SEXUAL POLITICS IN WOMEN'S WRITING

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SEXUAL POLITICS IN WOMEN'S WRITING

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to investigate the construction of female identity and sexuality in Turkey by making use of the literary realm. Bearing in mind the fact that the literary production in Turkey, especially in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, incorporates the prevailing social and political concerns into itself, it relies on the view that an investigation of the literary realm from a feminist point of view would provide analytical tools to decipher the hegemonic discourses applying to female sexuality in Turkey along the major social and political transformations. In this framework, this study mainly focuses on the canonical women's writing rising with the late 1960s and tries to distinguish the approach of this writing to female sexuality from earlier literary traditions. In other words, it undertakes an investigation as to whether it is possible to label this particular writing as 'feminist'. In the light of this discussion, this study proposes the view that the women's writing in question is an apparent reflection of the rising radical feminist discourse in the West in the 1960s and 70s and also a close ally of the second wave feminist movement flourishing in the 1980s at home.

Keywords: women's writing, female sexuality, feminism and sexuality in Turkey

ÖZET

KADIN YAZININDA CİNSEL POLİTİKA

Didem Ünal

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Tez Danışmanı: Prof.Dr. Sibel Irzık

Bu çalışma, edebi alandan yararlanarak Türkiye'deki kadın kimliğinin ve cinselliğinin kuruluşunu araştırmayı amaçlıyor. Türkiye'de edebi üretimin özellikle Osmanlı'nın son dönemi ve cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında sosyal ve politik problematiğin dinamiklerini içinde barındırdığı gerçeğini dikkate alarak, kadın kimliği ve cinselliğinin sosyal ve politik dönüşüm süreçleri boyunca hegemonik söylemler tarafından nasıl tanımlandığının edebi alanda açıklıkla izlenebileceği görünüşüne dayanıyor. Bu çalışma esas olarak 1960'larda yükselen kadın yazınına odaklanıyor ve bu yazının kadın cinselliğine olan yaklaşımını önceki edebi gelenekten ayırmaya çalışıyor. Bir başka deyişle, bu bahsedilen kadın yazınının feminist olarak nitelendirilip nitelendirilemeyeceğinin bir araştırmasını yapıyor. Bu çerçevede, söz konusu kadın yazının 1960'lar ve 70'lerde Batı'da yükselen radikal feminist söylemin izlerini taşıdığı ve aynı zamanda Türkiye'de 1980'lerde gelişen ikinci dalga feminist hareketin bir müttefiki olduğu tezi savunuluyor.

Anahtar Sözcükler: kadın yazını, kadın cinselliği, Türkiye'de feminizm ve kadın cinselliği

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1.INTRODUCTION

Literature is a neglected area in studies accounting for Turkish modernization. Although Turkish modernization has been investigated in terms of its different aspects[1], studies thoroughly investigating the relationship between literature and the social and political problematique barely exist.[2] The literary realm is an explanatory category to understand the women's movement and the construction of female identity in Turkey. Especially women's writing is a useful source for the study of women's issues in Turkey but it is for the most part neglected by feminist scholarship. The women's writing which began to rise in the late 1960s can be distinguished by its particular approach to female identity and sexuality.

In this frame, this study derives its momentum from the point that constitutive elements of female identity in Turkey that differ according to time are clearly reflected in the literary realm. Discussions about the status of women in society that for the first time come forward on the agenda in the late Ottoman society were clearly mirrored by the prominent literary works in this period. Moreover, the Republican period is no exception to this pattern. Acknowledging the literary realm as a crucial site to trace the construction of female identity in Turkey, here the focus is on the canonical women's writing from the the late 1960s to the mid-1980s. The main category that will be used to decode the specificities of this women's writing is sexuality. Women writers treat sexuality as a constitutive element of the subjectivities of their female characters. Therefore, I find it necessary to investigate where the

[1] The transformation in the mindset of the modernizing elite (Mardin 2000, Parla 2002), the role of Islam (Toprak 1981), the effect of strong state tradition (Heper, 1985), the relationship between woman's emancipation and modernization project (Kandiyoti, 1987, 1989; Arat 1997) have been extensively and meticulously investigated.

[2] Mardin (1974) traces super-westernization in urban life in the late Ottoman era by closely examining the literary texts of the period. Also, Parla's work *Fathers and Sons* (1990) illuminates the epistemology underlying the Tanzimat novel as its subtitle suggests and provides significant tools to employ in the analyses of the social transformation in the late Ottoman society. Moreover, Irzık and Parla's *Kadınlar Dile Düşünce* (2005) investigates the openings of feminist literary theory.

peculiarities of the representation of female sexuality in the 'new' women's writing can be located vis-a-vis the prevalent discourses on female sexuality in Turkey from the late nineteenth century onwards to the 1980s.[3] This attempt may reveal the topography of the discursive construction of female sexuality in Turkey.

Having specified the focus of the study as such, a few notes have to be made with respect to the theoretical approaches to sexuality. At the very first instance, sexuality as a multi-faceted, uniquitious phenomenon may seem to belong merely to the private realm. However, recent studies have irreversibly transformed the social scientific approach to sexuality, taken it out of the personal realm and placed it at the center of social and political analysis. Theoretical approaches leading to the centrality of sexuality in social scientific investigations have been various. At the turn of the 20th century, Freud argued that sexuality has a determining influence on one's life and modern society represses this basic instict.[4] Later, in the 1950s Reich and Marcuse elaborated more on this repressive hypothesis and challenged the sex-negating structures of modernity.[5] In this sense, Freud, Reich and Marcuse are the leading figures of the repressive hypothesis of sexuality. Another break point for studies on sexuality would come with the Foucauldian approach. In 1978, Foucault introduced the idea of the discursive construction of sexuality.[6] According to this, sexuality is not merely a cluster of biological impulses to be satisfied but also a social construct working in the realm of power. Foucault shows how sexuality and power have become intertwined since the nineteenth century and maintains that the modern society has turned sex into a discourse by putting it into an ordered system of knowledge. Moreover, Foucault underlines that it is not simply through prohibiton that the regulation of sexuality takes place, but discourse on sexuality is

[3] The 1980s in Turkey represent a new era for the articulation of female identity and sexuality. The new feminist movement rising in this period will be discussed in detail.
[4] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey, NY: Norton, 2005.
[5] Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*, London: Routledge, 1956. Wilhelm Reich, *Cinsel Devrim: İnsanın Kişilik Özerkliği İçin,* trans. Bertan Onaran, İstanbul: Payel, 1995.
[6] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Vol.I, NY:Vintage, 1980.

produced more through prescription and incitement. In this sense, he argues that nineteenth century was not a period of silenced sexuality but one in which categorizing of sexual acts was leading to new sexual lexicon. Foucault's conception of productive power, power/knowledge relationship and sexuality indeed seems to be quite in line with the feminist project in the sense that according to him, power functions outside the narrowly defined political realm, explores micropolitics at the personal level and thus happens to support the view that patriarchy is reproduced at the most intimate level of the female experience. Moreover, it is also relevant to the feminist project mostly because of its peculiar treatment of the relationship between power and the body. The Foucauldian conception of the body as the principal site where power functions provides new openings for feminist debates.

However, the Foucauldian conception of sexuality, just like those others introducing the repressive hypothesis, is also severely criticized by some feminists on the basis that it fails to account for the different functioning of sexuality for men and women.[7] In this sense, it ignores the relatively inferior position of female sexuality vis-a-vis the social constructedness of sexuality or sex-negativity when compared to male sexuality. Especially since the 1970s feminist scholars have drawn attention to the male appropriation of female sexuality and claimed that female sexuality is a primary site of women's oppression.[8] In this respect, sexual politics claiming that male dominance in the realm of sexuality causes unequal power relations between sexes has come forward on the feminist agenda. A main premise of sexual politics is that patriarchy embedded in sexuality cyristallizes in men's control of women's sexuality, in the perception of sexuality as a male entitlement and also in the male appropriation of female bodies and the ubiquotous tendency to sexualize relations with

[7] For a comprehensive criticism of the Foucauldian approach from a feminist point of view, see *Up Against Foucault: Explorations of Some Tensions Between Foucault and Feminism*, ed. Caroline Ramazanoğlu, London, NY: Routledge, 1993.

[8] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, NY: Doubleday, 1970; Catherine MacKinnon, *Towards a Feminist Theory of State*, Harvard University Press, 1989. MacKinnon states in a catchy way that sexual oppression is to feminism as exploitation of labour is the root of capitalist class relations.

women. This stream of feminist thinking on sexuality problematizes various issues such as reproductive rights, sexual violence, sexual identity, sexual pleasure, abortion, birth control, domestic violence, rape, incest, sexual harrasment, prostitution and pornography. By doing so, it comprehends female sexuality both as the domain of systemic oppression of women and a site of resistance against male dominance and also heterosexual hegemony. In this way, it tries to find authentic forms and desires of female sexuality.

Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, published in 1949, could be mentioned as an early account opening up the subject of sex. A year earlier, bioligist and poet Ruth Herschberger publishes *Adam's Rib*, a witty feminist analysis of female sexuality. However, it is more with the second wave feminist movement rising in the late 1960s and 1970s and with the extension of the meaning of the political through the motto 'the personal is the political' that sexuality is placed at the center of the analysis of women's oppression. Institutions like love, marriage, sex, masculinity and femininity are central themes of this movement. The idea that 'there is no private domain of a person's life that is not political and no political issue that is not ultimately personal' constitutes its ideological inspiration. As a precursor of sexual politics, Kate Millet suggests that politics cannot be reduced to the conventional functioning of political institutions and power relations in the macro realm; it also encompasses relations in the realm of sexuality.[9] To show how patriarchal ideology crystalizes at the level of sexual intimacy, Millet provides examples from male writers such as Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, D.H. Lawrence and Jean Genet and points out the female subjugation characterizing the imagination of these canonical male writers. Millet's preoccupation with sexuality and the extension of the meaning of the political applies to other major theorists of the radical feminist movement as well. Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970), Ti-Grace Atkinson's *Amazon Odyssey* (1974), Susan

[9] Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, NY: Doubleday, 1970:45.

Brownmiller's *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (1975), Mary Daly's Gyn/Ecology: *The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978) are some other prominent examples dealing with women's sexuality as the site of male dominance. These works heavily criticize marriage, traditional patriarchal family, pornography and heterosexual sex as institututions perpetuating women's sexual oppression.

Ideas of sexual revolution that were generated in the leftist and counter-cultural movements of the 1960s had their effects on the emergence of a new feminist wave and its perception of sexuality as a central subject of the women's liberation. The sexual revolution, as it is called, marked this decade by opposing the negative attitude to sex that underlies modern times and calling for sexual-permissiveness. Having its intellectual roots in the writings of Freud, Marcuse, Reich and also in the ideas of 1960's social movements, it aimed to get rid of the Judeo-Christian legacy of guilt and sin and tried to dissociate sexual desire and perversion. For the sexual libertarians, sexual activity is inherently radical and resistant and thus has to be affirmed. The basic tenets of the sexual revolution can be enumerated as follows: emphasis on sexual pleasure, elimination of all sexual restraints, call for 'free love' that condemns marriage as a bourgeois institution and advocates disassociation of sex from reproduction and also attacks the male dominance in the field of sexuality on the feminist front of the sexual revolution.[10]

Millet mentions three longitidunal periods along which sexual revolution has evolved: 1830-1930; 1930-1960 and the period from the1960s onwards.[11] The period between 1830-1930 is characterized by the first wave feminist movement in which civil rights pertaining to marital affairs are acquired in addition to suffrage rights; years from the 1930s to the 60s represent a counter-revolution because of the negative effects of fascist regimes and the Freudian theory

[10] Jackson, Stevi and Sue Scott (eds.), *Feminism and Sexuality*, Edinburg: Edinburg University Press, 1996: 4.
[11] Millet, *Sexual Politics*, 256-365.

on women's sexuality. Millet argues that from the 1960s onwards discourse on sexual permissiveness and also sexual rights of women have proliferated. Among the facilitators of the ideals of sexual revolution in the 1960s are wider availability of contraception, more permissive legislation around sexual issues such as abortion and homosexual acts in some Western countries.[12]

One of the explanations of the sexual revolution of the 1960s is economic-based. The post-war demographic boom and the rising affluence in this period are put forward as crucial factors in the sense that they facilitated the creation of a mass market, democratization and a greater flexibity in attitudes.[13] In addition to the changing economic, political, social and demographic structures, the transformation of the women's increasing power in society ranging from the workplace to family also had great impact on the development of sexual revolution. Against this backdrop, activists and intellectuals of the movement tried to get rid of the residues of the Victorian morality despising and repressing sex. A few concepts come forward in the lexicon they use. For example, 'inhibition' is frequently articulated in order to oppose women's reservations about some sexual acts.[14] In this respect, the basic idea underlying this concept is that sex is desirable and thus is to be freed from all the inhibitions no matter what their ground is. Moreover, making sexuality of single women available and pre-marital sex more prevalent was another main endeavour of the revolution.[15]

Having said these, the first thing to note is that sexual libertarianism associating free sex with freedom does not necessarily imply a feminist consciousness because it fails to recognize the fact that sexual liberation for men and women are not the equivalents of each other. Then, how has the sexual revolution since the 1960s affected female sexuality? Some of the leading

[12] Jackson and Scott, *Feminism and Sexuality,* 4.
[13] Sheila Jeffreys, *Anticlimax: A Feminist Perspective on the Sexual Revolution*, NY: New York University Press, 1991: 92.
[14] Ibid., 95.
[15] Ibid., 106.

slogans of the European student movement of the 1960s such as 'Fuck the Establishment' or 'Never fuck the same woman twice' clearly reveal the male-dominated character of the movement and thus its limitations for women's sexual liberation.[16] A male supremacist understanding is involved in this approach to sex in that it does not challenge the patriarchal construction of male sexuality. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between sexual revolution and female sexual liberation without denying the fact that these two were not mutually exclusive. Regarding this, Rubin notes that the hegemonic sexual value system defines proper sexuality as "heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive, non-commerical, coupled, relational, within the same generation and occuring at home" and condemns all other practices outside this framework.[17] To oppose this strict definition of proper sexuality, Rubin suggests that feminist endavours to liberate female sexuality should meet broader attempts attacking sex-negativity.

In addition to the effects of the sexual revolution, women's politicization under leftist circles also had a triggering effect on the rise of the feminist movement and of sexuality as a feminist theme. Feminist activists of the second wave movement largely come from the ranks of the left activism that postponed feminist demands to the aftermath of the revolution and marginalized female sexuality.[18] Feminists were discontent with the leftist idea that it is capitalism that essentially causes women's oppression. Since the left failed to account for male dominance in the family, marriage and sexuality, an autonomous feminist movement was needed, which would not diagnose the inequality between men and women as a problem to be solved after the revolution but endorse it as the major concern and also provide women a platform to affirm female sexuality.

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[16] Frigga Haug et al., "Sexuality and Power" in *Female Sexualization: A Collective Work of Memory*, trans. Erica Carter, Verso, 1987: 188

[17] Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of Politics of Sexuality" in *Culture, Society, Sexuality: A Reader*, ed. R.G.Parker, P. Aggleton, NY: Routledge, 1999: 152.

[18] Jackson and Scott, *Sexuality and Feminism*, 4.

This changing discourse on sexuality in general and on female sexuality in particular had its repercussions in the Turkish context as well. The 1980s represent a turning point in the feminist movement in Turkey. In the liberalizing aura of the period the new feminist movement revived the female perspective, challenged androcentric narratives of the hitherto existing hegemonic discourses such as Westernization, nationalism and Kemalist ideology and opened up the way for new themes that are critical for the construction of female identity such as sexuality, romantic love, domesticity and male violence. In this framework, the new women's writing rises beginning with the 1960s as a current on the eve of a new feminist movement in Turkey and parallels the changing discourses on sexuality in the West and at home. I particularly aim to study this writing with respect to the construction of female sexuality. To do this, in the first part of the study I will discuss the codes of female sexuality in Turkey from the late nineteenth century onwards. Here, hegemonic social and political discourses that condition female sexuality will be dealt with. Moroever, prominent themes in the definition of female sexuality such as family, marriage, home, romantic love, honor will be investigated as well. In the second part, some major novels of canonical women's writing will be discussed along particular themes like Republican woman's sexuality, search for romantic love and sexual pleasure, redefinition of marriage, intimacy, masculinity, woman's authority on her body, and differences in women's sexualities. This framework can make it possible to distinguish women's writing from the late 1960s to the 1980s in Turkey as a particular period, which is totally new in terms of the representation of female identity and sexuality when compared to the earlier literary tradition.

2.CODES OF FEMALE SEXUALITY IN TURKEY

2.1. Symbolism of Female Sexuality

It is said that female sexuality in Turkey has been strategically addressed by major macro social and political projects.[19] Westernization, Islamism, nationalism, the Republican project of modernization and socialism have been grand discourses that in one way or another tried to incorporate female sexuality into their broad projects. They regarded female sexuality either as the facilitator of their ideals or as the marker of their ideological boundaries. Thus, to understand the specificities pertaining to female sexuality in Turkey, first and foremost one has to analyze the patriarchal elements embedded in the social projects enumerated above. To this end, I will discuss the major discourses that have attempted to define female sexuality and the social transformations that have shaped it.

First of all, discourse on women in Turkey became salient with the Westernization attempts in the 19th century Ottoman society. Starting with the Tanzimat period (1839-1876) marked by the Imperial Rescript of Gulhane (Gulhane Hatt-i Humayunu) that guaranteed all Ottoman subjects the right to life, honour and property regardless of their religion and ethnicity, the woman's question settled on the agenda.[20] The modernizing elite of the period operationalized female identiy as a means to express their views about the Western influence upon the Ottoman society. Ottoman cultural integrity or backwardness came to be associated with the status of women.[21] Issues such as marriage, love, family came forward in this period. Male intellectuals, namely the Young Ottomans who were the first cadres trying to adopt

[19] Ayşe Kadıoğlu, "Cinselliğin İnkarı: Büyük Toplumsal Projelerin Nesnesi Olarak Kadınlar" in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. A. Berktay Hacımirzaoğlu, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1998.

[20] Further reforms had been accomplished in the late Ottoman era concerning the woman's status such as the Land Reform of 1958, which consolidated women's rights to inheritance or the opening of secondary and vocational schooling for girls. For a comprehensive account of how women's lives had changed in the social and cultural context of the 19th century Ottoman state, see Fanny Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History: 1718-1918*, Westport, Conn.:Greenwood Press, 1986.

[21] Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey" in Women, Islam and The State, ed. Deniz Kandiyotti, Philedelphia: Temple University Press, 1991: 26.

Enlightenment principles to the Ottoman modernizing context, criticized arranged marriages, subordinate position of women in marriage, family life and society.[22] Moreover, female intellectuals and activists began to be quite influential in this period, initiated associations and published various women's magazines.[23] The opening up after the 1908 Young Turk revolution led to easing the restrictions over the press, the rise of the number of women's journals and the increasing articulation of issues like women's attire, family, marriage, education, employment. Women's associations were quite various in their aims ranging from charity organizations and cultural associations to associations for women's employment, feminist unions, and political parties' women's branches.[24] Also, the range of publications discussing women's rights and status in society were impressive. Until the foundation of the Republic nearly fourty women's journals could be detected. Aile (1880), Şükufezar (1886), Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895), Demet (1908), Kadın (1908), Kadınlar Dünyası (1913)[25], İnci (1919), Süs (1923) were some examples among them.[26] One can say that the importance of women's magazines and associations as a part of Ottoman-Turkish feminism lies in the fact that they created a public sphere specific to the woman's question.[27] As a result, women attained public visibility as writers, professionals, activists and could raise their voices to

[22] Şinasi's *Şair Evlemesi (1860)* and Namık Kemal's *Intibah* (1876) could be mentioned among the examples problematizing family, marriage and woman's status .

[23] For a detailed account see Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, Istanbul: Metis, 1996: 43-78.

[24]Regarding Ottoman feminism, Berktay warns us that the movement was not restricted to Ottoman-Turkish women but women from other ethnic groups were also involved in it actively by founding women's associations or taking part in existing ones. (2003: 97)

[25] Kadınlar Dünyası (1913-1921) has been the most influential and radical journal in the late Ottoman era with its being the publication of a woman's organization, namely Müdafaa-ı Hukuk-ı Nisvan Derneği (Association for Protection of Women's Rights), which included influential women figures such as Ulviyye Mevaln, Mükerrem Belkıs, Nezihe Muhiddin and devoted itself solely to the woman question unlike the organizations who engage in such other activities as charity work.

[26]Aynur Demirdirek, "In Pursuit of Ottoman Women's Movement" in Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman, ed. Z. Arat, NY: St. Martin Press,1998: 66.

[27]However, one should also acknowledge that the woman's activism in the late Ottoman society was highly class-bounded in the sense that mainly women from upper-class backgrounds had access to the means of intellectual production. Later, we will see that this class-boundedness will show up again in the new feminist movement in the 1980s.

criticize patriarchy. A daring evaluation of patriarchal appropriation of women's lives stands out in a prominent women's publication as below:

"Let us confess, today a woman lacks the rights to live and be free. Because she can never express her ideal, will, desire and tendency to obtain and sustain a free life; her life is dominated by a father, a maternal or paternal uncle, a husband or a brother who takes advantage of traditions and customs. It is impossible for her to set a goal or an ideal for herself ... In our society a woman does not have an individual existence, she has never had one."[28]

With the proliferation of the discourse on women's emancipation, female identity came to be treated as boundary marker or signifier of opposite camps with differing views on modernization, namely Westernists and Islamists. For the Islamist intellectuals in the late nineteenth-century, the culture of the Ottoman Empire and Islamic civilization were far superior when compared to the West. Thus, for them the right course of modernization was to adopt Western technology without sacrificing Ottoman/Islamic civilization. Having this stance, they associated Western morality with the degradation of society and were concerned about the corrupting social effects of the emancipation of women. As a result, they heavily criticized women aspiring to live like their counterparts in the West and encouraged veiling against moral degeneration.[29] On the other hand, the Westernists who were guided by the principles of science and progress advocated the idea that civilization is a totality that cannot be divided. Thus, for them the adoption of technology without cultural transformation would not be possible. They blamed traditions such as veiling or polygamy for the disintegration of the empire and in this way harshly criticized religious morality.[30] Some others argued that Islam reduces women to femaleness and thus limits them to mothering and reproduction functions.[31]

[28]Kadın ve Hürriyet-i Şahsiye (Woman and Personal Freedom), *Kadınlar Dünyası* 135, (March 1914) quoted in Demirdirek, "In Pursuit of Ottoman Women's Movement", 74.
[29] Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, İstanbul: Metis, 2004: 62-66.
[30] Ibid., 57-62.
[31] Salahaddin Asım, *Türk Kadınlığının Terakkisi Yahut Karılaşmak*, for the new edition see *Osmanlı'da Kadınlığın Durumu*, İstanbul: Arba, (1910) 1989.

The parameters to discuss female identity and sexuality shifted from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. This meant distancing from Islam towards cultural nationalism.[32] For the nationalists, the legitimate ground upon which the woman's question was to be based was no more the empire or Islam but the nation-state itself. The nationalist discourse promoted a particular conception of feminism and female identity. It suggested the idea that feminism is not alien to the fundamentals of Turkish national identity. Moreover, this alleged inclusion of feminism in Turkish nationalism also implied a smooth transformation in women's rights. In this sense, Halide Edip (1884-1964), the famous woman novelist, politician and feminist activist, characterizes Turkish feminism as different from Western feminism and says that the most salient feature of Turkish feminism is the gradual emancipation of Turkish women and their evolution as socially useful units: "it was not a revolt of one sex against the other, it was an integral part of Turkish reform and accepted as such by all progressive parties in Turkey..."[33] This idea of equality between sexes as an inherent part of the Turkish national character mainly stems from the writings of Ziya Gökalp, the nationalist ideologue of the Kemalist revolution. Feminist dicourses of the Republican era were heavily influenced by Ziya Gökalp's *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (*Fundamentals of Turkishness, 1923)*, which introduces the idea that equality of sexes is a part of Turkish culture with its origins dating back to Central Asia. Gökalp traced the roots of Turkish feminism back to the pre-Islamic origins and shamanistic rituals and found proofs for the equality of men and women and monogamous marriage.[34] Thus, the specificity of Turkish feminism, if it exists, stems from the nationalist argument saying that equality between men and women and monogamous family structure were characteristic features of Turkish national identity since the ancient Turkic tribes of Central Asia.

[32] Kandiyotti, "End of Empire", 23.
[33] quoted in Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey" in *Deconstructing Images of The Turkish Women*, ed. Zehra Arat, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998: 140.
[34] Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, İstanbul: Inkılap, 2001: 139-149.

Here Gökalp's distinction between civilization and culture is quite crucial because it suggests the idea that culture is a truly unique and sui generis part of a nation and thus has to remain intact while civilization may change.[35] In this scheme, the authentic realm of culture had to distinguish the nation that adopts Western civilization and female identity would serve as the signifier of it. Here, to explain this point further, Chatterjee's distinction between the spiritual and material spheres pertaining to the modernizing third world contexts could be useful.[36] According to this, the material is the domain of the 'outside', of the economy, of statecraft, of science and technology-- a domain where Western superiority had to be acknowledged. On the other hand, the spiritual realm was an 'inner' domain, bearing the 'essential' marks of cultural identity. Accordingly, modernizing contexts apply Western technology without hesitation, while they strictly refrain from Western influences on the spiritual sphere, i.e, home. In this frame, women, the essential actors and markers of the spritual realm are seen as the transmitters and even guardians of the culture. The domain of the family, the foremost basic institution of society in nationalist discourse, is where women begin to preserve and transmit the past.[37] This nationalistic stance attributing great significance to the family was also internalized by the women's movement, which is epitomized in the following statement from a women's magazine:

"The purpose of the family is the future. The family provides the future of national life. Family means nation, nation means family."[38] or "it is the family which causes the nation to increase in numbers, which gives it power and strength... everyone is obliged to get married."[39]

[35] K.E. Fleming, "Women as Preservers of the Past: Ziya Gökalp and Women's Reform" in Deconstructing Images of The Turkish Women, ed. Zehra Arat, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998: 129.
[36] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993: 120.
[37] Ibid, 130.
[38] Aliye Cevad, "Aile" (Family), Kadınlar Dünyası, 37, 25 May 1913, quoted in Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family, Fertility*, 1880-1940, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991: 105.
[39] Seniye Ata, "Türk Kadınlarına: Aile" (To Turkish Women: Family) , Kadınlar Dünyası, 70, 25 June 1913, quoted in Ibid.

