

# The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage

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# Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After

*Edited by*

Benjamin C. Fortna



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# Preface: Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After

*Benjamin C. Fortna*

In recent years the history of childhood has expanded dramatically in scope and sophistication, but its geographical coverage has remained heavily skewed towards the West. This volume breaks new ground by focusing on the ways in which childhood was imagined and experienced on the eastern fringes of Western Europe. The contributions that follow show that in the Balkans, Anatolia and the Arab lands of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the influence of Western ideas about childhood was important but unevenly absorbed, and always mediated through indigenous institutions, individuals, traditions and desires. As the Ottoman Empire gave way to the nationally defined states that supplanted imperial rule, children assumed novel roles and childhood took on new significance and expectations in response to the rapidly changing realities of this turbulent time.

The studies in this volume address childhood in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ottoman and post-Ottoman world. The changing approach to childhood in this period of rapid transformation reflects a confluence of major shifts in societies that were increasingly minded to differentiate it from childhood as it was experienced before the nineteenth century. The Ottoman lands were buffeted by a number of developments both internal and external that fundamentally reshaped certain—but far from all—aspects of society. Far from being protected from these trends, children and, indeed, the very conception of childhood assumed a novel prominence that was increasingly linked to the major questions of the modern period.

In order to appreciate the many changes affecting childhood in the late Ottoman and immediate post-Ottoman eras it is necessary to understand some of the ways in which children and childhood were traditionally experienced and understood before the changes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries began to alter the picture so dramatically, a subject which we will address shortly. But it is the changes that have usually attracted the most attention. They have been depicted as the products of a top-down process in which the modernizing state set the tenor for the period, effecting a series of transformations that, taken together, went a long way towards altering society as a whole.

Starting with the crucial decision to reorganize the Empire's military, the late Ottoman state soon found itself engaged in—and assuming responsibility for—areas in which it had traditionally involved itself either minimally or

not at all. The business of creating Western-style standing armies based on drill, uniformity and technical training in turn demanded a cascading series of changes in the way the state operated and engaged with its subjects, now increasingly viewed as proto-citizens with new roles to play as the social contract shifted. The alarmingly expensive requirements of the modernizing military meant first and foremost that the state had to find new sources of revenue, pushing it towards a more intensive relationship with its population. The men and institutions that had so long served as the intermediaries between Istanbul and the provincial population were swept aside. In their place came teams of salaried and uniformed inspectors, tax collectors and governors who filled the rapidly proliferating buildings that most concretely symbolized the central government's newly expanded presence across the Empire's sprawling territories.

The state's new stance swelled the ranks of the bureaucracy. From this point on one of the biggest concerns of the high-ranking bureaucrats was to fill the tens of thousands of government positions that burgeoning process had created. The objective of training capable and loyal officials played a huge role in shaping the creation and articulation of the new state educational system. Traditionally, the Empire had left schooling to the religious establishments, only involving itself in training the relatively small numbers of palace scribes and some military technical vocations. Over the second half of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries this situation changed dramatically. New schools popped up across the Empire as the state attempted to flesh out the ambitious state educational plans envisioned during the period of Tanzimat reforms. From this point on late Ottoman and post-Ottoman childhoods would increasingly be dominated by that quintessentially modernizing, novel institution: the state school. It played a vital role in shaping the discourse of childhood, establishing the terms of the relationship between the government on one side and parents and children on the other, and insinuating itself into a central role in the arbitration of the moral, cultural and social development of the Empire's youth.

Before the arrival of the state school and the rising expectation that children should attend it, formal education had been a minority phenomenon. The majority could generally not afford either to pay for tuition or to sacrifice the labor that sending a child to school entailed. Indeed, before the nineteenth century, the matter of raising and educating children remained far from the attentions of the state.<sup>1</sup> The upbringing of children was largely a private, family

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1 Yahya Araz, *16. Yüzyıldan 19. Yüzyıl Başlarına Osmanlı Toplumunda Çocuk Olmak* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2013), 100.

affair; to the extent that it followed organized precepts, these were inherently religious. Families tended to be very large and the distinction between a defined period of “childhood” and adulthood tended to be blurred. Local traditions and superstitions also played their role in such matters as when would-be parents should try to conceive their children and when they should first encounter education, a time commemorated by the Muslim population by the ‘*amin alay*’ ceremony, a procession held for the child’s first trip to school. This institution, the local, religious school, known as the ‘*mekteb*’, was for centuries the chief locus of learning outside of the home. Often denigrated for its ‘backwardness’ and vilified for the violence that could be meted out by the almighty ‘*hoca*’ who held sway there, these schools were nevertheless sometimes also often remembered fondly after they were largely replaced by the more standardized and secularized state institutions.<sup>2</sup>

In the pre-modern period most children grew up untouched by the experience of schooling. A certain freedom of the street existed alongside the watchful eyes of the neighbourhood.<sup>3</sup> Children learned through playing a number of ‘traditional’ games that absorbed the attentions of children in their free time. But not all children were accustomed to such leisure. Here we come to a major difference between the expectations of the two eras, through work. Child labour was the norm. Because children were not, in the absence of widespread schooling, physically separated from the adult population for long hours, their interactions were naturally far less regimented than would come to be the case in the modern era. As a result, their existence was frequently depicted as relatively carefree, but the lack of regulation and the mixing of generations left them vulnerable to what would today be considered exploitation and even abuse, both economic and sexual.

The changes that would affect children so dramatically were not solely the result of state-led modernization. Important shifts in society were at the heart of the new approach to childhood that would emerge in the modern era. Over the course of the nineteenth century, while important continuities remained,<sup>4</sup> a raft of changes took hold in Ottoman society. Most visible in the major cities, Istanbul most of all, these shifts nevertheless were not limited only to the capital.

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2 On the trope of violence in the old schools, see Benjamin C. Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). On the often hereditary position of the *hoca* in general, see Araz, 16. *Yüzyıldan*, 118 ff.

3 Bekir Onur, *Türkiye’de Çocukluğun Tarihi: Çocukluğun Sosyo-Kültürel Tarihine Giriş* (Ankara: İmge, 2005), 147.

4 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 269–270.

They included an increasingly egalitarian approach to gender relations, the spread of companionate marriage, changes in fertility rates (in part due to later female marriage age), a greater focus on children and increasing prominence of Western manners and dress. These shifts, some highly visible and others more hidden but no less influential, began to make late Ottoman urban family life increasingly distinct from its regional counterparts and closer to European practice.<sup>5</sup> As a result there were “significant changes in the attitudes of many people in Istanbul towards children from the mid to late nineteenth century, and particularly in the early twentieth century.”<sup>6</sup> Children were increasingly taken seriously as children, defined as a distinct segment of the population. Society was becoming more child-oriented now with men taking more of an interest in the upbringing of their children,<sup>7</sup> a trend that began in the late Ottoman period and continued with added vigor in the post-Ottoman nation states. And, as we have seen, the state was also increasingly minded to lavish attention on its youngest subjects, increasingly viewing them as proto-citizens whom it hoped to mold into loyal and productive servants.

As in other parts of the world during this period, children of the region became increasingly visible members of society, recognized and validated both by the state and society at large. Leading the way was the rapidly expanding network of state schools designed to teach them lessons in an array of subjects that were almost universally accepted as necessary for survival in the modern world. At the same time these institutions attempted to go beyond their purely academic tasks and to shape their young charges by inculcating the moral, cultural and social agenda of the state. Meanwhile the private sector increasingly took notice of children as a new category of consumer. Publishers in particular adapted rapidly to the existence of a new market by producing an array of offerings intended for younger readers. Sometimes the messages imparted by such private actors reinforced those of the state but at other times the pull of the market worked at cross-purposes to the state’s agenda. Through the consumption of the new media and its messages and through the effects of globalization, children were increasingly exposed to a wider world than that of previous generations.

The new attention placed on the children of the late Ottoman Empire and its successor states offered them unprecedented opportunities while simultaneously placing new expectations on their slender shoulders. Because these

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5 Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility, 1880–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 10.

6 *Ibid.*, 226.

7 *Ibid.*, 235.

changes took place during, and constituted an important part of, this period of rapid transformation, the effects on childhood were especially intense. The chapters presented in this volume demonstrate that during this period of transition from the 1880s to the 1930s childhood bore far more than the usual pressure of expectations placed on the young. From the ways in which childhood was reconceived to children's day-to-day experience during periods of occasionally acute national and societal stress, to the various ways in which childhood was subsequently remembered across altered political and cultural boundaries, these studies reflect the particular pressures and concerns of a period in which radical change was becoming almost normalized. The volume is organized around these three main themes: (1) the changing conceptions of what childhood ought to be and how it was experienced, (2) how childhood intersected with changing notions of conflict, gender and the nation, and (3) how childhood was variously remembered in autobiographical works published in later eras. Throughout the volume comparison with Western, regional and other modes of childhood informs the selected case studies, each of which has important implications for the history of the Ottoman Empire, its successor states and the global history of childhood.

One of the most interesting aspects to emerge from this project has been the commonality of experience despite the geographical and cultural differences encompassed between, say, Serbia and Egypt. Given that all of the contributors ostensibly engage with aspects of the same topic, the variety of sources used, the approaches deployed and the arguments produced were remarkable and stimulated considerable interest in pursuing comparative approaches. Particular areas of research convergence included: the changing conceptions of childhood over time, the role of wars or other crises in affecting the lives of children and the complicated but crucial relationship between autobiography and the history of childhood.

The book has its origins in a workshop, sponsored by the British Academy and the British Institute at Ankara, intended to explore the possibilities for the history of childhood in a non-Western context. Of great interest to the presenters was the participation of Laurence Brockliss, a distinguished historian of European childhood. He has kindly written the Introduction that sets the stage for the chapters that follow. His overview of the development of Western ideas of childhood and the field of the history of childhood that has evolved in their wake provides a crucial comparative perspective. As his horizon-tour of a contribution indicates, Western ideas and policies concerning childhood were far from monolithic. Notions of child development, morality, the role of the family, physical punishment and the proper role to be played by the state were disparate, debated and rapidly evolving. The impact that these ideas had as

they were variously adopted and adapted in the Ottoman and the former Ottoman lands is therefore, as these chapters demonstrate, 'partial, fine and complex.' The large degree of commonality between the experience of childhood in the West and the Ottoman and post-Ottoman region suggests that instead of merely looking for the effects of a one-way pattern of borrowing we might more profitably examine the shared dynamics of childhood through a truly comparative approach.

The first section of the book addresses the ways in which conceptions of childhood were changing in response to rapid modernization and increasing state involvement in the lives of its young citizens. Nazan Çiçek addresses the critical connection between the nation's claim to modernity and its conceptualization and treatment of children. Her chapter carries on the conversation opened by Professor Brockliss by placing the early Turkish Republican discourse on childhood in the context of scholarly analysis of the nature and definition of childhood. Because the Turkish experience is in many respects the iconic example of the transition from Ottoman Empire to nation-state, not least in its keenness to disparage the old regime, Çiçek's analysis provides a particularly useful opening for the discussions that follow. Crucial here are the ways in which the Republican elites conceived of childhood and its close relationship with the state. It is interesting to note that even within this relatively narrow ideological band of thought, remarkably varied ideas about what constitutes and informs childhood can be discerned. Also poignant is the tension between romantic ideas of childhood adopted from Western Europe and a much more pragmatic approach that saw children as inherently linked with the future success of the state.

Kathryn Libal's contribution follows nicely by juxtaposing the issue of child poverty with the state's ideological stance against recognizing class distinctions. Populism was, after all, one of the key tenets of the Kemalist 'revolution,' but one that was challenged by evidence of glaring inequality, most poignantly demonstrated by the suffering of children alongside the persistence of elitist notions of class hierarchy and proper comportment. Libal's research shines a revealing light on the often abrupt contrast between the ideal child depicted in the discourse of state ideology and the practical problems facing children in the young Republic; problems such as hunger and poverty, which were particularly acute in the wake of over a decade of warfare and displacement. Her discussion of the emergence of a discourse on children's rights highlights the important but at the time politically sensitive question of the boundary between the state and the non-state. Organizations such as the Child Protection Society and the Turkish Red Crescent Society reveal the alignment but also the tensions that could open up between the state's agenda and competing initiatives,

tensions heightened by the often heavily emotive language and the imagery of suffering children. Interestingly, the extent to which debates about child welfare were shot through with references to analogous problems and solutions in other countries underscores the importance of the comparative approach to this topic, a theme recurring throughout the volume.

Heidi Morrison's chapter provides an excellent example of the usefulness of a regional comparison. Egypt's trajectory from Ottoman province to independence was mediated in important ways by its experience under British rule. This sets it apart from the other regions covered in this book in some respects but also highlights the extent to which both the reality and the discourse of childhood shared crucial features across geographical boundaries and despite distinct differences of historical contingency. Morrison shows that in Egypt as elsewhere the link between childhood and nation has been a central tenet in the modern history of the region. Opening her piece with an indelible childhood memory of political violence, she highlights another crucial theme of this book: namely, the interweaving of individual, communal and national narratives. Morrison demonstrates the ways in which the notion of childhood evolved in Egypt against the backdrop of state-driven modernization, a globalizing economy, Western imperialism and national 'awakening.' As in other countries, the definition and understanding of childhood was wrapped up in notions of progress and independence. As was the case in the Balkans, Anatolia, the other Arab lands and far beyond, education became a vital vehicle for national uplift. But that was not all: education was also freighted with notions of economic and social advancement, with gendered and bodily expectations, and with a conception of morality heavily inflected by Islam. In Egypt as elsewhere in the region institutions such as schools and the literacy upon which they depended were vital to the inculcation of a series of interrelated values and ideals that stood at the heart of an emerging national experience of childhood. As the pace of change increased, Egyptian childhood was, like its counterparts around the region and the world, shaped by attempts to implement a version of morality that showed signs of both universally modern expectations and national particularities.

The second section, devoted to the subject of War, Gender and Nation, focuses on the ways in which periods of crisis intensified and altered the experience of childhood. Elif Akşit's contribution begins the conversation by going back into the late Ottoman period to help us understand the context for the national turn and childhood's place in it. Linking the ways in which girls are portrayed in the new genre of the late Ottoman novel with new ideas of the nation, Akşit distinguishes between fictional works that instrumentalize girls and those that, following the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari, allow them

to 'become women.' By examining the literary approaches to girlhood, she demonstrates the interrelated evolution of the novel, childhood and the nation. Institutions such as the harem, the family and the school form the background to the changing portrayal of female characters in Ottoman Turkish novels. The 'new girl' that emerges was different from the characters of the previous period in that she was a working girl who, like her Western European counterparts, was taking on an unprecedented degree of social visibility. Increasingly to be found in school and in the workplace—both in fiction and in reality—the new girl and new woman were now more fully developed characters. Then making the transition from empire to republic, the fictional girl takes on a new, national guise, albeit one that has deep roots in the Ottoman period, revealing the enduring importance of historical narrative to locating the history of childhood.

Naoum Kaytchev switches the scene to Serbia and Bulgaria, two of the later Balkan states to win independence from the Ottoman Empire, and shifts the subject from females to males. Focusing on the ways in which the newly formed national militaries attempted to indoctrinate the young men they conscripted, his contribution highlights the crucial role that the military played in all of the nation states of this period. In this period of considerable change and national insecurity the militaries received high priority and funding, meaning that their impact on society was especially prominent. The novelty of the mission of forging a national army also meant that its messages were often passionately received. Focusing its efforts on young males of mostly rural origin, the Serbian and Bulgarian military attempted to inculcate a strong sense of fatherland and collective national identity. Emphasis was placed on ethno-national solidarity and the existence of evidence to the contrary was almost completely ignored. 'Othering' the neighbors, including Greece and in particular the Ottomans as the traditional enemy, played a particularly strong role in attempts to foster a cohesive and battle-ready military force. The literature designed for recruits reflects the ebbs and flows in the political situation in the Balkans, with the rivalry in Macedonia never far from the discussion. By the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912, Kaytchev concludes, the two recently formed national militaries had succeeded in fostering a strong sense of patriotism among its recruits, many of whom would lose their lives in the fighting to come.

Nazan Maksudyan's chapter takes us into the period of the First World War, a particularly acute period for the history of childhood. Her contribution examines the practice by which hundreds of Ottoman children, many of them orphans, were sent to Germany to apprentice in a variety of jobs as part of a plan ostensibly drawn up to increase the technical know-how of the Empire. Maksudyan analyses the shortcomings of the project and in particular the gap

between expectations and realities. The ‘triangle of regrets’ that she identifies on the part of the Ottomans, the German hosts and the boys themselves reflects the extraordinary pressures placed on children during the war years. The Ottoman state, despite its rhetoric of raising the technical and commercial level of the Empire, was perhaps more interested in getting rid of ‘excess’ or ‘problematic’ children and the expenses associated with maintaining them in state orphanages. The Germans had expected a chance to spread German language and cultural influence alongside technical skills and to gain a fresh source of labor for their depleted ranks. The boys seem to have had different expectations altogether and were often unpleasantly surprised to find themselves excluded and alienated in their new locales, some of them even turning to crime—the forerunners of some of the less fortunate experiences of the *Gastarbeiter* later in the century. The result was a difficult situation that produced a few successes but mostly left all parties disappointed, a poignant example of the wishful thinking that accompanied adult plans for children, especially apparent during wartime. It also demonstrates the extent to which children’s lives could be dramatically affected by the technological, socio-economic and cultural changes of the period.

Continuing on with the gap between idealism and reality, Benjamin Fortna’s contribution explores the mixed messages with which children were presented from the late Ottoman to the early Turkish Republican period. As public education expanded, a new literature was created for young readers both by the state and the private sector. While there were some important differences between the reading materials that they supplied, both nevertheless shared a clear tendency to present their child audience with very mixed signals. On the one hand children were confronted with images of an idealized, romanticized world that was cut off from the real world. This was a world of fluffy dolls, sweets and games in which the cares of the adult realm were invisible. On the other hand, the exigencies of the period frequently induced educators and authors of children’s works to attempt to inculcate their audience into the realm of first imperial and then national demands. Child readers were frequently told that the success of their country depended on the slender shoulders, particularly in times of acute crisis such as war. The mixed messages that resulted must have been difficult to integrate and reflect the contradictory inclinations and conflicted expectations that adults everywhere place on children, often in spite of their best intentions.

The third section of the book explores the ways in which childhood has been remembered and retold in the post-Ottoman era. Given the remarkable changes in political and cultural terms between the old regime and the new nation states, memory is a crucial factor in contesting the political, social and

cultural fields. Alex Drace-Francis opens the section by giving us two examples of childhood in Romania. As an early defector from Ottoman rule, Romania's history tends to be treated as having little in common with the Ottoman experience. But as Drace-Francis's richly contextualized contribution indicates, the depiction of childhood in Romania shared much with its fellow Ottoman and formerly Ottoman counterparts. By decoding the regimes of space and memory in the memoirs of two rather distinct nineteenth-century Romanians—namely, Ion Ghica and Ion Creangă—Drace-Francis reveals important connections between the local and the national, the individual and the collective and the private and the public. His evocation of childhood experiences, including the crucial transition from family to school life, can be profitably read together with the other evocations of childhood in this volume. But more than just adding another geographical dimension, his contribution suggestively probes what Balzac called 'the history forgotten by historians.' His close reading of the ways in which individual childhood memories are constructed tells us much about the creation of public memory, particularly given the close connection between child and nation in this period.

Returning to the core Ottoman lands, Philipp Wirtz's contribution addresses the complexities inherent in remembering childhood across the political divide of 1923, the year of the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. Focusing on the themes of the family, the physical environment and 'childhood culture,' including the contrast between the new and the old, Wirtz explores how a variety of authors remembered their Ottoman-era childhoods from the vantage point of Republican Turkey. He explains the many ways in which childhood could be remembered differently according to the authors' position *vis-à-vis* the old Empire and the new Republic. Criticism of one or the other periods often suffused the narratives as specific memories were extended to broader political or cultural debates. Depending on whether they deplored the old regime or celebrated its passing, Turkish-language autobiographers frequently used their writings to criticize the disappearance of one set of traditions and the creation of another. The changes—but also the continuities—between the two eras offered considerable scope for the flexibility of human memory, with its capacity for erasure, exaggeration and selective emphasis. Ottoman childhood and the way it was represented in another setting took on distinctly political and cultural overtones.

In the final chapter, Duygu Köksal compares and contrasts the works of two late Ottoman female authors, one a Greek Orthodox Christian and the other a Turkish Muslim. Given that both women wrote in English for foreign audiences, the subject of representation is central to her contribution. The ways the authors represent their child selves, their families and their societies are

mediated through the choice of the language in which they write and the readership they address. Köksal demonstrates that both authors used their writings as a means to challenge the prevailing Orientalist depictions of late Ottoman life. But to do so they had to take extraordinary measures, such as leaving their homeland and adopting a non-native language to communicate with their largely foreign audience; two indications that whatever their intention of subverting the dominant discourse of their day, these women's choices—like the question of childhood in general—were bounded in important respects by the fraught relationship between the West and the Ottoman Empire and its successor states.

In sum, these contributions demonstrate the importance of the Ottoman and former Ottoman lands for an analysis of childhood that is both geographically broader and theoretically deeper than usually understood. By tackling a variety of crucial questions emanating from childhoods imagined, lived and remembered in lands simultaneously affected by and distinct from the West, these chapters have pointed the way forward to a history of childhood that is both integrated with the wider field and also able to make a modest but distinctive contribution to its development.

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# Introduction: The Western Concept of Childhood

*Laurence Brockliss*

As the great European powers, and to a lesser extent the United States, became predominant commercially and militarily across the globe after 1850, the rest of the world came to see Western culture in all its many different forms as an ideal that had to be imitated and absorbed if colonization and domination by outsiders were ever to be overthrown or withstood. This was as true of conceptions of childhood and child-rearing as anything else. In the Middle Ages European children had been largely seen as fallen, wilful and incomplete creatures whose socialization into adulthood was left to their parents and was a matter of custom. By the late nineteenth century, among most of the well-to-do at least, children were seen as fragile, innocent vessels: their upbringing required expert advice to be successfully negotiated and was the responsibility of the state as well as the family.<sup>1</sup> Any history of children and child-rearing in the non-Western world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will inevitably have as its backdrop the impact of this still freshly minted idea of childhood on traditional beliefs and practices. At the same time, the influence of Western ideas on any narrative of non-Western childhoods in the decades before and after the First World War will be far from straightforward. Importing the Western concept of childhood into traditional societies and cultures was inevitably a Herculean task. The supporters of modernization usually lacked the money and the authority to enforce their will, while many of the modernizers were understandably ambivalent about unreservedly introducing the alien ideas of the imperialists into their native land, even if they believed there was a need to re-structure traditional beliefs. The Western concept of childhood, moreover, was not frozen in aspic. The West's child-centred concept of childhood which began to command the world's attention in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century was itself continually being developed, refined and contested.

According to the French historian Philippe Ariès, who is generally regarded as the father of the modern history of childhood, this child-centred concept of childhood began to develop in the seventeenth century when the division of

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1 For an overview, see Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001). For the singularity of modern Western childhood, see Peter Stearns, *Childhood in World History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006).

Christendom in the wake of the Reformation led the new Protestant and Counter-Reformation Churches to place a novel emphasis on the creation of godly laity. As he argued in his pioneering work, *L'Enfant et la Vie Familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, published in 1960, it was only then that young children, even at the top of the social ladder, were given their own separate space and no longer mixed promiscuously with adults, playing the same games and picking up at an early age a rich vocabulary and interest in sex. It was in this century, too, that it first became common for a growing section of the population, even for artisans' and peasants' children, to spend part of their day in school being 'civilized' as well as taught to read and write.<sup>2</sup> The seventeenth century, however, was only the beginning of the story, as later historians have realized. The concept of childhood as an age of innocence was the creation of the following century and was the product of the Age of Enlightenment. In the eighteenth century a growing number of intellectuals followed John Locke in breaking with the traditional Christian idea of original sin—if not necessarily with Christianity—and declared that the new-born infant was a *tabula rasa* whose development into a socialized adult depended entirely on the environment in which he or she was raised. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his educational novel *Émile* (1762), took the new idea a stage further by claiming that a child's rational capacity hardly developed before puberty, so that new experiential ways had to be devised in order to teach younger children the basic life skills, and book- and rote-learning had to be abandoned.<sup>3</sup> Novelists and poets, too, not just philosophers, were won to the idea that children were empty vessels who could be made or marred by their parents. The melancholic began to look back to their childhoods to explain their deficiencies as adults,<sup>4</sup> and by the end of the century William Blake was claiming childhood was an age of bliss and innocence easily ruined by heartless parents only interested in their economic potential, not their happiness.<sup>5</sup>

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2 The work was translated into English two years later as Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962). Ariès's more radical assertions that parents in the Middle Ages did not love or cherish their children has been largely dismissed by medievalists: e.g. Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990).

3 For a recent account of Locke and Rousseau's educational theories, see Natasha Gill, *Educational Philosophy in the French Enlightenment: From Nature to Second Nature* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

4 Sebastian Matzner, "Haunted by Paradise Lost: The Theme of Childhood in Eighteenth-Century Melancholy Writing," *Childhood in the Past*, 1, 2008, 120–135.

5 E.g. "The Chimney Sweeper," from *Songs of Experience* (1794).

The Enlightenment's emphasis on getting child-rearing right encouraged the development of a novel child-centred material culture of books, games and even dress (to ensure growing limbs would not be constrained by the adult fashion for stays and corsets).<sup>6</sup> In the richer European states in the course of the nineteenth century this became a highly profitable industry, legitimized by a new generation of Rousseauvian educational theorists, such as the Swiss Johann-Heinrich Pestalozzi and the German Friedrich Froebel, who taught that children in their early years learnt most effectively through controlled play.<sup>7</sup> There was a growing feeling too as the century wore on that artefacts especially created for children should not just be learning aids but objects to heighten the simple joy of being a child. Building on the nostalgic notion promoted by Wordsworth and other Romantics that childhood was potentially a special time of quasi-divine understanding lost in becoming adult, a number of novelists, educational theorists and proto-child psychologists took the Enlightenment theory of childhood one stage further. Growing up should be fun: children were entitled to a happy and not just a properly ordered upbringing and should be allowed to dwell in their own magical universe as long as possible.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, many of the same pundits were also convinced that for even the conscientious parent child-rearing was a hazardous activity. The publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 had as profound an effect on contemporary theories of childhood as it had on other areas of the burgeoning social sciences. It became fashionable to believe that the development of the individual child mirrored the history of the human race in its rise from primitive simian beginnings to the heights of Western civilization. According to the American educationalist and psychologist G. Stanley Hall, writing in 1904, this made the teenage years particularly difficult to negotiate successfully, for it was then that children of all classes had to learn to subsume their emotions under their reason. This inevitably led to inner turmoil, which could only be quieted by the most careful parental oversight. The slightest wrong turn and the teenager would fail to mature into a civilized adult.

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6 Children's literature has been particularly well researched: e.g. Matthew Grenby, *The Child Reader, 1700–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). For an early analysis, see J. H. Plumb, "The New World of Children in Eighteenth-century England," *Past and Present*, 67, 1975, 64–95.

7 Pestalozzi (1746–1827) set up an experimental school at Yverdon in 1805; Froebel (1782–1852) invented the kindergarten, a term he coined in 1840 for the play and activity institute for young children he had set up at Bad Blankenberg in 1837.

8 Wordsworth's nostalgia for childhood was set out in his book-length autobiographical poem, *The Prelude* (1805).

Successful parenting was a science: it was next to impossible without expert external advice.<sup>9</sup>

The belief that childhood was precious but parenting difficult was widely disseminated among the well-to-do in the Western world in the second half of the nineteenth century. In England the rapid spread of public and preparatory boarding schools after 1850 was not a sign of the heartlessness of middle-class Victorian parents but stemmed rather from fears they were too indulgent to oversee their sons' passage from their idyll of childhood to the harsh realities of adult life. Someone else was needed to give their offspring the necessary sharp shock.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the new ideas about child-rearing did not command universal consent by the end of the nineteenth century, even among the well-to-do. Pre-Enlightenment views of children as fallen and wilful who needed to be beaten into righteousness continued to be embraced by the traditionalist wings of the Catholic and Protestant Churches. Many high- as well as low-born children were brought up 'by hand' like Dickens's Pip in *Great Expectations* and Samuel Butler's Ernest Pontifex, thrashed on one occasion for failing to pronounce the word 'come' properly.<sup>11</sup>

Nor did the new understanding of childhood initially receive much support from the state. For the most part, the novel stadial theories of child development were the creation of free-thinking radicals, who had little influence over government policy in Britain, France and Germany. The nineteenth-century state was not unconcerned with the fate of children. Long before Locke and Rousseau, the state had acknowledged the need to step in when parents or those *in loco parentis* maltreated or neglected children in their care. But the authorities only did so, as they had in the past, in the most egregious circumstances. The nineteenth-century state was also not oblivious to calls in the wake of industrialization that children should be protected from exploitation

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9 G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime and Religion* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904). For a detailed account of theories of child development in Britain in the decades before the First World War, see Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine, 1840–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

10 Boys who were not sent to public school were thought to grow up as sissies: see Cuthbert Bede, *The Adventures of Verdant Green* (Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, 1982 [1853–1857]), especially 6–7.

11 *The Way of All Flesh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966 [1903]), 125. The novel was a fictionalized account of Butler's own childhood. Girls as well as boys could be physically punished for their own good; in 1855 a French governess, Célestine Doudet, was found guilty of torturing five English sisters, on their father's behest, in order to prevent them from masturbating.

in the factories and mines. But the passage of legislation banning the very young from long hours of arduous and monotonous labour was seldom evidence of the power of the new ideas in national legislatures. In Britain the first child labour laws in the 1830s and 1840s were the result of the lobbying of traditional evangelical Christians, like the Earl of Shaftesbury, who objected to the balance-sheet mentality of the new entrepreneurs and believed masters should have a paternalistic care for their workers.<sup>12</sup> Even in 1885, when Parliament struck the first blow against child prostitution by raising the age of consent to sixteen, the leaders of the campaign for change, W.T. Stead of *The Times* and Josephine Butler, were fervent Christians.<sup>13</sup>

The nineteenth-century state, to the extent it had a position on childhood, embraced an Enlightened not a Romantic agenda. The *philosophes* in the eighteenth century believed that it would be possible to turn every child into a productive and law-abiding citizen/subject if the state set up a system of universal elementary education where the offspring of the poor majority, girls as well as boys, would be taught to read, write and count and learn right from wrong.<sup>14</sup> A few eighteenth-century rulers, notably Frederick the Great of Prussia, paid lip-service to this agenda but most were content to leave what provision of elementary education there was to the church.<sup>15</sup> The upheaval wrought by the French Revolution and the subsequent Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars led the rulers of Europe after 1815 to reconsider their position. The French revolutionaries themselves had understood that the safety of the Revolution depended on taking the next generation out of the family and schooling it in the new values of the rights of man, but they lacked the money in wartime to make their dream a reality.<sup>16</sup> The redrawing of the map of Europe at the Congress of Vienna created a congeries of states filled with people of different religious and ethnics backgrounds who had never had to live together hitherto. Compulsory universal education now seemed the key to effective

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12 In France, too, it was religious traditionalists and paternalists who affected change: see Lee Shai Weisbach, *Child Labour Reform in the Nineteenth-century France: Assuring the Future Harvest* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

13 Louise Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England* (London: Routledge, 2000).

14 For the debate in France, see Harvey Chisick, *The Limits of Reform in the Enlightenment: Attitudes towards the Education of the Lower Classes in Eighteenth-century France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

15 Even in Prussia, it was the Lutheran church which maintained the system of elementary education which Frederick promoted: Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Absolutistischer Staat und Schubwirklichkeit in Brandenburg-Preussen* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1985).

16 Han-Christian Harten, *Elementarschule und Pädagogik in der Französischen Revolution* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1990).

state-building for all regimes, be they liberal or conservative. Initially, in the 1820s and 1830s, it was states that felt particularly insecure, such as Prussia and France, which set up a system of state-financed elementary schools.<sup>17</sup> In Britain, on the other hand, only lightly touched by the upheavals on the continent, the state was happy to leave elementary education, as before, to the churches. It was only in Ireland, newly attached to the British state in 1801 and a potential source of unrest and disloyalty, that the government felt moved to establish a national system of education in the years following Catholic emancipation in 1829.<sup>18</sup> Even Britain, however, had set up a universal state-system of sorts by 1880, and by 1914 every European state—including Russia—had laid the foundations of a compulsory system, although the proportion of children between the ages of five to seven and 12 to 13 actually in school was in the poorest states relatively small.<sup>19</sup> North America and other parts of the English-speaking world similarly set up their own system after 1860, though it was not until 1918 that the state of Mississippi made attendance de rigueur.<sup>20</sup>

The new compulsory systems of education set up in Europe and North America across the nineteenth century were scarcely dedicated to the promotion of the happy child. Their principal aim was to create literate, useful and law-abiding citizens who would love their native land and be ready to die for its sake. Corralled in desks for hours at a time, they were prisoners in a crowded class-room, taught by rote and punished, often by being beaten, for ignorance, disobedience and slovenliness.<sup>21</sup> It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the state began to evince an interest in the new ideas

17 For France, see Laura S. Struminger, *What Were Little Boys and Girls Made of? Primary Education in Rural France, 1830–1880* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), and Raymond Grew and Patrick J. Harrigan, *School, State, and Society: The Growth of Elementary Schooling in Nineteenth-century France: A Quantitative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

18 Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Educational Experiment: The National System of Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970); Jane McDermid, *The Schooling of Girls in Britain and Ireland, 1800–1900* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

19 For Russia, see Jeffrey Brooks, *When Russia Learnt to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861–1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985) and Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture and Popular Pedagogy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

20 For an overview, see Laurence Brockliss and Nicola Sheldon (eds), *Mass Education and the Limits of State Building, c. 1870–1930* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 167–176, 251–260, and essays by Ellen Berg (the United States) and S. E. Duff (South Africa).

21 Work in progress by Sian Pooley of Cambridge University suggests that in British schools at least children were not turned into knee-jerk jingoists; the emphasis was on inculcating a concept of fairness. See her “‘Leagues of Gentleness’ and ‘Column Comrades’: Children’s

about child rearing and child development, as teaching became a profession whose practitioners underwent theoretical as well as classroom training and the inspectorate set up to monitor classroom performance was won over to child-centred learning. Even then the resultant changes in approach were limited. States were unwilling to commit the funds needed to make school life more fun, so ‘chalk and talk’ remained the predominant way of delivering the curriculum. In England before the First World War the principal evidence that the elementary-school curriculum was becoming more child-orientated lay in the new commitment to nature study, which aimed to teach pupils about their local environment through letting them draw specimens of flowers.<sup>22</sup>

From the end of the nineteenth century, too, the state developed a new interest in children’s bodies as well as their minds. There had always been children who had been abandoned or orphaned and had had to be brought up outside the family home in institutions run by the church or the local municipality.<sup>23</sup> After 1870, however, the state began to claim the right to take children away from their family home in cases of parental neglect or inadequacy and place them in special orphanages where they would be brought up properly.<sup>24</sup> The primary concern was moral: bad parents threatened to undermine the good work of the elementary schools by the example they set their offspring. But intervention was also fired by a growing concern about child abuse and the physical well-being of the nation’s young, which was connected to a wider worry at the turn of the twentieth century about the poor physical state of the working-classes sparked by the new interest among those studying child

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Responses to War in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England,” in Lissa Paul and Rosemary Johnston (eds), *Children and the Great War: 1890–1919* (forthcoming).

- 22 For an example of a nature study lesson, see the account in D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (1921), Chapter Three (Lawrence had been a teacher himself).
- 23 For an introduction, see the works listed at Oxford Bibliographies on Childhood Studies for Western Europe and Scandinavia: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199791231/obo-9780199791231-0018.xml>. Large numbers of children were abandoned in the pre-modern era, in nineteenth century Paris up to 20% of all babies born: Rachel G. Fuchs, *Abandoned Children: Foundlings and Child Welfare in Nineteenth-Century France* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984). In England, too, children of poor parents forced to seek shelter in the workhouse were temporarily at least separated from their mothers and fathers.
- 24 In Britain special boarding-schools were created on ships and in the countryside where neglected children could be rehabilitated: see Nicola Sheldon, “Socialising the Anti-Social Youth: Industrial Schools and Citizenship,” paper presented at the Institute of Historical Studies, January 28, 2010.

development in correlating children's age, height and weight.<sup>25</sup> In part, the state was moved to act by new lobby groups like the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, established in 1895 out of a number of local organizations active from the early 1880s.<sup>26</sup> But it also had its own agenda. In the case of boys the state was fearful lest the army of the future would be staffed by weaklings. In the case of girls, it feared that the national stock would be depleted if they grew up into underweight, listless mothers unable to produce healthy babies and unable to look after them properly. In England, where the government was shocked by the physical state of soldiers recruited during the Boer War and eugenicist ideas were widely embraced by the country's opinion formers, it was quickly decided that the elementary school must extend its remit. Physical education, especially team games, became a part of the official school day, while in 1906 Parliament passed a School Meals Bill which empowered local authorities to provide a hot midday meal for the neediest children and in 1907 it created a nationwide school medical service financed through the local rates.<sup>27</sup>

After the First World War, the European states' role as a surrogate parent was further extended. In most countries compulsory education continued to end with elementary school. Until 1945 few states thought more than 10% of children would benefit from secondary schooling and provided scant opportunity

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25 The science of pedology was particularly developed in Belgium and France, where it was believed that it was the key to producing well-educated children; elementary education would be wasted if children were too under-nourished or tired to learn. A leading figure of the movement in the first decade of the twentieth century was the Belgium-based Polish paediatrician Jozefa Joteyko. See Ilana Lowy, "Measures, Instruments, Methods and Results': Jozefa Joteyko on Social Reforms and Physiological Measures," in Gérald Jorland, Annick Opinel and George Weicz (eds), *Body Counts: Medical Quantification in Historical and Sociological Perspective/Quantification médicale: perspectives historiques et sociologiques* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 143–172.

26 It was the lobbying of the London Society that led to parliament passing Britain's first Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act in 1889; see Harry Hendrick, *Child Welfare: England, 1872–1989* (London: Routledge, 1994).

27 On team games, see Susannah Wright, "Citizenship, Moral Education and the English Elementary School," in Brockliss and Sheldon, *Mass Education*, 30–31. For the introduction of school meals, see Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society, 1880–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 47–48, 67. On girls' physical well-being, see Hilary Marland, *Health and Girlhood in Britain, 1874–1920* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). In Britain, teenage girls in the middle classes responded so positively to the call they should be physically active that by the outbreak of the First World War, there were concerns they were becoming too manly: the 'bicycling' girl was particularly worrying.

for even clever working-class children to continue with their studies.<sup>28</sup> The tutelary role of the state, however, was taken ever more seriously. In the new Soviet Union, where mothers were expected to work and most parents were suspect in their political loyalties, the state became a surrogate parent providing crèches as well as schooling and making membership of party-run youth organizations—the Young Pioneers and the Komosol (All-Union Leninist Young Communist League)—all but mandatory.<sup>29</sup> In Western and Central Europe, state intervention was more restrained, and in many cases the state simply set the policy and left it to charities and voluntary bodies to provide the infrastructure and to the childcare experts to promote the cause of good parenting through advice literature and in the burgeoning periodical press.<sup>30</sup> In both France and Britain, for instance, there was widespread agreement among educationalists, child-psychologists and politicians in the interwar years that an unrelieved urban upbringing was physically and morally deleterious: all children should have the chance to enjoy the delights of the countryside. In consequence, in both countries every summer a large number of working-class children left their home environment to spend one or two weeks of the summer breathing the pure bucolic air of the countryside. In France, the *colonies de vacances* were organized by the government; in Britain the holidays were organized by specialist charities, such as the the Children's Country Holiday Fund, and the many youth organizations—the Boys' Brigade, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and so on—which had sprung up on the eve of the First World War as part of the drive to create civic-minded and patriotic citizens of Empire.<sup>31</sup>

28 Brockliss and Sheldon, "Introduction," in id., *Mass Education*, 14–15 and 91–92 (some figures). The United States was different. By 1940, 49% of American teenagers would graduate from high school: Ellen Berg, "'To Become GOOD MEMBERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY and PATRIOTIC AMERICANS': Mass Education in the United States, 1870–1930," *ibid.*, 92.

29 Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). As in the United States, many working-class Soviet children were able to go on to secondary education in the 1930s and became totally loyal to the Soviet state in consequence.

30 In Britain, periodicals aimed at mothers and teenage girls were on the market from the turn of the twentieth century. So too were advice manuals. But they became ever more numerous after 1918, the year that saw the publication of first edition of the Stenhouses' *Health Reader for Girls*.

31 Laura Downs, *Childhood in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880–1960* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1960); Hester Barron, "Changing Conceptions of the 'Poor Child': The Children's Country Holiday Fund, 1918–1939," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* (forthcoming); Tammy M. Proctor, *On My Honour: Guides and Scouts in Interwar Britain* (Philadelphia: American

The developed world also invested children and childhood with greater dignity than ever before in the interwar years. Much had been made in Britain during the war of the German soldiers' inhumanity in their purported treatment of children.<sup>32</sup> Immediately after the war, the focus changed to the plight of children displaced or under-nourished in the wake of the conflict, and in 1919 the social reformer Eglantyne Jebb founded the Save the Children Fund, dedicated to helping victims of famine in Berlin and Austria, and which quickly became an international organization. Four years later, Jebb drew up the first ever Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which emphasized a child's right to a normal material and spiritual upbringing and its right not to be exploited:

The child that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and waif must be sheltered and succoured.<sup>33</sup>

Adopted in 1924 by the new League of Nations, the declaration was the starting point for our present day concept of children's rights. A child's right to family life was particularly stressed, leading to a novel interest in finding caring homes for unwanted children rather than leaving them to languish in orphanages. In nineteenth-century Britain children had frequently been fostered or taken in but formal adoption had always been illegal. All this changed with the end of the war: private adoption agencies sprang up to deal with the unprecedented number of illegitimate babies and fatherless children, and in 1926 legalized adoption was allowed for the first time.<sup>34</sup>

What did not change dramatically over the interwar years was the orthodoxy on child-rearing. Late nineteenth-century child development theorists had been keen to emphasize that successful parenting demanded skill and time, but they had also preached that success depended on organization. A child subjected to a form of control and discipline appropriate to his or her age would emerge as a fully-rounded adult. One cosseted, arbitrarily or inconstantly

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Philosophical Society, 2002). The history of childhood during the interwar years is only now beginning to receive serious attention.

32 This remains a contentious issue. For a discussion, James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914–1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941).

33 The full text is available at <http://www.un-documents.net/gdrc1924.htm>. Clare Mulley, *The Woman who Saved the Children: A Biography of Eglantyne Jebb Founder of Save the Children* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009).

34 Heather Montgomery, "Unwanted Children and Adoption in England," in Laurence Brockliss and Heather Montgomery (eds), *Childhood and Violence in the Western Tradition* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), 83–88.

punished or treated inappropriately would be launched down the Primrose path. It was this 'behaviourist' view of child rearing that dominated establishment thinking until the 1940s. Although figures like Freud were questioning the value of 'tough love' and some child gurus were advocating allowing children to do as they like and find their own feet, their ideas had little purchase outside Soviet Russia in the 1920s where novel 'anti-bourgeois' philosophies of all kinds had a temporary hearing and Lev Vygotsky was developing his ideas of the role of the environment on children's cognitive development.<sup>35</sup> Parents in the Western world in the first part of the twentieth century were supposed to love and look after their children; they were not supposed to cut them much slack. A change towards a much more child-focused theory of child-rearing—one that stressed the differences between children and the special needs of the individual child—took root only in the years following the Second World War under the influence of the inter-war work of such seminal figures as the Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget, the Austrian psycho-analyst Melanie Klein and the British educationalist Susan Isaacs, who stressed the importance of learning through child-directed play.<sup>36</sup>

The chapters in the present book bring out clearly how partial, fine and complex the imprint of Western theories of childhood and childhood development could be on movements for national reform and regeneration in non-Western countries in the decades before and after the First World War. While it is evident that reformers, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in the old Ottoman Empire and the new states that emerged from its collapse had imbibed the Western message that the future strength and success of the state depended on turning children—girls as well as boys—into good citizens and patriots, there was no uniform response to the question: what should be done? Lack of resources was key. While Western states were often unwilling to commit taxpayers' money to the child problem, the Ottomans and their successors had very little to spend in the first place. Establishing state-controlled systems of education before the 1920s was therefore next to impossible, and was sometimes not even attempted. The Bulgarians in the late nineteenth century left

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35 Vygotsky (1896–1934) was little known outside Russia in his life time. His work only began to be seriously studied in the West in the 1970s. For his ideas and their eventual influence, see Peter E. Langford, *Vygotsky's Developments and Educational Psychology* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2005).

36 Schooling therefore remained very formal in the interwar years. Only a handful of private experimental schools such as A. S. Neill's Summerhill, initially established in Dresden in 1921 before moving to Lyme Regis, allowed children to learn in their own way and at their own pace. See Jonathan Croall, *Neill of Summerhill: The Permanent Rebel* (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1983).

the task of national education to the army: in the absence of other institutions, conscription became the primary tool of state-building, albeit a highly imperfect one given the high proportion of males who escaped military service.<sup>37</sup> As a result, child-rearing before 1918 remained almost exclusively the family affair it had always been. New ideas about childhood and citizen-formation were paraded in novels, travelogues and periodicals, but there were inevitable limits to their reach in an area of the world with low literacy. As a result, they tended to preach to the converted.

