intellectuals”, *International Journal of History*, 3/3 (2011).

⁷ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Ülken Yayınları, 1994).

⁸ Evren Altınkaş, “The Uniqueness of the Ottoman Modernization: Intellectuals”, *International Journal of History*, 3/3 (2011), 39.

⁹ Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Ülken Yayınları, 1994), 112.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

mentions that these people were stuck between tradition and modernity.¹¹ Having been punished with exile when he clashed with state authority, Ahmed Midhat did not continue to clash with authority and instead tried to carry the ideological approaches of the state to the public. It was thus he was defined as an ‘intellectual’ or author.

Antonio Gramsci’s theory related to the role of intellectuals in society and their effects is also important in understanding Ahmed Midhat’s connection with state authority and his effort to include Fatma Aliye, whom he called ‘my spiritual daughter’ into this authority. Gramsci claims that modern intellectuals are organizers who help to build society and produce hegemony through ideological apparatuses such as education and media.¹² According to Foucault, individuals are always tools of the authority. The government uses individuals as a passage way. Individuals are not outside or against the government. Individuals are the impact and also a tool of the government. The government maintains itself in particular through intellectuals.¹³

Ahmed Midhat Efendi produced literature in a manner consistent with the state to ‘train the society as desired’ or in other words to ensure ‘correct westernization’ with his literary works during the process of shaping intellectual and cultural world of the Ottoman Empire prior to 1908. He also guided writers, who grew up under its auspices, as a figure of authority. It can be seen that Ahmed Midhat was consistent with Gramsci’s theory, indicating that the duty of intellectuals is to guide and educate.¹⁴ By considering Ahmed Midhat within this context, his teacher-student relationship with Fatma Aliye will be examined in this study.

In this study, as specified earlier, the first type of source of authority will be further discussed. In other words, the focus will be on modernizing authority by basing its constitutionalism on religion and tradition. Here, in addition to pragmatic manifestation of religious principles, it is mentioned how the dynamics of modernity are discussed in historical Islamic understanding. In the study, letters between Ahmed Midhat Efendi and his “spiritual daughter” Fatma Aliye are used as a primary source. Fatma Aliye (1862-1936), Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s eldest daughter, is one of the significant female

¹¹ Ibid., 217.

¹² Antonio Gramsci, *Aydınlar ve Toplum*, trans. V. Günyol, F. Edgü and B. Onaran, (İstanbul: Örnek Yayınları, 1983).

¹³ Michel Foucault, *Power and Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972- 1977*, trans. by Colin Gordon, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

¹⁴ David Forgacs, *Gramsci Kitabı Seçme Yazılar 1916-1935*, trans. İbrahim Yıldız, (İstanbul: Dipnot Yayınları, 2012).

writers of the period. She belonged to one of the upper-class families of that time, was quite fluent in French and followed Western sources closely, but also attributed her identity to Islam. Fatma Aliye as the author of the book *Nisvan-i-Islam* is also a reflection of the ‘women’s role model’ of an Islam-based understanding of modernity during the period between the Tanzimat and the 1908 Revolution. An exhibition of her works was featured at the Chicago Book Fair during the reign of Abdulhamid II. She entered the life of literature under the supervision of Ahmed Midhat Efendi, who was among the first writers producing Western style literary works, appeared as the “father” figure of the period and was deeply loyal to the Sultan during the second period of his life in exile. He also affirmed that Fatma Aliye was a role model for the Ottoman Muslim female authors during this period. The fact that Fatma Aliye did not have any problems with the Sultan’s authority, that she was also protected by an important representative of the period, namely Ahmed Midhat Efendi, can all be given as proof of her thought and literature she produced accordingly. Transcription of correspondence between these two during 1890-1912, namely for twenty-two years, was conducted by F. Samime İnceoğlu and Zeynep Süslü Berктаş. The clear majority of transcribed letters were written by Ahmed Midhat Efendi, there are also letters as a fulcrum of this research, written by Fatma Aliye and verifying that she was a student of Ahmed Midhat Efendi under whose supervision she entered the realm of literature. While discussing letters in this sense, it is possible to observe reflections of parallel thoughts between Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Fatma Aliye because of guidance by Ahmed Midhat Efendi, particularly in Fatma Aliye’s work, *Nisvan-ı Islam* that is used as another primary source in this study. In addition to this work, novels written by Fatma Aliye were also studied, and her works are addressed in the study despite the fact that they were not included separately.

The aim of this thesis is to better understand the author, Fatma Aliye, who had an important place in the Ottoman Muslim Women’s Movement within the context of the Ottoman modernization. While trying to understand Fatma Aliye, it will also be possible to see foundations of Women’s Movement prior to 1908 and the place of Islam was during this process. The aim here is to correctly place Fatma Aliye in the historical context while giving information about her family which had a great importance in her life. Then, by giving information about Women’s Movement in Ottoman modernization, an attempt will be made towards understanding the level of women’s rights and freedom

during this period and understanding how much Fatma Aliye was a pioneer in this movement, or was a part of it rather than being a pioneer. In the final section, in consideration of letters taken as the main source of the work, “an intellectual anatomy” will be tried to be established in axis of Fatma Aliye’s relationship with Ahmed Midhat.

Consequently, Fatma Aliye, emerging as “daughter of a father” represents the role model of the Ottoman Muslim woman in pre-1908 generation. Fatma Aliye’s emphasis on the rights of women is identified based on non-conflicting relationship with the Sultan as the biggest representation of authority and Ahmed Midhat Efendi as the other authority in this period. However, it has been observed that Fatma Aliye was in variance with her spiritual father, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, regarding some points that were considered inappropriate for a woman. Undoubtedly, these breakthroughs were instances when Fatma Aliye gained her deep subjectivity.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

Following the “Feminist Wave” rising in the 1970s women’s experiences in social sciences became more visible. Fundamentally androcentric perspective and sexist perspective in both natural sciences and social sciences began to be questioned.¹⁵ The emergence of the Social History also coincides with this period. Among sub-branches of social history, history of the family, gender history and women’s history studies increased after 1970s and especially towards 1980s. Number of gynocentric studies in Turkey, on the other hand, increased in parallel with developments in the world in 1980s and 1990s. The biggest proof of this is the increasing number of the master and PhD theses written in the field of women’s studies, especially since 2000s, that can be accessed in the database of Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Regarding Women’s Studies, studies conducted in Turkey focused on women with an upper class and educated background. To evaluate these studies more accurately, educational issues should be considered one of the most important factors that increases visibility of women in the public sphere and development in literary life of the period. It will be an appropriate entry to be able to understand studies related to Fatma Aliye who is a focal point of this research and to consider a short history of women’s studies to have an adequate frame. It would be a meaningful discussion topic that an important personality such as Fatma Aliye showed herself abruptly within and outside academic literature in mid-2000s despite the fact that women’s studies were rising in Turkey during 1980s. The fact that Fatma Aliye was not discussed in history discipline except literature department theses that constituted the majority of studies conducted on Fatma Aliye will be evaluated separately. Before analyzing who Fatma Aliye is, her inclusion in literary production was affected from not only the implementation of printing capitalism during the period but also mentorship by Midhat Efendi who was one of the most important representatives of the Ottoman Muslim community. Another issue was the incredible increase in women’s education during the period of Fatma Aliye. This subject will be discussed in detail in upcoming sections of the study. While Fatma Aliye’s period and her education in accordance with conditions of the period is another subject

¹⁵ Serpil Çakır, *Farklı Feminizmler Açısından Kadın: Kadın Araştırmalarında Yöntem* (İstanbul, Sel Yayıncılık, 2000), 7.

to be considered, it will be beneficial to briefly look at these points since majority of studies conducted on Ottoman women's rights focused on women's education in the Ottoman Empire. Finally, after considering answers given to the question of Fatma Aliye's identity by referring the studies conducted on Fatma Aliye, the benefit from letters between Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Fatma Aliye as the main source of the study will be assessed in terms of understanding Fatma Aliye and Ahmed Midhat Efendi will be evaluated.

1.1 Ottoman Women's Movement and 'Print Capitalism'¹⁶

According to media historian S.H. Steinberg, the invention of the printing press resulted in radical changes in political, religious, economic and social events, but also had significant effects on fields of literature and philosophy.¹⁷ Elizabeth Eisenstein also indicates that the printing press had an almost 'divine power' that mobilized modern history.¹⁸ However, this divine power has a strong effect only with capitalism. Benedict Anderson suggested that the transformative effect of printing office could not emerge in the absence of modernity coming with capitalism, he explained that China did not achieve an effect similar to Europe despite the existence of printing office.¹⁹

Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar shows Ibrahim Müteferrika as the manifest of westernization in the Ottoman Empire who was famous with the introduction of printing press.²⁰ Being one of researchers who depicted increasing literary productions in the Ottoman Empire with westernization, Jale Baysal indicated that the number of books published annually was 40 following the Tanzimat period and this rate increased to 160 during 1869-1875.²¹ Sultan Abdulhamid II was aware of the power of printing press. Being aware of the increasing growing influence of the media, Abdulhamid II tried to keep journalists under control and applied censorship to prevent revolutionary ideas reaching the public

¹⁶ A term coined by Benedict Anderson. "Print capitalism" is a theory underlying the concept of a nation, as a group that forms an imaginary community that emerges with a common language, discourse generated from the use of the printing press and proliferated by a capitalist marketplace. Capitalist entrepreneurs printed their books and media in the vernacular (instead of exclusive script languages, such as Latin) in order to maximize circulation. As a result, readers speaking various local dialects were now able to understand each other, and a common discourse emerged. Anderson argued that the first European nation-states were thus formed around their national printing-languages.

¹⁷ Sigfrid Henry Steinberg, *Historical Tables*, (London: Macmillan, 1939), IX-X.

¹⁸ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1991), 44.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁰ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Çağlayan Kitapevi, 1988), 46.

²¹ Jale Baysal, *Müteferrika'dan Birinci Meşrutiyete Kadar Osmanlı Türkleri'nin Bastıkları Kitaplar*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1968), 79.

through the press.²² Printing offices were also under strict control. However, despite the censorship, there was a great increase in the number of printing office and publication.²³

It can be said that modernization and westernization specified above also resulted in the increase in number of books in the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century, namely those that problematized and discussed traditional gender norms. Among authors of these publications were both female and male individuals from Muslim and non-Muslim regions of the empire. Irvin Cemil Schick states that press capitalism is a very strong conductor in spreading of new gender roles in the Ottoman society.²⁴ Ayşegül Utku Günaydın also draws attention to the increase in the number of publications during 1839-1876, especially after the 1860s. Günaydın addresses studies conducted towards inclusion of woman in social life again within the framework of domestic borders, common among almost all Tanzimat period authors. In line with this, Günaydın underlines the fact that developing press also paved the way for the authors to create works in the field of novels.²⁵

In Ottoman Women's Movement discussions, the emphasis was mainly on the changes in women's place in Ottoman society. In this context, a determining role was attributed to Westernization. The focus was on women such as Fatma Aliye, Halide Edip, Nezihe Muhiddin who could follow new ideas from the West thanks to their education and foreign language knowledge.²⁶ The main reason for focusing on these women was the written sources left by them. In Schick's book, *On Islam, Gender and Culture*, Schick explains visibility of woman in literature with the rise of press capitalism that began after the Tanzimat and continued with a big acceleration following the Constitutional Monarchy. According to Schick, as publishing was fueled by new ideas, it also gave an opportunity to spread these ideas and also to affect large masses that had not been possible before.²⁷ Analyzing the literary production during the period from 1876 to 1928, Schick touches upon books that mention women's sexuality. He also argues that

²² Esther Debus, *Sebilürreşad: Kemalizm Öncesi ve Sonrası Dönemdeki İslamcı Muhalefete Dair Karşılaştırmalı Bir Araştırma*, translated by Atilla Dirim, (İstanbul: Libra), 21.

²³ Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Türkiye'de Matbaa Basın ve Yayın*, (İstanbul: Literatur Yayıncılık), 95-96.

²⁴ Irvin Cemil Schick, *Bedeni Toplumu Kainatı Yazmak* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 267.

²⁵ Ayşegül Utku Günaydın, *Cumhuriyet Öncesi Kadın Yazarların Romanlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet Ve Kimlik Sorunsalı (1877-1923)*, (Ankara: Bilkent University, Ph.D. Thesis, 2012), 1-5.

²⁶ Irvin Cemil Schick, *Bedeni Toplumu Kainatı Yazmak: İslam, Cinsiyet ve Kültür Üzerine*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 219.

²⁷ Ibid., 219-220.

increasing literary works especially after the Second Constitutional Era contributed to the establishment of an environment in which woman sexuality was discussed.²⁸

Considering the literary production by Fatma Aliye, there have been studies that focused on Fatma Aliye's works ranging from translations to novel, from novel to historical and philosophy books. These studies concentrated on Fatma Aliye's contribution to the world of letters. The main theme of these studies focused on the production of women authors in the form of "Analysis on Woman in Tanzimat Period Novels" as far as Fatma Aliye and other female writers of the period were concerned. Furthermore, not only works of female writers but also works of male writers who committed themselves towards the education of women were discussed in the framework of literature discipline.

While monogamy and love marriages were praised in publications after Tanzimat, polygamy and arranged marriages were condemned in these publications.²⁹ Detailed information will be provided in the section named *A Brief Summary of Women's Rights in the Ottoman Empire*, regarding the burst of publications during the period from Tanzimat to the Second Constitutional Era and women in these works. Also, in studies conducted on Fatma Aliye and female writers of the period, the main theme focused on subjects such as monogamy, women's education, women's self-development in domestic works, in materials produced via press and literature. To understand women's movement during the process from Tanzimat to the Constitutional Monarchy, the issue of press capitalism in the Ottoman Empire mentioned by Shick is to be considered to evaluate Ottoman women's rights.

1.2 Women's Movement and Education in the Ottoman Empire

Many applications were implemented towards making women more visible in social life after Tanzimat, and the leading one among these applications was schools built by the empire to promote women's education and to include women in public sphere. Ekrem Işın, in his book, *Istanbul'da Gündelik Hayat (Daily Life in Istanbul)*, mentions that, in the 19th century, even girls who graduated from local schools but could not continue "Girls' High School" (*İnas Rüşdiyesi*) were apprenticed with the female masters who were known as people of honor (*ehl-i namus*) in Muslim neighborhoods that may be

²⁸ Ibid., 215-269.

²⁹ Ibid., 220.

traditional education centers. In this way, Işın claims, women learned practical knowledge of everyday life. The objective here may firstly seem like educating skillful housewives, but in fact, it should not be forgotten that qualified masters were also trained.³⁰

Serpil Çakır suggests that state policies, and opinions and demands to put forward on societal basis are important regarding the Ottoman women's education. Çakır addresses to discussions on the woman theme in *Women's World Magazine (Kadınlar Dünyası Dergisi)*.³¹ Underlying the fact that Women's World Magazine was a guide for women regarding women's education, she also addresses increasing women's schools and changing education system together with dynamics of the period.³²

More descriptive information about Ottoman women's training will be given in the following chapters. Here, the issue to be considered is the necessity to establish a more concrete historical context while trying to figure out women who took active role in the Ottoman Women's Movement. One of the most decisive points of this fact includes understanding importance given to women's education and how education was approached by the Ottoman State. Thus, it is necessary to mention that romantic approaches were avoided while assessing female writers and intellectuals of the period, such as identifying every or any woman who wrote about women as feminist in a caricaturized way.

1.3 Perceptions on Fatma Aliye's Personality

Considering the press capitalism that started after Tanzimat and improvements in the women's education and before answering who Fatma Aliye is, we should ask why research on Fatma Aliye began in the mid-2000s. Fatma Aliye, long forgotten by history and literature, began to be known with dramatic adjectives such as "the most important, the first" starting from the beginning of 2000s. Certainly, the major factor for this fact is the increase in the importance towards women studies with developments in understanding of social history as specified early in this study. However, another problem is how a person like Fatma Aliye, who used to be considered worthy of attributions such as "role model Muslim women writer", as pro-women's right or

³⁰ Ekrem Işın, *İstanbulda Gündelik Hayat*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 108-109.

³¹ Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1994), 225.

³² *Ibid.*, 219-224.

Islamic feminist” began to be considered mostly after the 2000s and became the first woman to be printed on official Turkish Republic banknotes. The records show that Fatma Aliye was born in 1862 and died in 1936. 80 years have passed since her passing away. Daughter of an important statesman, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Fatma Aliye was a member of a leading elite family and a woman who produced literary texts and newspaper articles. She made literary productions during the reign of Abdulhamid II, and witnessed the Revolution of 1908 and the proclamation of the Republic. Thus, she witnessed a very important transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, and she wrote her experiences both intellectually and physically in her novels and newspaper articles. As a result, it is a subject emerging quite late, but such an important personality should be further studied with a view to understand the historical context of the period. It will not be an exaggerated claim to say that there was the influence of ideology-based approaches far from popular and scientific basis lying behind this outcome.

At the beginning of the 2000s, studies have been presented towards the fact that Fatma Aliye’s perspective on women’s rights had an Islamic basis. Another argument conducted about Fatma Aliye is that she is the greatest representative of the Ottoman women’s rights movement. Together with the idea that Fatma Aliye was the first female author in the Ottoman Empire, however, as a result of studies conducted by Zehra Toska, it has been proved that the first woman writer was not Fatma Aliye, but Zafer Hanım. Although Zafer Hanım did not produce multiple works and was the authoress of only one work, still Fatma Aliye is shown as the first woman writer, a rush began to portray Fatma Aliye as the most significant representative of the Ottoman feminism or the biggest breaking or turning point in Ottoman search of women’s rights. Also, majority of studies addressing Fatma Aliye and her works were in the form of understanding her literary personality and the place of her works in the Turkish literature. It can be fair to say that studies conducted mainly focus on Fatma Aliye’s works. It is because Fatma Aliye’s works of literature are documents she left behind. However, in these studies, not enough emphasis has been given to the historical context, Fatma Aliye’s social class and her relationships with leading characters of the period due to her class. In this case, the answer to the question who Fatma Aliye is has become more difficult to answer.

1.3.1 Fatma Aliye as a Conservative and Islamist Woman vs. Fatma Aliye as an Ottoman Feminist Writer

One of the well-known studies arguing that Fatma Aliye was extremely devoted to traditions and her approach to women's rights was completely Islamic-based was Fatma Karabiyık Barbarosođlu's work which includes fictional parts, *Fatma Aliye, Uzak Ülke*. At the beginning of this work, Barbarosođlu says:

“To Fatma Aliye... 96 years ago, Ahmed Midhat Efendi presented your life recorded on lines as the most beautiful gift by saying ‘this book is you’. As a gift to the 70th anniversary of your passing, this time, I, your humble servant, present you ‘you’ and ‘us’ to your presence. Please accept.”³³

Barbarosođlu summarizes the situation that will be explained. Referring to Fatma Aliye as ‘my spiritual daughter’, Midhat Efendi's biography of Fatma Aliye was a beginning. Main outlines of this study consist of intellectual similarities between Fatma Aliye and her spiritual father, Midhat Efendi, shown by Fatma Aliye as the biggest factor in her entry into the world of literature, who tried to guide her intellectually. It is a fact that Fatma Aliye was pleased with this guidance, but she sometimes had objections. However, before that, the most significant problem is the way to discuss Fatma Aliye and her period. Barbarosođlu, while recounting Fatma Aliye in the work dedicated to Fatma Aliye, remarks that she narrates a community in which she included ‘us’, thereby also including her at the beginning of the book. So, who is ‘us’? While referring to which ‘us’, in fact, the main objective is Fatma Aliye or which community is aspired to be explained while talking about Fatma Aliye. The author, after presentation of the book, says “I looked for Fatma Aliye. She, as a religious woman, looked for a place for the Ottoman woman in contemporary civilizations.” But in fact, as specified at the beginning of book, this is not just a story of searching for Fatma Aliye, this work is also adventure of the community that the author included herself as “us”, it is even the form of self-search and historical reasoning by “us”. The writer evaluates Fatma Aliye's refusal to write after The Alphabet Reform as her reaction to this reform. However, this is a claim that cannot go beyond speculation, and there are not any documents on this issue. Barbarosođlu's work, *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke (Fatma Aliye: The Distant Country)*, is a fictional text, although it bears some biographical features as she declared. Although this work is fictional, it is quite noteworthy that the writer indicated as searching “us” in the search for Fatma Aliye at the beginning of book. The most

³³ Fatma Karabiyık Barbarosođlu, *Fatma Aliye: Uzak Ülke* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2007).

basic starting point of studies conducted on Fatma Aliye, namely searching for “us”, starts an adventure for searching us based on an assumption without enough consideration of who Fatma Aliye is, and of her period, status and intellectual world. However, this adventure could not help us understand both Fatma Aliye and general historical conditions of the period.

One of the significant academic studies suggesting that Fatma Aliye’s approach towards women’s problems in the Ottoman Empire was Islamic is by Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye Hanım’ın Romanlarında Kadın Sorunu (Women Issue in Fatma Aliye’s Novels)* (2005). Canbaz argues that Fatma Aliye was a quite important figure in terms of being the first Muslim Turkish female novelist who discussed “women’s issues” in the Ottoman Empire. Basic parts of the study consist of literary production of Fatma Aliye, especially her novels such as *Muhâdarât* (1892), *Refet* (1896), *Udî* (1898), *Levâ-yih-i Hayât* (1898), and *Enîn* (1910). Canbaz says that it would be a superficial perspective to call Fatma Aliye a feminist author when evaluated in accordance with her works. Therefore, Canbaz concludes that Fatma Aliye should be identified as a conservative Muslim authoress. This is due to the facts that her suggestions to women’s problems in her novels were based on Islam.³⁴

Rabia Dilara Zengin, who chose Fatma Aliye’s life and ideas as the subject of her thesis, included Aliye in her articles while trying to understand Aliye’s world of thought. Zengin expressed that Aliye was aware of the feminist movement but was against it.³⁵ In her thesis, Zengin draws strongly the fact that Aliye’s approach to women’s rights was Islamic-based. However, there are two main issues to be considered here. The first one is the question of “which Islam?”, debated even today, and the second one is the definition of conservatism. Before considering problem of “which Islam?”, it would be beneficial to think about conservatism. If Fatma Aliye is evaluated with her works and within the framework of her correspondence with her master, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, such a conservatism suggested by Canbaz is not found. This is because even her father, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, appears as a person who was modernist and supported Western reforms in the Ottoman Empire when examined in the light of this period. In addition, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, whom Fatma Aliye accepted as a father,

³⁴ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye Hanım’ın Romanlarında Kadın Sorunu*, (Ankara: Bilkent University, Ph.D. Thesis, 2005).

³⁵ Rabia Dilara Zengin, *Fatma Aliye Hanım’ın Fikri Dünyası*, (İstanbul: Fatih University, 2013), 47.

was a pioneer in the implementation of Western genres in Turkish literature and he closely followed scientific and literary developments in the West. As a person who believed in women's education during Ottoman modernization, who emphasized individualization of women in her novels and who supported monogamy, calling Fatma Aliye a conservative personality may result in ignoring the development that had started before the Tanzimat and that had been ongoing during and after the Tanzimat and the Constitutional Era. Moreover, it will be difficult to identify a woman who knew French as conservative, because she could follow ideas and developments in the West while being a woman who came from the upper class and who had "Western" tools to express herself. For this reason, trying to identify the personality of Fatma Aliye only by literary text is not sufficient for a correct way of evaluation on Fatma Aliye. In addition to her literary production, it will be an important step to make more accurate statements if Fatma Aliye is evaluated within the historical context of her period.