Another point that should be noted here with respect to family is that nationalist discourses regard the family as identical with the nation.[40] On both sides of this alegory women's primary role is motherhood. Therefore, women's chastity and sexual modesty is as important for national identity as it is for the family. Referring to the femininity of the land, Najmabadi writes that "whereas the land itself was constructed as the mother (motherland), the nation had been defined as a brotherhood among men".[41] Since women are "mothers of the nation", their sexuality degrading their purity, innocence and appraisal is a threat to the nation.

In this framework, it becomes clear that nationalism and female sexuality are two phenomena that are closely related to each other. According to Altınay, gender is not a minor but a constitutive factor in the discourses of nationalism.[42] Five different ways in which women take place in the nationalist projects can be noted: "as biological producers of ethnicities, as reproducers of boundries of ethnicities and nations, as transmitters of culture, as symbols at the core of the discourse of authenticity of ethnicity and as participants of national, economic, political and military struggles."[43] Recent scholarship on nationalism has begun to draw attention to the close relationship between the national and the female identity, especially in the context of third world nationalisms.[44] The nationalist discourse in the post-colonial context submits to westernization on the one hand; on the other, it has to keep intact the authenticity of the national identity vis-a-vis the West. The women's question is placed into the very center of this dichotomy. No matter how different the political agendas of the national transformations in the modernizing contexts have been, they have one thing in

[40] Joane Nagel, "Erkeklik ve Milliyetçilik: Ulusun İnşasında Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Cinsellik" in *Vatan, Millet, Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay, İstanbul: İletişim, 2004: 84.
[41] Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Sevgili ve Ana Olarak Erotik Vatan: Sevmek, Sahiplenmek, Korumak" in *Vatan, Millet, Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay, İstanbul: İletişim, 2004.
[42] Ayşe Gül Altınay, "Giriş: Milliyetçilik, Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Feminizm" in *Vatan, Millet, Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay, İstanbul: İletişim, 2004: 15.
[43] Slyvia Walby, "Kadın ve Ulus" in *Vatan, Millet, Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay, İstanbul:İletişim, 2004: 38.
[44] Chatterjee (1993), Kandiyoti (1989), (1991), (1997), Jayawardena (1994), Yuval-Davis and Anthias (1989).

common: they all incorporated the woman's question into state policies with differing degrees of progressiveness and strategically operationalized it.[45]

2.2. Republican Approach to Female Sexuality

In the longitudinal design of the construction of female identity in Turkey, some periods come forward. Firstly, the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman society was crucial in the sense that this period introduced the woman's question into the agenda. The other distinguished era loaded with discursive articulation of female identity and sexuality is the Republican period after 1923. Recent feminist scholarship presents a critical outlook to the Republican construction of female identity. In this regard, it is claimed that though the Republican regime cared for women by initiating radical reforms which gave women suffrage rights, ensured equal education opportunities for them and improved their status in marriage by introducing a new civil code, it is doubtful whether women were real political actors or symbolic pawns in the Republican modernization project.[46] In other words, it is argued that granting women these rights was instrumentalized by the Republican regime as a tool to prove belonging to the Western world.[47] The nation-building and modernizing mentality perceiving the emancipation of women as the sign of modernization incorporated it into the accomplishment of a higher cause, namely the ideal of reaching the level of contemporary

[45] Nilüfer Çağatay and Yasemin Soysal, "Comprative Observations on Feminism and the Nation-Building Process" in *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Şirin Tekeli, London: Atlantic Heights, N.J:: Zed Books, 1995: 264.

[46] Kandiyotti, "Women and The Turkish State: Political Actors or Symbolic Pawns" in *Women-Nation-State*, ed. Yuval-Davis and Anthias, NY: MacMillan, 1989.

[47] Şirin Tekeli, "Women in Turkish Politics" in *Women in Turkish Society*, ed. N. Abadan-Unat, 1981: 293-310. Asking the question why Atatürk waited up until 1930 and 1934 to grant women electoral rights, Abadan-Unat notes that this might be a strategic move when the atmosphere of the international arena is taken into account. In 1930s there were attempts in some of the European newspapaer comparing the one-party regime in Turkey with the fascist rule in Europe. In 1930 Atatürk gave an interview to the Vossische Zeitung saying that "revolution and dictatorship can only be used for a short time". This is the year when women get the right to vote in local elections and also an unsuccesful attempt to multi-party regime was realized with Free Party that was opened and closed down in. And 1934's move granting full suffrage rights to women comes after the rise of the Nazi's to power that confined the German women to "Kirche, Kitchen, Kinder" triology. (Abadan-Unat, 1981: 18-19). Accordingly, entitling women with full electoral rights before many countries in Europe can be interpreted as a strategic move to prove the belonging to the contemporary civilization and to the democratic camp for the Republic.

civilization. Hıfzı Veldet Velidedeoğlu, a famous law professor and writer in the early decades of the Republican era vividly expresses this instrumentalization of women's emancipation by the following statement in *Ülkü* (Ideal)[48]:

"In the new Turkey there is no struggle between men and women, there was not and there will not be. These rights were neither granted to women nor were acquired by women through struggle. *All that has been done is just the completion of what was lacking in the Turkish world so far on the prompting of other current causes and concerns*."[49] (emphasis mine)

In order to indicate the lack of autonomy of feminism in the early Republican era and the paternalist attitude of the new nation to the women's movement better, the case of the Turkish Woman's Union is worth mentioning. This union was first established as a political party in 1923 being the first political party of the new Republic, even before the Republican People's Party and then turned into a union in 1924 since the establishment of the party was not approved on the grounds that women did not have the right to elect and be elected at the time. Also, it was argued that a women's party would distract the attention from the Republican People's Party to be established soon.[50] The dissolution of the union is also indicative of the lack of autonomy of the feminist movement. It is said that when the union hosted the 12th Congress of International Women's Union in Istanbul and issued a declaration against the rising Nazi threat in 1935, the state elite was further displeased to see a women's movement taking up such an active role in political issues while the state itself remained mute on this particular issue on the international scene.[51] The closing down of the Women's Union in 1935 revealed the fact that the feminist movement in Turkey could only exist from now on under the rubric of the Republican ideology. In other words, feminism was seen as a tool that is too dangerous in the hands of women and thus the paternal state should take away and turn into a

[48] A nationalistic journal published between 1933-50 with the aim to promote the Republican ideology, having such prominent writers as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, Ahmet Kutsi Tecer.
[49] *Ülkü* 5 (28), p. 268- 276
[50] Zafer Toprak, "Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkasından Önce Kurulan Parti: Kadınlar Halk Fırkası", *Tarih ve Toplum* 9, 1988: 31.
[51] Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey" in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Sibel bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997: 101.

vehicle legitimizing its own concerns. Kandiyoti's statement is explanatory for this particular move of the Republic:

"women's emancipation under Kemalism was part of a broader political project of nation-building and secularization... The authoritarian nature of the single-party state and its attempts to harness the new woman aborted the possibility for autonomous women's movements."[52]

Having identified the feminist critique of the peculiar Republican approach to women, here we can say that sexuality has been a key theme in this utilization of female identity by the Republican ideology. While constructing the image of the ideal Republican woman, the hegemonic Kemalist discourse meticulously regulated her sexuality as well. First of all, the ideal woman would be well-educated, free from the impositions of tradition, meaning that she would not be related to such Islamist practices as veiling or polygamy, and she would be an active participant in the public sphere. Metaphorically, it is said that women were launched into the public sphere under the Republican regime.[53] In this regard, professionalism was presented as a distinguishing feature of the ideal Republican female identity, which was also deeply internalized by women themselves.[54] One of the first generation Kemalist women, Prof. Hamide Topçuoğlu reveals the symbolism attached to women's professionalism by saying: "we were interpreting having a profession in a different way. As if it was not for earning a living! It was rather for being useful, rendering service to society and displaying success".[55]

This exclusive definition of the modern Republican female identity deriving its momentum mainly from professionalism encompassed an inevitable imperative, i.e, sexual modesty. In this respect, modern woman "veil"ed her sexuality in a male public domain, which was seen

[52] Deniz Kandiyotti, "End of Empire", 43.
[53] Fatmagül Berktay, "Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Feminizm" in *Tarihin Cinsiyeti*, İstanbul: Metis, 2003: 99.
[54] One should bear in mind that women who mostly benefited from the changes in the gendered nature of the public sphere were predominantly from well-educated, middle or upper-middle stratas of society. (Öncü, 1981: 185)
[55] Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 108.

as a mechanism to be able to reconcile modernity and tradition. In the Ottoman society the urban space was highly segregated on the basis of gender.[56] Republican reforms demolished this segregation and made encounters between men and women in the public sphere possible. The asexuality attributed to ideal female identity could be seen as a strategic means to cope with the male trauma caused by the new regulation of public relations. To indicate the thin line between modernity and chastity that the first generation women of the new Republic had to walk upon in symbolic ballrooms, i.e, the display window of modern-dressed new woman, the prominent women writer, Adalet Ağaoğlu's (1929-) following quotation is quite revealing:

"They were the ones who had to regulate the degree of intimacy with great caution and meticulous attention as they danced with men who were total strangers to them; ...Even though the principles of the Republican revolution were backing them, these were not deeds easy to accomplish... Now it seems easy to tell."[57]

The sexually modest character of the new woman was consolidated in the private sphere through a particular father-daughter relationship. The role of fatherhood was redefined in the modernization process, dissolving the inapproachable and authoritarian father figure. In this context, the modern father acting as the representative of the Republican male elite in the private sphere wanted to see the new woman ideal of the Republic materialize in the persona of his daughter.[58] Thus, this father image fully supports the daughter's participation in the public sphere. In this way, the daughter comes to define herself through the image of the ideal woman that the modern father promotes, not through an identification with the mother who already belongs to the category of traditional women. However, modern fathers' support for the public visibility of their daughters is conditional: daughters have to protect their sexual

[56]Emelie Olson, "Duofocal Family Structure and An Alternative Model of Husband –Wife Relationship" in *Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey*, ed. Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982:41 .
[57] quoted in Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 151.
[58] Ayşe, Durakbaşa, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Modern Kadın ve Erkek Kimliklerinin Oluşumu: Kemalist Kadın Kimliği ve 'Münevver Erkekler' " in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. Ayşe Berktay Hacımirzaoğlu, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998.

modesty and moral conduct. In this sense, just like the "patriarchal bargain"[59] of Republican daughters with the state which involved their acquisition of formal citizenship in return for a devotion to the national ideals in the public and private realm, there was a tacit contractual relationship between fathers and daughters at home. Daughters aboded by sexual purity and fathers made it possible for them to pursue educational and vocational careers.

In this framework, the new woman of the new Republic was "a well-educated, professional and socially active woman in the public sphere and a biologically functioning woman in the family fulfilling responsibilities as a wife and mother".[60] This dual set of duties rely on the idea that women had to be "modern but chaste"[61]. Tekeli argues that the concomitant presence of the puritan sexual codes on female identity and the ideal of professionalism and active participation in the public sphere implies nothing but a schizophrenic existence for women.[62] Here, it should be noted that the puritan sexual discourse on female identity begins from the very site of material existence, i.e., the body. The foremost utilization of bodies in Turkey comes to the foreground with Westernization attempts in the late Ottoman era. It is noted that the Ottoman state issued several decrees aiming to control and regulate the color, thickness and length of women's overcoats and veils.[63] The attire women wear had become a marker distinguishing the modern from the traditional. It is clear that clothing gives a particular visibility to bodies, differentiates between male and female, lower and upper class, traditional and modern or religious and secular. In this way, it exposes bodies to the public gaze and constitutes subjectivities. Thus, regulating clothing is a part of the act of controlling bodies. In

[59] Deniz Kandiyotti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy", *Gender and Society*, 2:3, 1988:274-290.
[60] Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 147.
[61] Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Hazards of Modernity and Morality: Women, State and Ideology in Contemporary Iran" in *Women, Islam and State*, ed. D. Kandiyoti, Philedelphia: Temple University Press, 1991.
[62] Şirin Tekeli, "The Meaning and Limits of Feminist Ideology in Turkey" in *The Study of Women in Turkey: An Anthology*", ed. Ferhunde Özbay, publication of Unesco in collaboration with Turkish Science Association, İstanbul, 1986: 180.
[63] Nora Şeni, "Fashion and Women's Clothing in the Satirical Press of Istanbul at the end of the 19th Century" in *Women in Turkish Society*, ed. Şirin Tekeli, London, Atlantic Heights, N.J.:Zed Books, 1995.

the Republican period, the utilization of bodies and regulation of clothing became more salient. The Hat Law enforcing the hat as required headgear for men in 1925 is a vivid example of state intervention to regulate the body. Though the state did not issue a similar regulation in this period to control women's attire or ban veiling, we see the female body used discursively. According to this, a new sense of nationhood was to be created through women's public appearance. In this respect, associating the Islamic veil with backwardness and unveiling the female body was a constitutive attribute of the official ideology. Atatürk's utterance below is indicative of this:

"In some places I have seen women who put a piece of cloth or a towel or something like it over their faces when a man passes by. What is the meaning and sense of this behaviour? Gentleman, can the mothers and daughters of a civilized nation adopt this strange manner, this barbarous posture? It is an object of ridicule. It must be remedied at once."[64]

State power assumed the right to dress and undress women's bodies, thereby promoting its identity as modern, secular and Western. One of the most salient techniques for promoting the image of ideal woman and unveiling her body was the presentation of women in bathing suits in photographs, cartoons, illustrations.[65] Also, images of women lawyers, parliamentarians, pilots, athletes and of modern and secular married couples were available in the press. State-sponsored beauty contests, sport events, ballroom receptions further contributed to the depiction of the new 'Republican' femininity. In this new construction of femininity of the Republican ideology, even the conception of beauty is redefined. In the westernizing context, Eastern judgments of beauty based on roundness, chubbiness, whiteness and long hair have left their place to Western codes that praised slim, corseted, energetic and short haired

[64]Alev Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places and Time*, Minnesota:University of Minnesota Press, 2005: 62.
[65] Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography in the Middle East, 1860-1950*, NY: Colombia University Press, 1988.

women.[66] Moreover, the new female body image under the changing conception of beauty was not fragile and coquettish but was identified with such values as health, success, agility.

For the nation-building project to display how emancipated the body of modern woman is, beauty contests and ball rooms were other crucial places.[67] Çınar draws attention to the symbolic importance of the first beauty queen of Turkey, Keriman Halis, who became Miss World in 1932 and says that it was a move against the orientalizing European gaze which imagines Turkish women behind veils or in the confines of harems.[68] In this sense, the modernizing mind-set encouraged the organization of beauty contests since it regarded the presentation of Turkish women in bathing suits in the international arena as a marker of belonging to the modern world. Another form of dress associated with the ideal woman is serious, defeminized suits that symbolize professionalism and create an asexual impression about women. This form of dress helped women to present a suitable body image in line with the definitions of ideal femininity under official ideology. Kadıoğlu maintains that women benefited from the reforms of the early Republican period were similar to the *noblesse de robe* (nobility by virtue of dress) in pre-revolutionary France, for whom the aristocratic clothes were a means to join the ranks of nobility.[69] In this sense, it was assumed that modern women could be only *modern by attire*.

2.3. Themes of Female Sexuality

Radical feminist accounts of patriarchy introduced the idea that the private sphere is the critical category of women's oppression. Accordingly, such themes as family, home, love and sexuality perpetuate patriarchal relations. In this line of thought, tracing the transformation of intimate themes along the modernization experience is of crucial significance to set forth the

[66] Nilüfer Göle, *Modern Mahrem*, 93.
[67] Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 144.
[68] Çınar, *Modernity, Islam, Secularism in Turkey,* 72.
[69] Ayşe Kadıoğlu, "Women's Subordination in Turkey: Is Islam Really the Villain", *Middle East Journal*, 48:4, 1994: 652.

construction of female identity in Turkey. Sirman says that these themes are not adjuncts to the transformation of the political regime but rather located at the heart of this change.[70] Intimate issues began to be incorporated into the social discourses with the first modernization attempts. In the transition period from empire to nation-state, they became a main topic in new genres of writing such as newspaper articles, plays, novels, monthly magazines and journals.[71] Questions of love, marriage, sexuality and constructions of masculinity and femininity were major discussion themes in the public discourse through the newly emerging communication channels.[72] Below is an analysis of these intimate themes, how they were transformed in time and led to new constructions of the female self.

Family, Marriage, Household

Changes in family and modernization attempts were two phenomena going together in the late Ottoman period. With the Tanzimat era the integrity of big houses that had been the social structure organizing intimate relations up until then was challenged and the dependency ties that had placed the patriarch and young men in hierarchical positions were shattered. The decline of the patriarch as the oldest and eldest man in the large household with his privilege to speak in the name of the household in the public sphere was superseded by the nuclear household and its head as the husband. Even though the male household regime led by the old patriarch was transformed into a new but still male household regime, what did not change was the role of women to assist men and take care of the family. Moreover, the interiors of households were experiencing a massive change in domestic mores ranging from

[70] Nükhet Sirman, "Constituting the Modern Family as the Social in the Transition from Empire to Nation-State" in *Ways To Modernity in Greece and Turkey: Encounters with Europe, 1850-1950*, A. Frangoudaki and Ç. Keyder eds., I.B.Tauris, 2007: 177.
[71] Ibid.
[72] One reason for authors in late Ottoman period to choose to write about family was that the despotic regime of Abdülhamit II did harshly limit freedom of expression about political issues. Though this was the case, the interest in intimate relations did not get lost nor with the relative freedom achieved after the declaration of II. Constitution in 1908 or after the foundation of the Republic (Sirman, 2007: 177). Thus, it could be said that the interest in intimacy was genuine.

interpersonal relations to eating habits, engendering a distinction between *alla turca* and *alla franga* lifestyles.[73] This change was a source of worry for the household about personal relations in public. The novels of the period express this anxiety about proper conduct clearly.[74]

With the rise of nationalism, we see an elaborate discourse on family emerging. Recent works investigating the link between nation and gender relations have indicated that nation-building processes and attempts to reorganize the family go hand in hand.[75] As a result of the rise of Turkish nationalism, an understanding of the 'New Family' contributing to social solidarity came to the forefront, which was defined with reference to ancient Turkish traditions. According to this, such practices as monogamy, equality in marriage and democracy in the family were said to be present in ancient Turkish tribes and therefore central to Turkish culture.[76] These were values in compliance with the values of Western civilization that the reformist minds were trying to adopt. Thus, this particular conception of the new family would serve the purpose of building a modern nation. The role of women in this new family was also redefined by Gökalp. With the rise of nationalism, women's role as mothers was ascribed new dimensions. This clearly finds expression in Gökalp's letter to his daughter, which states that "women are not only responsible for raising children but they also have a duty to educate the nation, to set men on the right path".[77] Women presented as mothers of the nation to bring up future generations had to be educated and freed from thinking solely about domesticity. Moreover, their main duty would always remain as motherhood. Atatürk's following statement clearly illustrates this:

[73]Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family, Fertility*, 1880-1940, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991: 194-239.
[74] Mardin (1974), Kandiyoti (1988), Parla (2002).
[75] Jayawardena (1994) , Abu-Lughod (1998).
[76] Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları, p. 139-149*.
[77] Quoted in Behar and Duben, *Istanbul Households,* p. 221.

"History shows the great virtues shown by our mothers and grandmothers. One of these has been to raise son of whom the race can be proud. Those whose glory spread over Asia and as far as the limits of the world had been trained by highly virtuous mothers who taught them courage and truthfullness. I will not cease to repeat it, wman's most imortant duty apart from her social responsibilities is to be a good mother. As one progresses in time, as civilization advances with giant steps, it is imperative that mothers be enabled to raise their children according to the needs of the century."[78]

Prioritization of motherhood vis-a-vis other roles of women is an indication of the fact that while attempting to restructure women's position in the public sphere Kemalist policies did not aim to reorganize gender roles in the private realm. The new Civil Code of 1926 also reinforced this by stipulating that "the wife is the assistant and advisor of the husband...She is responsible for the housework."[79]

The Republican project also promoted the modern bourgeois family with conjugal love and scientific child-raising.[80] Articulation of a new morality and the regulation of sexuality was a part of the new family ideal. In order to promote the ideal Turkish family it was necessary to put an end to the diversity of sexual, familial experiences and to non-familial sexual conduct.[81] The elimination of the diversity of intimate practices would be legally achieved with the adaptation of the new Civil Code in 1926. With respect to the regulation of sexuality, Kandiyoti refers to the quasi-scientific language on "appropriate" reproductive heterosexuality in the public discourse.[82] With the liberation of the body from the Islamic order and its placement into the positive medical one, the physiologically and scientifically "healthy" marriages came to be defined. Behar and Duben note that in the early twentieth century there were publications talking about proper age, hygiene and health conditions

[78] quoted in Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism*, p. 36.
[79] Duben and Behar, *Istanbul Households, p.* 222.
[80] A useful site to investigate the usage of family as a metaphor in the consolidation of the new nation and regime is the textbooks in the period. See Selda Şerifsoy, "Aile ve Modernizasyon Projesi" in *Vatan Millet Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşegül Altınay, İstanbul: İletişim, 2000.
[81] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimesions in the Study of Turkish Modernity" in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. Sibel Bbozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997: 116.
[82] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions" in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* , Lila Abu-Lughod, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998: 280.

necessary for a good marriage.[83] As a part of this, teenage marriages, marriages across generations, polygamy and arranged marriages were discouraged.[84] In this particular discourse on sexuality aiming to create the new family, the aim of sexuality and marriage was limited to procreativity. This understanding of sexuality was clearly stated in a daily newspaper of the time, an issue of Vakit in 1920:

"The purpose of marriage is the perennity of the human race. People should marry therefore at the age most suitable for raising healthy children. The proper age for marrying is twenty-five for men and twenty for women... Late marriages are just as harmful as ones too early. Besides, the ages of the spouses must be well-balanced. The husband should be from three to ten years older than the wife."[85]

According to Sirman, this constructedness of the family lies at the heart of what Foucault calls governmentality.[86] Similarly, Kandiyoti argues that preoccupation with marital sex coincides with the emergence of new governmental technologies surveying health, morbidity, life expectancy and fertility.[87] As Foucault notes, the modern invention of sexuality involves the accumulation of knowledge about sex through technologies of bodily management and regulation, which in return generates *biopower*.[88] The body becomes a focus of administrative power via the ubiquitous means of *biopower* utilized by diverse institutions such as family, school or medicine. Through disciplining the body and regulating the population sex comes under surveillance and control and thereby becomes a political issue.[89] Since the survival and viability of the nation depended on the regulation of population, it was necessary to monitor

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[83] For example, in 1909 *Izdivaç: Şerait-i Sıhhıye ve İçtimaiyesi (Marriage: The Hygenic and Social Conditions)* was published by Dr. N. Fuad. Another another medical expert of the period commenting on the proper marriage in the daily Sabah (6 February 1901) was stating that "age at marriage for men should be no less than twenty-four or twenty- five... for women marriage should not take place before twenty." (Duben and Behar, 1991: 138-139)

[84] Ibid., 139-140.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Nükhet Sirman, "The Making of Familial Citizenship" in *Citizenship in a Global World: European Questions* and *Turkish Experiences*, eds. Fuat Keyman and Ahmet İçduygu, Routledge, 2005: 154.

[87] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions", p. 281.

[88] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 141.

[89] Ibid. 145

the material aspects of procreation and also familial life. Furthermore, it is also important to note that 'proper' sexuality was defined not only by stimulating the monogamous, heterosexual one and by excluding such practices as childbrides, female slaves or male homosexuality but also by discrediting its extreme liberation associated with Western morality. In other words, the definition of 'proper sexuality' also implied restraining passionate love and urged for the taming of desire.[90]

Home

As second wave feminist accounts suggest, home as the critical site of sexual politics lies at the heart of power relations between sexes. Within the context of Ottoman-Turkish modernization, home appears as the central locus where the characteristic traits of female identity are defined. Regarding the point that modern female identity in modernizing contexts has been always defined with reference to home, Chatterjee's contribution challenging the gender-blind studies of nation and nationalism is quite revealing in the sense that it brought women to the forefront as the constitutive element of the national projects. According to his analysis, the authenticity of national identity in the post-colonial context vis-a-vis the West is formulated in the spiritual sphere, i.e, home, whereas the material aspects of Western culture, i.e, technology, science, state administration and economy could be adopted without any doubt.[91] Thus, it is in the spiritual domain that the local culture could base its distinctiveness. Women as the bearers of home and tradition are to stick to the codes of traditional morality and should not go through super-Westernization. This conception of women as the bearer of home and tradition is a part of the definition of ideal femininity in Turkey. Beginning with Ottoman-Turkish feminism, we see the stress on the view that women's emancipation would not mean their separation from and negligence of home. An open articulation of this could be

[90] This point will be elaborated on in detail.
[91] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993.

found in the works of Nezihe Muhittin, a prominent feminist activist and writer (1889-1958).[92] Her works have been deemed to be reflective of the principal ideas of the first wave feminism in Turkey. In spite of being an ardent advocate of women's education and public visibility, she urged women not to turn demands for equality into aspiration for sameness and thus underlined domesticity as the point that distinguishes women's specificity and as a 'feminine' site that modern woman should not try to disassociate from. Moreover, the same emphasis on the need to restrain women's demands for liberation comes forward in the critiques of the super-westernized female characters in the early Republican novels.[93]

Another discourse addressing home was about scientific methods of home economics that had to be applied to every aspect of domestic life ranging from child raising to housework. In this sense, Navaro points out that the method Taylorism was adopted in housework in the early Republican era.[94] The aim was to create *alla franca* housewives which was further fostered by the opening of Girls' Institutes in 1928 and Girls Evening Art Schools (Akşam Kız Sanat Okulları). To illustrate the wide-ranging influence of these schools, Arat mentions that during the academic year 1940-41, 16 500 women were enrolled in these institutions.[95] In this frame, the centrality of the idea of home in the construction of modern female identity in Turkey is clear. What is interesting is that a resistance to the idea of home could be detected in the new women's writing, which we will point out in the next part. In this regard, new women's writing tells about female characters, who regard home as the starting point of their (sexual) liberation.