The promoters of the new ideas also delivered a mixed message. Post-independence Romanian nationalists, Janus-like, saw the new Romania in both the traditional village and the new city, while late-Ottoman educationalists were unclear whether children should be allowed a childhood or turned as quickly as possible into useful and independent adults: it seemed to depend on how far the Empire was felt to be in crisis.<sup>38</sup> Egyptian intellectuals, on the other hand, living under British control at the beginning of the twentieth century, were anxious to dress Western ideas in Islamic clothes. As nationalists, they objected to the wealthy Anglophone elite bringing their children up on what was perceived as Western lines, and called for a child-rearing revolution which encouraged creativity and interactive learning, not because these were Western imports but because they were part of the forgotten Islamic inheritance.<sup>39</sup> Intellectuals, too, could promote Western ideas of independence by reworking Islamic institutions. Fatma Aliye, the first Ottoman female novelist, was an ardent supporter of female education but she packaged her views in a traditional context. Her vision of the ideal school for girls was one where girls were taught there was more to life than marriage but where the gendered classroom mirrored the isolated but convivial society of the harem.<sup>40</sup>

After 1923, with the establishment of the new secular Turkish Republic devoted to rapid modernization, Western concepts of childhood and child rearing were inevitably championed more forcibly in the heartland of the old Ottoman Empire. The Kemalist regime was totally convinced that universal literacy had to be created as quickly as possible if Turkey were to become a

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37 See the chapter by Kaytshev in this volume.

38 See the chapters by Drace-Francis and Fortna in this volume. Fortna is the author of a full length study of the attempt to establish state education at the end of the Ottoman era: *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

39 See the chapter by Morrison in this volume. Her argument is developed further in ead., *Modernity Comes of Age: Childhood in Early Twentieth-Century Egypt* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

40 See the chapter by Akşit in this volume.

respected and powerful state, and many more resources were pumped into education both for adults and children.<sup>41</sup> But the new Turkey continued to spread mixed messages about childhood. If the Kemalist state believed that children were the future, it did little to promote the idea that childhood was a time of innocence, and in its determination to create patriotic citizens was happy to sponsor children's magazines that filled young minds with stories and images of war and starvation. It was left to periodicals specifically aimed at mothers to promote a gentler, more child-focused view of childhood. Not surprisingly, then, the regime soon faced criticism from supporters of modernization, particularly socialists, who felt that the state, for all its rhetoric about children, was not doing enough to deal with child poverty and children's health.<sup>42</sup>

Autobiographical evidence, moreover, although sometimes of questionable reliability, suggests that before 1920 most childhoods were all but untouched by imported Western ideas. The centre of life was the household, a secure and protected space where children listened to folk tales and stories about their ancestors.<sup>43</sup> Not surprisingly therefore the first generation of children who were subjected to state intrusion in their lives found the experience upsetting. Egyptian memoir writers, recounting their childhood, recalled how much they disliked having their bodies poked by doctors, or teachers telling them many of their ideas about spirits and jinns were superstitious and untrue. Children who were taken out of their traditional environment altogether and fully exposed to Westernization seem to have seldom thrived. During the First World War many orphans, usually in their mid-teens, were sent to Germany to be trained as apprentices: with a handful of exceptions the experience was unpleasant and many returned early.<sup>44</sup> Before 1914, even children of fathers who were Ottoman bureaucrats and committed to modernization could have very different childhoods. Demetra Vaka and Selma Ekrem both came from families, one Christian and one Muslim, who believed that girls as well as boys should have an education. But Demetra, a Christian, was brought up in a disciplined environment where her nose was kept to the grindstone, while Selma, a Muslim, was reared in a much more free and easy home.<sup>45</sup>

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41 N. Çiçek, "The Role of Mass Education in Nation-building in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, 1870–1930," in Brockliss and Sheldon, *Mass Education*, 224–250.

42 See the chapters by Çiçek and Libal in this volume.

43 See the chapter by Wirtz in this volume.

44 See the chapter by Maksudyayn in this volume.

45 See the chapter by Köksal in this volume.

Of course, much the same points could be made about the reality of childhoods in Western states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By 1930 all over Europe, the state might have successfully established universal and compulsory education and asserted the right to interfere in many aspects of parenting, but the family home and hearth remained the focus of child-rearing outside the Soviet Union. In working-class households as well, most state initiatives continued to be met with varying degrees of resentment: teachers, midwives and Lady Bountifuls usually encountered the same suppressed hostility as the rent collector if they tried to cross the threshold.<sup>46</sup> But the big difference in the Western world was that the creators of the new concept of childhood and their governmental supporters were working with the grain. They were heirs to a campaign waged by the churches from the era of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation to release ordinary people from the purported shackles of medieval superstition and paganism and turn them into God-fearing, moral and sober Christians. Ordinary people, however resentful, were relatively inured to external intrusion into their lives. Even parenting had come within the purview of the Calvinist consistory.<sup>47</sup> Outside Europe, if the power of religion in the lives of ordinary people was just as great, if not greater, there had not been a comparable longstanding promotion of regeneration; individuals might choose a life of austerity but apart from occasional moments of zealotry, there had been no collective drive to eradicate sin and wipe out popular culture. As the essays in the following pages confirm, importing evolving Western ideas of childhood was never going to be easy in the Ottoman and post-Ottoman world. Modernizers who sought to effect serious change in the face of the forces of conservatism and with very limited resources were embarking on an uncertain voyage into the future.

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46 For a recent study of working-class upbringing based on some six hundred autobiographies, see Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

47 On the Reformation and Counter-Reformation as movements to turn the laity into good Christians, see, as an introduction, John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

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# The Interplay between Modernization and the Reconstruction of Childhood: Romantic Interpretations of the Child in Early Republican Era Popular Magazines, 1924–1950<sup>1</sup>

*Nazan Çiçek*

Ahmet Haşim (1884–1933), the well-known Turkish poet and essayist, writing in *İkdam* newspaper in 1928 used the approaching Christmas as an opportunity to contemplate the alleged ‘deficiencies’ of Turkish modernization. He criticized the Turkish upper classes’ superficial interpretation of Westernization/modernization as conspicuous consumption and drew attention to the lack of a true understanding of the socio-cultural parameters that underpinned some Western rituals and manners. The Christmas holiday, an indisputably Christian festival, in its current form, Haşim believed, was a vehicle by which Western societies had come to demonstrate the value they attached to their children. As he expressed his discomfort with the Turkish society’s ‘indifference’ towards children, Haşim ventured to urge the Kemalist founding cadres to introduce Christmas into Turkey as a children’s festival in order to prove their dedication to the solution of the ‘child question,’ which indeed had been posing an enormous challenge to the young Republic:

The Christians’ New Year’s festival that they call Noël is approaching. All European newspapers and magazines are already flooded with advertisements for Noël gifts. Toy factories exhibit their new products in shops across the world. This festival is actually a children’s festival. Father Noël [Santa Claus], namely Aya Nikola, will sneak down the chimneys on Noël morning and leave all sorts of presents for children. With the adoption of

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1 This paper makes partial use of the findings of the research project “Geç Dönem Osmanlı ve Erken Dönem Cumhuriyette İnşa Edilen Toplumsal Cinsiyet Kategorilerinin Normallik/İdeallik ve Anormallik/Ötekilik Kategorileri Üzerinden Analizi” [The Analysis of Gender Categories in the Late Ottoman and Early Republican Era with a Special Reference to the Manifestations of Normality/Idealness and Abnormality/Otherization], code number 10B5260002, sponsored by Ankara University, Research Projects Office. The project was conducted by Nazan Çiçek between 2010–2012.

the Gregorian calendar, this festival, which in essence is by no means a religious festival, ought to have been established in our country too. Yet it merely turned out to be a new occasion for the fops living in luxurious apartments to dance and drink champagne, which is very regrettable. What we should do is to officially celebrate Noël as a children's festival. We have no particular hygiene regime, clothing, food, entertainment or playgrounds designed exclusively for children. We cannot claim that we are in the least interested in children's happiness. In order to grasp the meaning of children's happiness we have to observe the nations where children are loved and cared for. After all those novels, poems and plays we already adapted, would it fly in the face of our culture if we adapted the Noël festival for the sake of our children?<sup>2</sup>

As we know today, the Kemalists would opt to invent a children's festival to be celebrated on the 23 Nisan Bayramı, the foundation day of the Turkish National Assembly (April 23), rather than adapt Christmas in building their politico-cultural symbolic repertoire as to childhood. This lengthy quotation from Ahmet Haşim's article, written only four years after the establishment of the new regime, is loaded with many-layered references to the matrix of modernization and rediscovery/reconstruction of the concept of childhood in Turkey in the early Republican era. In his usual straightforward yet witty manner Haşim reminds the Kemalist nationalist elites that modernization generates as well as dictates a new understanding of and approach to childhood, and that there is a strong connection and resonance between a nation's claim to modernization and its interest in children's happiness. His words simply yet clearly reflect the modern notion of childhood, which regards children as a distinct category in the life-cycle with special needs as well as an inherent "physical, social and structural vulnerability,"<sup>3</sup> who are by definition entitled to happiness.

As the literature on childhood firmly suggests, the concept of childhood is rather contingent and ever changing. As a social construction and "distinct from biological immaturity, childhood is neither a natural nor biological feature of human groups but appears as a specific structural and cultural component of many societies."<sup>4</sup> It is reinvented or rediscovered as well as restructured

2 Ahmet Haşim, "Çocuklar İçin Bayram" [Festival for Children], *İkdam*, 11365, 12 Birincikanun, 1928, quoted in İnci Enginün and Zeynep Kerman (eds), *Ahmet Haşim: Bütün Eserleri 11* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1991), 176–177.

3 Anneke Meyer, "The Moral Rhetoric of Childhood," *Childhood*, 14 (1), 2007, 85–104.

4 Alan Prout and Allison James, "A New Paradigm for the Sociology of Childhood? Provenance, Promise and Problems," in id. (eds), *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood* (London: Routledge), 1990, 8.

by each society over time in accordance with the prevailing worldviews supporting those societies.<sup>5</sup> What is also certain is that in tandem with the expansionist qualities and universalist claims of Western interpretations of modernity, a particular understanding of childhood that had been generated as a social and cultural construct of modern times in the Western world proved its hegemonic power in having an impact on the deconstruction and reconstruction of the idea of childhood in non-Western political landscapes with modernization agendas.

Philippe Ariès asserted in his *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime*,<sup>6</sup> which laid the groundwork for the childhood studies in academia, that in modern times children, rather than being the transitory inhabitants of a Lilliputian world, came to be regarded as a *sui generis* group, separate from adults and deserving special treatment and care. From the mid-nineteenth century onward this modern notion, that saw childhood as “an ontology in its own right,” also began, *inter alia*, to regard children as being “angelic creatures who have a natural goodness and clarity of vision that we might idolize as the source of all that is best in human nature,”<sup>7</sup> and as living in a world of their own where innocence reigned: “[Children] in this *Apollonian* image, the formalization of which occurred with Rousseau’s *Émile*, were not curbed nor beaten into submission but encouraged, enabled and facilitated.”<sup>8</sup> They were expected to live in the world of childhood, untainted by corruption—a world, as Cunningham remarked, made up of “innocence, school, fun, games, friends, nature, and sweets.”<sup>9</sup> They were also kept away from the adult world of violence, sex, hard labour and politics. Also, towards the end of the nineteenth century in Western settings, especially for the middle classes, children’s status as economic assets largely lost ground as their participation in the labour market became subject to officially imposed strict regulations and their association with domesticity and education gained impetus. Children gradually turned into emotional rather than financial investments for their parents, who through nostalgia and a romanticized envisioning of childhood as a ‘Paradise Lost’ sacralized childhood. Az Zelizer, investigating the changing patterns in

5 See William Kessen, *Psychological Development from Infancy: Image to Intention* (New York: Wiley, 1979); Anne-Marie Ambert, “An International Perspective on Parenting: Social Change and Social Constructs,” *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 56, 1994, 529–543; Harry Hendrick, *Childhood and English Society, 1880–1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

6 Published in English as Philippe Ariès, *A Social History of Family Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962).

7 Chris Jenks, *Childhood* (2nd edition, London: Routledge, 1996), 73.

8 Jenks, *Childhood*, 73.

9 Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London: Longman, 1995), 1.

child labour, adoption and child-rearing practices at the turn of the nineteenth century and over the course of the twentieth in the United States, convincingly concludes that children shed their economic worth and began to acquire 'priceless' emotional value in modern times.<sup>10</sup> As a result of their supposedly essential otherness and inherently vulnerable status, children increasingly became subject to an entirely different consumption regime that included the production of food, books, magazines, clothing, recreational spaces and living arrangements specially designed for them. In modern times childhood became highly commercialized in industrialized societies.

In the non-Western world, where "childhood was rediscovered and became a topic of broad intellectual inquiry;"<sup>11</sup> at a time when "the validity of traditional models appeared to have crumbled,"<sup>12</sup> modernizing elites increasingly tended to view the child question in the light of this modern Western conception of childhood, which in fact was by no means monolithic in itself. Yet informed by 'a post-colonial legacy,' the Western world, "through the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the work of charitable agencies and international bodies in the Third World" exported one particular vision of childhood as correct childhood and engendered "the misguided and tacit assumption of a uniformity of childhood in Western Europe."<sup>13</sup> Considering that the late Ottoman and early Republican Turkish modernizing elites took the Western world as their almost sole referential point, it was not surprising that they enthusiastically embraced this exported vision of 'correct childhood.' Thus in their eyes, as was suggested by the Western world, "the child symbolized all that is decent and caring about a society, it was the very index of a civilization."<sup>14</sup> Aside from placing the child in the centre of their nation-building and citizen-creating project, they also tended to regard, at least discursively, the handling of children by society, in the broadest sense, as a benchmark in the progress of modernization and civilization.

As Deniz Kandiyoti correctly points out, "studies of modernization in Turkey have generally privileged the juridico-political and institutional realms," so that "comparatively little attention has been paid to the less tangible effects of

10 Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

11 Anne Behnke Kinney, *Representations of Childhood and Youth in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2.

12 Catherine E. Pease, "Remembering the Taste of Melons: Modern Chinese Stories of Childhood," in Anne Behnke Kinney (ed.) *Chinese Views of Childhood* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), 287.

13 Jenks, *Childhood*, 122.

14 *Ibid.*, 67.

processes of social transformation on the emergence of new identities and forms of subjectivity.” This has crippled “critical awareness of the specificities of the ‘modern’ in the Turkish context.”<sup>15</sup> As one of the specificities of the modern, the conceptualization of the child and childhood in Turkish Republican context in their own right has long been left unexplored. Some of the official institutions, such as Himaye-i Etfal [Children’s Protection Society], or a series of state policies for education and indoctrination of Turkish children as part of the Kemalist nation-building strategies, have received some academic attention;<sup>16</sup> yet the ways in which the concept of childhood in the cognitive map of the Republican modernizing elites was fashioned and conditioned by the modern notion of childhood that had been in progress in the Western world since Victorian times have not been subject to an in-depth analysis.

This study, by examining a body of essays on the subject of children and childhood that appeared in some popular magazines published during the formative years of the Republican regime (1923–1950), seeks to ascertain how and to what extent a particular interpretation of the modern notion of childhood informed, constituted and transformed the conceptualization of child and childhood in the minds of Turkish policy makers and pro-regime intelligentsia. The magazines under consideration are *Süs* (Ornament, 1923–1924), *Asar-ı Nisvan* [Women’s Stories] (1925–1926), *Ülkü* [The Ideal] (1934–1948), *Yedigün* [Seven Days], (1935–1946) and *Ev-İş* [House-Work], (1942–1950). With the exception of *Ülkü*, the

15 Deniz Kandiyoti, “Gendering the Modern: On Missing Dimensions in the Study of Turkish Modernity,” in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba (eds), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 113.

16 See Mustafa Şahin, “23 Nisan ve Himaye-i Etfal,” [April 23 and Children’s Protection Society] *Toplumsal Tarih*, Nisan [April], 1997 (40), 15–17; Kathryn Libal, “The Children’s Protection Society: Nationalizing Child Welfare in Early Republican Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 23, 2000, 53–78; Leyla Neyzi, “Object or Subject? Paradox of ‘Youth’ in Turkey,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 33 (3), 2001, 411–432; Yiğit Akın, *Ana Hatları ile Cumhuriyet Döneminde Beden Terbiyesi ve Spor* [Physical Education and Sports in the Early Republican Era] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004); Füsün Üstel, *Makbul Vatandaşın Peşinde: 11. Meşrutiyyetten Bugüne Vatandaşlık Eğitimi* [In Quest of the Acceptable Citizen: Citizenship Education Since the Second Constitutional Era] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004); Erhan G. Ersoy, “1930’ların Kültür ve Eğitim Anlayışının Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu Neşriyatı Çocuk Dergisindeki Yansımaları,” [The Reflections of 1930s Cultural and Educational Perceptions in the Children’s Protection Society] *Kebikeç* 19, 2005, 373–387; Özge Ertem, *The Republic’s Children and Their Burdens in 1930s and 1940s Turkey: The Idealized Middle-Class Children as the Future of the Nation and the Image of ‘Poor’ Children in Children’s Periodicals* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2005); Güven Gürkan Öztan, *Türkiye’de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası* [Political Construction of Childhood in Turkey] (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011).

official publication of Halk Evleri [People's Houses], they were all published by private publishers and more often than not targeted a literate yet intellectually/academically average female audience. When thoroughly examined, these magazines reveal many articles, editorials and comments on topics relating to children, ranging from pregnancy, childbirth, infant mortality, children's health and hygiene, to the centrality of children in population growth policies, parent-child relationships, pedagogy, the treatment of children at home and at school, educational and recreational practices devised for children and the importance of children for the future security and prosperity of the nation etc.—all of which attest to the growing interest in children as publicly recognized agents whose welfare is hailed as a national enterprise.

This study will focus on particular pieces that give insights into the construction of the child as a value in itself, rather than the already researched and documented issue of the child as a political, cultural or economic asset for the Turkish nation and the Republican regime. In other words, this study does not aim to portray the general imagery of the child and childhood as it appeared in the said magazines; neither does it attempt to provide a content and discourse analysis of those magazines with a special reference to the 'child issue.' It merely seeks to locate, identify and sample the manifestations of the Western-based modern notion of childhood in the intellectual and discursive cosmos of the early Republican era through the investigation of some popular pro-regime magazines. The study is not as much interested in the representative quality of the examined magazines as in the fact that they published articles exemplifying the basic tenets of the modern Western conceptualization of childhood. The criterion in choosing the magazines used in this study, in other words, is rather random, other than the presumption that they were all constituted by the pro-regime intelligentsia for the consumption of average literate citizens, mostly women, waiting to be 'enlightened' on the requirements of the new modern social conduct, including child rearing.

Although it is very hard, if not almost impossible, to find an image of the Turkish child during the era that is not illustrated as the hope and sometimes as the very embodiment of the Turkish nation / the young Republic itself, there nevertheless exists a body of writing in those magazines that allows us to catch a glimpse of what the concepts of the child and childhood meant for those with cultural and symbolic capital in Bourdieusien sense in the early decades of the Turkish Republic. As they seek answers to questions such as 'what/who is a child?'; 'how much should a child know about the evils and predicaments of the adult world?'; 'how should parents punish or reward their children?' etc., these pieces reveal clues about the impact that the modern Western understanding of the child as well as the exported image of correct childhood had on the cognitive map of the Republican elites.

### The Child as the Personification of the Nation and the Republic

For the Kemalist elite the concept of childhood from the beginning served as a metaphor or a potent vehicle which represented/carried the spontaneity, joy, purity and naturalness of the Turkish Revolution and had notably positive connotations. What Catherine E. Pease asserts for the Chinese progressive intellectuals during the New Culture Period (1915–1921) also applies to the Kemalist founding elites: “Their interest in children and childhood was a natural outgrowth of the promotion of “newness” as a positive, indispensable value”<sup>17</sup> which the Kemalists in fact had inherited from their Young Turk antecedents:<sup>18</sup>

17 Pease, *Remembering the Taste*, 280.

18 A formerly unprecedented interest in the ‘child issue’ in the Turkish-speaking Muslim quarters of the Ottoman Empire first germinated in the late Tanzimat era (1839–1876) and became intensified during the periods of First and Second Constitutional Monarchy, including the long reign of Abdülhamid II between 1876 and 1909. This new interest manifested itself in the publication of numerous periodicals that were exclusively designed to be consumed by children. See Öztürk Emiroğlu, *Tanzimattan 1928’e kadar Yayımlanan Çocuk Gazete ve Dergileri Üzerine Bir İnceleme* [An Examination of the Children’s Newspapers and Magazines Published Between the Tanzimat and change to: 1928] (Unpublished MA Thesis), Erciyes Üniversitesi, Kayseri, 1992. Those periodicals, essentially product of the modernization and centralization attempts of the Ottoman State that attributed special value to education as a vehicle of European modernity, were always highly prone to the dictates of the political regime of the time, and reflected and reproduced the main principles and ideas about society, power relations and official ideological stance that also characterized the prevailing educational system which was constantly under construction and reform. See Cüneyd Okay, *Meşrutîyet Çocukları* [Children of Constitutional Era], İstanbul, Bordo, 2000. Accordingly, while they aided the institutionalization of public schooling and functioned to discipline the spare time of students those periodicals championed and aimed to inculcate the principles of Ottomanism, Abdulhamid’s Islamist flavoured conservatism and Constitutional Monarchy respectively. See Mehmet İnanç Özekmekçi, *The Formation of Children in the Late Ottoman Empire: An Analysis Through the Periodicals for Children (1869–1914)* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul, 2005).

From the period of Abdülhamid II’s reign onwards the ‘social policies’ of the Ottoman state began to put emphasis on the protection of poor and abandoned children. Three main institutions for the welfare of children, namely Darülaceze [poor house], Hamidiye Etfal Hastane-i Alisi [hospital for children] and Dar’ülhayr-ı Ali [orphanage], were founded by Abdülhamid II. See Özgür Sevgi Göral, *The Child Question and Juvenile Delinquency During the Early Republican Era* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, İstanbul, 2003), 41–42. The Young Turk era (1908–1918) whereby the constitutional monarchy was restored, saw a renewed enthusiasm with the ‘child issue,’ owing mostly to the increased efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress [CUP] in transforming the Empire into a highly centralized, standardized modern nation-state where children were hailed as the

“The belief on the freshness of the child’s perceptions and on the relative ease with which the child moves across traditional social barriers”<sup>19</sup> helped them to associate the new regime with the concept of child and childhood.

The Turkish Republic was figuratively presented as a new-born child<sup>20</sup> who had no (tainted and burdensome) past but only a promising future. Being young, and in particular being a child, was romanticized and became a discursive instrument that was used to underline the supposedly energetic, vigorous and youthful qualities of Turkish society and of its newly founded nation-state in contrast to the world’s gerontocracies. This emphasis on the ‘childishness’ of the Republic, in another sense, was also employed to keep the self-improvability/

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prospective regime defenders. Family as the nucleus of the society became the centre of attention and its reorganization and everyday practices were regarded as intrinsically linked to the new regime’s success in creating new citizens. Turkish nationalism was also added to the educational agenda after defeat in the Balkan War in 1912. This time, not only the education of children but also their health, protection and entertainment became a topic of broad concern to the power-holders and intelligentsia. Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti, which would later be transformed into Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu [Children’s Protection Society] by the Kemalists, was first established in 1917 as a philanthropic organization that aimed to provide shelter, food and protection for the abandoned and orphaned children of the Ottoman Empire. See Cüneyd Okay, *Belgelerle Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti 1917–1923* [Himaye-i Etfal and the Related Documents 1917–1923] (İstanbul: Şule Yayınları, 1999) and Libal, “Children’s Protection Society.”

Turkish-speaking Muslim Ottoman elites gradually developed a discourse that attached profound importance to children, whose indoctrination as well as physical and mental well-being would guarantee the reproduction and future of the fatherland, the regime and the State. The Kemalists who took over the task that the Unionists had embarked upon, and whose hands were no longer fettered with the many internal and external entanglements of empire, gave full vent to their plan of creating and molding the children of Republic as they saw fit for the secular, Westernized and Turkish nation-state. For more on the Ottoman inheritance that the Kemalists worked upon, see Zafer Toprak, “İkinci Meşrutiyet Döneminde Paramiliter Gençlik Örgütleri” [Paramilitary Youth Organizations in the Second Constitution Period], in *Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 531–536; Cüneyd Okay, *Osmanlı Çocuk Hayatında Yenileşmeler 1850–1900* [Novelties in the Life of Ottoman Children 1850–1900] (İstanbul: Kırkambar Yayınları, 1998); Neyzi, “Object or Subject?”

19 Pease, *Remembering the Taste*, 280.

20 This situation in fact was by no means peculiar to Turkey; as discussed by Pamela Karimi and Christiane Gruber, it also applied to almost the whole Middle Eastern region, where “at the dawn of Westernization and rapid infrastructural transformations, oftentimes an entire nation was personified as a child in need of special care and attention.” See Pamela Karimi and Christiane Gruber, “Introduction: The Politics and Poetics of the Child Image in Muslim Contexts,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32 (2), 2012, 276.

revolutionary spirit alive by pointing at the importance of remaining in touch with one's/a nation's 'inner-child,' characterized by its capacity for unrestrained emotion, directness and self-forgetfulness.<sup>21</sup>

The child for the Kemalist elite, in other words, allegorically stood for the Turkish Republic as well as the Turkish nation. This allegory was constituted both visually and discursively in many texts representative of the *zeitgeist* of the early Republic. As Yasemin Gencer, drawing on her analysis of pro-Kemalist political cartoons published during 1923–1928, displays, the Republic was depicted in its first anniversary as a toddler practising its first steps, in its fifth anniversary and as a five-year-old learning to write and read:

The most prominent image [in these cartoons] is that of the child, which alternatively can represent the young Republic, the innocent nation, or future generations of the Turkish people. [...] The child's liminal status as a link between past ancestral achievements and future transformation was exploited to present nationalist belief in the continuity and persistence of the solidary nation.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the child was by no means just a child in the early Republican Turkish political landscape. In a highly pragmatical discursive cosmos in which everything was judged and assessed through its contribution to the success of the new regime, the value attached to the child was inextricably linked to the potential services it would provide for the well-being of the nation. The politically constructed image of the child as the Republic's active citizen in the future overrode the image of the child acquiring value in and of itself. Children were placed in the centre of nation- and state-building policies. An article by Burhan Asaf, ironically titled "The Love for Children," summarizes the way in which Turkish children were instrumentalized by the Republican regime:

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21 In a similar vein, Njabula Ndebele, talking about the South African National Reconstruction, explains the inextricable link between recovery of childhood and innocence and the reconstruction of South African society. Ndebele emphasizes the symbolic value of children's energy, fearlessness and questioning attitude as the essential prerequisites for building a new society. See Njabulo Ndebele, "Recovering Childhood: Children in South African National Reconstruction," in Sharon Stephens (ed.), *Children and the Politics of Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1995, 321–333.

22 Yasemin Gencer, "We Are Family: The Child and Modern Nationhood in Early Turkish Republican Cartoons (1923–28)," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32 (2), 2012, 295–296.

Today, we are capable of comprehending the true meaning of society, economics, welfare, population and state. This allows us to approach the child issue as a particular cause. Yet we do not believe in pursuing a child cause *per se*, we believe that we should treat the child issue as part of a greater cause. We are realist people. There is only one great cause we strive for and that is the Turkish revolution. Everything we do is being done for the sake of this revolution. All our acts are inspired by and serve the ends of this revolution. It is our only yardstick and only principle. This also applies to our dealings with the child. The Turkish child will be assessed and handled through the requirements of this revolution. In the light of the ideals of the revolution the child will acquire its new meaning and status. The child's value and importance will be determined by its relationships with the objectives of the revolution.<sup>23</sup>

As a result, the concept of the child was reconstructed and furnished with a powerful symbolic value which in turn overburdened actual Turkish children with many responsibilities and duties, and who had to prove that they were worthy of the hopes set upon them by the new regime.

The Kemalist cadres, claiming an ontological fracture between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic, and undertaking a project of re-habituating the nation along Western lines, took on a paternal disposition with its adult population, "whose mind and memory were tainted with the unwanted residue of the past times,"<sup>24</sup> and infantilized them through a large-scale mobilization campaign that was designed to disseminate modern ideas and methods for the treatment of children. The Republican regime, now replacing the former Islamic-Ottoman regulations of the body and social space and constructing a new normative order, believed that the traditional way of handling children was not good enough, and perhaps even harmful, for raising healthy, sturdy, intelligent and patriotic citizens. This meant that the Turkish state set out to act as *parens patriare* for the children of the nation until they themselves reached reproductive age. The state positing the familial sphere as a site of constant intervention for the common good of the nation sought to teach current parents the proper ways of child rearing, which loomed large from scientific breast

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23 Burhan Asaf, "Çocuk Sevgisi," no date or publication name, quoted in Ertem, *The Republic's Children*, 2005, 1. Ertem explains that she obtained the material from Cüneyd Okay's private archive and that the article had been published in a supplement to a journal or magazine, the name of which did not appear on the supplement. She believes that the article dates from sometime before 1935.

24 Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun*, 7.

feeding to hygiene, how to discipline and affection. *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* [Robust Turkish Child] commented in 1930:

the new generation [would] create a new society, yet the family [was] old. It owe[d] its power to the institutions dating back to the old ages. Left alone, the family [would] not be, in any way, able to bring up and educate the child of the new generation.<sup>25</sup>

As Sadi Irmak MD (1904–1990), a prominent figure of the Kemalist era, flatly asserted in *Ülkü* in 1944, although the regime did not regard the child as a public commodity that should be taken away from its parents, it nevertheless did not think that the child and its destiny should be left completely to the hands of its parents. The child was too precious and important for the regime and society for parents to be allowed to raise it according to their own preferences. The child stood at the centre of both the population growth policy and the nation-building and modernization efforts:

If the Turkishness shall reign over this territory, if the Turkish language shall be spoken eternally, if the Turkish nation shall prosper and flourish, then we have to pay utmost attention to the child, providing it with love, care and protection, following its trajectory of progress carefully and controlling its process of growing up closely.<sup>26</sup>

Again, this was by no means peculiar to Turkey and the Kemalist cadres. During periods of nation building, children and their upbringing had always been a main concern for nationalist elites. Anne Scott MacLeod explains how in the early nineteenth century, when the American Republic was still young, concern for the future of the new nation and for children became thoroughly intertwined:

Together, these preoccupations produced a flood of advice literature for parents and instructive fiction for children, most of which said nearly identical things about ideal child management, on the one hand, and ideal child behaviour, on the other. Both literatures were prescriptive, the fiction no less than the advice books, and the prescriptions were quite

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25 “İstismar Edilen Çocuk,” [The Child that is Abused] *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu*, 43, Nisan [April], 1930, 7, quoted in Pınar Öztamur, *Defining a Population: Women and Children in Early Republican Turkey 1923–1950* (Unpublished MA Thesis, Bosphorus University, İstanbul, 2004), 29.

26 Sadi Irmak, “Çocuk ve Meseleleri” [Child and the Child Question], *Ülkü Halk Evleri Mecmuası*, 23, 1944, 3.

remarkably consistent. The image of the well-managed child and of the ideal home that was to produce him or her shine forth everywhere in the admonitory writing of the new American Republic.<sup>27</sup>

As the Kemalists worked their way into constructing their modern conception of the child and formulating their vision of modern childhood, they often stigmatized 'the Other,' namely the non-modern interpretations of childhood and treatments of children that were invariably represented by Eastern and by implication Ottoman and Islamic forms of conduct with children. This constant "reference to an assumed prior state that was defective and in need of reform, regardless of whether the patterns in question actually obtained in the society,"<sup>28</sup> was an expected outcome of the Kemalist attempts at articulating a new regulatory discourse, as was the case with all regulatory discourses. An article from *Cumhuriyet Çocuğu*, a fine example of the body of children's magazines that proliferated in 1930s Turkey, illustrates the alteritist discourse exploited by the new regime in the reconstruction of Republican, and hence 'modern,' conceptualization of childhood:

In the beginning the Ottoman Turks appreciated children and endowed them with rights and freedoms just as the Huns had done before them. But in time the despotic Ottoman Sultans and governments slowly corrupted social life through their backward rules. The best features of the Turkish tradition were ignored. The child too lost its value. The Ottoman child became an encumbrance, an overcrowding. It was destitute of all sorts of rights, regularly beaten and insulted. [...] The child in the Ottoman Empire pursued a very hard life until the collapse of the Ottoman rule. You, the future adults of the republic, there is no need to remind you how happy and sheltered your life is now.<sup>29</sup>

Parenting, especially motherhood, as the most crucial space in child rearing came under close scrutiny. As Pınar Öztamur demonstrates, "with the advent

27 Anne Scott MacLeod, *American Childhood: Essays on Children's Literature on the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Athens: University of Georgia Press), 1994, 99.

28 Kandiyoti, *Gendering the Modern*, 117.

29 Cumhuriyet Çocuğu Öğretmeni, "Tarihten Yapraklar, Türk Tarihinde Çocuk," *Cumhuriyet Çocuğu*, 26, 1938, 473. Özge Ertem supplies several other examples in the same vein which openly contrast the Republican "loving and caring" treatment of children with the "inconsiderate, even inhumane" Ottoman attitudes towards children. See Ertem, *The Republic's Children*, 53 n. 82.

of a modernizing discourse, child-rearing became embedded almost exclusively in the sphere of mothers” who were expected to produce “physically, mentally and morally healthy children” in accordance with “the desired modern, rational and hygienic principles.”<sup>30</sup> During the early years of the Republic the popular women’s magazines often published articles focusing on motherhood which referred to women as “meta-human creatures” and “the architects of the new society who would secure its future well-being by giving birth to new generations, as well as undertaking their early socialization.”<sup>31</sup> Various texts depicting ‘perfect motherhood’ and correcting the false beliefs or harmful practices in child-rearing that should be abandoned were published. As Aylin Özman argues in her work on Vâlâ Nureddin, aka Vâ-Nû (1901–1967), a well-known Turkish author and journalist (and a prolific mouthpiece of Kemalist modernization project), “the modernization of motherhood,” which inevitably included the modernization of childhood, “was regarded as instrumental for the Europeanization of the country.” The “major point that [Vâ-Nû] criticize[d] [was] the dominance of Eastern values and modes of behaviour in most mothers’ attitudes towards their children.”<sup>32</sup>

By and large, the treatment of children was seen as a litmus test for the Republic’s march along the path of modernization and Europeanization. Attempts at incorporating the modern child-rearing practices imported from the Western world into the realm of Turkish childhood and constructing a new understanding of the child and childhood informed by the modern notion of childhood were mutually constitutive in the Turkish case. Although the emphasis was mostly and ineluctably on the rediscovered and indispensable value of the child for the future of the nation and the Republican regime, the child as a value in itself (and childhood as an ontology in its own right), and whose characteristics, singularities and needs distinguished it from the adults, was also of interest to some Turkish intelligentsia. If Turkish children were to be raised through modern methods of hygiene, health, nurture and pedagogy, then they had to be understood, perceived and defined through the parameters of the modern notion of childhood. And when the child was once seen through the prism of the modern notion of childhood it was only self-evident that it

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30 Öztamur, *Defining a Population*, 26.

31 Aylin Özman, “Domesticated Souls: Vâlâ Nureddin (Vâ-Nû) on Womanhood,” *Turkish Studies*, 8 (1), 2007, 141.

32 Ibid.

had to be handled through modern child-rearing practices. Considering the definition of what a child is maps out the complex topography of childhood in which children are treated in a particular society and time; and the body of advice literature with respect to modern child rearing that became *omnipresent* in popular (especially women's) magazines during the early decades of the Republic stood in testimony to the impact that the modern notion of childhood had on the conceptualization of the child and childhood in the mind of the Turkish Republican elites.

### What is a Child and How to Treat It? The Definition and Perception of the Child and Childhood in Early Republican Magazines

What distinguished the modern interpretation of childhood was the fact that it approached childhood as a definite stage apart and children as a *sui generis* category intrinsically different from adults and who should be seen and treated in a way acknowledging their essential otherness. Yet this did not necessarily mean that the modern notion of childhood professed one single perception of the child and childhood that remained unchanged over time. On the contrary, from the very beginning it harboured many competing ideas as to the 'nature' of the child as an entity in its own right which vied for a place in the construction of modern childhood. In many cases those ideas were not mutually exclusive and in fact mostly coexisted, constantly constituting one another. Each approach generated its own set of parenting rules in accordance with its conceptualization of the child. Calvinist and Evangelical approaches, acting on the assumption of children's inborn sinful, pre-social, primitive and hence dangerous nature prescribed strict control and discipline, including corporal punishment, in order to create conformable adults. Although Rousseau's *Émile* (1762) presents an alternative to purging the child from its original sin, Evangelical parenting nevertheless held sway for a long while until Romanticism gained hegemony from the mid-nineteenth century, finally paving the way to the child-centred societies of the twentieth century.

Thus over centuries the modern notion of childhood went through specific phases under the influence of many movements and thinkers, from Puritanism to Locke and Rousseau to Romanticism, as the pendulum of the modern comprehension of childhood swung between the images of the child as savage and the child as angel to differing degrees (or between Dionysian child and Apollonian child, as Jenks termed it.<sup>33</sup>) Accordingly, the modern notion of childhood did not

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33 Jenks, *Childhood*, 70–78.

represent a monolithic understanding or actual experience of childhood in modern Western societies that could offer ready-made models and clear-cut policy solutions. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the twentieth century there was a Western blueprint that purported to describe the true and correct modern childhood which modernizing elites, decision-makers and intelligentsia in non-Western geographies (who, more often than not, were very much interwoven with one another) were willing to grasp. Kemalist politico-bureaucratic elites and pro-regime intellectuals for whom Western modernity provided the main point of reference tended to prioritize a particular image and perception of the child and childhood constructed in the Western world, which they believed epitomized the proper and most modern approach to the child issue. This was an image that had been largely fashioned both by Romanticism and also by what Carolyn Steedman identifies as a “central tenet of nineteenth-century reforming liberalism,” referring to the measurement of a society’s civilization and progress “through its treatment of disadvantaged and dispossessed groups such as women, slaves and children.”<sup>34</sup> The Turkish Republic’s founding elites thus perceived a ‘model childhood’ that should be embraced and emulated as a part of modernization, with children portrayed as innocent and vulnerable beings who should be protected and enabled, and childhood as a privileged time in the life-cycle that should be worshipped and lengthened as long as possible.

The early Republican-era magazines under examination reveal instructive clues as to the discursive power that childhood innocence as an essential component of modern childhood enjoyed in the cognitive map of the Turkish intelligentsia. Some of the articles that refer to the innocence of children make a point emphasizing that although innocence is a trait that cuts across all children, it is, nonetheless, the modern Western world that recognizes and values childhood innocence most. An article in *Süs Magazine* in 1924 on family life in Britain written by Abdullah Cevdet (1869–1932), a well-known politician and thinker with extreme pro-Western tendencies, makes a brief comparison between British—and by implication European—and Turkish attitudes towards childhood, overtly favouring the former over the latter. The article also unmistakably mirrors the romantic maxim that a “child’s sojourn in childhood was to be protected, not hastened”:<sup>35</sup>

The child maintains its innocence for a long time because innocence is embedded in its nature. The precocious child, the kind that we call grown

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34 Carolyn Steedman, *Childhood, Culture and Class in Britain: Margaret McMillan 1860–1931* (London: Virago), 1990, 63–64.

35 MacLeod, *American Childhood*, 156.

up before its time, is almost unheard of in Britain. Paring up the childhood years is an attempt to shorten the longevity of human life. The British regard childhood, the magical time in life cycle, as an astonishing opportunity bequeathed to human beings.<sup>36</sup>

A year later, another article in *Asar-ı Nisvan*, ascertaining whether children should be allowed to read newspapers, reproduces one of the basic principles of the modern notion of childhood, which dictates that in order to retain and foster childhood innocence, children should be kept away from adult matters, and that their access to some sort of knowledge and experience should be curtailed. Instead they should be provided with material that fits their needs and feeds into their supposed innocence:

Children's literature has not yet become widespread in our country. All there is for our children to read is the novels, stories and magazines produced for adults. I doubt that any parent in our society has seriously thought about the harmful effects those kinds of reading material may cause to their children. Likewise not many of us are concerned about whether newspapers should be allowed to children. If we spare some time to think about it, it seems obvious that no parent would be willing to permit their children, whom they love so dearly and strive so adamantly to protect from the dangers and damages of life, to read newspapers. Can compassionate and serious parents possibly wish their children to be exposed to the bitter, atrocious, abhorrent realities of life as well as scary and confusing political issues and conflicts that they even themselves would rather stay away from in the form of newspaper?<sup>37</sup>

As Fletcher points out, Romanticism meant that childhood began to be sentimentalized in the Victorian period:

[It] became a special time, the best of times, a time that was sanctified. Thus the Romantics, with their emphasis upon the child as 'father to the man,' extended selfhood backwards into childhood.<sup>38</sup>

36 Abdullah Cevdet, "İngiltere'de Aile Hayatı"[Family Life in England], *Süs*, 49, 17 Mayıs [May], 1340 [1924], 1.

37 K.A., "Çocuklarımız Gazete Okumalı mı? Etfalin Terbiye-i Ruhaniyesi" [Should Our Children Read Newspapers? Psychological Training of our Small Children], *Asar-ı Nisvan*, 8, Haziran [June] 1, 1341 [1925], 6–7.

38 Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood 1600–1914* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 2008, 10.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the apogee of the romanticization of childhood in the Western world. In the United States, for example,

at the popular level, the romantic outlook was sentimental, dwelling on children's beauty and innocence. At the aesthetic level, romanticism went farther, surrounding childhood with an aura of myth, seeing in children the elemental qualities of nature unspoiled.<sup>39</sup>

An article that appeared in *Yedigün* in 1934 displays how the modern notion of childhood, with clearly discernible romantic undertones, had become the main source of inspiration as well as the sole referential framework in the pro-regime elites' approach to the 'child question.' The article, delving into the Republic's celebrations of the children's festival on 23 Nisan Bayramı—which itself stands as a monumental reminder of the Kemalist regime's discursive devotion to the supposed importance and value of children—bears all the distinctive marks of romanticized interpretation of modern childhood. It also condemns pre-modern, and hence 'un-civilized,' attitudes towards children, hinting at the correlation between human progress and the rising status of children in modern societies:

The child is a world in its own right with many marvels. Previous generations with their old-fashioned ideas found it unnecessary to unveil the mysteries of that complicated yet fascinating world. Yet today's enlightened pedagogues devote all their time and energy to untie the knots of this enigma. The child, who used to live like a weed, is being treated as a rare and precious plant at the hands of today's powerful nations.<sup>40</sup>

A year later and again in honour of the children's festival, *Yedigün* published another article which, in line with the romantic assumption that "childhood was the high point of life" and that "the road to maturity was not an upward progress, but a descent,"<sup>41</sup> mourned for the loss of childhood:

We always look down on children, thinking that we are superior to them. This in fact happens to be only our imagination. We usually believe that children are subject to us, yet we are deeply mistaken. We cannot reign over children. The only thing we can do, however, is to admire, envy and

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39 MacLeod, *American Childhood*, 117.

40 "Çocuğun ve Annenin Bayramı" [Children's and Mothers' Festival], *Yedigün*, 59, 25 Nisan [April], 1934, 4.

41 MacLeod, *American Childhood*, 156.

appreciate children. Each and every child owns a treasure that we ourselves lost as we grew up. We adults seem very impoverished compared to the wealth children have in themselves. [...] The child does not know anything about the realities of life. The reality of life as we adults call it is nothing other than the ache and hurt we feel in our heart. The reality of life is the residue left by the days, months and years that constantly pain our soul. Our knowledge of the realities of life hardly entitles us to boast about ourselves and belittle children.<sup>42</sup>

In the same issue, Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın (1875–1957), a famous figure in the political panorama of the late Ottoman and early Republican era, openly associated childhood with happiness, which he saw as a children's right. "Joy," he wrote, "is children's prerogative," adding that "they have the right to not worry about anything and be happy at least during their childhood."<sup>43</sup>

In 1945 a piece appeared in *Ülkü*—the official publication of Halk Evleri [People's Houses], which the Kemalist cadres had founded to teach the populace modern conduct as well as the regime's fundamental values—showing that the modern notion of childhood seems to have entrenched itself in the minds of the Republican intelligentsia. Echoing very much Rousseau's *Émile*, which had called for the child to be allowed to discover the secret of happiness for itself, the article shows all the signs of the hegemonic twentieth-century Western discourse of childhood:

When we assess children's drawings we should avoid judging them according to our own measures and tastes. We adults can learn from children because they are a value in their own right. We should allow children to express and fulfil themselves freely. And the first prerequisite of this is to attach value to children for merely being children and believe in their abilities.<sup>44</sup>

Considering "parenting is constantly being constructed according to the ideologies and the paradigms of those sciences and professions that happen to dominate at any point in time in terms of dictating what is good for children,"<sup>45</sup> it is not surprising to see that the popular magazines under examination often

42 Selami İzzet Kayacan, "Çocuk" [The Child], *Yedigün*, 111, 24 Nisan, 1935, 14–15.

43 Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, "Çocuk Haftası" [Children's Week], *Yedigün*, 111, 24 Nisan, 1935, 4.

44 Cemal Bingöl, "Çocuk Resimleri ve Yetişkinler" [Children's Drawings and Adults], *Ülkü*, 26, 1 Ekim [October], 1945, 15–16.