Before mentioning the argument that Fatma Aliye's solutions towards women's issues were based on Islam, it has already been stated above the necessity to discuss the type of Islam in this approach. First, it is necessary to underline that Fatma Aliye was the daughter of an upper-class Ottoman Muslim family. Considering the period and class status, it is quite understandable that a woman shows Islam as center/focal point for her ideas. Indeed, in 1899, Mahmud Esad in his book, *Taaddüd-i Zevcat-* argues polygamy and dwells upon application of polygamy in Islam. Despite rejecting polygamy directly, Fatma Aliye prefers to refute Esad's opinions in the form of answers to him. As also pointed out by Schick, it would be very difficult for Fatma Aliye to clearly reject polygamy while polygamy was allowed in the Quran.³⁶ In this case, it will be an appropriate determination to say that Fatma Aliye used Islam to express her opinions. That is because Fatma Aliye did not directly deal with Islam alone in her works. Instead, she regarded Islam as a central source in her search for Ottoman women's rights.

When Fatma Aliye's works are evaluated together with the developments in the women's movements during this period, a contention emerges regarding how much accurate it will be to call Fatma Aliye as the first feminist writer. One must consider the elements that would put Fatma Aliye in a privileged place from other writers of her

³⁶ Irvin Cemil Schick, *Bedeni Toplumu Kainatı Yazmak: İslam, Cinsiyet ve Kültür Üzerine*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 236.

period, from Midhat Efendi and Şemseddin Sami when asked what makes Fatma Aliye a feminist writer. For Zihnioğlu, if an intellectual and imperative action under the name of Ottoman Feminism, Fatma Aliye is the most important thinker of this formation.³⁷ Zihnioğlu specifies that the emergence of woman identity as “self” in Fatma Aliye’s novels is quite important, which partly comes from the fact that Fatma Aliye was the first known Muslim woman novelist.

Claiming that Fatma Aliye experienced the tension between her efforts at modernization and protecting the traditionalism at a certain level during the Tanmizat period, Nüket Esen explains that Aliye’s work, *Levayih-i Hayat*, included stories of rebel, powerful and go-getter women.³⁸ Besides, Bihter Dereli considers Aliye as an advocate of women’s rights in her study in which she examines Fatma Aliye’s *Levayih-i Hayat*.³⁹ In the study conducted on Fatma Aliye’s letter-novel type work, *Levayih-i Hayat*, in which women’s problems were discussed over women’s education, Dereli indicated that Aliye mentioned women’s issues by using two-way discussions with the help of possibility of this genre.⁴⁰ Bihter thinks that letter-novel genre allowed Fatma Aliye to narrate outside male narrator authority in a period when male narrators or male writers dominated the field of narration.⁴¹

According to Hülya Argunşah who suggested that Aliye produced texts with two different approaches, Aliye wrote her theoretical thoughts in her articles and addressed in the novel any issues that she wanted to apply in practical life.⁴² In addition to Argunşah’s distinction of theoretical and practical writing, Nüket Esen refers to an ambivalent state in Aliye’s works. According to Esen, while Aliye discussed women’s issues in a more traditional basis in her *Nisvan-ı Islam* and many other articles, she managed to be more anomalous under the umbrella of fictional world, namely in her novels. Esen says that there were two different Fatma Aliyes: The first one is the protesting, and the other one is a subservient Fatma Aliye.⁴³

³⁷ Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003), 44.

³⁸ Nüket Esen, Nüket Esen, “Bir Osmanlı Kadın Yazarın Doğuşu”, *Journal of Turkish Studies- Türklük Bilgisi*

³⁹ Bihter Dereli, *Epistolary Novel and Women Writers: Fatma Aliye, Halide Edip Adivar and Şükûfe Nihal Başar*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2010)

⁴⁰ Bihter Dereli, *Epistolary Novel and Women Writers: Fatma Aliye, Halide Edip Adivar and Şükûfe Nihal Başar*, (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2010), 43.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴² Hülya Argunşah, *Kadın ve Edebiyat: Babasının Kızı Olmak*, (İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2016), 278.

⁴³ Nüket Esen, *Modern Türk Edebiyatı Üzerine Okumalar*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2012), 117.

Melin Has-Er in her book, *Tanzimat Devri Türk Romanında Kadın Kahramanlar* (Women Characters in Tanzimat Period Turkish Novel), in which she examined writers of the Tanzimat period, only included Fatma Aliye among women writers of this period. Esen mentions that Aliye's heroines gave details of harem life different from heroes and they discussed different aspects of women's social lives.⁴⁴ Has-Er claims that, with a huge impact on Turkish literature, Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu*⁴⁵ was inspired by Aliye's work, *Muhâdarât*.⁴⁶ Has-Er suggests that conflict and gossip among these women, problems with stepmothers and governesses in Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu* were already discussed in Aliye's novels for the first time.⁴⁷ Furthermore, according to Has-Er, although Aliye had feminist opinions, she had difficulty expressing her feminist opinions freely. The reason for this was that Aliye was Cevdet Paşa's daughter and married to Faik Paşa.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Has-Er suggests Aliye's intellectual world was open to modernization and she was an Ottoman woman writer who believed in Turkish-Islamic values.⁴⁹

Zafer Toprak, author of the book, *Women's Freedom and Feminism in Turkey (1908-1935)* (*Türkiye'de Kadın Özgürlüğü ve Feminizm (1908-1935)*), underlines that Aliye also served for social services in addition to her writing career in Ottoman society. Toprak indicates that Aliye founded *Cemiyet-i İmdadiyye* that was known as the first women's community in the Second Constitutional Period.⁵⁰ In his book discussing women's movement in Turkey after 1908, Toprak did not detail Aliye's authorship side but mentioned only about her social service works.

As shown in Toprak's study, Aliye was not shown as a powerful voice in Ottoman women's movement after 1908. Toprak demonstrated within his study that Aliye was a writer and thinker of the period before 1908.

⁴⁴ Melin Has-Er, *Tanzimat Devri Türk Romanında Kadın Kahramanlar*, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını, 2000), 401.

⁴⁵ First serialized in the magazine *Servet-i Fünun* (1897-1898), *Aşk-ı Memnu*, was considered as a major turning point in the development of Turkish novel and considered among classics of the Turkish literature. Due to successful use of Western novel techniques, *Aşk-ı Memnu* was considered as a turning point technically in the Turkish Literature by literary historians.

⁴⁶ Melin Has-Er, *Tanzimat Devri Türk Romanında Kadın Kahramanlar*, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını, 2000), 401.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Melin Has-Er, *Tanzimat Devri Türk Romanında Kadın Kahramanlar*, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayını, 2000), 401.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Kadın Özgürlüğü ve Feminizm (1908-1935)*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015), 19.

It is possible to say that two main arguments arise in studies focused on Aliye. According to the first argument, Aliye based her ideas related to women's rights on Islam. Despite being aware of the feminist movement, Aliye did not directly mention feminism. Another main argument is that Aliye supported her thoughts with feminism, but she implicitly expressed these due to the social class she belonged to. There is an argument in the literature that Aliye was a woman 'pushing the boundaries' in a man's world due to the reasons such as being Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's daughter, entering the world of literature under mentoring of Ahmed Midhat.

In this study, the aim is to determine class position of Aliye and to understand Aliye's class position, her relationships with her father, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, her mother, Advıye, her brother, Ali Sedat, her sister, Emine Semiye and her husband, Faik Paşa. Besides, the literature Aliye produced will be used to understand her world of thought. In addition, by addressing women's rights, education and the press developing during the period after Tanzimat, cultural developments of Fatma Aliye's period will be explained. The aim of this chapter is to understand more accurately in what kind of an environment Fatma Aliye started writing. Finally, correspondences between Fatma Aliye and Ahmed Midhat as the basic premise of this thesis will be examined to explain Ahmed Midhat's role in Fatma Aliye's world of thought. As an organic intellectual, Ahmed Midhat was a writer who dedicated himself to educate society accordingly via tools, such as media and training, which the State used as tools of spreading its ideological apparatus. It can be seen from Ahmed Midhat's letters that he wanted to educate and guide Fatma Aliye as 'an ideal Muslim Ottoman woman' by establishing a moral authority over her. Fatma Aliye stated that she was pleased to enter the world of literature surrounded by men under the mentoring of Ahmed Midhat.⁵¹ However, this does not mean that Fatma Aliye always produced literary and intellectual works as demanded by Ahmed Midhat.

Understanding the progress of the relationship between Ahmed Midhat and Fatma Aliye is important for putting Fatma Aliye in a correct place in the history. This study will discuss the relationship between Fatma Aliye, who was considered as a woman writer with significant place in the Turkish Literature, and Ahmed Midhat, who was considered one of the most important writers of the Tanzimat period and who showed himself as a father figure in society. Another point which makes this thesis important is

⁵¹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 36-38.

the lack of studies directly focusing on this subject within the framework of history discipline in literature.

1.4 Methodology

Considering Fatma Aliye and subjects of women's rights in the period, the first referenced resources were Fatma Aliye's novels and articles. In this study, Fatma Aliye's novels were used as the most important sources in understanding her intellectual world in greater depth. Although the relationship between literature and history has led to long-term discussions among both men of letters and historians, novels result in more colorful and concrete thinking about any period. In addition, they also give clues about the period.⁵² According to Halim Kara, this results from the fact that historical novelists regard the history they fictionalize as a tool to reflect social, political and cultural problems of the period.⁵³ In addition, although literature does not provide information about a period directly, fictional universe created by men of letters allows historian to imagine the subject livelier and more colorfully.

In this study, each work by Fatma Aliye was examined with a view to understand her intellectual world and to establish correct analysis of the period, especially *Nisvan-ı İslam*. However, the main thesis of study constituted from correspondence between Fatma Aliye and Midhat. When these letters and Fatma Aliye's works were evaluated together, the outcome in a historical sense resulted in stepping further to reach the truth searched by a historian. While embodying world of the period by fictional texts, issues mentioned by Fatma Aliye at the beginning of her works and characters she creates were all important in terms of understanding the period and seeing Fatma Aliye's intellectual world. Moreover, in letters between Fatma Aliye and Midhat Efendi, it is possible to witness how Fatma Aliye as an Ottoman Muslim woman was raised by Midhat Efendi, a "father figure" who raised "children" without discriminating between man and woman in his period. This guidance was not only towards intellectual development, but also it could be seen that Fatma Aliye was under the control or influence of Midhat Efendi in her literary works or articles. Although objection against "father" occurred from time to time, in general, it is possible to see that Fatma Aliye needed Midhat Efendi's guidance and she made use of these guidances.

⁵² Halim Kara, *Edebiyatın Omzundaki Melek: Edebiyatın Tarihle İlişkisi Üzerine Yazılar*, Edited by Belce Ünüvar, Compiled by Zeynep Uysal, (İstanbul: İletisim, 2011) 337.

⁵³ Ibid., 337.

Letters allowed enlightenment of Fatma Aliye and Midhat Efendi's opinions on various topics and their lives. It is possible, for instance, to observe that Fatma Aliye had a poetic side, which did not gain currency so far, and was not approved by Midhat Efendi. Considering whom they were in contact with in their period and current political framework of the era, letters also allowed to understand where they positioned themselves. In addition, thanks to these letters, it is possible to witness that Fatma Aliye had a wide range of writing adventure including philosophy, history, and literature. It is also important to note that in this adventure of writing, Midhat Efendi seems to have protected Fatma Aliye as her father and mentored her in almost every subject.

Letters begin with Fatma Aliye's translation of Ohnet's *Volonte* under the name of *Meram*. The latest letter was about three months before Midhat Efendi's passing away on September 16, 1912. It is observed that letters focused between 1893 and 1896, and this period is when Fatma Aliye's literary production is the most prolific.

Although Midhat Efendi's letters outnumber Fatma Aliye's letters, Fatma Aliye's writings are sufficient from the point of showing the structure of her relationship with Midhat Efendi. Moreover, Midhat Efendi's writing in a response to Fatma Aliye also shows what Fatma Aliye wrote, whether she interfered with Midhat Efendi on mentioned issues or whether their ideas overlapped or not.

Therefore, it can be put forth that in contrast to other studies conducted on Fatma Aliye, Fatma Aliye's correspondence with Midhat Efendi was used as the main source. In addition to this, Fatma Aliye's books, especially *Nisvan-ı Islam*, was included. Thus, the relationship of Fatma Aliye with Midhat Efendi was documented. It was observed how Midhat Efendi, "The Father" of the era, made the definition of the Ottoman Muslim women regarding Fatma Aliye within the women's movement in a period from the Tanzimat to the 1908 Revolution. In this way, it is possible to conclude how woman was discussed in the way from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic and that each period had its own effort to create "role model woman".

CHAPTER 2

FATMA ALIYE'S IMMEDIATE VICINITY: FAMILY

Fatma Aliye was born on October 9, 1862 to Advıye Hanım and Ahmed Cevdet Paşa from Lovech, who supervised the preparation of the *Mecelle* and published *Islamic Law* in a book with a profound language.⁵⁴ Just like Fatma Aliye, her brother, Ali Sedat, and her sister, Emine Semiye, were also the leading figures of the Ottoman intellectual community.

Fatma Aliye's father, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, who had a very important place in Fatma Aliye's intellectual development, was born in Lovech, today in Bulgaria. Osman Keskiöglü mentions that Ahmed Cevdet started his education firstly by taking Arabic lessons from Hafız Ömer in Lovech. Then at the age of 17, Ahmed Cevdet came to Istanbul and attended courses such as Fiqh, Kalam, and Hadith from traditional education curriculum of the period in the Fatih Medresseh. He attended courses which had great importance in the Western curriculum including philosophy, mathematics, geometry, nature sciences, astronomy and geography outside the Medresseh. Ahmed Cevdet took lessons from key figures of the period including Sheikh Mehmed Murad from Murad Mullah Tekke, Poet Süleyman Fehim, Müneccimbashi Osman Saib and Nuri Bey.⁵⁵ Besides, Ahmed Cevdet also received "icazet" (certificate) from Birgivi Hoca Şakir Efendi.⁵⁶ Şeyhülislâm Arif Hikmet Bey (1786-1859) was a person who was in favor of the implementation of European science and technique. Hikmet Bey supported Ahmed Cevdet Paşa for his intelligence and information at such a young age.⁵⁷ As Ahmed Cevdet received a good education and was acquainted with Eastern Sciences, as much as Western Sciences, he was noticed by Mustafa Reşid Paşa, one of the most important figures of the Tanzimat period. In the words of Cevdet Paşa, Mustafa Reşid Paşa was a statesman who had the idea of regulating the state according to the new European state style with the public press education and the spread of education.⁵⁸ Cevdet Paşa met with Ali and Fuat Paşas through Reşid Paşa, and he

⁵⁴ Osman Keskiöglü, "Ahmed Cevdet Paşa Hayatı ve Eserleri (1822-1895)," *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 14 (1) (1966).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ "Ahmed Cevdet Paşa," *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, accessed December 24, 2016, <http://www.diyanetislamansiklopedisi.com/ahmed-cevdet-pasa/>.

⁵⁷ Ahmed Zeki İzgöer, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa* (İstanbul: Şule Yayınları, 1999) 20-21.

⁵⁸ Kemal Beydilli, "Mustafa Reşid Paşa (1800-1858)," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi* 31, 348.

benefited from their knowledge in the field of diplomacy.⁵⁹ Reşid Paşa had an important place in the formation of Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's world view and his rise in state services since Cevdet Paşa entered under protection of Reşid Paşa at an early age. Reşid Paşa was not only an important statesman of the Tanzimat period but also an important figure in the formation of a new "intellectual type". The new type of intellectuals took the example of the West with the Tanzimat, believed in reason, nature and human will and did not give place to superstitions in their lives. The new intellectuals demanded social order to be based on the law rather than force. They regarded working and assistance as a high value.⁶⁰ The fact that Mustafa Reşid Paşa took part in these views as a Tanzimat intellectual also influenced the development of Ahmed Cevdet as an intellectual. Indeed, according to Mehmet Kaplan, the new intellectual type originated from Mustafa Reşid manifested itself also in Cevdet and Ahmed Midhat.⁶¹ However, Fatma Aliye observed that this new type of intellectuals began to receive very serious criticism later on. In Fatma Aliye's work, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve Zamanı*, which she wrote to defend initially her father, she expressed that, being one of the most important figures of the Tanzimat, Reşid Paşa's progressive ideas were not be understood by the conservatist of the period and expressed her regret regarding the fact that these people were interpreted as atheist. Fatma Aliye emphasized in her work that her father should not be understood as such.⁶²

Among the most important works by Ahmed Cevdet were *History of Cevdet Paşa*, *Stories of Prophets*, *Memoirs of Cevdet Paşa*, *Maruzat*, *Mecelle*, *Grammar of Ottoman Language*, *Ottoman Literature*. One of the most important works by Ahmed Cevdet was the translation of *İbn-i Haldun's Mukaddime*. In addition to the history discipline, Cevdet conducted studies in the field of law. *Mecelle-i Ahkam-ı Adliye* was compiled by a commission under the chairmanship of Cevdet Paşa during 1868-1876. *Mecelle* was a product of effort to establish an analytic and positive judicial system that was built on the Fiqh tradition but also arranged in substances. We must not forget that *Mecelle* was

⁵⁹ Ahmed Zeki İzgöer, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa* (İstanbul: Şule Yayınları, 1999) 21.

⁶⁰ Mehmet Kaplan, *Türk Edebiyatı Üzerine Araştırmalar 3: Tip Tahlilleri* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2014), 168.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 160-168.

⁶² Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve Zamanı* (İstanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1995), 56.

an ecclesiastical work and Western ideas had a profound effect in its formation and its form of substances.⁶³

Tanpınar, in his Monograph, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, assert that a large part of works conducted in the country from 1850 to 1895 were his works.⁶⁴ Suggesting ideas in many fields such as history, jurisprudence, language and philosophy, Cevdet Paşa's works were filled with materials that reflect his intellectual world. Cevdet Paşa had an important place in the intellectual development of his daughter, Fatma Aliye. His history writing and works in the field of law were important sources to understand his intellectual world.

Cristoph K. Neumann, in his pieces on Ahmed Cevdet, says that he was not a positivist thinker or a secular person, but not an "Islamist" either.⁶⁵ Cevdet Paşa was a Muslim in his position who produced thoughts on how to cope with challenges in the Ottoman Empire. That is because, in his book, *Tezaker and Maruzat*, Cevdet Paşa defined "we" as an Islamic nation.⁶⁶ On the other hand, Ahmed Cevdet did not attribute any importance on conditions in his book, *Tarih*. In his narratives, Cevdet Paşa did not think mostly about how convenient the subject was to the ecclesiastic law. In fact, he argued in one of the annotations of *Mukaddime* in a rather naive attitude that Islam was in harmony with criteria of the philosophy unlike Christianity.⁶⁷ According to Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Muslims were the true people of the Ottoman Empire, but while suggesting these, we can neither say that he defended directly the idea of Ottomanism nor interpret his words as the beginning of Turkish-Islamic nationalism. In addition, Neumann asserts that Ahmed Cevdet was one of the most important figures who adopted the principles of the Tanzimat and who thought over these ideas.⁶⁸ Ahmed Cevdet considered the policies of the Tanzimat as an extension of both the initial reformist attempts, efforts of Abdulhamid I and further attempts by Selim III and Mahmud II. Thus, he presented the Tanzimat as a part of the Ottoman tradition. As a result, according to Neumann, just like Ahmed Cevdet showed in his work, *Tarih*, he was one of the most important defenders of the progressive Islamic modernism, which

⁶³ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1823 - 1895) Vefatının 100. Yılına Armağan* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997), 283.

⁶⁴ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), 165.

⁶⁵ Christ K. Neumann, *Arac Tarih Amaç Tanzimat* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000). 208-210.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 210

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 213

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 216

was also supported by intellectuals such as Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Cemaleddin el-Afgani who were all different from each other and who did not agree on many issues.⁶⁹ Fazlur Rahman, while recounting people who had the modernist understanding of Islam, defined these people as those who considered the necessity of the regulation of some Islamic institutions in the face of rise and progress in the West. Fazlur Rahman expanded his definition by referring to people who attempted to implement general educational reforms and to implement philosophical and scientific disciplines by reviewing curriculum programs in the institutions of learning but who base these ideals on Islamic foundations. He showed Cemaleddin Afgani as the most important representative among these intellectuals.⁷⁰ The conclusion from the civilization concept that Ahmed Cevdet revealed in which the Islamic culture was dominant factor of education, from his success in political and administrative areas and from his works in various fields was that he believed in the renewal of traditions.⁷¹

In such development of Ahmed Cevdet's ideas, it was effective that Ahmed Cevdet was in the immediate vicinity of Mustafa Reşid Paşa, who was known as the initiator of reforms in the Ottoman Empire. Cevdet's acquaintance with ideas of Westernization as a person close to this environment also indicates that he created a synthesis with his former Islamic education. Included in discussions related to the civilization during the Tanzimat period, Ahmed Cevdet was among decision-makers directing the state. According to him, changes should be implemented by maintaining the tradition. Also, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, who introduced himself as the spiritual father and mentor of Cevdet Paşa's daughter Fatma Aliye, had the idea of "progress". This did not mean the complete imitation of the Western civilization. Tanpınar says on this approach continuing openly in Ahmed Cevdet's daughter, Fatma Aliye: 'He admires Europe like his period and was a modernist. He believes in progress. In contrast, he wants that this progress be implemented within the Islamic religion. He insists on the protection of customs and traditions.'⁷²

Zeki İzgöer, in his studies on Ahmed Cevdet, argues that Ahmed Cevdet Paşa even made his definition of civilization over the combination of Sultanate and the State. In

⁶⁹ Ibid., 146

⁷⁰ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

⁷¹ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1823 - 1895) Vefatının 100. Yılına Armağan* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997), 77.

⁷² Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), 165.

fact, İzgöer identifies Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's definition of the civilization as organized societies at a level of state and Sultanate.⁷³

Although it is clearly seen from expressions and ideas mentioned so far that each field and institution was dominated by religion and Islam in Ahmed Cevdet's ideas. He did this in a pragmatic way as specified by Neumann. Ahmed Cevdet was an important person who could see developments of the era, to analyse over these developments and to create new alternatives. Not considering Islam as an obstacle to the progress, Ahmed Cevdet criticized those who adhered tightly to the old and objected against innovations with expressions such as bigot etc.⁷⁴ For him, it was necessary to develop institutions for different conditions that civilizations experienced. Similarly, Ümit Meriç mentions that conservativeness for him arose from his respect for values of the past while he was open to European civilization values.⁷⁵

It is very important to understand Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's intellectual world and intellectual position in his period who had an important place in Fatma Aliye's world of thoughts. Because it is possible to clearly observe from Fatma Aliye's letters and her correspondence with Midhat Efendi that Fatma Aliye bore many resemblances with Ahmed Cevdet Paşa in an intellectual way. Interestingly, the tombstone of Fatma Aliye has the words "father's daughter" written on, which may imply how she was received by others. Erich Fromm in his book, *Art of Loving*, puts the father to a pole and the mother to another pole in an individual's existence, and says: 'Father is the other pole of existence despite showing the natural world: the universe of thoughts, human relations, law, order, discipline and adventures.'⁷⁶ Understanding the father, Ahmed Cevdet who had a great influence in Fatma Aliye's intellectual world is an important step to explain Fatma Aliye defined as a daughter.

Following the role of intellectual and worldly relationship with the father, Erich Fromm defines the other relationship established with the mother as the world, house and uterus. In Fromm's perspective, while the father corresponds to the outer world and its theme, in contrast, the mother corresponds to inner emotions, what is intimate and

⁷³ Ahmed Zeki İzgöer, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa* (İstanbul: Şule Yayınları, 1999), 58-59.

⁷⁴ Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964), 165-169.

⁷⁵ Ümit Meriç, *Cevdet Paşa'nın Cemiyet ve Devlet Görüşü* (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınevi, 1975), 161.