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[92] Nezihe Muhittin, "Türk Kadını" in *Nezihe Muhiddin and Türk Kadını 1931: Türk feminizminin düşünsel kökenleri ve feminist tarih yazıcılığından bir örnek*, Ayşegül Baykan ve Belma Ötüş-Baskett, İstanbul: İletişim, 1999.

[93] Yakup Kadri's *Kiralık Konak*, Peyami Safa's *Fatih-Harbiye*, Reşat Nuri Güntekin's *Yaprak Dökümü* are among the most obvious examples in this respect.

[94] Navaro, Yael, "Using The Mind at Home: The Rationalization of Housewifery in the Early Republican Turkey" (1928-1940), unpublished senior thesis, Brandeis University, 1991.

[95] Yeşim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey" in Rethinking Modernity and National Identiy in Turkey, eds. R. Kasaba and S. Bozdoğan, Seattle:University of Washington Press, 1997 : 110.

Changing Conceptions of Romantic Love

The turbulence of change in the late Ottoman society influencing every aspect of life also reached the intimate sphere of love. A fertile ground to detect standpoints about intimacy is the fictional works of the period. It is significant to note that love was a main theme of the cultural production until the mid-twentieth century.[96] The demise of arranged marriages and the gradual rise of the idea of love as the cornerstone of marriage were frequently narrated in the late Ottoman literary production. Şinasi's *Şair Evlenmesi (Marriage of A Poet)* (1859) or Şemseddin Sami's *Taaşşuk-u Talat ve Fitnat (The Love of Talat and Fitnat)* (1872) were among the early works which openly argued against forced marriage and its destructive effects. Şinasi's work depicts the story of a protagonist discovering on the night of the wedding that his prospective bride has been replaced by her older sister in accordance with traditional values yet he is so lucky that he succeeds in taking back the bride he loves. On the other hand, Sami's *Taaşşuk-u Talat ve Fitnat* tells the tragic story of a young man and woman who cannot come together because her family forces the woman to an unwanted marriage. In these works love appears as a theme challenging the rule of the patriarch, whose impositions are against the personal desires of the younger generations. Thus, it operates as a category leading towards a more liberal social and familial setting.[97] Indeed, not only men but also women were in a quest for happy intimate relationships. This demand could be traced in women's journals of the period that called for a new marriage composed of affection and companionship: "neither should the male be the ruler, nor the female the ruled. A man is a

[96] Sirman, "The Making of Familial Citizenship", p. 161.
[97] Nükhet Sirman "Gender Construction and Nationalist Discourse: Dethroning the Father in the Early Turkish Novel" in *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey*, ed. Feride Acar and A. Ayata, Boston: Brill, 1999.

woman's life-long companion."[98] Another theme that women articulated with a longing for companionship in marriage was polygamy and how it hinders a happy marriage.[99]

Here it is significant to remind that love becoming as a major concern in the marriage decision is not a phenomenon specific to the modernizing context of the Ottoman-Turkish society. It is argued that romantic love was in a steady rise in the nineteenth century in many places of the Western world and came to be seen as a critical category that would constitute the autonomous subject and lead to conjugal bliss.[100] Illouz itemizes the transformation coming along with the romantic turn in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as follows: secularization of the discourse on love, love as a theme getting prominent in mass culture, glorification of love and its equation with happiness.[101] As for the shift in the romantic imagination in Turkey, love emerges as a liberatory theme. The emphasis on romantic affairs was also facilitated by the changing status of women in the public sphere. However, it is significant to note that idealized love was not 'devastating passionate love' but tamed romantic love.

Male Fear of Women's Sexuality and The Taming of Desire: Fragile Balances

Late Ottoman male writers expressed their uneasiness with all kinds of social conventions inhibiting liberated intimate relations and thus supported women's emancipation with a longing for wives who would be intellectually and emotionally suitable for them.[102] Sirman defines the kind of intimate relationship that these male intellectuals were asking for as

[98] 'Müsavat-ı Hukuk' (Equality of Rights), *Kadınlar Dünyası*, 30:1 (16 May 1913), quoted in Duben and Behar, *Istanbul Households*, 220.
[99] Çakır, 1996: 185-219; Demirdirek (1998).
[100] Eva Illouz, *Consuming The Romantic Utopia: Love and The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, University of California Press 1997: 27.
[101] Ibid., p.28.
[102] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions", p. 282.

muhabbet[103], a term used in order to refer to intellectual, emotional, reasonable, moderate talk. In this sense, though men were longing for the modern woman, who would be a suitable companion for them, the image of woman in their minds was not mainly associated with carnality but defined through sexual chastity and purity.

A quite significant point in this framework is the negativity attached to passionate love and the fear of female sexuality. According to Parla, the reformist men in the late Ottoman period were in an unconscious quest for fatherly authority that had disintegrated through the encounters with the West.[104] The most terrifying danger threatening fatherly authority was not Western technology but morality. Sexually liberated femme fatales seducing men were the embodied state of this corrupted morality. According to this reasoning, abandoning traditional morality altogether would mean the emergence of a dangerous form of love that is not spiritual but sensual. Another explanatory parameter to explain the conception of 'dangerous' sexualities of women in the Ottoman-Turkish context could be identified as the Islamic perception of female sexuality. Mernissi indicates that unlike the Western society that attributes passivity to female sexuality in Freudian terms and thus does not require more than the internalization of sexual prohibitions, Muslim Eastern cultures with traditions of veiling, seclusion in harems and constant surveillance impose external measures on women to ensure the protection of their pre-marital chastity and post-marital fidelity. The male fear in Muslim cultures of female sexuality originates from the active conception of female sexuality as the source of *fitna*, i.e., chaos or disorder.[105] In this vein, it can be said that feminist questions concerning the status of women in Muslim societies often revolve around the use of space and spatial restrictions that aim to prevent female sexuality from leading to fitna. Gender-segregated use of space very much applies to the Ottoman-Turkish case. In this respect, E.

[103] Sirman(2000, 2007)
[104] Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar: Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2002: 18.
[105] Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987: 30.

Olson writes that throughout the Ottoman era the ideal was to prohibit encounters of women with men other than their husbands and male kins.[106] In this territorial arrangement of life women only belonged to the private sphere.

Male fear of femme fatales as the source of *fitne* that appeared in the late Ottoman era remained intact in the Republican period as well. In this framework, the course of modernization, on the one hand, witnessed the widespread support given in the intellectual milieu to the liberation of intimate relations and the 'contemporary woman' who is freed from traditional morality and open to flirtation. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's novel *Kadın Erkekleşince (When a Woman Becomes Man, 1933)* set in 1916's Istanbul middle class life is reflective of this mindset in the sense that it depicts the woman character avoiding to show her love for a man as "girl of the past century"[107]. A similar observation about 'contemporary' woman could be found in *Canan,* where Peyami Safa differentiates between different types of women as below:

"the vulgar, the middling who is always submissive and faithful to their husbans and the contemporary who is egocentric, pleasure-seeking and unfaithful because she finds the family system comical and knows that this system is bound to collapse some day. She is the woman of the future."[108]

On the other hand, the call for the 'contemporary' woman was accompanied by the critique of the sexually assertive woman.[109] In this sense, Gürpınar's *Kadın Erkekleşince* criticizes the woman character, who aspires to an absolute equality with her husband, neglects domestic chores and causes the death of her child because of negligence. Similarly, his novel called

[106] Emelie Olson, "Duofocal Family Structure and An Alternative Model of Husband –Wife Relationship" in *Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey*, ed. Ç. Kağıtçıbaşı, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982:41 .
[107] Quoted in Duben and Behar, *Istanbul Households*, p. 100.
[108] Quoted in Ibid., 102.
[109] The critique of sexually liberated woman could be found in Yakup Kadri's Kiralık Konak (A Mansion to Rent, 1922) in which the super-westernized character Seniha sees marriage as a matter of accounting and does not feel the need to get married with her lover Faik. Similarly in Sodom and Gomorre Yakup Kadri tells the destrcutive effects of free sex and love of a modern Turkish woman with English and French officers and associates women's free sexuality with social degeneration.

Meyhanede Kadınlar (Women in the Tavern, 1924) satirizes female characters on the basis that they drink in public, behave like men and indulge in extravagances. Also, Safa does not refrain from reminding the 'contemporary' woman of the fact that "her happiness, ideal, everthing is in her womb".[110] This male urge for the liberation of women in intimate relations on the one hand and stress on chastity on the other is the most clear reflection of the dichotomy pertaining to the women's question in Turkey. As a result, it becomes clear that puritanism attached to female sexuality lies at the heart of the construction of ideal femininity. Thus, it is necessary to investigate the codes of the control on female sexuality and the transformation they go through in time further.

2.4. Changing Discourse on Female Sexuality in the 1980s

So far, we have tried to outline the paradigms and discourses that attempt to construct women's sexuality in Turkey. To be able sketch the periodical design of this construction, we have already mentioned two prominent eras: late Ottoman society and early Republican period. At this stage, it is important to talk about the 1980's because this decade represents the next paradigmatic shift. 1980's witnessed a striking transformation in the cultural, social and political structure in Turkey. The 1980 military coup aimed to silence 1970's political tensions and initiated a period marked by neoliberal economic policies and acculturation. In the aftermath of the coup, the newly emerging political era brought up the rise of identity politics with a plurality of discourses- namely, feminist, Islamist, Kurdish, in which codes of politics, democracy and civil society were redefined. Toprak mentions that the tradition of the coercive state *(ceberrut devlet)* characterizing the Turkish political structure with the conception of a strong center and weak periphery had been suspicious of civil society and had

[110] Peyami Safa, *Bir Tereddüdün Romanı*, İstanbul: Ötüken, (1933) 1998: 180.

not allowed a pluralist construction of power relations until then.[111] Referring to the fact that civil society has begun to be recognized and seize more power in the post-1980 period, Robins defines the multiplication of the discourses in this era as 'the return of the repressed' and says that 'the other Turkey is now making its declaration of independence'.[112] Göle also explains the changing face of the public sphere and politics in this era by pointing out the shift in the discourse from confrontation to tolerance, differentiation and pluralism.[113] Transnationalization of markets, growth of communication technologies and emergence of new media and mobility of populations facilitated the spread of the liberal aura of 1980s.[114] Many issues, which had been confined to the intimate sphere before, began to be discussed publicly in this period thanks to the changing means of communication.

In this framework, the post-1980 feminist movement in Turkey along other streams of identity politics discourse has greatly benefited from the redefinitions of such basic concepts as democracy, civil society and anti-authoritarianism. Flourishing in this milieu, it challenged the Republican nation-building ideology and questioned the genuineness of the Republican reforms in terms of the women's liberation. Before, most of the feminist studies encompassed a Kemalist ideological bias and were committed to explain how the Kemalist reforms of the Republic represented a rupture and replaced the inferiority of women under the Ottoman rule with a superior status.[115] However, the post-1980 feminist production of knowledge revised all the hitherto existing androcentric narrative of history pertaining to the women's emancipation in Turkey. Moreover, before the 1980s female identity was mainly articulated within major social projects such as Kemalism, socialism, Islam and nationalism. In the new-

[111] Binnaz Toprak, "Civil Society in Turkey" in *Civil Society in the Middle East*, ed. A. R. Norton, Leiden: Brill, 1996: 89.
[112] Kevin Robins, "Interrupting Identities Turkey/Europe" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, London: Sage, 1996: 72.
[113] Nilüfer Göle, "Towards An Autonomization of Politics and Civil Society in Turkey" in *Politics in the Third Turkish Republic*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, Boulder: Westview Press, 1994: 213.
[114] Ibid.
[115] See Afet İnan (1966).

wave feminism this incorporation of female identity into broader discourses began to lose its grip. Arat says that this new wave of feminist movement in Turkey is an extension of liberalism and also had an antistatist element in it.[116] Patriarchal state policies that had emancipated women not as individuals but as "symbolic pawns" and left untouched their oppression in the private sphere came to be challenged with these new feminist attempts. Demonstrations, campaigns, intellectual circles and feminist journals attracted attention to the issues that had been silenced until then such as violence against women, sexual harassment, domestic roles. Relying on all these characteristics mentioned above, Tekeli maintains that this new feminist movement was perhaps the first authentic example of democratic movement in Turkey.[117]

To understand how the 1980s came to represent a rupture for feminism in Turkey, a brief chronological account of what happened during 1980s in the field of women's movement would be helpful here. *Kadınca* started to be published and prominent feminist authors such as Kate Millet, Shulamith Firestone or Simone de Beauvoir were translated into Turkish (1978). Feminist consciousness raising groups began to be formed (1981). The first massive feminist mobilization occurred in 1986 in order to campaign for the ratification of CEDAW and a petition composed of 7000 signatures in favour of the ratification was sent to the parliament. In Ankara feminist circles like Thursday meetings were formed in 1986. The first demonstration was held in İstanbul as a protest campaign condemning violence against women in 1987 when a judge refused to grant divorce to a pregnant woman who had experienced violence from her husband by saying that the beating was legitimate.[118] This walk prompted the expansion of an issue thought to be private and secret towards the public

[116]Yeşim Arat, "1980ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Hareketi: Liberal Kemalizmin Radikal Uzantısı" in *Türkiye'de Politik Değişim ve Modernleşme*, ed. Ersin Kalaycıoğlu and Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, Istanbul: Alfa, 2000.
[117] Şirin Tekeli, "Introduction" in *Women in Turkish Society*, ed. Şirin Tekeli, London, Atlantic Heights, N.J.:Zed Books, 1995: 15.
[118] Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yeşim Arat, *Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddet*, İstanbul: Punto, 2007: 18.

realm.[119] In 1987-88, feminist journals like *Somut* and *Kaktüs* entered the publishing world and also Duygu Asena's *The Woman Has No Name* was published. In 1990 institutions like Kadın Eserleri Kütüphanesi (Library of Women's Works), Mor Çatı (Purple Roof Women's Shelter), Istanbul University and Marmara University women's studies graduate programs and Presidency Directorate of Women's Status were established. In 1995 feminist publishing continued with *Pazartesi*.[120] Furthermore, the rising number of women's associations established in the post-1980 period indicates how prolific the new woman's movement is. It is reported that between 1973-82 there were 10 women's association recorded, between 1983-92 the number was 64 and by 2004 it rose to over 350.[121] With its consciousness raising groups, petition campaigns, protest walks and journals, this post-1980 movement aimed to carry the status of women beyond the place secured by Kemalist reforms.[122] At the same time the public sphere that had been 'monopolized by the state and fused with the official sphere'[123] itself was experiencing a structural transformation. Women's movement in the 1980s carrying the private into the public made a substantial contribution to the transformation and democratization of the public sphere.[124]

In this frame, feminism after the 1980 attempted to separate itself from broader social discourses and also from state tutelage, began to seek autonomy and tried to point out women's own experiences with particular emphasis on women's sui generis identities. Unlike the Kemalist project, which legitimized male-female equality through ascribing asexuality to women, woman's discovery of sexuality was encouraged by the new feminist movement. The

[119] Recently, degradation of female subjectivity through physical violence has become a fecund research ground in Turkey. See Aksu Bora and İlknur Üstün, *Sıcak Aile Ortamı: Demokratikleşme Sürecinde Kadın ve Erkekler*, Tesev Yayınları, 2005; Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yeşim Arat, *Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddet*, İstanbul Kamer Vakfı, 2007. These research revealed that the allegedly warm and secure home is the very site of violence by men and women and violence constitutes a determinant aspect of many women's lives in Turkey.

[120] Ibid., 243-44.

[121] Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yeşim Arat, Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddet, Istanbul: KAMER Vakfı, 2007: 21.

[122] Sirman (1989).

[123] İlkay Sunar, "State, Society and Democracy in Turkey" in *Turkey Between East and West: New Challenges for a Rising Power*, ed. V. Mastny, V.C. Nation, Coulder: Westview Press, 1996: 142.

[124] Yeşim Arat, "Democracy and Women in Turkey: In Defence of Liberalism ", *Social Politics*, Fall 1999.

different voice of this movement mainly emanates from the fact that feminist women themselves took up the leadership of the feminist struggle. In other words, the ones who were to be liberated were not any more those others, as the modernizing male elite regarded women; rather, the new movement was to be conducted by women around women's needs. This point is expressed clearly in the feminist journal *Somut* as below:

"We tried to say "I" or "we"; not "those" women but "we women". Not "woman questions" but questions of being women, becoming women, atempts to become subjects. To tell about ourselves and speak in our name. Finally to have a say. And write, learn to write, go beyond our fears."[125]

The leadership of the new feminist upsurge was in the hands of a group of well-educated, urban, professional women.[126] Arat says that a particular line of bifurcation emerged in this period between the members of the younger generation who organized the women's movement in the 1980s and the older generation, who called themselves Kemalist feminists. In this respect, the first generation Kemalist women declare an unreserved vindication for the Kemalist reforms and seem to be not willing to accept the limited nature of these reforms for women's liberation.[127] This devotion of the first generation Kemalist women to Republican reforms has been so unshrinking that even when these women could lead "radical" lifestyles in other aspects, they declared their unreserved attachment to Republican ideology. In this sense, the example of Mina Urgan, a distinguished literature professor of Istanbul University who published her autobiography that became a bestseller in 1998, is quite relevant here. She

[125] Stella Ovadia, "Bu Yazı Son Yazı mı Olacak", Somut, 27 mayıs 1983, quoted in Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey", 104.

[126] Tekeli notes that being organized around small groups and having an elitist structure is a commonality between the first feminist activities at the beginning of 20th century and the second wave feminist resurgence in the post-1980s era. (1998: 342) It would only be possible with the institutionalization of women's movement under particular associations to reach the marginalized women who come from lower segments of society, lacked financial, educational, or material means of having autonomy vis-a-vis their families and husbands and basically lead secluded lives full of househols chores. In this respect, KAMER (Women's Center), which was founded in 1997 and has been working since then in Eastren and Southern Eastern provinces of Turkey with the aim to empower women in both public and private domains of life through providing educational, vocational, material support. For the personal encounters and experiences of these women with KAMER, see *Ben Varım* (I Do Exist), Diyarbakır: Kamer Vakfı Yayınları, 2007.

[127] Z. Arat, "Introduction: Politics of Representation and Identity", 178.

is an exceptional figure in this context because in her autobiography she openly and even proudly declares her atheism which is not very common in Turkey and thus could be easily accepted as a radical act. On the other hand, even though she is one of the most "radical" women among the first generation Kemalist women, she cannot approach Kemalist reforms in a critical way:

"By the way, I frankly would like to say that I am a Kemalist to the backbone. Mustafa Kemal danced with me, I am a Kemalist not because he treated an 11-year old kid as a humanbeing; but because if he did not exist I would not be "me". It would be truly abnormal if a a well-educated woman above eighty in this country would not believe in Kemalism. Then I was a small child but I still remember the veil separating the the compartments on the streetcar where men and woman sit. With his beautiful hands Mustafa Kemal tore down both that veil and all other veils isolating women from social life and confining them to dark corners. That's why it is impossible for a woman who was seven-eight year old when the Republic was founded and witnessed the reforms of Mustafa Kemal with her own eyes not to be on his side."[128]

Arat points out that vis-a-vis this unreserved vindication of the Kemalist reforms, the young generation of women challenged the limited scope of the former women's movement that mainly aimed to achieve equality with men in the public sphere.[129] New feminists of the 1980s could build subjectivities outside the symbolic duties attached to women by the Republican discourse.

Having mentioned the attempts of the new feminist movement to bring female perspective to the forefront, the thematic commonalities between the second wave feminism in the West and the 1980's feminist upsurge in Turkey is worth noting here. Since 1970's the field of women's studies has engaged in efforts to make perspectives and experiences of women

[128] quoted in Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Modern Kadın ve Erkek Kimliklerinin Oluşumu: Kemalist Kadın Kimliği ve 'Münevver Erkekler' " in *75 Yılda Kadınlar ve Erkekler*, ed. Ayşe Berktay Hacımirzaoğlu, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 1998: 43. The veil seperating men and women in public transportation which Urgan mentions in the quotation above was lifted only in 1923 by a regulation saying that "husband and wife may sit next to each other provided that they are not acting against the law in public transporation vehicles. No police can prevent an honourable woman from sitting next to her husband." (Abadan-Unat, 1981: 13) The limitations of this regulation which imagines women's public presence only through the existence of the husband and implicitly aims to hinder any encounter between man and woman beyond familial ties is clear.

[129] Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey", 103.

visible. With its assertion that 'the personal is political', radical feminism has brought the private realm into the center of discussion and drawn attention to new areas of investigation such as sexuality, intimacy, home or domesticity. These feminist contributions to the ways of knowing and studying the social phenomena had its effects on the production of feminist knowledge in Turkey. The enlargement of the feminist agenda was a crucial feature of the feminist movement in this new period. Feminist publications proliferated, providing space to articulate new feminist themes such as such as sexuality, sexual harassment, violence against women. According to Davaz-Mardin, 44 women's periodicals or magazines were published between 1980 and 1990 and 63 between 1990 and 1996 in Turkey.[130] These publications were quite interested in exposing women's narratives and encouraged women to tell their personal experiences and demands. For example, the journal *Feminist*, in this respect, was making the following call: "dear women, write to us. To remember, understand, feel relieved, reconstruct, save memories and to exist, write to *Feminist*"[131] Another influential example among the feminist journals that could stick to feminist values was the monthly entitled *Pazartesi,* published between 1995-2002 (82 issues). It is said that *Pazartesi* contributed to rereading popular culture and challenging stereotyped gender roles imposed on women and also recognized the heterogeneity of women, particularly the demands of Islamist and Kurdish women as well.[132] Furthermore, other examples of women's magazines such as *Kadınca* and *Kim* that were published between 1978–1998 and 1992–1999 respectively, also reflected a feminist perspective in that they dealt with the female body, sexual desire and female pleasure and featured dilemmas of urban, professional women.[133] Similar in content to these women's

[130]Aslı Davaz-Mardin, Kadın Süreli Yayınlar Bibliyografyası: 1928–1996 Hanımlar Aleminden Rosa'ya. Istanbul: Numune Matbaası, 1998: 14 cited in Y. Arat, "Rethinking the Political: A Feminist Journal in Turkey, Pazartesi", *Women's Studies International* Forum 27, 2004: 283

[131] Yeşim Arat, "1980ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Hareketi: Liberal Kemalizmin Radikal Uzantısı" in *Türkiye'de Politik Değişim ve Modernleşme*, ed. Ersin Kalaycıoğlu and Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, İstanbul: Alfa, 2000: 441.

[132] Arat, "Rethinking the Political", 289.

[133] Indeed, covers of these commercial magazines making use of some pornographic and voyeuristic elements and their content reproducing a comsumerist image of women perpetuated through issues like current fashion,

magazines, *Kadının Adı Yok* (The Woman Has No Name, 1986), i.e., the bestseller novel of Duygu Asena, the editor of *Kim* and *Kadınca,* was another striking cultural production of the post-1980 period. This popular feminist consciousness raising novel has sold over sixty editions since its publication.[134] The title of the book seems to be quite symbolic when we consider that the term 'woman' has such a pejorative, value-loaded connotation in the Turkish cultural context that its usage is most of the time avoided. By saying 'woman' in Turkish, one does not only distinguish femaleness from maleness but also separates the unvirgin from virgin. Thus, in order to avoid the sexual connotation it bears, the term 'woman' is exchanged for 'bacı' (sister) in the leftist ideology to refer to female comrade or in the slang language and also for hanım (lady) to seem not to be vulgar. Moreover, Durakbaşa draws attention to the fact that the usage of the word 'woman' in daily language to connote an inferior status crystallizes in calling the female domestic workers as 'kadın (woman)'.[135] Thus, one could say that all these connotations are to some extend implied in the phrase 'the woman has no name'. In the novel, the heroine grows up in a conservative family, where she is not allowed to have any male friends and suffers from an authoritarian father during her childhood and youth. In her adulthood marriage and sexuality would be the sites for her in which she has to struggle against the traditional conception of gender roles.

In this milleu where female sexual liberation came to be widely discussed, the verbalization of sexuality in this period is closely related to the exposition of private life. Regarding this, Gürbilek stresses the role of the changing media by arguing that voluntary narrators in the media saw a possibility of liberation and self-expression in telling their own stories.[136] It can be said that magazines like *Kadınca, Kim* and other similar publications in the period were a

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cosmetics, diets prompted some feminist criticism. In other words, their commercial concerns made them prone to the coverage of patriarchal streotyping of women's roles. (Kırca, 2001; Öztürkmen, 1998)

[134] The last edition is 64th.
[135] 2007: 16
[136] Nurdan Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak: 1980lerin Kültür İklimi*, Istanbul: Metis, 2001: 18.

part of this changing media and its leading to popular public debates about intimate issues. Saktanber investigates the images of women in the newly emerging media in the 1980s and points to the multiplication of discourses on women accompanying this change. She identifies two opposing depictions of women.[137] Women are represented either as self-sacrificing mothers and virtuous wives or as "available women" whose sexuality is exposed to constant male gaze. It can be said that one of the main aims of the feminist movement in the changing political, cultural, social terrain of the 1980s was to deconstruct the taboos associated with the idea of 'available woman' and promote self-confident women who can freely enjoy their sexuality.