45 Ambert, "International Perspective," 530.

passed opinions on modern parenting as they discussed the meaning and value of the child. At the beginning of the twentieth century parenting as part of the biopolitics of modernization was becoming heavily medicalized, psychologized and psychiatrized. In the Western world, advice literature preaching scientific child-rearing practices was burgeoning: parents were admonished to employ scientific methods provided by modern medicine in their dealings with children, be it relating to bowel movements, the correct temperature for bath water or how to deal with tantrums. As mentioned earlier, the health of Turkish children was a grave concern for the Republican elites, since their healthy, sturdy bodies were regarded as the most tangible testament to the well-being of society as well as the efficiency of the new regime, and this was coupled with the Kemalist elites' eager aspirations to catch up with Europe. Consequently, advice literature invariably informed by "scientific European pedagogy" covering every aspect of parenting and describing acceptable and ideal forms of child rearing similarly proliferated during the early decades of the Republic. The magazines under examination provide many informative examples of that literature which cannot be reproduced within the scope of this study. Nevertheless, some articles are worth mentioning in that they manifest the intricate relationships that played out between biopolitics, modernization, the reconstruction of childhood and parenthood, and nation-building in Turkish Republican context. One article from 1949, entitled "Are You a Good Mother?" encapsulates all the parameters that the modernizing elites wished to dominate in the newly devised normative space regulating childhood and parenthood:

An ideal and knowledgeable mother breast-feeds her infant. She sometimes ignores tantrums in order not to spoil the child. After weaning the child she keeps it in her room but in a separate bed, and later transfers the child to another room. She never allows the child to sleep over at someone else's house, not even in the house of close relatives. She has the child examined by a doctor regularly even if there are no health problems with the child. She never beats the child. A good mother supervises her child in choosing friends, keeps in constant touch with his/her teachers, shows concern over the child's interests and talents. She never harms the child's natural innocence by terrifying and coercive acts. A good mother ascertains the good and bad traits in her child's character and helps the child develop the former and rehabilitate the latter. A good mother knows that she sometimes needs to restrain her motherly instincts and sacrifice her clemency for the sake of child's discipline.<sup>46</sup>

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46 "İyi Bir Anne misiniz?" [Are you a Good Mother?], *Ev-İş*, Nisan [April], 1949, 43.

Peter Stearns, in his *Childhood in World History*, observed that the sentimental Victorian conceptualization of childhood as ‘loving innocence,’ which prepared for the child-centred society of the twentieth century, unprecedentedly increased “parental, and particularly maternal responsibilities in protecting children from corruption as well as ill-health” and that “many women worked very hard to maintain a sunny disposition with their offspring.”<sup>47</sup> Likewise, Anne Scott MacLeod detects a consensus at the beginning of the twentieth century in middle-class American culture which approached childhood as a time for happiness, “a season in the sun before the shadow of adult responsibility fell.” Thus “children were integral parts of their families, yet a child lived at a little distance from the serious concern of adult life.”<sup>48</sup> An article published in *Ev-İş* magazine in 1942 by Kemalettin Tuğcu (1902–1996), a famous children’s books writer, appears as an epitome of the conduct literature, disseminating the Western middle-class idea of protective parenting to Turkish mothers:

Given that they are not capable of contributing to the household income, what is the point of letting children know about our economic dire straits and the deprivations of our family life that are bound to cause sorrow in their young minds and hearts? The life you are living is your life with its all fortunes and misfortunes. You are the ones who should take responsibility and struggle for a better life. Your children should know only about the good and pleasant parts of life and be sheltered from the cruel and unpleasant parts. Otherwise they lose their hope for future. In order to be able to keep children away from the distressing sides of our family life we should limit their contact with the adult members of the family and provide them with a room of their own. You should treat your children as though they are privileged guests in your house who do not have to know about the agonizing and distasteful features of your household.<sup>49</sup>

Raising sheltered children in a bubble, so to speak, also called for the abandonment of all sorts of violent acts by parents, be it corporal punishment, tyrannical control or denigrating rebukes. Since Victorian times, advice literature in the Western world had been urging parents to discipline their children through love and considerate care rather than physical pain. As vigorously asserted in Melesina Trench’s *Thoughts on Education* (1837), “beating children produced

47 Peter N. Stearns, *Childhood in World History* (London: Routledge, 2006), 60.

48 MacLeod, *American Childhood*, 167.

49 K. Tuğcu, “Çocuk Terbiyesi: B y kler ve K  k kler” [Children’s Education: Adults and Kids], *Ev-İş*, Temmuz [July], 1942, 68.

pusillanimity or hardness, cruelty, obstinacy,” and “chastisement, however applied, whether spanking, caning, slapping, ear-pulling, hair-dragging or any other uncouth and barbarous shape would never produce good.”<sup>50</sup> As home increasingly came to be seen as a haven of love, especially for the middle classes, training children at home through corporal punishment gradually lost its legitimacy. In the highly psychologized milieu of the twentieth-century parenting, alongside beating, verbally harsh treatment of children was also added to the list of unacceptables. A piece published in *Yedigün* in 1940 manifests the spirit of liberal parenting, which it assumes was commonly unknown in Turkey. Depicting the previously adopted methods of child training as oppressive, the article, in tandem with the so-called liberating/democratic spirit of the Republic, demands freedom for children to realize themselves:

What a child needs is not oppression but care and understanding. Parents may take pride in a repressed child who has been taught to not talk in front of the adults because she/he appears like a well-mannered, unspoilt child. Yet there is a great chance that this child will grow into a timorous, inept, feckless adult. Up until recently in our society, especially upper-class children used to be raised under strict control and suppressed by unprofessional child-minders, which caused them to become complete failures in their adult life. We might worry about the future of neglected and uncared-for children but there is no need to worry about the future of children who are raised unoppressed. They will turn out just fine.<sup>51</sup>

Two articles by the pedagogue Hasip Aytuna (1895–1980), published in *Ülkü* in 1948 and 1950, confirm that the pro-regime Turkish intelligentsia's interest in the liberal training of children befitting modern times and modern Turkey retained and reinforced its place in the realm of childhood. The quotations below provide us with a melange of thoughts from Locke through to Rousseau and several Romantics on the education of children, on which modern pedagogy in the early twentieth century had been built:

The mind and soul of a child resemble a blank white slate on which any influence can leave indelible marks. According to psychologists, those marks endured in childhood remain in people's soul and mind throughout

50 Quoted in Fletcher, *Growing Up in England*, 42.

51 İbrahim Alaettin Gövsa, “Baskısız Çocuklar”[Children Without Oppression], *Yedigün*, 368, 26 Mart [March], 1940, 14.

their lives. Therefore we have to make sure that those childhood marks consist of happiness, love, kindness, fairness and honesty.<sup>52</sup>

Those who are responsible for the education and discipline of children should always refrain from cruel and coercive behaviour towards them, because children are inherently vulnerable, fragile and helpless in all respects. There is nothing worse in the field of education than training and disciplining a child by means of frightening, scolding and beating. Such attitudes invariably cause tension between the tutor and the pupil, turning them into opposite poles. Proper educational practices operate on the basic rule that the tutor should address the natural goodness in the child's soul and manipulate it through compassionate conduct.<sup>53</sup>

Needless to say, we should not assume that these articles, which were devised to inculcate in parents or prospective parents how to treat, love and discipline their children in accordance with the requirements of modern times, would reflect the actual practice of the time. Yet a thorough analysis of this literature can, nevertheless, reveal changing trends as well as the assumed common practices, since this type of advice text usually tends to "correct" their contemporaries' behaviour. Even if we cannot think that the dictates of those texts were observed and followed by all parents, at least we can see what the acceptable treatment of children was in the eyes of the writers of that material; namely, the pro-regime Turkish intelligentsia.

### Concluding Remarks

The articles in this study should be seen as a small sample and popularized version of a much wider professional advice literature mainly composed by pediatricians, pedagogues, psychologists and lawyers during the early decades of the Turkish Republic. They evidence that in the mindset of Turkish intellectuals and policy makers, the 'loving innocence' of Victorian times, along with its all socio-cultural connotations, irrevocably came into play in drawing the borders of and characterizing middle-class childhood. In the broadest sense, however, we can venture to suggest that Turkish children did not acquire particular value in and of themselves through their much-romanticized innocence

52 Hasip Aytuna, "Çocuklar ve B y kler" [Children and Adults], * lk *, 29, Ekim [October], 1948, 11.

53 Hasip Aytuna, "Çocuklarımız ve Hatalı Terbiyemiz" [Our Children and Our Wrongs in Education], * lk *, 31, Haziran [June], 1950, 5.

in the first place. They were rather seen as valuable because of their indispensable status for the success of the new regime. Nevertheless, as their instrumental value increased, the attention they received increased too, which in turn led the Turkish intelligentsia, who had an avowed modernizing agenda, to explore and exploit the discursive elements that fashioned the essential value of the child and childhood in modern Western settings. It should be emphasized, however, that this discursive recognition of childhood innocence did not necessarily translate into official state policies *vis-à-vis* children. The successive Republican governments persistently avoided, for example, introducing children's courts, a part and parcel of the modern notion of childhood, into the Turkish judicial system until 1979;<sup>54</sup> and the Ministry of Education did not see any harm in sponsoring some so-called children's magazines for years whose ultra-nationalistic, indoctrinating content encroached upon supposed childhood innocence with countless horror stories, jingoistic poems and spine-chilling memoirs of war, starvation and exodus.<sup>55</sup> What is more, during the early decades of the Republic the actual childhood experience of the underprivileged child population, which in fact comprised the majority, was a far cry from the Western-inspired happy and innocent picture of childhood painted in the popular magazines by modernizing intelligentsia. The young regime, with its scarce resources and many other pressing matters to deal with, largely failed to protect the innocence of the majority of its children. An article published in the famous monthly *Resimli Ay* [Illustrated Monthly] in 1924 by Sabiha Zekeriya, a leftist, feminist journalist and the voluntary attorney of destitute children in the early Republic, speaks volumes. Considering that the conditions depicted by Zekeriya remained unchanged, if not deteriorated in the following decades, well into the post-Second World War period, her article is worth quoting at length for it displays the striking contrast between the actual and the imagined ideal that made up the modern childhood repertoire of the Turkish Republic.

[...] When I saw this man selling his child in a neighbourhood of Istanbul for five hundred Turkish liras as if the child was a commodity I was assured one more time that we are the children of a society that is oblivious to its

54 Nazan Çiçek, "Mapping the Turkish Republican Notion of Childhood and Juvenile Delinquency: The Story of Children's Courts in Turkey, 1940–1990," in Heather Ellis (ed.), *Juvenile Delinquency and the Limits of Western Influence, 1850–2000* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 248–275.

55 Nazan Çiçek, "Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Modern Çocukluk Nosyonunun Görünümleri Üzerine Bir Analiz" [An Analysis on the Manifestations of Modern Notion of Childhood in Early Republican Era], *Mülkiye Dergisi*, 36 (4), 2012, 69–104.

responsibilities towards children. [...] It is argued that in human societies children are under the protection of family, charitable organizations and the government. Either I do not live in a society or the owners of that assertion are complete liars. Masses of poor, abandoned, orphaned children are begging, stealing and striving to survive in squalid conditions like sinners in every corner of our country. [...] Those who claim that family protects children are lying, because most families do not have the economic means to protect their children. Those who claim that charitable organizations protect children are liars, because if they had, children living as beggars and pick-pockets would not have swarmed the streets of Istanbul. The society which is supposed to spread its protective wings over children abandons them to their fate. Those who claim that the government is protecting children are liars too. If children of a society are left to live without bread, home and morality, then there is no government protection to talk about. If the government does not pass laws for the protection of children in a society where children are sold for money, regularly beaten and frequently killed, then the government protection is a sheer lie. If there are statesmen in a government who sneer at the child issue, denying its importance and contenting themselves with issuing police orders for driving beggars of the streets, then those who claim that the government is protecting children are shamelessly lying. In our society no one, not the family, not the government, is protecting our children. They are born and die like weeds attracting nobody's attention or compassion.<sup>56</sup>

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56 Sabiha Zekeriya, "Satılık Çocuk Beş Yüz Lira" [Child for Sale for Five Hundred Liras], *Resimli Ay*, 4, Mayıs [May], 1340 [1924], 5-7.

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# Child Poverty and Emerging Children’s Rights Discourse in Early Republican Turkey

*Kathryn Libal*

[W]e are poor, very poor. We have hundreds and thousands of children who are hungry and neglected vagrants living on the streets. The majority of these children die and many of [those who live] are not being brought up properly. We must know that these neglected and dying children are the pure blood that flows in our veins. If we cannot save them from poverty and death, we will never be able to feel the real joy of living and we will not be able to say that we did our duty for the future. In our country the child question is not so simple that one or a few organizations will be able to tackle it. The state should take this as one of its most important tasks. The state is the expression of the society’s will and our society is one that will depend on being led by the hand.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The unnamed author of the above column published in 1935 in Turkey’s leading newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, encapsulates a dominant theme in newspaper and serial publications in the early Turkish Republic. Child poverty and dislocation that resulted from the aftermath of more than a decade of war, followed by the onset of economic recession, troubled social reformers who worked to establish a strong Turkish nation-state. While such reformers espoused political perspectives ranging from liberalism to socialism, they shared a common concern that the state must fully embrace tackling child poverty and attendant social problems—and, for most, the state had an obligation to secure child welfare through the creation of an expansive program of social protection. Such programs were being introduced throughout Europe and the United States during this era and Turkish reformers were fully aware that addressing

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1 “Biz Bize Çocuklarımız,” *Cumhuriyet*, August 28, 1935, 5. Quote initially published in translation in Kathryn Libal, “The Children’s Protection Society: Nationalizing Child Welfare in Early Republican Turkey,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23, 2003, 53–78.

child welfare systematically through state-directed and funded efforts signified a 'modern' approach to ending child poverty.

Evidence of this desire to tackle child poverty as one of the most pressing social problems abounds across print media in the 1930s, ranging from pro-government newspapers and serial publications to the independent, critical press. Yet by the mid-1930s, such discourse contradicted a key ideological stance of the Republican People's Party platform: a principle asserting populism and denying the existence of social classes in Turkey.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter I show how social reformers—both those who sought to work within the ruling regime and those who opposed the RPP's leadership—endeavored to highlight this contradiction in their advocacy for greater state investment in child welfare programs. The chapter is organized in three parts. First, I outline the discursive parameters of the debate on the 'child question,' focusing especially on social reformers' desire to promote rapid population growth and combat infant and child mortality as a matter of national urgency. Then I illustrate several modes of writing, and particular children's rights claims, made by journalists and social commentators, including leftist journalists and writers such as Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel and Suad Derviş. Sertel and Derviş sought to underscore that governmental support for ideologies of 'populism' and 'classlessness' meant little in the face of failures to develop comprehensive social welfare and labor supports. Finally, in a related vein I show how satire in the print media was used to highlight the persistence of social inequality and class, especially in urban areas such as Istanbul. Throughout I point to the deployment of contrasting figures of the poor child and the wealthy child to draw attention to the reality of social hierarchy and difference in Turkish society. Precisely because of the increasing sentimentalization of childhood and the use of children in advertising and popular culture to depict a modern Turkish domesticity, reformers prodded the state and political elites using the specter of unequal childhoods to mobilize for additional resources and programs.

This chapter develops aspects of earlier scholarship in which I examined the social construction of the 'child question' that surfaced so often in public and governmental debate in the early Turkish Republic.<sup>3</sup> The work sheds light

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2 In May 1931 the Third Party Congress adopted six core principles as undergirding Kemalism (Ataturkism). These included: Republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism and revolutionism/reformism. See Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 63.

3 Kathryn Libal, "'The Child Question': The Politics of Child Welfare in Early Republican Turkey," in Mine Ener, Michael Bonner and Amy Singer (eds) *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 255–272.

on the intersection of public discourses of nationhood and childhood in the construction of the Turkish nation-state. In an era of competitive nationhood, children of the early Republic were treated as a national asset, a product to be cultivated, nurtured and trained. As Dr Kutsi Halkacı put it in the first line of his tract on child protection: “The work of child protection is a national principle [foundation] in all civilized nations.”<sup>4</sup> For Halkacı and others, ‘modern techniques’ [*modern teknik*] in child protection were regarded as inextricably tied to population growth and the ‘politics of health’ [*sıhhat siyaseti*], which included the need to educate women on health in pregnancy and child rearing, especially in the months after a baby was born.

In official ideology children were considered a resource of the nation-state—a generation of future citizens who would be entrusted with protecting the nation-state, just as they too had been protected when young.<sup>5</sup> As Alemdaroğlu notes, these projects emerged in the context of eugenics discourses operating throughout Europe and other parts of the world in the 1930s, and as a progressive current “went hand in hand with social hygiene, pro-natalist and child-care policies.”<sup>6</sup> Yet this ideological vision of childhood as constituting the new nation-state, promoted so actively by publicists and politicians of the day, was in contrast to the daily lives of most children and thus the dominant narrative on state concern for childhood was a ready target for critique.

### Rhetorics and Realities of Nation Building

Political leaders and social reformers of the new Republic grappled with questions of post-war reconstruction, the recrafting of nation-state bureaucratic structures and processes, and the transformation of a beleaguered Ottoman citizenry into that of a Turkish national one. As such, they had to deal with elite and popular concerns with material and moral aspects of basic subsistence and the social construction of stratification and socio-economic

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4 This was one in a series of Istanbul CPS publications disseminated for free. Kutsi Halkacı, *Çocukları Esirgemenin Modern Tekniği* [Modern Techniques in the Protection of Children]. Türkiye Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu İstanbul Merkez Hey’eti Neşriyatı, Sayı 3 (İstanbul: Millî Mecmua Basım Evi, 1937), 3.

5 Kathryn Libal, “The Robust Child: Discourses on Childhood and Modernity in Early Republican Turkey,” in Daniel T. Cook (ed.) *Symbolic Childhood* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 109–130.

6 Ayça Alemdaroğlu, “Politics of the Body and Eugenic Discourse in Early Republican Turkey,” *Body and Society*, 11 (3), 2005, 68.

inequality in the new Republic. In recent scholarship, Yasemin Gencer notes the co-construction of childhood and nationhood in 1920s Republican Turkey:

The child's liminal status as a link between past ancestral achievements and future transformation was exploited to present nationalist belief in the continuity and persistence of the solidary nation.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, according to Gencer, the image of the child dominated in cartoons of the early Republic, simultaneously representing "the young Republic, the innocent nation, or future generations of Turkish people."<sup>8</sup> This discursive preoccupation with the nation imagined through child-as-future provided an opportunity for those seeking governmental support for child welfare and for the institutionalization of efforts that had been unfolding to secure child well-being since the late Ottoman Empire.

In the 1920s and 1930s children symbolized progress towards nationhood and realizing goals of modernization. In their figures resided the promise of a vital national future. Children signified the possibility to create modern Turkish subjects and for many social reformers the possibility to transcend the divide between rich and poor. By the time Turkey's independence was declared in 1923, attitudes and beliefs about children and childhood had begun to shift under the influence of modernist and nationalist currents of the late Ottoman period. The child was portrayed as resource, reservoir and source of hope for the nation-state.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, because of the prevalence of poor children displaced from homes and living and working on the streets of urban centers like Istanbul, the child also signified potential danger or futures not attained. Social reformers troubled over how poor children might be recovered and included alongside the thousands of Turkish children beginning to attend elementary school.

The roots of sentimentalizing the plight of poor children and 'child-saving' efforts predated the early Republic, as a number of other scholars have shown in their studies of the late Ottoman period.<sup>10</sup> This concern intensified in the

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7 Yasemin Gencer, "We Are Family: The Child and Modern Nationhood in Early Turkish Republican Cartoons (1923–1928)," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32 (2), 2012, 295.

8 Gencer, "We Are Family," 296.

9 Libal, "The Child Question"; Libal, "The Robust Child"; Hale Yilmaz, *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey (1923–1945)* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2013).

10 Nadir Özbek, "The Politics of Welfare, Philanthropy, Voluntarism and Legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1918" (Unpublished PhD thesis, State University of New York,

1920s and 1930s, demonstrated by the predominance of attention given to the ‘child question’ within newspapers, popular magazines and radio, scholarly study and analysis, education, private and public philanthropic activities, and regulation of child health and welfare at the official level within municipalities and the state. Evidence of such concern can also be found in official records between parliamentarians and high-ranking officials within Republican government. As one illustration of the extent to which state actors themselves assumed governmental engagement in child welfare, we can consider questions directed by Naci Paşa, a parliamentarian from Cebeli Bereket (later renamed Osmaniye) to the Minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya, concerning the conditions facing children in Ankara in 1929.<sup>11</sup> Noting with dismay the large numbers of girls and boys of varying ages on the streets of Ankara and other cities, Naci Paşa asked how the Minister of Interior planned to strengthen social welfare supports for children. Of particular concern to the parliamentarian was the failure to impart morals and education to children who lived and worked on the streets, and the likelihood such children could be exploited for any number of “unclean” forms of work.

It is in this context of heightened political interest in child welfare and nation formation that I consider the emerging public discourse that children had a right to well-being, security and protection by the state. Social reformers sought to highlight, define and create modern social institutions and mechanisms to address child poverty and related social problems. As Dr Halkacı asserted in his 1937 text on *Modern Techniques of Child Welfare*:

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Binghamton, 2001)—see also revised version in Turkish, Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Sosyal Devlet, Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşrutiyet, 1876–1914* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002); Nadir Özbek, “The Politics of Modern Welfare Institutions in the Late Ottoman Empire (1876–1909),” *International Journal of Turcologia* 3 (5), 2008, 42–62; Nazan Maksudyan, “Hearing the Voiceless—Seeing the Invisible: Orphans and Destitute Children as Actors of Social, Economic, and Political History in the Late Ottoman Empire” (Unpublished PhD thesis, Sabancı University, 2008); Nazan Maksudyan, “Modernization of Welfare or Further Deprivation? State Provisions for Foundlings in the Late Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 2 (3), 2009, 361–392; Nazan Maksudyan, “Orphans, Cities, and the State: Vocational Orphanages (İslahhanes) and Reform in the Late Ottoman Urban Space,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43, 2011, 493–511; Nazan Maksudyan, *Orphans and Destitute Children in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Syracuse, NY: University of Syracuse Press, 2014).

11 Correspondence from Cebeli Bereket representative Naci Paşa Hazretler to the Minister of Interior, 27 Mayıs, 1929, Başbakanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi (hereafter BCA) 030.10.8.48.6.

Every child has been born possessing equal rights [*müsavî hakka malik olarak*]. But some are able to claim their rights, while others cannot. As you see, children who cannot claim their rights are the poor children who are to be protected by child protection organizations.<sup>12</sup>

The 'child question' included reducing high infant and child mortality rates, improving child health, addressing the plight of orphaned, abandoned or homeless children, enabling a greater number of children to attend primary school, and preventing the most exploitative forms of child labor. The child question became a potent site to both project the potential of the nation-state through reform and to challenge the efficacy of the new government's approach to nation-state building.<sup>13</sup>

### The Children's Protection Society as 'Stand-in' for the State

In the late Ottoman period, a group of doctors, political leaders and other professionals established the Children's Protection Society [Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti / Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu], initially as a humanitarian effort to provide relief to children orphaned or displaced by war.<sup>14</sup> Led in the 1920s–30s by Dr Mehmet Fuat Umay, a doctor and parliamentarian, the CPS developed a network of branches throughout the country. It gradually expanded its charge from the initial aims of providing humanitarian relief to children to one that worked to secure the welfare of children and their mothers.<sup>15</sup> In core areas like Istanbul and Ankara, the CPS provided some on-site housing for orphans. The CPS also intensified campaigns to provide safe milk for infants, pre-natal and post-natal medical check-ups for mothers, well-baby check-ups, vaccinations and bathing facilities to promote 'hygienic' mothering practices with young infants and children as well as clothing and hot lunches for school children. One of the CPS's lasting legacies in the early Republic was its efforts to publish popular and professional serials advancing children's well-being and promoting 'modern' child-rearing practices. Its publications also served the purpose of highlighting the efforts of the CPS to secure child welfare, not only for

12 Halkacı, *Çocukları Esirgemenin Modern Tekniği*, 15.

13 For fuller treatment of the socio-economic conditions that informed debates over child poverty and child welfare, see Libal, "The Child Question."

14 Libal, "The Children's Protection Society."

15 Veysi Akın, *Bir Devrin Cemiyet Adamı Doktor Fuat Umay (1885–1963)* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 2000).

Turkey's most marginalized children, but also that of children in middle-class households.<sup>16</sup>

The CPS recognized an overwhelming need for children's protection on all fronts and focused, in particular, on high rates of infant mortality that persisted throughout Turkey. Dr Umay, like other doctors concerned with child health, thought that only through curbing the numbers of babies lost in the first few years of life could the Turkish state's goals for significant population growth be met. Dr Şemsettin Dora, a pediatrician at the State Hospital (Memleket Hastanesi) associated 'population politics' with 'child politics,' asserting that "the child is the country's most precious treasure; to protect the child is to protect the country."<sup>17</sup> Dr Suad Yılmaz similarly emphasized the 'national duty' to raise children, underscoring that providing pre- and post-natal care to women and infants would strengthen the country,<sup>18</sup> while Dr Halkacı underscored that child protection was directly connected to the country's economic growth and well-being.<sup>19</sup> Or, as Alemdaroğlu asserts of other leaders in public health and hygiene initiatives: "bodies were the principal and most profitable capital of a nation-state."<sup>20</sup>

In order to promote the reduction of infant mortality rates, the CPS wrote and disseminated educational materials on child health, child care and nutrition. Leaders of the organization regarded training [*terbiye*] and public education [*propaganda*] as crucial to fostering modern principles of child welfare, which were grounded in the young child's life course (from securing women's health during pregnancy through early educational years).<sup>21</sup> A July 1931 issue of *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* included an article on a 'school for mothers' in Vienna.<sup>22</sup> The subtitle of the article noted that "regardless of class" all mothers are taught child rearing. The authors of the article highlighted the value of intensive

16 The CPS sponsored a variety of publications, including a series of books for children in translation published by Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel and Zekeriya Sertel through Resimli Ay Matbaası. In the late 1920s through the 1930s the CPS also sponsored the serial *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* [The Robust Turkish Child], which aimed at times for a public literate elite and during certain periods seemed more focused on health and social service professionals. The CPS also sponsored more popular publications like *Çocuk Haftası* [Child's Week].

17 Şemsettin Dora, "Yeni Rejimde Çocuğun Ehemmiyet ve Kıymeti," [The Importance and Value of the Child in the New Regime], *Uludağ*, 18, 1938, 45, 47.

18 Suad Yılmaz, "Çocuk Yetiştirmek Bugün Bir Vatan Borcudur," (Raising Children Today Is a National Duty), *Cumhuriyet*, 17 June, 1937, 4.

19 Halkacı, *Çocukları Esirgemenin Modern Tekniği*, 7.

20 Alemdaroğlu, "Politics of the Body," 70.

21 Halkacı, *Çocukları Esirgemenin Modern Tekniği*, 5–9.

22 "Anneler Mektebinde" [At Mothers' School], *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu*, 58, July, 1931, 8–10.

classes given on topics concerning spiritual and physical education, including how to appropriately nourish infants. Photos accompanying the article show nurses demonstrating to mothers how to weigh their baby and demonstrating how to appropriately swaddle infants. CPS officials also published posters, pamphlets and monthly magazines and broadcast radio addresses on child-health and child-care techniques in an effort to reach greater numbers of Turkish mothers and families.

A substantial proportion of articles in CPS publications highlighted the necessity of developing institutions to address large numbers of children who did not have families to care for them. Often such work drew heavily on the writings of European specialists in translation. Such articles showed that the child question was not confined to Turkey, but also included social welfare strategies developed to address children dislocated from families in European countries such as Germany or the United Kingdom. An article in *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* in 1931 drew upon experiences of addressing 'abandoned' children in Berlin, underscoring the value of adoption rather than the long-term institutionalization of children in orphanages. The article stressed the importance of fully accepting adopted children within the household through giving the child the family's name and the rights that should be accorded to the child as a family member.<sup>23</sup>

While CPS literature must be understood as engaging global awareness of child welfare programs and norms, serial publications of the CPS, its regional reports and annual meetings also contributed to a sense of the 'national' spread of the organization. Annual yearbooks published in 1929 and 1930 included photos representing the work of local CPS chapters. *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* also included such photos, paired with listings of the leadership in a given branch. Leaders were often elites from the community in question, such as the Polatlı Branch's head, Saim Bey, who was also a manager for İş Bank.<sup>24</sup> Delegates were as often doctors, head teachers or civil servants within the local or provincial government. And, such publications inevitably included photographic representations of the most celebrated period of the year in terms of advancing child welfare, 23 Nisan Bayramı (April 23, the foundation day of the Turkish National Assembly and also the Children's Holiday [*Çocuk Bayramı*]).

23 "Yeni Anne ve Baba Arayan Yavrular" [Little Ones Looking for New Mothers and Fathers], *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu*, 58, Temmuz 1931, 11–13. Adoption did not emerge as a widespread, culturally acceptable practice; however, *evlatlık*, or informal 'adoption' practices, were widespread, particularly with girls.

24 See, for example, "Himayei Etfal Haberleri" [News of Children's Protection (Society)], *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* 58, July 1931, 22.

Impeccably clad school children lined streets, school yards or the entrances to municipal buildings in locales across the country. Children selected as model “robust children” were displayed to readers of the CPS serial publications and highlighted in local and national newspapers.<sup>25</sup>

### Defining a Role for the State in Securing the Rights of Children

Debates on child welfare during the 1920s and 1930s point to childhood as a vehicle for talking about modernization, nation-state building and processes of social transformation. These larger processes were in some ways more open to debate through the ‘child question’ than through other issues, such as the rights of workers, single-party rule and the repression of those who supported a greater role for Islam in official and popular domains. For reformers, the broad social terrain encompassed by a notion of child welfare and children’s protection became increasingly politicized. The plight of children as portrayed in the media and witnessed by sometimes competing elites became one form of political capital exercised in debates about how to construct a modern Turkish society and strong nation-state.

Large numbers of elementary-school age children in urban Istanbul worked in and outside of their homes to contribute to family income (or to survive on their own). According to newspapers and professional journals of the day, many infants, toddlers and children of school age did not receive adequate nutrition and an undetermined (yet large) number of these children were chronically hungry. In the early 1930s campaigns were led by the Turkish Red Crescent Society to feed elementary school children who were chronically hungry. Branches of the TRCS in Istanbul initiated a campaign to feed such poor children several times a week. In 1929, one of the Ministry of Education’s health inspectors asserted that a 5-kuruş donation would provide funds for one meal to a needy child. This child would then be able to have bread and cheese at lunch, as well as under some programs a ‘hot lunch’ with variations of soup, bread, cheese and helva.<sup>26</sup> In 1934 the issue resurfaced again and the Minister of Interior, Şükrü Kaya, paid a visit to Istanbul in part to address growing concern over the issue of child hunger.<sup>27</sup> By 1937 he estimated the number of hungry school children had grown from 7,000 in 1934 to close to 15,000. As a part of

25 For more on this see, Libal, “The Robust Turkish Child.”

26 “Fakir Çocuklara Sıcak Yemek Tevzi Edilmez Mi?” *Cumhuriyet*, January 15, 1929.

27 Neşet Halil Atay, “İstanbul İlk Mekteplerindeki 7000 Çocuk,” [Istanbul’s 7,000 Primary School Children], *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* 97 (1934), 3–7.

an effort to better prepare private and official organizations to provide hot meals to children, officials in the Ministry of Education in Istanbul worked with the CPS, TRCS and local social assistance wings of People's Houses [Halk Evleri] and branches of the Republican People's Party to create a manual instructing them on how best to carry out their work.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the 1930s social reformers called for the formation of a social institution embedded within the state that could adequately address the needs of the Republic's children.<sup>29</sup> Greater resources from the government were required immediately to address inadequacies in securing child welfare in all institutions, including branches of the Children's Protection Society and Red Crescent Society, state-run orphanages, and boarding houses attached to schools, which combined were unable to even remotely meet the needs of the urban poor. Addressing child poverty in towns and rural areas, particularly in the 'Eastern' regions, was an even more distant prospect.<sup>30</sup>

A series of government documents from 1936 to 1939 reveals the contours of governmental debate over how to address 'abandoned' children [*metruk çocuklar*], meaning children without families who could care for them, in towns and cities. Dr Fuat Umay and other CPS representatives raised concerns with officials at the highest levels of government about how to address the needs of orphaned and 'abandoned' children once they turned six years old.<sup>31</sup> Dr Umay argued that the government bore the responsibility for providing protection to such children formerly in CPS care or within state-run orphanages.<sup>32</sup> This was ostensibly the time when children would begin attending schools, but boarding schools and day schools were not adequately established or funded by municipalities and the national government to provide spaces for a great number of

28 See, e.g., "Yoksul Çocuklar: İlk Mekteb Talebelerine Nasıl Yardım Edilecek?" [Poor Children: How are Elementary School Students to be Helped?], *Cumhuriyet*, January 7, 1937, 7; "Yoksul Talebeye Yapılacak Yardım" [Assistance to Be Given to Poor Students], *Cumhuriyet*, January 10, 1937, 2.

29 Libal, "The Child Question," 268.

30 Bahri Turgud Okaygün, "Şarkî Anadolu'da Köyler ve Köylülere: Şark Köylerinde Çocuk Meselesi" [Villages and Villagers in Eastern Anatolia: The Child Question in Eastern Villages], *Cumhuriyet*, July 12, 1937, 2.

31 Correspondence from the Head of the Malatya Children's Protection Society, Sabri Akalın, to Prime Minister İsmet İnönü, August 7, 1937, BCA 030.10.178.234.1. The Malatya CPS head requested financial support from the national government to help address the needs of street children, who he portrayed as gathering in Malatya from various counties [*ilçe*] after finishing their education.

32 Correspondence from the Head of the Children's Protection Society, Dr Fuat Umay, to Prime Minister Celâl Bayar, March 25, 1938, BCA 030.10.178.234.1.

children. The CPS head framed the social problem as a ‘painful inheritance’ from the Ottoman era, saying that with each day that the CPS carried out its efforts conditions were more serious.

In the same series of documents, the Minister of Health and Welfare, Dr Ahmet Hulusi Alataş, noted that the CPS was a private philanthropic organization and for this reason, children of school age should no longer be under CPS care.<sup>33</sup> In late 1937 the Minister of Health and Social Welfare acknowledged that elementary-aged children without families should be the responsibility of the state broadly, with municipalities and the Ministry of Education bearing obligations to support the inclusion of such children within urban ‘boarding schools.’ By mid-1939, with the apparent closure of a number of urban boarding schools, the same minister proposed that by the time children reached an age where they could reasonably work (12 years), they should begin jobs at state-owned factories and other workplaces.<sup>34</sup> What is striking in the documents is the struggle over which part of the national government would ultimately bear responsibility for the welfare of poor children who had little or no family supports once they became too old for CPS care.<sup>35</sup> The documentation, however, underscores that leaders recognized a role for government in securing child welfare, even as they struggled with the overwhelming scope of the ‘child question.’

Such debates were carried out more visibly in print media, beginning in the earliest years of the Republic. Shortly after returning to Turkey from university studies in social work at the New York School of Social Work, Sabiha Zekeriya (Sertel) called for a “children’s crusade” [*çocuk cihadı*] in the influential *Resimli Ay*.<sup>36</sup> As James Ryan notes, this was a “clear reference to the ‘Children’s Crusade’

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33 Correspondence from Minister of Health and Social Welfare Dr Ahmet Hulusi Alataş to the Prime Ministry, December 14, 1937, BCA 030.10.178.234.1.

34 Correspondence from the Minister of Health and Social Welfare Dr Ahmet Hulusi Alataş to the Prime Ministry, June 24, 1939, BCA 030.10.178.234.1.

35 Education Minister Hasan Ali Yücel asserted that local Istanbul control of homes to protect orphaned children between 1933–1939 had not been well organized or administered, and thus the operation of such facilities would come under the oversight of the Education Ministry. The minister noted that private (philanthropic) administration and municipal budgetary support had failed to successfully address the needs of these children. Thus the national government was obligated to step in and take control. Correspondence from Minister of Education Hasan Ali Yücel to the Prime Ministry, September 26, 1940, BCA 030.10.174.201.6.

36 I owe these insights to James Ryan, who included analysis of Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel’s child welfare advocacy in his unpublished paper, “A Revolution In-Between: M. Zekeriya and

march from the Kensington neighborhood in Philadelphia to Oyster Bay, New York organized by Mother Jones in 1903." Sabiha Sertel, drawing upon her understanding of the Children's Aid Society and the work of Mary Harris Jones ("Mother Jones") was especially drawn to the harsh circumstances of orphans in Turkey's cities.

Similarly, in an essay entitled "Our Children," the writer and educator Hıfzı Tevfik (Gönensay) asserted that caring for orphaned or abandoned children was one of the key issues to be addressed by the state. For Tevfik, the child question could only be solved by "creating an organization addressing the whole country." He explained:

For this, definite and fundamental steps must be taken. Despite the work that Himaye-i Etfal has done [...] it is not sufficient. From day to day the number of children who are vanishing because of neglect is increasing beyond all predictions, despite the wonderful services provided by Himaye-i Etfal.<sup>37</sup>

Other prominent figures, such as Yunus Nadi (Abaloğlu), editor and chief of the leading Istanbul newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*, exhorted readers to consider the problem of the child as a key national problem, claiming that it would signify Turkey's 'civilization' and modernity if everyone concerned themselves with protecting children. Yunus Nadi's writings on the importance of the child for the future of the Republic resonated with the most strident Kemalist declarations on the centrality of the child. His stance was closely linked to nationalist, eugenicist concerns, with the health of the Turkish populace as a signifier of the health of the Turkish race and nation-state:<sup>38</sup> "[B]y showing concern not only with our own children, but also the children of the entire country, we provide proof that our society is a strong one."<sup>39</sup>

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Sabiha Sertel as Pro-western Anti-Kemalists, 1919–1924." Sabiha and M. Zekeriya Sertel co-founded *Resimli Ay* with Yunus Nadi. It became an important progressive publication, alongside sister publications *Resimli Hafta* and *Resimli Perşembe*.

37 Hıfzı Tevfik, "Çocuğumuz" [Our Children], *Çocuk Haftası* 1, 1929, 89.

38 See also Alemdaroğlu, "Politics of the Body"; Sanem Güvenç Salgırlı, "Eugenics for the Doctors: Medicine and Social Control in 1930s Turkey," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 66 (3), 2010, 281–312.

39 Yunus Nadi (Abaloğlu), "Küçüklerimizin Çok Büyük Bir Meselesi" [Our Little Ones' Very: Large Problem], *Cumhuriyet*, April 25, 1936.

### A Declaration on the Rights of Children in Turkey

In April 1929, in recognition of ‘National Sovereignty and Children’s Day’ held on 23 Nisan (April 23) and Children’s Week, Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel issued a Declaration of Children’s Rights in a leading child welfare publication.<sup>40</sup> Her list of ‘rights’ that should exist for all Turkish children was illustrative of a genre of declarations emerging in the 1920s and 1930s in Europe and other parts of the world, that called upon the state to take a leading role in children’s welfare. It can be read as a more expansive (albeit local) call for securing children’s rights than the earlier Geneva Declaration of the Rights of Children adopted by the League of Nations in 1924 and discussed below.<sup>41</sup>

The Declaration was notable because of its length, specificity and the emotive linking of religious and cultural referents to that of the new nation-state (which was avowedly secular). Through the imagined voices of children (using first person plural), the document expresses the “wants” of children and approximates framing such wants as ‘rights claims’ on the state:

We, this generation’s children of Future Turkey, request from the Children’s Protection Society and from the larger Turkish society, the following:

1. We, the children who grow at the breasts of mothers with tuberculosis, want food, air, and life.
2. We, the children who have engorged bellies on our skinny legs that are bigger than our sins and who await the Angel of Death in our sleep, we who are neglected and forgotten, want the means of healthy living and to stand up straight.
3. We, who are rented to death and disease<sup>42</sup> by extreme poverty and who are hungry want bread, bread, bread.
4. We, who beg naked on piles of snow, day and night, manipulating your sense of compassion don’t want your charity [...].
5. We, the children who are deprived because of a lack of human compassion, perform heavy labor, and are exploited in order to make a living, want laws that will protect us.

40 Kathryn Libal, “Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel: Turkish Feminist, Organizer, and Journalist,” *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 27 (3), 2012, 328–337.

41 The full text is available at <http://www.un-documents.net/gdrc1924.htm>.

42 “Rented to death” in this context means having another older child or adult control the labor of children, impressing them into begging, stealing or performing heavy labor, such as hauling objects on their backs. A common image of poor beggar children was that they were organized in bands and impelled to use childlike ways to garner donations.

[...]

11. We, the children who have been sacrificed to the Angel of Death before we were even two years old, want this relentless flow of death to be stopped. We want you to mobilize against the attacks of the Angel of Death just as you fight against the enemies [of the nation].<sup>43</sup>

In this Declaration, Sabiha Zekeriya employs a modernist lexicon of disenfranchisement—focusing on deprivation, child labor, exploitation, endemic poverty and the need for reforms that encompass more than individual acts of charity. Also, she invokes emotive notions of sacrifice and the presence of Azrael, the Angel of Death, who must be defeated just as would-be colonizers were repelled a decade earlier. The declaration ended with a final pronouncement:

WE—The Turkish children deprived of life, food, health care, and development and whose stomachs are empty: We want you to find a solution for our problems in this Children's Week that you have created for us. We came to you with these problems and our handicaps. We don't only want your nurturance. We want equality, nutrition, development, and education that are the right of every human child. We want new laws and a social organization that will provide us with the rights and the life that we lack.

Such advocacy for laws and a 'social organization' to provide children with legal rights and basic assurances of welfare are found throughout newspapers, weekly publications and professional journals, and in transcripts of radio addresses from the 1930s. A growing cadre of 'helping' professionals, educators, political leaders and journalists all invoked the idea that children had rights to be secured by larger national projects, whether enacted by the state directly or implemented through quasi-state institutions such as the Children's Protection Society. Their modernist vision supported a greater investment in state institutions to secure children's and the broader population's well-being. This endeavor entailed a shift to a more extensive, bureaucratized form of child welfare that combined local initiative and control with greater levels of national monitoring and agenda setting. Throughout this era, however, the actual reach of the CPS and other state-funded efforts for orphanages, boarding schools and health clinics remained limited in scope.<sup>44</sup>

43 Sabiha Zekeriya, "Biz...," *Çocuk Haftası* 1, 1929, 44.

44 Libal, "The Children's Protection Society."

Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel's Declaration on behalf of Turkish children was related to an emerging international discourse on children's rights and the responsibility of states to assure that children both survived and thrived into adulthood.<sup>45</sup> 'Children's rights' in the aftermath of the First World War were regarded as a leading social problem and the Geneva Declaration addressed sentiments being expressed at national and international levels about developmentalist needs to protect children who were orphaned, displaced from homes, malnourished and unable to access education. In 1924, The Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child had called for "men and women of all nations" to "accept it as their duty" that

- The child must be given the means requisite for its normal development, both materially and spiritually;
- The child that is hungry must be fed; the child that is sick must be nursed; the child that is backward must be helped; the delinquent child must be reclaimed; and the orphan and waif must be sheltered and succored.<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, children's needs were to be prioritized during "times of distress" and children should be assured of being able to earn a livelihood without exploitation. Its five articles concluded with the assertion that "[t]he child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of fellow men." The Geneva Declaration foreshadowed future international declarations and treaties that would emphasize children's rights to economic and social provisions commensurate with their capacities as children within society and their rights to be free of exploitative forms of labor that might endanger their health and development.

Sertel's Declaration was longer than the Geneva Declaration, and it elaborates on what would come to be known as children's economic and social rights—their rights first and foremost to life, health, nutrition, housing and education, and to be free of exploitative forms of labor.<sup>47</sup> The document is

45 Lara Bolzman, "The Advent of Child Rights on the International Scene and the Role of the Save the Children International Union 1920–45," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 27 (4), 2009, 26–36.

46 <http://www.un-documents.net/gdrc1924.htm>.

47 The focus on children, their physical and mental health, strength, cleanliness and intelligence sharpened in a climate of extreme nationalisms during the interwar years. In Turkey during the 1930s the Ministry of Education became increasingly preoccupied with physical education as a way to strengthen youth. Exercises for both boys and girls blended physical training with regimentation and militaristic routines that were common in other parts of Europe. See Alemdaroğlu, "Politics of the Body."

remarkable in its specificity and direct call for the establishment of a social welfare system that could assure these rights (wants) as a matter of state obligation. Printed in an official publication of the Children's Protection Society during national celebrations focusing on Turkish children during 'Children's Week,' Sertel's document ostensibly had the support of CPS leadership. Sertel's familiarity with child welfare institutions and movements for children's rights in the United States shaped her call: she was deeply influenced by the three years she had spent in New York and by her travels with the CPS leader, Dr Fuad Umay, in the United States to raise funds for the organization.<sup>48</sup> This work must also be understood as being a part of state-making processes elsewhere that sought to incorporate and transform charitable efforts on behalf of the poor into laws, policies and programs that addressed the poor as a matter of modern state policy.

### Exhibiting Unequal Childhoods through Reportage and Satire

The fact that neither the state nor local philanthropic organizations were able to meet the basic needs of large numbers of children living in poverty was highlighted in the reportage of widely published journalists such as Sertel and Suad Derviş.<sup>49</sup> Before widespread crackdowns on socialist and communist writers in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Sertel's and Derviş's columns were commonly published in *Cumhuriyet* and *Tan* and were reprinted in CPS journals. Derviş, an active member of the banned Turkish Communist Party during the 1930s and 1940s, often wrote articles based on interviews with poor widows with children, working mothers and orphaned or abandoned children. By reporting the issues close to the hearts of working women and children, Derviş challenged the state and other organizations perceived to be closely aligned with the state.

48 Libal, "Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel."

49 Derviş, who studied in Berlin in 1919–1920, published her first novel, *Kara Kitap*, in Istanbul in 1920. She published more than 10 novels from 1920–1932 and worked simultaneously as a freelance journalist. Because of her fluency in French and German, she covered the Lausanne Conference in 1922–1923, thus securing her reputation within the journalistic arena in early Republican Turkey. See Fatmagül Berktaş, "Derviş, Suat (Saadet Baraner) (1905–1972)," in Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova and Anna Loutfi (eds), *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries* (Budapest: Central European Press, 2006), 109–113.