⁷⁶ Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving* (London: Thorsons, 1957), 30-32.

superior love.⁷⁷ In Fatma Aliye's life, the role of mother was related to abstract inner world rather than the outer world, namely concrete sides of a person just like in Fromm's theory. Just for this reason, information about Fatma Aliye's mother are limited in not only in Fatma Aliye's articles and books but also her letters, since Fatma Aliye narrated the relationship with the outer world rather than her inner world in her articles and novels. While the mother represents the intimate love, the father represents self-realization. For this reason, while the name, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, is seen frequently in correspondence between Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Fatma Aliye, it is not possible to find anything about Fatma Aliye's mother, Adviye Rabia. As specified by Judith Tucker in her article, *Motherhood in Islamic Law*, according to child-rearing understandings of mufti and courts, the mother was in a position of caring and raising and the father was in a position of guiding and supporting. In the same article, Tucker mentions that mother and father were divided into different periods in child's development. The mother was responsible for the early childhood years and the father was responsible for teenage years, however there was not a strict limitation.⁷⁸ In parallel with this approach and when considered together with Fromm's theory, Fatma Aliye's relationship with her mother is recorded as a domestic impact on Fatma Aliye's early childhood in the field of literature. Our knowledge on the mother is limited with letters and lines from Ahmed Midhat Efendi's book about Fatma Aliye's life.

With regard to Adviye's marriage to Ahmed Cevdet in 1856, we learn from the biographic work by Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım Yahut Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti*, in which Fatma Aliye's life was narrated, that Adviye Hanım was a woman who could not spare time for her children and who spent all her time with managing housework and hosting guests because she was married to an important statesman, Ahmed Cevdet.⁷⁹ Ahmed Cihan defines Adviye Hanım and his family as a dynastic family model living in a large mansion rather than a small family model with three children.⁸⁰ From letters written by Ahmed Cevdet Paşa to his wife, Adviye Hanım, it is possible to infer that the family did not only consist of parents and children

⁷⁷ Ibid., 30-39.

⁷⁸ Judith Tucker, *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, edited by Mandeline C. Zilfi, (Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1997) 247.

⁷⁹ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım Yahut Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayıncılık, 1994), 23.

⁸⁰ Ahmed Cihan, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa'nın Aile Mektupları* (İstanbul: Gökkuşbu Yayınları, 2007), 45-48.

but there were also people from close relatives regardless of summer or winter.⁸¹ In this case, it seems quite normal that Advıye Hanım could not spare time directly for her children when the conditions of this period are considered for such type of families.

However, although Advıye Hanım did not spare time for her children sufficiently, she was again the one who noticed that Fatma Aliye learned how to read at an early age and who supported her daughter in terms of education.⁸² Fatma Aliye's mother was proud of her daughter's education. Advıye Hanım made Fatma Aliye write her own private letters and, in words of Ahmed Midhat Efendi's statement, she saw her daughter as her secretary.⁸³ On the other hand, according to historian Mübeccel Kızıltan who conducted studies on Fatma Aliye's life, Advıye Hanım was also a conservative who considered Fatma Aliye's learning French equal to religious conversion.⁸⁴ Although our knowledge on Advıye Hanım is limited between the lines, it is possible to suggest that she was not only a woman who cared for education of girls and supported them, but also a mother who did not give up some traditional and stereotyped thoughts. Fatma Aliye's elder brother, Ali Sedat (1857-1900) and her sister, Emine Semiye (1864-1944) were also intellectuals of the period.

Knowledge about the brother, Ali Sedat, is available in Ahmed Midhat Efendi's book, *Fatma Aliye Hanım Yahut Bir Muharrıre-i Osmaniye'nin*, related to Fatma Aliye's life and in correspondence between Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Fatma Aliye. Apart from these, the most important source related to Ali Sedat is *Mizan'ül Ukûl fi'l-mantık ve'l-Usûl (Scale of Minds in Logic and Methodology)* a logic book written by him. He was the first one who examined logic studies in the West and introduced it to the Ottoman Empire. He introduced algebraic logic, but he thought that this logic was insufficient, its field was narrow and its future was not good. For this reason, he defended a sense of classical logic based on metaphysics.⁸⁵ In the introduction section of *Mizan-ül Ukul*, Ali Sedat expresses his effort to reconcile the old and the new with following words: "I have read the logic to the finest detail that is valid today in Europe, the center of science

⁸¹ Ibid., 45-48.

⁸² Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım Yahut Bir Muharrıre-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayıncılık, 2016), 33.

⁸³ Ibid., 38.

⁸⁴ Mübeccel Kızıltan, *Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yaşamı, Sanatı, Yapıtları; ve, Nisvan-ı İslam* (İstanbul: Mutlu Yayıncılık, 1993), 13.

⁸⁵ Necati Öner, *Felsefe Yolunda Düşünenler*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1995), 145.

and industry, and I have compared it with our logic.”⁸⁶ With a good knowledge of the history of logic and having developed a methodical approach in this respect, Ali Sedat had information about logic philosophy of Aristotle, Boolean and Stanley Jevons, as well. In becoming one of the leading logic philosophers of the period, Ali Sedat’s father, Cevdet Paşa, was a great influence by having the best knowledge on the classical logic in the Ottoman Empire.⁸⁷

Although a special interest was given to Ali Sedat’s education within Ahmed Cevdet Paşa’s mansion⁸⁸, today Ali Sedat is not known as much as his sisters, Fatma Aliye and Emine Semiye. We understand from the following statements by Ahmed Midhat Efendi that Ali Sedat supported Fatma Aliye from her early childhood: “Ali Sedat was fascinated from the fact that his sister, Fatma Aliye, had learned to read at an early age, and he wanted help from Fatma Aliye to place his books, then in return for her help, he used to present Fatma Aliye with newspapers and magazines.”⁸⁹ However, this admiration was sometimes replaced with jealousy. Likewise, Ali Sedat opposed her correspondence with Ahmed Midhat Efendi, because such a correspondence by a woman with a man without any blood relationship or marriage was not suitable for traditional values of the Ottoman society.⁹⁰ Ali Sedat regarded this correspondence as a situation in which family secrets were revealed and which was not suitable for Islamic morals. In this way, it is possible to suggest that a Muslim woman writer was attempted to be limited within the Ottoman society.

Ahmed Midhat protects Fatma Aliye, whom he considered his spiritual daughter, against people trying to create boundaries and he gave her morale. He claimed letters that had been sent with “Ayn and Sin” signature to make it look like written by Ali Sedat did not actually belong to Ali Sedat, Midhat Efendi supported Aliye in writing.

“Think of it, my daughter! Remember that the (Ayn Sin) signature indicates the signature of the name, Ali Sedat. We tried to figure out who this (Ayn Sin) belongs to. They said he was Ali Suad. Why they changed the name, they considered as Sedat, to Suad? Because Sedat will thunder and they will make themselves embarrassing! However, the name Ali Suad is an alias. (...) Do you notice? This post is entirely because they are jealous of your *Volente* translation. They are jealous of the fact that a woman has achieved in such achievement for which they are

⁸⁶ Necati Öner, *Tanzimat’tan Sonra Türkiye’de İlim ve Mantık Anlayışı*, (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1967), 55.

⁸⁷ Necati Öner, *Felsefe Yolunda Düşünenler*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1995), 145-165.

⁸⁸ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım Yahut Bir Muharrire-i Osmaniye’nin Neşeti*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2016), 32.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 38.

⁹⁰ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, XI.

insufficient. Are not these men the cause for our sadness, failure and idleness? In another country, if a woman utters a few words, she is probably valued even when she is wrong. We, on the other hand, are trying to intimidate the women.”⁹¹

Thus, Ahmed Midhat Efendi criticized male dominant literature environment attitude based on their jealousy, and he protected Fatma Aliye in the face of this situation.

Ali Sedat also appeared as an Ottoman intellectual who admired the development of Europe in science and technology and at the same time who adhered to conservative values just like his father, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa.

Fatma Aliye’s younger sister, Emine Semiye, was one of the pioneers of the women’s movement in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire. She made a name for herself with her literary works, newspaper articles, and activities in the social and political fields during her life but who was then forgotten. Semiye lived a life that offered so many materials to historians in terms of understanding political and social activities of the period with her articles on various subjects. As an example, it can be given that she wrote about women’s and children’s problems during her career as a literary figure and a teacher in different regions of the Ottoman Empire-and then the Republic of Turkey.

Born during the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz, Emine Semiye was one of female writers in Turkey who lived through reigns of Murat V, Abdulhamid II, Mehmet Reşad and Mehmed VI and who witnessed Autocracy, Constitutional Monarchy and Republic, and even the period of Reforms.⁹² Only the fact that Semiye witnessed these processes is quite important to understand the Ottoman Women’s Movement and the development and transformation of women’s rights during the period from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. Emine Semiye was always left one step behind Fatma Aliye, and she is still not known as much as her elder sister, Fatma Aliye, both in her period and today.

Although Emine Semiye’s approach to women’s rights is at a closer point to the thoughts of her sister, Fatma Aliye, they were separated in some points that were considered very important for their period. Just like her elder sister, she believed in the myth of Golden Age (*Asr-ı Saadet*) and she entered effort of finding a basis for women’s rights by putting this thought to the center. For Emine Semiye, Islam had not banned women from entering trade and agriculture, and joining the war to assist

⁹¹ Ibid., 32-33

⁹² Kadriye Kaymaz, *Gölgedeki Kalem Emine Semiye Bir Osmanlı Kadın Yazarının Düşünce Dünyası*, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2009), VII.

soldiers, and women had lived freely.⁹³ Emine Semiye did not tend towards history and religion courses as much as her sister, she advanced in literature and fine arts.⁹⁴

At the same time, Emine Semiye was one of the most active woman members of Committee Union and Progress (CUP). We do not have enough resources and studies on Emine Semiye's life; there were rumors about her visit to Paris and her relationship with her husband from some correspondences in her period. In Emine Semiye's letters, while she specified that she went to Paris due to her illness, there were rumours about the fact that she was scared of going to jail and escaped to Paris for this reason.⁹⁵ Kadriye Kaymaz, who has made significant contributions to research on Emine Semiye, suggests that Semiye was a member of CUP and she was in Serres due to the task of her husband for four years, during this period, while she was teaching girls in her own house, she was also one of the members of CUP organization.⁹⁶ With regard to Emine's membership in CUP, Güldal Okuducu also mentions that Emine was involved in activities to encourage Muslim women to participate in a conference that was arranged for Jewish Women in Salonica for CUP and to break their hesitation.⁹⁷ Besides, Bernard Caporal includes Emine Semiye to the group which he described as invisible and loyal messengers of CUP and even suggests that Emine Semiye was the leader of Salonica Women's Revolution Committee.⁹⁸ Besides, İnci Enginün, in her article in which she discusses Aliye, also mentions Aliye's sister, Emine Semiye. Enginün drew attention as the most noticeable feature of Emine Semiye to the fact that Emine was interested in political events and was a member of CUP.⁹⁹

As can be seen, Emine Semiye was among the leading figures of Ottoman Women's Rights like her sister, Fatma Aliye, and she was separated from her sister in terms of approach to issues at some important points. In fact, although Emine Semiye participated more actively in terms of women's rights activism than Fatma Aliye, her

⁹³ Ibid., 63.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁹⁵ Sema Ok, *İTC'nin Yeminsiz Kadınları*, (İstanbul: Destek Yayınevi, 2012), 33.

⁹⁶ Kadriye Kaymaz, *Gölgedeki Kalem Emine Semiye Bir Osmanlı Kadın Yazarının Düşünce Dünyası*, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2009), 29.

⁹⁷ Güldal Okuducu, *Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Türk Kadının Kısa Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014), 171.

⁹⁸ Bernard Caporal, *Kemalizmde ve Kemalizm Sonrasında Türk Kadını*, (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 1982), 152.

⁹⁹ İnci Enginün, *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı: Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e (1839- 1923)*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2014), 278.

name was not quoted as much as her sister. This might be because she did not fit ‘the role model Muslim Ottoman woman’ profile as much as Fatma Aliye.

Another important name in the life of Fatma Aliye, without a doubt, was her husband, Faik Paşa. Ahmed Midhat Efendi mentioned that Fatma Aliye did not want to get married but she married to Faik Paşa since she had to perform ‘one of the most sacred tasks of humanity as a mandatory rule’.¹⁰⁰ Praising Fatma Aliye with her knowledge and etiquette, Ahmed Midhat Efendi openly says that Faik Paşa was not a suitable husband to Fatma Aliye in this sense. Midhat Efendi said that there was unrest in the family since Faik Paşa did not reach Fatma Aliye’s level in terms of philosophy and literature. In fact, when Faik Paşa, who boasted with his knowledge in French, realized that Fatma Aliye’s French knowledge was better, he decided to take lessons from a leading French scholar, İlyas Matar, but he did not fulfill his desire.¹⁰¹

As Ahmed Midhat quoted, Faik Paşa first objected when he saw a book in Aliye’s hands, and he did not want Aliye to work with novels.¹⁰² Midhat Efendi narrated this objection as follows:

“For example, when Faik Paşa saw novels in the hands of her wife for the first time, he objected and started talking of the dangers of reading these books for an honorable Muslim woman. He even attempts to tear them off. this was not suitable for Fatma Aliye’s assesment, she was not courageous to respond due to the fact that she considered herself obliged to respect her husband alongside respecting her father, and the novels were removed.”¹⁰³

Faik Paşa was sent to Konya due to his duty. Faik Paşa changed his ideas over time although previously he had not approved of women’s novel-writing.¹⁰⁴ In Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s book, *Fatma Aliye Hanım Yahut Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniyenin Neşeti* (*Lady Fatma Aliye or Birth of an Ottoman Author*), there were not only Mithat’s writings about Aliye but also information about Aliye’s personal life, her social circles and process of writing. Related to the support by Faik Paşa’s wife regarding Aliye’s writing, Aliye inserted that:

¹⁰⁰ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yahut Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniyenin Neşeti*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayıncılık, 2016), 75.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 76.

¹⁰² Ibid., 75.

¹⁰³ “Mesela Faik Paşa zevcesinin elinde ilk defa olarak roman kitaplarını görünce itiraza kalkışıp bir muhaddere için bunların mütalaasındaki mehalikten bahsetmeye başlamış. Onları yırtıp atmaya kadar bile davranmış. Bu hâl Aliye Hanımefendi’nin mütalaasına muvafık düşmemekteyse de pederden sonra zevcine hürmet ve itaatle kendisini mükellef bilmesinden dolayı mukabeleye de mütecasir olmayarak romanlar ortadan kaldırılmış.” Ibid., 75, 76.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 77.

“I read George Ohnet’s *Volente* three years after After Faik Paşa arrived in Konya. I liked this novel very much. I fell into enthusiasm to translate this novel. One day, we were sitting. I told my husband, ‘Oh, what if I translated this novel’. He replied, ‘Come on, translate it then’. ‘Will you allow me to publish it?’ I said. He said, ‘Of course’. I was very happy. With such enthusiasm, I started translations quickly.”¹⁰⁵

In the same page, it was expressed that not only Faik Paşa but also her father Ahmed Cevdet supported Aliye for writing. Fatma Aliye described her father’s support in her writing with following words:

“... One day, my father entered the room to say something to his son-in-law. He asked what were articles in the middle of room. His son-in-law said that I was translating a novel. I began to get excited. My father said, ‘let me see your writings’. He took papers and took them to his room. After a while, he came back to our room and said: ‘Oh, what good writings these are!’ This daughter could write in such quality and I have never known! How could you hide your success you so far?”¹⁰⁶

As described by Fatma Aliye herself, both her husband, Faik Paşa, and her father, Ahmed Cevdet Paşa supported her in writing.

To understand Fatma Aliye more correctly, it is important to know the members of her family who had a central place in the Ottoman society and whose heritage continued in an intellectual sense in the history of the Republic. The type of family structure Fatma Aliye had meant that her personal relationships with family members and sometimes supportive and sometimes restrictive approaches of these members are also important in terms of understanding the period of Fatma Aliye.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 78.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 78.

CHAPTER 3

FATMA ALİYE

Fatma Aliye was one of the important names among Ottoman woman writers who achieved much, such as being the first woman translator known in the history of the Ottoman Empire, the first woman novelist who systematically addressed women's problems, the first female member of *Hilal-i Ahmer Society*, the first woman who founded a charity in the modern sense, and the first woman whose biography was written considering her life important¹⁰⁷.

One of the most important sources on Fatma Aliye's life was Ahmed Midhat Efendi's study written as a biography, *Fatma Ali Bir Osmanlı Kadın Yazarın Doğuşu (Fatma Aliye, Birth of an Ottoman Woman Writer)*. In his biographical work, Ahmed Midhat Efendi mentioned about Fatma Aliye's early childhood years. We learn from the book that her family went to Aleppo due to her father's duty and then returned to Istanbul where she was born.¹⁰⁸ Midhat Efendi mentioned that Fatma Aliye spent most of her time in "male" section in the house during her stay in Aleppo, and she had a close friendship with Süleyman Agha who was her father's coffee maker. Ahmed Midhat Efendi described that the main reason for this friendship was that Süleyman Agha answered Fatma Aliye's questions tirelessly.¹⁰⁹ Midhat Efendi mentioned as "an ideal child" by saying that Fatma Aliye did not like playing games different from her peers during her childhood and she read books in her spare time.¹¹⁰ However, throughout this biography, Midhat Efendi consciously or unconsciously described Fatma Aliye as masculine. Important names in Fatma Aliye's life always emerged as men. In his biography, even pages devoted to Fatma Aliye's brother, Ali Sedat, were different in volume compared to pages devoted to her sister, Semiye. However, Fatma Aliye was a serious, tough, smart kid, and her teenage years were at the same direction. A masculine exemplary can also be observed in female characters that Fatma Aliye created in her novels. One of Fatma Aliye's characters, Refet, was a great example of this situation who wanted to build a personal life rather than working to get married by considering herself ugly. Similarly, beauty and domestic lives of women who were shown as an

¹⁰⁷ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye'nin Eserlerinde Kadın Sorunu*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), 33.

¹⁰⁸ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yahut Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayıncılık, 2016), 26.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

example or an ideal were not touched upon; their struggle to take an individual place in the social life was demonstrated. Such struggle generally occurred in the form of encounter with men or the men's world. Midhat Efendi's narration of Fatma Aliye as an ideal woman was also similar to ideal woman characterisations in Fatma Aliye's novels.

Midhat Efendi's writing of Fatma Aliye's biography already originated from the fact that Midhat Efendi considered Fatma Aliye as "an ideal woman" for the Ottoman society. Ahmed Midhat Efendi, who called Fatma Aliye "my daughter", also begins the very sentence of his biography with "my spiritual daughter".¹¹¹ Considering Fatma Aliye his daughter, Midhat Efendi gave information about Fatma Aliye's early childhood, adolescence, youth, marriage and her thirties that he defined as maturity. While Ahmed Midhat Efendi praised Fatma Aliye's diligence, wisdom and determination at every opportunity, thus, he presented Fatma Aliye to Ottoman society as "an ideal Muslim woman writer".

As much as we learn from what Ahmed Midhat Efendi provides, the ideal woman Fatma Aliye attended Hoca Mustafa's *Mahrec-i Eklam (Language School)* courses given to Ali Sedat, and Hoca Mustafa gave Fatma Aliye *Dürr-i Yekta*, which was a type of catechism well accepted according to Hanafi fiqh and which was taught as a coursebook in Rüşdiye Mektebi (Secondary School). Impact of Mustafa Efendi on Fatma Aliye's early education was significant. He took the initiative to clear Fatma Aliye's ideas contradictory to Hanafi fiqh and to support her progress accordingly. Fatma Aliye also took Grammar and Astronomy courses from Mustafa Efendi.

Fatma Aliye learned French from İlyas Matar known as the best French tutor of the period, which was one of the most important skills that allowed Fatma Aliye to come to the forefront in the Ottoman intellectual community. She took French courses from İlyas Matar from the age of 10 to 13. Foreign language learning for daughters of upper class families during Fatma Aliye's period was not an acceptable case.

According to Ahmed Midhat Efendi's narration in his biographical work, Fatma Aliye had more knowledge than the only woman teacher whose name was not given in this book, different from other male teachers supporting Fatma Aliye and teaching style of the woman teacher was thought to be worthless and unimportant.¹¹² Here, Ahmed

¹¹¹ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yahut Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniyenin Neşeti*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayıncılık, 2016), 15.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 31, 44.

Midhat Efendi expressed how much a woman teacher who had graduated from Teacher Training School with a degree trained Fatma Aliye in his comparison of the teacher's and Fatma Aliye's knowledge with these words: 'This lady was assigned as a teacher to Fatma Aliye to teach her *Emsile and Tuhfe-i Vehbi*. However, there was no consensus between the teacher and the student. Not only did the teacher write as qualified as her student, but also the teacher lacked knowledge of grammar.'¹¹³ It is apparent from the narration above and Midhat Efendi's correspondence that Fatma Aliye used to know better than her female teacher. She was more content when she took courses from male teachers, and the most well-known of them is Ahmed Midhat Efendi himself. Anyway, while talking about Fatma Aliye's life, Midhat Efendi explained that most important names in her life were always male teachers and her father Ahmed Cevdet Paşa. As is known, it can be given as another example that the mother, normally known as first teachers, was not included in Fatma Aliye's development. Indicating that this knowledge of Fatma Aliye was quite beyond this female teacher, Ahmed Midhat Efendi especially expressed that "this woman" was not aware of geology and astronomy which were shown among important positive sciences of the period.¹¹⁴ Thus, Midhat Efendi explained in one sentence both how a female teacher who had graduated from the teacher school of the period with a degree insufficient for Fatma Aliye and how Fatma Aliye was superior to a graduated teacher. Besides, he emphasized the importance of positive sciences. After Fatma Aliye did not get along with İskender Efendi, a teacher whose name was mentioned unlike the woman tutor, was brought to enhance Fatma Aliye's Persian knowledge instead of this nameless woman, Ahmed Midhat Efendi emerged as Fatma Aliye's most precious teacher.¹¹⁵ Ahmed Midhat Efendi said that Fatma Aliye only at the age of 11 had already read all his works written so far and even she memorized parts she liked. Midhat Efendi mentioned that they established a father-daughter close relationship between themselves by taking Ahmed Cevdet's consent. In fact, to make clear and emphasize his place in Fatma Aliye's life, Midhat Efendi wrote the following sentences that he claimed Fatma Aliye said: "Mother-father causes the birth of a living creature. But what makes a person a human and create its spiritual existence is a valuable person who is selected by him/her and who is considered as

¹¹³ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yahut Bir Muharrire-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti*, (Istanbul: Dergah Yayıncılık, 2016), 49.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 50.

pacemaker. We can only call this person spiritual father.”¹¹⁶ By continuing to narrate by Fatma Aliye’s words, Ahmed Midhat Efendi asserted that Ali Sedat was effective in Fatma Aliye’s first encounter with his own books. Ahmed Midhat Efendi wrote that *Letaif-i Rivayat*, *Télémaque* translation, *Hace-i Evvel*, *Hasan Mellah*, *Rakım Efendi*, *Dünyaya İkinci Geliş*, *Kırkambar* were among the first books that Fatma Aliye read. Midhat Efendi emphasized his important place in Fatma Aliye’s life at every turn by indicating that Fatma Aliye was impressed very much by *Kırkambar* among these books, and she had not read such a fantastic book.¹¹⁷

The first work by Fatma Aliye in literary sense was her translation of Georges Ohnet’s work, *Volonte*, under the name, *Meram*, in 1889. With this translation, Fatma Aliye stepped into the Ottoman literary world under the auspices of Ahmed Midhat. She presented the translation not by her name but by the signature, ‘A Lady’. Then, this success shown by *A Lady* was honored with Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s newspaper articles in the *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper. In 1891, *Hayal and Hakikat* novel was published again with the signature of A Lady with Ahmed Midhat. Fatma Aliye wrote the part that was narrated by a woman, and Ahmed Midhat Efendi wrote the part that was narrated by a man. She wrote *Udi* novel in 1899. In this novel, the story of Bedia who made an unhappy marriage was narrated in a very simple language compared to its period. Fatma Aliye’s other novels were *Ref’et*, *Enin*, *Levayih-i Hayat* which discussed subjects emphasizing women's rights such as marriage in the eyes of women, harmony between spouses, the concept of love and affection and the importance of marriage after knowing each other. Fatma Aliye created woman characters with individualization efforts in her novels. In addition to literary works, Fatma Aliye also wrote articles. Fatma Aliye wrote articles related to women’s problems in Women’s Newspapers and she defended women's rights without breaking away from conservative opinions. In her book, *Nisvan-ı Islam*, published in 1892, Fatma Aliye explained the status of the woman in Islam to European women. Creating more modern woman characters in her novels, Fatma Aliye defended old traditions as in her articles.