Before the liberalization of the social, cultural and political spheres in the 1980s, the private was merged into the public; in other words, the former was seen as submissive to the latter. Yakup Kadri's famous novel *Ankara* clearly epitomizes this privileged public encapsulating the private. In this novel all private concerns of the female protagonist, Selma Hanım are absorbed by the national ideals and needs. Gürbilek writes that Selma Hanım did not need any privacy and intimacy since Ankara representing the precedence of the nation was already her home.[138] Thus, there was no outer space of Ankara, where individuals can forget their public identities. It can be said that *Ankara* is a prominent literary narrative of nationalized love. The three marriages that Selma Hanım lives through are not triggered by purely romantic love but are primarily shaped by the changing social and political background. Selma Hanım and her husbands are characters who find the meaning of their individual existence in the nationalist cause. The utterance of the first husband Nazif, an official during the occupation period, is indicative of this:

[137] Ayşe Saktanber, "Women in the Media in Turkey: The Free, Available Woman or the Good Wife and Selfless Mother" in *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Şirin Tekeli, London, Atlantic Heights, N.J., Zed Books, 1995: 198.
[138] Gürbilek, *Vitrinde Yaşamak,* 62.

"Sometimes I feel like celebrating the national disaster that happened to us. If we had not gone through it, where would I be now, what would I be? In whatsoever neighborhood of İstanbul, in a house, occupied with quotidian concerns and future plans. However, now, here in the burning middle of the country, I am a happy person, feeling the national trouble and getting mature in it." (61-62)

However, Nazif Bey, a man of passive and spiritless nature, or not as feverish as Selma Hanım wishes him to be, cannot integrate himself into the changing society, which pushes Selma Hanım towards a new marriage with Binbaşı Hakkı Bey, a leading and active figure in the national liberation movement. Yet after the new Republic is founded and a new era begins, also this second husband turns out to be outdated. Hakkı Bey becomes an alla franga dandy and cannot grasp the real meaning of granting women their rights. For example, Selma Hanım opposes him by saying "did you uncover us just to embellish us and make us dance? What does a woman's liberty mean if it only serves this?" (119). The fact that her second husband also turns out to be a passive man when it comes to passionately supporting the revolutionary reforms leads Selma Hanım to make her third marriage with Neşet Sabit, who does not reduce emancipated women to adorned pawns and opposes the equation of westernization with dandism.

As Ankara evidently narrates, the early years of the Republic was characterized by the interlocking of the personal and the national, which hindered the emergence of an autonomous intimate realm. Thus, it is possible to contend that the rise of the intimate domain was made possible by the withering away of the all-encompassing public after the 1980s. The changing character of the public in this new era also directly affected the articulation of feminist demands and facilitated verbalization of sexuality. As a result, this 'changing' face of the public provided the new feminist movement the site to take root.

3. SEXUAL POLITICS IN THE NEW WOMEN'S WRITING

3.1. Why Women's Writing

As long ago as 1947 Beauvoir investigated the writings of Montherlant, Lawrence, Breton, and Stendhal to discover the patriarchal stereotypes these male authors attach to women.[139] Similarly, in *Sexual Politics* Kate Millet searched for patriarchy in the writings of Norman Mailer, Henry Miller, D.H. Lawrence and Jean Genet. Both Beauvoir and Millet tried to show that sexuality in the imagination of the canonical male writers mentioned above is equated altogether with male pleasure and objectification of women. As a result, these works opened the way to argue that sexuality is a site in which powerful and powerless, active and passive, ruler and ruled are defined. This first phase of feminist literary criticism was followed by the idea of *gynocriticism*, which underlines the idea that women have *a literature of their own* and when investigated, their works reveal particular specificities.[140] Defining a distinctive female tradition in literature is based on the assumption that the difference of female experience that is basically caused by patriarchal gender relations in society shapes women writer's distinctive literary perception of the world. In order to outline the historical development of a unique female literary subculture, Showalter distinguishes three major phases:

"First, there is a prolonged phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of protest against these standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward freed from some help of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity. An appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages, *Feminine, Feminist*, *Female*."[141]

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[139] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, NY: Alfred Knopf (1953) 1993: 210-267.

[140] Elaine Showalter, "Toward a Feminist Poetics," in *Women's Writing and Writing About Women*, ed. Mary Jacobus, London: Croom Helm, 1979.

[141] Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*, London: Virago Press, 1999: 13.

This study endorses the view that the women's writing in Turkey from the late 1960's onwards approaches female characters with a 'new' vision. First of all, the period between the late 1960s and mid-1980s stands out in terms of the quantity of women's literary production. Between 1970 and 1985 forty-one woman fiction writers appeared on the literary scene in Turkey.[142] Nezihe Meriç's (1925-) *Korsan Çıkmazı* (Pirate's Close, 1961), Leyla Erbil's (1931-) *Hallaç* (The Wool-Carder, 1961), Adalet Ağaoğlu's (1929-) *Evcilik Oyunu* (Marriage Play, 1964), Sevim Burak's (1931-83) *Yanık Saraylar* (Burnt Palaces, 1965), Sevgi Soysal's (1936-76) *Tutkulu Perçem* (Passionate Fringe, 1962), *Tante Rosa* (1968) are among the crucial works published in the 1960s. The second wave of the articulate expression of sexuality and femininity by women writers comes with the 1970s, when the following books appeared on the literary scene: Leyla Erbil's (1931-) *Tuhaf Bir Kadın* (A Strange Woman, 1971), Sevgi Soysal's *Yürümek* (Walking, 1970), *Yenişehir'de Bir Öğle Vakti* (Noontime in Yenişehir, 1973), *Şafak* (Dawn, 1975), Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Ölmeye Yatmak* (Lying Down To Die, 1973), *Fikrimin İnce Gülü* (Delicate Rose of My Thought, 1976), *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (A Wedding Night, 1979), Pınar Kür's (1943-) *Yarın Yarın* (Tomorrow Tomorrow, 1976) and *Asılacak Kadın* (The Woman to be Hanged, 1979), Tomris Uyar's (1941-2003) *İpek ve Bakır* (Silk and Copper, 1971), *Ödeşmeler ve Şahmeran Hikayesi* (Payoffs and the Story of Shahmeran,1973), *Dizboyu Papatyalar* (Knee-Deep Daisies, 1975), Füruzan's (1935-) *Parasız Yatılı* (Free School and Board, 1971), *Kuşatma* (The Siege, 1972) and *Bütün Sinemalarım* (All My Cinemas, 1973), Selçuk Baran's (1933-99) *Haziran* (June, 1972), *Bir Solgun Adam* (A Pale Man, 1975), Nazlı Eray's (1945-) *Ah Bayım Ah* (1976) were among the novels and stories of the 1970s which one way or another address sui generis female experience and the consciousness of womanhood. This upsurge in woman writers continued

[142] Dilek Cindoğlu, "Woman Writers and Woman Fiction 1970-1985 Period of Turkey", unpublished MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 1986: 1.

in the 1980s with newcomers such as İnci Aral (1944-), Erendiz Atasü (1947-), Ayla Kutlu (1938-), Tezer Özlü (1943-) and Latife Tekin (1957-).

In addition to this massive amount of production, another peculiarity of women's writing in this period is its feminist treatment of some issues that could not find expression in the literary realm until then. Therefore, we can say that this writing seems to belong to what Showalter (1999) calls as 'feminist' and 'female' phases of women's writing. In this sense, on the one hand it is distinguished by a protest against prevailing modes of women's oppression and by a demand for autonomy and on the other, it displays instances of self-discovery and endeavors to build up a new female identity. Opposition against the patriarchal construction of virginity, taboos on premarital sex, vindication of women's sexual pleasure and the questioning of marriage appear as the prominent themes in this particular writing. In an interview, Latife Tekin, a proclaimed writer who entered the literary scene in the 1980s accounts for the mysterious knowledge of womanhood that can be represented in women's fiction:

"I believe it is important that we should be curious to find out how women bear the burden of their womanhood in a country where male oppression is so strong... For instance, I keep thinking that when I go back to my childhood I remember my mother and aunts as the subjects of strange, narrowly framed photographs. These women used to scatter about into rooms in whispers, bury their money-boxes deep into trunks, wore lonely expressions in the back-rooms but changed them when they were in a crowd, and moved back and forth with incredible speed between this world and their other one. It seems to me quite important to understand what in fact they experienced, and how. One can always start with oneself to reach out for this lost knowledge; maybe there is no other place to start but there... I think women create something like an illicit world or an illicit language: something that is secret but can be shared. Opening the doors, penetrating into the secret world of women and learning their idioms seems to me as important as an organized struggle. Rather, I can no longer imagine a women's struggle without that, as learning this medium will help us to understand their particular ways and methods of resistance."[143]

Here Tekin explicitly addresses the difference of women's writing and strongly urges writers to discover the lost knowledge of womanhood. Taking into account its treatment of female

[143] quoted in Saliha Paker, "Unmuffled Voices In the Shade and Beyond: Women's Writing in Turkish", in Textual Liberation: European Feminist Writing in the Twentieth Century, ed. Helena Forsas-Scott, London: Routledge, 1991: 291-92.

characters and its attempt to highlight their perspective, one should acknowledge that the new women's writing reflects a peculiar awareness about the female experience of the world.

Some salient facts come forward regarding the context in which this writing has flourished. First of all, the challenge that new women's writing poses against the legacy of the Republican emancipation of women is quite apparent. In this regard, the asexuality and disembodiment of the Republican women appear at the core of Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Ölmeye Yatmak* (*Lying Down To Die*, 1973). *Ölmeye Yatmak* evidently depicts the split in the personality of the 'new Republican woman', who feels stuck between the duty of being *alla franca*, modern and emancipated on the one hand and the norms of chastity and sexual modesty on the other.[144] Here, it is meaningful to note that most of the women writers, who appear in the literary realm from the 1960s onwards come from middle class families with Kemalist affiliations.[145] Grown up in this familial milleu, women writers come up with the critique of the Kemalist discourse at a time when the leftist struggle rises. Therefore, the second crucial feature to be noted regarding the new women's writing is the backdrop of the leftist struggles. The leftist movement had a powerful impact on the imagination of women writers.[146] The obliteration of gender and the marginalization of feminist demands as mechanisms in the leftist discourse repressing female identity find place in new women's writing. In this respect, it can be surely said that women writers collaborate with the feminist critique of the left. Here, one should remember that the marginalization of women's issues by the leftist movement in the 1960s had a triggering effect on the seperation of the feminist struggle and its claim on autonomy in the West.[147] A similar pattern could be observed in the Turkish case in that the leftist movement in Turkey did not incorporate the feminist cause into

[144] Ayşe Kadıoğlu, "Alaturkalık ile İffetsizlik arasında Birey Olarak Kadın", *Görüş*, 9, 1991: 58-62.
[145] Cindoğlu (1986).
[146] Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak (1975)* , Füruzan's *47liler (1974)*, Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Bir Düğün Gecesi (1979)*, Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın(1976)*, Latife Tekin's *Gece Dersleri (1986)* could be cited among the texts which are set up against a leftist background.
[147] Josephine Donnovan, *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions*, NY: Continuum, 2000: 156.

its project either.[148] In this frame, women's writing poses a considerable challenge to the gender-blind aspects of the leftist struggle.[149]

In addition to the critique of the Kemalist and leftist ideologies, women's writing also deals with a third discourse, i.e, radical feminism. As mentioned earlier, themes like women's sexual rights, stance against marriage, democratic intimacy and motherhood are quite explicit in the new women's writing. Sexuality is represented as the constitutive realm for woman characters to rebuild their identities. It appears also as the realm where the male domination and violence against women crystallize. Therefore, it is obvious that this writing is a convenient site to trace the elements of sexual politics. Moreover, it is also worth underlining that the new women's writing tries to settle accounts with the themes of both sexual revolution and feminist sexual revolution. To differentiate between sexual revolution and feminist sexual revolution, Jefferson says that sexual libertarianism does not necessarily bring about liberation of female sexuality from male dominance.[150] She further claims that the changing discourse on sexuality in the 1960s primarily served male desire by making female sexuality more available. On the other hand, some others suggest that since it is not possible to change the patriarchal codes of female sexuality without reconstructing the realm of sexuality as a whole, the feminist endeavor is to embrace the ideals of sexual revolution by opposing sex-negativity and calling for sexualities not restricted to marriage, monogamy and heterosexuality.[151] In this sense, it could be said that the new women's writing in Turkey not only argued for the liberation of female sexuality and rejection of male appropriation of

[148] Ayeşegül Devecioğlu, "1975-1980: Kadın Örgütlenmesi İçin Kaçırılmış Bir Fırsat" in Sosyalizm *ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, 7, İstanbul: İletişim, 1988: 2260.

[149] Women's organizations that were both feminist and leftist like İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (İKD) represented another stream of opposition to the ignorance of the left to the feminist demands. We will elaborate on this point later in detail.

[150] Sheila Jefferson, *Anticlimax: A Feminist Perspective on the Sexual Revolution*, NY: New York University Press, 1991.

[151] Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of Politics of Sexuality" in *Culture, Society, Sexuality: A Reader*, ed. R.G.Parker, P. Aggleton, NY: Routledge, 1999.

female sexuality, but also for an overall transformation of sexuality by challenging the strict conception of sexuality as conjugal, monogamous, reproductive. Allocating considerable space to the themes of sexual politics, women's writing also precedes the 1980's turn in the feminist struggle in Turkey. Taking into account the commonality in the attempts of these two feminist currents to revive the female perspective, one can say that the new women's writing appears as the antecedent and also collaborator of the new feminism in Turkey.

In this framework, the thematic embeddedness of the new women's writing in Turkey between the late 1960s and 1980s, meaning that there are some repeating themes that come forward in the major texts of this writing, needs to be analyzed in order to be able to explain the changing feminist discourse in Turkey. Thus, without denying the specificity that each and every work has on its own, this study attempts to detect the recurring elements in the imaginative mind that shaped women's writing at a particular time. While doing so, (female) sexuality will be operationalized as the leading category around which all other themes like marriage, family, romantic love revolve. Before going into detailed discussion of the texts, it would be helpful to identify some of the prominent features characterizing the approach to female characters in Turkish literature. This attempt can be useful to indicate why we call the women's writing under question as pioneering and 'new'.

3.2. Gender Roles In The Late Ottoman and Early Republican Novels

It is important to acknowledge that the literary and social realms intermingled with each other in the Turkish context especially in the late Ottoman and early Republican era.[152] In the last quarter of the 19th century, Turkish literature witnessed the rise of the novel. Carrying the burden of the belated modernity of the nation, the rise of the novel in Turkish literature was a cultural reflection of westernization attempts. As Jusdanis argues, in the cases of belated

[152]Indeed this mutuality between literature and social problematique has not been limited to the women's question but encompasses the whole course of modernization experience in Turkey. See Evin (2004), Finn (2003), Moran (1995).

modernities where the leading force is not the civil society but the state, literature comes to the foreground to play a vital role.[153] In other words, the Turkish experience of belated modernity was intertwined with the advent and development of a national literature which would serve the construction of a homogeneous national identity and also the generation of proper definitions of femininity and masculinity. Writers of the first novels, who were members of the reformist bureaucratic cadres, approached literature in an idealist, reformist and moralist way. For them, literature was on the one hand a necessity of being genuinely westernized and on the other hand an instrument facilitating the realization of broader social goals and a means of guiding the masses. Consequently, the hurried rise of the novel led to the imitations of Western classics, the treatment of literature as a strategic, pedagogic means and in this way, hindered authenticity. All these blocked the development of convincing characters in the text beyond the concerns to reflect social degeneration in the society or moralist discourses.[154]

The social transformation of the time constituted the base upon which male imagination rose. In the familial sphere this transformation was encapsulated in the demise of *konak* life and the patriarchal family. Male novelists were artistically influenced by the effects of this social change and incorporated fatherless homes into their stories. Deprived of the paternal authority both in the private and the public sphere, the Ottoman male writer assumed the role of the father in novels and aspired to resurrect fatherly authority.[155] In addition to the dissolution of *konak* life, the position of women in the society as a theme deeply attracted the male imagination. Duben and Behar state that the early Ottoman novels represented "a growing and

[153] Gregory Jusdanis, *Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture: Inventing National Literature,* Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

[154]Moran (1995), Tanpınar (1992). For a discussion about the complaints regarding the lack of authenticity in Turkish novel, see Nurdan Gürbilek, "Dandies and Originals: Authenticity, Belatedness and Turkish Novel" in Relocating the Fault Lines: Turkey Beyond the East-West Divide, S. Irzık and G. Güzeldere (eds), Duke University Press, 2003: 599-629.

[155] Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar*, 16-17.

increasingly unnerving sense that women are getting out of hand."[156] In this respect, the construction of female characters clearly reflects the social and political concerns involved in the production of literature. Fears about the widespread effects of modernization revolved around the women's question also in the literary realm. The distinction between the 'spiritual' and the 'material', borrowed from Chatterjee, is a useful category here to remember once again in order to make sense of this preoccupation with the honor and dignity of women.[157] In line with what Chatterjee says, the modernizing mentality in the Turkish context did not hesitate to apply the Western- *alla franga*- mode of technology and statecraft. However, the spiritual realm had to be kept authentic, i.e, *alla turca*. The greatest challenge to fatherly authority that Tanzimat writers attempted to revive in their novels would not come from the technologies of the West, but from the corrupting effects of Western morality. Women as the bearers of the familial and intimate sphere would draw the line between traditional and modern, i.e., East and West. Their sexually modest identities are deemed to be the first and foremost constitutive feature of the spiritual realm. In this frame, sensuality and passionate love prompted by *femme fatales* was equated with departure from Eastern morality and exposure to the Western moral codes.[158] This mentality is quite prevalent in the plots of the early Ottoman-Turkish literary works that attribute the super-westernized woman a dangerous femininity causing loss of order.[159]

Accordingly, two main categories could be identified with respect to the approach to the female characters in the first novels: passivity and marginality.[160] We come across

[156] Behar and Duben, *Istanbul Households*, 199.
[157] Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993: 120.
[158] Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar*, 17.
[159]Namık Kemal's *Intibah (1876)*, Yakup Kadri's *Kiralık Konak* (1922) and *Sodomme and Gomorre (1928)*, Peyami Safa's *Bir Tereddütün Romanı (1933)* are some of the examples.
[160]Robert Finn, *The Early Turkish Novel: 1872-1900*, Istanbul: Isis Press, 1984: 26. Passivity and marginality that Finn detects in early-period Turkish literature as traits chosen by male authors to describe female characters can also be found in *Thinking About Women* (1968), an early work of images of women criticism, where Ellman summes up the 11 major stereotypes of femininity as presented by male writers as such: formlesness, passivity,

submissive, docile slave girls such as Dilaşub in *Intibah (Awakening)* (1876) who dedicates herself to comfort the male figure suffering from a devastating sexual desire for a *femme fatale* or the heroines like Zekiye in *Vatan yahut Silistre (Nation or Silistre) (*1873), representing the ideal woman supporting the male figure by being innocent, submissive and patriotic.[161] Furthermore, the passivity ascribed to female characters was also furthered by the frequently used image of "bovarist woman", which treats the female figure as a sentimental reader.[162] In this usage, female readership by its very nature is linked to irrationality, sentimentalism and imaginativeness. On the other hand, the image of marginal woman materializes in the persona of Şehriyar in Namık Kemal's *Cezmi* or Mahpeyker in *Intibah*. In the male imagination, tamed female sexuality is represented as healing and comforting whereas women's sexual assertiveness is destructive. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's *Mürebbiye* (1898) is another instance of destructive female sexuality in which a Western woman, namely Matmazel Angéle is invited to the mansion as governess, seduces all the men and turns the household into a chaos. As also seen in *Mürebbiye*, since sexuality as a problematic theme was distanced from the definition of ideal woman, in order to write about sexuality Ottoman male writers could only refer to concubines, slave girls and "impure" or Western female characters because the carnal issues were despicable and they could be only associated with the "impure" woman.[163]

As a result, two different understandings of sexuality come out: amour passion for a *femme fatale* and tamed love felt for a slave girl. These two categories for depicting woman characters, i.e, good versus bad, seducing versus affectionate were main limitations of the

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instability, confinement, piety, materiality, spirituality, irrationality, compliancy, and figures of witch and shrew (cited in Moi, 1984: 34).

[161]Deniz Kandiyotti, "Slave Girls, Temptresses, Comrades: Images of Women in the Turkish Novel", *Feminist Issues*, 8: 1, 1988: 35-50.

[162]Nurdan Gürbilek, "Erkek Yazar, Kadın Okur: Etkilenen Okur, Etkilenmeyen Yazar" in *Kör Ayna, Kayıp Şark: Edebiyat ve Endişe*, Istanbul: Metis, 2004.

[163] Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar*, İstanbul:İletişim, 1998: 346.

early Ottoman-Turkish novel in creating convincing female figures.[164] Tanpınar draws attention to this strict imagination about ideal femininity and says that these women, depicted as either good or bad, are completely symbolic and thus bizarre.[165] This categorization as 'either/or', i.e, either chaste, affectionate, modest, passive, ideal or active, resistant, independent and seducing woman who is reduced to sexuality and doomed to marginalization constitutes the main pillar for the definition of ideal femininity up until the emergence of the new women's writing in 1970s which puts this strict categorization of women into question through encouraging women's autonomy on sexuality.

Rising Nationalism and the Critique of Idle and Super-Westernized Women

Earlier, we have elaborated on the incorporation of ideal femininity into the nationalist discourse. In the nationalist discourse as articulated by Z. Gökalp, women are seen as comrades of men committed to the national ideal. "Feminization of women" or "*karılaşmak"* [166] was a pejorative term that emerged to criticize women who did not assume any responsibility in the public sphere and confine themselves to the realm of reproduction and domesticity. Against this background the figure of the idle woman who only cares about consumption and develops pseudo-Western manners emerges as a new character in contrast to the image of the ideal woman who feels responsible for the national cause, is self-sacrificing, submissive and sexually modest. [167] In *Ankara* Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu defines the codes of "proper femininity" in the modernization process:

[164] Finn, *Türk Romanı*, 26.
[165] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler*, İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1992: 62.
[166] Asım, Selahaddin, *Türk Kadınlığının Terakkisi yahut Karılaşmak*, İstanbul: Arba, 1989.
[167] Indeed the excessive preoccupation with consumption and alla franga lifestyles is not only specific to women characters but also encapsulates male characters who are harshly criticized by the fatherly authority of the male author because of being effeminate. Bihruz Bey in Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* (1896) is a figure as such. See Mardin (1974).

"...Yes, a Turkish woman has claimed her freedom and used it not to dance and to polish her nails... to be a puppet but to undertake a demanding and serious role in the constitution and development of a new Turkey." (135)

One of the most vivid female characters in the early Republican Turkish novel, who cannot comply with the above-quoted definition of proper femininity is Seniha in *Kiralık Konak (Mansion for Rent,* 1922). She is a typical female character who suffers from generational conflict with her grandfather Naim Efendi, a man of tradition, and dreams about having a European life-style that she reads about in novels and magazines. Karaosmanoğlu depicts her as below:

"... a girl whom the French would call a fin de siécle girl. The turn of the century is such a new model of society that in its internal and external being, it is free of all sorts of records, present and past, and is subject to the currents of the future in the making. Seniha would always look like the features in fashion magazines... Like her green eyes which would change conforming to the changing light of the day, the tune of her voice, the rhytm of her moves and even the way her head poses would relentlessly change. Her inner world was alike; she had a soul identical to the color of her eyes... full of sorrow, with a cloud over it, then wicked, clear, clam and as festive as fireworks. But if there was something fixed in her little devilish body that was her ironic and coquettish nature." (16-17)

Seniha, portrayed as a feverish character, has high ideals surpassing the opportunities that her family can offer. Her following words are indicative of this mode:

"Do you think I will spend my life in such a house? In such a country with such people aroud me. Do you think I will lead a life in which I would only be able to own about half a dozen clothes a year, seldom go to Ada to pay a visit and wait downstairs for a couple of meaningless and dull visitors on Mondays? No grandpa, I'm not a girl with such a simple soul. I read many, I learnt a lot... I know that this thing called life is an endless field outside this prison where I have grown up since the day I was born..." (110)

Her "super-westernized" morality also shapes her relationship with her lover Faik, a bohemian, idle young man. Perceiving marriage as nothing more than a formality and calculation, Seniha feels no need to get married with Faik. She clashes with her grandfather Naim Efendi by declaring her views about marriage:

"Our thoughts about marriage are not identical with yours. For us marriage is not an emotional matter. Neither is it a vital necessity. We regard this business as a matter of reason and account; a business pertaining to money..." (109)

On the other hand, the grandfather Naim Efendi declares his belief in conjugal love and opposes premarital sex:

"Would not the memory of that first moment of weakness and defear make them ashamed constantly? Would not they start hating each other when a woman thinks that the man cannot refrain from his desires and a man thinks that the woman is weak and dishonorable?" (54)

From here, it is clear that the conception of premarital sex in the traditional mind exclusively labels women as "fallen". However, for men it is repersented as a matter of a moment, which does not bring with itself serious social and cultural sanctions from community. The similar emphasis put on female chastity and suspicion of women's sexual liberation could be also detected in Peyami Safa's *Sözde Kızlar (So-Called Girls,* 1923). In the novel female characters, who do not repress their femininity and sexuality are depicted as "so called" women by Safa. Nazmiye Hanım, the landlady in the novel, comfortably lives illicit love affairs; her daughter Nevin appears as a figure, who is excessively preoccupied with beauty and marriage and lastly, Belma is represented as a young woman from a traditional rural family, who aspires to be an actress. For Safa, these "so-called" women signify the degradation of society and cannot be associated with the ideal femininity to be promoted in the country. In a similar vein, Safa's *Fatih-Harbiye* (1931) criticizes the figure of super-westernized woman and promotes the view that women need men's tutelage in order to make sense of the changing world since "woman is not yet an individual who is cultivated enough and believes in progress". (94) This position of the writer associates woman with nature, thus with the concrete and material one and men with nurture, i.e., with the abstract realm. Safa makes his stance clear by claiming that women lack the capacity for abstract thinking and are therefore "obliged to understand western civilization only through their eyes" (94). Thus, for women the only way to get close to modern civilization is presented as the Western type of

consumption and a frivolous existence preoccupied with flamboyance. Neriman, the heroine in *Fatih-Harbiye* hesitates between two worlds and two lovers, between tradition and westernized life-style. It is the men around her, who shape her personal development. The critique of super-westernized in Safa's writing is so strong that in his *The Novel of A Hesitation* Safa even attempts to limit the experience of being a woman to fertility. Vildan, a female character in the novel, who is presented as a sexually liberated contemporary woman is heavily criticized:

"Most of those new women find motherhood contradictory to their grace and hate baby cry. Aren't you one of those? But where does this endless pessimism of yours come from?... The eternity of woman is not in her cleverness but in her womb. New woman is puzzled about the center of her creativity. Your despair comes from here... *I tell you, your happiness, ideal and everything is in your womb*." (180) (emphasis mine)

In this respect, it comes out that the main concern of the male writers publishing in the first decades of the Republican period was the social and moral problematique while creating the female characters.[168] Faced with the rapid social and cultural transformation in the Republican era, these writers regarded the degenerate and morally disintegrated woman as a troublesome actor in the ongoing modernization process and longed for the ideal woman, who is chaste, selfless and devoted to her family and nation. Either through praising the patriotic, self-sacrificing female character or criticizing the super-westernized woman, the male psyche of the early period Republican literature ardently engaged in attempts to define ideal and marginalized femininites. What is interesting to see is that in all these stories a decadent future awaits super-westernized female characters and their famillies. In this perspective, it would not be implausible to say that a real break-up with these female characters who do not have a history or psychology narrated not for the representation of the social and cultural

[168]Füsun Akatlı," The Image of Women in Turkish Literaure" in *Women in Turkish Society*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat, Leiden: Brill, 1981: 227.

background yet for its own sake will come only with the women's writing rising in the late 1960s and 70s.