Sabiha Zekeriya asserted that many historically specific social concerns must be addressed as part of the child question. In an article for *Cumhuriyet* in which she explained the relevance of Children's Week, she provided a lengthy list outlining the parameters of this problem. The list illustrates the symptoms of persistent poverty and the fracturing of family and local communities that were widespread during post-war reconstruction and the depression years. Sabiha Zekeriya's account included the following catalog of child-types who were produced in a society that had yet to develop a comprehensive welfare program:

orphaned children, poor children with parents, sick children, street children, child thieves, girls who have been adopted into families, children deprived of toys and fresh air, children forced into heavy labor from a young age, children with tuberculosis, beggar children, mentally handicapped children, illiterate children, children of working mothers, children raised in dirty and immoral conditions, homeless children who grow up on the streets, village children and schools, children raised by ignorant mothers, and child prostitution.<sup>50</sup>

Such a classification of social categories of children (largely as problems to be addressed) underscores the dominant view among social reformers that the state had a significant role to play in child welfare. Orphans and poor children led the list, as children deprived of an imagined "ideal childhood" filled with toys, education and a mother's nurturance. The notions of "children raised in dirty and immoral conditions" and child prostitution were tied to a host of anxieties over child sexuality, morality and social control.

Commentaries highlighting children's experience of social inequality were widely published in the mid-1920s and 1930s and reflected the politicization of child welfare and children's rights in the early Republic. The weekly serial *Akbaba* published satirical cartoons that visually underscored the gap between wealthy and poor in (Istanbulite) Turkish society, often focusing on children or the elderly. In one instance, the cartoonist Orhan Ural portrayed a father dressed in top hat and tuxedo walking down the street with his hand in his

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50 Sabiha Zekeriya added that other problems have yet to be named, and that the CPS had embarked upon Children's Week to raise national awareness of these issues. She outlined various standpoints from which the children's problem can be considered, including diplomatic/military, pedagogical and sociological views. For each, the problem is tied to larger issues of "population" [*nüfus işi*]. See Sabiha Zekeriya (Sertel), "Çocuk Haftasının Gayesi Nedir" [What is the Purpose of Children's Week?], *Cumhuriyet*, April 25, 1929, 3.

daughter's.<sup>51</sup> The daughter was dressed in stylized 'traditional' Turkish attire donned for a 'costume ball.' A boy was depicted on the same street glancing back at the father–daughter pair. The child wore tattered clothes and a rag tied to his head. The daughter asked her father, "Baba, is this child also going to the costume ball?" Such cartoons condensed a critique of class difference in exaggerated portrayals of dress and body size and brief, incisive commentary. Justifications of such difference were intended to appear flimsy—to heighten a sense of the injustice of a society which tolerated vastly different opportunities and outcomes for children.

Other instances were critical of the gap between the oft-cited connection between the nation and child in public and political discourse and the reality of most children's lives. One cartoon published on the front page of *Cumhuriyet* on Children's Day 1935 satirizes the joyous celebration of school children marching down the street. The reader viewed Children's Day through the perspective of a child-porter [*hamal*] carrying a basket filled with vegetables on his back. Clothes tattered, wearing worn-out slippers, he waves to a parade of happy children marching together. The child-porter calls out: "Long may you live! This is our holiday too!" The school children on the other hand bear placards with slogans like, "We want toys!" and "We want to play!" In this image, the cartoonist, Ratil Burak, represents for the reader the contradiction between an idealized childhood celebrated on Children's Day and the more commonly encountered child of limited means in the new Republic.

Such commentary undermined the official Republican ideology that Turkey was a classless, relatively homogenous society, in which people related to one another on solidarist connections by occupation (peasant/farmer, factory worker, greengrocer, etc.). Leftist journalists writing on child welfare utilized images of poor, undernourished or abandoned children to challenge the ideology. These writers and artists underscored in literary and visual terms the plight of poor children. Through their invocation of children excluded from the national imaginary of robust childhood, health and future strength, leftist elites called readers' attention to stratification along lines of economic, political and social difference.<sup>52</sup>

51 Published in *Akbaba*, 13 (100), 1938, 15.

52 William Hale writes of the mid-1930s Republican stance on labor unions:

The official rationale for the banning of strikes and trade unions under the 1936 Labour Law was part of the RPP's (Republican People's Party) 'populist' philosophy—that Turkey was not a class-divided society and that the worker's interests were well-protected by a paternalistic state. The point was hammered home by an article of the Societies Law, passed in 1938, which forbade the formation of 'associations based [...]

Public discourse on the nature of the child question and possible avenues to redress poverty and other related problems were constituted through vocabularies and practices that acknowledged and reified distinctions of privilege, stratification and hierarchy in the ‘new Turkey.’ Newspaper articles, editorials and memoirs used vocabularies of difference that underscored the embeddedness of social and economic hierarchies. In an article on the Turkish woman after the War of Independence, the author refers to those of the “high class” [*yüksek tabaka*], “families of middling conditions” [*orta halli aileler*], “artistic and merchant classes” [*sanat ve ticaret sınıfları*] and the “little classes” [*küçük sınıflar*]. The diminutive of “little” for the latter category euphemized the position of those at the lower rungs of the socioeconomic order.<sup>53</sup> In a different article, on the development of child protection in Turkey and the world, M. Celal Bey cites distinctions between children of the “working class” [*amele sınıflar*] and “children of families with middling means” [*mütevassıt ailelerin çocukları*].<sup>54</sup> Meanwhile, other writers characterized difference in terms of the binary ‘rich’ and ‘poor.’ In the early 1920s, İsmail Hakkı (Baltacıoğlu) took to task those elites who felt educating orphans towards “intellectual professions” [*fikir meslekleri*] was a waste of resources. His essay was reprinted in a collection for educators in 1930.<sup>55</sup> İsmail Hakkı ridiculed those who felt that educating the poor was misguided. He takes on the voice of one such critic:

You accustom them (orphans) to comfort, however, in their own families they do not have a place to sleep. You have them benefit from the possibilities of wealth, however they are poor children! In sum, you teachers who work in orphanages, you are not raising these children in accordance with the (reality of) their future lives that will bring poverty. You are not taking into account their families, past, and social class. You are ruining them.<sup>56</sup>

From this position, children were predestined to replicate the class position of their parents, and accustoming them to comfort ‘ruined’ their ability to

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on class’ (William Hale, *The Political and Economic Development of Modern Turkey* [London: Croom Helm, 1981], 65–66.)

53 “Bugünkü Türk Kadını: İstiklâl Harbindeki Yararlık ve Cesaretile Temayüz Etmıştır” [Today’s Turkish Woman: She Distinguished Herself through Bravery and Service during the Independence War], *Cumhuriyet*, July 25, 1934, 7.

54 M. Celal, “Çocuk Himayesinin Tekâmülü” [The Development of Child Protection / Child Welfare], *Çocuk Haftası* 1, 1929, 78.

55 İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu, “Yetim de Bir İnsandır!” [An Orphan is a Person Too!], in *Mürebblere* [For Teachers] (Istanbul: Sühulet Kütüphanesi, 1932), 184–188.

56 Baltacıoğlu, “Yetim de Bir İnsandır!” 184.

tolerate hardship and want. İsmail Hakkı's account underscores the politics of socio-economic differentiation in the early Republic. By the mid-1930s, the Republican government formalized its position that Turkey was a classless society, though this largely masked in rhetoric the playing out of difference, privilege and continuation of a divide between rich and poor.

For writers such as Sabiha Zekeriya, in the child resided a promise of the erasure of such difference and the realization of an ideal form of citizenship in which all children enjoyed good health, proper nutrition and the benefits of education:

The infant resting in the cradle neither has religion, race, nor class. Infants in a golden cradle and a cardboard cradle are the same. In this country no one can know which one is more useful. By organizing all the social power/strength, we must provide children with as much equality as the rights of society will allow.<sup>57</sup>

Sabiha Zekeriya's call to equality was shared by others. Hıfzı Tevfik's concerns for child welfare reprinted in *Çocuk Haftası* in 1929 also referenced the contrast between a child of privilege and of mean circumstances. In the author's estimation, children, regardless of whether they were rich or poor, deserved the attention of the nation's leaders:

I see that child whose golden hair frames the white face and deep blue eyes that he borrowed from the skies. Sometimes I see this child happily running in the wide salon with polished hardwood floors and heavy velour curtains. Sometimes I also see a child squatting in a corner of a building with ruined marble, broken and hungry, sadly thinking. These two children are the inheritors of the same blood and mind and I love them equally.<sup>58</sup>

Through education and good parenting these differences would fade in the new Republic. For Hıfzı Tevfik, the gulf between the experiences of rich and poor stemmed from historical circumstances in the late Ottoman Empire. The natural course of modernization and introducing mass education to all citizens would level such differences and create a universal, ideal Turkish childhood in which children balanced education and pleasure, were in good health and had plenty to eat and wear.

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57 Zekeriya (Sertel), "Çocuk Haftasının Gayesi Nedir?."

58 Hıfzı Tevfik, "Çocuklarımız" [Our Children], *Çocuk Haftası* 1, 1929, 88–89.

This vision was more confident than that of socialist activists. In Sabiha Zekeriya's estimation, for example, the Republican approach to the 'child question' and the continual invocation of children as the foundation of Turkey's future were little more than masks veiling the 'thinness' of its ideology on populism and goodwill towards 'the people.' Feroz Ahmad has framed the distinction between those holding administrative power and 'the people' in a way that underscores the object of leftist dissent and hints at more popular discontent as well:

[A] gulf was created between the rulers and the ruled who found they had less in common with the new elite which seemed to live in a world totally different from their own; the elite dressed differently and spoke a language they could not understand. And yet the rulers claimed to be populist. This alienation continued to grow throughout the 1930s and was aggravated with the death of the charismatic Atatürk.<sup>59</sup>

Difference could be marked in terms of dress, occupation, level of education, language and accent, home and neighborhood, and whether one was 'of the city' or a villager. Reformist projects accelerated and punctuated binary classifications so familiar in other national contexts of the same era, including: urban/rural, literate/illiterate, civil servant / manual laborer and progressive/backward, among others. In the realm of childhood, celebrating robust children, the accomplishments of school children, even giving sweets to orphans or allowing children to ride public transport toll-free for the day did as much to mark privilege in the new Turkey as to create new practices and beliefs in the name of modernity.

### Conclusion

Though social stratification and economic inequality were certainly 'real' in the early Republic, part of the reason 'the people' participated (or at least tolerated) the elite-driven reform had to do with their aspirations towards bettering their lives—of being 'modern.' One could hope that modernization would bring improvements in health, education and transportation, and access to goods that would make one's life more comfortable. Everyday encounters with children on streets, in factories, fields and schools underscored that Turkey was a country of great inequality. According to Kemalist social reformers, those

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59 Ahmad, *Making of Modern Turkey*, 92.

disparities would cease to exist once Turkey had adequately modernized industry and agricultural practices, implemented universal educational programs, and expanded health services for the populace.

Seth Koven comments that an irony of the history of liberal (or liberalizing) nation states resides in the fact that “the exploitation of the political capital” generated by the question of child poverty has been “grotesquely incommensurate with the actual resources devoted to meeting children’s needs.”<sup>60</sup> Ten years after the founding of the Republic, the Turkish government consistently allocated only a small proportion of its budget to issues of health and welfare and a slightly larger proportion to education and justice. On the other hand, allocations for internal security and international defense—the military, *jandarme* and police—commanded the largest percentage of annual state budgets.<sup>61</sup> One might say that this could only be expected given Turkey’s recent emergence as a nation-state at that time and the desire of leaders to secure sovereignty in an uncertain European and international climate. After all, only in retrospect do we know of Turkey’s ability to secure its borders and maintain an uneasy neutrality during World War II.

Regardless of claims for ‘national defense’ or state ‘sovereignty,’ it is difficult to reconcile the disparities in state spending on military and police measures with those resources spent on social programs, and institutionalizing reforms to education, health and welfare in the early Turkish Republic. Social activists, like Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel, Suad Derviş or Dr Fuat Umay, certainly pressured the state through their political activism to take a larger role in securing the basic needs of children and families who lived in poverty. They and other social ‘experts’ and medical professionals succeeded in getting the ‘child question’ onto the national agenda, as an important social problem to be addressed by the state. The critical voices of social activists and professional elites who worked with children helped to solidify the sense that the welfare of children should be one of the critical elements addressed in Turkey during the 1920s and 1930s. In the process they helped to redraw the boundaries of the obligations of the state towards its citizens.

This process of defining boundaries of state obligations towards children was marked in the early Republic by reformers’ intention to create a ‘modern society.’ For these reformers, the success of the project was predicated on ‘the people’ accepting the legitimacy of the Republican government, following governmental and professional elites’ programs for social transformation, and swearing allegiance to a new form of extended community—the nation-state.

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60 Seth Koven, personal communication.

61 Libal, “National Futures,” 89–90.

In so doing, they were to look beyond the gulf that was so readily apparent between rich and poor, investing in the state ideology of populism based on notions of social solidarity. In this way, ‘the people’ would work to better their own lives and the lives of their children, until at some undetermined point in the future a leveling of opportunities—of economic, social and political capital—would occur. Certainly at stake in the debates about the social meaning of poor children who played, begged or worked on the street were larger questions of social and economic transformation. Official denial of class interests, class-based affinities or changing inequalities ideologically masked new ways in which socio-economic difference was constructed in the young Republic.

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# Nation-Building and Childhood in Early Twentieth Century Egypt<sup>1</sup>

*Heidi Morrison*

## Introduction

In her autobiography, the Egyptian activist and writer Latifa Zayyat (1923–1996) recalls standing on the balcony of her home at 11 years of age and seeing the police shoot down 24 demonstrators. This was in 1934, when the Prime Minister, who served the King and the British Occupation, shut down all trains so that the leader of the majority Wafq party would not be able to tour the provinces. A procession of cars and thousands of people swarmed the streets. The municipality of the province ordered the digging of a series of trenches to prevent the demonstration from advancing. As Zayyat stood on the balcony, she counted the fallen bodies, observing guts exploding and deep red blood flowing like a waterfall. She noted one man raped by the policemen, while hearing her mother in the house cry.<sup>2</sup>

Writing many years later, Zayyat reflects on how she felt as a child watching the demonstration:

I find no refuge from the sense of powerlessness, of distress, or oppression that shakes me as the police shoot down twenty-four demonstrators that day, as I scream at my inability to do anything, to go down into the street and stop the bullets flying from the black guns.<sup>3</sup>

Although Zayyat saw herself as a helpless child in this moment of intense historic change, her life, and that of peers, was in reality at the heart of the Egyptian nationalist movement at the turn of the twentieth century. As we read further in Zayyat's autobiography, examples unfold of just how important children were to building the new Egyptian nation. Zayyat also recalls, for

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1 Parts of this article are adapted from the author's book *Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015; reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan).

2 Latifa Zayyat, *The Search: Personal Papers* (London: Quartet Books, 1996), 43.

3 *Ibid.*, 42.

example, many times in her childhood playing with her skipping rope on the rooftop while singing her favorite song: “Egypt, have no fear,/ This talk is all hot air./ We’re the girl guides,/ Our father is Saad Pasha,/ Our mother is Safiyya Hanim.”<sup>4</sup> Zayyat internalized patriotic songs that taught her the nation’s heroes and encouraged her to be a mother of future citizens. She also learned in school that her success in life depended on a centralized Egyptian government. Zayyat says she was aware from the age of six onwards that Egyptians had to leave their villages and move to Cairo if they wanted higher education.<sup>5</sup> While not directly fighting in the street battle, Zayyat was nonetheless engaged in a battle for the nation on her rooftop and in her school.

Egyptian nationalist reformers and intellectuals deliberately targeted the supple minds of children to create a new Egyptian nation independent from the British occupiers. Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905), for example, spoke to this goal when he claimed that the human spirit is like the earth because if it is not tended to and cultivated when it is tender then it will produce no results.<sup>6</sup> During the early twentieth century, children were at the forefront of elite Egyptians’ discourse and actions to build a state independent of the British, and to a lesser extent from the Ottomans. This resulted in a new conception of childhood, notably care for children became the responsibility of not just kin but outside experts. There was a synergistic relationship between the changing conception of childhood and the growing state apparatus. Such a fundamental shift in thinking set in place the development of large-scale institutions, such as public education, that remain in Egypt today. Although resembling the Western and Ottoman trajectories of modernization, the model of childhood that evolved in Egypt followed its own path. This chapter explores the theme of childhood in early twentieth-century Egypt through the work of Egyptian intellectuals and the Egyptian children’s press.

### Common Childhoods

Before exploring how the modern state apparatus entered Egyptian children’s lives, it is useful to paint a picture of the typical network that shaped Egyptian childhoods during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Generally, children’s immediate and extended families prepared them for adulthood

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4 Ibid., 17.

5 Ibid., 37.

6 Muhammad ‘Abduh, *al-Islam wa-l-radd ‘ala muntaqidhi* (Cairo: Al-Maktaba al-Tijariyya al-Kubra, 1928), 165.

skills, leaving recreational activities to the children themselves. Adults believed that at around the age of seven, children developed *'aql*, which is reason, maturity and the ability to learn. Adults did not throw children into the world of adults as soon as they developed *'aql* but instead gradually introduced them to work, allocating time as well for some degree of studies and play.

In rural areas, adults largely believed that their children's futures were in the local surroundings, be it the land, household or artisan trades. Girls stayed at home until around the age of five, when they would then begin fetching water and helping their mothers with such work as cooking, cleaning and making fuel cakes. Boys also usually stayed home until the age of five, when they would then begin to take the donkeys to the field or the buffalo to the canal. At around eight years of age some girls might begin work as maids in a middle-class home, but most stayed at home to continue helping the family. Boys, on the other hand, might begin part-time religious schooling (in a *kuttāb*) while working in the fields. In their free time, boys would often wander past houses, calling out the names of their friends until a group formed for play on the land and in the canals. Play for girls was more limited than for boys because their opportunities for leaving the house were fewer and they were married at a young age. Both boys and girls often listened alongside adults to community storytellers, musicians and poets.

### Historical Backdrop

In Egypt, the process of bringing children into the state fold began under Muhammad 'Ali (1769–1849) at the start of the nineteenth century. 'Ali attempted to create a dynasty separate from the Ottoman Empire, to which Egypt technically belonged. 'Ali sent missions to Europe to learn customs and habits (including those relating to offspring, marriage, games and sports) that could be transmitted to the Egyptian domicile, in hopes of modernizing the masses.<sup>7</sup> He also secured a hereditary system of governance through total control of the military, which included conscription of children.<sup>8</sup> 'Ali's reorganization of the Egyptian economy around long-staple cotton as a cash crop allowed him to secure a monopoly that locked peasant children into working for the state. 'Ali prohibited family migration to the cities, conscripted children laborers and

7 Lisa Pollard, "The Habits and Customs of Modernity: Egyptians in Europe and the Geography of Nineteenth-Century Nationalism," *Arab Studies Journal*, 7/8 (2), 1999/2000, 52–74.

8 Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men: Mehmed Ali, His Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2002).

ordered Egyptian peasants to cultivate cotton to the exclusion of all other crops, which he bought and then sold to British textile manufactures at a higher price.

‘Ali’s use of children to help build a nation was not unique in this century of budding nation-states. Around the world, leaders sought to help build the future of their nations by instituting changes in the lives of their littlest citizens. For example, during the partisan wars that broke out in Argentina after its independence from Spain in 1816, the Rosas regime assumed control in 1829 and moved aggressively to employ lower-class children, who were seen as a potential source of social disorder. In Japan, the Meiji leaders who took control in 1868 set out to create a centralized school system that would mobilize the people against an encroaching Western imperialism. In the nineteenth century climate of economic and imperial rivalry, the Ottoman Empire sought to hold on to its subjects through a series of centralizing state reforms targeted at children in the various provinces. The Ottoman Empire attempted to govern its diffuse populations by training more teachers and educators as agents of the state.<sup>9</sup>

The successors of Muhammad ‘Ali continued to use children to build the Egyptian dynasty that he envisioned independent of the Ottomans. They did so by a continuation of his economic policies that interfered in the lives of the country’s children. By the end of the nineteenth century, the single most common feature of most Egyptian childhoods was participation in the state cotton economy.<sup>10</sup> Government primary schools for boys had operated in limited number since 1837 and for girls since 1873; however, the state made dimly low expenditures on education and continued the process of intervening in the lives of children by exploiting the Nile Valley to provide British mills with raw cotton.<sup>11</sup>

### Creating a New Child

By the end of the nineteenth century, there existed a group of Egyptians who wanted an end to the Muhammad ‘Ali dynasty, which they viewed as a puppet

9 Emine Evered, *Empire and Education under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012).

10 Ellis Goldberg, a political scientist, found that in Egypt during the period 1880–1950 the labor of children was the single largest input for the production of the country’s cotton. Overall, the labor of boys accounted for nearly 35% of the total labor requirement for the major Egyptian crops, and they were mostly employed in cotton. See Ellis Goldberg, *Trade, Reputation, and Child Labor in Twentieth-Century Egypt* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 65.

11 Goldberg calculates that demand for the labor of children and the acquisition of literacy were inversely related. *Ibid.*, 149.

for the recently established British protectorate in Egypt. These Egyptian nationalists, similar to the Young Turks, also refused to be part of a large Islamic *umma*, for which the Ottoman Empire was advocating to curb its looming demise. The first Egyptian nationalist groupings appeared in 1879, under the direction of Ahmad Urabi (1841–1911), due to dissatisfaction with Isma‘il, the grandson of Muhammad ‘Ali, and with European intruders. After the First World War, Sa‘d Zaghlul (1859–1927) and the Wafd party led the nationalist movement, culminating in the Revolution of 1919 and Britain’s Unilateral Declaration of Egyptian Independence in 1922. However, Egypt did not really obtain full independence from the British until the military coup of 1952.

By the turn of the twentieth century, efforts by nationalist reformers and intellectuals to intervene in the lives of children to develop an independent Egypt were well underway. For instance, one year after Egypt transformed from a protectorate into a semi-autonomous state (1923), elementary education became compulsory for all Egyptian children, even though very few children actually attended. Taha Husayn (1889–1973), a leading intellectual and future Minister of Education, placed a large responsibility for effecting changes in child rearing onto the government. In his writings, Husayn articulates what exactly the government needs to address: teaching children the language, history and geography of Egypt and ensuring the development of the children’s entire being. Learning how to think, be free and have peace, all aspects of a desired new citizenry, come from proper education whose goal is not just to get a job, nor only to teach literacy and mathematics:

If he [the young boy] grows up weak of mind, corrupt of opinion, malformed of thought, unable to understand and make judgment, ready to be influenced by everything that he encounters, and in compliance with everything that prevails upon him, he is dangerous to himself and his nation because he is dangerous to the social system.<sup>12</sup>

Husayn placed the responsibility of educating children on the state because he did not think the masses could be relied upon alone to educate the country; the government is obliged to provide education to its people because the people are not fit to do so themselves.<sup>13</sup> Most Egyptian, he explains, are still completely ignorant and even the small percentage of Egyptians who are educated

12 Taha Husayn, *Mustaqbal al-thaqafa fi Misr* (Cairo: Matba‘at al-Ma‘arif wa-Maktabatuha, 1938), 108.

13 This is in addition to the fact that by this point the constitution made education compulsory.

(he estimates this at 20%) have been taught in either a religious or European fashion.<sup>14</sup> One concrete way by which the government must ensure a proper education system, according to Husayn, is by ensuring teachers are properly trained and supported.

Nationalists wanted to bring children into the fold of the state through means such as education, raising a new generation of Egyptians skilled in modern knowledge and technology who would be strong enough to resist the British. The very first children's magazines to appear in Egypt were about teaching science and did not include any entertainment, humor or illustrations. Children's magazines thereafter were generally educational, teaching math skills or historical facts. *Samir al-Tilmidh* [Samir the Student], for example, published several articles on geography, such as the forests of Congo and winter climates in Nordic countries.<sup>15</sup> *Waladi* [My Boy] also emphasized geography, running an ongoing column called "Around the World" about transportation, food, water and natural resources in different regions.<sup>16</sup> Muhammad al-Harawi, a children's poet, produced several collections of poetry in the vein of teaching children their importance to the nation as future workers and professionals. In the introduction to one of his collections, entitled *The New Child*, he declares that the book's goal is to educate children on everything from how to properly greet visitors to how to count to how to give a speech.

It was not uncommon to find in the early twentieth-century Egyptian children's press photographs of children posed next to new technology, such as typewriters, automobiles, clocks, cameras, bicycles, telescopes, moving pictures and record players. What is most striking in all of these photos is the way in which the set-up of the scene by the photographer brings the viewer's focus onto the objects and not the child. It is as if the child were there only to show off his possession of or mastery over modern western technology. Whether the photo be of a record player on a table in the center of a room, with children's backs pushed up against encircling chairs, or of a motionless boy staring at a typewriter, the photos seem to say that the child is defined less by his/her relationship to the object than the presence of the object itself. The captions to the photos say nothing of the child's feelings about what he or she is doing, instead drawing attention to children's use of technology. This in turn conveys that childhood is valued not so much for the child him/herself but for the vessel of knowledge that the child represents for the future of Egypt.

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14 Husayn, *Mustaqbal al-thaqafa fi Misr*, 71.

15 See, for example, the issues for May 1933 and January 1934.

16 For an example of an "Around the World" column focusing on China see *Waladi*, February 18, 1937.

The rising Egyptian middle class, *effendiya*, fostered the idea of a new child skilled in modern knowledge and technology. Changing social class in Egypt was associated with displaying changes in one's ideas about childhood. Becoming *effendi*, or effendification, was a strategy and performance for people from lower-class urban and rural backgrounds who wanted to join the ranks of middle-income families in mid-level government professions such as teaching or the law. There was a synergistic relationship between these new professions and Egyptian nationalism: those who became upwardly mobile through education went on to engage in professions such as journalism that helped produce new ideas for the nation.<sup>17</sup> As Lucie Ryzova observes, “[a] state-building project based on liberal ideology and institutions needs a middle class.”<sup>18</sup>

Another way to build the nation was to teach the children that they had a shared heritage. Perhaps this is most explicitly articulated in the words of one advice manual that tells children: “You must love this country as you love your father, mother, brothers, and sisters.”<sup>19</sup> This same message of collective belonging can be found throughout the bulk of children's literature, from the cover of the February 1934 issue of *Samir al-Tilmidh*, which features a picture of the Prince with an announcement of birthday wishes to him on behalf of all the readers, to the introduction to a translation by Kamil Kilani, a children's book writer, of a story about the Russian leader Boutros (Peter) the Great, in which readers are told that the story will provoke in them love of the nation.<sup>20</sup> It is almost as if the King is presented to the child readers as their father, and the Prince as their brother.

In order to implant in children the feeling of solidarity, the press presented to children the nation not just as a family, but also as a family that was thousands of years old. In the children's press there are several references to the golden age of pharaonic times and Egypt's roots in ancient civilization. Harawi for example, wrote poems about the pyramids, the Sphinx, pharaonic holidays and the collection of antiquities held in Qasr al-Nil. The pyramids are described as the tombs of the old kings of Egypt and lauded for their indestructibility

17 Omnia El Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 16–18. Another example is Taha Husayn serving as Minister of Education.

18 Lucie Ryzova, “Egyptianizing Modernity through the ‘New Effendiya,’” in Arthur Goldschmidt, Amy J. Johnson and Baraka A. Salmoni (eds), *Re-Envisioning Egypt 1919–1952* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2005), 131.

19 Ahmad Afandi Salih, *Kitab ‘allimu al-atfal ma yaf’alunahu wa-hum rijal* (Cairo: Al-Matba‘a al-Amira, 1894), 22.

20 *Samir al-Tilmidh*, February, 1934, 1; Kamil Kilani, *al-Malik al-Najjar* (Cairo: Matba‘at al-Ma‘rifa, 1935), 1.

through time, which is said to indicate that Egypt is the mother of work and science. The idea of Egypt existing as a cohesive community since the pharaonic ages is an invented idea. The process by which Egyptians came to call themselves Egyptian in the last few centuries required coercion of the people by its leaders for their own self-interest.<sup>21</sup> As the historian Jamal Hamdan discusses in his four-volume study on the identity of Egypt, the building of Egyptian society has been based on both a continuation of old ways and an adoption of new ways through a series of many different occupiers (Persian, Roman, Greek, Mamluk, Ottoman, French and British).<sup>22</sup> Answers to questions such as whether or not Egypt is pharaonic or African or Mediterranean or Arab have depended on the political climate of the time during which the questions were being asked. For the first half of the twentieth century the two main intellectual trends in Egypt regarding the country's identity consisted of (1) those who said Egyptian identity derives itself from its pharaonic, Mediterranean and Arab past and that this identity was neither purely secular nor purely Islamic; (2) and the Salafi movement, which said Egyptian identity derives from its Islamic past and that Western liberal ideas can be found in Islamic beliefs and practices.

Teaching children a cohesive national identity required the use of new gender roles. In 1900, Qasim Amin's book *The New Woman* heralded a new kind of woman in the Egyptian cultural scene: the new woman was supposed to be educated and to advance the nation by raising the moral and material level of the house.<sup>23</sup> The goal of educating girls was to produce better domestic caregivers for future Egyptian generations.<sup>24</sup> In 1905, a column entitled "[Which Education is more Influential: Education in the Home or in the School?]" appeared in *al-Tarbiya* [Upbringing], a magazine for teachers:

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21 Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*.

22 Jamal Hamdan, *Shakhsīyat Misr: Dirasa fi 'Abqariyat al-Makan*, Volume 4 (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1995), 552.

23 Mona Russell, *Creating the New Egyptian Woman: Consumerism, Education and National Identity, 1863–1922* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

24 Qasim Amin's previous book *The Liberation of Women*, published in 1899, was seminal—it argued that children are ignorant because mothers are ignorant. Both works have been published in English in a combined edition, Qasim Amin, *The Liberation of Women and The New Woman: Two Documents in the History of Egyptian Feminism* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2000, translated by Samiha Sidhom Peterson.). For more information on the role of mothers in early twentieth-century Egyptian society, see Omnia El Shakry, "Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt," in Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.), *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 126–170.

The family is the first school that is responsible for the youth's education at the outset. [...] Children that go on the wrong path and deviate were raised by ignorant, uneducated mothers and the roots of this badness will not be able to be changed later (in school).<sup>25</sup>

In the children's press, girls were not taught like boys to be warriors and leaders of the nation: in Kamil Kilani's two hundred-plus stories for children there are no female heroines and the female characters that appear are usually presented as prizes/rewards for the male heroes. Also, magazines that ran ongoing stories rarely used females as the main characters, or if they did it was in the role of being a homemaker.<sup>26</sup>

Girls' engagement in social, cultural and economic realms was defined as much by class as by gender. For example, the type of education offered to an upper/middle class girl in a state school was different from that for a lower-class girl. The class-based curriculum meant that upper/middle class girls had additional opportunities to learn language, art, dance and piano. The reason for teaching upper/middle class girls these additional skills was so that they could be appropriate wives for the new *effendi* family. Children of the *effendi* class needed mothers who could stimulate them. *effendi* husbands needed engaging wives.

The idea also emerged that experts should play a role in not just supervizing the intellectual and mental development of children but also the physical. According to Husayn:

The state is not just responsible for building the mind of the child and his heart, but also is responsible for the protection of his body from diseases and providing him with steady growth that does not expose him to trouble and immorality.<sup>27</sup>

Husayn thus claims that if the Egyptian government cares for the children, then the country is guaranteed generations of people (i.e. a nation) healthy in body and mind. According to nationalist elites, play, for instance, was no longer to be left to the whims of the children alone. In 1905, *al-Tarbiya* also ran an article which defined the two types of exercise possible for children, spiritual

25 "[Which Education is more Influential: Education in the Home or in the School?]" *al-Tarbiya*, March 1, 1905, 10.

26 The magazine *Waladi*, run by a female editor, in 1937 published a piece on Joan of Arc, but the female heroine did not reappear and the title of the magazine itself meant "My Boy."

27 Husayn, *Mustaqbal al-thaqafa fi Misr*, 101.

and material. The former included visiting old monuments, reading and listening to music, while the latter included walking and swimming. The article's stated purpose is to show the difference to children between activities that are for the mind and those that are for the body, and the ideal activities that combine both, such as billiards. Each edition of *Waladi* contained a column on exercises with illustrations on how to perform them. The column advises the child to do these exercises ten times per day before school. *Waladi* also contained a column entitled "[Come, Let's Play]," in which examples of children's games were explained, such as one in which children form a circle holding hands with one child in the middle who must escape.<sup>28</sup> Not only were the types of exercise prescribed but so too were the times at which they should occur. Harawi published a poem called "[Sports and School]," encouraging children to play at specific intervals in between their lessons.<sup>29</sup>

Nations are formed through discipline and also attachment to an "imagined community."<sup>30</sup> During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, segments of the Egyptian population were targets of the hegemonic state-building process: peasants, for building the army;<sup>31</sup> mothers, for raising future citizens;<sup>32</sup> middle class men, for strengthening national honor;<sup>33</sup> and the poor, around whose needs politicians vied for power.<sup>34</sup> The intrusion of outside experts in the rearing of children was essential for creating a nation. Foucault posits that society imposes through such institutions as the school a normalized type of behavior that children internalize. These institutions are in turn "architects of childhood."<sup>35</sup> With the intervention of the state in the lives of children, reformers sought to create informed, skilled and loyal future citizens.

28 "[Come, Let's Play]," *Waladi*, February 18, 1937, 24.

29 Muhammad al-Harawi, "[Sports and School]," *al-Tifl al-jadid*, 1931, 38.

30 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 2000.

31 Fahmy, *All the Pasha's Men*.

32 Lisa Pollard, "Learning Gendered Modernity: The Home, The Family and the Schoolroom in the Construction of Egyptian National Identity (1885–1919)." In Amira Sonbol (ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies* (NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), 249–269.

33 Wilson Jacob, *Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colonial Modernity, 1870–1940* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

34 Mine Ener, *Managing Egypt's Poor and the Politics of Benevolence, 1800–1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

35 Mark A. Jones, *Children as Treasures: Childhood and the Middle Class in Early Twentieth Century Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 3.

## Institutions

According to nationalist elites, the parents and the village were no longer sufficient as the sole caregivers of children. Children needed the government and trained professionals. Nationalists claimed that it was out of moral obligation that the government and elites were stepping into the guardianship role hitherto played exclusively by parents, kin and community. The new concept of childhood that evolved in the first half of the twentieth century required institutions to implement it, and children's literature was one such institution. Children in Egypt had always been exposed to stories, but during the first half of the twentieth century classics, translations and new stories became more accessible to children through the creation of a children's press and through the encouragement of reading.<sup>36</sup>

The initial interest in Egypt in children's literature began with the Egyptian intellectual a Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, who brought the concept to Egypt from France at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Al-Tahtawi founded the first printing press in Egypt, Bulaq Printing Press, in 1824. However, large-scale children's literature did not begin until decades later, following improvements in technology, advancements in the science of bookmaking, and the changing concept of childhood. After the 1920s, when the children's press became a true commercial enterprise, it also began to include more and more translated foreign material. This was not just because of what the writers and editors wanted to teach children and what was cheaper to produce, but was also due what the readers wanted to buy. However, the foreign material used was often modified to fit local customs. For example, Mickey Mouse came to Egypt in 1936 and the translators appealed to local popular tradition by producing texts in the form of *asjā'* rhymed *zajals* and using dialect (and which did not fit into the speech bubbles). Tintin arrived in 1948, renamed Humhum and changed to a darker color. But Tintin did not use *zajals* and this marked the beginning of foreign texts being directly translated without adapting to local style (other than writing from right to left). Local artists and original work for children was revived at the end of the 1960s.

Several independent children's magazines existed at the start of the twentieth century addressing political, social and cultural themes.<sup>37</sup> One

36 Also, mothers were taught in women's periodicals to encourage their children to read. See Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and the Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 140.

37 For a full review of these magazines see Bertrand Millet, *Samir, Mickey, Sindbad et les autres: Histoire de la presse enfantine en Égypte* (Cairo: CEDEJ, 1987).

magazine that is representative of the whole body of children's magazines was *Baba Sadiq* [Papa Sadik], launched in 1934 by Muhammad Sadiq 'Adb al-Rahman and which monopolized the children's press market until its disappearance in 1945. It had normative objectives and was almost entirely written in simple classical Arabic. It was published every two weeks and was 20 pages, with photos but few illustrations and no color. Each week the magazine showcased stories of traveling animals, for example the rabbit Chuchu who discovered many parts of the world. The magazine also had moralizing texts, a page of poetry, and contests, as well as a page dedicated just for girls. Portrait photos of young readers often decorated the front page, and the back page was dedicated to movie actors or singers (for example, Abd al-Wahhab was in the first edition in 1936). The magazine also ran advertisements for certain books and shops in Cairo and Alexandria. There were several pages dedicated to the King, especially after the death of King Fuad and the coronation of Faruq. The restrictions of the Second World War brought the magazine to a close.

New social welfare projects were another example of an institution through which outsiders became involved in the lives of children. Throughout Islamic history private groups and endowments ensured some kind of care for the poor. However, the social work done at the turn of the twentieth century was different in that its goal was to build the Egyptian nation. From the last decades of the nineteenth century through the first decades of the twentieth century, children appeared center stage in discourses on social assistance, public health and public safety in Egypt.<sup>38</sup> In 1935, the Egyptian Congress created a program calling for the creation of village health and educational facilities and in 1936 Congress upgraded the Department of Public Health to the Ministry of Health; however, few programs were executed, for political and financial reasons.<sup>39</sup> Community networks were being replaced by state agencies for dealing with issues such as premarital 'defloration' and child marriage.<sup>40</sup>

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38 There was for all people a trend towards more government control over social services. See Ener, *Managing Egypt's Poor*; Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation: The Family Politics of Modernizing, Colonizing, and Liberating Egypt 1805–1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

39 Nancy Gallagher, *Egypt's Other Wars: Epidemics and the Politics of Public Health* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 12.

40 For information on feminist efforts to create minimum marriage age laws in the personal status code see Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and the Nation*, 127–128.

### Alongside the Western Model

In the West, the most significant transition in the history of childhood is regarded as having occurred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Hugh Cunningham identifies this period as being when the ideal of education and special protections for children spread to broad segments of the population.<sup>41</sup> This chapter refrains from reducing the history of childhood in Egypt to a comparative one that holds modern Western standards of childhood as the model. Modernity was not a force emanating from the West and replicated by Egypt: although Egyptian intellectuals articulated similar ideals, particularly in regards to state intervention in the lives of children, they did so in a different framework. They did not adopt wholesale a Western model of childhood, but nor did they retreat to traditional extended family patterns as a form of refuge from and objection to western occupation. Egyptians carved out an identity that accepted, rejected and modified various aspects of modern European ideas.

Nationalist elites' ideas about childhood in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had three specifically Egyptian characteristics. First, Egyptian justifications and motivations for reforming childhood in Egypt emerged in large part from resistance to imperialism, which translated into Islamic heritage playing a role in shaping ideas towards childhood. During this period, Egyptian reactions to imperialism and the colonial gaze occurred on many levels of society, elite and non-elite. According to the historian Wilson Jacob: "The nature of colonial occupation was not only a matter of military and economic domination; it was equally and perhaps more insidiously a question of psychological domination."<sup>42</sup> Colonizing Egypt required not only physical control of the country but also control of the inner, mental sphere of Egyptians. The belief that Egyptian parents preferred to have their children work in fields rather than attend schools is part of the general colonial ideology in which the British portrayed themselves as bearers of civilization. Western images of Egyptian children often stressed the irresponsibility of Egyptian child-rearing practices and conveyed the idea that the ragged condition of poor Egyptian children was due to moral and cultural decline. For example, a series of commercial slides produced by an American company in Egypt and distributed in the United States and Europe in 1896 shows a group of naked children sitting

41 Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005).

42 Jacob, *Working Out Egypt*, 90.

in the dirt in undeniable conditions of hardship. The caption reads: “Degenerate Egypt—Wretchedness of the People.” The photo gives the impression that the Egyptian child is helpless and a victim of a backward culture that produces negligent mothers who bear hordes of children.

As noted above, the Salafi movement, which started in the mid-nineteenth century, held that Egyptian identity derives from its Islamic past and that western liberal ideas can be found in Islamic beliefs and practices. In their calls to reform child-rearing practices, Egyptian Salafi intellectuals drew on ideas about childhood from Islamic, Arab and Mediterranean heritage. For example, the intellectual ‘Abdallah al-Nadim (1845–1896) argued that the form of upbringing which he advocates used to be a part of the East at a time when writers produced books on child rearing to bring children “from the lowest point of bestiality to the highest point of humanness.”<sup>43</sup> Just as European social sciences made the Egyptians passive objects of observation and classification, the Egyptian intellectual elite saw Egyptians as educable and able to move out of stagnation. As Ashis Nandy argues: “Colonialism colonizes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within the colonized societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all.”<sup>44</sup>

Second, in addition to reforming childhood out of resistance to imperialism, of central concern in discussions by Egyptian nationalists in reforming childhood was providing children with a moral education. Egyptian ideas about childhood were closely linked to religion. Tahtawi, for instance, wrote that there are three ways in which children should be nourished: first, feed the body; second, feed morality; and third, feed the mind. If any one of these nutrients is lacking in a child, then the child will be incomplete as an adult. A great mind, according to Tahtawi, is nothing without great morals. Tahtawi illustrates this point by saying that a person, no matter how great their skills, will not be able to successfully debate another person if he has hubris. Two examples of good moral behavior, according to Tahtawi, are modesty and hard work. This is similar to Taha Husayn, who explained that a proper education is not just for getting a job, nor only for teaching literacy and mathematics:

If he [the young boy] grows up weak of mind, corrupt of opinion, malformed of thought, unable to understand and make judgment, ready to be influenced by everything that he encounters, and in compliance with

43 ‘Abdallah al-Nadim, writing in *al-Ustadh*, August 24, 1892, 202.

44 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), xi.

everything that prevails upon him, he is dangerous to himself and his nation because he is dangerous to the social system.<sup>45</sup>

The focus on raising a moral child must be understood in the context of the Middle Eastern heritage of *adab* literature. Muslims in the past were familiar with the concept of childhood as a distinct stage in the human life cycle and developed rules and methods of child rearing, education and medical-hygienic treatment to assist children in the gradual process of development. *Adab* literature dated from the medieval period and was part of a large body of literary sources—including medical and legal writings, collections of hadith and consolation treatises for bereaved parents—that showed the importance Muslims thinkers paid to childhood. *Adab* literature is a corpus of instructions on how to raise a child to be a man who possesses appropriate manners, morals, hygiene and comportment.

Third, intellectuals and reformers in Egypt, unlike their contemporaries in Europe, framed the actualization of the child's self (or, in other words, the fulfilment of the child's potential) as having the purpose of serving the community. Starting from the eighteenth century, liberal European social-science ideas on the child's self-actualization were disarticulated from religious instruction and based on the individual as a sovereign and autonomous subject. This emphasis on the individuality of the child is seen in the writings of John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose works on childhood played an important role in shaping European conceptions of childhood in the nineteenth century. As Cunningham notes: "The art of child-rearing became one of hearkening to Nature, giving free reign to growth, rather than bending twigs to a desired shape."<sup>46</sup> In Egypt, however, intellectuals argued that teaching moral values in children would serve the rebirth of the whole community.

Changing the nation through reforming childhood was a widespread concern in this era. Egyptian nationalist elites integrated some of the new European ideas about childhood into their discourse, but with a unique twist: they asserted that their ideas originated in the Egyptian heritage, be it pharaonic, Mediterranean, Islamic or Arab. However, Egypt also resembled other countries in the Middle East that also articulated a new form of childhood in a local framework. For example, Fortna writes about state-led initiatives to modernize the late Ottoman Empire population by infusing imported western educational systems with moral content appropriate to the Islamic-Ottoman

45 Husayn, *Mustaqbal al-thaqafa fi Misr*, 108.

46 Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, 59.

context.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, the Lebanese resisted the French colonial project by stressing their children were sons and daughters of Arab and Lebanese civilization.<sup>48</sup> Ela Greenberg finds that the Islamic Girls' School in Mandatory Jerusalem disseminated nationalist ideas through a curriculum that combined the study of Arabic and Islam with secular academic subjects.<sup>49</sup> These societies made the modernizing project both western and traditional, so as not to be implicated in the colonial system.

### Conclusion

Egyptian nationalist reformers and intellectuals wrote and advocated for experts, primarily in the form of the state, to increase their reach into the lives of children, be it through such institutions as schools, social welfare projects or the children's press. For some children, childhood went from being primarily a private family affair to being a matter of concern to strangers. Nationalist elites communicated the idea that the household, extended family and local religious school were not sufficient to raise the next generation of Egyptians.

The goal of the experts was to build a future independent nation by preparing children to serve Egypt professionally and to hold the nation together by having a shared identity. The resulting change in childhood from being a matter almost exclusively for family to a matter of large importance to outside experts occurred in a context of shifting class and gender dynamics. The new ideas about childhood were particularly directed towards parents of the upper class whose children had access to education. The modern Egyptian model of childhood did not develop as a copy of the western model, but neither as one cut off from outside influences. Modern ideas about childhood were refashioned and renegotiated by Egyptians. This process was not uncommon in other formerly Ottoman territories of the era, including the seat of the old Empire itself: Turkey.

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47 Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

48 Taylor Long, "Political Parenting in Colonial Lebanon," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 4 (2), 2011, 257–281.

49 Ela Greenberg, "Educating Muslim Girls in Mandatory Jerusalem," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 36 (1), 2004, 1–19.