One of Fatma Aliye’s occupation outside the literary world was charities. She wrote articles in the *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper with a view to support families of soldiers injured in 1897 Ottoman-Greek War: she founded an association named *Nisvan-ı*

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 49-50.

¹¹⁷ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Fatma Aliye Hanım Yahut Bir Muharrire-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti*, (İstanbul: Dergah Yayıncılık, 2016), 64-67.

Osmaniye Charitable Organization. This association was one of the first official women's organizations in the country.¹¹⁸ Fatma Aliye was also the first female member of the *Hilal-i Ahmer (Red Crescent)* Association. In addition, periodicals in which Fatma Aliye published her articles were *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, *Women's Newspaper*, *Ümmet*, *Inkılâb*, *Mahasin*, *Servet-i Fünun*, *Women's World*, *Nüsha-i Fevkalade*.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve Zamanı* was the final work she wrote. In this book, Fatma Aliye depicted political life after the Constitutional Monarchy.

According to what Fatma Aliye's daughter Zübeyde İsmet Faik Topuz (1901-92) said in a letter she wrote to Carter Findley in 1990: "[Fatma Aliye] She did not like imams, priests and rabbis. She had a passion for a freedom that did not yet occur in Turkey at that time. However, strange as it may seem, she was tied to tradition. I think she was under the influence of her father to whom she found herself very close, on the one hand, she was under the influence of Ahmed Midhat."¹²⁰ With these words, Zübeyde emphasized two important names who were effective in Fatma Aliye's intellectual life, and she speculated with the idealization of Fatma Aliye that Fatma Aliye was in another quest despite such limitations. Also, Zübeyde mentioned that Fatma Aliye contained in her thoughts both tradition and modernity which were considered as two "separate" power systems. Here referring to an important point that should be considered while analysing Fatma Aliye's life, Zübeyde asked the question of whether an Islam-based modernist approach might exist, a question which is still discussed today, and she claimed in her speculative approach that there would not be such an Islam-based approach, even so, this would be contradictory. The following lines from Zübeyde's letter to Carter Findley are quite important:

"I never understood how she reconciled loyalty to the tradition, which means established order, with her pioneering thoughts. What she did was not a bit usual. As far as I can tell, she wished that people would change slowly and deeply rather than a rush for revolution to achieve freedom."¹²¹

With these words, Zübeyde said that she could not understand Fatma Aliye who was included in the 19th century Ottoman Muslim Women's movement with a western-oriented understanding, and she found her ideas contradictory. These lines in fact

¹¹⁸ Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Kadın Özgürlüğü ve Feminizm (1908-1935)*, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2015), 19.

¹¹⁹ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye'nin Eserlerinde Kadın Sorunu*, (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010), 178-180.

¹²⁰ Müge Galin, *Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yahut, Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti*, (İstanbul: İsis, 1998), 15.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

emerged as a manifestation of a certain thought. This thought affected non-Western societies particularly the Islamic cultural geography by means of orientalist and colonial men and the feminist discourse that was systematized in the 19th century. The discussion of Muslim woman that started with colonialist and orientalist discourses was carried on by pro-modernization/westernization intellectuals in a short time in Islamic countries. With a quality that would pose an answer to western-centric and orientalist women's rights discussions, Fatma Aliye's *Nisvan-ı Islam* was written precisely in the form of an answer to this thought. When we consider the argument that the West tried to pose its own values on other countries within the development of a common sisterhood progress, Zübeyde's failure in understanding Fatma Aliye would become meaningful. That is because a modern women's rights advocate based on traditional and Islamic system is contradictory according to this point of view given above. However, during the 1980s, Postcolonial Feminists interpreted the thought as a hallucination in which the West put itself in the center and considered itself in a common experience ground with 'others'.

In this way, Postcolonial Feminism that was added to feminist readings with the striking article, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is considered as the beginning of the third feminist wave. One of the deconstructivity theories, Postcolonial Feminism, in this sense, rejects the "common experience" ground that had been expressed by Western Feminists for so long. From this aspect, due to their attempts to remove generally accepted approached in today's world, actually, these theories criticises a common point of view based on western ideas rather than demands of 'other' women or what their places are in terms of women's rights.¹²² When we analyse Fatma Aliye's state of mind and her women's rights demands in the axis of her own historical context and her cultural and social life, it will be correct to consider Fatma Aliye a unique pioneer of 19th century Ottoman Muslim Women's Rights rather than being the founder of a contradictory structure. Since other women's struggle for rights were against not only patriarchal culture but also Eurocentric discourse, other women's search for rights gained a multi-tiered state.¹²³

¹²² Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak," in *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, edited by Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

¹²³ Cherly Mc Ewan, "Postcolonialism, Feminism and Development: Intersections and Dilemmas," *Progress in Development Studies*, 1(2) (2001): 93-111.

3.1 A Short Summary of Fatma Aliye's Works

Fatma Aliye entered the literary world with translated works. *Meram* (1889) was a translation of George Ohnet's novel, *Volonte*, from French to Turkish in summary under the signature of 'A Lady'. Midhat Efendi congratulated Fatma Aliye for this translation. Other works, under the signature of Mütercime-i Meram, were translations of Swiss Scientist Euler's letters to the Princess of Anhalt Dessau including "*Bir Prensesin Tedris-i Ulum*" and "*Ayler'in Prensesine Üçüncü Mektubu*" published in 1890.

Hayal ve Hakikat (1891) was a novel that Fatma Aliye prepared jointly with Ahmed Midhat. Fatma Aliye wrote parts of novel from woman's narrative, and Midhat Efendi wrote parts of novel from man's narrative. In *Hayal and Hakikat* (Dream and Reality), she mentioned that women were prone to hysteria and young girls were disappointed because of passing time with romantic dreams of marriage. In this novel, which aimed at teaching young girls, Ahmed Midhat Efendi indicated in the chapter called "Hysteria" at the end of the novel that Vedat got hysteria that was a women's disease. However, it is observed in Fatma Aliye's novels that those who fell in love are generally men. Especially, ideal women types did not fall in love and were not defeated in these novels.¹²⁴

Muhâdarât (1892) was published under Fatma Aliye's own signature one year after *Hayal ve Hakikat*. This novel is the first novel published with Fatma Aliye's own signature. In the novel, issues such as marriage, concubinage and education were discussed. The protagonist of the novel, Fazıla tried to improve herself although she faced many troubles due to her stepmother, Calibe. She could not marry her lover, Mukaddem, but she married Remzi with a blind date, so she was not happy. That was because Remzi was a person below Fazıla's level of education and he married another woman while he was married to Fazıla. Fazıla, then, could not stand this anymore and ran away from home. She took refuge in Şebip's home and became a female servant there. After she learned about her husband's death, she married Şebip. Knowing Şebip, his nature and moral, Fazıla thus showed how much arranged marriages were bad. On the other hand, another character in the novel who married for love and who only cared about physical properties of the man, Fevkiye got very unhappy and depressed. Finally, she resorted to divorce from her husband, Nabi. Fatma Aliye, thus, drew the path to a

¹²⁴ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Romanlarında Kadın Sorunu*, (Ankara: Bilkent University, 2005), 8.

“balanced” marriage. Fatma Aliye criticized arranged marriages that were shown as the traditional marriage by suggesting young girls, she considered as her audience, that they should be educated and act on logic instead of love in their marriages.

Nisvan-ı İslam (1892) is shown among Fatma Aliye’s most important works. Fatma Aliye gave some information about Muslim Women or Women in Islam to a woman and a nun that were guests in her house. The book consisted of three chapters including Concubinage, Marriage and Polygamy, Fashion and Music. According Mübeccel Kızıltan, Fatma Aliye’s father, Ahmed Cevdet, had a greater effect on Fatma Aliye’s knowledge on the place of woman in family and social life in the Islamic law.¹²⁵ During years when Fatma Aliye wrote *Nisvan-ı İslam*, Fatma Aliye discussed the place of women in Islamic law in her correspondence with her mentor, Ahmed Midhat. In this regard, her mentor, Midhat Efendi, offered some guidance. Midhat Efendi consulted the Islamic scholars of the period for points for which he lacked information. It can be said that, as with many other books, Midhat Efendi had a support in Fatma Aliye’s writing *Nisvan-ı İslam*. In the book, Fatma Aliye showed Islam and the culture shaped under this religion as a point of reference in issues such as women’s education and necessity to make women more visible in social life that Fatma Aliye considered as requirements of her period.

Refet (1897) was published serially in the *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* Newspaper during September-March 1897. The novel discussed struggle and success regarding women’s education in the Ottoman Empire experienced by Refet who was a poor fatherless handmaiden. Refet finished teacher’s college and rejected her cousin who wanted to marry her because he was ignorant and uneducated. But, on the other hand, Refet considered herself ugly and did not believe in making a good marriage. For this reason, deciding to become a teacher, Refet as a character was the ancestor of Feride from *Çalılıküşu*, which is shown as one of most important works of Turkish Literature.¹²⁶ Fatma Aliye, in this novel, emphasized that spouses should be equivalent to each other in a marriage. However, the most important feature of the novel can be shown that Refet who want to establish her personal world went to Anatolia as a teacher. On the other

¹²⁵ Mübeccel Kızıltan, *Fatma Aliye Hanım: Yaşamı, Sanatı, Yapıtları ve Nisvan-ı İslam*, (İstanbul: Mutlu Yayıncılık, 1993), 294.

¹²⁶ Duygu Oylubaş, *Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Düşünce Dünyası*, (Kayseri: Erciyes University, MA Thesis, 2014), 35.

hand, Refet emerges as a representation of a patriarchal stereotype by improving herself in the field of education by thinking that she could find a husband due to her ugliness.

Levayih-i Hayat (Pages of Life, 1897-98) was published serially in *Women's Newspaper* during June 1898-February 1899. The work was an epistolary novel. In this novel, "active writer" technique frequently seen in the Tanzimat novels was not used. In the novel, issues such as marriage, family and gender relations among well-educated, rich and cultured women of the period from high class families were discussed. Consisting of a total of ten letters, characters of the novel were Mehabe, Fehame, Sabahat, Nebahat and Itimat. The novel started with Mehabe's letter and ended with Itimat's letter. The novel included perspectives of women who came from elite families and a good educational background, and thoughts of these women who wanted equal rights with men and wanted to live equally similar to the first wave feminism in Europe.

Udi (1898) was published serially in the *İkdam* newspaper during March 23-April 27, and two years from its publication, it was translated to French by Gustave Seon in 1900. Again, the protagonist of the story was a female character. Bedia learned to play oud from his father at a young age. Living through many things, when Bedia lost her father and everything left from her father, she was left only with the oud. Coming from a wealthy family, Bedia lost everything because of his father's profligacy, and finally, she started to play the oud for everybody although she used to play oud only for her father. Thus, her oud became bread and butter.

Taaddüt-i Zevcata Zeyl (1899) was in the form of criticism on Mahmud Esad's work, *Taaddüt-i Zevcat*. In this work published with Fatma Aliye's own signature in Tahir Bey Press, family law was discussed such as marriage and divorce law. Against Mahmud Esad's solid traditionalist approach, Fatma Aliye responded to Mahmud Esad in a historical sense of Islam.

Teracim-i Ahval-i Felasife (1900) and *Tedkik-i Ecsam* (1901) were published in *Women's Newspaper*. Narrating lives of philosophers in the first work, in the second work, Fatma Aliye tried to explain materialism philosophy, which was quite effective in Europe during that period, with the Islamic philosophy. Fatma Aliye thus became the first woman writer who wrote about philosophy among Ottoman Muslim women. Her father, Ahmed Cevdet, and his brother, Ali Sedat, were also among the leading philosophers of the period.

In her work, *Enin* (1910), Fatma Aliye emphasised again the necessity and importance of knowing each other before marriage for the young. However, this novel was incomplete. This novel can be considered an expanded version of *Levayih-i Hayat* in terms of both character and subject.¹²⁷

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve Zamanı (1913) is known as the last known book by Fatma Aliye. Fatma Aliye wrote this book as a defense against criticism towards her father following the 1908 revolution. It was speculated that printing of this book, with its criticism of Supreme Porte.¹²⁸

Consequently, women's issues discussed extensively in the Tanzimat novels were the main topic in Fatma Aliye's works. The author wrote her novels during 1892-1910. In her novels, Fatma Aliye narrated women's demands for rights within the new approach that was improved with the Tanzimat. She considered women as one of the leading dynamics of modernization. A large portion of her characters consisted of women and issues were selected among education, polygamy, marriage, women's career and expanding the place of women in social life. Regarding characters that she created and issues she discussed, Fatma Aliye tried to write according to the Islamic principles, and she believed in the necessity to revise the women issue in Islam. Although Fatma Aliye did not express this in her novels, she made similar demands for rights that were similar to women's demands in Western Europe, and in doing so, rather than showing the West directly as an example, she preferred to take Islam and her golden age myth as a reference point.

In her last work, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa ve Zamanı*, Fatma Aliye defended her father against policies of the period. It can be a proper evaluation that Fatma Aliye with her interests and ideological stance was her father's daughter. Fatma Aliye was criticized by the government of the period since she made criticism of the Sublime Porte, and even she was abandoned into loneliness.¹²⁹ In addition to this claim shown as one of the reasons for Fatma Aliye to stop writing books, the fact that her daughter ran away from home in 1926 and became a Catholic nun and the introduction of 1928 Alphabet Reform are given as other reasons for her retirement.

¹²⁷ Duygu Oylubaş, *Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Düşünce Dünyası*, (Kayseri: Erciyes University, MA Thesis, 2014), 21.

¹²⁸ Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Romanlarında Kadın Sorunu*, (Ankara: Bilkent University, Ph.D. Thesis, 2005), 25.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN FATMA ALIYE'S ERA

Republican ideology claims that it created itself among the ruins of the Ottoman Empire and despite these remains. In this way, the republic shows the authenticity of complete modernization project as a brand-new mindset that owes nothing to the pass in an intellectual sense. Although republican ideology tried to show that it had nothing to do with modernization of the Ottoman Empire, ongoing reforms of the Republican era had their roots in the Ottoman Empire. The new state, nonetheless, was created from the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire.¹³⁰ However, Republican ideology created a differentiation that could not reconcile the new modern nation-state and the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, the perception of an archaic empire that was a prisoner of religious world gave way to a young and dynamic republic that the light of science is the route for progress where women lived freely.¹³¹ But, Şerif Mardin indicates that the Ottoman Empire had never cut its ties with the structure that was generally defined as the Western civilization. However, since the Ottoman Empire considered itself ahead of the Western civilization, the Empire did not find any harm in seeing the West as a model at first. But this situation changed when the Ottoman Empire fell behind the Europe. Beginning with the period of Ahmed III in the 18th century and gaining speed with the Grand Vizier Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşa, the acceptance of the superiority in military power of the West manifested itself during periods of Mahmud I, Abdulhamid and especially Selim III. During this period, Ottoman Embassies began to be established.¹³²

Mahmud II (1808-1839) was convinced that not only the military superiority of the West but also causes of success of the West lay behind a state that moved towards centralization. Obligation of guaranteeing property rights of people started with Sultan Mahmud, and they began to understand the benefit from spreading education to the country. With the establishment of national states and the strengthening of the middle class, this policy aimed at establishing the national integrity.¹³³ This global innovation movement that was accepted to start with the Edict of Gülhane known as 1893

¹³⁰ Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 213.

¹³¹ Etyen Mahçupyan, *Türkiye'yi Anlamak: Zihniyet, Değişim, Kriz* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 43.

¹³² Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 9-11.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 12.

Tanzimat was followed by 1856 Imperial Reform Edict. The era when Western opinions began to be adopted thoroughly is the reign of Abdulhamid (1876-1909). The main reason for this is that Abdulhamid as the Sultan adopted Western military ways and educational system himself and he attempted to implement this in the Muslim community. At the same time, the reign of Abdulhamid II was important for the Ottoman Empire in terms of following the West thanks to newly established schools and increasing the number of Muslims who spoke foreign languages.¹³⁴

Mühendishane-i Bahr-i Humayun (*Imperial School of Naval Engineering*) founded in 1773 was known as the first most important scientific institution of the Westernization efforts. Naval Engineering School (*Mühendishane-i Bahr-i Humayun*), where natural sciences were taught, was supported by French-born Baron de Tott.¹³⁵ In this school, courses like French, Mathematics, Geometry were taught.¹³⁶

In 1795 when Engineering School for Armed Forces was founded with a view to train military officers. In the War Academy (*Mekteb-i Ulûm-i Harbiyye*) founded in 1834, French courses were also given.¹³⁷

According to *Cevdet Paşa's History*, the importance of literacy and education was emphasized by a Sultan for the first time with the words of Mahmud II.¹³⁸ Akşin Somel also, in his book, *the Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire*, indicated that the first obvious initiative towards worldly- practical direction school system in Istanbul was the bill that was probably issued by instigation of Mahmud II in Council of Public Works (*Meclis-i Umûr-ı Nâfia*) in 1839.¹³⁹ Again, during the reign of Mahmud II occurred the transition from military school to civilian educational institutions. It is possible to infer from Abdulmecit's *hatt-ı şerif* (*supreme edict*) that educational activities becoming widespread with the Tanzimat were established to learn the tradition and to follow positive sciences of the West. Abdulmecit indicated that a

¹³⁴ Ibid., 11-15.

¹³⁵ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, edited by Suraiya Farooqhi and Halil İnalçık, (Leiden; Boston; Köln: 2001), 21-22.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 21.

¹³⁸ Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Osmanlı Eğitim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 65.

¹³⁹ Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline*, edited by Suraiya Farooqhi and Halil İnalçık, (Leiden; Boston; Köln: 2001), 29.

person needed to learn religious information and to obtain an adequate level of literacy and then, a person needed to learn science and technique.¹⁴⁰

Fanny Davis says that, while information was extremely limited about Ottoman women's education before the 19th century, following this period, Ottoman Muslim women got involved in education at an incredible rate.¹⁴¹ However, despite this difference, education of girls was not welcomed warmly by many people in the country. For example, Erzurumlu Hafız Mehmed, who was governor in Kosovo and Tripolis during the reign of Abdulhamid II, was incredibly against giving women religious education and teaching them anything but domestic skills.¹⁴²

In consideration of education becoming widespread with the Tanzimat, education of women and improvement of primary school were achieved, and modern education methods were adopted. Therefore, in addition to modern military training schools, modern civilian educational institutions were also founded. Although the Tanzimat Edict did not include specific provisions for women, it changed intellectual and social structures indirectly but influenced education of women.

Although the presence of thoughts that limited women continued, the Palace and its social circle supported women's education centrally. Not only in the field of education, women's issues were also discussed in publications after the Tanzimat. Many writers and intellectuals of the period expressed the necessity to include woman in social life, women's position and professions. Western family and female models began to be found in the press developed after the Constitutional Monarchy.¹⁴³

When we consider themes developed after the Tanzimat and Imperial Reform Edict in the field of women's rights, it is possible to say that significant innovations occurred in women's education and their participation in social life. On May 1, 1845, a Greek magazine, '*Kypseli*,' began publication dedicated to the Sultan. The magazine mentioned the necessity of equal right of education for two sexes. With these words, "we wish that men and women and the whole humanity can be enlightened equally. Women's mission is not just to raise children and do housework. Women are friends

¹⁴⁰ Necdet Sakaoglu, *Osmanlı Eğitim Tarihi*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 71.

¹⁴¹ Fanny Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: Social History from 1718 to 1918*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 47.

¹⁴² Ibid., 49.

¹⁴³ Sabiha Doğan, *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet'e Aydın Kadınlar: Şair ve Yazarlar (1850-1950)*, (İstanbul: Akademik Kitaplar, 2012), 22-23.

and helpers of men.” They demanded gender equality.¹⁴⁴ Although the Reform Edict of Gülhane did not include any references directly towards women’s demands for right, rights provided by the Edict also influenced women. Homestead Law was enforced in 1858, which enabled daughters to benefit from lands inherited from the father equally with their brothers. Considered the biggest achievements of the Tanzimat, Articles 54, 59, 61 and 88 of this arrangement were about inheritance rights of daughters.¹⁴⁵ Efforts in establishing Ottoman Junior High School for girls since 1838 ended up with the establishment of *Cevri Usta İnas High School* in 1859.¹⁴⁶ In the reign of Abdulaziz, many important developments were implemented in the field of education based on *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* (General Education Instructions) enacted in 1869. In the regulation that was based on the French model, an educational system was grounded starting with primary school and ending with university. One year after the *Maarif Nizamname* (Educational Regulations), *Dârü’l-muallimât* (Girls’ Teacher School) was founded to train female teachers.¹⁴⁷ With Ottoman Constitution of 1876, right to education became a more equal level for girls and boys.¹⁴⁸ As a natural outcome of these developments in the field of women’s rights, visibility of women in the world of press and publication began to gradually increase. In 1868, a newspaper named the *Terakki* began to be published in Istanbul by Ali Raşid and Diyarbakırlı Filip Efendi. On Sundays, newspaper supplement called “*Terakki-i Muhâdarât*” was published for women. In this supplement that was published for forty-eight issues during 1869-1870, women’s education and gaining a new identity were emphasized. In the newspaper indicating the honorific role of women in society, it was demanded to remove obstacles for girls’ education. In addition, there were articles that mentioned domestic economy and necessity for savings. In the newspapers that was dominated by men from its owner to columnists, educated women tried to contribute by sending letters. One of the magazines with female owner and authors was the *Şukûfezâr*. With its meaning “*Flower Garden*”, the magazine began publishing in 1886 and its owner was Arife Hanım. Arife Hanım wrote in the *Şukufezar* as following: “We are faction as the target of mocking by

¹⁴⁴ Güldal Okuducu, *Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Türk Kadının Kısa Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014), 89.

¹⁴⁵ Orhan Çeker, *Arazî Kanunnamesi*, İstanbul: Ebru Yayınları, 1985), 36, 40, 42, 51.

¹⁴⁶ Güldal Okuducu, *Osmanlı’dan Cumhuriyet’e Türk Kadının Kısa Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014), 97.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 130.

men calling us ‘long-haired scatter-brained’. We will try to prove the opposite of this saying by not preferring womanhood to manhood.”¹⁴⁹

From 1908 onwards, women’s visibility in the press and publishing fields and new publishing fields increased along with women’s demands for rights. Irvin Cemil Schick indicated that the highest number of publishing houses after the Constitutional Monarchy had reached three times of the highest level during the final years of Abdulhamid's reign.¹⁵⁰ Freedom atmosphere brought about by the Constitutional Monarchy led to the emergence of women's publications one by one. According to the assessment by Şefika Kurnaz on these publications, nearly all the publications on women’s issues after 1908 were supporters of Constitutional Monarchy, open to the West and in favor of reform and democracy. Kurnaz indicates that there were no Islamist women’s magazines during this period, and she discusses magazines of the period in two groups such as “Western supporters, and Turkists”.¹⁵¹ In these magazines, various topics such as women’s law, education, political and social life, family, fashion and practical information for women’s domestic works were included.¹⁵²

Consequently, political and social transformation that started with the proclamation of the Tanzimat increased women’s visibility in society through education and the press. Intellectuals who preoccupied with social issues mentioned in their articles in newspapers of the period about how women should be included in the new social order. Beyond that, women’s education was taken under control directly by the government, and an attempt to create a new social order emerged with men and women together. During this period, the most important reference point was the idea of *Asr-ı Saadet*. Ottoman Muslim women modernization based itself on Islam as its main source. Without entering a direct conflict with Islam, the idea that religious orders were directly towards educating women was emphasized not only by the sultans but also by media organizations. With this new perspective, religion began to be perceived among Ottoman Muslim intellectuals not as a series of prohibitions but a reference point that authorized women for so long and that the modernity was itself based on. Borders of this modern and Muslim women type were again drawn by the masculine mentality of

¹⁴⁹ Fatma Tunç Yaşar, “Şükûfezar: Kadınlar Tarafından Kadınlar İçin İlk Süreli Yayın,” *Dem Dergi*, 1(4), (n.d.) 69-70.