Moreover, one should also be aware of the fact that the creation of female characters for the sake of the articulation of the social and political concerns is not only specific to the male imaginative mind. Writings of Halide Edip, in this respect, reflect the hegemonic codes of femininity. For example, in her novel *Sinekli Bakkal (The Clown and His Daughter, 1936),* Edip evidently praises the downplaying of femininity. She finds women virtous to the extend that they supress their sexuality:

"in her talking, gaze, there was the trace of difference, a higher civilization created by centuries...she was so different from all those women in the mansion who excessively display and abuse their sexuality...people who would see Rabia outside wouldn't think of her sexuality at all". (91, 100, 222)

The same attitude rendering women genderless also appears in such works of Edip as *Yeni Turan* (1912), *Ateşten Gömlek* (1922) and *Vurun Kahpeye* (1923). In these texts, the heroine is presented as someone who has totally committed herself to the national ideal and abandoned her femininity. In *Yeni Turan* the male ideal for woman's liberation is expressed as the following: 'to save them from being confined to flesh, from merely being a machine' (28) so that they could be useful actors as mothers, wives and comrades in the nationalist project. One important point here is that it is necessary to distinguish between Edip's early and later works. In early works like *Seviyye Talip* (1910) or *Handan* (1912) the ideal woman has not an asexual existence but her sexuality is strictly restrained. Before all, she is imagined as a woman who is well-educated, does not confine herself to domesticity and shows interest in social and political matters. In this frame, the ideal woman does not prompt male desire through carnality and sensual passion but through qualities such as education, intelligence, attainment of public roles. In *Seviyye Talip* (1910), in which the protagonist Fahir, a

progressive man with a strong belief in women's education, liberation and adoration for *alla franga* women, criticizes his traditional, passive wife Macide:

" I often wondered whether Macide owned a personality different from this tranquil, calm and rather dull one. But no! Those are such young girls that are literate only enough to read the papers and write some letters; then they spend all their time in domestic chores. The most natural thing for them is to sew, to sweep, to clean up and keep the house neat and tidy... While you talk about the things you have contemplated, her neurotic eyes hunt for dust on the furniture." (12)

On the other hand, Refik Cemal in *Handan* (1912), who advocates women's liberation in a similar way to Faik in *Seviyye Talip,* criticizes his wife Neriman on the basis that she is indifferent to the social and political turmoil in the country:

"Neriman likes music a lot, she plays the piano well, she has a smooth and sweet voice. But it is just a dream to see her as a comrade who would share the male ideas burning inside us... *she is a plant, a flower and a thing*! However bitter, dark and weak it may be the life in the country is of nothing to her. I cannot make her share with me this huge but desperate thing occupying me so much." (25) (emphasis mine)

The image of Handan in this novel represents the opposite of the passive, "flower" woman. She is interested in "manly" subjects such as philosophy, history and sociology, cares about the critical situation in the country and thus is represented as the ideal woman that a modern man could desire. So is Seviyye presented as the opposite of the passive wife Macide in *Seviyye Talip*. Here, it is quite clear that male desire is shaped by the ability of the female character to comply with the ideal codes of femininity. Adak reminds us that the narrator of the ideal woman in Edip's novels is always male and suggests that this could be seen as a strategic move to boost the reliability of the female character. [169] In this way, it becomes more evident that male desire and approval is the main factor for the female character in building up subjectivity. In other words, intellectual men define the codes of 'being modern' for women and in return women are imagined in two categories, namely 'traditional' and

[169]Hülya Adak, "Otobiyografik Benliğin Çok Karakterliliği: Halide Edip'in İlk Romanlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet" (Multi-characters in Autobiographical Self: Gender in Halide Edip's Early Novels" in *Kadınlar Dile Düşünce (Women in Language)*, Istanbul: Metis, 2004: 162. Noting the dread of writing about love and sexuality for woman writers, Adak also says that the function of male narrator is to faciliate writing in such realms.

'contemporary'. Relying on these, it is possible to conclude that in Halide Edip's novels the main female character is employed to represent roles of ideal femininity. Moreover, these roles are imposed on her by a higher position of authority, i.e, the male narrator.

3.3. New Women's Writing

So far, it has been made clear that the literary realm in the late Ottoman and early Republican periods presented female identity as it is constructed in the prevailing hegemonic discourses. In other words, symbolism overshadows the persuasiveness of female characters in the novels produced in this particular period. Against this background, in close collaboration with the post-1980 feminist movement, which criticized the conception of a women's liberation as adjunct to the realization of other major social projects and in this way tried to revive the female perspective, women's writing brought feminist themes to the forefront. At this point, to trace the changing perception of female identity in the literary realm, the following novels will be taken into consideration here: *Tante Rosa* (1968), *Yürümek* (1970), *Ölmeye Yatmak* (1973), *Yarın Yarın* (1976), *Şafak* (1976), *Asılacak Kadın* (1979), *Bir Düğün Gecesi* (1979), *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri* (1980), *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları (1984)*, *Gece Dersleri* (1986), *Kadının Adı Yok* (1986).

Sexuality of Republican Women: Split Selves

Women writers in the 1970s incorporated the asexuality of the Kemalist women as a leading theme into their plots. As indicated before, according to the nation-building Kemalist ideology of the Republic, the ideal woman would become visible in the public sphere at the expense of her sexuality.[170] *Ölmeye Yatmak* is a quite overt example telling the story of an ideal Kemalist woman who questions the well-known plot of the women's emancipation by attempting to revive her docile body, sexuality and repressed femininity. As a university

[170] Durakbaşa (1998a).

professor, Aysel represents the ideal Kemalist woman with such qualifications as good education, active participation in the public sphere and sexual modesty. Throughout the college years she internalizes the idea that she has to repress her femininity and sexuality in order not to be taken away from her education. Among the methods she uses for hiding "herself" are suppressing her laughter or not wearing beautiful dresses in order not to prompt a marriage proposal that would prevent her from continuing education. Moreover, she does not meet male friends in public because of the fear that her conduct could be misinterpreted by the community. (301) This suppression of the self and femininity as a method employed by the heroine in order to be entitled to active participation in the public sphere could be seen as the "patriarchal bargain" as Kandiyotti calls it.[171] In this sense, Aysel consents to the repressive mechanisms of the patriarchal order so that she can in return have the opportunities leading to a reputable career.

Suppression of the self and body is not a short-term arrangement for Aysel but extends into her whole existence. She admits that she has never felt at ease with her femininity because of being overwhelmed by "higher and nobler" concerns:

"All that pedicure and manicure, wiping my face with a good cream at night... seemed to be duties always detached from my womanhood and performed just for health and comfort. Have I ever been myself? Have we ever been ourselves? Have I had any place where I have not carried my duties with me?" (183)

When compared to professionalism that is defined through reason, competitiveness, discipline, aspects of life that are thought to be *feminine* such as domesticity, shopping or self-care seem to be trivial for her. It is clear that professionalism and the idea of being useful for national ideals are apparent features in the narratives of the first generation Kemalist women.[172] These women unanimously articulate the symbolism attached to their education,

[171] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining With Patriarchy", *Gender and Society*, 2:3, 274-290.

[172] Ibid.

professionalism and participation in the public sphere.[173] However, their professional identities are constructed at the expense of their femininity and relations in the private sphere. The burden of professionalism and the inability to reconcile it with womanhood becomes truly apparent in a nightmare scene in *Ölmeye Yatmak*. In her dream Aysel takes the exam to become associate professor in front of the committee, in the middle of which Atatürk sits and expects from Aysel the formula that would save the country. This great expectation of the male-dominated committe arouses worry in Aysel and prevents her from defending her thesis. It is symbolic that she finds a pot of *dolma* in front of her instead of her thesis. (314) The pot of *dolma* here should point out the strict boundary between womanhood and professional identity and the fear of being denied professionalism because of failing to surpass womanhood.

Performance in the public sphere as ideal female figures and personal wishes and desires are always presented at odds with each other. Therefore, excessively value-loaded professionalism imposed on women generates a particular conception of private sphere and intimacy in women's minds. In this respect, Aysel despises domesticity and refrains from displaying her desires. The ideal image that she feels obliged to display in the public always requires her to appear as a busy, intellectual and disciplined woman:

"The cleaning woman came in at that moment... She exclaimed: 'you haven't slept at all?'... 'because I worked' I said. I could have said many other things like 'guests came, so I stayed up, I spent the night with a friend, I didn't want to sleep, I sowed'... I was doing the same thing to the pedicurist girl, Gönül... I was saying "be quick I will run to the conference, I have to type the report for the research institute or I am being late for the lecture'. I wasn't saying anything at all if I would attend a cocktail after the pedicure, or go shopping or if we have guests in the evening". (185)

Aysel's disembodied existence and detachment from womanhood becomes quite evident in the contempt she feels for corporeal, 'trivial' matters. However, the discomfort of being

[173] "We were interpreting having s profession in a different way. As if it was not for earning a living! It was rather for being useful, putting ourselves into the service of society and displaying success" says Hamide Topçuoğlu, a professor from the first generation of the Republic. (Göle, 2004: 108).

imprisoned into a disembodied existence will arise in her narrative and lead her to ask "why her body has been so detached from her throughout all these years?" (184). An illicit sexual affair with her student will trigger the revival of her body. Aysel expresses her mood aroused after this "marginal" sexual experience in the following terms:

"I was once again a fresh, full-blooded young woman. My whole mind, knowledge, hair, lips, breasts, waist, appearance in the world, way of smiling, way of speaking were all out in the open. I was at the same time both worthy and unworthy of respect, both with and without fault, both dressed and naked. Both woman and human being." (181)

However, this bodily awakening does not take place smoothly and peacefully. On the one hand, it reunites Aysel with an embodied subjectivity, but on the other it also triggers regret and guilt in her, causing her "to lie down to die". Moreover, this corporeal epiphany of Aysel does not refer to becoming totally at peace with the body but still encompasses restraints:

"Beginning with that morning I came to understand that my body was concrete, something touchable and visible... For a moment I wanted to take off my clothes and see myself naked in the mirror yet I managed to overcome this desire through rebuking myself. I took shelter in my hair once again and brushed it many times." (183)

Desipite her desire to feel comfortable with her body, Aysel prohibits nakedness to herself and tries to compensate for this self-restriction by leaving her hair free. Indeed, taking shelter in the hair cannot be simply coincidental. Delaney draws attention to the fact that woman's hair carries sexual connotations in itself.[174] For Aysel, hair becomes the substitute of the naked body. Delaney further suggests that hair has a particular meaning in the Turkish context. It is more sexualized and objectified than usual in that on the one side the Republican secularism wants women's hair displayed in the public sphere and on the other hand the Islamist faith necessitates the veiling of hair. As a woman who has to display an unveiled appearance in order to distinguish herself from tradition and at the same time is restricted by disembodiment, Aysel regards hair as a shelter vis-a-vis this dilemma.

[174] Carol Delaney, "Untangling the Meanings of Hair in Turkish Society", Anthropological Quarterly, Vol. 67, No. 14, 1994.

Aysel's dilemmas caused by the Republican socialization into gender roles, namely disembodiment, contempt for domesticity, muffling of personal wishes and sexual desires appear to be at the core of the construction of the female identity in Turkey. In this sense, one should acknowledge that Aysel's case is not limited to her personal narrative but extends to the national. It can be said that we see the national and the sexual, the public and the private intermingling in this plot. This mixture of the public and private is elaborated on by Frederic Jameson in terms of third world literature as follows:

"All third-world texts are necessarily....allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation such as the novel... Third world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic, necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society."[175]

Referring to Jameson's insight, Irzık points out the fact that in many modern Turkish novels the characters lead allegorical lives and are representative of meanings larger than themselves.[176] Accordingly, *Lying Down to Die* comes forward as one of these novels that allegorically encapsulates reminiscences of the social and cultural past of the nation.

Leftist Project and Femininity

The female character who is exempted from the peculiar discomforts of the Kemalist female self in *Ölmeye Yatmak* belongs to the 68'generation. Grown up in the turbulent years of 1960s, Tezel, the little sister of Aysel leads a 'freer' life when compared to Aysel. Born into a country where the initial steps of the Republican revolution had been already completed and its ideals are solidified, Tezel and her generation did not feel obliged to carry the mission of being guards of the new regime. Thus, it is obvious that Tezel's relatively liberal upbringing

[175] Frederic Jameson, "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism", *Social Text 15* (1986): 69.
[176] Sibel Irzık, "Allegorical Lives: Public and Private in the Modern Turkish Novel", The South Atlantic Quarterly 102: 2/3, 2003: 555.

is affected by the rise of the left in the 1960s. Tezel herself admits the effects of the changing social and political atmosphere in these years on her upbringing and the familial support she had for her personal wishes and desires (for example for her occupation with arts):

"In the meanwhile you have attained a bright constitution after all the beating and the nightsticks I had, why wouldn't Aysel support me, me moving to İstanbul, going to the fine arts faculty?" (25)

In this frame, it is crucial that one generation later after Aysel a 'marginal' figure like Tezel shows up, replacing asexuality of the Kemalist woman with sexual assertiveness, the idea about the holiness of motherhood and the emphasis on ideal family in the Republican discourse with a rejection of maternal and marital ties. In *Bir Düğün Gecesi (A Wedding Night)* we hear Tezel criticizing institutions like bourgeois family, marriage, chastity, motherhood. For example, with regard to motherhood she says:

"What the hell have I given birth to him? Anyway, I gave birth to him. Tomorrow, I won't plague his life out by saying all the time 'take me to dentist, hospital, spa...' I made even my own mother used to not expecting anything from myself. How nice, my son would not suffer from mother trouble."(26).

Considering the resistant stance of Tezel in life, one should surmise that the rise of the leftist movement facilitated the emergence of a new generation that would revise the parameters of old hegemonic discourses. Similarly, Aysel's attempt to reconstruct her femininity also takes place against the backdrop marked by the rise of the left. However, it is also important to note here that though one could say that involvement in leftist activism may mean loosening of the ties with Republican missions, it is not reasonable to look for the source of Kemalist women's resistance to suppression of femininity directly in the rise of the left. The leftist discourse was not an exception to patriarchal ideology. Thus, fleeing from the influence of one patriarchal discourse to another could not be truly pathbreaking for women's criticism of Republican codes of ideal femininity. Having said this, at this point it would be helpful to investigate the relationship between the left and women's liberation in greater detail.

Female Sexuality and Grand Social Projects: Socialism, İKD and Gece Dersleri

In feminist scholarship in Turkey, it is argued that female identity has been operationalized by macro social projects.[177] So far, the limitations of the Republican project for the free expression of female sexuality have been made clear. Here we will mention the conservative gender roles perpetuated by the socialist project in Turkey. The Left became powerful in Turkey especially after the 1960 coup d'etat and remained as a determining force until the 12 September 1980 coup that dissolved all the formations on the left. The social movements of the 1960's were mainly facilitated by the new 1960 constitution, which introduced more liberal laws on unions and associations. In 1965 elections, the Turkish Labour Party, which had been founded in 1961 succeeded in getting three percent of the votes and sending fifteen MP's to the parliament and initiated a new era for leftist politcs.[178] First of all, one could note that socialism was an influential step to gain distance from the hegemony of the Republican ideology and allow a plurality of discourses. However, though it represented a challenge to the hegemony of the Republican Kemalist discourse that reproduced puritan sexual codes for women, the socialist movement could not place the woman's question at the center. Rather, it marginalized feminist demands by turning the principle of equality into that of sameness.[179] In other words, femininity was regarded as an obstacle that could distract people from 'real' ideals and thus had to be discarded.[180] The attempts to curb the feminine traits of women crystallizes in the label '*bacı*', meaning 'female kin' in Turkish. By calling their female comrades as *bacı*, socialist men tried to get rid of the inconvenience that 'destructive' female sexuality may cause. In this sense, it would not be implausible to suggest that the socialist project shares one particular commonality with both the nationalist and Islamist approaches to

[177] Kadıoğlu (1998).
[178] Erik Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2004: 351-405.
[179] Fatmagül Berktay, "Has Anything Changed in The Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?" in *Women in Modern Turkish Society*, ed. Şirin Tekeli, London, Atlantic Heights, N.J: Zed Books, 1995.
[180] Indeed this leftist plot regarding leftist women as secondary actpors and the women's demands as trivialities was not peculiar to the Turkish case but also characterized the leftist movement in 1960s in the West. (Donnovan, 2000: 156)

female sexuality. As discussed before, the nationalist discourse proposes genderlessness for the sake of the new nation. As a matter of fact, it tends to see both men and women as socially useful agents and regards the emphasis on sexual differences as a deviation from the national good. On the other hand, the Islamist approach perceives female sexuality as the source of *fitna*, i.e, chaos and thus urges that it be kept under control. Similar to these approaches, the socialist project tries to erase the boldness of femininity and attempts to render women trustful comrades by fostering genderlessness. The left assumes that women's liberation would be achieved with the coming of socialism and therefore overlooks feminist concerns by calling them ideological divergence.

From here, what comes out is that leftist women are subject to contradictory discourses. On the one hand, they are rendered genderless within the leftist movement; on the other they are still primarily defined by their womanhood in the patriarchal order outside the movement. To make this point clearer, we could refer to Sevgi Soysal's *Şafak* (1975), in which Soysal narrates one night that a middle class leftist woman spends under interrogation. When arrested because of her leftist activism, Oya is primarily accused of being an unchaste woman rather than of leftism. The first question that the police officer Zekai Bey asks Oya in the interrogation room is whether or not she is married and has any children (84). In doing so, the police officer aims to impose on Oya the burden of chastity required by her marriage and motherhood. Referring to the norm of chastity that she breaks by drinking together with foreign men, the officer insults Oya by constantly calling her a "bitch". Oya's identity is reduced to femaleness in that not her leftism but her womanhood and failure to comply with the conservative codes applying to her womanhood makes her a suspect. As a result, Oya is trapped between two discourses: the leftist movement which aims at genderlessness for female identity so that the 'dangerous' female sexuality would not hinder the socialist project

and the patriarchal discourse that constantly reminds her of her womanhood as if it were a source of guilt.

Having indicated the urge for genderlessness as a leftist tool to control 'dangerous' female sexuality, one should also pay attention to the fact the left did not display a homogeneous structure but encompassed diversities. In this regard, there was a feminist–leftist women's movement in the 1970s, in which women took up leadership roles and to some extend accomplished to articulate the feminist cause. Among women's associations in this feminist-leftist movement, İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (İKD) (1975-80) stands as the most progressive one because of its more overt feminist affiliation.[181] This association enabled women to have a public space of their own that was not dominated by men. Still, even this uniquely leftist-feminist women's organization could not prioritize feminist demands and primarily cared for the socialist cause.[182] As one of the members of İKD in the late 1970s, Latife Tekin personally experienced the leftist marginalization of female identity, which caused her to write *Gece Dersleri*. In this novel, Tekin tells the story of Gülfidan/ Sekreter Rüzgar, who interacts with the leftist circles but admits that she approaches the leftist ideal critically and thus cannot become a submissive member of the organization. However, rather than her criticism of the movement in terms of the persuasiveness of the leftist cause, the real challenge Gülfidan poses against the movement emerges in the site of her femininity. The leftist belief that manifest, daring sex roles would frustrate the socialist project appears in Gülfidan's case as well. Moreover, her narrative reveals that this leftist belief is not only made widespread by restriction or force but women themselves internalize it. For example, some of the women in the movement feel embarrassed when they happen to emphasize their

[181] For a more detailed account about the role of women in the leftist movement See Emel Akal Arslan, "Kadın ve Siyaset: Aykırı Bir Örnek: İKD in *Yerli Bir Feminizme Doğru*, ed. Aynur İlyasoğlu, Necla Akgökçe, İstanbul: Sel, 2001.

[182] İKD could not catch up with the rising second wave movement in the West in the 1970s. See Ayşegül Devecioğlu, "1975-1980: Kadın Örgütlenmesi için Kaçırılmış Bir Fırsat" in *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedi*si, 7, İstanbul: İletişim, 1988.

femininities in their appearance. Gülfidan is deeply moved by the embodied existence of a leftist female friend:

"Her uneasy bows, moves revealing that she feels embarrassed because of the shiny pink lipstick on her lips and the streaked hair... That she becomes fresh again with such a humanist sentence as 'that lipstick suits your lips very much'..." (22-23)

The Foucauldian conception of positive power may be helpful here to understand how women submit themselves to the leftist norm of being an asexual comrade. Foucault underlies that power is not primarily repressive and coercive but is productive, meaning that it does not only work through inhibition and enforcement but has more complicated mechanisms and practices to produce individuals.[183] In this respect, the leftist discourse on 'proper female body and sexuality' is not perpetuated through direct violence or threat but through persuasion and incitement. The internalization of restraints on femininity by leftist women as it is depicted in *Gece Dersleri* mainly stems from the fact that devotion to the leftist cause precedes a feminist consciousness. That is to say that leftist women, who are rendered genderless and whose bodies are made docile prioritized the leftist cause before feminist demands. This stance shows up in women's personal accounts and testimonies pertaining to the feminist movement in Turkey in the 1970s and 80s. Leftist and feminist women in the 1970s got confused about where to put the stress, i.e, whether on the socialist ideals or the female identity. It is claimed that they failed to see the rise of radical feminism and overlooked the view that the root of women's oppression does not lie merely in capitalism but also originates from the unequal relations in the private sphere. Pointing out this failure to grasp the patriarchal roots of such institutions as love, marriage, sexuality, Devecioğlu says that the feminist-leftist movement in the 1970s is a missed opportunity.[184] Others also point out that this dilemma of the 1970's

[183] Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 94.
[184] Devecioğlu (1988).

feminist-leftist movement persisted in the small feminist circles in Ankara in the 1980's.[185] It is noted that leftist women accused others of being too liberal because of omitting socialist concerns in the feminist project and in return they were accused of not being feminist enough.