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**PART 2**

***War, Gender and Nation***



## Being a Girl in Ottoman Novels<sup>1</sup>

*Elif Akşit*

The difficulty of conceptualizing girlhood has led to the under-representation of girls in scholarly writing. In this chapter, I tackle this difficulty by focusing on how girls are depicted in Ottoman novels, exploring the interrelationship between the processes of becoming a nation, as formulated and reformulated by the novel, and the process of becoming as revealed in girls' lives. In other words, the birth of the novel, the birth of the nation and the birth of 'the girl' can be considered as part of the same broader development.

The close links between gender and nationalism and the ways in which nationalist discourse instrumentalized women's bodies in order to create soldiers to fight for the nation have been explored in various contexts in recent decades.<sup>2</sup> However, the centrality to this endeavour of girls and their stories of becoming has been less explored.<sup>3</sup> This chapter demonstrates this centrality by considering how male and female authors of the late Ottoman period tell stories of girls in the process of becoming a woman, and of the feminine as a project of becoming.<sup>4</sup> I draw on examples from the works of Namık Kemal, Ahmet Mithat, Fatma Aliye, Halide Edip, Reşat Nuri, Samipaşazade Sezai and

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- 1 Many thanks for the help of Ben Fortna, Alev Özkazanç, Ezgi Sarıtaş and Firdevs Canbaz.
  - 2 See Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop*, 5, 1978, 9–65; Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (eds), "Womanly Duties: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States in France, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States, 1880–1920," *American Historical Review*, 95 (4), 1990, 1092–1093; id., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (London: Routledge, 1993); Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall (eds), *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2000); Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military-Nation: Militarism, Gender and Education in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Beth Baron, *Egypt as a Woman: Nationalists, Gender, and Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
  - 3 I have developed the theme of girls as future mothers in my PhD thesis: Elif Akşit, "Girls' Education and the Paradoxes of Modernity and Nationalism in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic." Binghamton University, Department of History, 2004.
  - 4 See Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook (eds), *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Rosi Braidotti, "Becoming Woman: Or Sexual Difference Revisited," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20 (3), 2003, 43–64; Patty Sotirin, "Becoming-woman," In Charles J. Stivale (ed.), *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts* (Durham, UK: Acumen, 2005) 98–109.

Halit Ziya<sup>5</sup> and I argue that while male authors either idealized or criticized girls and the conditions they had to bear, women's writings on girls were *lines of flight* from these tendencies of instrumentalization into real stories of becoming.<sup>6</sup> Male writers also used girls' *bildungsroman* in encompassing, recreating and rewriting womanhood.<sup>7</sup> I conclude that it is in fact this genuine search for becoming that the nationalist aspirations for meta-narratives depended upon, and that women's writing provides us with more realistic stories of becoming than those of male writers, whose work remains at the instrumental level of educating the public to be nationalists. Overall, Ottoman novels seem to have a fixation on girls; slave girls in particular stand out as powerful figures symbolizing everything that is wrong with the Empire, especially in men's novels.

It is quite hard to conceptualize 'the girl' within childhood. Her being a girl, and not just a child, is the point where she starts to be told to behave in certain ways: either like a child, like a boy or like a woman. But at the same time she is considered to be a woman and is asked to conceal herself and to serve like a woman; she is harassed and becomes a magnet for the male gaze. In the story of the girl lies the history of modernity, even more than is found nationalism,

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5 A wider array of novels written in the different languages of the Ottoman Empire could be compared in future studies.

6 This concept is explained in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia II*, translated by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 9–10.

7 The feminist usage of Deleuze and Guattari's theory, and especially the term "becoming-woman," is a much debated issue. Deleuze and Guattari both critique and affirm feminism via the term "becoming woman," underlining the necessity of feminist politics, women "winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity," but saying that this subject (of feminism) functions by "drying up a spring or stopping a flow." They find Nietzschean definitions of resentment and the will to power in this trait of feminism, where the telling of untold stories feed rather than abolish resentment and the road to empowerment becomes a way to the will to power:

It is, of course, indispensable for women to conduct a molar politics, with a view to winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity: "we as women [...]" makes its appearance as a subject of enunciation. But it is dangerous to confine oneself to such a subject, which does not function without drying up a spring or stopping a flow. The song of life is often intoned by the driest of women, moved by resentment, the will to power and cold mothering.

DELEUZE and GUATTARI, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 276

However, in exploring alternative truths, other paths also open, such as the case of women telling girls' stories and freeing the girl figure—and thus themselves—from being used or being killed in her passage to womanhood, as was the case in the prior examples of novel in the Ottoman Empire.

but ‘the girl’ is so hard to define, because she carries many stories with her all at once. These powers are the same powers that make her invisible, that cause her to be harassed and to remain silent. Many men, many projects, feed from these powers but the girl remains invisible. It is easy to justify this invisibility: she is not a child, she is not a woman—however, at the same time, she is both a child and a woman.

In order to better pursue this multi-faceted identity, in the following section I focus on the changing dynamics of family and education in Ottoman girls’ lives. I then discuss how the creation of a new literature, the new idea of nationalism and the concept of the new girl coincide, drawing on literature and philosophy to evaluate how novels develop the interrelationship between literature, politics and gender, and to explore the ways in which the in-betweenness and power of girlhood is manipulated and reflected in the Ottoman novel.

### The Nineteenth Century and the Rise of the Girl

The family is an appropriate starting point in this search; however, although the family and the household as centres of trade and intellectual life in the Ottoman Empire are significant aspects of Ottoman historiography, the place of women has been under-researched. Further, although ‘the birth of the girl’ concerns all social classes, studies on the family have focused predominantly on the religious practices, education and daily lives of elite women.<sup>8</sup> Yet starting with the family is important, as the passage to the public spheres of education and media have their beginnings in the harems. I have previously argued that the public education programs for girls initiated by the Ottoman state in the early nineteenth century had their roots in harem education; existing forms of household education were transferred to the public education curriculum, and thus girls’ education in the Empire represented a continuum between the harem system and the new technical schools. Including the harem in the analysis of public education practices also allows for a better understanding of women’s roles in the transformation from private to public education.

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8 The few examples that take families as an important unit of analysis include: Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Hala Fattah, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745–1900* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997); Thabit Abdullah, *Merchants, Mamluks, and Murder: The Political Economy of Trade in Eighteenth Century Basra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

Literature is a source for women and girls in the private sphere as well as the public sphere, with the authors Fatma Aliye and Halide Edip providing details that should be evaluated carefully.

The elite families that were bases for women's networks were deeply embedded in the political life of the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> Kinship relations were widened to include the service providers of the household, meaning that the elite structure of the family and the different forms of education it provided encompassed different classes: less wealthy family members, service providers, high-ranking slaves, low-ranking slaves, etc. Elite households were thus centres for the systematized education of girls before the establishment of girls' public schools. Older women educated younger women, and educated women occupied higher ranks in these hierarchies.<sup>10</sup> Thus, pursuing the intellectual roots of women's education in families promises to provide an alternative history of education in the Ottoman Empire.

The subjects taken up in harem education consisted of sewing, embroidery, playing the harp and singing, and memorization of customs and ceremonies.<sup>11</sup> The harem transformed greatly over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and this became a subject of discussion among Ottoman intellectuals in the nineteenth century. The new elites that emerged in the eighteenth century replicated the imperial practices of education and the Ottoman household: their homes became more like the imperial harem, and this resemblance challenged its authority at the same time. While the new elites started to raise their members through these households, the state, too, initiated new ways of public education throughout the nineteenth century. Public schools for girls were initiated from 1850 onwards. The practices of public education in these schools incorporated the segregated nature and practices of harems. The first modern form of widespread girls' public schooling was the girls' maturation schools [*Rüştiyes*] that were

9 Fanny Davis, *The Ottoman Lady: A Social History from 1718 to 1918* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986); Fanny Davis's style recalls that of Lucy Garnett, who was also a freelance writer, or, to a certain extent Grace Ellison, a British woman who lived in Ankara and wrote orientalist accounts of women in Turkey. Although not listed in her sources, Demetra Vaka, a Greek-American woman who wrote about the harem based on her experiences, also belongs to her list of memoir-related accounts of the harem (Davis, xi). See Grace Mary Ellison, *An Englishwoman in a Turkish Harem* (London: Methuen and Co., 1915); Lucy Mary Jane Garnett, *The Women of Turkey and Their Folklore* (London: D. Nutt, 1890–1891); Demetra Vaka Brown, *Haremlik* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909).

10 Elif E. Akşit, "Harem Education and Heterotopic Imagination," *Gender and Education*, 23 (3), 2011, 299–311.

11 Jane Hathaway, *The Politics of Households in Ottoman Egypt: the Rise of the Qazdagli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

initiated as early as 1858, during the reforming atmosphere of the *Tanzimat* era. Soon after, in 1865, industrial schools for girls [*İnas Sanayi Mektepleri*] were established simultaneously with those for boys,<sup>12</sup> the first in an old clothes factory for the army in Russe (now in Bulgaria) where orphan girls were employed and educated. Others came into being shortly after this, particularly in Istanbul. In 1873, the first generation of students graduated from teachers' schools [*Darülmuaallimat*], and women started teaching in various established schools for girls.

Most of the girls came to the industrial schools as teenagers and without any prior education; in their first year, classes on speaking techniques and reading and writing provided a formative education, and students were instructed in a variety of topics such as general education, science and Persian and Arabic languages. However, the schools also replicated certain educational models from the elite harems, transmitting them into the arena of industrial production. For example, the core curriculum included religion, embroidery and music, signifying continuity between household and public education in practices of modernization; the study of the Quran suggested that there was still an Islamic emphasis to education, just as in the harems. However, as regards music, the inclusion of piano lessons—even in the first girls' industrial school in Russe—demonstrated how the music classes that were transferred from the nineteenth century households were signs of Westernization. Similarly, supporting classes on mathematics, ethics, administration, geography, history and drawing emphasized the scientific aspect of education and were new additions to girls' public and private education. Girls' industrial schools thus transferred patterns of education from the households, but they also partially transformed these patterns.<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting to see similar patterns emerge among Western girls and Ottoman girls at the turn of the century, a time when both worklife outside the house and education became more common for the latter.<sup>14</sup> Three qualities distinguish 'the new girl' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Firstly, the new girl displays an urban character, as the public schools opened in the major cities and became widespread. Secondly, girls were regarded as women and they were obliged to be properly covered and to be educated only by women, unless their instructors were 'aged and well-behaved' men.<sup>15</sup> However, education and work placed them in a new category of women,

12 Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women And Sovereignty In The Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 140.

13 Peirce, *Imperial Harem*.

14 Philippe Ariès, *A Social History of Family Life* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962), 53.

15 Marie Florine Bruneau, "Learned and Literary Women in Late Imperial China and Early Modern Europe," *Late Imperial China*, 13 (1), 1992, 160.

characterized by delayed marriage and motherhood. The new trends in girls' education also socialized them not only as agents of modernity, but also as future teachers. Thus, the already existing ambivalence around the concept of the girl was in a way institutionalized with the spread of education for girls. The third quality relates to class: the new girl, especially that the Industrial Schools aimed to create, was ultimately a working girl, and therefore differed from the wealthier students of the elite schools.<sup>16</sup> This portrait of the working-class 'new girl' can be found in the newspapers and journals of the era.

### Journals

The place in journals of not only girls but also children in general is another neglected issue in the history of the girl, and<sup>17</sup> the invisibility and power of girlhood can both be traced in Ottoman journals. According to Sally Mitchell, the new girl's readership of journals in England both unites girls in education and worklife and distinguishes 'the girl' as a separate category; similarly, urban Ottoman girls, through becoming students, acquired new identities and in Istanbul became consumers of journals.<sup>18</sup>

Children's magazines in the Ottoman Empire have as long a history as women's magazines, usually taken as having begun in 1869, when the newspaper *MümeYYiz* issued a supplement for children. After this, a dozen other journals also came into existence.<sup>19</sup> The lifespan of these journals rarely exceeded one or two years, and they were very rarely published outside Istanbul. *Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete* commenced in 1896; after a short break, in 1904, *Çocuk Bahçesi*, and five years later, *Arkadaş* and *Çocuk Dünyası*, owned by Leon Lütfi, were published. *Çocuk Duygusu*, with Baha Tefvik as the chief columnist, in 1913–1914 changed the previous format of children's journals by publishing comics.<sup>20</sup>

16 Their case was usually the opposite, as these women contributed to works that are known to belong to famous men. Fatma Aliye, *Hayattan Sahneler (Levayih-i Hayat)* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayinevi, 2002 [1897–1898]), xii; Bruneau, "Learned and Literary Women," 165, 167–168.

17 Yahya Akyüz, "Osmanlı son döneminde kızların eğitimi ve öğretmen Faika Ünlüer'in yetişmesi ve meslek hayatı." *Milli Eğitim Dergisi* 143 (1999), 19.

18 Sally Mitchell, *The New Girl: Girls' Culture in England 1880–1915* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).

19 I have introduced this discussion in chapters three and four of "Girls' Education."

20 Mehmet Azim, "Çocuk Bahçesi Dergileri," *Müteferrika*, 19, 2001, 143–179; Bülent Varlık, "Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet Dergileri," *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 123.

Meanwhile more journals with education and nationalism as the main theme came into existence in the second constitutional era.

Three of these journals were children's versions of women's journals: *Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete* (1897) of *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, *Çocuk Duygusu* (1913) of *Kadınlık Duygusu* and *Çocuk Dünyası* (1913) of *Kadınlar Dünyası*. *Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete* gave *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* as its mailing address, but did not acknowledge the latter as its inspiration despite the manifest similarity in the formats of the two journals. The introductory article of the first issue was titled "The Humanist Feelings of a Child,"<sup>21</sup> and told the story of a seven- or eight-year-old boy who went to the coffeehouse to read with his father. The writer of the article, who was also the journal's publisher, expressed pity for this young child. Having to read journals that were designed for adults, the boy constantly had to ask his father the meanings of the Persian words in the novels that the newspapers published. This introduction highlights two elements that prevailed in children's journals until the last ten years of the Ottoman Empire: first, that the journals' muse was unquestionably the boy-child, and, second, that the prevailing household education that these boys went through should be critiqued.

This discourse on the inappropriateness of household education as well as of adult texts for children had begun a decade before the publishing of *Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete* in 1897. Benjamin Fortna observes that children's books started to be published in the Ottoman Empire as early as the mid-1880s; he gives the book *Çocuklara İstifade* [For the Benefit of Children] as the primary example of the disappointment of a child with the small black scribbles that books contained. This disappointment was increased by the fact that learning to read was a difficult experience, starting with the reading of the Quran in Arabic<sup>22</sup> and of texts that were filled with unknown words. Thus, it was implied, a child could not be educated in reading and writing at home. The school was deemed to be an absolutely necessary institution in boys' and girls' education.<sup>23</sup> The discourse on the necessity of schools rejected the importance of household education, presenting the image of an illiterate mother unable to teach reading and writing skills to her child.

21 Baha Tevfik, "The Humanist Feelings of a Child" [Bir Çocuğun İnsaniyetperveranesi], *Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete*, 13 Şubat 1312/ 23 Ramazan 1314 [25 February 1897], 1.

22 The Quran was actually easier to read as it had spelling marks, and unlike the Ottoman script, which is shorthanded, every letter is openly spelled in the Quran.

23 Benjamin C. Fortna, "Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 21 (1-2), 2001, 34-41.

The women's journals drew upon Western and other feminisms, and the dynamic character of their readers had the potential to challenge the *status quo*. However, the discourse on children functioned by ignoring its feminist origins in the Ottoman press, as well as by rejecting the importance of household education. Although they repeated the formats and used the equipment of women's journals, children's journals lacked the critique of the former. The common goal of all children's journals was education, and one means used was children's contests. Such contests compared and contrasted the success and physical characteristics of children, as well as their parent's wealth and status; one example appears in *Mahasin* (1908–1910), a journal that had consistently employed women writers such as Zühre Hanım, Emine Semiye Hanım and Zekiye Hanım, as well as Halide Edip (writing as Halide Salih, and discussed further below). The contest placed importance on detailed descriptions of the children's fathers' occupations and the districts in which they resided.<sup>24</sup>

Baha Tevfik, as the publisher of *Çocuk Duygusu*, sought to convey rules of courtesy and respect to its young readers, through original means such as printing details on cards. The first issue also tells the story of a young revolutionary during the French Revolution<sup>25</sup> who is nearly killed and then decides to disassociate himself from revolutionary activities. In this way, Tevfik presents the French Revolution as something interesting for the children, and from the point of view of a revolutionary, while at the same time condemning it.

*Çocuk Duygusu* also illustrates a shift away from an emphasis on boys. As a start, boys and girls who wrote to the journal were referred to by the names of their schools. From the sixth issue on, Selim Sırrı composed long pieces that were written for his daughters but addressed to all girl readers. In one of his essays, dating from 1913 and presented in the form of a dialogue with his daughters, he first defined the word 'kız' as a Turkish girl, and then as a philosophical being.<sup>26</sup> When he asked his daughters *what* they were, they answered, as good girls should: "I, dear daddy, am Turkish, am a Muslim. I am a girl, who is eight years old." This was the answer that he had wanted, so he advanced the discussion and asked what it was that distinguished them as girls from stones, trees, animals and birds. Upon their silence, he answered his own question by introducing a philosophy of humanity to the word 'kız,' saying that they were ontological beings beyond their Muslim and Turkish identities, and ending the

24 *Mahasin*, Numara 1 2, Teşrin-i Sani 1320 [15 November 1904]; Yıldız Akpolat-Davud, "11. Meşrutiyet'te Toplumda Kadına Başat Rol Vermeyen: Kadın Dergisi Mahasin," *Tarih ve Toplum*, 156, Aralık 1996, 362–367.

25 Baha Tevfik, "Fransa İhtilalinden bir Sahife," *Çocuk Duygusu*, 1, 6 Haziran 1329 [1913], 1.

26 Selim Sırrı, "Kızlarıma Öğütlerim: Ben Neyim," *Çocuk Duygusu*, 19, Temmuz 1913, 1.

conversation with this monologue that pointed towards their potential powers and complex being.

Sırrı was well aware that childhood had been perceived as synonymous with boyhood and that the spread of girls' education could change this misconception. He was also aware that he was the first to introduce this discussion into the genre of children's journals.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the inclusion of pictures of girls on the cover page rather than boys supported his essays, and his essays on his daughters constituted the main body of the issues that in which they appeared. Further, the very first issue was printed in red ink, underlining the importance of the subject. Having thus guaranteed attention, he not only introduced a discussion relating to girlhood but also sought to manipulate popular views. These views were represented by his very young daughters, answering his questions on their girlhood as "I am a Muslim girl," or "I am a Turkish girl." Although he did not provide a solid alternative to these conceptions, he hinted that girlhood was beyond these identities. As a result, the word '*kız*' started to be observed in the journal from the first page,<sup>28</sup> and the girl introduced to the Ottoman world of printed journals beyond her Islamic and Turkish identities in 1913.

### Context for the Rise of the Novel

Education was the most important aspect of *Tanzimat* reforms that began in 1839, and that marked a new kind of relationship between the Empire and the new world powers. In this new setting, the Ottoman state machine needed a Western-oriented but primarily Muslim bureaucratic class. The young men that the state systematically sent to France for education after 1789 were just a handful at first; these students, now distinct statesmen, or pashas, became the architects of the reforms, including the resulting new education system. However, while this system was on its way to raising a whole new bureaucracy, the void was in the meantime filled with imitation *Tanzimat* pashas:<sup>29</sup> the *Tanzimat* literature is filled with pseudo-westerner Ottomans, whose imitation of the pashas derived from denying their own Ottoman-Islamic identities rather than any substantial knowledge of the West. Their belittling of Islamic identities, traditional lifestyles and family relations was criticized by the Young Ottomans.<sup>30</sup>

27 Selim Sırrı, "Türk Kızının Öğüdü," *Çocuk Duygusu*, 6, 1912, 1; id. "Kızlarıma Öğütlerim."

28 Ibid.

29 Akşit, "Harem education."

30 Ibid.

Although it seemed that these types of bureaucratic personalities were going to be replaced once the newly educated generations were raised, this proved not to be the case; the mindset of the pseudo-westerner Ottomans predominated over that of the first generation of Ottomans to acquire a Western-style education in the Ottoman Empire. This new generation was known for its harsh critique of the Tanzimat mentality, both of the pashas and of the false pretenders who formed the bureaucratic class. As a result, they were marginalized and unable to find employment in the bureaucracy themselves, and because of this their critique grew harsher. Instead, they channelled their language, writing and analytic skills into journalism and literature.<sup>31</sup>

The *avant-garde* novelists Namık Kemal (1840–1888) and Ahmet Mithat (1844–1912) came out of this atmosphere, and their novel-writing and publishing efforts aimed to empower lower- and middle-class urbanites like themselves. Namık Kemal was born into a family of state officials and had a high-level of education from private tutors in his governor grandfather's home, whereas Ahmet Mithat was born into a poor family in Istanbul and attended the *Rüşdiye*, the new secular school that was a product of centralization and modernization processes in the Empire. Ahmet Mithat also taught himself, and learned Arabic while working as an apprentice in a spice-shop at in the local market. He then followed the Young Ottoman way pioneered by Namık Kemal, becoming a well-known journalist and writer. Thus, he was a product of the struggle among mindsets caused by nineteenth century reforms.

These authors saw themselves in the role of a nourishing 'mother,' to young women more so than to young men. Ahmet Mithat appears to be 'becoming a woman' in his aspiration to turn girls into new kinds of women, in the sense described by Deleuze and Guattari:

The rise of women in English novel writing has spared no man: even those who pass for the most virile, the most phallocratic, [...] in their turn continually tap into and emit particles that enter the proximity or zone of indiscernibility of women. In writing, they become-women.<sup>32</sup>

In this fashion, Ahmet Mithat instrumentalized 'becoming woman' to be able both to flirt with the Empire, and at the same time to imagine alternative

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31 See Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004). See also Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Itzhak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (eds), *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005).

32 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 276.

futures, although this early novelist's know-it-all approach towards young women also reveals the limitations of this complicated position from early on.

Fatma Aliye (1862–1936) was Ahmet Mithat's student, and he opened the way for her to become the first female Ottoman novelist, in the interstices between the harem curriculum and the scientific emphasis of public education. His desire to become a mother appears in its most obvious form in his biography of her, *Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti* [The Birth of an Ottoman Woman Writer].<sup>33</sup> In this work, it is he who gives birth to the first Ottoman woman writer, as her educator, her manager and co-author.<sup>34</sup> However, Fatma Aliye, as the first Ottoman woman writer and one of the first Ottoman novelists, went beyond Ahmet Mithat's influence and found her own voices in her novels *Ref'et* (1898), *Udi* (1899), *Muhadarat* (1892) and *Enin* (1910). She reflected the concerns of a swelling population of educated women in her novels, with a focus on urban, educated and/or poor girls.

Like the Young Ottomans, Fatma Aliye was also active in newspapers and journals, and she wrote extensively about girls in of all ages and young women in relation to marriage, education, poverty and slavery: she was a prominent contributor to *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*, and as the journal gained considerable popularity it catalysed a new kind of relation to mainstream politics for women.<sup>35</sup> Fatma Aliye rejected the Orientalist 'feminist' viewpoint that declared a subordinate place for women in Muslim societies, and she avoided using the Western terms *feminism* and *feminist*: her struggle was for equality with Western women, as well as for fair collaboration with men. However, she promoted the core aspects of the concept of feminism, and a conceptual history of the women's movement in Turkey starts with her.

In the subtle ways that Fatma Aliye imagined and realistically depicted alternative ways for women and girls, I will show that her persistence in the girl

33 Ahmet Mithat, *Bir Muharrir-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti* (İstanbul: İsis, 1998 [1893]).

34 In Fatma Aliye, *Hayal ve Hakikat: Bir Kadın ve Ahmet Midhat* (İstanbul: Yıldız Üniversitesi Basım Yayın, 2005 [1892]). Hülya Adak emphasizes how Ahmet Mithat keeps talking about himself even though it is Fatma Aliye's biography in *The Birth*. See Hülya Adak, "Gendering Biography: Ahmet Mithat (on Fatma Aliye) or the Canonization of an Ottoman Male Writer," *Querelles*, 10, 2005, 189–204.

35 There were other influential women, such as Halide Edip, Fatma Aliye's sister Emine Semiye and Müfide Ferit, who also wrote novels and contributed to newspapers; their contributions in different media deserve to be evaluated much further than they have been up until now. However, for the purposes of this chapter I focus only on Fatma Aliye and Halide Edip, due to their emphasis on the girl and the thematic continuities with the other authors under discussion.

figure—continued by Halide Edip and Halit Ziya—is a *line of flight*.<sup>36</sup> In Deleuze and Guattari, too, it all starts with the girl: “becoming-woman” describes the girl herself. The body is first stolen from the girl.<sup>37</sup> Her being a girl dissects boundaries, and thus attracts extra interference and regulation. Yet she remains “an abstract line, or a line of flight. Thus girls do not belong to an age group, sex, order, or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts, ages, sexes.”<sup>38</sup>

This is so for the girls in Fatma Aliye’s and Halide Edip’s novels: these women’s stories of becoming woman describe but also empower their girlhood.<sup>39</sup> Halit Ziya stands in between these male and female writers: his ultimate girl character remains a child, and his stories of becoming woman destroy everyone around. He is the only one among the male writers discussed below who succeeded in ‘becoming woman.’ With these examples, I will try to explore the ways in which the in-betweenness and power of girlhood is manipulated and reflected in the Ottoman novel.

### The Slave Girl and the Birth of the Ottoman Novel

The journals of the second constitutional era were publishing novels in serialized form. By 1913, girls with Islamic and Turkish identities, as students and slaves, as beholders of beauty and ugliness and as pathetic and powerful were introduced into the Ottoman novel by the authors under consideration. In this section, I will trace these depictions and focus on how while Samipaşazade Sezai, Ahmet Mithat and Halit Ziya like to depict the tragic lives of passive slave girls, Fatma Aliye derives empowerment even from slavery.<sup>40</sup> The approaches of the first three authors reflect a choice to depict tragicized and caricatured situations to create strong emotions in the public, out of which an effort to change them is hoped to grow. Slavery is one such instance; ignorant mothers—the anti-muse of reading-children described above in the context of

36 As used by Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 9–10.

37 Braidotti, “Becoming Woman.”

38 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 276.

39 “The girl is like the block of becoming that remains contemporaneous to each opposable term, man, woman, child, adult. It is not the girl who becomes a woman; it is becoming-woman that produces the universal girl” (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 277).

40 Also see Feryal Saygılıgil, “Anneliğin Osmanlı romanında kurgulanışı,” *Toplum ve Bilim*, 126, Şubat 2013, 144–161.

children's newspapers and journals—are another. Slavery and ignorant mothers combine to produce deadly scenarios.

Namık Kemal, for example, mentions slavery less, while developing the theme of ignorant mothers more.<sup>41</sup> *İntibah* [Awakening] (1876) is his first novel, and is presented as *Sergüzeşt-i Ali Bey* [The Life story of Mr Ali]. This is also the life story of the slave girl Dilaşub, whose tragedy is detailed more fully in novels by Halit Ziya, Ahmet Mithat and Samipaşazade Sezai analysed below. She is the slave whom Fatma, Ali's mother, buys to redirect Ali's interest from Mahpeyker, another woman much more experienced in love than Ali. Fatma is an example of an ignorant woman who manipulates lives via the buying and selling of slaves. When Dilaşub fulfils her duty, she is resold on the slightest doubt of here taking an interest in another man. She is submissive and silent even though she is the most scrupulous character. In fact, she is a rare character among women and men who are weak even when they are depicted as good. But in the end she is the one who pays the price for the weaknesses of others. However, Namık Kemal compensates for the lack of good female characters in *İntibah* with Zekiye in an earlier work, a play titled *Vatan yahut Silistre* [Homeland or Silistria] (1873). The work features the story of Zekiye (feminine name for 'Clever'), who becomes a woman by first becoming a boy: her love interest, Islam, leaves her to defend the fortress of Silistria castle in the Crimean War against the Russians. Instead of waiting passively, Zekiye disguises herself as a boy, joins Islam's forces and, despite being the youngest in this troop, takes part in the bravest and the cleverest moves against the enemy. Being able to protect Silistria enables Islam and Zekiye's union, and it turns out that Zekiye's long-lost father was the commander of the castle. She saves the castle, the homeland, Islam and her father all at once by being disguised as a boy.<sup>42</sup> In this story, which became a trigger for Turkish nationalism, motherland and the girl are adjacent concepts. They are both in the process of becoming: for the motherland to come into being, she has to be valued and everything else sacrificed for her worth. For Zekiye to become a woman, and hold on to the man she loves, she has first to become a boy. This way she can win back her father as well! Thus processes of becoming feed on each other, and all feed on the capacities of girlhood, yet this is disguised and Zekiye's girlhood becomes invisible in her desire and her pseudo-boyhood. Whereas Dilaşub is a side character in *İntibah*, other novels—and plays like *Homeland*—will be built on girls as their main characters. In fact, male writers' focusing on and sympathizing with slave

41 Namık Kemal, "Aile," in Mustafa Nihat Özön (ed.) *Namık Kemal ve İbret Gazetesi* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2003), 19–205.

42 Namık Kemal, *Vatan yahut Silistre* (İstanbul: Tümrül Şirket Matbaası, 1291 [1872]).

girls and their lives from childhood to womanhood becomes a persistent theme in the birth of the Ottoman novel. However, like Zekiye's powerful girlhood, this trait has not been emphasized so far.<sup>43</sup>

In Ahmet Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* (1875),<sup>44</sup> the rich and whimsical dandy Felatun is contrasted with the poor but smart Rakım. However, the main twist of the story is revealed in the life of Canan, a slave girl bought and raised by Rakım. Rakım tutors Canan, like he educates British girls living in Istanbul—or like Ahmet Mithat educates Fatma Aliye: he is motherly, tender and compassionate to all, both in real life and writing in fiction. In mothering Canan, Rakım creates a well-mannered, beautiful woman out of an uneducated slave girl and marries her. Ahmet Mithat finishes his novel with Rakım, who tutors students and his future wife, as the winner as against Felatun, who ends up poor and miserable.

The slave girl theme is continued with Halit Ziya's (1866–1945) first novel. While the former three writers were more political in nature, Halit Ziya aimed at a more literary form rather than a political form of writing.<sup>45</sup> However, his first novel was not among the high-quality works that he would soon produce. In *Sefile* [The Miserable] (1886–1887),<sup>46</sup> Halit Ziya tells the adventures of the slave girl Mazlume (feminine name for 'Oppressed'). Evil women come her way, as well as good women. Both are ideal types, and so is Mazlume. As a child her misery increases even with goodness, as she has to return to evil households after enjoying the good ones. Her story of becoming woman is sealed by falling in love. The combination of love and slavery result in prostitution, Mazlume's wild slaying of the love and enemy of her life, and her own death. While her girlhood carries a potential for freedom despite all the combined negative aspects of slavery, her passage into womanhood by falling in love for Halit Ziya means a death.

In *Sergüzeşt* [Life story or Adventure] (1888), Samipaşazade Sezai (1859–1936) develops the same themes of love, slavery, misery and death. Under the strong influence of Namık Kemal, he tells in his only novel the story of another slave girl, Dilber. Dilber's story is more aesthetically tragic, and in her person slavery

43 I focused on Namık Kemal's play as he is also a novelist. However, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar rightly points to the potentials of evaluating the plays of Abdülhak Hamit as well. Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Ondokuzuncu Asır Türk edebiyatı tarihi* (İstanbul: İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1949).

44 Ahmet Mithat, *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 2003 [1875]).

45 Nurdan Gürbilek, *Kör Ayna, Kayıp Şark; Edebiyat ve Endişe* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2004).

46 Halit Ziya, *Sefile* [The Miserable] (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 2006 [1886–1887]).

is more openly condemned than the story of *Sefile*. In *Sergüzeşt*, Dilber, too, is bought and sold from one family to another, and in the meantime she transforms herself from a young girl to a young woman. This change is depicted with a change in her beauty: she changes from a weak, sickly girl into an attractive, sparkling young woman. However, ironically, while being weak and girly will protect her from wanted and unwanted sexual advances, her beauty and passage to womanhood will prove to be a fatal combination with slavery, and her love will draw her to suicide. In the house where she arrives as an attractive young woman, the young man first ignores and mocks her and then starts painting her picture, manipulating her like his toy. She rebels and cries and he sees that she is in fact a human being. And they fall in love. However, his mother, the lady of the house, sells Dilber in the market to prevent the love between a slave and a lord.

### Women's Stories of Girls

The theme of love between a slave and a lord took a very different turn in the hands of Fatma Aliye. However, before going into details about her novel *Muhâdarât* (1891–1892),<sup>47</sup> it is worth surveying the slave girl theme in her other novels. For example, in her novel *Refet* (1897),<sup>48</sup> she imagines a public school as an alternative to both poverty and marriage. Here Fatma Aliye depicts the life of Refet, who clings to the processes of public schooling, rather than marriage, to escape her poverty. *Refet* can be considered a feminist utopia where girls and women can exist without much reference to men. Furthermore, by dismissing marriage, this book transforms the aim of the modern state in creating a new type of family. Fatma Aliye is more interested in the new woman, and refuses to see her as a tool for creating this family.

In *Refet*, women's support of girls is important to Refet's story of her transformation from a poor, ugly, unhealthy child into a strong, independent woman who does not need to be pretty. Refet, by becoming a teacher when she graduates, turns around and supports these informal spheres—and not an idealized, modern, nuclear family—with the means she derives from the practice of public education. Thus, girls and women use public education, itself a product of patriarchy, to resist patriarchy through informal women's spheres. Fatma Aliye transforms the main theme of the Ottoman novel, girlhood, via *Refet*, proving

47 Fatma Aliye, *Muhâdarât* (İstanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1996 [1891–1892]).

48 Ead., *Refet* (İstanbul: L Yayıncılık, 2007 [1897]).

that even practices of public education can become something other than patriarchy when their relation to informal spheres is acknowledged.

Upon the death of her father while she is a young child, Refet and her mother lose everything, including their home, and are left without any allowances. However, despite the hardships they have to endure, Refet perseveres in her studies and becomes a teacher. She is then able to save the women who surround and support her during times of hardship. By the time she graduates from the teachers' college [*Darülmüallimat*], she has transformed the average turn-of-the-century Istanbul family into a world of women strengthened by the ties of sisterhood, motherhood, friendship and neighbourhood.

On graduation, Refet is ready to realize her true potential as a teacher. Unlike many characters in post-Tanzimat novels, she accepts herself as a poor, unattractive young woman. More importantly, she recognizes the fact that neither a husband nor a school can provide the intuition that one develops when surrounded with the perseverance of women in need. When Refet's mother dies when she is about to graduate, her good friend Şule—as poor, as smart and as desolate as she is—reminds her of the greatness of God.<sup>49</sup> In this thought they unite, and fulfil their aims of self-sufficiency. Refet's story demonstrates that it is indeed possible to 'become women' together.

Aliye tells a similar story in *Enin* [Lamentations] (1910),<sup>50</sup> another tale in which two young women 'become women' together. However, the childhood and girlhood of the main character, Sabahat, is only a small part of that novel. Two of the main characters are slave girls: İtimat, Sabahat's best friend and confidante, and Piraye. Piraye's life is tragically similar to Namık Kemal's Dilaşub, as even though she grows up in the safety of a good family, she falls in love with her young master Rıfat, while Rıfat falls in love with Fehame. Piraye dies of a broken heart. İtimat shares a similar fate even though it is not as heavily emphasized as Piraye's: Whereas they grew up together with Sabahat, the protagonist, Sabahat, in her search for a good husband, ends up being more and more interested in their neighbor Fehame and in a way grows away from İtimat in their collective search for science instead of marriage! In *Muhadarat* [Memorable Stories / Useful Information] Fatma Aliye reverses the slave-girl theme by choosing as her protagonist an unhappy, rich and married woman who chooses to be a slave. Slavery gives Fazıla a chance to be a girl again, not knowing what will happen to her, not knowing what the limits of slavery will be. She leaves her riches and power as a woman behind to be like a girl again.

49 Fatma Aliye, *Refet*, 188.

50 Fatma Aliye, *Enin* [Lamentations] (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005 [1910]). Also see Firdevs Canbaz, *Fatma Aliye* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2010).

Thus, although the slave girl theme is left behind in this novel, slavery and girlhood become almost synonymous, both deriving the ultimate power to be and to become from powerlessness.

After Fatma Aliye's *Muhadarat* and before her *Enin*, in 1900, Halit Ziya (Uşaklıgil) (1866–1945), published his famous novel *Aşk-ı Memnu* [Forbidden Love], which developed the themes of love between a slave boy and the girl-lady, and between another boy and this girl and her stepmother. Its main characters include the young orphan girl Nihal and her little brother Bülent, whose wealthy father marries the attractive Bihter. Bihter's beauty and spell start to transform Nihal from a child into a woman, but soon she discovers that they love the same man, Behlül. Nihal then turns back to being daddy's little girl and this time, in contrast to other male novelists who saw the death of girlhood in becoming a woman, it is not girlhood, but womanhood that dies in the person of Bihter.

This novel can be evaluated under the heading *Women's Stories of Girls* because, as Nurdan Gürbilek has suggested, Halit Ziya "becomes" his famous *femme fatale* Bihter, the young woman who marries the rich man in this novel.<sup>51</sup> Thus Halit Ziya stands in between male and female writers. It is not Ahmet Mithat but Halit Ziya who in this sense, to again refer to Deleuze and Guattari, "not imitating or assuming the female form, but emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity."<sup>52</sup> He surpasses the death of the girl by facing and embracing this fear.<sup>53</sup>

Nihal's commitment to childhood is resolved in Halide Edip's *Handan* (1912).<sup>54</sup> Halide Edip, too, lost her mother at a young age; she wrote more than twenty-five novels and has had a deep impact on Turkish literature. Towards the middle of the book, we go back to the girlhood of her autobiographic character Handan. She is educated in science and life by an older man, who is soon conjoined by a younger revolutionary. She becomes a woman when she falls in love with this man. Halide Edip similarly married one of her private tutors, Salih Zeki, at the age of seventeen while she was still at school. However, the man Handan marries is not her mentor, the man she falls in love with, but an older man who values her when she behaves as a woman, wearing make-up, dressing in ways that emphasise décolletage, acting mysteriously. When she is her real self, though, he ignores her, not even realizing that she is around.

51 Gürbilek, *Kör Ayna*.

52 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 276.

53 Gürbilek, *Kör Ayna*.

54 Halide Edip *Handan* (İstanbul: İkbâl Kitabhanesi, 1342 [1924]).

She is like a shadow then. Handan's crisis is learning womanhood from men who do not value the sets of knowledge related to being a woman, instead valuing women for their enthusiasm—for a 'male' knowledge—and beauty. The enthusiasm lies in their ongoing girlhood and beauty in becoming women. While Handan's husband caricatures these expectations (and Halide Edip's real-life mathematician husband Salih Zeki), her first teacher and love interest also shares these traits. Yet unlike Nihal, under a French education Handan is allowed to grow up and become a woman. She is then able to get even with her husband and everything he represents: she falls in love with another man, who is again a revolutionary but who values women as they are. However, she knows this because he is the husband of her almost-sister and best friend Neriman, whom he cannot love as she had never had an interest in male knowledge. Thus, Handan dies out of guilt.

### The Empire Strikes Back

At the time of the passage from empire to republic, in 1922, came the most popular example of a *bildungsroman*: *Çalığışu*, by Reşat Nuri (Güntekin) (1889–1956), who has acknowledged his open admiration of for Fatma Aliye's novels.<sup>55</sup> *Çalığışu* [The Wren] is a nickname for Feride, an orphan who loses first her father—like Refet—and then her mother—unlike Refet. Feride grows up first in her aunt's mansion and then in a missionary school in Istanbul. Her girlhood is extended, as she falls in love with a relative, but is unable to unite with him throughout the novel. She leaves Istanbul, works at various posts in Anatolia during the war years, and adopts another young orphan girl, Munise, in one of these posts. Only then does she grow up, and in mothering Munise she manages to withstand the pain of being all alone. This time the story of the girl, which continued in womanhood with *Bihter* and *Neriman*, finds expression with Munise, and only after her death does Feride unite with her long-lost lover.

In *Çalığışu*, the Ottoman girl grows up into a woman during the war years that created the Turkish Republic. However, the story of the Ottoman girl did not end with Güntekin. As Tanpınar states in his *History of the Nineteenth Century Novel*, the themes that are left from previous generations are developed again and again, and this is how literature develops.<sup>56</sup> Halide Edip developed the themes of girlhood and becoming woman *par excellence* in one of her

55 Reşat Nuri (Güntekin), *Çalığışu* (İstanbul: İkbal Kitabevi, 1935).

56 Tanpınar, *Ondokuzuncu asır*.

best-known novels, *Sinekli Bakkal* [The Clown and His Daughter, which is not a direct translation of the title]. Yet although this novel takes place in the Hamidian era, it was published in 1935, after the passage to the Republic in 1923. The heroine, Rabia, grows up with divided allegiances to her deceased mother's well-off and religious family and her revolutionary father who has an underground *théâtre des atelier* under his shop in a poor district. She is loved dearly by both sides and everyone else who comes into her life. She loves them back. Thus, she carries religion and revolution, the Quran and music, richness and poverty with her all at once. She embodies the all-encompassing characteristics of girlhood. She finally combines them and becomes a woman when she falls in love with an aged Italian man, her music teacher, who marries her after converting to Islam.<sup>57</sup>

### Conclusion

The *bildungsroman* that takes a character from her childhood into her grown-up years is a widespread genre in the Ottoman novel. Both the slave girl stories and stories of education—which sometimes collide, as in Ahmet Mithat's works—commonly focus on girls growing up. The complicated passage from girlhood to womanhood entails tragedy, growth and rebirth. For example, and in contrast to the slave girl theme that gave birth to the Ottoman novel, Rabia's and Refet's stories transform the tragic fate suited to girls by nationalist writers. Their stories do not end with tragic deaths as an indicator of the male authors' vision that equates womanhood with the death of girlhood. However, in women's and Halit Ziya's stories, passages between girlhood and womanhood are possible: Nihal and Fazıla both become women, but turn back into girlhood. Female writers manipulate the system subtly to change the fate of girls and extend the influence of their potential. However, as the nationalists felt fit to marginalize Fatma Aliye and Halide Edip into minoritarian positions, the nationalist resolution of women's problem was stuck in creating girls who did not grow up to be women.<sup>58</sup> In short, both male and female writers used the girl and her processes of becoming woman to resist the Empire and create an idea of nationalism to encompass the needs of the masses. While women portrayed more genuine stories of becoming, the nation that was created out of these efforts dwelled largely on men's portraits

57 Halide Edip Adivar, *Sinekli Bakkal* (İstanbul: Ahmet Halit Kitap Evi, 1936).

58 Aksu Bora, "Annesiz Kızlar: Modern Babaların Modern Kızları," *Folklor ve Edebiyat*, 61, 2010, 7–15; Elif E. Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012).

of suffering girls. Thus, as I stated in the introduction, the birth of the novel, the birth of the nation and the birth of the girl can be thought of together, but in order for the first two to come into being from nothingness, the latter, the real, the genuine, should be manipulated and killed in men's novels. Although women present alternative stories and transform the faith of girlhood, these stories are again manipulated but, as with Rabia, retrospective interferences in the past are possible, like female writers making transformations between girlhood and womanhood possible. This chapter, in the Deleuzian interstices between literature, history and philosophy, also aims to be a minor effort for restarting such transformations.

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# Children into Adults, Peasants into Patriots: The Army and Nation-Building in Serbia and Bulgaria (1878–1912)

*Naoum Kaytchev*

## Introduction

After the Great Eastern Crisis of 1875–1878 and the Berlin Congress of 1878, Bulgaria and Serbia respectively were acknowledged as autonomous and independent states, thus moving further out from the Ottoman political orbit. In the two countries, processes of nation-building proceeding efficiently, with army systems playing an important role: a large proportion of young men were called up and exposed to intensive training in new nationalist molds. In both countries, they were conscripted around the age of 20<sup>1</sup>—the period that marks the transition from childhood/youth status to that of adulthood.

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1 In Bulgaria, the conscription age was consistently lowered. Initially, youngsters were recruited after turning 21 in the calendar year previous to the recruitment, but from 1892 this age was reduced to 20, and from 1904 reduced further to 19. Thus, for example, boys born in 1885 were recruited in the spring of 1905, several months before or after turning 20 years old. Secondary school pupils and university students were conscripted after graduation. See: Article 4, “Law on Taking New Recruits in the Bulgarian Army,” *Därzhaven vestnik*, 2 (89), December 6, 1880; Article 15, “Law on the Organization of the Military Forces of the Bulgarian Army,” id. 14 (36), February 15, 1892; Article 13, “Law on the Organization of the Military Forces of the Bulgarian Army,” id. 14 (18), January 24, 1904.