¹⁵⁰ Irvin Cemil Schick, *Bedeni, Toplumunu, Kainatı Yazmak* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 223.

¹⁵¹ Şefika Kurnaz, *II. Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Kadını*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1996), 139.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 192.

the period and manifested itself as good mother and good wife. The author of articles and novels in the last quarter of the 19th century, Fatma Aliye established *Asr-ı Saadet* in her work, *Nisvan-ı İslam* (Muslim Women) and mentions that many scholars and writers emerged from Prophet Muhammed's wives and daughters. Fatma Aliye showed women's reference point in receiving education as Prophet, namely, directly the religion itself.¹⁵³ When Fatma Aliye defined the ideal intellectual woman in her mind as a woman who could speak French and lived Islam properly by observing religious rules and customs,¹⁵⁴ on the other hand, she presented herself as an "ideal Ottoman Muslim intellectual" woman. Educational approach and a further rise in women's voice in society thanks to modernization created "New Ottoman Women" personalities. Not only did this new type of intellectual woman received traditional sense of religious education but also did they learn foreign languages-primarily French-to allow them follow closely the intellectual developments of the period. This new type of intellectuals, in which Fatma Aliye was also included, consisted of women who were loyal to the Sultan, traditions and open to the West.

¹⁵³ Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Nisvan-ı İslam*, (İstanbul: İnkılab Yayınları, 2009), 10.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

INFLUENCE OF AHMED MIDHAT EFENDI ON THE FORMATION OF FATMA ALIYE'S INTELLECTUAL WORLD

To understand Ahmed Midhat Efendi, his effect on the Ottoman world of thought and his relationship with Fatma Aliye, it will be a relevant introduction to mention Ahmed Midhat Efendi's life briefly. In the introduction to Ahmed Midhat Efendi's biography, İsmail Hikmet primarily mentioned that Midhat Efendi was a person who worked relentlessly and who strove for becoming helpful to his country and his people. Ahmed Midhat Efendi was born in Tophane, Istanbul in 1844. His father was a man called Bezci Süleyman Agha. Losing his father at an early age,¹⁵⁵ Ahmed Midhat Efendi became an apprentice in an herbalist due to poverty. After learning to read and write, Ahmed Midhat Efendi began to take French lessons from a foreigner in Galata, and he began to have a makeshift training.¹⁵⁶ Ahmed Midhat Efendi finished middle school in two years, became a civil servant. Ahmed Midhat Efendi continued his education under the supervision of Persian Can Muattar from whom he learned eastern sciences and with Osman Hamdi to whom he owed many things for his development. Then, Ahmed Midhat Efendi became one of the leading names in his own period in the field of press and publication in the Ottoman Empire. He published three short-term magazines including *Devir*, *Bedir* and *Dağarcık*. Tanpınar suggested to analyse Midhat Efendi's articles in *Dağarcık*¹⁵⁷ to understand him. According to Tanpınar, Midhat Efendi's effort to combine Islamic principles with data of Lamarckism thought of the positivist philosophy that was suggested by French natural scientist Jean Baptiste Lamarck (1744–1829), his relaxed non-depressed swing between religious principles and European science and philosophy he had just learned, and even finding basis for his thoughts from Qur'an and hadiths would make us easy to understand Ahmed Midhat.¹⁵⁸ In 1873, Ahmed Midhat Efendi was sent into exile unexpectedly. Nüket Esen indicated that the exile had an important place in shaping Ahmed Midhat Efendi's future world-view and political stance, Ahmed Midhat was devastated from the discussion breaking out from the acceptance as harmful for some of his works that he wrote to educate the

¹⁵⁵ İsmail Hikmet, *Ahmed Midhat Efendi*, (İstanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1932), 5.

¹⁵⁶ Nüket Esen, *Hikaye Anlatan Adam: Ahmed Midhat*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 27.

¹⁵⁷ *Dağarcık Dergisinde "Felsefe ve Felasife", "Felsefenin Sergüzeşt-i Ahvâli", "Hürriyetin Mâhiyeti", "Duvardan Bir Sada", "İnsan", "Dünyada İnsanın Zuhuru", ve "Schopenhauer" adlı makaleleri yayınlamıştır.*

¹⁵⁸ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), 449.

public and to show them the right way.¹⁵⁹ Apart from these, Ahmed Midhat Efendi was also accused of profaneness because of an article he wrote in the *İbret* newspaper. Midhat Efendi tried to reconcile Islam with Lamarckism in the *Basiret* newspaper. Tanpınar described Midhat Efendi's approach as a sequence of contrasts that was only compatible in his own writing.¹⁶⁰ When Hoca İshak said that Ahmed Midhat Efendi claimed human kind as an ape-descendant, Ahmed Midhat Efendi felt obliged to defend Islam continuously in his following articles.¹⁶¹ Ahmed Midhat Efendi began to gain the trust of the Palace because of his commitment to the Palace in his articles published in the *İttihad* newspaper issued during Serbia and Montenegro Wars.¹⁶² After their exile, Ahmed Midhat Efendi completely cut his ties with his friends and chose the path of "ingratiating" himself to Abdulhamid II as described by Tanpınar.¹⁶³

His particular emphasis on education throughout his life, Ahmed Midhat Efendi was not idle during the period of exile in Rhodes; he both educated children and tried to provide for the expenses of his family in Istanbul.¹⁶⁴ After Ahmed Midhat Efendi returned from exile, he finally made his political choice in favor of the Sultan and Sultanate. After this date, he began publishing the *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper with financial support from the Palace. According to Tanpınar's narration, Ahmed Midhat Efendi became the Manager of *Takvim-i Vekayi* (Calendar of Events) in 1878. In 1879, he became the manager of *Matbaa-i Amire* (State Printing House). Ahmed Midhat Efendi bought a farm and mansion after becoming increasingly rich and prosperous. His daughter married poet Muallim Naci. Rapidly advancing in his career, Midhat Efendi became the head of *Meclis-i Umur-ı Sıhhiye* (Public Health Services).¹⁶⁵ After his marriage with his first wife Servet Hanım, he married Greek-born Melek Hanım and lived a large family life with five children from each of his wives.¹⁶⁶ Following the 1908 Revolution, he returned to the leadership of the *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, but he did not have his previous prestige.¹⁶⁷ Ahmed Midhat Efendi was a person of the period before 1908.

¹⁵⁹ Nüket Esen, *Hikaye Anlatan Adam: Ahmed Midhat*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 29.

¹⁶⁰ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), 450.

¹⁶¹ Nüket Esen, *Hikaye Anlatan Adam: Ahmed Midhat*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 30.

¹⁶² Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), 451.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 450.

¹⁶⁴ Nüket Esen, *Hikaye Anlatan Adam: Ahmed Midhat*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 30.

¹⁶⁵ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), 455.

¹⁶⁶ Nüket Esen, *Hikaye Anlatan Adam: Ahmed Midhat*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 32.

¹⁶⁷ Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyat Tarihi* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1976), 451.

Also, in his novels, Ahmed Midhat Efendi continuously tried to encourage his people towards private enterprises. Even in his correspondence with Fatma Aliye, Ahmed Midhat Efendi talked about the necessity of working hard and maintaining the integrity of Islam with working.¹⁶⁸ Despite all the hard-work, Nüket Esen said that Ahmed Midhat Efendi was a loser although he had always chosen the strong one by means of clearly selecting his side, namely his belief in forming his life sharply.¹⁶⁹ Ahmed Midhat Efendi also remained on the losing side not only in political sense but also with his literary preferences. For example, he was against *Servet-i Fünun* movement, but Turkish Literature announced this magazine as a great value for literature. In short, Esen indicated that Ahmed Midhat Efendi remained in losers' side not only politically but also in literary sense which clashed against his diligence and wide intellectual world.¹⁷⁰ However, although his favored ideas could not continue, it will be a very dramatic approach to call him a loser. Ahmed Midhat Efendi was in a pragmatical attitude based on tradition and western understanding of progress in fields of culture and education different from the Tanzimat writers and positivist-materialist philosophers who made the Western civilization an action of regime. To fill his lack of a father authority in his life, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, in his letters to Fatma Aliye who he addressed as his spiritual daughter, both strengthened his fatherhood authority and created the ideal father through his definitions and descriptions such as commitment to the Sultan and traditions, working for the State, Islamic Progress, and ideal woman, or ideal son.

Jale Parla says in her book *Fathers and Sons (Babalar ve Oğullar)*, that father-son relationship was not a relation of conflict but continuity in the Ottoman modernization.¹⁷¹ Parla showed the first novelists in the Ottoman Empire as sons of this conservative relationship and mentioned that all these writers were in search of a lost father. Parla indicated Islamic epistemology as the authority these intellectuals were subjected to.¹⁷² Because of lack of "father authority" among intellectuals of the period, Parla said that they needed to implement and powerful sense of morality in the absence of a father. Since Ahmed Midhat Efendi feared of graying of the father authority, he narrated in his books that moral and decent children found peace and others got lost in

¹⁶⁸ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 195, 270.

¹⁶⁹ Nüket Esen, *Hikaye Anlatan Adam: Ahmed Midhat*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 35.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 20.

¹⁷² Ibid., 20-21.

the absence of a father.¹⁷³ On the other hand, writing articles on counsel and manners were also direct order from the authority. Paternalism in the form of forced interference to people's freedom to make in better in the name of goodness, happiness, requirements, interest and/or values of another consciousness was included not only in Ahmed Midhat Efendi but also in the government of the period. For Abdulhamid II, the people were still too naive and very little educated. Abdulhamid II frequently mentioned the necessity of treating the people as children and said that they were "old children". He thought that, just as families and trainers tried to keep harmful articles away from the young, state also needed to keep everything that would poison the public mind away from these old children.¹⁷⁴ Ahmed Midhat Efendi emerged as an Ottoman Muslim author who was a supporter of Sultan, father of the period, a traditional person and who believed in taking advantage of the western civilization technically and ideologically.¹⁷⁵ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, who tried to fill the gap of father authority indicated by Parla, accepted Fatma Aliye as his spiritual daughter. In their correspondence, Fatma Aliye called Ahmed Midhat Efendi "üstadım"¹⁷⁶ in response to Ahmed Midhat Efendi's "my daughter" -with various adjectives before the phrase-and she accepted being his student. In fact, here, it can be said that foundations of a new father-daughter relationship were laid. Deniz Kandiyoti argues that distant and authoritative father figure left its place to privacy and sincere fathers, and thus, she mentioned that the new prevailing ideology recreated the woman socially.¹⁷⁷ This new type of father both manifested itself as a continuation of tradition and established a special bond with the daughter who the father cared, raised and helped in her development. Objective of this special bond was an attempt to create the new woman who was an example or ideal. As specified, this attempt to recreate women was carried out with the new educational approach and developments in the press. Here through these letters, we witness the efforts to build the ideal daughter sometimes in an egalitarian way and sometimes in a restrictive form under the authority of the new authority of father in a more special relationship.

After discussing about the type of authority Ahmed Midhat Efendi was exposed to, we will explore the political thinking patterns he put himself due to his fear of authority.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 28.

¹⁷⁴ Mehmet Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmed Midhat Efendi*, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1991), 8.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷⁶ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 36.

¹⁷⁷ Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler Bacılar Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dönüşümler*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1997), 213.

Ahmed Midhat Efendi's reference to the necessity of censorship in letters he wrote to Fatma Aliye after he was sent to exile as a thought criminal¹⁷⁸ shows how much he was afraid of authority and how much his bound with the authority was by showing the current authority as insufficient. The reign of Abdulhamid was a period of great developments in fields of education and press, on the other hand, a period when censorship brought along limits to thoughts. In such an environment, sent into exile because of his thoughts, Ahmed Midhat Efendi saw his own limits and agreed to remain within boundaries of the authority. It is necessary to evaluate Ahmed Midhat Efendi's correspondence with Fatma Aliye within the boundaries of this authority.

In the light of these letters, Ahmed Midhat Efendi's place in the intellectual world of Fatma Aliye will be analysed within the framework of Ahmed Midhat Efendi's relation with the authority, as a person who considered Fatma Aliye the ideal woman, and who befriended Fatma Aliye and introduced her to society. Coincided with her spiritual father at points of Islamic progress and westernization and commitment to the Sultan and traditions, Fatma Aliye nonetheless conflicted with her spiritual father, in other words, with the authority, and tried to do what she believed.

5.1 Commitment to the Sultan and the State

Ahmed Midhat Efendi expressed his commitment to the Sultan at every turn and showed his side with a clear attitude. In a letter to Fatma Aliye in 1894, he talked about sacrificing anything for his Sultan.¹⁷⁹ In 1897, Fatma Aliye shared with Ahmed Midhat Efendi a letter sent from Paris. This letter was from Young Turks. Finding words against himself in the letter, Ahmed Midhat Efendi said "the reason for this is commitment to the Sultan and my country."¹⁸⁰

"I, your "spiritual father" is loyal and committed to the Sultan. I swear allegiance to my Sultan as people did for Ali ibn Abi Talib. But, our time has many obstacles and difficulties. These difficulties try to discourage me and tarnish my loyalty and obedience to the Sultan. But I am willing to die rather than giving up this loyalty. I am also ready to die by guns of such enemies of religion and state like those. Know this, and decide whether you love Ahmed Midhat Efendi or Young Turks accordingly."¹⁸¹

It is not yet known whether these words reached Fatma Aliye but Fatma Aliye's choice of sending the letter to Ahmed Midhat Efendi seemed like an indicator of choosing her side. In the same letter, Ahmed Midhat Efendi also indicated that he perceived

¹⁷⁸ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 376.

¹⁷⁹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 206.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 384.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 385.

republicans as nihilist and anarchist while saying that he was not a socialist, nihilist, anarchist or republican.¹⁸²

“Light of my eyes, my daughter.

I have read the letter sent from Paris. Like you, I do not understand anything. What words and ideas of these people can anyone understand? Apparently, I am the most dangerous man in the eyes of these guys! They sent me many letters. They threatened me with death. (...) The reason for being condemned to such death is that I do not take part in their bad ideas and stay faithful to my Sultan, my country and religion. According to them, patriotism is disorder. Whoever is not socialist, anarchist, nihilistic, republican, he or she is called as traitor. (...)”¹⁸³

In another letter, he wrote to Fatma Aliye at the beginning of 1897, Ahmed Midhat Efendi said that he was grateful to censorship while everybody complained about censorship. He explained the reason for his support that blocking of any thoughts against the Sultan’s consent would protect the state from negative effects and thoughts.¹⁸⁴ Fatma Aliye explained her ideas on censorship in 1897 as follows:

“Although everybody complains about the presence of censorship, I am grateful to censorship. Will know things that are against the royal consent better than me, so the censorship is a shield for us. Reason for this is that the government will censor everything that is against the State’s interests and wishes.”¹⁸⁵

Midhat’s words also explain the fact that İnci Enginün described Ahmed Midhat as the most famous journalist of the period of Autocracy.¹⁸⁶

Midhat Efendi regarded the Sultan as the basis of authority and explained the necessity of authority while expressing his commitment to the Sultan. This situation also transformed into one of the legitimate foundations of his own authority. State’s prohibitions in fact lied in the idea that the people still did not reach enough maturity. This thought was based on the idea of having rights to guide and restrict the people for their own good.

5.2 Father’s Ideal Islamic Women and Women’s Limits

Jale Parla claims that a lack of a father in Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s works was equal to wrong manners. Method of progress is based on Islamic manners for Ahmed Midhat

¹⁸² Ibid., 384.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 384.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 376.

¹⁸⁵ “Herkes sansürün vücûdundan şikayet eylediği halde ben müteşekkirim. Sebebi ise rızâ-yı hümâyûna muğâyir olan şeyleri sansörler elbette benden a’lâ bileceklerinden rızâ-yı istihsâl der iken gazabı isticlâb etmiş olmak tehlikesine mukâbil sansür bize bir siperdir.”

Ibid., 376.

¹⁸⁶ İnci Enginün, Yeni Türk Edebiyatı: Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e (1939-1923), (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2014), 71.

Efendi.¹⁸⁷ Ahmed Midhat Efendi indicated not only in his novels but also in his letters to Fatma Aliye that education was necessary under the guidance of the father both within Islamic boundaries and using western tools. Ideas of being “good mother” and being “good, educated, decent” wife for Ottoman Muslim male connected to the west directly that lied behind state’s unwillingness to educate women were also seen similarly in Ahmed Midhat Efendi. Ahmed Midhat Efendi shared his ideas with his spiritual daughter, Fatma Aliye, in his letters.

By saying that:

“(…) Schools are full of children. Especially in big cities, all children go to school. On the bridge, on the ferry, there are no children without uniforms. They receive full manners worthy of a civilized people. Do you think they would not like to marry women becoming of themselves? Won’t they apply to Europe when they fail to find them?”¹⁸⁸

Ahmed Midhat Efendi not only narrated a view from the Ottoman Empire in 1894, but also emphasized the real objective of education as creating a civilized people and disciplining people. The idea of necessity of educating the people and guiding the people due to their lack of thinking maturely also emerged as a part of Abdulhamid politics.

Fatma Aliye, in a letter that she wrote to Ahmed Midhat Efendi, shared with her spiritual father that she supported educational policies about women by Abdulhamid II and her admiration to these developments.

“From actions of Our Great Sultan Abdulhamid Han, there are no people who have not benefited from these actions, and women are no exclusion. Thanks to the Sultan, women get rid of ignorance.”^{189 190}

Adopted the educational approach of the authority without conflicting with the authority, Fatma Aliye shared such understanding with her spiritual father, Ahmed Midhat.

¹⁸⁷ Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 29.

¹⁸⁸ “Mektepler çocuk dolu. Bilhassa büyük şehirlerde mektebe gitmeyen çocuk yok. Köprü üstünde, vapurlarda üniformasız çocuk görülmüyor. Bunlar tam medenî bir halka lâayık terbiyeyi, ta’lîmi alıyorlar. Ya bunlar kendi terbiyelerine münâsîp kadını istemeyecekler mi? Bulamazlarsa Avrupa’ya müracaat etmeyecekler mi?”

İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 223.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹⁰ There is not a single person who has not been enlightened by worldly protection of his Unique Ruler Sultan Abdul Hamid Lordship, and women are not no exception for his protection. Many woman secretaries are trained under auspices of Sultan’s educational schools. Women are also getting rid of ignorance. (FA_Evr-110, Fatma Aliye)

Before Fatma Aliye sent her writings for publishing, she shared them with Ahmed Mithat. It is possible to see importance of Ahmed Mithat's thoughts, guidances, and limitations related to Aliye's writing in Aliye's lines that she wrote:

"My Lady Daughter,

I received your message this morning. Now that I'm writing my answer on a part of this letter: Please write what you remember and what you wish. I write down what I see true without any worries. I correct anything that needs touch. (...) But I am warning you only that do not publish poems you send to Lady Gülnar. Do not even show them to others."¹⁹¹

As can be seen, not only did Ahmed Midhat encourage Aliye to write, even tell her to write anything she wants, but Midhat also told her that he expected that she shares her notes with him first. In this way, just like a modern father figure who tries to raise her daughter, Ahmed Midhat supported Aliye to fly on her own wings but also approached her with protective tone if required. Argunşah also indicated regarding Ahmed Midhat's such approach that Ahmed Midhat wanted to encourage women to write on the one side but to guide them as he believed on the other hand in his protective approach.¹⁹²

Ahmed Midhat shared his views on poetry with respect to Fatma Aliye's interest in poetry. Ahmed Midhat did not have any books of poems. However, he specified that he wrote poetry.

"Do not think, like others do, that Midhat is not a poet. But he likes seriousness and bears hostility against poetry. (If you think so) you will make a mistake on yourself! I was also interested in poetry. Still, even from time to time, I write down a few rhymes. I love the poetry, too! The reason for not writing in that language is that its language has boundaries."¹⁹³

In addition, Ahmed Midhat also mentioned about Lady Nigar's writings who was one of the women poets of the 19th century:

"I remember when you said Nigar. Among books I took to Stockholm, there was a well-known poetry booklet written by her. Library officials also needed my help to classify these books. I took notice of this work of art which had a strange style that I had not seen by that time. Even in a style that Europeans also would not like! What do you say? Wouldn't I secretly steal the book and destroy it? Rather than an Ottoman Lady writing such a poem, it is better that she never writes!"¹⁹⁴

¹⁹¹ "Hanım Kızım,

Bu sabahki tezkirenizi aldım. İşte ben onun bir parçası üzerine cevapçımı yazıyorum: Siz hatırınıza ne gelir ise yazınız. Ben doğru gördüğümü bilâ-endişe neşr ederim. (...) Yalnız ihtâr eylerim ki Gülnar Hanım'a gönderdiğiniz şiirleri neşr etmeyiniz."

Ibid., 64,65.

¹⁹² Hülya Argunşah, *Kadın ve Edebiyat: Babasının Kızı Olmak*, (İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2016), 157.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 65.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 68

Thus, Ahmed Midhat shared with Aliye how he protected his daughters against Europeans with a father's attitude and how he hid such works that Europeans would not like.

In Ahmed Midhat's letter to Aliye signed December, 1890 in which he expressed his support for Aliye and other Ottoman women and how they should be considered equal to men, Midhat says:

"... It is possible is that when your young ladies start to work in publications, and when my son replaced me and started working in the printing house as a "Midhatzâde", and there they will work together. Yes, they will work together, yet they will not even draw anybody's attention. In a situation where the hearts of a man and a woman are bound to a legal direction, the future minds will accept that there will only be a literary companionship between them, although minds of this period cannot accept such this."¹⁹⁵

Ahmed Midhat believed in these lines he wrote to Aliye that women should work equally with men. In the same letter, Ahmed Midhat drew attention to the absurdity of that fact that Aliye as an educated woman could not enter the public park while a simple laundrywoman could enter that place. Simply put, the elite women of the time had to behave with etiquette and according to Ahmed Midhat this was an unnecessary limitation as women of the lower classes acted freely on certain occasions like the abovementioned.

"Be careful, my Wise Daughter! Be careful so your laundrywoman can enter the municipal park while you cannot. Why? Because we do not have respect to women's reputation. Be prudent! The required reasons of this situation even go up to the familiarities of literature"¹⁹⁶

Ahmed Midhat gave information about a situation that an educated Ottoman 19th century woman had faced or might face; on the other hand, he warned Aliye that she would also face similar situations in the world of literature. However, despite all adversities, Ahmed Midhat underlined that Aliye should proceed on her path with his support.

Ahmed Midhat Efendi tried to find a basis for everything whenever an issue emerged

¹⁹⁵ "İhtimal ki hanım kızlarınız neşriyâta başladığı ve benim oğlum bir Midhatzâde olarak matbaada benim yerime geçtiği zaman orada birlikte çalışacaklardır. Evet birlikte çalışacaklardır da hiçbir kimsenin nazar-ı istiğrâbını bile celb etmeyeceklerdir. Bir erkek ile bir kadının gönülleri birer cihet-i meşrûaya merbût olduğu halde aralarında yalnız bir refâkat-i kalemiye bulunabileceğini şimdi bu asrın zihni belki de kabul edemese bile o asrın zihni kabul edecektir."