Having mentioned that the leftist patriarchy is perpetuated not only by men but also by women themselves, it is important to mention how Gülfidan is different from the other leftist women in that she comes to implicitly oppose genderlessness in the leftist propaganda. First of all, one should note that it is not only the leftist circles but her traumatic past as well that puts pressure on her in the realm of love and womanhood. Gülfidan mentions that she comes from a household in which women feel lonely. (7) By saying this, she refers to her memory of her mother who had an illicit love affair and was driven away from home. This first trauma in her life makes her behave cautiously in the realm of love. For Gülfidan, love is a state that is to be avoided. It is closely associated with feelings of anger, embarrassment or worry. Thus, she refrains from encounters with the opposite sex. For example, at one of the leftist meetings in which she is the only woman in the room and the 'sister-in-law'[186] of all the men there, a male speaker gazes at her after each one of his statements. The male gaze targeting her femininity and body makes Gülfidan lose her temper. (41) Similarly, when her mother tries to make her calm down after a bad nightmare by saying that she will fall in love one day and feel liberated, she reacts to her and even curses. (42) Unlike her mother, Gülfidan cannot see love as liberating but wants to escape from it. She tells her mother her wish to not to fall in love:

"Mommy, I said, I wish I would not fall in love, never fall in love, I wish I gave birth to a boy with a female heart , I wish I gave birth to a second child. " (60)

However, the vulnerability that Gülfidan feels in the realm of desire and love turns into a determined resistance when the organization directly attempts to control her body by telling

[185] N. Timisi and M. A. Gevrek, "1980ler Türkiye'sinde Feminist Hareket: Ankara Çevresi" in *90larda Türkiye'de Feminizm*, ed. Aksu Bora and Asena Güral, İstanbul: İletişim, 2002.
[186] 'I was the only woman in the room and was the sister in law of all of them' (40)

that she should terminate her pregnancy and postpone all the individual wishes until after the revolution. (73) This audacious attempt of the movement to directly control her corporeal being prompts the most far reaching resistance: giving birth. It is quite meaningful that Gülfidan's resistance originates from her femaleness, her female body. Giving birth becomes the site of releasing her 'veiled' femininity. Indeed, on the one side she vividly mentions how painful giving birth is for a woman and seem to acknowledge birth as a bodily burden for women. She describes the birth scene in the following terms:

"You will listen to your body until it will feel like seared with iron sticks between your legs and then they will place the cinders as big as horse shoe until the embouchure of your womb and push you down from a cliff." (61)

On the other side, however painful it is, giving birth still remains as the most available tool to her to oppose the leftist restraints on femininity. Moreover, it is also crucial that the second time that Gülfidan gives birth is her writing of Gece Dersleri. Before, when she told her mother that she did not want to fall in love but to give birth to her second child (60), she had already given the clue of her wish to write this book. While she associates love with male ascendancy and female oppression, giving birth or writing is the only way to escape the oppressive relations in the realm of love. The association of writing with an essential, female bodily function and also the affirmation of it here brings to mind French theories of women's writing and femininity. Using Deridean deconstruction and Lacanian pyschoanalysis, theorists like Irigaray, Kristeva and Cixous celebrate women's sexual capacities and urge for an *écriture féminine*, which will make it possible for women to bring their bodily energies forward. Denying the perception of female body as lack, Cixous regards it as a positive force and calls for a writing that derives its source from a feminine mind shaped by female bodily derives. In the "Laugh of the Medusa", Cixous writes:

"Write yourself. your body must be heard... To write. An act which will not only realize the decensored relation of woman to her sexuality, to her womanly being, giving her access to her native strength; it will give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily

territories which have been kept under seal; it will tear her away from the superegoized structure in which she has always occupied the place reserved for the guilty (guilty of everything, guilty at every turn: for having desires, for not having any, for being frigid, for being too hot, for not being both at once, for being too motherly and not enough, for having children and for not having any, for nursing and for not nursing)" (880)

For Cixous, writing is the ultimate way for women to overcome the binary opposition set between the male and female by phallogocentricism in the Western philosophical tradition, i.e, the privileging of the masculine in the construction of meaning. Below, she outlines the categories to which man and woman belong in the phallogocentric mind:

"Where is she?
Activity/Passivity
Sun/Moon
Culture/Nature
Day/Night
Father/Mother
Head/Heart
Intelligible/Palpable
Logos/Pathos
Form, convex, step, advance, semen, progress
Matter, concave, ground- where steps are taken, holding-and dumping-ground.
Man
—
Woman "[187]

In the patriarchal Western culture the text's author is a father whose pen is thought to be an instrument of generative power like the phallus.[188] Attacking all the binary oppositions between male and female and also the inferior/superior meanings attached to them, Cixous overthrows this conception of authorship. Thus, she calls for *écriture féminine* that originates from or tells about female body and in this way transforms language. To refer to the corporeal roots of women's distinct language, Cixous frequently uses metaphors of maternity to define writing by women:

"She is giving birth. With the strength of a lioness. Of a plant. Of a cosmogony. Of a woman...A desire for text! Confusion! What possesses her? A child! Paper! Intoxications! I'm

[187] Helene Cixous, "Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/ Ways Out/ Forays" in *The Newly Born Woman*, H. Cixous and C. Clement, London: Tauris, 1996: 63.
[188] Sandra Gilbert and Gubar, *Mad Woman in the Attic: Woman Writer and 19th Century Literary Imagination*, New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2000.

overflowing! My breasts overflow! Milk. Ink. The moment of suckling. And I? I too am hungry. The taste of milk, of ink!"[189]

Earlier, I referred to the concept of *gynocriticism* that assumes that women writers have a literature of their own just because of their peculiar experiences. According to this outlook, the female literary tradition arises out of the unique relationship between women writers and society rather than being a matter of biological impulses as theories of *écriture féminine* argue. However, regarding *Gece Dersleri* both of these approaches seem to have some explanatory power. One can say that in addition to the socialization process that shapes Gülfidan's mind and gives her a particular experience of the patriarchal practices, it is also her body that leads her towards feminist consciousness and towards writing. Her resistance to the disciplinary mechanisms on her femininity occurs in the form of giving birth. In the next part, we will show that some of the woman characters rely on love as a liberating tool to redefine their sexuality and femininity. As for *Gece Dersleri* love remains as the realm of unrest for Gülfidan. Her resistance primarily comes from the body. Therefore, Gülfidan's resistance is more corporeal than any other resistance taking place through the theme of love; it is as corporeal as giving birth.

Repurcussions of Ideas of Sexual Liberation and Second Wave Feminism

Critique of romantic love in feminist scholarship is abundant. Especially, the second wave feminist movement puts forward the idea that romantic love becomes a tool that perpetuates women's subordination and men's dominance. Preceding this stance that will become prominent in the 1960's and 70's, Beauvoir argues that love for women leads to self-negation, reinforces subordination and constructs subjectivity through that subordination:

"There is no other way for her but to lose herself, her soul, body in him, who is represented to her as the absolute, as the essential... she chooses to desire her enslavement so ardently that it

[189] Helene Cixous, La Venue a l'ecriture, with Anne Leclerc and Madeleine Gagnon, Paris: Union Générale d'editions, 10/18, 1977: 37, quoted in Ann Rosalind Jones, "Inscribing Femininity: French Theories of the Feminine" in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism,* ed. G. Greene and C. Kahn, NY: Methuen, 1985:88.

will seem to her the expression of her liberty... she will humble herself to nothingness before him. Love becomes for her a religion." (1972: 653)

This stance of Beauvoir was furthered by the second-wave feminist theorists like Firestone who says that 'love, perhaps even more than childbearing is the pivot of women's oppression today'.[190] For her, 'since men and women are not equal, love is destructive for women'.[191] Romantic love causes women to direct all their energy toward men and thus prevents them from contributing to culture and civilization. Firestone concludes that women love in exchange for security and recognition:

"In a male run society that defines women as an inferior and parasitic class, a woman who does not achieve male approval in some form is doomed...But because the woman is rarely allowed to realize herself through activity in the larger (male) society-and when she is, she is seldom granted the recognition she deserves-it becomes easier to try for the recognition of one man than of many; and in fact this is exactly the choice most women make. Thus once more the phenomenon of love, good in itself, is corrupted by its class context: women must have love not only for healthy reasons but actually to validate their existence." p. 139.

The same point is articulated by Atkinson, who maintains that women take shelter in love to be able to deal with oppression, to absorb some of men's power, find wholeness for their inadequate self.[192] One argument attempting to account for the relationship between romantic love and women's subordination proposes the view that women become so obsessed with love that they have no energies left for public achievements. Carol Gilligan's views about differences between male and female psychological development underlie this point. Gilligan argues that men and women develop different moral reasoning in that women prioritize relationships, prefer to exist in a web of relations whereas men relate to the world by putting the stress on separation and individuality.[193] Similar to this, Nancy Chodorow (1978) proposes that gender personality is shaped within the pyschodynamics of family.[194] Making

[190] Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, NY: William Morrow, 1972: 121.
[191] Ibid., 139.
[192] cited in Donnovan, *Feminist Theory*, 166.
[193] Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge, Massachusettes: Harvard University Press, 1993: 19.
[194] Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, California: University of California Press, 1978.

use of the Freudian theory, Chodorow pinpoints the preoedipal phase in the girls' psychosexual development, according to which daughters closely identify themselves with mothers simply because they both are of the same sex.[195] Since boys are of the opposite sex, mothers push them from the preoedipal to the oedipal stage in which they identify with their father and desire the mother. According to Chodorow, as a result of the close connection with the mother, girls end up in developing traits like sensibility and sympathy rather than 'male' traits like independence, need for public recognition and individualism. In line with this conception of women's pscyhological development, love comes out as a feminine feeling because it centers affection, mutuality and intimacy which are characteristics marking girls's psychological development.[196]

On the other hand, love may also serve as a feminist tool for women's liberation and empowerment. The sexual liberation of the 1960s had criticized marriage as a bourgeois institution characterized by unequal gender relations and encouraged women to seek for free romantic love outside marriage. In that sense, the call for free love was accompanied by the criticism of marriage. Theorists like Carol Pateman put forward the idea of sexual contract and further elaborated on the institution of marriage as a form of reproduction of male dominance. In her *The Sexual Contract* (1988) Pateman argues that the liberal tradition historically did not consider women as one of the parties giving consent to the social contract. A sexual contract precedes the social contract, confines women to object position and endows men with patriarchal rights over women. Pateman particularly dwells on the marriage contract as the prompter of the sexual contract and suggests that historically the marriage contract is not freely determined by free agents since wives are doomed to inferior status. Pateman notes that the heyday of patriarchal institutions was between the 1840s and 1970s.[197] Since the

[195] Ibid., 104.
[196] Francesca M. Cancian, "Feminization of Love", *Signs*, Vol.11, No.4, 1986:692-709.
[197] Carole Pateman, "Beyond Sexual Contract?" in *Rewriting the Sexual Contract*, ed. Geoff Dench, London: Institute of Community Studies, 1997: 4.

1970s a critical stance vis-a-vis the patriarchal power relations in the family and marriage has become prominent thanks to social movements like the women's movement, the gay movement and also the rising feminist scholarship.

Among the forces reinforcing oppressive relations in marriage, domesticity and housewifery are thought to have quite entrenched effects. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) Betty Friedan urges women to deny the myth of happy housewife and engage in more meaningful and creative work than household chores. She argues that women have been victimized by a self-perpetuating myth, i.e, the house-bound existence and thus rejects the roles of wifehood and motherhood that tie women to home. Friedan's views principally include the critique of everyday life and the unequal share of domestic labour between sexes at home. With its routine repetition of daily chores everyday life perpetuates oppressive relations of gender, restricts women to domesticity and keeps them from self-realization. In that sense, it is clear that domesticity dooms women to *immanence*, i.e, remaining within, rather than *transcendence,* i.e, surpassing physical existence, as Beauvoir expresses it. She states that:

"Woman is doomed to the continuation of the species and the care of the home-that is to say immanence".[198]

According to this, women's association with immanence rather than transcendence mainly stems from the routine and relentless repetition of domestic chores. Moreover, acknowledging that "everyday life weighs heaviest on women", Lefebvre draws attention to the difference between the cyclical time of everyday life and the linear conception of time surpassing the everyday and enabling progress, which actually corresponds to the difference between the feminine and the masculine.[199] This means that "the housewife is outside time; she does not

[198] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993: 449.
[199] quoted in Rita Felski, *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture*, NY: New York University Press, 2000: 81.

do anything but only drags the present".[200] In this framework, the sisyphus myth-like nature of domesticity and its marital context appear as prompters of women's subordination.

The radical feminist stance vis-a-vis marriage encouraging free love composed of equal parties, marked not by violence, aggression or domination but by mutuality and affection had its repercussions in women's writing in Turkey as well. Moreover, this call for free love also reflects ideas of the sexual revolution in the 1960s in the West. Many prominent works of women's writing treat love as a liberatory theme and simultaneously challenge the patriarchal roots of marriage. It is hard to claim that the repercussions of the sexual revolution were widespread and influential in Turkey. One has to take into account that the 1960s and 70s were politically tense years for Turkey. The internal struggles revolving around ideological divides were the focus of attention on the social and political agenda. Women's feminist demands were deemed to be a minor or secondary issue that could not attract attention. In this respect, the leftist paradigm becoming powerful after the 1960s and challenging the hegemonic status of the Republican ideology could not incorporate feminist principles into its project. Earlier, it has been noted that the basic leftist ideal, i.e, 'equality' often turns into a discourse on 'sameness' with regard to gender roles. This meant that for the sake of the socialist project sexual differences had to be obliterated from the picture. Women writers in the 1970s had clear leftist affiliations. In that sense, the gender-blind approaches within the leftist paradigms had considerable effects on their imagination. Here, what is important to see is that in the middle of an ideological turmoil in which feminist demands are largely ignored or incorporated into broader discourses, women writers did not simply pass over feminist questionings. The themes such as marriage, sexuality and love and the way they handled these themes were in line with the debates of the second wave movement rising in the 1970s. In the post-1980s period one can observe that these themes of women's writing become identical

[200] Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 51.

with those of the new feminist movement in Turkey that benefited from the liberal aura of the decade and began to discover the achievements of the second wave feminism in the West.

Having said this, here the main aim is to see how this women's writing dealt with issues like women's sexual pleasure, patriarchal roots of marriage and romantic love and in this way constituted an early representation of second wave feminism in Turkey. The texts that will be investigated here are selected from the late 1960s, 70s and 80s: *Tante Rosa* (1968), *Yürümek* (1970), *Yarın Yarın* (1976) and *Kadının Adı Yok* (1986).

Intimacy and Femininity: Love, Sexuality and Marriage

New women's writing tells stories about female characters who revise their intimate relations, seek sexual autonomy and question the traditional conception of marriage as a secure place for women. They leave home where they cannot find affection and love. It can be said that just like the Tanzimat writers who saw love as a liberatory theme against patriarchal authority and tradition[201], new woman writers associate the search for love with liberation from repressive patriarchal relations in marriage. This idea can be clearly found in the plots of *Tante Rosa (Aunt Rosa,* 1968) and *Yürümek (Walking, 1970).* In *Tante Rosa* Soysal tells the story of a rebellious female character, who refuses to pretend to be 'the happy woman'. In this regard, Tante Rosa denies "the myth of happy housewife"[202] that Friedan mentions. Opposing home and marriage that confine women to routine and repetition and male dominance in the realm of sexuality, Tante Rosa says: "Instead of living this ugliness one should go for foolish beginnings" (48). Rosa's first marriage had taken place because of an unwanted pregnancy and the fear of being labeled as "unchaste".[203] However, later on in her marriage her perception of chastity changes in a radical way:

[201] Duben and Behar, *Istanbul Households,* 87-122.
[202] Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, NY: Penguin, 1983.
[203] "namusu kirlenmiş bir aile kızı olmamak, zavallı bir piç kurusu doğurmamak için Hans'la evlendi." p. 30.

"She really understood what it means to be an 'unchaste' woman and give birth to bastard children after she began to sleep with her husband even when she did not want to." (32)

This change in the mindset is prompted by forced sexual intercourse. As a result, Tante Rosa leaves her husband, begins to make a living in the big city on her own and marries a man who does not work and bring home money but plays the violin, knows a lot about philosophy and distant places and thus can entertain his wife. Tante Rosa has her own conceptions of love, marriage and man-woman relations: "time will come when love would be real love,... resistance would be genuine and... marriage would be real" (49). In search for the 'ideal' love affair in her mind, Rosa attempts to challenge conventional definitions of masculinities and femininities. Conventionally, hegemonic masculinity is defined in terms of being able to impregnate a woman, protect her from danger and make a living for her.[204] Moreover, the ideal man has to perform in the public sphere that has been historically always male.[205] The binary oppositions set between masculine and feminine put forward that he is what she is not. In other words, he is logos whereas she represents pathos.[206] Objecting to these codes of hegemonic masculinity, Rosa marries 'a beautiful husband who plays the violin' (39). This husband figure is a 'feminine' figure according to the conventional definition of ideal manhood since he neither can play the role of breadwinner nor is he able to attain a role in public. He also fails to be a man of reason because of his delicate, emotional character. By desiring and marrying a stereotypically 'feminine' man, Tante Rosa seems to be unwittingly renegotiating hegemonic codes of gender under the patriarchal system.

Considering that themes like the correlation between chastity and honor, sexuality confined to marriage, search for romantic love and home as a trap to flee from are at the core of *Tante*

[204]David Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making: Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*, New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1990: 222.

[205]For the ideology of seperate spheres confining women to the private realm and defining man in the public, see Jean Elsthain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

[206] Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy*, NY: Routledge, 1984.

Rosa (1968), it is quite reasonable to suggest that with its direct inclusion of feminist themes *Tante Rosa* is a pioneering feminist text in women's writing. However, praising Tante Rosa as a feminist text should not prevent us from acknowledging its limitations. Before all, Tante Rosa is narrated in a strikingly satirical and humorous way. This satire, humour and open criticism is quite symbolic in the sense that they are the tools that make it possible to write about an apparent but incomplete, naively optimistic and bovarist female resistance. Soysal criticizes Rosa on the basis that Rosa does not have a feminist consciousness. In other words, she seeks love and happy marriage in an instinctual way and cannot see that her case is not an individual story but the epitome of common female experience under patriarchy. Leaving conjugal life behind and setting off for a new beginning is naive according to Soysal because Rosa does not take into account the fact that the world outside marriage is not immune to patriarchy either. Obviously, Rosa lacks educational qualifications and professional experience and thus succeeds in neither of the jobs that she tries. The jobs are presented as unreasonable activities that are doomed to fail. She attempts to run a kiosk, does maintenance job at the cemetery, turns her apartment into a hostel, becomes a cloakroom attendant, collects empty bottles to sell but in the end dies alone in poverty. Moreover, the conservative and sex-negative society despises Tante Rosa because of her 'marginal' preoccupation with love and sexual pleasure, when she marries a 'feminine' man or tries to seduce a sexually conservative husband or a customer while working as a cloakroom attendant in a brothel. Towards the end of the story, it is clearly expressed that Tante Rosa's search for 'new beginnings' is just a naive form of escape form an unwanted life:

"We were naked, walking, we learned how to feel shameful at the same time we learned how to forget, we were naked, walking. We were one of those who undress to escape, to forget. However, one is to undress in order to remember, to remember those things we have been made to forget since centuries. To remember what couldn't happen, what will not happen, to possess the power to start anew, to be able to chose, to have a clear mind to choose... Tante Rosa didn't undress for those, not even once... Tante Rosa is the name of all the womanly ignorances." (90)

The first person plural narrative voice is probably an indication of incompleteness of Tante Rosa's liberation. Here, Soysal unifies the female experience by using the first person plural narrator and in this way points out the commonality of a "womanly ignorance", i.e, the inability to see that a woman's experience of patriarchy is not confined to the limits of the personal. In this regard, Rosa's belief in 'ideal' love affairs, which she practices through successive marriages or extramarital affairs is presented as a romantic myth of women's magazines that she used to read a lot in the youth. I mentioned before how the male imagination in the late Ottoman and early Republican period prepared unfortunate futures for highly criticized female figures like femme fatales and super-westernized women. A similar pattern, namely punishing the unapproved female character can be traced in *Tante Rosa*. There Soysal expresses that in Rosa she personified all the women who "undress to escape, not to remember" (90) or are unaware of the unifying women's experience under patriarchy and thus go after romances as if they were not shaped by patriarchal relations. Therefore, she admits that she dragged Rosa into a symbolic death:

"It is only me myself who will not forget about Tante Rosa's death. Because I dragged her into that passage. Rosa whom one can drag into any passage... Rosa whom one can imagine living in these conditions or in those. Rosa could be sad or foolish...Rosa dreams about those who come to her funeral and cries for her own death. They always cry for their own death, own loneliness, their misfortune. I killed them all with Rosa. To put a period and untie the knot." (93-94)

As seen above, Rosa's death signifies a possibility for the emergence of a new female character in the author's mind, who would not aspire for love and sexuality as an escape from the old conjugal love but on the contrary would attempt to transform love and sexuality by redefining them outside patriarchal connotations. After Rosa's death, Ela would come forward in *Yürümek* (1970), Soysal's secod novel and begin the feminist quest from where Rosa had left it.

Beginning with the 1960s and 70s many novels in the Western canonical women's writing have openly sided with or propagated feminist ideals.[207] What about the women's writing in Turkey? First of all, *Tante Rosa* and other novels investigated in this study could be cited among literary works openly siding with the feminist movement. Arat criticizes the feminist scholarship in Turkey because of its failure to keep up with the scholarship in the West and identify its specificity.[208] Identification of feminist literary works in the Turkish context could be an important task to specify the intellectual traditions of the feminist struggle and fill the gap that Arat points out. Regarding the first phase of the feminist movement in Turkey, many recent works have attempted to reveal the intellectual roots. Some of them have drawn attention to women's writing and activism in the late Ottoman era. They exposed the fact that there was a fertile intellectual production and activism carried out by women then.[209] Moreover, some other studies investigated the literary production of women writers such as Nezihe Muhittin or Halide Edip Adıvar who had been influential figures along the development of the first wave feminism in Turkey.[210] Though the texts of first wave feminism are more clearly identified, studies deciphering intellectual traditions of the second wave feminist movement that gained momentum after the 1980s wait to be conducted. As an initial step one is to acknowledge that the new women's writing in question has preceded and shared commonalities with the second phase of the feminist movement in Turkey. *Tante Rosa* (1968) is a precursor text in women's writing in the sense that the themes underlying it, namely search for romantic love, happy marriage, sexual pleasure and escape from the lack of these

[207] Among the novels of the 1960s and 70s that have been influential for the feminist conciousness raising, Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook (1962), Margaret Drabble's The Waterfall (1969), Margaret Atwood's Surfacing (1972), Lady Oracle (1976), Marge Piercy's Small Changes (1973) are among those frequently cited. The non-canonical production was also abundant. For a detailed account about feminist literary production, See Lisa Maria Hogeland, *Feminism and its Fictions*, Pennyslyvania: University of Pennyslyvania, 1998.

[208] Yeşim Arat, "Women's Studies in Turkey: From Kemalism to Feminism", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Fall 1993, Vol. 9, p. 130.

[209] See Çakır (1996), Demirdirek (1998).

[210] See Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği*, İstanbul: Metis, 2003; Metis; Ayşe Durakbaşa, *Halide Edip: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2007.

anticipate the agenda of the new feminist movement in Turkey after the 1980s. Moreover, *Tante Rosa* also seems to be in line with the feminist movement on the basis that it is a feminist consciousness raising novel presenting a type in the persona of Tante Rosa that would refer to the common female experience. In this sense, Soysal clearly reveals her intention to depict a female figure, who would represent the case of a failed feminist liberation: "Tante Rosa is the name of all the womanly ignorances" (90). In addition to *Tante Rosa*, women's writing has also produced other principal texts that would constitute a feminist writing. In the following sections, I will discuss some of the prominent examples of women's writing that could be considered feminist in terms of their approach to sexuality.

Searching for Female Desire

The binary oppositions of patriarchal thought construct female and male sexualities by associating them with essential, ahistorical and stable attributes and accordingly positioning the former one as passive object and the latter as active subject. In this sense, the most obvious objective of feminist sexual politics is to oppose the patriarchal rights that men assume over women's sexuality, to argue for sexual autonomy and pleasure for women and thus to eradicate the conception of female sexuality as passive, dependent and object.[211] The agenda of feminist thought dealing with female sexuality has been crowded, encompassing issues ranging from reproductive rights to sexual harassment, pornography, prostitution and women's sexual pleasure. Some of the feminist projects in the realm of female sexuality can be noted as follows:

"to explore more authentic forms of female sexuality or languages of sexuality more fitting to the physicalities and desires of female bodies; to understand some forms of female sexuality as sites of resistance to male dominance or as radical transgressions against heterosexual hegemony; to comprehend some forms and contexts of female sexuality as significant areas of women's social oppression and potential systemic sites of violence against women; to expand the notion of sexuality as an erotic that is inclusive of, but not limited to genitally-focused

[211] This stance characterizes the major texts of radical feminism. See Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape*, Simon and Schuster, 1975; Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, Women's Press, 1981; Catherine MacKinnon, *Towards a Feminist Theory of State*, Harvard University Press, 1989.

acts; to comprehend sexuality as socially constructed and as implicated in various social hierarchies of gender, race, class and reproductive practices..."[212]

Having said this, one should also bear in mind that the 1970's feminist writing on the liberation of female sexuality has been greatly challenged by the recent post-structural theories. First of all, it is said that the earlier writings were not responsive to differences across race, ethnicity or class and accepted woman as a unitary category. Moreover, a new Butlerian construction of gender as performance and sex as socially constructed as gender adds new dimensions to the old accounts by blurring the distinction between femaleness and femininity.[213] Also, the body has come forward as a primary site of construction of female subjectivity and sexuality.[214] Though they had some limitations as recent accounts reveal, feminist writings about women's sexual liberation in the 1970s were crucial in that they were pioneering in identifying sexuality as a constructive realm for women. The sexual pleasure of women, which had been neglected for so long, emerged as a main topic in these radical feminist accounts.