In Serbia, males were initially conscripted after turning 20 years in the calendar year previous to the recruitment, but in 1884 this age dropped by one year. Towards 1899, the age of conscripts was raised back up again. Thus, for example, Belgrade boys born in 1870 were conscripted in September 1890; those born in 1878, in March 1899; and those born in 1883, in August 1904. In both countries secondary school pupils and university students (a tiny minority among conscripts) were recruited after their graduation and served reduced terms of duty. See: Article 5, “Law on the Recruitment of the Permanent Army, October 23, 1872,” in *Zbornik zakona i uredaba izdanih u Knjažesvu Srbiji* (Belgrade: State Printing House, 25, 1872), 63; Article 3, “Law on the Organization of the Army,” *Srpske novine*, 50 (24), 115, February 1, 1883; “Naredba okružne komande,” *Beogradske opštinske novine*, 8 (33), August 5, 1890; “Objava,” *Beogradske opštinske novine*, 17 (9), March 7, 1899; Article 2, “Law on the Organization of the Army, January 27, 1901,” in *Zbornik zakona i uredaba u Kraljevini Srbiji* (Belgrade: State Printing House, 61, 1903), 92–93; “Law on the Amendment of the Law on the Organization of

While traditional peasant societies tended to associate men's maturity with marriage,<sup>2</sup> the new Serbian and Bulgarian states started to prescribe more precise juridical definitions. The Serbian Civil Code, first adopted by the Principality of Serbia in 1844 and still in use even after the Second World War, considered all persons under 21 years as of 'youth-age' [*mladoletni*] and classified them as either 'small children' [under age of seven], 'ungrown children' [*deca nedorasla*, age of seven to 14] or 'grown-up children' [*deca dorasla*, above age of 14, under 21].<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Bulgaria's 1879 Tarnovo Constitution provided political voting rights only for citizens above the age of 21.<sup>4</sup> Respective provisions were also inscribed in Bulgaria's civil law as well: a special law on guardianship defined as minors ('underage person') all individuals under the age of 21; the designation 'underage children' (*nepālnoletni detsa*) was also used as a synonym. Minors were prohibited from controlling property or entering into property transactions, which were the responsibility of their father (or in the case of his death, of a guardian and special council of relatives, which included also the local judge).<sup>5</sup> In this context, for a large portion of the population,

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the Army, April 15, 1902," *Službeni vojni list*, 22 (16), April 20, 1902, 301; "Objava," *Beogradske opštinske novine*, 22 (36), August 22, 1904.

- 2 Traditionally, family law was governed by the religious rules of the various denominations. According to the Statute of the Bulgarian Exarchate (applied over the majority Eastern Orthodox population) the minimum marriage age for boys was 20 years, and for girls 18 years. See: Article 186, Sixth Part of the "Exarchate's Statute Adapted for the Principality of Bulgaria," in Velichko Georgiev and Stayko Trifonov, *Istoriya na bālgarite 1878–1944 v dokumenti*, 1 (1) (Sofia: Prosveta, 1994), 213.
- 3 Article 37 in *ibid.*, 11. There were some modifications and exceptions to this rule: girls above the age of 18 could marry without consent of the parents (Article 150); boys above the age of 17 could be proclaimed adults by a court after a personal and parental application, but even in this case the law instructed judges to consider if there were essential grounds for such a decision: 'the male [person] is wedded, maintains own house, regularly runs craft or trade, or has received a position in the public service with a regular salary' (Article 152, *Ibid.*, 51–52).
- 4 Herbert Wright, *The Constitutions of the States at War 1914–1918* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1919), 96.
- 5 "Law on Guardianship," *Dārzhaven vestnik*, 12 (67), 1–5, March 24, 1890. See especially Articles 1–3 and 14–15. The law provided that above 18 years of age, in some cases "an underage person" could be put under milder form of supervision (*popechitelstvo*): he could use profits from his property, but still not sell it or use it for credit without the approval of the council of relatives (Articles 100–111). Other important childhood-related civic legal acts were the "Law on Acknowledgement of Illegitimate Children, of their Legitimization and on Adoptions," *Dārzhaven vestnik*, 12 (9), January 12, 1890, and the "Law on Inheritance," *Dārzhaven vestnik*, 12 (20), January 25, 1890.

especially peasants, conscription marked the effective transition of the male from the world of childhood, understood in the wider sense of immaturity<sup>6</sup> and legal minority, to that of adulthood. This was hardly a unique experience: in many other countries on the continent 'growing up' implied a similar army encounter.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the school systems of both states were involved in parallel educational nation-building process, aimed at children of different age groups.

In what follows I will present and analyze the role of military systems in forging and affirming modern Serbian and Bulgarian national identities and the suggested types of national identity imposed on the young conscripts-turned-adults. These messages will be compared with those of the schools, targeted at younger children. Some recent theories on nationalism would be applied, mostly implicitly, in the process.<sup>8</sup>

### Creating Soldier-Citizens

The two countries aimed to build strong armies as a strategic priority. The reasons for this were concerned mainly with questions of 'grand policy' and war: Serbia and Bulgaria sought to put up capabilities that could not only defend their borders, but also secure enlargement by acquisition of new 'unredeemed' territories. Though the two states were sometimes rivals, and on one occasion in 1885 even went to war, their main focus, especially in later decades, was on the remaining Ottoman possessions in Europe. This course was reflected in the

6 Similarly, many other contemporary Europeans tended to regard childhood as also encompassing the phase of adolescence: see Michelle Perrot, Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (eds), *A History of Private Life: From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1990), 203.

7 Cf. Colin Heywood, *Growing Up in France: From the Ancien Régime to the Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 83–85, 268.

8 Some of the arguments in this chapter are drawn from the relevant sections of my book: Naoum Kaytchev, *Makedoniya, vāzzhelana: armiyata, uchilishteto i gradezhāt na natsiyata v Sārbiya i Bālgariya* [Desired Macedonia: Army, School and Nation-Building in Serbia and Bulgaria, 1878–1912] (Sofia: Paradigma, 2003; 2nd edition, 2006). It is hardly possible in this space to engage extensively in the ongoing debates and plethora of theories concerning nationalism. I would point here to a seminal article: Anthony Smith, "Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations," *Nations and Nationalism*, 1, 1995, 3–23. Cf. Umut Özkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

financial policy of the two states, with the lion's share of the state budget earmarked for the military.<sup>9</sup>

One important aspect of the army modernization in Serbia involved the complete transformation of the old principality's main body of militiamen—permanently armed peasants called periodically in the army—into conscript soldiers. Immediately after the Berlin Congress, in the autumn of 1878 Belgrade tripled its nucleus of conscription-based units, and five years later a new army law scrapped the militia system altogether and promulgated universal military duty. The implementation of the law amounted to radical intervention over Serbian society. In some eastern parts of the country a great number of peasants refused to surrender their arms and occupied four eastern counties, including their central towns. This *Timochka buna* [Timok Uprising] of 1883 was in military terms a clash of old militia units with the new conscript-based army, and the ultimate supremacy of more disciplined new detachments proved the necessity of the reform.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, Bulgaria, lacking any immediate previous state and with no militia system, experienced no opposition after 1878 to building its army on a modern conscription basis. The creation of these large modernized armies involving large segments of the male population also led to changing societal patterns of states and societies, as conscripts were forced to abandon their usual pace of life and spend a one-and-a-half to two years (and in certain cases, even three years) in the army.<sup>11</sup>

Legally, all males were subject to conscript service. However, in practice, high birth rates meant that the number of adolescents far outnumbered the army's capacity. A substantial number of youths were not recruited, officially

9 In Bulgaria, on average approximately 25% (between 16% and 44% over the years) of the state budget was devoted to the War Ministry, and in Serbia over 20% (17%–20%, plus additional expenditures for arms procurement). The proportion of military expense in terms of real post-balance payments was even higher if one takes into account the large portion (15–25% in Bulgaria, even more in Serbia) used to service the state foreign debt. See *Statističeski godišnik na Bălgarskoto tsarstvo* (Sofia: Glavna Direktsiya na Statistkata [Directorate General of Statistics]), 4:1912, 356–357; *Statistički godišnjak Kraljevine Srbije 4: 1898–1899* (Belgrade: Državna Štamparija Kraljevine Srbije, 1902), 440; id., 12: 1907–1908 (id. 1913), 583–588.

10 Slavica Ratković-Kostić, “Stvaranje stajaće vojske u Srbiji i njena uloga u Timočkoj buni 1883 godine,” *Vojnoistorijski glasnik*, 44 (1–2), 1996, 24–29; Milić Milićević, “Vitalni činioci razvoja srpske vojske tokom XIX veka,” *Vojnoistorijski glasnik*, 41 (1–2), 1993, 45–55.

11 In both countries infantry service was initially for two years, although in Serbia in 1901 it was reduced to 18 months. Artillery and cavalry service was for three years in Bulgaria and two years in Serbia. In both countries, secondary school pupils and university students or graduates were subjected to shortened terms of military duty.

for medical, family or other reasons. According to annual statistics, between only 27% and 52% of Bulgarian males went to the barracks,<sup>12</sup> and although there are no clear comparable data on Serbia, the relation of army numbers to the general population suggests that a similar percentage of the youth was recruited.

Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of young Bulgarian and Serbian youths made their first steps outside the familiar world of the local group in the army, where they had to interact within larger and novel complex communities. The social break was even more important because of the origin of the recruits: the populations of both countries were overwhelmingly peasant (80–81% in Bulgaria and 86–87% in Serbia), and the corresponding majority of the soldiers came from villages. They were intensively exposed to new perspectives and ideas: the armies undertook a process of ‘moral training’ of the soldiers, making conscripts into patriots who believed in their belonging to the nation and who were expected to sacrifice themselves for it. In the time leading up to the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913, more emphasis was placed on this training.

Most of the conscripts were not entirely new to the sustained institutional influence of the state: as seven- or eight-year-old children they were ‘recruited’ in the elementary school. Bulgaria in 1880 and Serbia in 1882 adopted special laws proclaiming compulsory primary education,<sup>13</sup> and made some efforts towards achieving this aim. The reports of school inspectors, especially in Serbia, demonstrate peasant passivity towards these modernization attempts:

If some [parents] seemingly willingly give their children to the school, it is not because they see benefit from the education, but because they know that they should send their children to school, just like in the army. They usually think that the child should ‘serve’ in the school four years.

When approached to send their children for further studies, the usual parents’ answer was: “my child has already served four years, it doesn’t need more.”<sup>14</sup>

12 *Statisticheskii godishnik, 5–14: 1913–1922* (Sofia: Glavna Direktsiya na Statistkata [Directorate General of Statistics], 1924), 110–111, 114.

13 “Law on Material Support and Educational Rearrangement of Schools, May 21, 1880,” *Därzhaven vestnik*, 2 (45) May 28, 1880; “Law on Primary Schools, December 31, 1882,” *Prosvetni glasnik*, 4 (2), January 31, 1883, 41–51. Compulsory primary education was introduced simultaneously with France, in 1882: Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 309.

14 Ministry of Education, “Report on the Elementary Schools in Four Counties of the Požarevac District in 1902–1903 School Year,” July 20, 1903, 46–76 (Archive of Serbia).

Thus large numbers of girls, and even more of boys, attended mainly the first few grades: at the turn of the twentieth century approximately 32% of Serbian and 58% of Bulgarian conscripts were literate, while on the eve of the Balkan Wars this had increased to 57% and 82%.<sup>15</sup> All pupils were exposed to the nation-building influences of the primary school system, although only a tiny minority (2% in Serbia and 8–14% in Bulgaria) of school ‘conscripts’ continued to some form of secondary education.

In both countries the officers were the face of the army, its most visible and representative element. They were a comparatively small group—not more than 2,000–3,000 individuals in each country—but by their standing and influence they were a clearly distinguished body among the motley mosaic of late-nineteenth-century Balkan societies. In moral, ideological and propaganda terms the officers were publicly praised by politicians, journalists and publicists as the people’s hope for the defense of the fatherland and for future national unification. Such rhetoric would have had doubtful success, had it not been financially underpinned; both young nation-states provided generous salaries for their military.

The social background of the higher ranks differed sharply from the peasant mass of the soldiers that they commanded, shaped and educated: 84% of Bulgarian and 76–79% of Serbian officers were of urban bourgeois origin. The graduates of civil high schools and universities—the human base of the political, administrative, cultural and economic elites—were conscripted in special military training units and commissioned as reserve officers. Numerous links bound the higher ranks with leading business, political and cultural strata. The ‘pre-planned creation of the elite’ even included specific marital regulations: according to special laws, a Serbian officer could marry a prospective wife only with the approval of his direct superior officer and the Minister of War. According to the law, junior officers also had to show they had extra income apart from their salaries: 2,000 dinars (equal at the time to French francs and Bulgarian leva) for lieutenants, 1,500 or 1,000 dinars in the case captains. Only majors could marry without such a precondition.<sup>16</sup> In Bulgaria legal requirements were somewhat lighter, but similar: officers were forbidden to marry until 25 years of age, and between 25 and 28 years old they had to show

15 Id., “Percentage of Literate Soldiers According to Different Army Branches in 1912,” July 7, 1912, 75–95 (Archive of Serbia); *Statističeski godišnik*, 110; *Statistički godišnjak*, 698.

16 This societal everyday pattern was reflected in Serbian literature: an army captain of modest background dreams to marry his beloved peasant girl, but this could be realized only by passing through the hurdles of the exam for the rank of major. This story was the central theme of the short novel *Captain Marjan*, by the Serbian classic writer Stevan Sremac.

that they had an extra-salary income of 1,200 leva. It should be noted that this was not some unique Balkan requirement: the two states were following a practice universally applied by major European armies; and as a result, military and civil elites were closely intertwined: in Serbia, only four out of 1,876 officers married peasant girls.<sup>17</sup>

The special role of officers included crucial social functions: they served as transmitters of the values that would convert the peasant, heretofore closed in the traditional world of the village, into an active soldier-citizen. That soldier-citizen would realize the true dimensions of the fatherland, which no longer ended with the family plot. To different extents—greater in Bulgaria, lesser in Serbia—the officers themselves identified this as a need and worked to develop the ideological system that would be propagated to the soldiers through instruction and education. A key part of this ideology was to draw the borders of the motherland, to make soldiers sensible of the nature of the fatherland and of the dimensions of the larger national entity.

The military employed different means to mold soldiers' views: direct speeches and lectures to the soldiers, formal hours of education in the 'national spirit' in courses for non-commissioned officers, patriotic marches and songs played by military orchestras and sung by the soldiers and their choirs, amateur theatre scenes and amusements, special festivities on the days of the national saints like Saint Sava or Saints Cyril and Methodius, regimental celebrations and so on. Further, the state-inspired 'union of the people with the army' was abundantly manifested at major public events. Cultural-symbolic demonstrations apart, this bond had a business dimension as well, with rich local merchants and entrepreneurs involved in army deliveries.

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17 Mile Bjelajac, "Ženidbe oficira srpske i jugoslovenske vojske 1881–1941. Planirano stvaranje elite," *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* [Annual of Social History], 2 (1), 1995, 19–28; Milić Milićević, "Socijalno poreklo oficirskog kadra školovanog u Srbiji od 1850 do 1901 godine," *Godišnjak za društvenu istoriju* [Annual of Social History] 2 (2), 1995, 200; "Law on the Organization of the Military Forces of the Bulgarian Army," *Därzhaven vestnik*, 14 (36), February 15, 1892; "Law on the Organization of the Military Forces of the Bulgarian army," *Därzhaven vestnik*, 14 (18), January 24, 1904.

At the turn of the twentieth century the Serbian marriage regulations were somewhat relaxed: captains could marry without demonstrating the financial stability of their prospective wives, while lieutenants' could marry after five years of active service to brides whose families would present a 10-year life insurance for 10,000 dinars. The marriage of sub-lieutenants was forbidden. "Law on Marriage of Officers, Under Officers, Corporals and Privates, December 24, 1901," in *Zbornik zakona i uredaba u Kraljevini Srbiji* (Belgrade: State Printing House, 61, 1903), 400–404.

The most complete source for details of this educational process is publications specifically targeted at the soldiers. Bulgaria's War Ministry began to publish an officers' monthly, named *Voenen zhurnal*, in 1888, and five years later it started another magazine aimed directly at the rank-and file, entitled *Voynishka sbirka*. Serbia issued its own official military periodical as well: *Ratnik*, for the officers, from 1879, and *Uzdanica*, for ordinary soldiers, from 1900. In addition, a specific genre of literature aimed at officers and soldiers also emerged. Although written largely by acting or retired officers, these books were formally unofficial and the result of private initiative. Successful publications that came to occupy this particular niche were reprinted in several editions. In Serbia, the most successful was *Vojnički bukvar* [Soldier's Primer] by Kosta Jokić, which went through 12 editions between 1893 and 1912.<sup>18</sup> While several different Bulgarian publications were in wide circulation, towards the end of the period *Voynishki drugar* [Soldier's Companion] by Vasil Guzhgulov was unrivalled: it was published eight times between 1907–1912.<sup>19</sup> Despite these market successes, the two countries' respective ministries of war also ensured that their official magazine for the soldiers was widely distributed: while every company of the Bulgarian army received four copies of *Voynishka sbirka*, in Serbia all non-commissioned officers were obliged to subscribe to *Uzdanica*.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, the national education in the schools was accomplished through the study of subjects such as history, geography, 'God's law' (religion). However, the most central role was given to the native language and literature. This occupied the bulk of the two countries' curricula, most importantly at the primary-school level that managed to encompass most peasant children. For example, until 1907 Bulgaria's education system devoted 43–44 hours per week to the national language and literature in the first four grades, compared with only three to six to 'fatherland knowledge' (national history and geography); while in Serbia, 28–30 hours were allotted to Serbian language and only 7–12 hours to history and geography.<sup>21</sup> Hence soldiers' books compared mainly

18 Kosta Jokić, *Vojnički bukvar* (Belgrade: Državna Štamparija 1893; 12th edition, 1911).

19 Vasil Guzhgulov, *Voynishki drugar. Uchebnik za mladite voynitsi ot vsichki rodove voyski* (Sofia: Balkanska tribuna, 1st edition 1907; 8th edition, 1912).

20 *Sistematičeski sbornik na zakonite, ukazite i tsirkulyarite po voennoto vedomstvo ot 1877/78 do 1 yanuarii 1901 g.* (Sofia: Glavna Direktsiya na Statistikata [Directorate General of Statistics], 1901), 421, 423; *Uzdanica*, 1, 1901, 161; 5, 1905, 62.

21 Charles Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms: Textbooks and Yugoslav Union before 1914* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1990), 35–36; Srećko Čunković, *Školstvo i prosveta u Srbiji u XIX veku* (Belgrade: Pedagoški muzej, 1971), 134–142, 155–170; Dimo Tsonkov, *Razvitie na osnovното obrazovanie v Bălgariya ot 1878 do 1928* (Sofia: Ministerstvo na narodnoto prosveshthenie [Ministry of National Education], 1928), 146–147, 232.

with literature textbooks as invaluable sources for studying the national instruction of children; especially influential were the manuals for primary education, encompassing children in the 7–12 age group.

### Imagining the Fatherland, Making Up the Nation...

Bulgarian texts for soldiers had an explicit addressee: pre-modern peasant boys entering the unknown adult world of the army barracks. The soldier literature defined the social and spatial limits of the reader's outlook: he was portrayed as a person who had hardly any knowledge beyond his settlement or county; his 'homeland' more often than not ended with his family plot or village. The texts extensively advertised the advantages of the army life: travel, acquiring knowledge of the world, a diverse and interesting life, greater hygiene, education and opportunity to master some craft and so on. In other words, if while entering the army soldiers were "wrongheaded foolish peasants," they would leave it as "sufficiently educated persons who know something and are capable to many different things."<sup>22</sup> In Serbia, the pattern of contrast between the peasant and the army world was to a certain extent similar.

For several decades, Serbian publications aimed at soldiers neither dwelled nor explicitly theorized on notions of nation or 'fatherland.' Instead, the literature adopted a more traditional approach: it chose to employ recurrent folk-historical motives. Different editions preferred to print epic songs and romantic tales on the medieval history of the Serbs. For example, 49% of the content of the first six issues of *Uzdanica* (233 out of 480 pages) was filled with epic folk-historical stories.<sup>23</sup>

Narration on the greatness and the fall of the medieval Serbian kingdom performed nation-forming functions in Serbia that in Bulgaria were accomplished by special texts on the fatherland or on contemporary patriotic deeds. In Serbia the songs and stories on the time of Stefan Dushan, on the 1389 Battle of Kosovo or on 'the new *Miloš Obilić*' of the nineteenth century occupied large portions of the literature published for the soldiers. The quintessence of this approach was formulated in the reasoning that "the Serbian song is an educative reader, which contains everything elevated and good that merited mentioning at the time."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Voynishka sbirka*, 1, 1893–1894, 196.

<sup>23</sup> *Uzdanica*, 1 (1–6), 1901.

<sup>24</sup> Andrej Živanović, *Čemu vojnika uči naša narodna poezija* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1892), 59.

This practice was applied not only in the army but also among younger children enrolled in the educational system. Textbooks in different subjects, and especially those in Serbian language and literature, included original epic texts drawn from the volumes of folk songs collected by Vuk Karadžić and his followers. These songs by and large narrated the story of the medieval Serbian state and its fate before and after the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.<sup>25</sup> From the 1890s on this method was further expanded and remodelled. The new textbooks incorporated not only original folk songs but also new epic-inspired texts fusing folklore with recent history and geography. Manuals painted the picture of cyclically recurrent historical time: the example of the heroes of the Battle of Kosovo was as relevant to the nineteenth or twentieth as to the fourteenth century. For example, the heroic figures of the early-nineteenth-century anti-Ottoman Serbian uprisings were represented as a new version of the fourteenth century originals. Manuals underlined that in 1878 the Serbian army had managed briefly to retake the area, but that the real ‘Kosovo revenge’ was an immediate aim for the future.<sup>26</sup> Thus Serbians, both as children in school and while becoming adults in the army, were exposed to the same type of national inculcation based on folklore and epic values. The texts—both for the pupils and the soldiers—outlined the superiority of combativeness, bravery and strength in war over other human qualities.

The re-creation of the nation through the mold of epic folklore was dominant throughout the whole period, although it lost some momentum in the last decade before the Balkan Wars. From the turn of the century another ‘modern’ approach was modestly introduced: texts started explicitly to describe and define not the epic past, but the contemporary Serbian fatherland and nation. From around 1908 such accounts were regularly included in the books for soldiers:<sup>27</sup> ‘the fatherland’ was related to the ancestors (described as “graves of

25 [Filip Hristić], *Treća čitanka za osnovne srpske škole* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1869), 117–142. Later edition: *Četvrta čitanka za osnovne srpske škole* (1885), 2–28; [Stojan Novaković], *Srpska čitanka za niže gimnazije i realke, Knjiga prva* (3rd edition, Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1883). In the latter textbook, aimed at 12–14 year old children, 21 texts out of 85 (occupying 91 pages out of 363) were epic songs on the times of the medieval Serbian state, including the Battle of Kosovo.

26 Milan Marković and B. Nedić, *Srpska čitanka za treći razred osnovnih škola Kraljevine Srbije* (2nd edition, Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1894), 30–46, 106–109; Ljubomir Protić and Vladimir Stojanović, *Srpska čitanka: treća knjiga za četvrti razred osnovnih škola u Kraljevini Srbiji* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1907), 3, 201–205; Milan Šević, *Srpska čitanka za sredne škole. Knjiga prva za prvi razred* (Belgrade: Državna štamparija, 1907), 75–80.

27 Pavle Jurišić, *Vojnička čitanka* (Beograd: Štamparija Davidović, 1908), 7–9; Dragoljub Mihajlović, *Srpski soko. Knjiga za vojnike* (Beograd: Uredništvo Narodnih novina, 1908),

grandfathers,” or “a country, in which every spot is permeated with the blood of your grandfathers and fathers”) in continuity with, but more importantly also as a departure from, the previous epic folk model. “The fatherland” was associated with the natural beauty of the land to a lesser extent than was the case in Bulgaria; in Serbia, the binding of the peasant soldier with the new ‘imagined community,’ the building of the bridge between the old village worldview and the modern reality, was accomplished with the help of different practices. Rather, ‘the fatherland’ was associated with the initial biological perceptions of the individual, with the place and moment of his birth.<sup>28</sup> It also encompassed the pre-modern restricted horizon of the young peasant, both social (relatives, friends and co-villagers) and material (hearth, house, family plot, entire village). The texts relayed the message that “one who loves his village loves also his fatherland; one who defends his co-villagers defends also his people.”<sup>29</sup>

The notion of ‘the village’ was also important in the writings of Ion Creangă, one of Romania’s nation-builders;<sup>30</sup> by contrast, ‘Ottoman childhoods’ were not obsessed with the village world (even Kâzım Karabekir with his grandfather’s village). The alternative neighborhood [*mahalle*] community is more often than not inscribed into the town-dwelling space. This suggests contrasts between values of peasant societies of Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania and that of late Ottoman cum Turkish entity.<sup>31</sup>

In Serbia, the image of the kin relations was also deployed to sum up various motivations: “Fatherland, dear mother, we are your children. When you call us we will come, when you want it we will die.”<sup>32</sup> The association ‘soldiers = children’ was highly symbolical but also appropriate and practical in view of the youth of the recruits. It ensured entering into the world of adulthood with the partial incorporation and continuation of a child’s perceptions.<sup>33</sup>

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9–10; Jovan Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja za vojnike stalnoga kadra* (Beograd: Štamparija Srbija, 1908), 21; Jokić, *Vojnički bukvar* (12th edition), 75.

28 *Uzdanica*, 3, 1903, 179–180; Jurišić, *Vojnička čitanka*, 7; Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja*, 21; Mihajlović, *Srpski soko*, 9; Dimitrije Pejović, *Vojnička čitančica za svakog vojnika* (Zaječar: Štamparija Đura Jakšić, 1911), 77.

29 *Ibid.*, 34.

30 See Alex Drace-Francis, this volume.

31 See Philipp Wirtz, this volume.

32 *Uzdanica*, 1, 1901, 346–347.

33 It should be noted that in the Serbian case, direct associations of the nation with ‘big family’ were very rare. One exception, however, was the article “Thoughts of Great People on Fatherland and Army,” *Uzdanica*, 10, 1910, 319–320. This provided a straightforward definition: “The fatherland is one big family.” The same text was published in the Bulgarian

The Bulgarian approach was somewhat different. From its very first publications, soldier literature did not include folk texts but made elaborate efforts to recreate and affirm the specially outlined contemporary notion of ‘fatherland,’ which was inherently bound with the nation. Numerous novels explicitly aimed to evoke this new image in the soldier. The fatherland was presented as a land, a natural beauty, an elevated pleasant feeling; it was anthropomorphous, eternal, homogeneous, stable, static and stemming from the history and the spirit of the ancestors. The variety of emotions and symbols might seem diverse, eclectic and disorganized, yet they all merged into a single dominating image, directly embodying and presenting the essence of the ‘people’: the family. The imagining of the nation was most easily accomplished by depicting a kin-related community, a ‘second family’ (alongside the first, biological one) or a ‘big family.’ According to two texts:

The Bulgarian nation [*narod*] is a big family; we, all Bulgarians, are members, relatives; we speak one language, share one faith and the same mores and customs, and we live in one land—Bulgaria, which is our Fatherland.<sup>34</sup>

Our Bulgarian land is like a big house, inhabited by one big family, that is called a Bulgarian nation [*narod*].<sup>35</sup>

Heidi Morrison (this volume) highlights the importance of the notion of family in nation-building efforts aimed at Egyptian children; in the case of Bulgaria, the ‘family-resemblant’ national concept was employed in the army rather than among schoolchildren. In Serbia, the kin-related comparisons were also emphasized but texts stopped short of the direct association of the nation with a ‘big family.’

The second quote above reveals one very important aspect of Bulgarian national self-representation: ‘fatherland’ (and nation) as a land. This trope was employed frequently both in the army and the school system, though with somewhat different emphases. For the young children it was mainly the natural beauty of Bulgaria’s plains and hills, rivers and mountains, forests and meadows, sun and sky—both on the level of birthplace intimacy and on more

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magazine for soldiers eleven years earlier, as “Thoughts and Sayings on the Fatherland, on Love for the Fatherland and for the Flag,” (*Voynishka sbirka*, 6, 1899, 490–496). Both texts were probably translated from another European language; the Bulgarian officer establishment more quickly adopted this foreign approach to nation-building.

34 Dimităr Draganov, *Uchebnik za mladite voynitsi* (Sofia: Pechatnitsa Gavazov, 1907), 43.

35 *Voynishka sbirka*, 1, 1893–1894, 357.

abstract and larger, but specifically named, geographical units, such as the Stara planina, Rila and Pirin Mountains, the Danube, Maritsa and Vardar Rivers, the Thracian Plain.<sup>36</sup> Especially instrumental were the verses and prose of the leading contemporary writer Ivan Vazov, whose nature-loving motives and particular geographic symbols permeated school-book pages. One of the most successful texts was his verse composition ‘Where is Bulgaria?’ which was widely reprinted in textbooks and reached to the core of the Bulgarian imagination:

If men ask me where the sunrise  
 Warmed me first when I was small,  
 If men ask me where the land is  
 That I cherish most of all,  
 This will be my simple answer:  
 Where the mighty Danube flows,  
 Where the Black Sea brightly dances  
 In the East and stormy grows;  
 [...]  
 My Bulgaria, dear mother,  
 Land with earthly goods galore,  
 Land I cherish like no other,  
 Please accept my humble bow.<sup>37</sup>

The notion of land was also extensively employed in the literature for Bulgarian soldiers, but often with somewhat different nuances. Apart from innocent

36 For national appropriation of the land/scapes, see Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origin of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), 183–191; Colin Williams and Anthony Smith. “The National Construction of Social Space,” *Progress in Human Geography*, 7 (4), 1983, 502–518.

37 Dragan Manchov, *Bashtin ezik za detsa. Tretya godina. Tretya chitanka za uchene sled bukvaryat* (11th edition, Plovdiv: D.V. Manchov, 1886), 148; Nikola Saranov, *Chitanka za osnovnite uchilishta. Sredni kurs. Vtora godina* (7th revised edition, Plovdiv: Hr. G. Danov, 1894), 59; Todor Vlaykov, *Chitanka za chetvarto otdelenie* (6th edition, Sofia: Vălkov, 1896), 23–24; Ivan Ivanov, *Chitanka za tretoto otdelenie* (2nd edition, Tărnovo: Knizh. N.P. Nedyalkovich, 1897), 82; Găcho Baltadzhiev, *Chitanka za chetvarto otdelenie* (2nd revised edition, Plovdiv: Hr. G. Danov, 1911), 95. The full text of the verse includes references to many more geographical notions. The first part of the translation is by Peter Tempest, published in Ivan Vazov, *Selected Poems* (Sofia: Sofia Press, 1976), 21, while that of the last strophe is by Valentin Hadzhiyski (*Gergana Songbook* [Sofia: State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad, 2013], 9).

abstract natural beauty and the country as a whole, it denoted mostly the particular 'real' holdings close to the peasants' worldview: an agricultural plot or a meadow, a small forest or a modest house, a vineyard or a garden. Thus 'the fatherland' became tantamount to the sum of the different real estates, "inherited from our fathers by all of us, who bear the beautiful name 'Bulgarians.'"<sup>38</sup> The entrance into the world of adulthood meant increasing concern for and dependence on property ownership, and the nation had to be associated with it.

Army education as a rule emphasized the ethnic nation as a community built on a common language, religion, customs, origins and history, rather than on a concept of the common state and its institutions and territories. Therefore, the ideal fatherland—the territorial projection of the nation—stretched far beyond the current state borders. While Bulgarian officers stressed the San Stefano Greater Bulgaria as the model for a 'united fatherland'<sup>39</sup> their Serbian counterparts presented the numerous 'Serbian lands' to that end; the full official list included the then-current small Kingdom of Serbia, together with Bosnia, Herzegovina, Srem, Banat, Bachka, Old Serbia, Macedonia, districts of Vidin and Sredets [Sofia], as well as Montenegro, Dalmatia, Slavonia and Croatia.<sup>40</sup> In this respect both Bulgarian and Serbian army educators were following and affirming concepts that were already imposed on children by the geography textbooks in school.<sup>41</sup>

From the mid-1890s the Bulgarian soldier was increasingly introduced mainly to one particular 'unredeemed' territory: Macedonia. After the turn of the century, reflecting geopolitical and ethnographic patterns, Macedonia predominated over the other parts of the ideal Bulgarian fatherland. In contrast, Serbian officers could not point exclusively to any single region, yet four out of the thirteen 'Serbian lands' received somewhat privileged attention: 'Old Serbia' (encompassing approximately Kosovo and the adjacent territories

38 Todor Girginov, *Pisma do mladite voynitsi* (Sofia: Voenen zhurnal, 1902), 14–15.

39 That is, Bulgaria as according to the 1878 San Stefano treaty including the Principality of Bulgaria, Eastern Rumelia, Macedonia and South (Adrianople) Thrace, Morava valley [Eastern Serbia] and North Dobrudja. This model was presented in: [Peev], *Voynishka čitanka* (Plovdiv: Druzhestvena pečatnitsa Edinstvo, 1888), 49; Ivan Markov, *Nravstveni besedi s voynitsite* (Sofia: Pridvorna pečatnitsa, 1891), 110–111; Girginov, *Pisma*, 17–18; Konstantin Shingarov, *Uchebnik za rednitsite* (5th edition, Sofia: Pridvorna pečatnitsa, 1907), 21.

40 *Uzdanica*, 4, 1904, 695; Miloš Vasić, *Vojnička čitanka* (2nd edition, Belgrade: Štamparija Svetozara Nikolića, 1896), 15; Jurišić, *Vojnička čitanka*, 7–9; Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja*, 21, 65; Mihajlović, *Srpski soko*, 9; Pejović, *Vojnička čitančica*, 66.

41 Kaytchev, *Makedonijo, vāzzhelana*, 148–150.

under the Ottomans), Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina. All of these until 1908 were really or theoretically within the Ottoman Empire, a space of instability and expected territorial change. Initially the focus was to the south, towards the first two regions, but starting from around 1903, and especially after 1908, the northwest and Bosnia and Herzegovina received equal consideration.

The sole notable discrepancy facing the Bulgarian soldier was that between the imagined larger ethnic nation and the potential civic community that might emerge from the current Bulgarian state and its institutions. The soldier was extensively introduced and educated in the functions of the state, its prince (after 1908, the king), its army and other institutions. This line sometimes evolved into a systematic concept of the political nation that by definition was in contradiction with the genetic organic nation.<sup>42</sup> Yet in general the majority of officers preferred to stress the ethnic essence of the nation.

This was further reinforced by neglecting the ethnic 'others' in the Bulgarian army. A substantial portion of Bulgarian citizens were Turks and other ethnic minorities, but the literature for the soldiers did not aim to socialize them with the state and its army.<sup>43</sup> The sole text explicitly devoted to a non-ethnic Bulgarian soldier was that on a Jew named Boroh who demonstrated bravery in the battle as a drummer and scared the enemy, the Turkish military unit.<sup>44</sup>

Likewise, the Serbian authors paid no special attention to the accommodation of non-Serbs in the army. The military authorities took steps to assimilate the Vlach conscripts from northeastern Serbia but this process was not reflected in the literature for soldiers. The Serbian officers took for granted the ethnic nature of the Serbian nation, which was not undermined by any references to the nation-state. Their major challenge in defining and presenting the Serbian nation to the soldier was quite different: it was extremely difficult to determine the proper role of religion as a constituent element of the national community.

Traditionally, the Serbian national community was deeply steeped in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Dominating folklore texts underlined epic heroes like Lazar Hrebljanović, Miloš Obilić, Marko Kraljević, who were Orthodox Christians fighting the Muslim Turks. These images initially also

42 *Voynishka sbirka*, 1, 1893–1894, 527–528.

43 One of the rare exceptions is Macho Iskrov, *Pamyatna kniga za rednitsite of bǎlgarskata voyska* (5th edition, Varna: R.L. Blǎskov, 1901), 11. The text mentions Bulgarian citizens and soldiers who could be of Bulgarian, Turkish, Greek or another ethnicity.

44 *Voynishka sbirka*, 10, 1903, 107–120. The text in fact was translated from Russian, but in the context of the numerous conflicts with Turkey it was perceived by the readers-soldiers as reflecting the reality of Bulgaria and its army.

permeated literature for the Serbian soldier; however, Serbian military educators soon clearly understood that Serb- and Croat-speaking Muslims or Catholics in the West should be somehow incorporated rather than excluded. Therefore the texts included vast sections narrating on the irrelevancy of confessional divisions:

This difference in faith is not a big difference. The blood remains Serbian blood in all of us. We remain true brothers because we are knit together first of all by blood, language and customs; very rarely some other people have them as commonly shared as us.

A rhyming phrase was formulated to reinforce the effect: “The brother is dear irrespective of the faith.”<sup>45</sup> Later editions of the most popular soldier’s primer even omitted the section on Orthodox religion; instead, the new text explained that Serbs and Croats, despite differences in religion and name, constitute one and the same people.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, even novel depictions of the nation and its fatherland included the Orthodox faith, monasteries and saints as important markers.<sup>47</sup> Thus Serbian identity remained insecure on the question of religion; while it remained fundamentally linked to Orthodoxy, on the surface some efforts were made to induce in soldiers a different view. Ultimately, Catholic Croats and Bosnian Muslims were not included efficiently in the imagined national community of the Serbian soldier.

By way of conclusion, these nation-building tropes can be juxtaposed to contemporary theoretical classifications. The army writers in both countries saw themselves as portraying and explaining the inherent, coherent and consistent nature of their nation; this recreated national type was dissimilar to the ideal models of Herder or Renan. When exceptional, more theoretically inclined, authors borrowed from foreign sources they did not revere to them as highest wisdom: the foreign elements were simply considered as necessary ingredients for the imagined unique nation. The Serbian and Bulgarian officers perceived the nation both as an objective and as a subjective phenomenon.<sup>48</sup>

45 “Brat je mio pa bilo koje vere bio,” Vasić, *Vojnička čitanka*, 14–15.

46 Jokić. *Vojnički bukvar* (7th edition, 1901), 91–96; id. (12th edition, 1911), 75–76.

47 Sretenović, *Potrebna znanja*, 21; Mihajlović, *Srpski soko*, 9–10; Petar Bojović, *Vaspitavanje vojnika* (Belgrade: Vojno Ministarstvo [War Ministry], 1907), 132.

48 “In all these places we will encounter our brothers—Bulgarians who speak the same language, are of the same belief, have the same customs and manners, the same feelings and thoughts for the common Bulgarian Fatherland.” [Dobri Ganchev], *Voynishka hristomatiya* (Sofia: Voynishka sbirka, 1896), 53.

Their model was so encompassing that it sometimes explicitly included communicational abilities that could not be derived solely from either objective or subjective influences alone:

we feel [...] towards them [compatriots] as at our home, in our village or in our town: we could converse soul by soul, we could understand each other; [...] everyone understands my word, everyone reads, writes, speaks and sings like me and I understand everyone.<sup>49</sup>

In other worlds, the nation was also represented and embodied in what Karl Deutsch would have defined as ‘communicational complementarity.’<sup>50</sup>

### **Picturing the Neighbors, Modelling the Foes: The Nation’s Significant Others and the Ottoman Empire**

In both Bulgaria and Serbia, the way army educators defined their nation also implied a particular image of their neighbors. Some neighbors were significant as ‘others,’ and or as potential enemies.

Among the different neighboring countries, Romania received the least attention. In Serbia, the state across the Danube, and even the Romanian-speaking community at home, were not specially denoted in soldierly readings; clearly, Romania was perceived neither as potential enemy nor as trusted ally. The country was barely mentioned in Bulgaria either: the main exception was that when describing the ‘ideal fatherland’ of San Stefano Bulgaria, literature for soldiers shortly observed that one part of this area (a section of northern Dobrudja) was allocated to Romania according to the Berlin Treaty.<sup>51</sup> Aside from that brief note, the themes connected with the northern neighbor were largely neglected. After the turn of the century Romania started to insist on territorial compensations in Bulgarian southern Dobrudja in the event of redistribution of the Ottoman inheritance in the Balkans; yet the Bulgarian soldier was not prepared to imagine facing an invading army from the north. This also points to the lack of any organized lobby group in Bulgarian society

49 *Voynishka sbirka*, 1, 1893–1894, 527.

50 Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (2nd edition, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), 96–98.

51 Girginov, *Pisma*, 18; Shingarov, *Uchebnik*, 21; Vasil Guzhgulov, *Novobranetsät. Kak da se gotvi za voenna sluzhba* (Shumen: Tipogr. Sp. Popov, 1903), 46; Guzhgulov, *Voynishki drugar* (2nd edition, 1907), 47–48.

that might include the Romanian-Dobrudjan issue in the political agenda of Bulgaria and its army.

Greece was covered more extensively in Bulgaria. Traditionally, Greece was portrayed mainly negatively, as it had been a main competitor in the Middle Ages; more importantly, the very construction of the modern Bulgarian nation was accomplished through emancipation from the Greek-dominated *Rum millet*. In addition, both states were engaged in rivalry over the domination of parts of Ottoman-ruled Macedonia, culminating in 1904–1908 with armed clashes between Bulgarian *komiti* and Greek *andartes*.<sup>52</sup> However, in spite of this, the Bulgarian soldier did not receive extensive adversary texts aimed at Greece. Compared with the heated anti-Greek rhetoric of the contemporary Bulgarian public and its press, the literature for soldiers was quite moderate when presenting Greek violence in Macedonia. Probably the small distant kingdom to the south was not perceived by Bulgarian political and military leaders as a potential immediate war enemy. Before encountering the Greek army, already defeated in 1897, the Bulgarian soldier had to overcome the resistance of the immediate direct neighbor to the south: the Empire with quite more impressive military strength.

Serbian army education paid less attention to the Greeks. They appeared only as casual opponents of the medieval Serbian kingdom of Stefan Dushan,<sup>53</sup> but were not represented in the key Kosovo epic cycle. Intensive political contacts at the beginning of the twentieth century could not compensate for a lack of military exchanges and the relative geographical remoteness.

More important were the mutual images of the two Slav nations. In Bulgaria, the picture of the Serbs was complex. On one hand, the 1885 Serb-Bulgarian war was the first test of the young Bulgarian army, and could not be forgotten. Also, Sofia faced Serbian counteractivity and resistance to Bulgarian domination in the northern parts of Ottoman Macedonia, and some of the texts for soldiers reflected this rivalry. On the other hand, though, accounts of the 1885 war did not focus negatively on the adversary as such, preferring instead to advance the virtues of the Bulgarian soldiers and their officers. Similarly to the Romanian case, the issue of areas of San Stefano Bulgaria under Serbian control was by and large ignored. Even in the texts on atrocities against Macedonian Bulgarians, Serbia emerged as a minor nuisance, compared to the main villains—Ottoman Turkey, and to a certain extent Greece. Moreover, some editions began to publish items that explicitly promoted a favourable

52 *Voynishka sbirka*, 9, 1902, 349, 394, 499–533; 13, 1906, 688; 15, 1908, 945–949; Guzhgulov, *Voynishki drugar* (4th edition, 1909), 137–138; id. (8th edition, 1912), 127.

53 *Uzdanica*, 1, 1901, 401; 3, 1903, 352–353; 6, 1906, 257–288.

image of the Serbs. In 1906–1907 the Bulgarian magazine for soldiers even published series of translated Serbian texts! The obvious aim was to present the related destiny of the two neighboring peoples and their shared suffering under the Turks, to prepare the ground for solidarity, mutual help and alliance. Army educators apparently realized that the sole realistic prospect for acquiring Macedonia involved a military alliance with Serbia; henceforth, the contradictions had to be disregarded in order to describe the closeness of the potential allies.<sup>54</sup>

In contrast, the Serbian image of their eastern Slav neighbor was neither complex nor favorable. Bulgarians were presented as the natural adversary of Serbia, deprived of the most elevated virtue of the Serbs: bravery. They were the enemy in the 1885 war, occupiers of one of the ‘Serbian lands’ of Vidin and Sredets [Sofia] and the current foe in Macedonia, presented as old Serbian land. This negative image was additionally reinforced by selectively chosen historical episodes, such as the 1330 battle near Velbuzhd (Kyustendil) or the controversy over the ethnicity of the leader of the early-nineteenth century-insurgent units in the area of Timok during the First Serbian Uprising.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the Bulgarians were rarely presented as a typical adversary who would unavoidably become a war enemy: this role was preserved for the ‘Turks’ and the ‘Austrians.’ Bulgaria was more of a minor, ‘reserve’ enemy who might strike some unexpected blow from the rear.

The Habsburg Empire had a very special place in the imagining of the Serbian soldier. The Empire ruled over the most of the ‘Serbian Lands,’ including regions with unregulated international jurisdiction: Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, in theory ‘the Austrians’ (sometimes referred also as ‘Germans,’ in certain cases in union with ‘the Hungarians’) should be the most significant factor for the military educators. However, their image as a potential enemy was not especially elaborated during the decades up to the end of the nineteenth century, and even until 1908. The reasons for this were twofold. Firstly, the epic cycles on Marko Kraljević and the Battle of Kosovo, long the core tools for building Serbian identity, pointed to the south and did not include specific references to the Catholic neighbors beyond the Danube and Sava. Secondly, the post-1878 Serbian state directed its foreign policy priorities to the south and went into a secret alliance with Austria-Hungary to that effect. Therefore it was highly inadvisable to criticize the mighty northern ally. Though some very rare books for Serbian soldiers dared to create an image of

54 *Vojnishka sbirka*, 1, 1893–1894, 420–436; 13, 1906, 931–940; 14, 1907, 1–18, 107–118, 217–228; 15, 1908, 945–949; 19, 1912, 575.

55 *Uzdanica*, 3, 1903, 231–236; 10, 1910, 633–640; 11, 1911, 147–153; Jurišić, *Vojnička čitanka* 17, 35; Vasić, *Vojnička čitanka*, 13, 40.

an all-powerful adversary to the north, the shift in that direction was very slow.<sup>56</sup> The decisive transformation came as late as 1908, along with the Bosnian crisis. The preceding (since 1903) foreign policy shift in an anti-Austrian and pro-Russian direction now was overtly exposed. The change could be spectacularly observed in a soldier-reader by Pavle Jurišić. The first edition was published in the early 1908, several months before the crisis, employing the traditional nation-narrating model on a vast fatherland consisting of many 'Serbian Lands' but emphasizing southern national roots in Old Serbia and Macedonia. A new edition had to be printed very quickly, reflecting a strategic change of government policy and of the everyday routine of its citizens. A new section, 'Our Lands under the Foreigners' was produced: it devoted eight times more space to regions under Austria-Hungary than to those in the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. Since the editing and re-writing of the main body of the reader seemed too arduous an task, the author chose an easier solution. He reprinted the main text but added at the top of every page a catchword on Bosnia and its "enslavers." Thus the phrase "Proud Bosnia weeps in slavery" was employed 12 times and "Austrians are our biggest adversaries" 10 times. In fact, the book offered two different chronological layers with diverging geographical messages.<sup>57</sup> In the remaining four years up to the wars, Serbian officers extensively focused on Bosnia and Vienna's unjust rule of over it. Nevertheless, at the same time stories of the Turkish adversary suppressing southern Serbdom in Macedonia and Old Serbia continued unabated.