Ibid., 69

¹⁹⁶ "Dikkat et ey fâzıl kızım, dikkat et ki çamaşırcınız belediye bağçesine girebilir de siz giremezsiniz. Niçin? Şân-ı nisvâna bizde riâyet yok da onun için! İstibsâr buyurun! İşte bu ahvâlin esbâb-ı mücibesi edebiyâtın lâubâliliklerine kadar varır."

İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 69.

that could be considered modern for his period. Ahmed Midhat Efendi said that the belief of the golden age was similar to the current modernity of *Asr-ı Saadet* (Ottoman Golden Age) in this period since this Islamic basis did not coincide with the traditional perspective of Islam at the period. He added that this approach became more conservative and bigoted over time due to corruption of religion. For him, Islam conferred extensive rights to women in its essence. Islam was compatible with the modern world but, over time, it was corrupted by its believers. Ahmed Midhat Efendi said “the reason for the decline of the Ottoman Empire during the last three centuries was not Islam but bigotry of Muslims.”¹⁹⁷

He said that reform was necessary for the progress of Islam.¹⁹⁸ Such approach towards Islam could be seen both in Ahmed Cevdet and many leading Ottoman Muslim intellectuals of the period. Within the axis of this approach of Ahmed Midhat Efendi, it is possible to observe how Ahmed Midhat saw Ottoman Muslim woman and his reflection on Fatma Aliye’s intellectual world and the effect on Fatma Aliye’s books and articles. In their correspondence, Ahmed Midhat Efendi read Fatma Aliye’s words on *Nisvan-i Islam* and evaluated her ideas. Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s description of Muslim woman in his letters to Fatma Aliye coincided with Muslim women in Fatma Aliye’s book, is similar with *Nisvan-i-Islam*.

Ahmed Midhat Efendi said that Islam had gave rights to women all along. Such that, there had been many women in Islam ranging from ulama, sheikhs, politicians all lionesses.¹⁹⁹ Defining these women as ‘female lions,’ Ahmed Midhat Efendi did not refrain from including Fatma Aliye in this cluster of ideal women.²⁰⁰ Ahmed Midhat Efendi explained the necessity for inclusion of women in politics and intellectual discussions on Islamic and traditional basis. Fatma Aliye, on the other hand, explained her idea that women should be educated and there should be scholars and writers among Ottoman Muslim women in the introduction of his book, *Nisvan-i-Islam*, with the following words:

“Some Muslim families living according to old practices consider women’s education as a sin. Women were not allowed to learn French, and even it was considered shameful for women to

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 361.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 362.

¹⁹⁹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 275.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 275.

learn Turkish more than enough. These were such people who did not know that many scholars and writers emerged among Prophet's wives and daughters."²⁰¹

With these words, Fatma Aliye found a religious and historical basis for the necessity of education for modern Ottoman women just like her mentor Midhat.

Another prominent issue was women's having fun in Ahmed Midhat Efendi's letters in which limitation and variety of his ideas can be seen regarding how Muslim Ottoman women should be. On the issue of drinking raki by a woman, Ahmed Midhat Efendi commented:

"A woman's drinking raki! I cannot think this as far away possibility. I have seen many. Even I can express my opinion on this that I do not even denounce this strongly. I think drinking raki is a shame in two ways. First, in terms of health, the other in terms of morality. However, what makes an action impossible for women while it is supposedly fair for men? Neither does a woman become an infidel with two glasses of raki...nor is she accepted as an infidel. (...)"²⁰²

The reason for Ahmed Midhat's discussion about drinking raki was based on gossips about Makbule Leman. Rumor has it, Makbule Leman had fun with men in promenades and drank raki. Even she shouted that she was in love with a man called Menemenli.²⁰³ Ahmed Midhat shared his view with Aliye that these were only gossips and he could not easily accept such ugly words invented for a woman.²⁰⁴

Ahmed Midhat gives a lesson of decency to Aliye, and told her not to believe in anything she heard. In a letter related to rumors about Leman Hanım in which he protected Leman against rumors, Ahmed Midhat inserted:

"In short, I cannot say 'she is like! he is like!' about anyone. I cannot judge people by believing in rumors. Especially if the objective of rumors is a woman, I completely conform to my principle."²⁰⁵

Ahmed Midhat Efendi did not see any inconvenience in a woman being modern and western, he even supported these traits, on the condition that she was loyal to Islamic rules and tradition. However, since there was not a strict hierarchy between religion and tradition for Ahmed Midhat Efendi, sometimes it was enough to be traditional or religious, and sometimes it was both necessary. According to the rumors about Nigar, it disturbed some sections of society in that period that Nigar adopted an extremely western lifestyle. "Poor Nigar's European style is exaggerated so much that the lady is

²⁰¹ Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Nisvan-i İslam*, (İstanbul: İnkılab Yayınları, 2009), 9-10.

²⁰² İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 235.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 235.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

²⁰⁵ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 243.

ostracized from the Islam and the Ottoman society.”²⁰⁶ Ahmed Midhat Efendi was not opposed to Westernization and Western lifestyle in a woman. For Ahmed Midhat Efendi, as long as anyone was loyal to Islam and the Ottoman Empire that were accepted holy, a woman could become westernized as much as she wanted.²⁰⁷ He wrote down his idea with following words: “We are not grandchildren of Ebussuud! We all have an idea, a disposition, a way of approach.”²⁰⁸

Another issue is the veiling which has not also lost its popularity in modern politics and which still comes to mind when we mention Muslim women. Similar to her spiritual father’s thinking method, Fatma Aliye also said that a woman did not abandon the religion by not covering her hair but she was a sinner. Fatma Aliye said that the basis of Islam was the belief in the unity of God and the prophethood of Muhammad.²⁰⁹ She also declared that veiling was also related to tradition and mentioned that Jewish women also veiled.²¹⁰ Furthermore, by suggesting that Ottoman Muslim women were not generally different from Western women other than headscarf, Fatma Aliye said exactly:

“Covering their hairs is alone enough. However, the cloth to be worn should cover all her body and should be in a way not to reveal her whole body. Now you see, Turkish women dress like European madams. Women you see in this society are now wearing the visit outfit. But if they went to a feast, they would dress like the same as you do in your parties and dances. On a flamboyant cloth, they wear a loose cloth and cover their hair with headscarf so that their outfit suits the Sharia Law.”²¹¹

Trying to explain herself to Western women, Fatma Aliye put the Western women to center deliberately or unwittingly and felt the need for explaining herself according this center. Her veiling approach was not based on strict rules, such that it was not an incidental situation that she emphasized veiling not as one of Islam’s rules. Moreover, she emphasized that veiling was basically related to tradition. Cloths such as *yaşmak*, *ferace* and *pardah* were local customs that were adopted later on.²¹² On the other hand, she mentioned that veiling is a situation that actually liberated women. Veiling allowed women to be included in men’s social gatherings. Since woman was covered, the potential for “sedition” was eliminated.²¹³

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 381.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 381.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 381.

²⁰⁹ Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Nisvan-i İslam*, (İstanbul: İnkılab Yayınları, 2009), 66.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 50.

²¹¹ Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Nisvan-i İslam*.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Duygu Oylubaş, *Fatma Aliye Hanım'ın Düşünce Dünyası*, (Kayseri: Erciyes University, MA Thesis, 2014), 179.

Ahmed Midhat Efendi distilled about Madam Jan Rikolayof, who was a Non-Muslim woman and of whom Ahmed Midhat did not give that much information about in a letter dated January 1894; and Ahmed Midhat shared his view with Fatma Aliye about how she dressed and how independent she was without any needs for others.

“When it comes to Madame Jan Rikolayof: There is nothing more or less than me in her work and dress. Just like a British with the habit to shave every day... (...) What a great friend she would become for any one! She does not need me, I do not need her. She finds the power to run everything herself with her wisdom, income and encourage, and she is independent.”²¹⁴

In this way, Ahmed Midhat gave a message to the ideal Muslim Ottoman woman.

Consequently, Ahmed Midhat Efendi also shared with Ahmed Cevdet the modernist Islam approach by Cemaladdin Afgani considered by one of the biggest supporters of Islamic modernism. While Afgani approved with his speeches that there was not anything against logic or knowledge in main principles of Islam, he also called Muslims for meeting the needs of the Modern community by expanding the content that Islam had created during Middle Ages.²¹⁵ Finding Islamic basis for their time and state in Golden Age myth, Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Fatma Aliye thus position some of new ideas they posed based on their period under the safe and legitimized umbrella of Islam. This way of thinking was not an approach shared by Fatma Aliye and Ahmed Midhat Efendi, the same way of seeing the Islam as fulcrum formed based on the period in the same pragmatic way was the general politics by Abdulhamid II who created this perspective in a censorship and control environment in which he was the greatest authority. Abdulhamid II emphasized Islam in novelty he implemented. In the process of communication between Islam and the West, the Ottomans undertook a mission aiming to promote themselves as the only Islamic Great Power that wished to join the modern Western Civilization. In this politics, superiority of the West was accepted and the West was in center. However, Islamic basis was required more than ever before not to lose integrity in politics. According to Selim Deringil, the Caliphate emerged as an Islamic basis exactly in such an environment.²¹⁶ Based on what Selim Deringil quoted from Şerif Mardin’s book, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey*,²¹⁷ Islam was used as a tool to cope with Greek and Serbian nationalism during the reign of

²¹⁴ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 170.

²¹⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 300.

²¹⁶ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire (1876-1909)*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998), 18-19.

²¹⁷ Şerif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey*, (New York: Suny Press, 1989), 129.

Abdulhamid II.²¹⁸ Considering the difficult situation the State faced, Abdulhamid emphasized the Hanafi sect as the state policy to legitimise his authority more.²¹⁹ Likewise, Kemal H. Karpat said that a contradictory integrity was observed when Abdulhamid's life and policy were evaluated together. Karpat mentioned that Abdulhamid who lived a westerner's life affected the internal structure of the Ottoman Empire even more than the Tanzimat because of his reforms in areas of westernized style education, communication, administration and transportation. Despite being known as Islamist, when his private life is unveiled, it is seen that he consumed alcohol which was strictly considered to be unlawful according to Hanafi sect of Islam.²²⁰ It can be seen that there is a parallelism between general political structure of the state and thought structures of intellectuals of the period. It was apparent that Fatma Aliye regarded Islam as a fulcrum or tool in her search for women's rights just like similar ideas were seen in Ahmed Midhat Efendi's letters to Fatma Aliye.

Islam had been a fulcrum to reforms or new approaches. This fulcrum was mainly seen in Sultan and his reforms as the biggest owner of the authority, but also these ideas were demonstrated by Ahmed Midhat Efendi who was one of the leading writers of the period and by Fatma Aliye who was among the most important woman writers of the period. All in all, the definition of "ideal daughter" did not stand far from public policy of the period. Ideal daughter was the one who turned her face to the west, who received a good education in the western sense, also respected Islamic values, and who was loyal to tradition. However, these Islamic values and traditions were in a mobile form changing from case to case and from topic to topic. Although some people defined this situation as contradiction, reconsideration of Islam and tradition and showing these as basis for modernity posed a pragmatic fulcrum for the Ottoman modernization and the expansion of Ottoman Muslim women's rights.

5.3 Fatma Aliye as an Ideal Daughter

Perhaps the most important issue in the correspondence between both writers was Ahmed Midhat Efendi's way of addressing and approaching to Fatma Aliye. When we look at Ahmed Midhat Efendi's way of addressing Fatma Aliye, these forms of

²¹⁸ Selim Deringil, *Simge'den Millete II. Abdulhamid'den Mustafa Kemal'e Devlet ve Millet*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 55.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

²²⁰ Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155-160.

addressing were highly embracing with a great diversity outside stereotypical forms of appeal but in a way to establish “a spiritual authority”. This way of authority can be defined as “divine authority”.

Because some of their correspondence were published in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper, Fatma Aliye’s name was not included in the newspaper. Readers knew her as the author of *Meram*. For this reason, while names such as *Young Lady or Interpreter of Meram* were used in 1890, this situation changed in time when identity of Fatma Aliye was revealed and their closeness with Ahmed Midhat Efendi increased. Addressing to Fatma Aliye was changed to “*Meram’s Interpreter Lady Fatma Aliye*”²²¹ when her translation of *Bir Prensesin Tadrîs-i Ulûm (Alyer’s First Letter to the Princess)* was published in *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* newspaper. Later, appeals were mainly towards highlighting the intelligence of Fatma Aliye. Sometimes these appeals were as close as in a father and daughter relationship as an indicator of their closeness such as “My virtuous and philosopher daughter” (*Benim fazıl ve feylesof kızım*)²²², “My Virtuous Daughter! My Clever Daughter! My Unique Daughter!”²²³, and sometimes these appeals were simple as “My Daughter”²²⁴. Although Ahmed Midhat Efendi did not want Fatma Aliye to study philosophy, later, he admired her efforts to study philosophy. Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s addressing to Fatma Aliye also changed in accordance with Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s appreciation such as “My Wise and Philosopher Daughter”.

If we analyze Fatma Aliye’s letters to Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Fatma Aliye was pleased with Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s embrace of her; guiding Fatma Aliye and showing her the way. Principally, it can be easily said from Fatma Aliye’s address to Midhat Efendi that she accepted Ahmed Midhat Efendi as her teacher and spiritual father. “My Father, Sir”²²⁵ and “My Benevolent Master”²²⁶ statements also show that Fatma Aliye accepted Midhat Efendi’s spiritual fatherhood. Saying “I got what I want. What else would a student want... A student says what comes to his/her mind to the master. And the Master answers. If it is true, the master approves, if not, the master corrects. Because criticism can only be between two masters.”²²⁷ Fatma Aliye accepts Ahmed Midhat Efendi as her

²²¹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 53.

²²² *Ibid.*, 58.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 71.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

²²⁵ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 97.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

teacher. In addition to this letter, in another letter in which Fatma Aliye addressed Ahmed Midhat Efendi as “My Benevolent Master”, she said:

“My Dear Master,

My addressing to your high personality with this title is not because I aspire to the honor of being your student. The lessons I took from you is not limited to benefits I had is not limited to the honor after the publication of *Merâm*. For fourteen years, since I was 10 years old, I have read your exalted works and gained knowledge, I have a right to call my virtuous tutor in this way. During this period, I have taken courses from Arabic, Persian and French teachers. But I learned from you to express these correctly.”²²⁸

Thus, clearly expressing that she saw Ahmed Midhat Efendi as her teacher, Fatma Aliye explained her trust and satisfaction in advancing under Midhat Efendi’s control in the same letter as follows:

“Because of this, I intended to go to the literature ball. I did not think that there would be also rovers and despicable people together with virtuous and decent people in the ball. Deceived by the name of the ball, I wore my mask and went there. I met with a team of rovers as I entered the ball. These punks attempted to repel me. At that time, I understood my mistake in coming without a cavalier. Just as I was about to lose hope and run back, the most noble person in this ball came and showed me his arm. There was courage and virtue in the forehead of this cavalier, honesty and clarity in her eyes. Now, I understood that I would go to the center of this ball. Because my cavalier was so powerful that everyone was forced to bow to him. This power and gun is the pen of my cavalier. You can recognize this cavalier, it is you sir!”²²⁹

Without a doubt, Fatma Aliye clearly expressed that she was under the auspices of Ahmed Midhat Efendi and she felt safe because Ahmed Midhat Efendi was one of the leading authors of the period. Fatma Aliye accepted that she could not enter the world of literature which was a world of males. Thus, Fatma Aliye replied to Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s appeals clearly with “My Master” and “My Father”. And Ahmed Midhat Efendi for Fatma Aliye said: “Such a lady calls me my father, then, I will call her my daughter”²³⁰.

Fatma Aliye was also “light of his life”²³¹ and the ideal Ottoman woman for Midhat Efendi who Fatma Aliye regarded as her mentor and spiritual father. While calling her

²²⁸ “*Üstâd-ı ekremim*

Zât-ı âlî -i atûfetlerine bu ünvân ile hitâb edişim şâkirdliğiniz şerefini özenerek takınmak değildir. Zât-ı âlilerinden aldığım ders yalnız Merâm’ın neşrinden sonra nail olduğum ihsânnâmelerine münhasır değildir. On dört senedir yani 10 yaşımdan beri âsâr-ı âliyenizi mutâlaa ile tehsil-i ilm ü marifet eylemiş olduğumdan hâce-i fezâil-mendimi bu ünvân ile yâd etmeye hak ve salâhiyetim vardır. Vâkıa bu on dört sene müddet zarfında nice Arabî, Fârisî ve Fransızca hâcelerinden ders okudum. Derdest edebildiğim leâli-i malûmât-ı şettâ zihnimde mensûr ve müteferrik bir halde olup bunları rişte-i tahrîre dizmeyi âsâr-ı ber-güzidenizden öğrendim.”

Ibid., 36.

²²⁹ Ibid., 36-38.

²³⁰ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 209.

²³¹ Ibid., 98.

“My Prideful Ottoman Daughter,” Ahmed Midhat Efendi indicated Fatma Aliye as one of the most praiseworthy women of the Ottoman Empire. In another letter, Ahmed Midhat Efendi indicated that Fatma Aliye was also an advisor for the Ottoman Muslim women writers, and talked about her as an ideal Muslim woman writer:

“You are such a prominent, sacred and chosen person in the whole Ottoman Empire not just for me(...).”²³²

By highlighting Fatma Aliye so much, Ahmed Midhat Efendi was exposed to some rumors during this period. These rumors were about Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s such praise and emphasis on Fatma Aliye indicating that Ahmed Midhat Efendi tried to say something to women and he used Fatma Aliye since he needed a woman to make him say these words.²³³

“Ahmed Midhat” needed a tool to put his words into woman’s mouth. This tool became Fatma Aliye rather than Gülnar. Even, Midhat Efendi was the reason to translate her works to French and English. While Midhat Efendi intended to encourage Gülnar to make publications on the road for Islamic and Ottoman benefit, he found an Ottoman and Muslim woman like Fatma Aliye and made her complete these publications.²³⁴

So, who was this Lady Gülnar to compare with Fatma Aliye and bothered Ahmed Midhat Efendi with rumors? Ahmed Midhat Efendi mentioned Lady Gülnar at length in his work, *Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan*. Real name of Lady Gülnar was Olga Sergeevna Lebedava. A member of noble family settled in Qazan, Gülnar was known as Olga de Lebedev due to her marriage with a French origin Count Lebedev. Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Lady Gülnar met at a meeting in Stockholm in 1889 and become friends. Introduced to Ahmed Midhat Efendi as a Russian noblewoman who wanted to meet him because she also knew Turkish in addition to many languages, this woman arouse curiosity in Midhat Efendi with her Turkish. Ahmed Midhat Efendi understood that this lady spoke French, German, English, Italian, Greek in addition to her mother tongue, Russian, but also, she was familiar with Arabic and Persian as much as her interest in Turkish. Together with speaking eight or nine foreign languages for a woman who was not yet forty, her perfection in piano and oil painting aroused Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s interest more and more.²³⁵ In his works, Midhat Efendi expressed how much he admired Gülnar and he introduced Gülnar to Fatma Aliye during Gülnar’s visit to Istanbul. Lady

²³² “Siz yalnız bence değil bütün Osmanlılarca öyle mukaddes, müctebâ bir zâtsınız ki...”

Ibid., 71

²³³ Ibid., 193.

²³⁴ Ibid., 193.

²³⁵ İsmail Karaca, “Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Madam Gülnar,” *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, 46 (2012), 56-58.

Gülнар also prepared French translation of Fatma Aliye’s work, *Nisvân-i Islam*, to publish in Paris.²³⁶ The degree of friendship between Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Lady Gülнар was seen very clearly in Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s letters to Fatma Aliye: “Lady Gülнар is still with us. She planned to return last Friday but she could not due to bad weather. She will stay with us until the weather clears up. I wish the weathers will not clear up soon! Oh, what a good way to live.”²³⁷

As a result, both in Midhat Efendi’s works and letters to Fatma Aliye, it was apparent that Midhat Efendi had admired Gülнар before Fatma Aliye. Midhat Efendi’s admiration of both women was based on their intellectual background and their revealing themselves with their intelligence that pertained to men at the period. In this sense, Gülнар and Fatma Aliye were connected. However, Gülнар was older than Fatma Aliye, and her relationship with Midhat Efendi was different in this instance. Midhat Efendi’s direct appeal to Gülнар was not a fatherly one as was the case with Fatma Aliye. Thus, while it was not possible to see Midhat Efendi’s authority on Gülнар, Midhat Efendi could guide Fatma Aliye by evoking Fatma Aliye’s admiration with his qualification as “a spiritual father”. Considering this situation, it seemed very difficult for Gülнар to emerge as “an ideal women writer” mainly because she was not Muslim, also because she was not Ottoman regarding Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s effort to create ‘ideal woman’ and his loyalty to the authority. Ahmed Midhat Efendi, at the same time, regarded Fatma Aliye as a person who would introduce the Ottoman Empire before the West, and he indicated at every opportunity that she was the one to present “us”.²³⁸ For Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Fatma Aliye was an ideal female writer who introduced Muslim and Ottoman women to the West and who became prominent with her ideal stance. Fatma Aliye’s presentation as an ideal among Muslim Ottoman woman writers was expressed not only in the form of addressing but also between the lines of Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s letters and sometimes directly in these letters.

Fatma Aliye’s, a symbol of Ottoman Muslim women, was not only respected in the eyes of Ahmed Midhat Efendi but also by Abdulhamid, the Sultan of the period. Fatma Aliye was in a different status compared to political stance of her sister, Emine Semiye, and approaches of other women in that period. Fatma Aliye accepted to be Midhat Efendi’s “spiritual daughter” and to enter the world of letters by holding her spiritual father’s

²³⁶ Ibid., 67.

²³⁷ İnceođlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 85.

²³⁸ Ibid., 34.

hand. Such that, she knew what would happen when their relationship was considered otherwise. In addition, the Sultan of the period, Abdulhamid II, requested her participation to a Bookstall held in Chicago Exhibition. Fatma Aliye, with her writings, ideas and stance, was approved as “the ideal Ottoman Muslim woman” both by the Sultan and by her master, Midhat Efendi. Thus, she passed the test of approval from these two great authorities.

As a result, Fatma Aliye managed to survive her literary journey that she had started as a good reader, in a male dominated environment under the auspices of Ahmed Mithat, first as an anonymous writer and then with her name, Lady Fatma Aliye. Mithat’s guidance did not end during Fatma Aliye’s process of thinking by herself and beginning to write. Midhat emphasized that Aliye was the ideal Ottoman Muslim woman. Aliye’s existence as an ideal Muslim woman was expressed not only by Midhat as the author in the period but also by the State authority.

5.4 Correspondence with Politics of the Period

Fatma Aliye’s perspective on Islam was similar to that of Ahmed Midhat. In her book called, *Islamic Women*, these women were among Muslim Ottoman women. Although it was not clear, as in Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s definition, whether these were firstly Muslim then Ottoman or firstly Ottoman then Muslim, Ottoman and Islam emerged as a hand in hand definition. For example, she described an ideal Ottoman woman with these words:

“Ladies of families who lived according to Islamic rules and who both knew French and protected decrees and national ideas and customs...”²³⁹ Fatma Aliye stated that, while complying with Islamic rules, loyalty to Ottoman traditions must be ensured. In this sense, it would not be right to suggest that Fatma Aliye’s approach was based on Islamic principles. Both Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Fatma Aliye’s way of discussing Islam occurred in a pragmatic way. It is not possible to say that their methods were based on directly Islam or Ottomanism. It is possible to mention that they employed Islam as a fulcrum to westernization. For example, Fatma Aliye put European women in the center in her book, *Nisvan-i İslam*, and tried to express herself. Under this effort, there was an effort to express herself as a Muslim Ottoman woman and actually to explain that they had similar level of rights compared to western women of the period.

²³⁹ Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Nisvan-i İslam*, (İstanbul: İnkılab Yayınları, 2009).