Calling for women's sexual pleasure and aiming to eradicate male dominance and violence in the realm of sexuality, some of the feminists also harshly criticized heterosexuality as the coercive norm governing the relations between sexes.[215] Two stances regarding female sexuality come forward in this picture: radical feminists and sexual libertarians.[216] Radical feminists hold the view that in a male-dominated society, heterosexual acts are quite dangerous for women. According to Ferguson, radical feminists approach to sexuality by claiming that heterosexual relations are characterized by an ideology of sexual

[212] Jacqueline Zita, "Sexuality" in A Companion To Feminist Philosophy, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Iris Marion Young, Malden: Blackwell, 1998: 308.
[213] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, NY: Routledge, 1990.
[214] Grosz (1994), Butler (1993).
[215] Some of them called for lesbian seperatism. See Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", *Signs*, Vol.5, No.4, 1980, .
[216] Ann Ferguson, "Sex War: The Debate Between Radical and Libertarian Feminists", *Signs*, Vol.10,No.1, 1984, 106-112.

objectification.[217] Thus, any sexual practice that normalizes male dominance and violence such as pornography or prostitution should be repudiated and women should reclaim control over their sexuality. For them, the ideal sexual relationship is between fully consenting equal partners, which is not possible in heterosexuality. On the other hand, the libertarian feminists put emphasis on women's right to pleasure.[218] In this respect, women's experience of heterosexuality is framed on this axis between pleasure and danger.[219] Female sexuality comes forward both as the realm of pleasure, exploration and agency and also as the very site of restriction, violence and danger.[220]

Bearing these in mind, we should firstly say that sexuality for all the woman characters in new women's writing is the constitutive element of subjectivity. Those characters who have the means to attack patriarchal formations demand new constructions of sexuality in which male tyranny would be erased. Their aspiration for a new sexuality appears in different forms. While some of them such as Aysel in *Ölmeye Yatmak* regard sexuality as a symbolic act, some others like Tante Rosa, Ela in *Yürümek* and Seyla in *Yarın Yarın* ask for desire, corporeality and carnality. In Ağaoğlu's *Ölmeye Yatmak,* Aysel experiences a bodily awakening through a 'marginal' sexuality that is extra-marital, illicit and across generations. Here, sexuality is represented as rejuvenating and constructive:

"I was once again a fresh, full-blooded young woman. My whole mind, knowledge, hair, lips, breasts, waist, appearance in the world, way of smiling, way of speaking were all out in the

[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid., 106.
[219] Carole Vance, *Danger and Pleasure: Exploring Female Sexuality*, London: Pandora, 1992.
[220] Here it comes out that both the radical feminist vew saying that patriarchy deprives women of their emotional sexuality and the libertarian view reminding that it denies women erotic pleasure are essentialist in the sense that they fail to contextualize male and female sexualities. In this sense, they strictly define male sexuality in terms of violence, excessive preoccupation with orgasm and on the other hand attach mutuiality, affection, intimacy, reciprocity and non-genital pleasures to female sexuality. The distinction that Fuss makes between Aristotelian real and Lockian nominal essences could be relevant here. According to this, the former refers to what is irreducible and unchanging about a thing whereas the latter is a fictional category needed basically to categorize and label. (1989:4) Thus, one could say that constructed essences are used by radical feminists to make it possible to gather female identity around one common experience that would refer to the ability of women to be concious of themselves as a class.

open. I was at the same time both worthy and unworthy of respect, both with and without fault, both dressed and naked. Both woman and human being... Beginning with that morning I came to understand that my body was concrete, something touchable and visible... For a moment I wanted to take off my clothes and see myself naked in the mirror yet I managed to overcome this desire through rebuking myself. I took shelter in my hair once again and brushed it many times." (181, 183)

Though *Ölmeye Yatmak* is to a great extent a text that bears feminist consciousness in the sense that Aysel goes through an awakening that enables her to approach to her femininity critically and challenge the repression of her sexuality, it is still hard to call it a feminist text altogether because Aysel can hardly cope with the discovery of sexuality; she even lies down to die in a hotel room because of the trauma caused by her 'marginal' sexual affair. Here, it is crucial to note that Aysel's search for sexuality does not take place simply out of sexual desire, rather it comes out as a form of resistance. Aysel openly admits this fact:

"You don't even have a sexual passion for him! How could Engin be your lover? If only he could... At least then you would have something to be proud of. Or you would be giving meaning to an affair that barely exists. Just for the sake of knowing, understanding, you would not let the young man walk naked at home then. Like repressing a burning cigare in the palm to see how much it would hurt, what would shatter to what extend and what would bring you where, you would not choose for yourself the spectator chair." (321)

The affair with Engin that Aysel depicts as "a conundrum that she cannot solve" (226) is indeed a form of resistance to all the repressions surrounding her femininity from her youth onwards and takes place as a mental reorganization. Aysel defines the sexual affair as "choosing a spectator chair for herself". Thus, rather than generating agency, the sexual act only represents the site of discovery for her, namely a discovery of what it means to have an embodied existence. Thus, for Aysel sexuality means much more in the realm of metaphor than in the realm of carnality or intimacy she shares with Engin.

While sexuality is more like a symbolic way of rebellion for Aysel, it also comes to represent the site of pleasure for some other female characters like Tante Rosa or Ela in *Yürümek* or Seyla in *Yarın Yarın.* In *Yürümek (Walking,* 1970), Soysal depicts the intimate relations of Ela and her attempts to redefine sexuality. Ela was brought up in an environment in which she

was alienated from her body. For example, her developing body in puberty is a source of anxiety, which teaches her to restrain her femininity. As a young woman she had to negotiate the limits of intimacy with boyfriends very carefully and repress her desires at every turn. Sexuality is associated with feelings of guilt in the plot. When Ela meets her destitute, thus despised boyfriend Aleko in the woods despite the warnings of the aunt, her father dies. Afterwards, she could not help thinking that her father died because of her illicit flirtation. (53) It is also worthwhile to emphasize that warnings about keeping sexual purity come from the aunt here. Young girls' socialization into conservative sexual codes is mainly fostered by the female figures, namely mothers or aunts.[221] In this sense, a definition of the 'ideal mother' in the patriarchal system also comes to the foreground in new women's writing. Accordingly, the ideal mother is primarily responsible for reminding the girl the importance of chastity and keeping her virginity for a 'suitable husband'. Also the 'marginal' mother appears in *Yürümek* in the persona of Şenel's mother. Şenel is Ela's friend, who has gone through puberty earlier than her peers, knows a lot about sexual matters and looks down on Ela because of her ignorance on sexuality. Şenel's mother appears as a figure who does not try to prevent her daughter's excessive preoccupation with sex and thus arouses bewilderment in Ela.

Having entered an unwanted marriage because of all those repressions of feelings and desires in youth, Ela begins to feel uncomfortable with the virginity and chastity she kept until her marriage and feels regret for not having had sex with her former boyfriends Bülent and Aleko. She questions her marriage with her husband Hakkı during their honeymoon:

"Why did I come here? To give Hakkı what I have preserved from Bülent and Aleko? Is it because they did not bring me to Hilton that I did not give this to them? Then I am someone who values marriage and honeymooh at Hilton... Did I love Bülent, Aleko less than Hakkı?... Who forces me to sleep with Hakkı since one week?... Marriage-Hilton-bed... Who forced me to this? I took his arm willingly. " (83-85)

[221] Another instance of this pattern could be also found in Latife Tekin's *Tuhaf Bir Kadın* (1970). There, Nermin calls her mother as the 'guard of hymen' because of her relentless warnings to Nermin on keeping the hymen intact until marriage.

Here Ela harshly criticizes herself because of having believed in the institution of marriage as the sole condition for the sexual act to take place. Feeling trapped in the "marriage-Hilton-bed" triangle during the honeymoon, Ela begins to think that reconstructing her sexuality is inevitable:

> "It is time to understand that knowing, desiring will begin soon, that it is necessary to begin this "new" even if it necessitates crawling, time to grasp the existence of things that forces her to this, the existence of things that she has not thought about so far, the existence of compulsion underlying all those old desiring, knowing that brought her to this point." (85)

Later in her marriage, she will put into question "all those old desiring, knowing that brought her to this point" and stop believing in the idea of chastity-based marriage and sexual puritanism. As a result of this mental shift, Ela will decide to have a sexual intercourse with her former boyfriend, Bülent, whom she constantly rejected during their college years. However, one could easily say that this decision to have sex outside marriage cannot take place in a positive, constructive way. It appears more like a revenge that she takes from all those restrictions applied to her sexuality until then. In other words, Ela resorts to sex as a tool to prove to herself that she does not suffer from sexual repression any more. Thereby she assumes that saying 'yes' to sex would bring her the liberation she aspires to. The Foucauldian conception of power shifting attention away from repression in explaining the relationship between sex and power towards the incitement of discourse could be helpful here. In this frame, saying 'yes' to sex does not mean saying 'no' to power. The feminist critique of the sexual liberation in the 1960s could be a relevant example here to show that one does not become immune to th power of discourses on sexuality by affirming the sex act. Jefferson (1990) has argued that by initiating a discourse that presents sex as a revolutionary, liberatory act that is to be praised, sexual revolution only perpetuated the existing patriarchal codes of sexuality and led to the availability of female sexuality for male desire. In a similar vein, Ela's saying 'yes' to Bülent stems from the belief that 'sex' is liberatory and thus fails to

acknowledge the fact that sex is not inherently repressive or liberatory but it is the discourse on sex that generates its content. Ela's decision to sleep with her former boyfriend Bülent is narrated as follows:

"She did not say "no". Why should she? Did she say "no" to Hakkı on all those nights when she did not want it? She has made herself forget the significance of "yes" and "no" a long time ago... Why did she betray Hakkı? Because she betrayed herself, for years only herself... This could be nothing else but depreciation, a self-punishment, burning oneself out. That brings an evil comfort. She slept with Bülent having all those uncomfortable ideas. Maybe that was the first beginning for getting up, for awakening. " (104)

As clearly expressed above, Ela's sexual affair with Bülent does not derive its source from pleasure and desire but from rebellion. This reminds us of Aysel's motivation to have an intercourse with her student in *Ölmeye Yatmak*. Just as Aysel regarded sexuality as a way to uncover her silenced body and femininity, Ela sleeps with Bülent in order to break with the past that is full of sexual repression. However, Ela is different from Aysel in the sense that she will be able to purify sexuality from feelings of indifference and resentment and combine it with desire and romantic love after she divorces her husband and moves to a new home together with her lover Mehmet. It is then "time to get rid of old incognizances that brought her to this point" (85). At this stage sexuality for her turns into a critical and constructive site where she can build a new subjectivity.

"While making love, Ela thought about... Aleko, her marriage, her false submissiveness, all those nonsense rebellions performed in order not to have obeyed for nothing, the nonsense love play that she played with Bülent, that thing that lacks in herself, that she have come here because of that thing, that she makes love because of that." (145)

As clearly seen from this quotation, the missing part of Ela's subjectivity is sexuality and thus only the sexual act can bring her "what she lacks in herself". Moreover, in this new period Ela's search for a new sexuality and intimacy inevitably necessitates the denial of love defined in terms of male paradigms. In other words, she does not only want access to love and desire but also wants them redefined. I mentioned earlier that according to Soysal, Tante

Rosa's main failure was her inability to acknowledge the patriarchal roots of institutions like love and marriage. Thus, Ela's attempt at liberation seems to be one step ahead of Soysal's former female character, Rosa. In this respect, Ela criticizes her lover Mehmet's views on love on the basis that he sees love as a duty, as being as dutiful as the man in their neighborhood who gets up early every morning to wash his car. (123). In her search for a 'different' kind of love and sexuality, Ela comes up with her own definition:

"... making love is not only about touching and kissing. Tedious, disgusting, tiring. Making love should not be tedious or tiresome but is to be transformative, nurturing, constitutive" (123).

While asking for a reconstruction of intimacy and sexuality as above, Ela affirms the sexual act by attributing positive features to it such as 'transforming, developing, constituting'. Here Ela seems to take sides with the feminist social construction theory of sexuality that aims to renegotiate the hierarchies embedded in the relationship between male and female sexualities and suggests that neither male sexuality is inherently polygamous, aggressive, violent nor is female sexuality the inferior 'other' of it. This also means that Ela's conception of sexuality not only aims to renegotiate female sexuality but also demands the transformation of the hegemonic values pertaining to the social construction of male sexuality. Accordingly, for Ela male sexuality is not to be primarily oriented towards consuming pleasure as if it were a duty (123), but involves a great deal of intimacy and mutuality. Therefore, Ela's aspiration for a 'transforming, developing, constituting' sexuality is a two-way project. On the one hand, it calls for the liberation of female sexuality from male control and dominance; on the other hand this unavoidably necessitates the transformation of male sexuality as well. This reminds us of the 'danger-pleasure axis of female sexuality'[222]. In this regard, Ela both tries to purify her sexuality from 'danger', i.e, male repression and dominance, and simultaneously demands 'pleasure' for herself.

[222] Vance (1992).

Moreover, Ela not only asks for liberation from patriarchal control on her sexuality and claims the right to pleasure in heterosexuality by renegotiating male sexuality but also opposes the sex-negativity that both affects male and female sexualities. In this regard, in *Yürümek* the young women are preoccupied with protecting their chastity whereas the young men are in constant search for a chance to have sex. For example, Ela accuses Bülent of insisting on having sex with her and in return Bülent criticizes her sexual puritanism:

"-Why do you come to university... To listen to Vivaldi with a girl you can like, to make love to her, read a little bit, watch movies, go to the theatre... These things are easy to achieve except for making love. Maybe it is the impossibility of making love that makes you so insistent, rebellious. If you were a Parisian or Londoner bourgeois kid, you would not have any trouble...
- Because we are in love with those rural girls like you we cannot overcome these little troubles. What should we do? You keep carrying your virginity and Hegel for a husband who is worthy of your distinction."

The unavailability of female sexuality leads Mehmet and her friends to experience sexuality only in brothels or through sex with animals (86, 87). This representation of sexual repression as affecting both sexes implies that Ela's call for the transformation of sexuality is all-encompassing and it would counter sex-negativity to bring about liberation for both male and female sexualities.

One important point here is that *Yürümek* clearly sides with the social construction theory of sexuality. In this respect, the peer pressure to experience sexuality, which causes anxiety in the adolescent minds and the strict restrictions on sexuality imposed by family and community are narrated from both Ela's and Mehmet's perspectives. This narration of the socialization into a particular sexual system could be cited as a clear indication of the attempt to refer to the social construction of sexuality. Furthermore, it is also meaningful that the author prefers to incorporate fragmentary depictions of nature into the text while passing from the narration of Ela's experiences of repression on sexuality to Mehmet's. After Mehmet's discouraging experiences in brothels or Ela's efforts to find her own way into womanhood

surrounded by the norms of patriarchal thinking, we read short depictions about procreation in nature, animal instincts and natural cycles. One can easily think about the reference to the social construction of human sexuality here and the implication that sexuality could be constructed in a different way. We may suggest that the author implicitly takes a critical stance vis-a-vis the sex-negative and patriarchal limitations on sexualities of her male and female characters through depictions of nature. Indeed, here it is crucial to underline that Soysal makes her presence felt and reveals her intention to write about the women's question and sexuality in her writing. If fragmenting the narration through scenes of nature is one reflection of this, the other is in *Tante Rosa* where Soysal exposes her authority in the text by explicitly criticizing Rosa, even despising her because of her inability to see the deeper causes of her suffering.

Either/Or Duality

One recurrent theme in the new women's writing is the societal sanctions imposed on sexually autonomous women who deny the custody of men. Ela's struggle against repression of female sexuality is not an exception to this pattern. Ela initially disassociates marriage and sexuality in her mind. Following this epiphany, she ends her marriage and starts living with her lover, which in return triggers some societal sanctions. For example, she reacts to being excluded by close friends:

"...is it to make me join you and give the promise of not doing it again?... but instead of me divorcing Hakkı and living with Mehmet, if Hakkı would have left me you would crowd opening your affectionate arms" (127-128).

In addition to sanctions coming from friends, another consequence of her 'radical' decision will be isolation from public places. When Ela and Mehmet go to the beach together they have to sit outside the sign which says "reserved for families" (141). In this framework, becoming a sexually free woman, who is not under the custody of a man or who dares to

experience sexuality outside marriage comes with seclusion, stigmatization and many other difficulties. In addition to *Yürümek*, this theme also appears in *Gece Dersleri*. There, Gülfidan is wary of love because as a child she has witnessed her mother's seclusion because of an illicit love affair. Furthermore, another example of this plot could also be detected in *Kadının Adı Yok,* in which the heroine leaves home in order to have freedom to discover sexuality and romantic love but in return has to bear some sanctions such as dismissal from work and exclusion by her married friends:

"On Saturdays we organize meetings among women but I am not invited to night receptions. I attract attention, I am not wanted there because I do not have a husband, an owner anymore." (166)

Considering the representation of becoming a free woman in these texts, one could say that the new women's writing clearly reveals the "either/or" duality that is set up to curb women's sexuality. According to this patriarchal construction, female sexuality falls into two unitary, monolithic categories: pure, chaste women versus 'fallen', marginal women. This implication regards a free, sexually autonomous woman as a dangerous actor who has to be marginalized. Earlier, we have indicated that this very duality pertaining to the female sexuality was a salient characteristic of the male imagination in early literary works in Turkish literature. By taking up the role of all-knowing and authoritarian father, early male writers associated women's sexual freedom with destructiveness and praised modesty, purity and submissiveness as ideal feminine traits. The modernizing mind and the Republican emancipation of women attempted to disassociate the modern woman from sexual assertiveness. In other words, the promoted definition of modern woman was not a category that is separable from tradition or authenticity of national identity. In addition to performing as the signifier of modern life, they were also expected to perpetuate tradition by backing it up in the spiritual realm, i.e, the realm that necessitates their chastity in the conjugal and familial contexts. The task to be the bearer of tradition turns into a heavy burden especially in the

realm of sexuality, which vividly materializes in the "either/or" category. In the early male imagination, contemporary women who experience sexuality outside marriage suffers from misery. These women used to be concubines, slave girls or Western women in late 19th century texts who facilitated for male writers to talk about sexuality.[223] In later texts, they arise as contemporary women who are disparaged because of their super-westernized identities.[224] This old "either/or" duality is challenged by new women's writing. Women writers tell about heroines who aspire to experience sexuality outside marriage such as Tante Rosa, Ela in *Yürümek* and the heroine in *Kadının Adı Yok*. However, in these texts the old male imagination that openly criticizes sexual assertiveness in women is displaced by the new woman writer. Each of these texts is in favour of female sexual liberation from the chastity-based, unhappy marriage and allow extra-marital female sexuality.

Another instance of "either/or" duality can be found in the belief that women's professionalism and sexual desire are at odds with each other. As explained before, this discourse was also part of the definition of the ideal Republican woman. Women's writing represents female desire repressed in the context of this particular duality as well but resistance is lacking in the plot in that the heroine does not attemtpt to challenge the subject duality. In Pınar Kür's *Yarın Yarın (Tomorrow Tomorrow, 1976*), Seyda as the smart daughter of an intellectual, Kemalist family is the focus of attention of her parents, receives a good education and wants to study atom physics in the USA. In order not to be distracted from her ideals, she does not become intimate with anyone except Oktay, her future husband (107). She is puzzled about her relationship with Oktay and thinks: "why did Oktay come closer?...What did he want from me? What did I want from him? I wanted to sleep with him..." (108). She honestly admits that it was sexual desires that brought the couple together. Though the main

[223] Namık Kemal's İntibah, Şergüzeşt and Mürebbiye are examples of this pattern.
[224] Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's Aşk-ı Memnu (1900), Yakup Kadri's Kiralık Konak (1922) and Sodomme and Gomorre (1928), Peyami Safa's Sözde Kızlar (1923) could be cited among them.

motivation in their relationship is sexual desire, they cannot experience sexuality fully because of the taboos on virginity. Consequently, Seyda's unsatisfied sexual desires begin to occupy her mind and affect her academic performance negatively. The myth that professionalism and sexual assertiveness cannot coexist in women prevents Seyda from reconciling sexual desires with her professional ambitions. Since on the day before the exam all she can think about is making love to her lover, she is unable to prepare for the math exam. The couple decides to get married when Seyda finds out that she has failed the exam. The trauma of failure is so devastating for that it leads her quickly to conclude that sexual desires and professional success cannot coexist. In this sense, Seyla is no exception to the binary oppositions that have been an intrinsic part of the modern female identity in Turkey. The idea that women's professionalism and sexuality are at odds indeed underlies the whole Republican project and the nationalist discourse. The basic imperative underneath the absolute Republican support for women's public visibility and their participation in the workforce was the concealment of femininities by means of an "invisible veil". In this framework, it is this particular heritage of thought and praxis about professional, ideal woman's asexuality that makes itself felt in the personal narrative of Seyda in *Yarın Yarın*. For Seyda, the decision to marry Oktay means giving up her career as an atom physician. Like Ela in Sevgi Soysal's *Yürümek (Walking*), during her honeymoon Seyda understands that marriage was a mistake that she made because she could not differentiate between sexual desire and love. (116) She confesses this to herself:

"What did I want from him? To sleep with him. "If I wanted (to have sex with Oktay) so much, then why didn't I do it?...The mistake is not having loved Oktay but not having been able to differentiate between love and sexual desire. Mr. Mehmet and Ms. Melahat, how meticulously you brought up your daughter! But in the meantime my sexual education was forgotten. When I first kissed Faruk at the age of 18 how many men, do you think, the other girls already knew by then? First kiss at the age of 18. Ridiculous..." (108)

Before marriage she actually has sexual intercourse with Oktay but it is not vaginal so that her virginity would stay intact. There she has an orgasm but still thinks that the 'real' sex, i.e, the one that would save her from the hymen, would be more pleasurable: "She did not know that the greatest pleasure she could experience was all about this...That 'real' bloody sex after marriage was neither better nor worse than those they had so far" (110, 116) Here, a clear position against sex defined in phallocentric terms as a part of heteronormative system can be detected. The idea that vaginal orgasm is a myth finds echo in the narration of Seyda's lack of sexual satisfacion. In her famous essay "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" (1968), which is one of the early and most influential texts of the radical feminist wave, Anne Koedt draws attention to the specificity of female anatomy and how it justifies discarding the idea of vaginal orgasm and arguing for a clitoral one.[225] She says that the patriarchal ideology that sees sexual pleasure as a male entitlement tries to reinforce male dominance in the sexual realm through the myth of vaginal orgasm and accuses women of frigidity when they express their vaginal insensitivity. Furthermore, Koedt puts forward that men maintain the myth of vaginal orgasm for the maximization of their own pleasure. In a similar fashion, Irigaray also expresses the idea that women do not need genital penetration in order to have pleasure and thus opposes the dominant phallic economy being the only recognized value in the sexual realm.[226] These ideas about the specificity of the female body contradicting the premises of phallic economy find explicit resonance in Seyla's disappointment about vaginal intercourse.

Virginity

A crucial point to make here is that from *Tante Rosa* (1968) to *Yürümek* (1970) and *Yarın Yarın* (1976) all the woman characters in the texts of women's writing investigated in this study are inhibited by taboos on virginity. Virginity, as a patriarchal construction to control

[225] Anne Koedt, "The Myth of Vaginal Orgasm" in Voices from Women's Liberation, ed. Leslie Tanner, NY: New American Library/Mentor Books, 1970.
[226] Luce Irigaray, *The Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. C. Porter and C. Burke, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985.

women's bodies and sexuality is closely associated with the honour of the state in the Turkish context. The debates on honour crimes and on virginity tests in recent years reveal the picture about controls and violence related to female sexual purity.[227] Parla maintains that these checks are emblematic of how the state is preoccupied with women's modesty through the surveillance methods it employs.[228] In this frame, Foucault identifies the ways in which modernity controls individuals through such institutions as school, hospital, prison or army.[229] Virginity is part of this Foucauldian disciplinary system in that patriarchal regulatory mechanisms of medicine closely watch over women's virginity to keep women's sexuality under control.[230] Virginity is also closely related to the honor of the family and community and also to the permanence of the line of descent. Historically, the control of female sexuality has been justified on the basis of the claim that women's promiscuity would threaten inheritance rights. It is true that the recent medical and technological developments such as contraception and improvements regarding abortion rights had a liberating effect on female sexuality in that they limited the restrictive consequences of compulsory procreation. However, the patriarchal association of female sexual purity with the honour of men, family and nation has not eroded. This association entitles the family and community to interfere with female sexuality. Facing this strict control on their sexuality, women refrain from premarital sex and seductive behaviour. Though they all suffer from the taboos on virginity, female characters in new women's writing eventually come to revive their sexualities. It is needless to say that Aysel was overwhelmed by the fears of virginity and chastity. So was Tante Rosa (1968) or Ela who accuses herself of falling into the trap of "marriage-bed-

[227] *Koğacıoğlu (2004), Parla (2001), Cindoğlu* (2000).

[228] Ayşe Parla, "The Honor of the State: Virginity Examinations in Turkey", *Feminist Studies* 27:1, 2001: 66. The social anxiety over the hymen in Turkey forces many women who experienced premarital sexual intercourse to virginity surgery. For an account of how medicine is involved in restructuring bodies of women in Turkey see Cindoğlu (1997).

[229] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, London, NY: Penguin, 1991.

[230] In *Virgin: the Untouched History*, Hanne Blank (2007) shows how virginity is socially constructed and how it came to acquire the patriarchal meanings attached to it today in the West when the medical science began to proliferate a discourse on it around sixteenth century.

Hilton" or Seyda marrying her lover because of fear of premarital sex. Just as Ela in *Yürümek* and Seyda in *Yarın Yarın*, the heroine in *Kadının Adı Yok* is disappointed during the honeymoon by the first experience of sex. Horrified by the bleeding of hymen, she says:

"In honeymoon suits linens are covered by nylon, girls are shut down to these rooms and are made woman. Constantly, relentlessly, like a fabric... Girls preserve their blood for the men who would marry them, even if it would take a life time." (59)

The loss of virginity at the first sexual intercourse with the husband causes feelings of resentment and rebellion in these female characters. This state of mind is furthered by the lack of sexual pleasure in heterosexuality. The heroine in *Kadının Adı Yok* complains about men's ignorance about their female partners' sexual desires:

"They don't know my sister... They do not know how to do it. Neither do they know themselves nor us. If they cannot manage it, they accuse of not being attractive and seductive enough. If we cannot take pleasure, they accuse us again of being frigid, being ignorant ... But don't they understand from our demeanors, manners? How could a human being be this much apathetic, careless and insensible? And also this much ignorant, unwilling to learn." (86, 87)

Frustrated by sexual displeasures and marriages made because of taboos on virginity, female characters come to disassociate ther sexual desires from conjugal context. This point is vividly expressed in *Tante Rosa*:

"That sex animal that suddenly takes shape, materializes came out from the wood and turned into Hans, Tante Rosa found that animal in front of her, not Hans but that sneaky animal lying in ambush and threw herself into the arms of that animal, not into Hans' arms, yes yes not Hans'. However, the worst thing is that that sex animal that suddenly takes shape, materializes later tuned into Hans again, foolish Hans, Hans of three dances, Hans who paid for the beer that day for some reason or other, Hans who does not know, will not understand that Tante Rosa may have animals and can sleep with those animals." (30)

In this frame, it is clear that the inconvenience that female characters feel because their sexual desires are not recognized outside marriage is a recurrent theme in new women's writing. Not *Yarın Yarın* but *Tante Rosa* (1968), *Yürümek* (1970) and *Kadının Adı Yok* come forward as resistant narratives in the sense that female characters in these texts dare to leave home to set

off for a happier (sexual/ romantic) life that they cannot achieve in their marriages.[231] Thus, it can also be said that their resistance is, in one sense, against home.