For both Serbia and Bulgaria, the foremost potential enemy, and simultaneously the most significant 'other,' was doubtless the Ottoman Empire. Its image was elaborated more extensively than those of the three other young small Balkan states taken together. In Bulgaria, 'the Turks' were the historic 'enslavers,' subjecting Bulgaria to a "five-century-long yoke." Crucially, this image was extrapolated into the contemporaneity, to the Turkish oppression of the Bulgarians in Macedonia.<sup>58</sup> Sometimes the negative image of the southern neighbor was presented with novel arguments. A story entitled "In What Kind of Banks we Put our Money" narrated a Bulgarian teacher in Ottoman Macedonia arrested and jailed by local police because of his books. The main purpose of the law enforcement officers was to receive a bribe, and after paying it from his modest savings the teacher was released. Thus the Ottoman Empire emerged as a

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56 Ibid., 15.

57 Jurišić, *Vojnička čitanka* (2nd edition, 1909), 8–11, 18–19, 59, 64, 87, 94, 111–112.

58 *Voynishka sbirka*, 1, 1893–1894, 221–227; 10, 1903, 580–588; 13, 1906, 312, 769; 14, 1907, 955–970, 980–993; 19, 1912, 477–401; Todor Kantardzhiev, *Primeri po voennoto vâzpitanie* (Plovdiv: Tărg. pechatnitsa, 1906), 153–170.

synonym of the incompetence, arbitrariness and venality of the officials, as a byword of institutionalized administrative and economic backwardness. The authors self-proclaimed a sense of superiority over their decaying oriental neighbor: "In Bulgaria applications are not accepted without treasury stamps, in Turkey—without *rushvet*, (*rüşvet*, bribe)." <sup>59</sup> All these negative images were complemented with the representation of the enemy fighting Bulgarian soldiers. The numerous stories of nineteenth-century revolutionary struggles were used to that effect, continuing with stories about the Bulgarian militia corps in the 1877–1878 Russian-Ottoman war and the soldiers of the contemporary Bulgarian army, either fighting in border skirmishes or ready for a general war against the enemy.

In Serbia, the image of 'the Turk' was almost the same: in the epic cycles the enemy was always a Moslem-Turk, a long time "tyrant," "enslaver," "persecutor." Similarly, Ottoman rule over Old Serbia and Macedonia was presented in the blackest colors. <sup>60</sup> Serbian officers, however, were not very consistent in narrating stories on contemporary border Serb-Turkish conflicts.

Overall, in both countries the Ottoman Empire dominated texts for soldiers and was close to completely assuming the role of the enemy. However, while for Bulgarian officers and soldiers it was the sole adversary, for their Serbian counterparts, as discussed above, Austria-Hungary emerged as a second major threat towards 1908. To complicate matters further, the image of another lesser foe appeared as well: the Albanians. They were presented as a distinct people, but as Muslims were semi-attached to the image of the Ottoman Turks. <sup>61</sup>

In both Bulgaria and Serbia, efforts aimed at children at school had somewhat different priorities. The main emphasis was on the composition and integration of the image of the nation, with texts very rarely explicitly focused on attitudes towards a specific neighbor. Opposition to and emancipation from the dominating neighbor were expressed inasmuch as to ensure the formation and working of a full-blown national self-identity. In the Serbian case, the epic songs on the Battle of Kosovo often involved the image of the Muslim/Ottoman Turk enemy. In Bulgaria, textbooks sometimes incorporated stories on nineteenth-century revolutionaries fighting against the Ottoman rule, or indignantly described the continuing oppression over compatriots in Macedonia.

59 *Voyishka sbirka*, 12, 1905, 14–26.

60 Pejović, *Vojnička čitančica*, 98–105; *Uzdanica*, 4, 1904, 258–259, 561–562; 10, 1910, 331, 639; 11, 1911, 68–72, 147–153.

61 *Uzdanica*, 1, 1901, 338; 2, 1902, 65–72, 298–301; 4, 1904, 641–646, 656–664. The article "Our Neighbors Albanians," was the sole text presenting them in the positive light, *Uzdanica*, 10, 1910, 350–356.

Some texts on medieval Bulgarian kings raised the image of a Byzantine Greek adversary or included verses rejecting the Greek and affirming the Bulgarian origin of the Saints Cyril and Methodius, who were instrumental in the establishment of the Old Bulgarian Christian culture.<sup>62</sup> After the turn of the new century some Serbian textbooks started to print items on the imminent war against the Ottomans.<sup>63</sup> In general, however, most school images aimed at children were used exclusively to build the national self and could not be compared in intensity and importance to the sustained military efforts to create a threatening figure of adversary.

In both countries all army images of the ‘the other’ were sets of stereotypes that condensed real facts into oversimplifying and misleading schemes ultimately building and affirming self-identity, and asserting difference and superiority over ‘the others.’ This pattern of stereotypes has been described as

the guarantee of our self-respect; [...] the projections upon the world of our own sense of our own value, our own position and our own rights. The stereotypes are [...] the fortress of our tradition, and behind its defenses we can continue to feel ourselves safe in the position we occupy.<sup>64</sup>

The stereotyped pictures of important others were indispensable to shaping and defining one’s own national identity, particularly in the reading of army educators.

To what extent were the sustained efforts of the two young states and their armies to convert boys into accomplished adults, peasants into patriotic soldiers, effective? To what extent they did shape the new mass national consciousness? Statistics point to the large quantitative outreach of the military and educational systems.<sup>65</sup> The ultimate results became evident in early autumn of 1912: the outbreak of the First Balkan War was universally acclaimed in both countries. Widespread evidence confirms that the populations of both countries enthusiastically supported the war effort in the name of the nation and its dreamed-of unification. This suggests that, at least in the decades up to

62 Todor Ikonov, *Chitanka za prigotvyanie na uroshite v klassovete* (Ruse: Pechatnitsa na v. Slavyanin, 1885), 138; Nikola Altankov, *Chitanka za IV otdelenie* (Sofia: Liberalen klub na B. Kozuharov, 1892), 38–39, 69–71, 104–105; Saranov, *Chitanka za osnovnite uchilishta*, 123–141.

63 Protić and Stojanović. *Srpska čitanka*, 14, 195–222; id. (6th revised edition, 1912, 185–211).

64 Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1922), 96.

65 See footnotes 9, 12 and 15 above.

the Balkan Wars and the First World War, the army, school and other nation-building institutions in Serbia and Bulgaria were by and large effective. The results of their labors were undermined at later stages: starting with initial disillusionments during Balkan Wars, deepening in the trenches and battlefields of the First World War and continuing during its harsh aftermath.

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## A Triangle of Regrets: Training of Ottoman Children in Germany During the First World War

*Nazan Maksudyan*

In Sabahattin Ali's famous novel *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* [Madonna in a Fur Coat], Raif Efendi, a relatively young boy, is sent to Germany to learn the trade of soap manufacturing in order to take over his father's business and run it with more technological and up-to-date methods. However, he does not have the slightest ambition or eagerness to accomplish what is asked from him. Instead, he shows more interest in the German language and culture than his work in the factory. He lives in a pension that houses a colorful mixture of international guests and learns German from an army officer. In fact, he spends a long time in the 'learning the language' phase, which finally turns out to be the last step in his German education, due to an unexpected love affair with the portrait of a melancholy young woman. After seeing the painting of Maria Puder for the first time in an opening, he is virtually struck down and instantly bewitched by the woman and starts going to the gallery every day. He is so deeply absorbed in the picture that when one day the painter of the *self-portrait* approaches to him, he could not recognize her. Set in 1920s Berlin with its nightclubs, restaurants, the Romanisches Café and other legendary sites, the story spans six months, almost reaching to a happy ending but then breaking off abruptly.

Sabahattin Ali's genius in constructing an exceptional love story and in penetrating deep into the inner lives of his protagonists is singular. Yet, the *sergüzeşt* [adventure] of Raif Efendi in Germany is actually not so exceptional in the context of the sending of Ottoman youngsters to Germany for vocational education and training during the First World War. Although constantly blamed by both disillusioned home and host countries as lazy, disobedient and unprepared, etc., Ottoman vocational students and apprentices in Germany felt the most betrayed and discontented with their lot, with their hopes of leading more prosperous lives in Germany shattered. My paper concentrates on the experiences of this earliest and youngest generation of Turkish/Ottoman migrant workers in Germany. As destitute and rootless lads, these children, collected from orphanages, were not only practically expelled from their home country, but in their migrant worker situation also suffered poverty, exclusion and disconnection. This paper explores their accounts of discomfort and

unhappiness during their stay. As a twist to this grey story, which offers little hope for a happy ending, in the final section of the paper I give a relatively more detailed and individual account of the experiences of two Ottoman orphan boys, an apprentice and a high school student, who decided to stay in Germany long after the organized return trips in 1919. Arguably, they found a better environment for their education and life prospects and also felt integrated enough to settle in Germany, despite the official call (and arrangements) for their return.

### **Educational Collaborations between the German Kaiserreich and the Ottoman Empire**

The turcophile journalist Ernst Jäckh founded the Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung [DTV, German-Turkish Association] in 1912, initially to bring together financial and industrial corporations with interests in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>1</sup> These corporations made substantial donations to the DTV in support of its declared aim of cultural rapprochement, including guided tours in Germany for Ottoman politicians and businessmen to impress them with the country's achievements, and educational initiatives in the Ottoman Empire. More importantly, the DTV built organic links with the German Foreign Office, such that it had tight control over the implementation of foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. The DTV would use the considerable funds at its disposal in coordination with the Foreign Office for expenses exceeding the latter's budget. Hans von Wangenheim, the German ambassador in Istanbul from 1912 onwards, pushed for a closer alliance under Jäckh's guidance and through his friendship with Enver Pasha, an enthusiastic admirer of Germany.<sup>2</sup>

At Jäckh's initiation, an Ottoman delegation of fifteen prominent men, consisting of politicians, businessmen, army officers, administrators, agriculturists and a journalist, was invited to Germany in 1911. Financially, the project was funded by the German Foreign Ministry through a German consortium of banks. The guests traveling from Istanbul arrived in Berlin on June 18, 1911. Their 27-day visit includes the cities of Preußen, Sachsen, Württemberg, Bayern, Hamburg

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1 The full name of the society is given in the earlier correspondence.

2 Malte Fuhrmann, "Germany's Adventures in the Orient: A History of Ambivalent Semicolonial Entanglements," in Max Langbehn Volker and Mohammad Salama (eds), *German Colonialism: Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 123–145.

and Bremen, and they saw the landmarks of German industry, especially that of arms industry. When they were finally back in Berlin, they were presented with evidence of German progress in municipal enterprises such as hospitals, fire departments, tramways, slaughterhouses, waterworks and open-air swimming pools.<sup>3</sup> One of the participants in the tour was the Ottoman undersecretary of state, Edhem Bey, and he decided to send technicians, apprentices and vocational school students to German factories for training—instead of to French ones. Up until 1914, just 24 technicians from the Ottoman Empire had received training by working in German factories, and a few others had come to Germany to study at university.<sup>4</sup> The new increase in the supporters and idealizers of Germany—rather than France—meant adopting an entirely different educational philosophy and role model. From the rise of the Committee of Union and Progress to power onwards, Ottoman educational journals were filled with articles on German education, economics and industry, and admiration for Germany frequently underlined German proficiency in technical education.

Once the Ottomans entered the war, the German Military Supreme Command and Foreign Office pursued good relations with the Ottoman government and sought to build channels of German cultural influence. Educational and cultural collaboration gained ground, and a German official was appointed to a key position in almost every ministry. Dr Franz Schmidt, a former inspector of German schools abroad, became the German advisor to the Ministry of Education and worked out a new law on basic education. He devised a large-scale reform program, altering the curricula, appointing German teachers and professors, and introducing instruction in German language in schools. Teacher training seminars were organized, and a number of aspiring teachers were sent to seminars in the Reich. German teachers started to teach in certain elite high schools and in vocational schools in Anatolia. Twenty German professors were appointed to Istanbul University, both to teach and contribute to its reform.<sup>5</sup>

Ottoman entry into the war also changed the direction and extent youth transfer to Germany. Pupils and orphan apprentices, together with workers and university students were sent to Germany in much higher numbers and as a systematic Young Turk project. It was a mutual project for both countries: on

3 Fünfzig offizielle Gäste, "Die Studienreise der osmanischen Delegation - ein Meilenstein in den deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen." In Ingeborg Böer, Ruth Haerkötter and Petra Kappert (eds), *Türken in Berlin 1871–1945: eine Metropole in den Erinnerungen osmanischer und türkischer Zeitungen* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 107–116.

4 Mustafa Gencer, *Nationale Bildungspolitik, Modernisierung und kulturelle Interaktion: Deutsch-türkische Beziehungen (1908–1918)* (Münster: LiT, 2002), 265.

5 Fuhrmann, "Germany's Adventure," 135.

the Turkish side powerful Young Turks such as Talat Paşa, Enver Paşa and Dr Nazım Bey were in charge, while important figures on the German side Paul Rohrbach, Jäckh, Hjalmar Schacht and Franz Schmidt. The DTV played a leading role in negotiations, as well as in organizing and carrying out the plan, as did the Türkische-Deutschen Vereinigung [TDV, Turkish-German Association in Istanbul]. Both groups hoped to achieve effective mutual rapprochement through the direct contact of large numbers of Ottoman boys with German language and culture through this one-way 'exchange' program; already by the beginning of the war, 2,000 young people had been sent to study in German schools and to be trained in German companies.

The idea of sending Ottoman orphan boys to work as apprentices in German handicrafts, mines and farms during the First World War belonged to Enver Pasha, Minister of War and the leading figure of the CUP. In late 1916, Enver Pasha informed the German military plenipotentiary in Constantinople that the government was willing to send many more boys (5,000–10,000) aged between 12 and 18 years to Germany. They would be apprentices in all types of crafts, agriculture—including forestry and dairy farming—and mining.<sup>6</sup> Since this education and training of Ottoman boys was entirely free of cost for the Ottoman government, they were willing to send as many as they could.<sup>7</sup> The DTV, personified by Jäckh, Dr Hans Hermann Russack and Dr Gerhard Ryll decided to test the idea with several hundred boys: 300 handicraft apprentices, 200 mining trainees and 200 agricultural apprentices were sent in the course of 1917 and 1918. Although there were negotiations for sending girls as well, the project did not continue long enough for the fulfilment of this phase, and the displacement comprised only of boys.

6 Gencer, *Nationale Bildungspolitik*, 268–269.

7 "Die Ausbildung der Handwerks—und Bergwerkslehrlinge erfolgt für die Türkei ganz kostenlos durch das deutsche Handwerk und den deutschen Bergbau," in "Tätigkeitsbericht der DTV (für das Jahr 1917)," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63454.

The DTV argued that this was thanks to German crafts and mines, but actually it was mostly thanks to the labor of the boys themselves.

Even the education of pupils and students ended up accruing no debt to the Ottoman treasury. The annual cost for the education of the Ottoman students would amount to 500,000 Mk, half of which was to be paid by parents and the other half covered by the German side. For 1916/1917 the Kaiser gave 100,000 Mk, German industry gave 40,000 Mk, city councils as a whole gave 100,000 Mk, and private donors gave 60,000 Mk, so that in the end around 225 students would be able to come for free. Consequently the German side covered 42% of the costs, while the remaining 58% came from the parents. "Tätigkeitsbericht der DTV (für das Jahr 1917)," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63454.

### Ottoman Children and Youths in the First World War

Mass mobilization left the overwhelming majority of Ottoman children unschooled during the war years.<sup>8</sup> The government first closed almost all foreign schools, including Catholic and Protestant missionary schools. Only German schools, along with some American and Alliance Israelite schools were allowed to remain open. Many private schools were also discontinued, as the War Ministry refused to postpone private school teachers' induction into military service. Being deprived of schooling raised the middle-class concern that children were over-socialized with street life and developing delinquent behaviour; though a significant number of children and youths between the ages of eight and 16 were employed in agriculture, manufacturing and shop-keeping, Ottoman authorities developed a critical discourse on unschooled city children. The Minister of Public Education, Ahmet Şükrü Bey, claimed that the opening of state kindergartens for the first time in 1915 would rescue thousands of children from the socialization of the streets [*sokak terbiyesi*].<sup>9</sup>

Innumerable children, whether unschooled or employed, from the city or the country, rich or poor, shared the experience of orphanhood. Hundreds of thousands of children lost their fathers and providers to the war. First of all, the number of Armenian orphans of the Genocide reached hundreds of thousands, probably around 400,000. Based on a report prepared by the Children's Protection Society [Himaye-i Etfal Cemiyeti] after the war, there were 200,000 orphans of martyrs in the country.<sup>10</sup> By mid-1917 the large network of state orphanages [*Darüleytam*]—opened due to the force of circumstances caused by the war, and also thanks to the confiscation of educational and philanthropic institutions of the Entente Powers (mostly run by missionaries)—was providing for almost 11,000 orphans.<sup>11</sup>

8 For further information on children and youths in the Ottoman Empire during war years, see Nazan Maksudyan, "Children and Youth (Ottoman Empire)," in Ute Daniel, Peter Gatrell, Oliver Janz, Heather Jones, Jennifer Keene, Alan Kramer and Bill Nasson (eds), *1914–1918-online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10595>.

9 Benjamin C. Fortna, "The Kindergarten in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic," in Roberta Lyn Wollons (ed.) *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 251–273.

10 Grand National Assembly, Minutes of the 2nd Parliament, 1st Legislative Year (August 11, 1923–February 28, 1924), 15th Session (September 8, 1398 [1923]) [hereafter TBMM ZC], 469. Available online: <http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/TUTANAK/TBMM/doz/coo1/tbmm02001015.pdf>.

11 The table prepared by the Directorate in mid-1917 gives the exact numbers in all orphanages: BOA, MF.EYT, 7/51, 1/Tm/1333 (September 1, 1917).

This figure of 11,000 suggests that Enver was thinking of emptying the orphanages by sending all the orphans to Germany. This is understandable, given the difficulty of sheltering, feeding and educating so many orphaned children and youths, and the organizational and financial problems of these institutions. First of all, they were overfilled: the Ottoman archives are full of petitions from district officials or relatives for the admission of such-and-such a child to an orphanage, whose administrators repeatedly declined due to not having any vacancies.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the budgets allocated to the orphanage administration constantly proved to be inadequate to cover the expenditures.<sup>13</sup>

From the children's side, it is not difficult to imagine why so many orphans volunteered to be sent away to the unknown. Orphanages were incredibly crowded, and many of them housed more than a thousand boys. Dormitories were neither warm nor comfortable: three to six children were allocated to the same sheetless and pillowless bed,<sup>14</sup> although they usually lay on the floor, getting closer for warmth.<sup>15</sup> The proximity of the children also facilitated the spread of disease, as it was impossible to separate the sick from the healthy.<sup>16</sup> Hygiene was a huge problem: most of the buildings did not have their own water sources, toilets were in a terrible condition, and children had to be taken to the public baths [*hamam*].<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the orphanage administrations could not provide spare clean underwear, and so children had to wear the same items for a long time. These problems regarding cleanliness easily translated into widespread outbreaks of scabies and rashes.<sup>18</sup> Hunger was the greatest suffering of the orphans: they were consistently underfed with a diet of soups low in nutrition and lacking carbohydrate and protein. Orphan memoirs are full of sad descriptions of never-ending hunger.<sup>19</sup>

12 For example, BOA, MF.MKT., 1215/63, 04/B /1334 (May 7, 1916); BOA, DH. KMS., 38/3, 29/Ca/1334 (April 3, 1916); BOA, MF.MKT., 1229/46, 24/Za/1335 (September 12, 1917).

13 BOA, İ.MMS., 198/1333-N-10, 06/N/1333 (July 19, 1915); BOA, İ.MLU., 10/1334-S-34, 24/S/1334 (January 1, 1916); BOA, MF.MKT., 1227/20, 19/Ş /1335 (June 9, 1917).

14 TBMM ZC, 461; BOA, MF. EYT., 6/131 (report) cited in Safiye Kıranlar and Aynur Soydan Erdemir, "Köyün Modernleştirilmesine Dair Bir Uygulama ve Proje: Kimsesiz Köy Çocuklarının Köyde Eğitimi," *Yakın Dönem Türkiye Araştırmaları*, 8, 2005, 94–113.

15 Hasan İzzettin Dinamo, *Öksüz Musa* (Istanbul: Heyamola Yayınları, 2005), 14–16.

16 TBMM ZC, 448–479.

17 BOA, MF. EYT., 6/131 (report) cited in Kıranlar and Erdemir, "Köyün Modernleştirilmesine" 98–99.

18 Dinamo, *Öksüz Musa*, 18–20.

19 Nissim M. Benezra, *Une Enfance Juive à Istanbul, 1911–1929* (Istanbul: Isis, 1996).

It was in this context that German master craftsmen and mine-owners appeared as an option for providing for the orphans. Although they were not properly informed about this foreign land, many orphans applied to go to Germany in 1917, assuming that they would live in better conditions. It is clear from the reports of the DTV that a substantial number of orphans assumed that they would become factory workers and earn a good salary.<sup>20</sup> What awaited them in Germany was quite different.

### War Orphans on Military Trains

In February 1917 the German Chambers of Trade and Industry agreed to arrange accommodation and work for apprentices, and the project finally got underway. The selection committee, made up of Jäckh, representatives of the Ottoman Ministry of Education and Orphanage Administration, easily rounded up the first group of craft apprentices on the basis of voluntary application. They were all declared to be ‘orphans of martyrs’ chosen from Istanbul orphanages. They were between 14 to 16 years old, with the exception of an orphan named Ibrahim, who was only 7 years old.<sup>21</sup> The Orphanage Administration prepared special passports for orphans going to Germany (Figure 6.1).<sup>22</sup> In addition to detailed personal information relating to age, family and physical description, these passports also had comments pages to be filled in by the masters in every three months.<sup>23</sup> In a sense, passports would make it possible to follow orphans’ vocational and educational development in Germany.<sup>24</sup>

The first group of 314 boys departed from Sirkeci Train Station in Istanbul in April 1917. The *Balkanzug* [Balkan Sürat Katarı] train, which covered the distance between Istanbul and Berlin in only three days, was rejected as an option in order to keep the expenses of the transfer to a minimum.<sup>25</sup> Instead, the boys had to spend ten days in a military freight train without warm clothes and

20 Dr. Hans Hermann Russack, “Die türkische Lehrlinge,” in *Türkische Jugend in Deutschland: Jahresbericht der Schülerabteilung der Deutsch-Türkischen Vereinigung* (Berlin: Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung e.V., 1918), 60.

21 “Türkische Jugend in Berlin,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 216, May 6, 1917.

22 There is a copy of the passport of Mehmet, the son of Yusuf Efendi, in the Ottoman Archives: BOA, MF. EYT, 2/117, 8/HZ/1332 (June 21, 1916).

23 Hakan Aytekin, “1914–1924 Yılları arasında Korunmaya Muhtaç Çocuklar ve Eğitimleri, Marmara Üniversitesi, Türkiyat Enstitüsü” (Unpublished MA Thesis, 2006), 108–110.

24 Nurdan Şafak, “Darüleytam’da Çocuk Olmak: On Çocuk On Portre,” *FSM İlmî Araştırmalar İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Dergisi*, 2, 2013, 261–284.

25 Russack, “Die türkische Lehrlinge.”



FIGURE 6.1 Passport photo of an orphan sent to Germany in 1917.

barefoot. This partially explains why so many of them were sent back after a few months: they had lung diseases.

Before departing for their various work places, they were housed in one of the city council's quarters in Sophienstraße 34. Soon after their arrival, they were gathered in the courtyard of the community school [*Grundschule*] at Koppenplatz and were greeted by Major Ramsen from the Ministry of War, the Privy councillors [*Geheimräten*] Cleff and Göhmann from the Board of Trade [*Handelsministerium*], Dr Glock from Ministry of Agriculture and Vice-Consul Tahir Bey from the Ottoman Embassy. They were all clothed in the European style, with a blue pelerine as a coat and a blue fez-like cap on the head. Their beautiful photograph on the way to this greeting ceremony featured in *Berliner Tageblatt* (Figure 6.2).<sup>26</sup> From Berlin, the boys were sent by the DTV to their posts in Augsburg, Breslau, Bromberg, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt an der Oder, Mannheim, Oldenburg, Schwerin, Weimar and Ulm. The master craftsmen and the Chambers of Trade and Industry committed themselves to pay for the boys' boarding expenses, but not for the cost of their return journey.<sup>27</sup>

26 "Türkische Jugend in Berlin."

27 This should be paid either by the Ottoman government or the boys themselves.



FIGURE 6.2 Photograph of Ottoman craft apprentices in Berlin, May 1917.

In June 1917 a second group of 200 Ottoman boys arrived to be apprenticed in mining areas.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to the first group, who came from orphanages in Istanbul, this time the boys had been chosen from orphanages in the provinces—from Maraş, Antep, Kilis, Ankara, Söğüd, Niğde, Konya, Bursa, Manisa and Karahisar, and from the CUP orphanage in Edirne. The boys from the eastern provinces had to make a 30-day journey: 20 days on the Anatolian railway before the 10 days on the military train from Istanbul to Berlin. In Berlin, the group has housed in the rooms of Gustavo's Inn [*Gastwirtes Gustavos*] in Hasenheide 52/53. As in the case of first transport, a greeting ceremony was considered and Dr Söhring of the Foreign Office was invited by Dr Russack of the DTV to visit the boys on the occasion of their distribution to various mines.<sup>29</sup> Yet, there is no evidence that he actually visited the boys. Based on the plan prepared by the Ministry of Trade and Industry [*Ministerium für Handel und Gewerbe*] representatives of the various mine administrations

28 "From die DTV to Dr. Söhring, Auswärtiges Amt, 13.Juni.1917, Berlin," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

29 *ibid.*

brought them from Berlin to their mining districts. They were about equally divided between the Rhenish-Westphalian mines in the area of Dortmund and Bonn, and those of Saarbrücken and the central German mining areas in the districts of Halle and Clausthal. A small portion was sent to the Wroclaw Mining Administration in Upper Silesia. Most of the boys worked in metal-ore mining (iron, zinc, lead, copper) and the coal industry, and a small number were employed in lignite and cement manufacturing.<sup>30</sup>

Sending the last group, the agricultural apprentices, took much longer than expected. Already in May 1917 approximately 500 agricultural positions were made available for Ottoman boys via a memorandum sent by the DTV to the German Chamber of Agriculture. The boys were to be dispatched from two different centers: those to be placed in the southwest were to arrive at Karlsruhe, and those heading northeast would arrive in Berlin. However, state affairs were moving slower on Ottoman soil. A large number of boys had been brought to Istanbul from the provinces, yet they had to wait idly in already crowded Istanbul orphanages for the preparations to be finalized.<sup>31</sup> One problem was that travel permits for those born in 1315 and 1316 (i.e. 1897–1899) could not be received from the Ministry of War until October.<sup>32</sup> During these few months they spent in Istanbul, the behavior of the boys from the provinces was criticized by the directors as inappropriate and spoiled. The administrators raised their concern for the manners of Istanbul orphans, who might be negatively influenced by these village boys. They insisted on the immediate transfer of the boys to Germany.<sup>33</sup>

In the autumn of 1917, the Ottoman Ministry of Education, again in collaboration with the Orphanage Administration, conducted the selection of the boys and sent the list to Germany. However, the DTV officers in Berlin objected to the selection, underlining that only about 100 boys out of the 500 had a rural background.<sup>34</sup> In response to the demands of the DTV administrators, Dr Nazım, a prominent figure in the CUP central committee and a member of the TDV, promised to organize a new selection and send a large number of agricultural apprentices from among Anatolian “farmer’s sons”

30 Russack, “Die türkische Lehrlinge,” 54.

31 BOA, MF.MKT., 1229/46, 24/Za/1335 (September 12, 1917).

32 BOA, MF.MKT., 1230/82, 28/Z /1335 (October 16, 1917). Still in late October, the Ministry of Education was sending orders for the completion of necessary documentation: BOA, MF.MKT., 1231/7, 09/M /1336 (October 26, 1917).

33 BOA, MF.EYT., 7/ 57, 1/Ağ/1333 (October 1, 1917).

34 “Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 17.Sept.1917, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

[*Bauernsöhne*] and not “orphans from the city” [*Waisenkinder aus der Stadt*].<sup>35</sup> In the end, only about 150 agricultural apprentices arrived, in two different convoys in June and July 1918.<sup>36</sup> The boys were mainly sent to the north and east of the country; there were only a few in central Germany and in the Rhineland.

Each apprentice had his own identity card, on which was printed his profession, workplace, the Chamber of Trade to which they were attached and their assignment number. There was also a plan to complete the cards by taking a photograph.<sup>37</sup> The names of the children, as recorded in documents in the German and Ottoman archives—partial lists of apprentices, correspondence regarding complaints, passports, etc.—show that they were without exception Muslims. However, the newspaper article in *Berliner Tageblatt*, which also included the photo of the first group of 314 boys, wrote that the boys “come from various ethnic groups [*Völkerstämme*].” Relying on the photograph, the reporter even argued that “one can see both the white faces of the Armenians and Jews, Anatolian types and also Arabs and negroes among them.”<sup>38</sup>

### Foreign Boys in Foreign Homes

#### *Turkish Students in German Families*

Turkey is about to send a large number of Turkish students to Germany to attend German schools, including sons and daughters of the best families of the country. Naturally, it is of great importance for the future of Turkish-German relations that these boarded pupils not only receive German education, but also find a home [*eine Heimat finden*] in good German families that could replace their parental home. The [selection] committee in Constantinople, made up of distinguished Germans, will act as the guarantor for hosted students. The Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung addresses all those families who are willing and in a position to house these Turkish boys or girls hospitably from themselves and whose household offers all security also for the Turkish parents, to please notify their

35 “30. Vorstandssitzung der DTV, am 29. Oktober. 1917, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63064.

36 “37. Vorstandssitzung der DTV am 3. August. 1918, in der Deutschenbank, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63454.

37 “Türkische Jugend in Berlin.”

38 Ibid.

willingness and any wishes about the age to our office: Berlin W. 35, Schöneberger Ufer 36a.<sup>39</sup>

Based on the training contract signed by the Chambers of Trade and Industry and a representative of the Ottoman embassy, the apprentices agreed to a non-paid three-year apprenticeship and also to work for a year as a journeyman in the same place for a journeyman's wage. In return, the master craftsmen would provide shelter, board and, in time, some clothing (excluding underwear and shoes). The DTV considered it desirable to let apprentices follow regular instruction in German, and so some attended part-time or night classes in order to improve their language skills.<sup>40</sup> Those who completed their apprenticeships were given certificates. A few examples are preserved in the Ottoman archives, submitted by the apprentices themselves for translation and accreditation purposes.<sup>41</sup>

The DTV chose the master craftsmen after a thorough examination of their household and family structures. An apprentice was only entrusted when the DTV was convinced that the boy would be treated as a child of the house.<sup>42</sup> In its information leaflet for German households accepting Ottoman boys,

39 Türkische Schüler in deutschen Familien. Die Türkei ist im Begriff, eine größere Anzahl türkischer Schüler und Schülerinnen zum Besuch deutscher Lehranstalten nach Deutschland zu entsenden, darunter Söhne und Töchter der besten Familien des Landes. Es ist naturgemäß für die Zukunft der deutsch-türkischen Beziehungen von großer Bedeutung, dass die Zöglinge nicht nur die deutsche Schulbildung erhalten, sondern vor allem auch in guten deutschen Familien eine Heimat finden, die ihnen das Elternhaus ersetzt. Für die Art der unterzubringenden Schüler und Schülerinnen bürgt ein Ausschuss in Konstantinopel, dem angesehene Deutsche angehören. Die Deutsch-türkische Vereinigung richtet an alle solche Familien, die bereit und in der Lage sind, junge Türken oder Türkinnen gastfreundlich bei sich aufzunehmen und deren Haushalt auch den türkischen Eltern alle Bürgschaft bietet, die Bitte, ihre Bereitwilligkeit, auch etwaige Wünsche über das Alter, der Geschäftsstelle, Berlin W. 35, Schöneberger Ufer 36a, mitteilen zu wollen ("Türkische Schüler in deutschen Familien," *Tägliche Rundschau*, July 3, 1916).

40 In the future, those willing could even follow other classes (for example maths) or even attend a vocational school. Russack, "Die türkischen Lehrlinge," 62.

41 BOA, MF.MKT., 1238/91, 05/N /1337 (June 4, 1919).

42 Already in mid-1916, the DTV had arranged more than 1,800 families to accommodate scholarship-holding Turkish pupils. "20. Vorstandssitzung der Deutsch-Türkischen Vereinigung am 15. Juli. 1916 in der Nationalbank für Deutschland, Berlin," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63435.

Such a great number raises doubts about the motivations and 'quality' of these families. As I will touch upon later, some critics claimed that these were usually poor soldier families, who volunteered to receive Turkish boys in order to have access to some financial means.

the DTV underlined the program's two goals.<sup>43</sup> First, the boys should become accustomed to German morals, ethics, honesty, thoroughness and industriousness. In order to facilitate this kind of cultural transfer, the mining apprentices, for instance, were sheltered in experienced miners' families, so that they not only worked but also lived in a mining environment in their homes. However, their religious and national character was not to be threatened: religious influence should be avoided, and the boys should be given the opportunity to perform their daily prayers and to follow Islamic religious holidays. The masters were also warned against offering them pork and alcoholic beverages, both prohibited by Islam.<sup>44</sup> On paper, rules and responsibilities of both sides were very well-defined and compatible with standard procedures. However, the experiences on both sides were far from perfect.

### Insufficient Preparation, or Blue Caps and Pelerines

The most recurrent conflict in the first months after the arrival of craft apprentices was the "insufficient preparation" [*ungenügender Vorbereitung*] of the Ottoman side for the transfer of the boys. German masters repeatedly complained that they provided beyond their original agreements, due to the boys' insufficient clothing. The Chambers of Trade and Industry underlined that Professor Jäckh had prepared the contract so that the boys would bring two outfits, along with underwear and shoes, so that their masters would not have any clothing costs for at least a couple of months—in other words, until the boys had become productive to compensate for their own expenses. However, the clothing they had when they first arrived "could not be poorer" [*denkbar dürftig*]; they had nothing to wear but blue caps and pelerines provided by the DTV. This is not hard to believe, knowing the circumstances in Istanbul orphanages. Some masters claimed that they had initially to spend around 100 Mk to clothe their apprentices, since they were ashamed to let the boys—parts of their household—to be seen on the street with the clothes they had.<sup>45</sup> There is evidence that the Ottoman Ministry of Education ordered an army tailor—Haim,

43 Gencer, *Nationale Bildungspolitik*, 278.

44 "An die Königlichen Provinzialschulkollegien, Der Minister der geistlichen und Unterrichts, Berlin, den 14. Oktober 1916," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63062; "Maarif Şuunu," *Muallim*, 15 Kanunuevvel 1332, 190–192.

45 "Report of Deutscher Handwerks—und Gewerbebekammertag (E.V.): Unterbringung von jugendlichen Türken in deutschen Handwerksbetrieben, Hannover, 25. Juni. 1917," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

son of Rafael—to produce outfits for the orphan boys to be sent to Germany.<sup>46</sup> However, this was in mid-April and it is probable that he could not finish the task in time for the departure date.

When the 200 mining apprentices arrived, the same complaints reappeared regarding the lack of clothing items [*mangelhafte Ausstattung*], particularly shoes and underwear. There was a long-lasting ‘shoe controversy’ between the masters and the DTV on the one side, and the Ottoman representatives on the other. Apparently, many of the orphan boys arrived in Berlin without shoes, and even those who had some sort of footwear were not sufficiently protected against German winters. Several institutions and masters were forced to provide shoes for their apprentices out of their own pocket and later applied to the Foreign Office for compensation.<sup>47</sup> The DTV in its turn demanded that all the expenditures caused by the Ottoman Ministry of Education’s “clangers” [*Missgriffe*] should be covered by them.<sup>48</sup>

Insufficient clothing was also a very serious issue for the orphan boys: three mine apprentices from Frankleben—Necdet, Hüseyin and Süleyman—applied to the office of the DTV with the complaint that their clothes were not warm enough and that they were constantly cold.<sup>49</sup> The apprenticeship work in the mines, coupled with uncongenial climate, actually risked some boys lives. An apprentice died at the Charité Hospital (Berlin) as a result of a lung disease, and many sick orphans were sent back.<sup>50</sup>

### Selection Mistakes

The plans and preparations for the transfer of the children were so hastily made that there was frequent criticism regarding the selection of children from German masters, Chambers of Trade and the supervisors of the DTV. The masters complained of “wrong selection” [*schlechte Auswahl*] to express their discontent with orphan apprentices. It is obvious that the Ottoman authorities made the selection on purely numerical terms—to reach certain numbers, be

46 BOA, MF. MKT., 1225/38, 26/C/1335 (April 18, 1917).

47 “Letter from Reichsbekleidungsstelle an das Auswärtiges Amt, 27.Sept.1917,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R 63063.

48 “28. Vorstandssitzung der Deutsch-Türkischen Vereinigung am 26.Juni.1917 in der Deutschenbank, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

49 “Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 17.Sept.1917, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

50 “Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 2. August 1917, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

it 200, 300, etc. —and that the process did not result in a group of suitable candidates with skills appropriate to the vacant positions. The DTV also claimed that the Ottomans sent essentially all who volunteered, without any detailed medical examination or testing boys' intellectual or moral qualities. The masters complained of orphans' poor health or their unsuitable ages—some were too young or too weak, especially for mine work. As a result, during the first two months 25% were sent back in order to “clean up thoroughly the unsuitable elements” [*den ungeeigneten Elementen gründlich aufzuräumen*].<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, the selection committee in Istanbul was accused of disregarding both boys' previous training and the list of vacant apprenticeship positions prepared by the German Chamber of Trade and Industry. A large number of apprentices (about half) were in professions other than their previous training. When possible, boys were assigned to another but related trade, but if not, they had to remain at their assigned positions. Mining apprentices frequently applied to the DTV with the grievance that their previous training was something else and that they did not want to be employed in mining. That is the reason why many were unhappy at their work places and why several of them escaped and/or acted disobediently, or applied for either relocation or to return home. For instance, a mine apprentice named Mazhar and a trade apprentice named Mustafa Osman abandoned their posts in Fürstenwalde, due to discontent with their jobs. They had previously trained for two years as lathe operators, yet their present apprenticeships were not relevant to their vocational qualifications. The German Chamber of Trade and Industry unfortunately responded that currently there was no chance to accommodate them as lathe operators.<sup>52</sup>

The Chambers were also unhappy about the arrival dates and job reassignments of the boys. The starting date for German apprentices was traditionally Easter, but the transfer of the Ottoman boys to their posts was delayed until mid- or the end of May. Consequently, the change of training caused further hardship for the Chambers.<sup>53</sup> Months after their arrival, many trade apprentices had to be accommodated in hotels in Berlin, since the authorities were considering whether they should returned home or assigned to another apprenticeship.<sup>54</sup>

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51 Russack, “Die türkische Lehrlinge,” 49.

52 “Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 2. August 1917, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

53 “Report of Deutscher Handwerks- und Gewerbeammertag (E.V.): Unterbringung von jugendlichen Türken in deutschen Handwerksbetrieben, Hannover, 25.Juni.1917,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

54 “Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 20.Juli 1917, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

The issue of boys making mistakes in their career choices was also a concern for the Ottoman administrators. A report by Muslihiddin Adil Bey, Director General of Secondary Education, written in the form of a travelogue following his visit to Germany in May 1333 [1917], touched upon the career choices as a problematic area. He claimed that most of the boys went to Germany without having any idea about the curriculum of their future studies. Most of them chose their trades by mere chance and others were placed in trades that were not in accordance with their skills and aspirations. Actually, very few apprentices were informed about the trade in which they would be apprenticed, the length of their training or the city or school to which they were going.<sup>55</sup> With such lack of information, it was only natural that many of them had problems with their workplaces and with the nature of work they were asked to perform.

### The Struggle to Belong: Difficulties of Integration

In accordance with the demands of the Ottoman government, most of the boys were assigned to workshops in small and medium-sized towns, to facilitate their integration into a foreign society and to enable the boys to meet intermittently. In this way it would also be easier to monitor them. However, integration of Ottoman orphans remained an unaccomplished goal. As destitute and rootless lads, orphan boys were not only away from home, but, as noted at the start of this paper, also suffered from poverty, exclusion and disconnection.

Language competency was an obstacle that complicated everyday experiences. Apprentices were not offered a period of language training, so all of them arrived at their posts without any knowledge of German. Some tried to follow courses after they were settled, but the reports of the Chambers of Trade and Mining Administrations point that the progress of most of the boys was next to nothing. In order to facilitate communication between masters and apprentices a 700-word dictionary was prepared on the instruction of the Chambers of Trade.<sup>56</sup> However, it was not at all useful for the Ottoman boys. All of the sections, explanations and words were from German to Turkish only (Figure 6.3). Moreover, it was written in the Latin alphabet, whereas these

55 Muslihiddin Adil (Taylan), *Alman Hayat-ı İrfanı* (İstanbul: Matbaa-ı Âmire, 1333 [1917]), 229–231.

56 “Ein kleines Wörterbuch, das wir auf Wunsch des deutschen Handwerks- und Gewerbekammertags für die Handwerkslehrlinge herausgegeben haben. 24.Juli.1917,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R 63063.

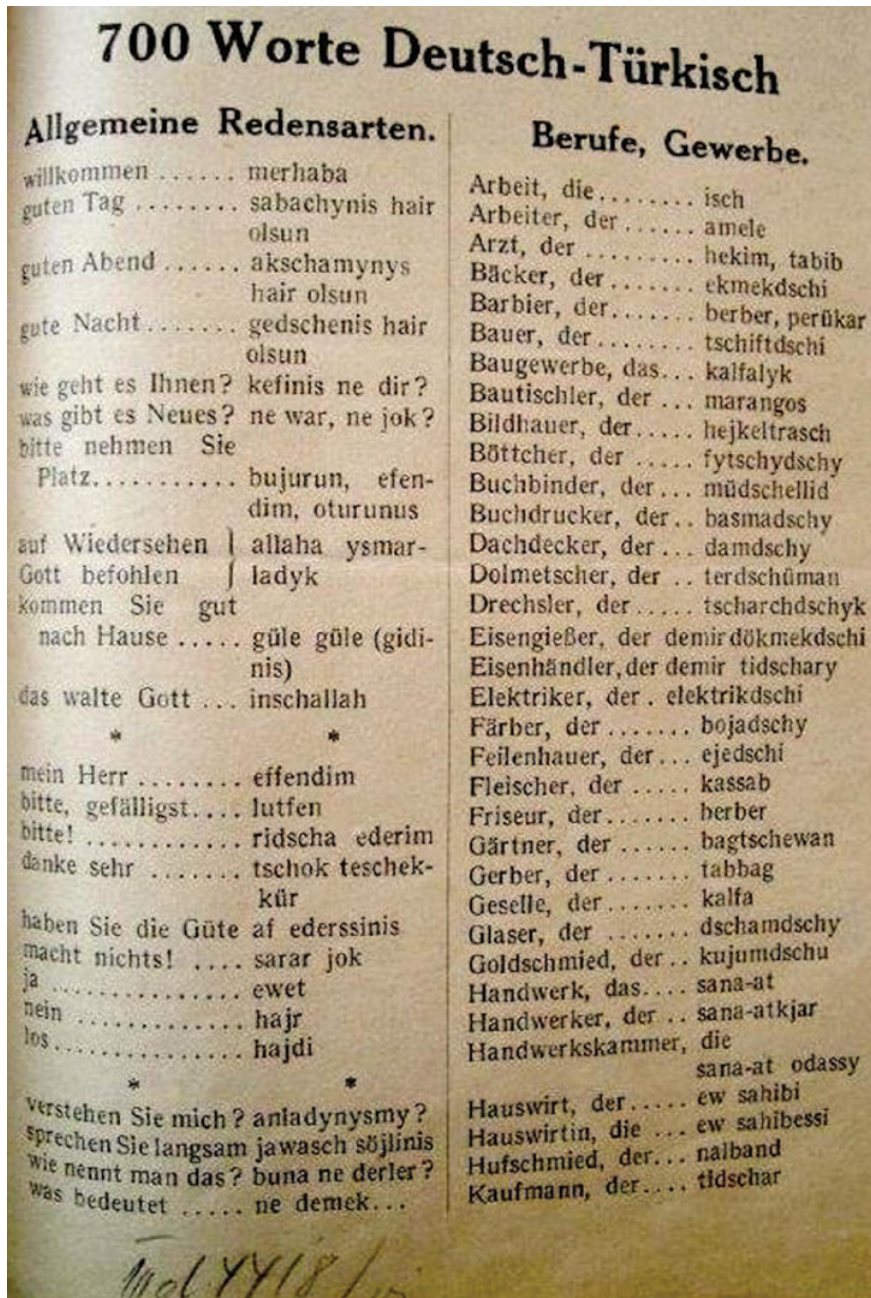


FIGURE 6.3 Pages from the dictionary for apprentices.

boys, if they knew any writing, only knew how to read and write in the Arabic script.