For this reason, it would be wrong to say that their approaches were completely and directly Islam-oriented. The biggest proof of this fact was the change in Midhat Efendi during the exile in 1873-1876. Before the exile, Ahmed Midhat Efendi worked with Namık Kemal, Ebüzziya Tevfik and Menapirzade Nuri among the most striking names of New Ottomans in the *İbret* newspaper due to his friendship with Namık Kemal. Since these names were defiant ones and due to Ahmed Midhat Efendi's friendship with them, he was sent to exile in 1873. During the period of this exile, Ahmed Midhat Efendi tried to pretend not to understand why he was exposed to this exile, and he performed the role of "victim of friend" as specified by Tanpınar and Handan İnci. However, it is unlikely that Midhat Efendi was realistic in his role of victim of friends. Among the newspapers, he published, the *Devir* was closed in its first issue and the *Bedir* was closed in its 13th issue due to their style. In fact, Midhat Efendi was also accused of heresy due to an article published in the *Dağarcık*.²⁴⁰ As a result, longing for his previous life after he was sent to exile, Ahmed Midhat Efendi tried to sever ties with Namık Kemal and New Ottomans. Ahmed Midhat Efendi was in the effort to show himself different from others and to return to his peaceful trades life between his printing house and home.²⁴¹

It is possible to see projections of how the authority set Ahmed Midhat Efendi was straight. However, the real problem here is to show the fact that approaches by Ahmed Midhat Efendi and his student, Fatma Aliye, were not purely based on Islam. Some of his ideas were against the authoritative voice of the state. It can be understood from Ahmed Midhat Efendi's approach and language in his articles that being accused of heresy and, consequently, being sent away from his family and work resulted in limiting his thoughts. This approach in thought and difference in style were reflected on Fatma Aliye when she wrote her articles and novels. While Fatma Aliye was in an intellectual ground that paid more attention to limitations of the period in her articles, she also created characters over the limit in her novels. Her approach to issues was based on Islam when appropriate and at a level that directly coincided with modern patterns, progress and positivism. For this reason, basis of her thought was not directly Islam or any other reasons put against Islam. Fatma Aliye or her mentor found Islamic basis or historical basis for what they would tell. For example, Fatma Aliye began her book,

²⁴⁰ Koray Saridoğan, Some Points on Ahmet Midhat and Dağarcık Magazine, *İdil*, 3.11 (2014): 137-146.

²⁴¹ Handan İnci, *Menfa: Sürgün Hatıraları / Ahmed Midhat Efendi*, (İstanbul: Arma Yayınları, 2002), 9-10.

Nisvan-i İslam, not with an Islamic introduction but with arguments of progressive mentality of the period. She said that limited correspondences were a factor that complicated communication. She attributed great importance to the invention of steamships, railroad construction and therefore speed.²⁴² Fatma Aliye believed in moving the age of speed. A reflection of her thought towards acting as per time was also revealed while she explained the Sharia. In the same book where her thoughts on marriage were included, Fatma Aliye did not mention whether flirting was a sin or not. She said that it was a matter of tradition. Even if incest was a sin in Islam, it was a subject that would change according to the conditions of this period. She gave the best example of this fact as follows: “Understanding of the era is very effective in this matter. Havva gave birth to twins of a boy and a girl each time. Religious principles of that period did not forbid marriage among these siblings. While it had been *halal* to marry your siblings, then it was forbidden by religion.”²⁴³

Here, Fatma Aliye supported her own pragmatic opinion while stating that decrees changed in time under the conditions of the period. It could not be coincidental that she selected this example. Fatma Aliye said that it would be considered *halal* if required on a subject, such as incestuous relationship, that cannot be accepted not only by Islam but also many other religions and even many secular societies. However, she talked about change in this tradition. With such an example, Fatma Aliye’s aim was not to express ‘us’ to foreigners. As specified by Irvin Cemil Schick, this was an ironical approach just like in Turkish proverb “Daughter, I’m telling to you, but my daughter in law, it is the one who should listen!” Apparently, Fatma Aliye’s counterparts were some foreigners through whom she tried to eliminate the wrong impression about the Ottoman society; but it was also apparent that the book targeted Ottoman readers.²⁴⁴ In this sense, it is not difficult to conclude that Fatma Aliye’s perspective on problems of her time was in parallel with this example and similar to pragmatic approach of her mentor, Ahmed Midhat.

²⁴² Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Nisvan-i İslam*, (İstanbul: İnkılab Yayınları, 2009), 7.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁴⁴ Irvin Cemil Schick, *Bedeni, Toplumu, Kainatı Yazmak* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 238.

5.5 Midhat Efendi's Effects on Aliye's Writing Process: From Translation to Novel

Irvin Cemil Schick denoted Midhat Efendi as one of the most distinguished figures of the press capitalism in the Ottoman Empire during the period.²⁴⁵ Many important works of the period were published in his printing press. Ahmed Midhat Efendi did not only lead Fatma Aliye in the intellectual sense, but also chose to become her guide in her literary style; thus, he influenced Fatma Aliye. First, it was important that Ahmed Midhat Efendi encouraged Fatma Aliye to write novels rather than translations. Another point to be considered was that Ahmed Midhat Efendi opposed to Fatma Aliye's poetry writing and he found poetry unsuitable for women. Midhat Efendi's guidance in Fatma Aliye's writing process from translation to novel, from here to her philosophy writings will be examined in the light of letters available.

First, Fatma Aliye explained at length that she needed to write prose works. Fatma Aliye said that Prophet Muhammad's wife Aisha was a woman of knowledge and she wrote works in genres of verse and prose. And she added, following the period of Prophet, many women scholars and poets lived in the Umayyad and the Abbasid periods. Later, Fatma Aliye praised Lady Zeynep, Lady Mihri and poet Lady Leyla. She said that they wrote poetry for the sake of their century. However, with the developing and changing time, she regarded poetry of the period not as the age of poetry but the age of prose. She explained the understanding of time (or speed) with following words:

"This period is the one that needs prose rather than poetry. Because we have more belongings. There are new inventions such as steamship and railway. In accordance with that speed, the telegraph is invented. It is like *tayy-ı mekân*²⁴⁶ 'teleportation' and time within time is experienced! People are forced to live in a hurry. Those who used to get to work slowly, now in a crowded fight. You will notice this haste on the bridge. Everybody runs to catch the ferry, and those coming out of the ferry hurry to bring letters to the post office and some of them to give telegraph to the telegraph shop, to catch tram or towards their hackney coach and the coachman tries to drive faster for his next customers. (...) Now not only men but also women have abandoned their heavy shoes and been forced to wear simple shoes or boots.

(...) Formerly, stories were written in verse. So now, if these works were written in verse today, would they give the quality of older works even a bit? If published books of science were written in verse, would it be possible to explain the subject regardless of how much rich the poet's language was? As you utter, writer dominates his/her own words in prose, but not in verse."²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 239.

²⁴⁶ *To be seen in different locations by overcoming places*

²⁴⁷ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 9.

With such words, Aliye described her thoughts based on progressive mentality. Here, clearly Fatma Aliye indicated that it would be appropriate to write works in prose in accordance with the spirit of the period as widely used in the West instead of traditional ones. In doing so, she indicated that conditions of the period changed not only for the men but also for women. With the changing circumstances, women also wanted to keep up with the era of 'speed'. Therefore, prose became a field that would be emphasized not only by male writers but also women writers. Requirements of the age covered not only men but also women who were regarded as pioneers of the modernity. In addition, Fatma Aliye specified that prose was needed to express both ideas of the age and its philosophical understanding. "If philosophers had waited so much to discover something, it would not possible to spread the knowledge, even to understand."²⁴⁸ With such statement, she showed prose as a requirement of his time.

Fatma Aliye's literary life began with her translation of Georges Ohnet's novel, *Volontè*, by the name, *Meram*, in 1889. This work published under the pseudonym, A Lady, and many more met with readers after being controlled by Ahmed Midhat. Then, Ahmed Midhat Efendi said that Fatma Aliye would have to write her own works rather than translations, actually he emphasized how important Fatma Aliye was. But her narration was under Midhat Efendi's control and usually with his guidance. Ahmed Midhat Efendi explained Fatma Aliye's writing original works rather than translations:

"What we expected from you is not translation. It is your identity. Let me give you an example to explain this difference: For instance, a trip was made from Paris to Rome and the trip is penned. Here is the objective to write geographical states between two locations? No! These have been written a thousand times. Therefore, it would consist of copies. .."²⁴⁹

Saying many things on Fatma Aliye's style of writing novel, the spiritual father, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, explained in a letter about novels written in 1893 about how to write a novel, what the novel meant and the main elements constituting a novel. Indicating that Fatma Aliye did not know how to develop a plot, Ahmed Midhat Efendi explained Fatma Aliye how to write a novel:

"Madam, it is clear that a novel should include a hero. The hero should have a heroine. First, their objectives are determined. Conditions such as 'Do they desire to meet each other or want to be rich? Do they want revenge?' will be aim of novel and also called subject of a novel. After determining these subjects, the conclusion, called denouement, is taken into consideration.

²⁴⁸ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 10.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 170.

Namely, will these characters reach their goals? This point is specified. Causes if their objectives will be reached, obstacles if not should be determined...²⁵⁰

With such statement, Ahmed Midhat Efendi explained Fatma Aliye at length about the most basic version of novel today in line with Fatma Aliye's request. However, Midhat Efendi's guidance of Fatma Aliye was not limited to description of how to write a novel. Besides, Midhat Efendi commented on the development of characters in novels and even their relationship with each other. For example, in a letter written in 1894, Midhat Efendi indicated that he had read some of Fatma Aliye's work, *Levayih-i Hayat* and even with reading some of it, the novel aroused great curiosity in him, Midhat Efendi congratulated Fatma Aliye for arousing such curiosity. But nevertheless, Midhat Efendi indicated that he did not find characters realistic enough.²⁵¹ Without refraining from making long descriptions on Fatma Aliye's characters, Midhat Efendi emphasised more realistic creation of Fehame, another heroine in *Levayih-i Hayat* than the definition "a girl who speaks French, takes history and philosophy courses, is trained in European style".²⁵² Besides, Midhat Efendi warned Fatma Aliye about not to include a situation or event as disgusting as "prostitution" in her novels.²⁵³ But in the end, Midhat Efendi stated "Again, you know best;"²⁵⁴ and indicated that Fatma Aliye had the last word. In addition, Midhat stated that Fatma Aliye might examine mythology if she would discuss love in the novel. This mythology is not Arab or Eastern mythology, he described Eros from the Greek mythology. Indicating that mythology would be one's definite source if love theme was used in a novel, he added his advice on love with following words:

"A blindfolded beautiful and crazy child takes an arrow in his hand and throws randomly. Here, the lover is the helpless one targeted by this arrow! So, firstly, there is a childishness in this! Secondly, there is blindness! Thirdly, there is coincidence! In its entirety, there is madness."²⁵⁵

Fatma Aliye developed Fehame's views on love, who was one of the heroines in *Levayih-i Hayat*, as follows: "Either love is a disease or a kind of insanity, if there is a disease like that, it should be avoided."²⁵⁶

In the same letter, Midhat Efendi also indicated that it was not necessary to read Emile Zola. "Do not read Emile Zola to learn about love. Never read! The world's most

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 156.

²⁵¹ Inceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 159.

²⁵² Ibid., 163.

²⁵³ Ibid., 164.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 164.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 164.

²⁵⁶ Fatma Aliye Hanım, *Levayih-i Hayat*, (İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2012), 4.

hollow man is Emile Zola. Even in an immodest country like France, he was criticized because of his profligacy.”²⁵⁷ With these expressions, Ahmed Midhat Efendi explained in vague form that he did not like Emile Zola. He also recognized Emile Zola with his naturalistic novel and wrote his thoughts on the subject. Deducting from the foreword to *Müşahedat*, Midhat Efendi liked naturalist writers because of their seriousness in novels, attention to observations and their effort to reflect the reality, but he found it wrong to talk about only the ugliness of life, immorality in society and showing evil deeds through ignoring the good, beautiful and sublime things. Judging by the naturalistic novels, Ahmed Midhat Efendi said that there was no virtue left in France other than prostitution, debauchery and poverty. Whereas this was not the reality; the author should explain not only the bad and ugly but also the good and beautiful. Ahmed Midhat Efendi believed ignoring good aspects of human and society would not comply with realism. Midhat Efendi wrote *Müşahedat* with the aim of explaining the good and the bad as an example of “a natural” novel.²⁵⁸ With its title meaning “observations”, he claimed that this book was the first naturalistic novel of the Turkish literature. Criticizing Emile Zola, Ahmed Midhat Efendi wrote *Müşahedat* to show how to write a naturalistic novel in true sense.²⁵⁹ Ahmed Midhat Efendi did not limit his views on novels only with his letters to Fatma Aliye, but he stated in his book, *Ahbar-i Asara Tamim-i Enzar*, as follows:

“Is the name, ... a novel? Surely as a dream! Is it necessary to explain again that this is a dream? If its name is “sugar”, it is absolutely a dessert. Is it is necessity to define it again as a dessert? When it comes to reality, it is rather strange. Because is it genuine? Then, it cannot be a novel, it will be history.” With such expression, Midhat Efendi apparently could not distinguish between realism and naturalism.²⁶⁰

However, he still did not refrain from guiding Fatma Aliye and transferring what he knew. Besides, Midhat Efendi criticized Emile Zola while discussing in the novel type by finding it inappropriate for morality. Midhat Efendi also underlined the gender discrimination while specifying that he did not consider Zola’s expressions not only for a woman but also for a man.

His thoughts on Fatma Aliye’s writing style were not limited to her style and approach. Midhat Efendi’s guidance or interventions also covered moral code of the novel and the

²⁵⁷ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 165.

²⁵⁸ Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Müşahedat*, (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 2006).

²⁵⁹ *Romanda Estetik Kalkışma-1: Osmanlıda Toplumsal Değişim*, edited by Cengiz Gündoğdu (İstanbul: İnsancıl Yayınları, 2015), 40-41.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

writer. In the same letter, Midhat Efendi indicated that platonic love was not suitable for Fatma Aliye's novels. "Please, do not talk about *amour platonique* again. This is not a word that can be used by a woman or any honest writers."²⁶¹ By stating if reason was included in love, it would be called friendliness and could not be called love anymore, Midhat Efendi tried to form opinions of Fatma Aliye's characters on love. Midhat Efendi wanted to see his opinions on love in Fatma Aliye's novels. According to Midhat Efendi, a novel was required to focus on certain qualities in terms of love, he draw a path from misleading writer, Emile Zola, to the necessity to read Greek mythology. Midhat Efendi also appreciated Fatma Aliye in terms of her novel writing. He indicated that he read the novel, *Muhâdarât*, in 36 hours. He honored Fatma Aliye by indicating that he had not read any novels like this one. However, he indicated points to be corrected in the novel as well.²⁶²

Although Midhat Efendi specified the necessity of prose as a requisite of the period, he was not against poetry. According to him, if poetry and prose were together, they would become "light above light!" (*nûrun alâ nûr*)²⁶³. However, although he said to give a special importance to poem, he did not support Fatma Aliye at the point of writing poetry. He even warned Fatma Aliye on writing poetry and indicated that he did not like her poems. In a letter dated 1890, writing down "My Lady, write whatever you want and you wish, but I will tell you what I see correct," Midhat Efendi reminded Fatma Aliye not to publish any of her poems that she had shared with Gülnar, even not to show to others.²⁶⁴ In another letter, Midhat Efendi explained his thoughts in detail and at length to Fatma Aliye about not to write poems. When describing the prose, Midhat Efendi indicated that it was one of requirements of the modern era and a tool of expression for a progressive and positivist mentality, and said following things about poetry: "First, poetry is the language of mysticism. Second, it is the language of wisdom. Third, it is the language of love."²⁶⁵ By this way, Midhat Efendi revealed two quite different forms of expressions. He also remarked that language of poetry was that of liars. In fact, he reminded of a common saying in the Ottoman society said by poets for themselves: "Do not be fooled, a poet's word is a lie."²⁶⁶ Thus, while there was an

²⁶¹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 165.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁶³ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 10.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

approach in which the reality could be expressed, Midhat Efendi put the other side a genre which told lies as its opposite. Explaining his thoughts on poetry in this way, Midhat Efendi did not stop writing a few things on Fatma Aliye's poetry writing. Midhat Efendi clearly expressed that he liked Fatma Aliye's style in prose but he did not like her poetry in terms of content. Because he did not find Fatma Aliye's poetry morally appropriate. According to him, a woman could not say so publicly that she was yearning for love. This is not true and acceptable in terms of morals. In addition, he remarked that poetry was a suitable genre to express this "immoral" states, but it would not be possible to express these feelings through prose.²⁶⁷ Thus, while Midhat Efendi demonstrated prose directly as more rational, coherent and morally favorable, he explained poetry as irrational, inconsistent and morally unfavorable tool of expressing emotions. Such that, Midhat Efendi got angry in Fatma Aliye's poetry writing so much that he made the following emotional and angry expressions: "What makes you write such things? Poetry! Damn that poetry!"²⁶⁸ With such words, he reminded Fatma Aliye that she exceeded her limit and stormed at poetry genre. Angered by Fatma Aliye's poem, Ahmed Midhat Efendi indicated that Fatma Aliye would not write such type of things with a softer voice. In fact, he indicated that he would deny Fatma Aliye's poetry if he saw this poem anywhere else. He explained why he would do such denial with these words: "Because my wise daughter does not need this kind of poetry to demonstrate her superior value. These are not my wise daughter's work, it is the work of ladies such as Lady Nigar."²⁶⁹ He clearly stated that he did not want Fatma Aliye to write poetry. Especially he was against a woman's writing love poems in such an explicit language. In addition, it was not in vain to give the example of Lady Nigar. Because he remarked that neither he nor Europeans would like what Nigar Hanım wrote. Moreover, he did not expect from "an ideal Ottoman woman" to write like Nigar Hanım. Not only would it be inappropriate for Fatma Aliye shown as an ideal Muslim Ottoman woman to write in poetry but also would she become a writer behind her age and who was not interested by Europeans. For this reason, Midhat Efendi tried to set Fatma Aliye straight as his ideal woman. Besides, he showed an understanding breaking away from the traditional line by indicating that it was not necessary to directly adhere to the tradition and to write according to needs of the period.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 67.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 67.

²⁶⁹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 67.

“My clever daughter! My wise daughter! Just because poets have gone this way, it is not necessary for us to follow their steps.”²⁷⁰ With such statement, he explained his thoughts on poetry with his usual pragmatic attitude. That is because, while Midhat Efendi relied on tradition and religion to defend his thoughts if required, sometimes he stated that it is not required to rely on tradition that much and even to review some terms of religion by considering conditions of the period. Here, he indicated that there was no necessity of continuing poetry just because poetry was popular and it would be more accurate to prefer prose because of conditions of the period.

“As a result, I show my enmity even towards my imagination. I do not want that my wise daughter should be like Leylas, Fitnats! I want her to be like Victor Hugo. If my daughter is to recite poems, she should recite like Naci’s Lamb (*Kuzu*), Cloud (*Sehabe*) and Dove (*Kebuter*).”²⁷¹

Midhat Efendi indicated his intention towards Fatma Aliye’s approach to poetry and literature. With his generalization of others like Leyla and Fitnat, he talked about poets who were loyal to the Divan literature, which was an Ottoman Classical Period poetry tradition. Even not expecting from Fatma Aliye such a poetic trial, Midhat Efendi considered Victor Hugo as the most ideal writer, who was also representative of the Romantic movement. But, if Fatma Aliye were to insist on writing poetry, Midhat Efendi would recommend her to write poems like those written by Muallim Naci. Naci began writing poetry in a classical style, and then, continued to write more realistic poems under the influence of his discussions with Beşir Fuad, and he was in an objective attitude towards understanding the reality. Naci and Beşir Fuad approached in a common opinion by considering that reality could be decorated in poetry on side of Naci and decorations would be acceptable if not changing the reality on the side of Beşir Fuad.²⁷² Thus, Naci’s poetry style became at almost a parallel level with Beşir Fuad’s realism. Midhat Efendi stated that Fatma Aliye would at least write like Naci. He said he could prepare Fatma Aliye’s writing for publication only if she wrote in that way.²⁷³ Even, Midhat Efendi indicated that Fatma Aliye’s brother, Ali Sedat, should not worry about Fatma Aliye’s writings. But this way, namely in classical attitude, Midhat Efendi wrote that Fatma Aliye had to control her poems about love not to make her brother, Ali Sedat, worry about her because Midhat Efendi suggested that women should not discuss subjects such as love. Because if Fatma Aliye continued to write this

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 68.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 70.

²⁷² Handan İnci, *Şiir ve Hakikat*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 25.

²⁷³ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 70.

way, readers might infer false reality from her dreams in these poems. If this happens, it would be right for the Ali Sedat to worry.²⁷⁴ Thus, Midhat Efendi used patriarchal family ties while trying to impose his own thoughts on Fatma Aliye.

In his letter sent to Fatma Aliye in 1891, beginning with “You have become more than I thought, my wise daughter”²⁷⁵, it was possible to observe from following words that he stood with Fatma Aliye, namely, Fatma Aliye is approved by Midhat:

“Yes, my virtuous daughter, we are both novelists! We are novelists together. Why should I be better than you because I started the job earlier than you? A camel caravan could set out three months ago, but a train may pass it.”²⁷⁶

Midhat Efendi praised Fatma Aliye with these words. One of the frequent situations in Midhat Efendi’s letters is as follows: To determine certain limits to Fatma Aliye, to show himself as superior than Fatma Aliye due to being her mentor and spiritual father, to try to establish an equality in virtue of a father if required. However, this equality was never perceived as a real equality. Because, while doing this, Midhat Efendi tried to indicate Fatma Aliye where to stand. By showing that his perspective on literature was the same with Fatma Aliye’s approach, Midhat Efendi brought Fatma Aliye to a point where he wanted see her.

A few months later, a letter by Fatma Aliye related to writing was also important in understanding Fatma Aliye’s position as a result of her correspondence with Midhat. Primarily, Fatma Aliye began her letter with an appeal, “My generous Master”, stating that she was a student of Midhat. She indicated that they had previously talked about writing. She said to reach a conclusion on writing. But she specified that her mentor Midhat Efendi’s views were very important to maintain this idea and she would not insist on her opinion without his approval. Based on her assertions on writing, it would be a mistake to say that Fatma Aliye had qualified literary knowledge. Her ideas on writing was highly simple, straight forward and emotional. In a letter in which she explained her thoughts about writing, she wrote a simple beginning: “Writing, *kitabete*

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 70.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 82.

²⁷⁶ “*Evet fâzıl kızım romancıyız. Hem de ikimiz beraber romancıyız. Benim sizden evvel işe başlamış olduğum için sizden büyük olmaklığım neden lazım gelsin? Bir deve kârbâni üç ay evvel yola çıkmış ise bir şimendifer katarı üç günde onu geçebilir.*”
Ibid., 82.

(literary composition) in Arabic, is cohesion of pen with paper, and the one writing this is called writer.”²⁷⁷ She distinguished writer and author.

She said “Who is the man of letters? What is literature? Since words of literary and literature was Arabic, I began to look for it in Arabic language and culture.”²⁷⁸ Besides, Fatma Aliye was also in the opinion that literature would not be as in old times in a changing and modernizing period.