Resistance Against Home and The Shift in The Romantic Imagination

Gürbilek states that the modern Turkish novel can be read as a narrative against the idea of home.[232] New women's writing provides some prominent cases of resistance at/ against home.[233] This resistance against the home as a feminist stance is perfectly in line with the second wave feminism that articulates the motto 'the private is political' and sets forth the critique of marriage, domesticity and male dominance in the realm of sexuality as institutions surpassing the limits of personal narratives and fostering patriarchy. Moreover, this resistance at home and search for autonomous sexuality is also quite in line with what Giddens calls the 'democratization of intimacy'. Giddens identifies the transformation of intimacy as a crucial characteristic of the late modern society.[234] According to this, the developments in reproductive technologies, the sexual revolution of the 1960's, the women's liberation movement all have led to the emergence of the idea of an intimacy based on equality in every respect, which Giddens defines as 'pure relationship'. In the preceding parts, I tried to identify

[231] As we have pointed out earlier, in *Tante Rosa* Soysal emphasizes that leaving home on its own as a romantic dream of a married woman's life is not enough for a complete feminist liberation because it fails to acknowledge the patriarchal embeddedness of every sphere of life. Indeed, this bovarist attitude towards women's liberation also marks *Kadının Adı Yok*. There the heroine goes after love affairs that she has read in romances. She constantly compares her own life and the romantic myth in the novels: "Fairy tales... Fairy tales...With the Snow White or Cinderalla... Novels, stories, Nuclear families with one daughter and one son... Happy mothers baking cakes..." (64) Therefore, though one can say that these two texts are to some extend liberatory in the sense that the heroine can leave unhappy home, they fail to be so because they do not problematize patriarchal institutions and do not acknowledge women's oppression as a unifying female experience.

[232] Nurdan Gürbilek, *Ev Ödevi*, İstanbul: Metis, 2005: 96-97. While arguing this, she has in mind Yusuf Atılgan's *Aylak Adam*, Adalet Ağaoğlu's *Ölmeye Yatmak* (1973), Oğuz Atay's *Tutunamayanlar* (1972) and *Tehlikeli Oyunla*r (1973) and Tezer Özlü's *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri* (1980).

[233] There are studies tracing the female resistance at home in short stories by contemporary woman writing. See Carel Bertram, "Restructuring the House, Restructuring the Self: Remegotiating the Meanings of Place in the Turkish Short Story" in *Deconstructing the Images of The Turkish Woman*, ed. Z. Arat, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1998.

[234] Giddens (1992). The same point is made also by Beck (1995). See Ulrick Beck and E. Beck-Gernsheim, *The Normal Chaos of Love*, Cambridge: Politiy Press, 1995.

the shift in the romantic imagination along the major political and social transformations in Turkey. In that regard, it has been said that three main eras can be identified, in which the conception of love that closely interacts with the social context changes in an apparent manner. These eras can be distinguished as follows: the late Ottoman era in which love is regarded as a passage to freedom especially for young men in the family through liberation from patriarchal authority; the post-1908 period in which love begins to 'flirt' with the nationalist discourse and comes to emphasize marriage and family. Moreover, the second phase also extends to the early Republican period in which there was the attempt to consolidate the Republican ideals and love had to be at the service of this attempt. Accordingly, love would lead to ideal families with Republican father, well-educated mother and scientific child-raising. The third period opens with the 1980s, in which the women's movement gained strength; sexual matters and intimate issues began to be articulated more frequently and outspokenly in newly emerging means of communication such as women's magazines targeting middle-class, urban, professional women. The call for the democratization of intimacy that goes along with the rising women's movement in the post-1980s is a prominent theme of new women's writing. While negotiating to redefine sexuality, female characters also put into discussion topics like domestic chores, women's employment and motherhood and seek for possibilities for a more democratic intimacy in each one of these critical domains.

Unreserved Affirmation of Female Desire

In addition to the experiences of sexuality marked by inhibition, there are also narratives in new women's writing telling relatively freer sexual experiences. Tezer Özlü's writings can be mentioned in this respect. First of all, talking about sexuality is an obstacle for woman writers

that should not be undermined.[235] In this sense, Özlü's writings are striking in that she can speak about sexuality in an unreserved manner. In *Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri* (The Chilly Nights of Childhood, 1980) and *Yaşamın Ucuna Yolculuk* (Journey To the End of Life, 1984) Özlü primarily focuses on the inner world of the female character, rather than any societal concern.. To a certain age Özlü lived in rural areas of Anatolia because of her parents's official duties. Then she went to the Austrian school and was educated in line with the German curriculum, which created a division in herself:

"when the child of a Turkish petite bourgeois family wants to make love, she has to get married, the culture of the country requires marriage to be a must. Yet how would the moral values of this woman settle with those of the men in this country? What would this bi-cultural person choose to find her way?"[236]

One could say that Özlü speaks with the lexicon of the sexual revolution of the 1960s. She argues for free love liberated from the confines of chastity and marriage and attributes a revolutionary character to the sexual act. Having this stance, she criticizes the society she lives in on the basis of sex-negativity:

"Why should one need the marriage signature to make love? Or should they stay alone and masturbate while missing men/ women? Should men get excited by looking at women's pictures? Should they know their first woman at the brothel? Should husbans and wives treat each other's bodies as commodity?.. Beginning from the childhood our people are denied the right to love, to caress a person." (*Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri*, 44)

Challenging the conservative moral codes applying to sexuality, she does not feel the need to refrain herself from expressing her sexual experiences and her views about sexuality outspokenly:

"When I sleep with him, there is neither any man nor strong pains in all those past long years. There is only youthful love, only desire. It is as if those years have never exhausted me, rather they guided my feelings. They taught me the divinity of beauty, of loving a person, of touching his skin, of uniting with him, of enjoying this divinity... I feel so insatiable while

[235] Showalter (1999) indicates how woman writers published their works under psedonyms in order to comfortably wrie about sexuality.

[236] Tezer Özlü, "Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri Üzerine Söylemek İstediklerim" in *Tezer Özlü'ye Armağan*, ed. Sezer Duru, Istanbul: YKY, 1997: 145.

climaxing with him that as if the sun rises from the east and sets in the west in this country. We make love again towards the morning. He is the one with whose warmth that awaits me and numbs my body I can feel in my wetness. The most beautiful moment of life... the moment that becomes sacred with the unification of two people. Eternity. The moment reconciling all times of existence. There should be the essence of eternity in the unification of two people." (64-65)

This frank expression of feelings about sexuality obviously affirms female sexuality. Here female desire acquires its agency and exists for itself. It neither feels guilty nor despicable. Thus, in Özlü's works female sexuality meets pleasure and finds expression without reservation. According to Leyla Erbil who exchanged letters with Özlü for many years, one of the main motives of Özlü's writing is to liberate sexuality from conservative bourgeois morality.[237] Özlü's disobedient attitude towards societal norms becomes clearly visible when she says:

"When people ask what I do, whether or not I am married, what my husband does, who my parents are, I can see in their face that they approve of me. And I just want to scream at their faces. What you approve is just a surface that does not comply with my reality. Neither a regular job, nor a proper home, what you call marital status or being regarded as a successful person is my reality..." (*Çocukluğun Soğuk Geceleri,* 51)

Earlier, *Ölmeye Yatmak* is identified as a text, in which the heroine primarily tries to negotiate her repressed femininity rather than seeking sexual pleasure. The search for sexual pleasure appears in texts like *Tante Rosa* and *Yürümek*. On the other hand, in Tezer Özlü we come across a heroine who has already discovered the way leading to sexual pleasure. According to this scheme, one could say that sexual liberation of woman characters is displayed in three stages in the new women's writing: first, sexuality is regarded as a form of symbolic resistance and rebellion against macro social and political discourses operating on female sexuality as it is in *Ölmeye Yatmak*; second, female characters do not only see sexuality as a symbolic site of resistance but also seek sexual desire in texts like *Tante Rosa* and *Yürümek*;

[237] Leyla Erbil, "Bir Romanı Okurken" in *Tezer Özlüye Armağan*, ed. Sezer Duru, İstanbul: YKY, 1997: 34.

third, we come across a female character, who has already discovered sexual pleasure and can talk about it freely as it is the case in Tezer Özlü's narratives.

SexualitIES

It is quite problematic to accept women's sexuality in Turkey as a monolithic category and then try to come up with general discursive codes applying to it. Women as a category has been historically and socially constructed. It is assumed that all women share a commonality in their experiences in that they all suffer from oppressive gender relations. However, women's experience of oppression is greatly divided by their differences of age, class, power, work, nationality, sexuality, ideology or culture. The feminist interest that focused on the differences of women from men in the 1970s has shifted to the differences among women in the 1980s. The arguments saying that the second-wave feminism only represented white, middle-class women drew attention to the unique experiences of third-world, black or working class women.[238] Also, post-structural accounts contributed to the disintegration of the conception of women as a monolithic category. In this frame, one should acknowledge that women's sexuality is crosscut by many other categories of identity such as social class, religion or ethnicity and inevitably interacts with them. The recent feminist move away from totalizing, unitary categories turns woman into "women" and sexuality into "sexualities". So far, we have dealt with sexual narratives of ideal Republican women who reclaim their corporeality as it is in *Ölmeye Yatmak*, or educated, middle class women who ask for sexual pleasure and democratic intimacy in *Yürümek* or *Yarın Yarın.* However, new women's writing also deals with sexualities of marginalized women from lower socio-economic backgrounds in such canonical texts as Latife Tekin's *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* and Pınar Kür's *Asılacak Kadın*. Therefore, in order to acknowledge the plurality of female sexuality, here we

[238]Elizabeth Spelman, *Inessential Women: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1988.

should pay attention to the specificities of the sexualities of women from lower class backgrounds as they are represented in the new women's writing.

It can be said that violence or sexual harassment are the determining themes of sexuality of lower class women as far as the novels in question are concerned. However, this should not mean that (sexual) violence is a phenomenon that pertains primarily to women from socio-economically marginalized segments of society. Recent studies prove that violence against women crosscuts stratas with different levels of education and socio-economic status.[239] Bearing this in mind, still if one is to distinguish representations of sexualities of women from poorer backgrounds in new woman's writing, violence comes forward. This violence comes forward in the form of physical violence in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* or as rape and sexual slavery in *Asılacak Kadın*. First of all, *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* (1984) which presents the life narratives of the dwellers of squatter houses briefly mentions power relations in the realm of sexuality. Against the backdrop of absolute poverty, Fidan is represented as a marginal woman in the story, who does not submit her sexuality to male dominance but displays sexually assertive manners unlike other women in the squatter area. She even gives night lessons to the women in the neighborhood and tells them about their sexual rights. (44). Having learned that sex is pleasurable for women as well, these women got sexually assertive, but are punished or beaten by their husbands in return (46). One of the women tries to resist her husband who commands her to asume the sexual position he wants. However, when threatened by being driven away from home she feels obliged to submit herself to his wishes. This brief but powerful scene clearly shows that in *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* agency in the realm of sexuality is totally denied to lower class women.

[239] Altınay and Arat (2007)

Pınar Kür's *The Woman to be Hanged* (1979) is another useful example in terms of its representation of the repressed and even abused sexuality of a lower class woman. Melek is sexually abused by her old, rich husband and by every man that this husband brings home. The husband is someone who suffers from a devastating desire for an unreachable femme fatale and thus has become a misogynist. The pure woman, namely Melek is sexually objectified here with the aim to take revenge from assertive female sexuality. The second misogynist mind in the text materializes in the persona of the judge, who has been constantly betrayed by his wife and thus wants to punish women's agency in the realm of sexuality. He admits his hostile, violent feelings for his wife: "One day when she is soundly sleeping in her bed like this, I'll suffocate her." (11)

It is clear that misogyny in the story results from active, autonomous female sexuality. In this sense, *Asılacak Kadın* is not a story about liberation unlike other texts studied so far that tell about middle class, educated women but it represents Melek's sheer oppression.[240] A young, ardent lover wants to save Melek from the relentless sexual abuse and kills her husband, which causes Melek to be accused of murder. What is reflective of Melek's silenced sexuality is her silence in the court on the day of trial. She does not say a single word there, which turns her into the symbolic figure representing the silenced female perspective. In the court room, the judge who has been betrayed by his wife personifies the image of unchaste woman in the very existence of Melek. He says that:

"None of the witnesses talked about enforcement. Surely the bitch took pleasure from it. She died for pleasure. Those women cannot take pleasure only when they do it with their husbands. With their husbands they lie down on the bed like a stone. With others they live jouissance." (11)

[240] However, this does not mean that the text does not have a feminist affiliation. The very fact that Kür has written this novel upon being inspired by a true story reveals her attempt to bring to light the perspective of the oppressed in the incident.

The death sentence that the unchaste woman deserves according the judge comes at the end of the court and Melek is sentenced to death. The fear of the voiceless woman who cannot dare to speak up in the male public is expressed by Cixous as follows:

"Every woman has known the torment of getting up to speak. Her heart racing, at times entirely lost for words, ground and language slipping away-that's how daring a feat, how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak-even just open her mouth- in public. A double distress, for even if she transgresses, her words fall almost always upon the deaf male ear, which hears in language only that which speaks in the masculine."[241]

As Cixous says, if Melek could find the courage to speak in the court room, her words would only fall upon "the deaf male ear" since male judge of the court is someone for whom women's unchastity is to be sentenced to death.

Female Body

The body is the site of material existence where sexuality is experienced. Patriarchal mechanisms such as the societal and communitarian control on women's sexuality or the physical violence applied to it render the female body docile. Misogynist thinking attributes inferiority to female bodies and tries to establish a universal male right to the appropriation of women's bodies, which is perpetuated by the Western philosophical tradition marked by a duality and hierarchy between the mind and the body.[242] The correlation of mind/body duality with the male/female contrast equates mind with the male and the body with the female.[243] In order to oppose the perception of the female body as lack and as an inferior situation, feminist thought has adopted different standpoints: egalitarianism, social constructivism and theories of sexual difference.[244] The first category includes feminists like Simone de Beauvoir and Shulamith Firestone, who see the specificities of the female body, i.e., menstruation, pregnancy, maternity or lactation as limitations on women's demand for equality. For them,

[241] Helen Cixous, "The Laugh of Medusa", *Signs*, Vol 1 (4), 1976: 880-881.
[242] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 3.
[243] Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy*, NY: Routledge, 1984.
[244] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 15-19.

women's suppression should be explained by taking the specificities of the female body into account. In this line of thought, these feminists propose that women should surpass their bodies in order to achieve equality in the public sphere. On the other hand, social constructivists such as Chodorow, Gilligan or psychoanalytic feminists employ a more positive approach to female body when compared to the first group. What they basically say is that it is not biology per se but the meanings attributed to biology, which causes women's oppression. Therefore, they do not advocate surpassing the female body and biological functions but urge everyone to give new meanings to female corporeal existence, purified from patriarchal codes. Finally, theorists of sexual difference such as Irigaray, Cixous, Wittig point out the necessity to reject the mind/body duality. Also, they deny any precultural, presocial or prelinguistic conceptions of the body and present it as a social and discursive category. What is striking in the sexual difference theories of French feminism is their affirmation of the female body.[245]

Bearing in mind the perception of the female body by the misogynst thinking and the feminist endeavor to oppose it, I deem it meaningful to trace the representations of the female body in the new women's writing. Firstly, it can be said that female characters in new women's writing have/ strive to have embodied existences. The female body appears as a critical dimension of existence in three different ways: Firstly, there is a challenge posed by women against disembodied existences. They express the lack of autonomy in their corporeality and also aspire to sexual pleasure. Aysel in *Ölmeye Yatmak*, Tante Rosa, Ela in *Yürümek*, in one way or another, express their alienation from their bodies because of societal repression, reclaim their corporeal autonomy by attempting to release their repressed sexualities.[246] On

[245] For example, in "The Laugh of Medusa", Cixous speaks to women by saying that 'write, your body must be heard'. On the other hand, in "When Our Lips Speak Together" Irigaray points out the specificity of female desire.

[246] Aysel is exceptional here because after the sexual affair her body does not become liberated altogether but turns into a source of dread.

the other hand, female characters also bring up the issue of sexual pleasure both by praising female desire as Tezer Özlü does or by mentioning the displeasures of heterosexuality. In this regard, for example Seyda in *Tomorrow Tomorrow* points out the myth of vaginal orgasm; similarly, the heroine in *Kadının Adı Yok* complains about men's ignorance about women's sexual pleasures. Secondly, the body is also represented as the site of women's vulnerability to violence. Sexual slavery, physical violence and the fear of rape appear as themes that expose the male appropriation of female body. It is argued that women's lives have been shaped by constant fear of rape or many other forms of sexual violence.[247] Representation of this vulnerability of the female body to violence can be found in novels like *Asılacak Kadın* that depicts the deprivation of the female body from agency through sexual slavery or *Berci Kristin Çöp Masalları* in which female sexual pleasure is denied through physical violence. Moreover, novels such as *Tuhaf Bir Kadın* and *Şafak* clearly reveal the fear of rape. In *Tuhaf Bir Kadın,* Nermin, who is taken under police custody because of leftist activism fears from being raped by a policeman during the interrogation and loosing her virginity. In *Şafak,* we see that pains of sexual torture intensify because of the male power over female body. One female character tells Oya that it is different when the tortured body is a female body because then it is not simply violence but male violence over female body, which further empowers the oppressor and weakens the oppressed:

"Indeed I take sexuality naturally... I am neither conservative nor prejudiced. However, when those three guys penetrated the nightstick into my anus by force, both nature and sexuality seemed to me as evil things. As if sexuality was humankind's most vulgar side. If sexuality wasn't exist they would beat me, yes... However, one can overcome that, after that one would never feel the disgust that I'm feeling now. One would never feel so much ashamed... I felt that the difference between man and woman was the worst play ever done to me. My womanhood was the greatest betrayal done to me." (95)

Finally, bodily specificities are recognized in many instances of women's writing. One particular bodily situation in this regard is menstruation. Misogynst thinking refers to it while

[247] Liz Kelly, "It's Everywhere: Sexual Violence as a Continium" in *Feminism and Sexuality*, ed. Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996.

constructing the female body as an uncontrollable and inferior entity vis-a-vis the male body.[248] Thus, to trace the implications attached to the menstrual experiences of female characters in new women's writing is meaningful in order to understand their sui-generis female experiences. In *Şafak,* when taken under custody because of leftist activities, Oya is not a genderless leftist activist, who encounters the danger of being sexually tortured but she is present there as a woman. Her menstruation reminds her of her womanhood and arouses worry in her. (81) As indicated before, during the interrogation Oya is accused primarily of unchastity rather than her leftist affiliations, which means that her womanhood precedes her leftist mindset. The menstruation here appears as an obstacle that furthers the burden of womanhood. In other words, her female body comes forward as a situation that weakens the position of Oya vis-a-vis the misogynist mind. In addition to this example, menstruation also appears in *Yürümek* as a painful experience during the puberty. There, it is interpreted as the marker indicating that female sexuality has become dangerous with this passage into womanhood and women have to adopt more cautious, modest manners in their encounters with the opposite sex.

Moreover, another specificity of the female body showing up in the new women's writing is maternity, which is represented as a site of resistance against the appropriation of women's corporeal existence. Earlier, I have mentioned that motherhood as a critical theme of femininity closely interacts with social discourses. Conventionally, discourse on motherhood has been treated as a discursive tool to tame women's sexualities. In the Turkish context, motherhood was inherently incorporated into the modernization and nation-building projects. With the rise of the nationalist discourse women as mothers came to acquire new roles. Walby shows how intermingled conceptualizations of motherhood and nationhood are by saying that

[248] Kristeva suggests that there is a link between menstruation and dirt in the misogynist thought. (cited in Grosz, 1994: 207)

in the nation-building contexts women are seen as biological reproducers of nation and transmitters of culture.[249] In this respect Gökalp, the ideologue of Turkish nationalism, states that "women are not only responsible for raising children but they also have a duty to educate the nation, to set men on the right path".[250] The emphasis put on on motherhood was reproduced also by the literary works of the period. For example, Safa criticizes 'contemporary' women, who have totally moved away from domesticity and motherhood, by reminding them that their real existence is maternity:

"Most of those new women find motherhood contradictory to their grace and hate baby cry. Aren't you one of those? But where does this endless pessimism of yours come from?... The eternity of woman is not in her cleverness but in her womb. New woman is puzzled about the center of her creativity. Your despair comes from here... *I tell you, your happiness, ideal and everything is in your womb*."[251]

Opposing the conception of motherhood as the primary duty of women under the nation-building and modernizing contexts, we see new women's writing attempt to define motherhood anew. First of all, we come across professional women who have chosen not to have children (Aysel in *Ölmeye Yatmak* or the heroine in *Kadının Adı Yok*). Considering the fact that while military service engenders ideal masculinity in Turkey[252], it is motherhood which has the potency to give women esteem and prestige, this can be regarded as a radical decision. For example, when she has to abort her first child because her husband does not want it, the heroine in *Kadının Adı Yok* expresses her resentment against the holiness of motherhood as below:

"I almost gave birth to this child and became your slave. I almost became slave of life, slave of this bastard. Mommy, shouldn't I abort this child? A woman's most sacred duty is motherhood, isn't it? Is motherhood being trapped in four walls like you with two children, with an unfaitful husband and without being able to leave? Does holly motherhood mean saying 'I could not get divorced because of you' or 'if you did not exist I would not lead this

[249] Slyvia Walby, "Kadın ve Ulus" in *Vatan, Millet, Kadınlar*, ed. Ayşe Gül Altınay, İstanbul:İletişim, 2004: 38.
[250] cited in Behar and Duben, *Istanbul Households*, 221.
[251] Safa, *Bir Tereddüdün Romanı*, 180.
[252] Emma Sinclair- Webb, "Our Bülent is Now a Commando: Military Service and Manhood in Turkey" *in Imagined Masculinities: Changing Patterns of Identity for Middle Eastern Men*, ed. Mai Ghoussoub et al., London: Saqi, 2000.

life'. Does holly motherhood mean bringing a creature whose future is uncertain in this shit world and keeping constantly blaming him/her?" (68)

A similar challenge to the holiness of motherhood can be found in the stories of female characters who do not talk much about their children. For example, in *Yürümek* Ela barely talks about her child (94, 125), which may mean that the child is not an ultimate figure in her life and she has freed herself from the the self-sacrificing attitude of maternal thinking.[253] Ela attempts to renegotiate all the conservative moralities turning "such a delightful feeling as motherhood into an unbearable duty":

"A Delight that turns into enduring. A breath that turns into duty. A duty that gets mixed with sentences like "we raised as well.", "we suffered as well", "we did not raised them easily either", "we got worn out as well." , "we paid it through the nose"... How sentences like "you have a child from now on, watch your step", "a marriage with children cannot be broken", "a child should grow up beside the mother and father" make that natural duty heavier." (94-95)

It is worth noting that there is not a denial of pregnancy and motherhood here as Beauvoir suggests. According to Beauvoir, the female body and maternity limits women's demand for equality and trancendence.[254] In a similar vein, Firestone called for women's release from biological destiny through new means of reproduction mechanisms. For her, women's ability to surpass pregnancy would bring an end to gender roles pertaining to child bearing.[255] Rather than having this stance, Ela obviously affirms motherhood by describing 'what a delightful feeling it is', but she wants to renegotiate its social construction.

[253] For an argument as to how maternal thinking hampers women's autonomy, see Sara Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking", *Feminist Studies*, Vol.6:2, 1980: 342-367.
[254] Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 15.
[255] cited in Donovan, *Feminist Theory*, 161.

4. CONCLUSION

By introducing sexual politics into feminist debates, radical feminist attempts in the 1970s vividly put forward the interplay between the personal and the political. Since then, it has become widely accepted that unequal relations in the realm of sexuality that at the first glance seem to be taking place exclusively at the personal level indeed have deeper causes embedded in the patriarchal structure of society. Particularly focusing on the sexual politics of women's narratives in new women's writing in Turkey, we have tried to place the representation of female sexuality in novels by woman writers vis-a-vis broader social and political discourses. As a result, we have found out that new women's writing openly displays a radical feminist stance as it explicitly treats sexuality as a constitutive element for the construction of female identity. In this sense, it can surely be alleged that sexual politics is at the heart of new women's writing. We have seen that female characters lay claim on their autonomy beginning from the the realm of sexuality. Sexual struggle as the linchpin of their identities appears in many different forms and themes. Female characters express that patriarchal repression on their sexualities engenders a split, a lack in their selves. They attempt to oppose asexuality or repressed sexuality by having illicit sexual affairs that would revive their bodily existence. Moreover, they ask for a redefinition of marriage, romantic love, intimacy, heterosexuality and domesticity. In addition to narratives characterized by feelings of guilt, shame and the fear of losing virginity, there is also an unreserved, affirmative articulation of female sexuality in the new women's writing. Furthermore, the main female character whom we encounter in the new women's writing is not always a middle- class, well-educated woman. Sexualities of lower class women are also represented in some of the novels investigated in this study; they are depicted as relatively more marginalized than middle class women's sexualities.

In this framework, new women's writing arises from the late 1960s onwards with a remarkable upsurge, with particular thematic orientations recurring in major works and with

an authentic ability to represent female perspective. Literary production in the modernizing context of the late Ottoman era and the early years of the Republican regime approached female sexuality symbolically in order to articulate the broader social problematique. We see new women's writing challenge the operationalization of female sexuality under macro projects. If the Republican project of women's emancipation is one macro project that woman's writing is critical of, the rising leftist movement in the 1960s and 70s is another one. In this respect, women's silenced sexuality in the Republican project and the male dominated leftist circles is a prominent theme that extensively fascinated some of the canonical women writers. In addition to the critique of the Republican and leftist discourses, new women's writing also has clear ties with other ideological currents, namely second wave feminism. Major issues of the feminist current in the 1970s such as sexuality, marriage, love find resonance in the novels investigated here. Additionally, it is also possible to say that women's writing that began in the late 1960's and rose in the 1970s constitues a considerable intellectual source for the feminist movement that marks the post-1980 period in Turkey. In this framework, whatever the specificities of the individual works and their limitations are, it is possible to regard new women's writing as a feminist literary current in the cultural realm in Turkey.

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