“Are not there the literary newspapers, now? These are called literature in French, and writers mention about history, geography and philosophy according to their branches. These sciences and literature are classified among themselves.”²⁷⁹ Furthermore, regarding the authorship as a God’s gift, Fatma Aliye asked his spiritual father Midhat Efendi the following question: “That is to say, writing good is different from writing honestly. Everyone has a desire to read works of these people called “littérature”. So, this quality is a God-given property. What do you think about this?”²⁸⁰ In return, Midhat Efendi said that the issue could not simply be explained as such, even this quality was a God’s gift, a writer would achieve a good level only by working hard with a reference to diligence in his life.²⁸¹

Thoughts and discussions on novel and writing would reveal themselves as letters continued. Many writers posed their opinions on differences and similarities between realism and naturalism as one of most important discussions in the period. Finding Emile Zola harmful and immoral due to his subjects on people and environment, Midhat Efendi was also against materialist and positivist world view of Beşir Fuad, who was the leading proponent of naturalism in the period.²⁸² However, he specified that reality should be written as much as possible. Midhat Efendi wrote the following words in response to a letter from Fatma Aliye: “Writing what is right and real is not novel. Then, it becomes history. What you write should be the product of your own imagination”.²⁸³

Fatma Aliye sent each of her novels to Midhat Efendi for reading. Midhat Efendi had detailed reviews on contents, structure and characters of Fatma Aliye’s works. In these

²⁷⁷ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 90.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 91-92.

²⁸² Handan İnci, *Şiir ve Hakikat*, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999), 21-25.

²⁸³ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 179.

reviews, Midhat Efendi mainly used his “spiritual fatherhood” to harshly criticise Fatma Aliye and sometimes he approached with a supporting style. In her novel, *Levâ-yih-i Hayat* (Scenes from Life), Fatma Aliye tried to explain women how to be a good wife, a good daughter and compatible woman by considering moral principles of the period. The most important feature of this work in terms of literature was the lack of intervening narrator. In a sense, Fatma Aliye took one step forward in her literary life. In this work, marriage, family, harmony female-male relationships among upper class women coming from rich and cultured families of the period were told, and importance of loyalty in the relationship and unlawful cohabitation were described. Thus, rather than women who followed an extreme and uncanny emotion as described by Midhat Efendi, the novel included rational characters who knew what they were doing. This novel was published as a book in 1898, and published in *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Women’s Newspaper) in the same year in 1898.²⁸⁴ In 1894, it is possible to observe from available letters that Fatma Aliye shared the first draft of this work with Midhat. Midhat Efendi read her novel twice and referred to points where correction was deemed appropriate by taking detailed notes. However, Midhat Efendi also specified that she did not have to apply these corrections, these were only his thoughts.²⁸⁵ After stating missing parts of the novel, Midhat Efendi did not see appropriate that characters’ names resembled each other. First, Fatma Aliye named her characters Fehame, Mehabe, Sabahe and Melahe. However, Fatma Aliye took into consideration Midhat Efendi’s such suggestion and she changed names of some characters to avoid any resemblances in their names. The work consisted of 11 letters by five women relatives, three of whom were married. Consisting of correspondence between five women named Fehame, Mehabe, Sabahat, Nebahat and İtimad, the work was much simpler than general style in the period.²⁸⁶ Five upper class women discussed in these letters how to achieve harmony in marriage, how disgusting unlawful cohabitation might result in disgusting and horrible outcomes and how bad a husband’s disloyalty was. Thus, women’s issues in the period were discussed and necessity to obey the traditional order was described in this work. But in the tenth letter, Nebahat and İtimad asked the following question about bad marriages: “Are all this training and manners just intended to make our future

²⁸⁴ Fatma Aliye, *Hayattan Sahneler (Levâ-yih-i Hayât)*, edited by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2002), XV.

²⁸⁵ Inceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 181.

²⁸⁶ Fatma Aliye, *Hayattan Sahneler (Levâ-yih-i Hayât)*, edited by Tülay Gençtürk Demircioğlu (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2002).

husbands like us?” Besides, although there was criticism of bad husband in their correspondence, necessity of husband was also emphasized. Marriage and child birth were shown as the requirement of nature. “Without the nature’s great gift given to me as motherhood, what is the meaning of fortune without kids to beautify our lives? However, if my partner were a person like many others I see, I would also have pity on my children to be born.”²⁸⁷ With such statement, they showed both the request of a woman who wanted to fulfill motherhood in her nature and the dilemma of Ottoman educated woman who questioned and thought. In fact, one of the characters in the book, Nebahat, said that she distinguished from other women with her education and being more intelligent. Even she stated that other women could be how much happy because they thought nothing but wedding dresses, money, their husbands’ length, but it was hard to be happy for a questioning and thinking woman.²⁸⁸ Thus, she recalled the saying ‘imbecile heureux’ and tried to describe the educated women’s dilemma.

As a result, considering Midhat Efendi’s guidance, Fatma Aliye put forward a work that was different in terms of its subject and its style and manner of expression. We understand that Fatma Aliye shared her plan and development of characters with her mentor, Midhat Efendi, before writing *Levayih-i Hayat*.

Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s thoughts on Fatma Aliye’s literary life were not limited to his comments and guidance for what Fatma Aliye wrote. At the same time, Midhat Efendi said that Fatma Aliye should also read works from classical French literature to improve her French. Evaluating Emile Zola as ‘a useless man’ and not recommending to Fatma Aliye to read him, Midhat Efendi recommended to read Francois de Fenelon, who was shown among the most important authors of the French Classical Drama, especially *Télémaque* written on subjects such as education, morality, politics and religion. Besides, he recommended Fatma Aliye to read the most important writers of French literature such as Octave Feuillet and Alexandre Dumas Fils.²⁸⁹

In addition to his views on novel plans and recommendation towards novels to read, Midhat Efendi also kindly requested from Fatma Aliye to share her articles with him before sending to the newspaper after he learned that she wrote in *Women’s Newspaper*:

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 91.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 187.

“I am your *kapukethüda*. What you write will come to me, then I will send them to the printing press. Then, all pages, letters and everything addressing you from there will come to me and I will deliver to you. Never think that we have no trust in you and we want to bring you under control. Such an insecurity cannot be found in me, nor in your husband. Here my intention is to write my comments on any documents that will come to you and to send these documents together with my comments to save us time. Do you understand? Or else, not just for your husband nor for me, but also there are not any women among the society who is more trustworthy than you.”²⁹⁰

With such a statement, he again underlined his authority as a spiritual father. Midhat Efendi stated that Fatma Aliye was different from other women with her education and way of thinking. He showed this difference as a virtue every time. However, it was also apparent that Midhat Efendi tried to conclude Fatma Aliye’s journey beginning with difference, namely a stance different from traditional women of the period, in the end with obedience. Just like Erich Fromm suggested that the history of human began with disobedience but unfortunately end with obedience,²⁹¹ it would not be absurd to think the same for Fatma Aliye’s journey.

Encouraging Fatma Aliye on writing novel, Midhat Efendi did not lean towards her writing on philosophy. Until the end of the 19th century, Saadettin Taftazani was read also in Ottoman madrassah. Taftazani excluded philosophy and indicated that basic questions of existence should be searched in theology and interpretation books.²⁹² With regard to the development of philosophy in Islam, Fazlur Rahman indicated that the tradition of intellectual philosophy still lived in various commentaries and booklets written in various styles as a tool for theology or a critic of theology, and that they were developed into a new and important style which could be called religious philosophy or philosophical religion.²⁹³ Thinking that philosophy in Islam was demolished with Ghazali’s approach and stating that Islam philosophy entered into a bumpy path with a mystic approach, Fazlur Rahman explained at length in this book, *Islam*, about what philosophy in Islam was and how this philosophy had been developed.²⁹⁴ On the other

²⁹⁰ “Ben sizin kapukethüdanızım. Yazdıklarınız bana gelecek, ben matbaaya göndereceğim, oradan size hitâb olacak varaka, mektub, herşeyler dahi bana gelecek ben size irsâl edeceğim. Sakın zannetme ki size emniyetimiz yoktur da sizi kontrol altına almak istiyoruz. Böyle bir emniyetsizlik bende değil kocanızda dahi yoktur. Bundan murâdım size gelecek evrâk hakkında söyleyeceğim şey ne olursa onu söyleyip ikisini beraber göndermektir ki bu sûretle zaman kazanmış oluruz. Anladınız mı? Yoksa yalnız kocanız yalnız benim nezdimde değil inde’l- umûm sizin kadar emîn-i mü’temen-i müste’men hiçbir kadın yoktur.”

Ibid., 311.

²⁹¹ Erich Fromm, *İtaatsizlik Üzerine*, (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2014), 7.

²⁹² Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1993), 23.

²⁹³ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 179.

²⁹⁴ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

hand, by considering even today questions of whether philosophy in Islam is possible, it can be said that Fatma Aliye's wish to study philosophy was an example of higher intellectual approach as a woman of the period.

It can be seen from Midhat Efendi's letters to Fatma Aliye that questions of whether philosophy was appropriate in Islam were asked in the 19th century. Midhat Efendi was a manifestation of Ghazali philosophy that continued in his period by stated that the reason for not wanting Fatma Aliye to write about philosophy was not originated from his doubt on her belief. "Because your belief does not change based on anything like that. You are a woman who has become a philosopher with Qur'an philosophy."²⁹⁵ Because Midhat Efendi did not refrain from emphasizing that Fatma Aliye was the ideal Muslim Ottoman woman. Midhat Efendi stated that he had read Darwin, Descartes and Spinoza but they did nothing except exhausting people. "What else do these book benefit expect talking at length and exhausting people? They could not connect themselves to something, so their readers could connect their readers!"²⁹⁶ With these statements, Midhat Efendi underestimated these important names guiding the European philosophy and effecting the world, he also did not want Fatma Aliye to read them. However, Fatma Aliye read works and lives of philosophers such as Spinoza, Descartes, Darwin and Auguste Comte with the approval and admiration of her father Cevdet despite Midhat Efendi's objection.²⁹⁷ Midhat Efendi stated that he found philosophy unnecessary and a valuable writer like Fatma Aliye should not deal with unnecessary things. Midhat Efendi indicated that it would be more suitable for Fatma Aliye to deal with history rather than philosophy. Because, according to Midhat Efendi, starting point of each science was history. Midhat Efendi persistently told Fatma Aliye that it would be appropriate to study history of philosophy.²⁹⁸ Besides, rather than generating ideas on philosophy, he indicated that Fatma Aliye would be developed more by translating philosophy works and studying history of philosophy. Therefore, Fatma Aliye would be able to see that philosophers' lives and their thoughts never coincided. He also did not forget to indicate that Fatma Aliye needed to take lessons from such inconsistency among philosophers.

²⁹⁵ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 119.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 119.

²⁹⁷ Güven Taneri Uluköse, *Fatma Aliye: Bir Biyografi*, (İstanbul: Cinius Yayınları, 2013), 48.

²⁹⁸ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 120.

Fatma Aliye's desire to study philosophy also continued despite the opposition from Midhat. In another letter, Midhat Efendi did not force Fatma Aliye not to study philosophy. He was convinced that she wanted to work on philosophy and said that she would choose which field of philosophy to study.

"What is your purpose? Rejecting materialism? Or do you want to carry out translation of philosophy? As a result, you must first set yourself a goal." These statements indicate what Fatma Aliye wanted to work on.

Although Midhat Efendi had not given proper works in poetry, he specified to Fatma Aliye how much he knew about poetry. Thus, it would be easier to introduce himself as an authority in Fatma Aliye's poetry adventure. Likewise, Midhat Efendi told Fatma Aliye how much he knew about philosophy as follows:

"I, your servant, have read a lot of philosophy books. All books by Auguste Comte are in five volumes -Course de Philosophie Positive-. Bühner, Schopenhauer, Pascal, and Spinoza, I have pondered all about them. Do you know what I saw in all these books? Although they are initially well-ordered and examined as to surprise minds, they are all incomplete in the end. I mean they could not reach the desired ends and their books, and in relation to their books, their occupations as well are most incomplete. Let us say "fruitless". I mean that you read those numerous points full of volumes, but when the book is finished, we are compelled to say that it is connected to no end when we asked "To what end this is connected?". However, entrance to the aim is quite well-ordered in these and your book should contain the same order as well. Thanks to the Islamic wisdom, you may even not leave the end fruitless."²⁹⁹

He wrote to Fatma Aliye that he considered philosophical thoughts developing in Europe as empty and meaningless. Furthermore, he added "seeing that I could not detract you from philosophy, then please tell me the kind of philosophy you want to write, send me your plan and I will help you in writing philosophy."³⁰⁰ Although Midhat Efendi could not prevent Fatma Aliye from writing on philosophy, he did not want her to get out of his control. Then, he mentioned about his philosophy knowledge at length. In doing so, he used French expressions. Besides, Midhat Efendi did not use a consistent language in expressing his thoughts on philosophy. First, he said that European philosophers were useless and also he criticized them on failure to reach a conclusion. On the other hand, again in the same letter, he indicated that he had read writings of many philosophers starting with Aristotle and Plato to the 19th century positivist philosophers. But he said that it was not possible to talk about classified and categorized philosophy in the Ottoman Empire and in other similar civilizations as in

²⁹⁹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 140

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

the West. He mentioned having read Şehristani's *Milel-u Nihal* and Ghazzali's *İhya-yı Ulum* and Cürçani's *Şerh-i Mevakıf*, but indicated that these philosophers could not completely grab Greek philosophy in harmony. Even so, according to Ahmed Midhat Efendi, their dreams could not reach classification of the 19th century Europe.³⁰¹ Midhat Efendi began to explain the necessity of learning the European philosophy and said to Fatma Aliye: "You guys are so easy to discredit the European philosophy. But they are broader and inclusive."³⁰²

After giving his opinions and suggestions on philosophy in detail, Midhat Efendi suggested Fatma Aliye to consult her father Cevdet for the final word and wanted her to consult her father regarding philosophy. But finally, he said that even he could not write anything about philosophy. Because according to him, his time to write philosophy did not come. Even he did not write anything about philosophy, and in this case, he did not like Fatma Aliye's desire to write on philosophy. He wrote the last sentences: "I do not even dare to write. Based on this fact, consider writing on philosophy. Besides, please do not write something yourself by following your enthusiasm in this dangerous road."³⁰³ Midhat Efendi ended the letter by specifying that she should not write without consulting him.

In their following correspondence, Midhat Efendi expressed his opinions on philosophy in detailed discussions on philosophy, and explained that there were no gender distinctions in writing on philosophy but there was a distinction regarding writing poetry.³⁰⁴ It was clear that Midhat Efendi was opposed to Fatma Aliye's working on philosophy and writing any works on this subject. However, Midhat Efendi did not put any obstacles in front of Fatma Aliye. Arslan Yanardağ in his work, *Our Woman Philosophers*, showed Fatma Aliye as the only woman philosopher prior to the Republic.³⁰⁵ Fatma Aliye's father Ahmed Cevdet and her brother Ali Sedat influenced Fatma Aliye's desire to work on philosophy with their important studies. Ali wrote two books on philosophy: *Teracim-i Ahval-i Felasife* and *Tedkik-i Ecsam*. "Life Stories of Philosophers" and "Analysis of Materials". These two works were written five years after her correspondence with Midhat Efendi in 1899. In her first book, Fatma Aliye focused on the importance of philosophy and philosophers, she was opposed to accusing

³⁰¹ İnceoğlu & Berktaş, *Mektuplar*, 141.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 141.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 142.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 148.

³⁰⁵ Arslan Kaynaradağ, *Kadın Felsefecilerimiz*, (Ankara: Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu, 1999), 5.

philosophers of atheism and hooliganism. As suggested by her mentor, Fatma Aliye told lives of many philosophers beginning with Plato. In the other book discussing “Analysis of Materials”, Fatma Aliye tried to explain her opinions and thoughts about the concepts of “object” by various philosophers including the Aristotelians, the Atomists, the Cartesians and new materialists. In this way, she both introduced philosophers and explained their ideas. Fatma Aliye explained that she was affected from an article written by Midhat Efendi in *Kırkambar Journal* as follows:

“Especially in *Kırkambar*, when I read the article that compared new philosophers with the old ones, I found myself in a new world. In this paper, the sentence about the fact of book making learning and education easier are not available in our country did not make me feel sorry about my effort on learning French, but rather showed me the need for continuation to this effort. Or else, I would be satisfied with *Kırkambar* and neglect studying French. I will tell you, this mistake is also corrected by *Kırkambar*. In conclusion, the effect of *Kırkambar* on guiding a woman is as much great as guiding a man.”³⁰⁶

Fatma Aliye in fact repeated Midhat Efendi’s effect on herself. As a result, even though the question of whether Fatma Aliye is a real philosopher or not is still a subject of discussion for today’s readers, she worked on the philosophy despite Midhat Efendi’s inconsistent and ambiguous approaches. Although initially Midhat Efendi objected, he started to support Fatma Aliye in the face of Fatma Aliye’s insistence. This support is not just a mere support. As stated in his letters, Midhat Efendi reminded Fatma Aliye that she could write on this field under his control if she insisted on studying philosophy that much. Thus, Fatma Aliye completed writing two works about five years after these correspondences. Even today, when creating a historical chronology of our women philosophers, Fatma Aliye’s contribution on this matter is not forgotten.

With the words of Argunşah, Ahmed Midhat was the guide of Ottoman Muslim women writers in the period with his position as a ‘cultural father’. Showing the clear reality that women writers began to write with encouragement by men, Argunşah mentions that Midhat described Aliye’s position as “the position of a woman writer as much as men allow and like they want”³⁰⁷ while analyzing Aliye’s writings. According to Argunşah, Midhat considered issues related to women and womanhood as part of Ottoman modernization.³⁰⁸ Considering all these facts, the conclusion is that Ahmed Midhat had a major impact on Fatma Aliye’s literary life. However, despite all guidances, Fatma Aliye revealed her own characteristics as a woman writer.

³⁰⁶ Arslan Kaynaradağ, *Kadın Felsefecilerimiz*, (Ankara: Türkiye Felsefe Kurumu, 1999), 59-60.

³⁰⁷ Hülya Argunşah, *Kadın ve Edebiyat: Babasının Kızı Olmak*, (İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2016), 205.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this study, the focus was on the impact of Ahmed Midhat Efendi, who was one of the leading writers of the period, on Fatma Aliye's intellectual development. Correspondence between Aliye and Midhat was used to form the basic argument in this study. However, Aliye's works were also examined, mainly her work, *Nisvan-i Islam*, was analyzed. What distinguishes this work from the others is that the study included Aliye's ideas on how she understood women's rights in this period and how to determine fields of freedom for women. Aliye tried to base her ideas on Islam in her effort to expand women's boundaries in the fields of rights and freedom just as her father, Cevdet Paşa, and her mentor, Ahmed Midhat did. In this thesis, as much as motivations for Aliye's effort were mentioned, this approach was observed among actions of many Sultans as the greatest representative of the State which was in search of innovation and wanted to expand their authority of 'freedom'. Besides, Midhat Efendi was also in the quest of innovation in a changing world as can be seen from his letters. He also used Islam as a basis for legitimating his thoughts.

Furthermore, the thesis included common and distinct ideas between Fatma Aliye and Midhat Efendi from Aliye's literary works as the most important sources of Fatma Aliye's intellectual world and from her correspondence with Midhat Efendi. In consideration of letters, Midhat Efendi emerged as the writer authority who discovered her talent and supported her rather a person who founded her writing career. In addition, not only did Midhat Efendi support Fatma Aliye but also, he draw her some limits. With these limits, the aim was to create a profile of Ottoman Muslim woman intellectual for Aliye which was considered suitable for Aliye and coincided with the state authority of the period. Thus, it was revealed with the example of Aliye how the society tried to form the Ottoman Muslim woman type through male gaze during the late 19th century. The support given to a woman who was a member of an elite family trying to gain support in the Ottoman world of intellectuals during the late 19th century, and limits of such support are significant in terms of understanding developments from the point of women's rights during this period.

Consequently, with studies conducted so far, a new approach has been established for the question of who Fatma Aliye was and what her ideological foundations were based

on. As can be easily seen from Fatma Aliye's correspondence with Ahmed Midhat, Fatma Aliye used Islam as a tool to improve women's rights in the Ottoman Empire like her father, Ahmed Cevdet, and her mentor, Ahmed Midhat did. Islam emerged pragmatically in Fatma Aliye's novels, articles and correspondence with Ahmed Midhat. A similar situation is seen not only in Fatma Aliye and in her intellectual immediate vicinity, but also among Ottoman Sultans recognized as the highest authority of the period. This gives us information about not only Fatma Aliye and discussions on women's rights but also intellectual structure of the period.

Although Fatma Aliye sometimes differed intellectually from Ahmed Midhat Efendi, in general, she did not go beyond limits drawn by Ahmed Midhat Efendi himself. Ahmed Midhat Efendi was a person who resigned himself to state authority. He also warned Fatma Aliye, as an intellectual of the pre-1908 generation, that she should stay within the limits drawn by the state. Ahmed Midhat's borders drawn for Fatma Aliye were not limited to relations established with the state. Ahmed Midhat described to Fatma Aliye at every turn with a father's attitude 'how to become an ideal Ottoman Muslim woman'. It was clear seen in letters in which Midhat gave answers to questions such as how to be a decent woman and what to expect from Ottoman Muslim women, that Ahmed Midhat considered Fatma Aliye as 'the ideal Ottoman woman'. Midhat Efendi introduced this 'ideal woman' to the world of letters under his supervisorship. Fatma Aliye, on the other hand, specified in her letters that she was pleased with such attitude by Midhat Efendi who she called 'my mentor'.

In these letters, it was observed that Fatma Aliye considered Ahmed Midhat Efendi as a father's figure. As the father of pre-1908 generation, Ahmed Midhat Efendi believed in the requirement that women should think in parallel with Ottoman Islamic tradition, obey the Sultan and should be educated in the Western sense. Ahmed Midhat said that Fatma Aliye was the ideal woman suitable for this thought. Aliye showed with her character in her novels and subjects in her articles that she was in similar opinion with his mentor. This view is included in the thesis with similarities and some differences of opinion.

Midhat Efendi made some interventions in Fatma Aliye's process of writing. Introducing Fatma Aliye to the world of letters, not only did Ahmed Midhat Efendi support the development of Fatma Aliye's literary personality, but also he limited Fatma

Aliye. It was very clear for Ahmed Midhat, who considered himself as ‘the writer authority’, what ‘an ideal Ottoman Muslim woman’ could write or avoided writing. It was an unacceptable situation that Fatma Aliye wrote poetry. However, Ahmed Midhat Efendi encouraged Fatma Aliye in writing novels and articles. Fatma Aliye often obeyed to limits specified by her mentor. However, there were also situations in which Fatma Aliye did not obey these limits and highlighted her own subjectivity.

Correspondence between Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Fatma Aliye was also of great importance in terms of understanding Fatma Aliye more accurately. Another important point of this study is certainly to examine texts as an historical source and to conduct a periodic historical study. Ahmed Midhat tried to draw Fatma Aliye limitations like Ahmed Midhat Efendi’s relationship established with the state authority, namely state’s limits for Ahmed Midhat Efendi. It is important to understand Fatma Aliye, who was ‘the ideal daughter, ideal Ottoman Muslim woman writer’ and who sometimes exceeded these boundaries and mainly preferred to remain within these boundaries, even in terms of understanding women’s rights discussions in the period. In this sense, it is necessary that researchers examine Fatma Aliye Hanım archives in the Atatürk Library on this subject. Since I was not able to see all the letters written by Aliye to Ahmed Midhat, intellectual parallelism between Fatma Aliye and Ahmed Midhat was attempted to reveal based on limited numbers of letters written by Aliye in response to Ahmed Midhat’s many letters. In addition, to understand Fatma Aliye’s intellectual world, her works of novel and article were also examined, especially her work, *Nisvan-i Islam*, was emphasised. Fatma Aliye posed similar ideas in her articles and novels in parallel nature with her opinions in these letters.

As a result of this study, the aim to evaluate Fatma Aliye’s place in the field of women’s studies also reveal how women’s fields of freedom were in the Ottoman society in the period after the Tanzimat and before 1908. It was possible to see what the limitations were as drawn by the state authority for an Ottoman Muslim woman who was a member of one of the elite families, who spoke French and with a good educational background.

This study is important in terms of understanding the world of Ottoman Muslim women intellectuals. Undoubtedly, others will be undertaken by future researchers. I also hope

that this study will be developed by other researchers as much as new historical materials are found.



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