Apprentices could have learnt the language in the exact same way that they acquired knowledge and skill: by observing, imitating, practicing and interacting with experienced workers and masters. However, relations were not always smooth between Turkish apprentices and their German colleagues and masters. As a pilot integration project, the apprentices in the ore mines of the Harz Goslar in Eisleben co-habited with the Germans. The administration assumed this would facilitate the linguistic progress and mutual interaction of the boys. Instead, there were serious problems and difficulties, from verbal harassment to physical disturbance and fights. Later, the boys were separated during work hours and accommodated in separate wards.<sup>57</sup>

The other everyday discontent was food. Many boys acknowledged that the bread was much better in German homes and workplaces, but they were never sure whether or not the meals contained pork. They were constantly served dark colored soups with unfamiliar tastes.<sup>58</sup> In other cases, the boys complained that they were provided with only one meal and nothing else to eat.<sup>59</sup> Four mine apprentices from Altenberg and Eschbach escaped, complaining that the food was bad.<sup>60</sup>

Critics of the project argued that Turkish students were usually settled with poor soldier families, in order to make sure that these people were provided with some means of assistance. Student boys' pocket-money (either sent by their guardians or state scholarships) became family income, since the residents paid for food and board. When the boys complained, as they frequently did, of the scarcity and/or distastefulness of the food, they were told in a hostile manner "to write to home for better food,"<sup>61</sup> or else, when they applied to

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57 Russack, "Die türkische Lehrlinge," 59–60.

58 Although Muammer Tuksavul was in the relatively rich student group and had enough funds to stay in pensions, he was unable to eat the soup served by his host. Muammer Tuksavul, *Eine bittere Freundschaft: Erinnerung eines türkischen Jahrhundertzeugen* (Düsseldorf: Econ Verlag, 1985), 162–163.

59 "Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 20. Juli 1917, Berlin," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

60 "Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 2. August 1917, Berlin," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

61 There is actually evidence for the transfer of food from the Ottoman Empire to Germany for students. The DTV arranged with Ismail Hakkı Paşa, the undersecretary of the War Ministry at the Embassy (Generalintendant der Armee or Harbiye Nezareti Müsteşarı), the procurement of 120 kg rice, 100 of beans, 200 kg raisins and 32 kg oil (and paid for them) in October 1917, although their arrival was delayed until February 1918, due to

the DTV, they were threatened with being sent back and made into soldiers.<sup>62</sup> German school directors, pension holders and craft masters were in a difficult position with the food costs of the boys. They claimed that catering for the boys' preferences under war conditions was extremely costly: they consumed rice, mutton, a lot of bread, and sugar and other things which could be procured only with great difficulty. Moreover, they did not eat pork and refused sausage, which were cheaper and easier to provide.<sup>63</sup>

### Resistance, Revolt and Escape as Empowerment

Accounts of boys running away and other such stories have been documented only sporadically. However, we know for certain that by November 1918, there were only 140 mine apprentices left in Germany out of the 200 initially sent, and only 181 trade apprentices from the 314;<sup>64</sup> almost 40% of the boys were either unsuitable for the designated project or dissatisfied and discontented. This was a paradise lost: the Ottoman boys had dreamed of a better training environment with more opportunities; and they were hoping to earn some money, and perhaps get rich, and benefit from the promises of European prosperity. When these dreams were shattered in the face of their living and working conditions, the orphans started to resist, even revolt.

The Chamber of Trade and Industry was worried that only a few masters gave positive feedback of well-behaved and modest apprentices, who fit well into German standards. Many masters resented having agreed to have Ottoman boys, who were demanding monetary compensation and free time. Both were considered incompatible with the rights and responsibilities of an apprentice in Germany.<sup>65</sup> The boys were supposedly acting very arrogantly and

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lengthy negotiations. The DTV also attempted to arrange with the Ottoman Ministry of Education the sending of food stuffs on regular intervals. "Lebensmitteln für die türkischer Schüler in Deutschland, From Kaiserlich Deutsche Botschaft, Pera, 19.Juli.1918," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63065.

62 "Was ein aus Deutschland kommender Reisender erzählt, Akşam, 5.Dez.1918 [Übersetzung, Gabel]," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63066.

63 "From Königliches Provinzialschulkollegium der Provinz Hannover, 25.mai.1917," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063. However, some masters reported that most of them did not abstain from eating pork. Gencer, *Nationale Bildungspolitik*, 278.

64 "Jahresbericht des Schülerheims, 1.Nov.1918," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R 63065.

65 "Report of Deutscher Handwerks- und Gewerbekammertag (e.v.): Unterbringung von jugendlichen Türken in deutschen Handwerksbetrieben, Hannover, 25.Juni.1917," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

self-confident. They insisted that they were promised, so entitled to, employment in a factory and a handsome monthly salary.<sup>66</sup> No matter how futile it was, orphan boys kept asking for time and money to remedy their situation, for self-determination, and possibly to move elsewhere.

The main problem was the children's misinformation, or mis-imagination. Most of the boys came assuming that they would be settled in with trade masters, in accordance with their previous training. They had no idea that they would end up in mine work. In the coal mines of Breslau, the boys were openly resistant. They were rude towards their co-workers and they frequently refused to perform the tasks that they were ordered to do. The boys said they were being exploited with repetitive tasks and very hard work and they quit the work premises;<sup>67</sup> this is perfectly understandable given the difficulties of coal mining. Four mine apprentices from Altenberg and Eschbach escaped because they had no pocket money and they were treated badly.<sup>68</sup> Orphan boys in the Rammelsberg mine administration were reported for evading their duties and they clearly had no interest in the work operation.<sup>69</sup> Apprentices, on the other hand, were rightfully complaining that they were not learning anything, apart from transporting stones.<sup>70</sup>

There was even a small uprising in the Royal Oberharzer mining and metallurgical works [Oberharzer Berg- und Hüttenwerke]. Fourteen Ottoman boys, supposedly under the leadership of a certain "negro Mehmed Tevfik," refused to perform their tasks and disturbed work discipline. Mehmed Tevfik was accused of discouraging his countrymen from work with "threats and ill-treatment" [*Drohungen und Misshandlungen*].<sup>71</sup> However, what turned minor cases of resistance into open revolt was the employment of several boys in the same work place. Group feeling strengthened the boys and encouraged them to take action. A common form of collective resistance was to escape to urban centers and allegedly get involved with the various 'vices of the cities.' For instance, eight out of the total 10 apprentices in Royal Mining Inspection Rüdersdorf escaped the mines shortly after their arrival and did not come back. A few weeks later, five of those eight escapees were found at Friedrichstraße

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66 Ibid.

67 Russack, "Die türkische Lehrlinge," 59.

68 "Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 2. August 1917, Berlin," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

69 Russack, "Die türkische Lehrlinge," 60.

70 "Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 17.Sept.1917, Berlin," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

71 "Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 20.Juli 1917, Berlin," Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

train station and were sent back to their posts at Rüdersdorf by the DTV. However, the whereabouts of other three remained unknown.<sup>72</sup>

Typical ‘problem boys,’ as in the case of Raif Efendi in Sabahattin Ali’s novel, ended up frequenting the night life and committing petty crimes. This issue was more common among vocational students, who were financially supported by their parents and so had access to money. A certain Sinai Cemal was quite adventurous in this respect. As the report of Consul Elfeld from Bremen describes it, he was first registered to a school in Bremen, where he was involved with several criminal acts: he embezzled the boarding-house money that was entrusted to him; he instilled an “oriental vice” [*ein orientalisches Laster*], probably hashish, in another Ottoman classmate; and he was accused of a shop theft that he committed with other classmates. Due to these charges Sinai Cemal was sent to a smaller provincial town, Göttingen, in the hope that there he would find fewer occasions to lead such a “dissolute lifestyle” [*liederlichen Lebenswandel*]. However, he could not be stopped. His landlady, Mrs Giercke—also the mother-in-law of Consul Redemann from Göttingen—reported that Sinai Cemal had damaged property within and outside the house several times and had also procured money from Mrs Giercke by lying to her that he needed the amount for his tailor’s bill. Moreover, he was constantly hanging around late at night in bars in the company of a few other Ottoman classmates. His landlady also claimed that he had contracted a sexually transmitted disease. Later, Sinai disappeared from Göttingen to go to Berlin and left behind a total debt of 600 Mk. The DTV decided to delete Sinai Cemal from the student list and pay off his debts. He would be sent back by the Ottoman Embassy, as soon as his location was determined.<sup>73</sup>

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72 Ibid.

73 “Sitzung des Ausschusses für türkische Schüler und Lehrlinge der DTV, 2. August 1917, Berlin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63063.

Another such case was that of Hasan Refet Sadrettin. Immediately upon his arrival in Berlin, he was placed with the family of Professor Fries (Grunewald, Kunostr 58). On the evening of September 1, 1916, he left the house on the pretext that he had to bring some Turks from the station. He actually did that, but afterwards did not return home, but rather spent the night in the company of a ‘lady’ in Hotel Saxonia, where he introduced himself as a ‘prince’ (he even had business cards as “Prince H. Refed Sadreddin”), and disappeared the next morning, without paying his bill. When the hotel contacted the DTV, the whole affair became known. He was emphatically warned that he would be sent back to Istanbul directly in the case of a similar fault. Unfortunately, his behavior did not change the least and his landlord found out that he spent another night with another ‘lady’ in Hasenheide. When Professor Fries spoke to him once more, he admitted that he used to live like that in Istanbul as well. It was also discovered that he had borrowed large amounts of money from the house’s maidservant, from another boarder, Sudfaddin

As such cases multiplied, criticism appeared on the Ottoman side regarding the success of the project of sending students and apprentices to Germany. After visiting German educational institutions in Berlin, Leipzig, Heidelberg, Munich, Dresden and Chemnitz, Muslihiddin Adil Bey concluded that the education of Ottoman youths in Germany, or in other Western countries, was a serious national problem.<sup>74</sup> He criticized the fact that most of the boys were of secondary school age: this was the ideal time to teach the history and traditions of a country, together with the fundamentals of the native language, but boys who did not have enough knowledge about their own national history and language could not “represent Turkishness and the country’s national ideals in the future.” He argued that student exchange programs should not involve teenage boys. Sending high school graduates to improve and expand their professional knowledge would be of more value.

Adil Bey also underlined the need to constantly supervise these young boys, due to the endless possibilities (and vices) of night life in European cities. He wrote that the danger of these inexperienced boys falling into crime and debauchery was his biggest fear and concern.<sup>75</sup> Similar criticisms appeared elsewhere: an article was published in the Ottoman daily *Akşam* [Evening], based on the observations of a traveler from Germany. He explained that many coffee houses were filled with Ottoman students who hung around as vagrants [*Landstreichere*] in a depraved state [*verwahrlost*]. Sadly, he said, many of them did not even learn the German language.<sup>76</sup> Due to prolonged residence in “places of terrible debauchery” [*Stätten der fürchterlichsten Liederlichkeit*], such as Berlin, many got accustomed to the vulgarities [*Gemeinheiten*] of this life, many contracted sexually transmitted diseases and some became completely Germanized. The author also assured his readers that the issue of students and apprentices was “the biggest villainy that Germany inflicted upon [the Ottoman Empire] during this war.”

The source material for this research, in the form of DTV reports (either prepared by local administrators or central supervisors) and the Ottoman archives, is thoroughly biased in terms of putting all the blame on the youth, depicted as

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Kemal, and from Professor Fries himself. As a consequence, he was deleted from the student list of the DTV and school principals, parents, the Board of the Student Committee of Istanbul and the Ottoman Embassy were informed. “Bericht über Hasan Refet Sadreddin,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63062.

74 Adil (Taylan), *Alman Hayat-ı İrfanı*, 229–233.

75 Ibid.

76 “Was ein aus Deutschland kommender Reisender erzählt, *Akşam*, 5.Dez.1918 [Übersetzung, Gabel],” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63066.

either ill-prepared for the nature of their training, or not accustomed to work discipline, or rude, or a bad influence on each other, etc. The disobedience of the boys was regarded with an even ‘colonial gaze.’<sup>77</sup> Dr Russack argued that the difficulty teaching regular work, discipline and obedience stemmed from the boys’ untamed nature. They were “children of nature” [*Naturkinder*] lacking the basic formation of civilized manners to adapt to German standards of hard work.<sup>78</sup>

Social historians, informed by post-colonial theoretical frames, underline the difficulty of hearing the voices of the subaltern, especially in sources. The solution is to read the documents against the grain. In this section, in order to strengthen the volume and depth of the children’s side of the story, I focused on the perspectives of the boys themselves, based on the complaints they made and several escape stories. With some sympathy for them and some attention on their lives, it is not so hard to reconfigure the narrative from children’s eyes. They were not simply lazy, disobedient or problematic for no reason. They were deeply disillusioned with the opportunities they were offered in Germany. Most of them were not offered proper vocational training, and their hopes of leading more prosperous lives were shattered. What the authorities saw as ‘going out of the way’ was both related to their young age and the opportunities of freedom and night life. More importantly, they were trying to compensate for their disappointments relating to the *ad hoc* and ill-prepared organization for their stay and education in Germany.

### Home Sweet Home

The pressure and necessities of the war facilitated rather than impeded the policy of child displacement between the two empires. The project was initiated in the middle of the war (1916), and it practically came to an end with the end of the war. The defeat of the Central Powers not only challenged the future of the German and Ottoman empires, but also made the continuation of educational collaboration projects impossible due to financial difficulties and organizational impossibilities. In the spring of 1919, the DTV informed the masters and mine authorities that Ottoman orphans were supposed to return by steamers departing from Hamburg. Three steamers, the *Akdeniz*, the *Reşid*

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77 As we learn from many works on the ‘colonial gaze,’ it was not rare for ‘civilized’ Westerners to see the less developed colonies as ‘barbarians,’ ‘savages,’ or as ‘untamed’ (animals). Pramod K. Nayar, *Colonial Voices: The Discourses of Empire* (Malden, MA: Wiley, 2012).

78 Russack, “Die türkischen Lehrlinge,” 61.

*Paşa* and the *Gülcemal*, departed in May, June and August 1919, carrying Ottoman soldiers, officials and students.

We, the Turkish students, do not want to miss this moment, as we leave German soil, to express our deepest gratitude for the hospitality and helpfulness that we were granted here at all costs.

We are well aware that we owe much to German culture, which helped us become competent.

We are happy to have spent our best years in this glorious land and we will always remember it with heartfelt pleasure.<sup>79</sup>

These were the farewell words of a student, shortly before the departure of the *Gülcemal*. His speech, together with that of Zeki Paşa, underlined “the sincere helpfulness of Germany towards Turkey” and expressed the importance with which the Ottomans regarded German culture and German hospitality. Despite numerous crises, regrets and disappointments on all sides, in the concluding phase of the project, official declarations tended to emphasize gains and accomplishments. Ottoman orphan boys were definitely not of the same opinion.

Most of the orphan apprentices were loaded onto the *Akdeniz* in May 1919 and arrived in Istanbul in the same needy circumstances in which they had left the city. The most serious problem was to lodge these destitute boys, since the former abodes of many were no longer functioning. With the Allies occupying the country, confiscated buildings were repossessed by their rightful owners,<sup>80</sup> meaning that most state orphanages had to be closed: their buildings were no longer under government control and the government was unable to offer alternative buildings. Sixty-one orphanages in Anatolia were closed and only a few continued to operate in Istanbul. About 3,500 orphans in these institutions lived in very poor conditions, without basic alimentation or adequate clothing.<sup>81</sup>

The orphan boys who came back from Germany could not fit easily into these already downsized and crowded orphanages. Almost of the orphans who came back from Germany were put into Yedikule Orphanage, due to its closeness to state factories;<sup>82</sup> most of the returnees were employed in Zeytinburnu Iron Factory [Zeytinburnu Fabrika-i Hümayunu]. A younger inmate of the same orphanage complained in his memoirs that these older boys had no

79 “Dank türkischer Untertanen an Deutschland,” *Hamburger Fremdenblattes*, 113, August 9, 1919.

80 Abdurrahman Şeref recounts that the French Fathers themselves evicted the orphans from the Kadıköy orphanage, their Collège de Saint Joseph. TBMM ZC, 465.

81 Dinamo, *Öksüz Musa*, 13–30; TBMM ZC, 452–453, 458–459.

82 BOA, DH.UMVM., 119/15, 16/N/1337 (June 15, 1917).

proper education and that they talked, made naughty jokes and laughed all night.<sup>83</sup> Boys who had been brought from orphanages in Anatolia were in especially difficult circumstances: their orphanages were closed and they were great distances away from their hometowns, with no means or assistance for getting there. Some were 'temporarily' sheltered in the Poorhouse [*Darülaceze*], in various hospitals or in existing orphanages. However, this supposedly limited residence lasted longer than expected, and they were not sent back until March 1922.<sup>84</sup>

Squeezed between Ottoman demands for quantity and German demands for quality, orphan boys were expected to accomplish an impossible mission. Orphans themselves felt betrayed in two fronts. As noted above, their hopes of leading more prosperous lives in Germany had been shattered; but they were not welcomed back in their own country as qualified workers to help rejuvenate the economy, either. They were still being treated as needy orphans that the state had a hard time providing for. Despite the distances travelled and all the hardships they encountered, they were unable to remedy their circumstances as destitute children.

### Happy Endings

Ahmed Talib was born in Istanbul in 1901. His mother passed away when he was three years old. His father was married again after a short time, but Ahmed was not at all satisfied with this and he constantly complained to his brother about the stepmother. Before the war years, the family's economic standing was not bad. The father had a shoeshine shop in Kadıköy and he was also an ice dealer [*sellac*]. The fate of the family changed dramatically with the explosion of the First World War: his father was drafted in late 1914 and killed the following year at Gallipoli. As an 'orphan of a martyr,' Ahmed Talib had the privilege granted by the Ministry of Education to be admitted to the state orphanage [*Darüleytam*] in Kadıköy, which occupied the former premises of the famous French college of Saint Joseph.<sup>85</sup>

83 Dinamo, *Öksüz Musa*, 37–38.

84 BOA, DH.UMVM., 119/26, 12/B /1340 (March 11, 1922).

85 The orphans of the martyrs were a privileged group of destitute children. They were the only ones to be granted such special rights as admittance into certain civil and military boarding schools, vocational schools and the newly introduced state orphanages [*Darüleytam*].

In this over-populous boys' orphanage with about a thousand boys, he was registered to the trades department and started training in shoemaking. When he heard in early 1917 that a large number of volunteer boys would be sent by the Orphanage Administration to Germany for further training, he applied immediately. At 16 years old, Ahmed was among the first group of 314 craft apprentices who arrived in Berlin in late April 1917. He was first transferred with 17 others to Frankfurt an der Oder, and then with four other boys to Fürstenwalde. He was settled in the household of Albert Pöthke as an apprentice cobbler as of May 1, 1917. Ahmed worked and lived in his master Albert Pöthke's house with three other German apprentices. He also attended night school to learn German. He learned fast and his training in general was very successful. They had an exemplary master–apprentice relationship: Ahmed passed the 'journeyman exam' [*Gesellenprüfung*] in shoemaking on April 30, 1921 with the grade 'very good' and worked at Pöthke's shop until February 10, 1923. He worked in different workplaces and factories in Berlin until he opened his own shop in Fürstenwalde in late 1927. He also married a young German woman and became a father. In 1935, Ahmed Talib was himself certified as a master by the Chamber of Trade in Frankfurt an der Oder and started to have apprentices of his own. He was well-integrated in this little town due to his German wife and total competence in the language, and by being a completely local figure in his neighborhood. It is fair to say that all his success and happiness resulted from his decision to come to Germany for training. He lived there till the end of his life and witnessed several historical eras: the Deutsches Kaiserreich, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic. He was one of the very few successful boys who won his struggle to belong.

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İshak Muammer was from a high-class and well-integrated family.<sup>86</sup> His father, Mehmed Cemaleddin, was the former judge [*kadi*] of Mecca, Cairo and, later, Istanbul. However, his father died during the war and the family faced financial difficulties, though probably much less than the average. One of their neighbors, a certain Frau Stange, talked to him about the DTV and about the students who were being sent to Germany. When he showed an interest, she arranged a meeting with Dr Jäckh himself at Pera Palas, the famous European-style hotel in Istanbul. Later, he successfully took an exam at the DTV offices,

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86 This section is prepared based on the autobiography of İshak Muammer himself: Tuksavul, *Eine bittere Freundschaft*.

and in accordance with the general scholarship rules, the DTV pledged to cover his study costs and the train ride to Germany. He needed to provide for his accommodation, boarding and pocket money himself. While trying to get the necessary permission from the Ministry of Education, he benefited greatly from his father's network, such that he could see in person both Dr Nazım, who was in charge of DTV operations in Istanbul, and Şükrü Bey, the minister himself.

İshak was put on the *Balkanzug*, which travelled from Istanbul to Berlin only in two days and three nights, and he arrived at the end of November 1917.<sup>87</sup> As one of the privileged boys, this was much faster than the 10-day journey of the orphan apprentices. After he arrived, he was taken to the DTV's student home [*Schülerheim*] in Grunewald.<sup>88</sup> The next day he met the director of the home and one of the key figures of the DTV, Dr Ryll. He stayed there for two nights and then went to Mannheim for his secondary school [*Oberrealschule*] study. His financial resources helped him to stay in a few different pensions in Mannheim. In school, his biggest problem initially was the language, but he soon proved successful in all his classes, including German. However, he found himself quite isolated in the city of Mannheim, where there were no other Turks or Muslims.

A few months before his *Abitur* exam in the spring of 1919, the Ottoman Honorary Consul in Mannheim, also the director of the Rheinischen Kreditbank, called him to tell that Ottoman citizens were supposed to return by steamships departing from Hamburg. However, as he was paying his own way he was not made to leave. After he got his *Abitur* diploma, he started to work as a trainee in the Rheinischen Kreditbank in Mannheim for two years to save money for further studies. Later, he attended the commercial college [*Handelshochschule*] in Mannheim and got his *Abschluss* in 1925. In spring 1925, he started studying chemistry in Darmstadt and Karlsruhe. During these years, he also got married a German woman. In the second half of the decade, he experienced the emergence and rise of National Socialism and felt threatened by the phenomenon. As a result, he decided to return to Turkey in 1929.

87 Before the war, the Orient Express ran between Istanbul and Paris. After the division of Europe into Entente and Central Powers, the *Balkanzug* passed through Sofia, Belgrade, Budapest and Oderberg.

88 The *Schülerheim* was opened in October 1917 in Grunewald (Herthastrasse 6) for Turkish students to spend a few days after they arrived in Berlin. They would stay there before they would go to their posts in other cities. Dr. Gerhard Ryll, "Die türkische Schülerheim in Berlin Grunewald," in *Türkische Jugend in Deutschland: Jahresbericht der Schülerabteilung der Deutsch-Türkischen Vereinigung* (Berlin: Deutsch-Türkische Vereinigung e.V., 1918), 42–46.

As a businessman in the 1940s, he rebuilt his relations to Germany and kept visiting the country. Remarkably, he wrote his autobiography in German.

### Conclusion

The activities of the DTV in the field of education and its collaboration with the Young Turk regime have been interpreted from an economic perspective. Gencer argues that in sending students and trainees to Germany for vocational training, the Young Turks were hoping to train pioneers for a national bourgeoisie, who would play key roles in creating a national economic policy and, thus, secure economic independence from Europe.<sup>89</sup> Those who analyze the German side of the picture also underline how German business circles and journalists, among which Ernst Jäckh and his DTV were the most prominent, wasted no time in forging ambitious plans for the “economic development of the Sultan’s lands.”<sup>90</sup> German trade masters and mining authorities also agreed to take in Ottoman orphans as apprentices for economic reasons, hoping that these children would be silent, obedient and hardworking laborers. The prospect of non-unionized and immigrant workers definitely seemed plausible, while the fear of a worker revolution was still on the air. Yet, economic explanations appear uncertain when we approach the issue from the perspective of the transferred boys.

The Ottoman administration did not have a long-term economic vision or plan. They were more interested in solving a *current* (and pressing) problem than in investing for a better future. The simple reason behind the desire to send as many as 10,000 orphans to Germany was the difficulty of sheltering, feeding and educating so many orphaned children and youths. Based on hastily made plans and preparations for the transfer of children (who lacked clothing, equipment, etc.), and with no regard for who was selected (former vocation, health, work ethics, etc.), we can safely argue that the only concern of the Ottoman government was the quantity they sent. The state wanted to *get rid of* as many lads as possible, regardless of the opportunities offered to them. Moreover, the boys were sent without a return date having been decided. The way the untimely arrived returnees were treated implies that they were not really expected to come back, at least not in the near future.

89 Gencer, *Nationale Bildungspolitik*, 265.

90 Ulrich Trumpener, *Germany and the Ottoman Empire, 1914–1918* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 319.

The quality—either of the boys or of the training they were offered—was not even an issue for the Young Turk regime. There is even evidence to the contrary: the Ottoman Ministry of Education acted as if the German educational outlets were banishment centers for unsatisfactory students, together with burdensome orphans. In October 1917, the Ministry ruled that those who failed to pass their final exams more than once and those who did not have any chance of graduation would be sent to Germany to be trained as apprentices in crafts and agriculture.<sup>91</sup>

Why the Ottoman government was not able to ‘utilize’ such a large labor force at home can be understood only with a closer look at the ‘foster care’ mechanism. Apprenticeship is traditionally an indispensable part of household economy. It means the extension of the family model of social hierarchy and organization to extra-familial members of the household. It was practiced to redistribute underutilized labor from families to households needing more hands. Since food and clothing consumed the majority of family resources, giving away a child into the care of others brought about serious financial relief. It was not rare that public authorities bonded out orphans and indigent children as a means of public relief.<sup>92</sup> Orphans in the Ottoman Empire were in exactly the same situation. The state was in a very weak organizational situation, financial crisis was very deep, and economic production during war years (both agriculture and industry) was very low. Therefore, the government was unable to turn this army of boys into a real workforce.

The DTV and German foreign policy makers, on the other hand, accepted the heavy burden of educating and feeding Ottoman orphans only because of the promise that they would receive “the sons and daughters of the best families of the country.”<sup>93</sup> Since there were only a few German-educated Ottomans, educating the children in Germany was a great opportunity to create a new generation, who would be “friends of Germany.”<sup>94</sup> In that respect, Germany’s semicolonial educational aspirations gave the country a long-term vision, which was dependent on the quality of the minds they received.<sup>95</sup> Dr Ryll, the inspector of the DTV for the Ottoman youths in

91 BOA, MF.MKT., 1230/54, 20/Z/1335 (October 8, 1917).

92 Hugh D. Hindman (ed.), *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2009), 533.

93 “Türkische Schüler.”

94 “An die Königlichen Provinzialschulkollegien, Der Minister der geistlichen und Unterrichts, Berlin, den 14. Oktober 1916,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63062.

95 For further information on the concept of ‘semicolonial mentality,’ see Fuhrmann, “Germany’s Adventures.”

Germany, described the issue in a report entitled “Quantity or Quality?” (July 1918), in the following words:

The evidence is growing more and more from supporters of our work and experts—both from the Turkish and German sides—that our success does not depend on whether the number of Turkish youths studying in Germany is increasing every year by several hundreds. It depends more on the arrival of “the best minds of Turkish schools” (as it says in our guidelines), and on educating and training in our country those who could alone be the bearers of a better Turkish future. Thereby one might at first think of the “best families,” i.e. the social elite of Turkish society, which has previously played the leading political role and which is also likely to continue to play that role for the time being.<sup>96</sup>

The discrepancy between what the Ottoman authorities wanted and what the German side expected of them resulted to a triangle of regrets. There was an essential difference between the two sides in defining these children. For the Ottoman side, they were simply a burden, an excessive population and disposable state property. For the German side they were potential transmitters of the German language, culture and work ethic. The only concern of the Young Turk government was the *quantity*, to send as many lads as possible, regardless of the opportunities offered to them. Germans, on the other hand, imagined they would receive a high *quality* group of boys, both to reinforce their weakening workforce and to open a new channel for social and cultural influence and supremacy over the Ottoman Empire.

Although both governments failed to get what they imagined, the sending of Ottoman children and youths to Germany to be trained and employed in handicrafts, mines and farms might well be considered background for the continuation of the sending of youth to Germany during the first decades of

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96 “Immer mehr wächst bei Freunden und Kennern unserer Arbeit—und zwar ebenso auf türkischer wie auf deutscher Seite—die Erkenntnisse, dass ihr Erfolg nicht davon abhängt, ob die Zahl der in Deutschland studierenden jungen Leute sich alljährlich um einige Hundert vermehrt, dass es viel mehr darauf ankommt, die ‘besten Köpfe der türkischen Schulen’ (wie es in unseren Leitsätzen heisst) auszusondern und sie, die allein die Träger einer besseren türkischen Zukunft sein können, in unserem Lande zu bilden und zu erziehen. Dabei mag man zunächst ruhig an die ‘besten Familien’ d.h. an die soziale Oberschicht der türkischen Gesellschaft denken, die bisher die politisch führende Rolle gespielt hat und vorläufig auch wohl weiter spielen wird.” (Dr. Ryll, “Quantität oder Qualität?: Kritische Bemerkungen zur dritten Schülerentsendung, 31. Juli 1918,” Auswärtiges Amt Archives, R63065).

Republican Turkey. It might even be linked to the recruitment of Turkish ‘guest workers’ in Germany from the 1960s onwards.

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# Bonbons and Bayonets: Mixed Messages of Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic

*Benjamin C. Fortna*

This chapter explores the conflicted nature of Ottoman and Turkish childhood that emerges from a reading of children's reading materials, including textbooks and magazines produced during the period from the 1880s to 1930. It argues that, as was the case in Western Europe and many other places around the world, the image of childhood was constructed at the confluence of a number of competing agendas in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres. Drawing mostly on children's reading materials produced both by the state and private actors, the chapter explores the tensions, contradictions and mixed messages with which primarily Turkish Muslim children were confronted in the late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican eras. In particular, it examines the contrast between a fanciful, cartoonish world of sweets, dolls and games and the stark world of warfare, sacrifice and service to the homeland, first the empire and then the nation. The dramatic military conflicts and political developments of the period that saw the demise of empire and the emergence of a nation state can, paradoxically, be seen to have been both crucial and surprisingly inconsequential in the shaping of children's lives. The complexities and contradictions of an age in flux help to explain the conflicting expectations which children in this period had to face in order to turn adult conceptions of childhood into their own lived reality.

## Introduction

Childhood is almost always understood in different and contradictory ways. It is experienced; that is to say, lived variously, remembered distortedly and conceptualized imperfectly. Conceptions of childhood and youth have varied significantly over time and across cultural and geographical space, reflecting the larger social, cultural and economic forces at play. To take one prominent example, the contrasting mythologized Apollonian and Dionysian understanding of youth identified by Chris Jenks reveal a fundamental difference in the way adults view

the young.<sup>1</sup> The Dionysian child is thought to be fundamentally bad, both impish and corrupting, and thus requires adult supervision to correct his or her destructive tendencies. The Apollonian child, by contrast, is understood to be inherently good, innocent and angelic, but his or her innocence requires adult intervention to allow the child's intrinsic creativity the time to develop and mature. What is interesting for the discussion here is the fact that both views depend upon a fundamental boundary between childhood and adulthood, one that in many locales had been erected only fairly recently in historical time as the understanding of the 'new' child came into being. Both views are, not surprisingly, adult projections about what childhood should be in its ideal state. Those projections have proved remarkably powerful but are themselves often tempered by real-life conditions. As Philippe Ariès famously recognized, across historical time most parents did not conceive of their children as inhabiting a separate stage of life delineated by the term 'childhood.'<sup>2</sup> Even when in the relatively recent past this began to change and young people came to be seen as and even defined by inhabiting a distinct phase of life, many parents could not afford the luxury of treating their offspring as if their youth isolated them from the realities of adult concerns, economic ones first and foremost.

While adult recognition of the category of childhood was coming into being, the lives onto which adults projected their types and concerns were of course inherently varied. A recent publication offering translations of a range of early memoirs from the late Ottoman Empire and the early Turkish Republic underscores this diversity. Even though the fact of authorship, and with it the access to the literacy and education necessary to compose such reminiscences, entails a fairly drastic reduction in the possibilities for representativeness of the sample, the lives conveyed in this collection are nevertheless remarkably diverse with respect to gender, geography, religion, social background and psychological composition.<sup>3</sup> The linguistic, ethnic and cultural richness of the late Ottoman Empire not surprisingly ensured that its children lived and subsequently remembered their childhoods in a variety of different ways. This diversity of experience notwithstanding, a clear pattern emerges from an investigation of the ways childhood was conceived and represented by adults. In the late Ottoman and immediate post-Ottoman periods—times of especially acute upheaval, stress and anxiety in both family and imperial/national life—we can

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1 Chris Jenks, *Childhood* (2nd edition, London: Routledge, 1996), 70ff.

2 Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, translated by Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962).

3 Klaus Kreiser and Patrick Bartsch (eds.), *Türkische Kindheiten* ([Frankfurt am Main:] Literaturca, 2012). I thank Philipp Wirtz for bringing this work to my attention.

detect both a tendency to shelter children from the 'real world' and, contradictorily, an imperative that children should engage with the world in order to improve and shape it. In fact, as we shall see, some adults were keen to assign children the burden of saving the nation.

Times of particularly acute stress perhaps naturally generate a degree of anxiety that places heightened demands on infancy and youth. The upheavals and dislocations associated with the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the appearance of the nationally defined states that replaced it demonstrate these contradictions in especially sharp relief. Given *inter alia* the unprecedentedly rapid pace of change in almost all spheres of life—the effects of warfare, including the dramatic demographic shifts that frequently followed in its wake, the sometimes abruptly changing ideology of the state and the increasing penetration of public education with a concomitant rise in literacy and the dissemination of texts—this period placed particularly strong demands on its children. How childhood was imagined, how it should be molded, the roles that the family and the teacher ought to play in it, and the extent to which it was conceived as both a distinct and a fully integrated part of first imperial and then national life: all were being affected by the stresses generated by the break-up of the Ottoman Empire and the coming into being of nation states in its stead.

### Bonbons

This heightened atmosphere exaggerated the pre-existing tendency to create two distinct worlds of childhood. The first, referred to here in shorthand as the world of 'bonbons,' is a realm of idealized, romanticized and proto-Disneyesque fantasy. In this construction children are protected and isolated from adult concerns. In the literature produced for children that was rapidly creating its own publishing niche from the 1880s onwards children are frequently depicted as being dependent on the wisdom, bounty and prescience of their elders but otherwise isolated from the preoccupations of the grown-up world, quite like their counterparts in the West.<sup>4</sup>

The first sign that this world was one that treated children as distinctly different from adults appears in the way that the adult interlocutors address the children in these texts. The introductions and opening lines of many of the books and magazines catering to a young readership would frequently feature passages in which children were spoken to in patronizing terms, such

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4 Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London: Longman, 1995), 1.

as “my dears” or “my little ones.” The children inhabiting this world are said to possess ‘mini-mini brains’ and appear to be completely dependent upon the world of adults for protection, sustenance and moral guidance. Such forms of address, while perhaps intended to be affectionate, nevertheless establish an unmistakable hierarchical barrier between the active adult authorial voice and the passive child audience. Defining the roles so clearly in this way set the tone for the content that was to follow in these texts.

Sometimes children are depicted as merely mouthing the words of adults, giving a stilted and scripted aspect to their utterances. This combination of ventriloquism and wishful thinking produced images such as that displayed on the cover of one edition of the children’s magazine *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* [The Healthy Turkish Child].<sup>5</sup> Two young children are shown next to an easel supporting a blackboard. One of the children has a piece of chalk in hand; the text beside them reads: “Every nation’s level of civilization is connected to the importance and attention paid to its children.” These are hardly the words to be spoken, let alone written, by children still to lose their baby fat. Putting words into the mouths of children was consonant with a widespread strategy aimed at framing their world in adult terms.

Similarly idealized but presented as natural was the range of activities in which children were represented. Whether depicted in the process of learning or playing, children were shown in a range of stilted, demonstrational poses reflecting an adult fantasy of childhood. This cocooned conception represented children both visually through the increasingly widespread use of illustrations and verbally as being engaged in a heavily idealized set of activities. Such scenes mostly show little or nothing in the way of context. Rather, they depict generically rendered children busy in the abstract projections of their adult authors and illustrators. Whether playing games, reading or frolicking with a variety of fluffy animals, the children shown in these images are invariably devoid of the normal markers of time and space that would indicate a localized context for children’s activities.

In fact, this world is so far removed from reality that it blends readily into fantasy. Animals that can speak, perform mathematical calculations and deploy elaborate mechanical contraptions populate the reading materials that were increasingly available for children. Indeed, many of these new publications included cartoon drawings, underscoring their fictional nature. In this world readers encounter a talking horse, a lamb much like Bo-Peep who accompanies a child to school and the duelling antics of a fox and rabbit who use elaborate mechanical devices to gain the upper hand over their adversaries. Anthropomorphism plays a

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5 *Gürbüz Türk Çocuğu* [The Healthy Turkish Child] April 23, 1927.

central role; animals are frequently given human-like faces and expressions. Perhaps the ultimate expression of this fantastic dimension is the category of stories and illustrations that portray adventures in outer space, complete with rockets and space travellers. These hyper-fictionalized scenes represent the ultimate representation of an escapist tendency in the depiction of children's activities in these sources. For example, the children's magazine *Yeni Yol* offered a story in which two boys were each encouraged to choose a book and to read it on their own at school. One of the boys opts for a Jules Verne-like tale that contains an account of lunar travel and the discovery of a new celestial body.<sup>6</sup> In an era increasingly exposed to and interested in the possibilities afforded by newly developing technologies such as rapid transport and new modes of communication by land, sea and air,<sup>7</sup> it was perhaps not surprising that children's literature would engage with the more imaginative—and entertaining—end of the spectrum.

Even the school, the most common, grounded, everyday element on display in characterizations of childhood, could be portrayed as a highly artificial realm. In both the late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican periods the educational institution was cloyingly depicted as a joyful world where grateful children appreciated and even eulogized their schools and teachers. In these texts, children are made to do all sorts of unlikely things in order to conform to adult projections of an idealized childhood. Two examples convey the lengths to which children's authors went in trying to concoct an idealized fondness for school. The first, a poem by the celebrated author and educationalist Tevfik Fikret (1867–1915) takes the form of a dialogue between a girl named Şermin and her grandmother. Understandably one of the great poet's little-known works, the poem details in highly stilted terms the things that its young female protagonist Şermin loves the most. After mentioning the members of her family she dwells on her favorite sweets, such as rice pudding, candy and pastry,

But most of all I love my school,  
My school I love very much  
Beautiful building!  
What things it teaches me.<sup>8</sup>

6 *Yeni Yol* 50, 13 Teşrin-i sani 1340 [November 13, 1924], 417.

7 For a discussion of the importance of the new as represented by technology in the late Ottoman period, see Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–1911* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press), 289 ff.

8 Sadrettin Celal, *Cümhuriyet Çocuklarına Sevimli Kirâat* (Istanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1928), 9–10. For further details, see Benjamin C. Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 58–59.

Another perhaps equally far-fetched attempt expressed the sorrow that children allegedly felt at having to say goodbye to their schools at the start of the summer holidays. In one children's reader from the 1940s a child is made to pen a letter to the beloved institution. It begins: "Dear School, We are parting. There are tears in our eyes and a strange feeling of sorrow in our hearts [...]." <sup>9</sup> To our eyes these words may seem strange indeed, or at least wishful thinking, but they are typical of the no doubt well-intentioned if somewhat pathetic attempts to demonstrate idealized behavior to young readers that formed a prominent element in the construction of the saccharine, idealized fantasy of the world of bonbons.

### Bayonets

By contrast, the depiction of childhood as something startlingly grounded in real-world concerns is referred to here as the world of 'bayonets.' In this realm we encounter children who are not only firmly situated in the grown-up world from which they were often excluded in the 'bonbon' realm but also heavily engaged with it. Far from being sheltered from the worrying developments of the outside world, children in this realm appear affected by both such 'real world' events and phenomena as war, economic competition and the need for national uplift and progress, and are depicted as being actively involved in efforts aimed at improving both their own lot in life and the standing of their country. <sup>10</sup> In some cases the actions of children are described in these materials as being crucial to the prosperity—and even the survival—of the empire or nation itself.

The dualism between the world of bonbons and that of bayonets is discernible in all sub-periods from the 1880s to the 1930s but the balance becomes noticeably more weighted in favor of the realm of the bayonet during periods of crisis, and especially after 1911. From that year the Ottoman Empire entered into a succession of wars, first the Italian or Libyan War [Trablusgarp Harbi], then the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), followed by the First World War (1914–1918)

9 Muallim Cevdet [İnanç], *Çocuklar için... Hayat bilgisine uygun yazılar ve temsiller* ([Balıkesir]: Türk Dili, 1943), 24.

10 Interestingly, in parallel but separate contexts Ottoman children were being encouraged to pursue education in order to serve their own 'nations' or 'races,' what we would today call ethnic or religious groups. Many of these groups used the purportedly essential differences between groups as a spur to encourage striving for success. For a good example, see Duygu Köksal's description of Demetra Vaka (this volume).

and finally the Greek invasion and 'National Struggle' which ultimately resulted in the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. As might be expected under these extremely trying circumstances, the depiction of children could change dramatically to reflect the altered circumstances of the period and especially the adoption of a seemingly permanent war footing. In general terms we can notice a trend to portray children as much more independent, a virtue born of the necessity of coping with the increasingly trying 'demands of the present.' But their independence needed to be subordinate to imperial/national interests. They needed to be resourceful but also obedient, independent but also orderly, on time and clean.<sup>11</sup> They needed to be curious and intelligent but also to conform to a long list of positive attributes that were drawn up by adults.

Modelling a range of practical activities was the result of this approach. For example, children were depicted as being taught to work, to save money and to serve their country, first the Ottoman Empire and then after 1923 the Turkish Republic. One story from 1909 combined these two goals by telling the exemplary tale of a group of male students who had pooled their resources to start a company. Standing before a model of a steamship, the story's protagonist and the boys' teacher tells his students of another group of boys from the same school who had formed a business partnership fifteen years earlier. By saving their pocket money instead of spending it on sweets or entertainment, their predecessors had saved enough to present their school with the very model that stood before the present-day students of 1909. But, the teacher continued, their partnership did not end when they left school but rather flourished as they made their way into business. Eventually they were able to buy a real steamship that was to be the first of many in their successful foray into the world of commerce; their firm was held up before the rapt fictional audience as evidence of the power of partnership, common endeavour, technology and patriotic service.<sup>12</sup> In these texts, the very point of childhood and education in particular is to contribute to the nation and, in its more extreme expressions, actually to save it by taking up arms, as we shall shortly see.

In contrast to the serenely oblivious approach of the world of bonbons, the mindset of the world of the bayonet brought politics to the fore. Political actors appear prominently in these texts. The first to appear were the last Ottoman sultans before they eventually give way to Mustafa Kemal, who assumes a

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11 On the important role of punctuality and hygiene in late Ottoman approaches to school-age children, see Avner Wishnitzer, "Teaching Time: Schools, Schedules and the Ottoman Pursuit of Progress," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 43, 2010, 5–32.

12 Tüccarzâde İbrahim Hilmi, *Altın Kitab: Çocuklara ilk kıraat* (Istanbul: Kitabhane-i Askeri, 1327 [1909–1910]), 35–37.

remarkably conspicuous place in the children's literature of the early Republican period as, indeed, he did in society at large. Beyond political leadership, everyday concerns associated with warfare, hardship, suffering and the application of effort and persistence are the hallmarks of this milieu, which often seems unrecognizable by contrast with the world of dolls, toys and frivolity. This is part of a general trend towards representing the 'real world' of politics, geography and adult concerns to children.

The school played an important role in defining this world as well. Increasingly represented as a microcosm for the political community—first the empire and then the nation—the educational institution was a crucial site in modelling an array of new behaviors and attitudes. These could assume an increasingly political function, particularly in the early Republican period when educational change played a crucial part in the Kemalist 'revolution.' But they were part of a longer trend towards the politicization of education that had begun in the late Ottoman period. In the last decades of the imperial era, we begin to see visual representations of the Ottoman sultan appearing in children's textbooks, first in the form of the royal coat of arms,<sup>13</sup> and then portrait-like illustrations,<sup>14</sup> along with maps of the Empire. Alongside them appeared messages underscoring the importance of such qualities as obedience to those in authority, respect for one's elders, thrift and service to the Empire. This tendency, with some important adjustments, was continued and, indeed, considerably amplified in the period of the Turkish Republic. It now showcased the role of Mustafa Kemal, soon to be renamed 'Atatürk,' who assumed the role of Educator-in-Chief [Başöğretmen] as one of his myriad public personae. Atatürk's image appeared regularly in textbooks and magazines intended for children in this period. Typical of the paternal image fostered in such publications was that of Atatürk teaching the new alphabet from 1928. While he was depicted as teaching the new script to the full range of the population, images of him teaching the new letters to a child in his lap were particularly prominent.<sup>15</sup> But it is important to remember that children's publications from both the late Ottoman and early Republican period enlisted a wide range of eminent

13 *Çocuklara Rehber* 20, 5 Rebiülahr 1315/21 Ağustos 1313 [September 3, 1897], 1.

14 Ali İrfan, *Birinci Kiraat* (Istanbul: İkbâl Kütüphanesi/Şems Matbaası, 1328–1330 [1910–1912]), 5.

15 Yasemin Gençer, Chris Gratien and Emily Neumeier, "Child and Nation in Early Republican Turkey," *Ottoman History Podcast*, 102, April 19, 2013. Available online: <http://www.ottomanhistoricalpodcast.com/2013/04/childhood-family-press-turkish-nationalism-republic.html> (See, in particular, the cover illustrations for various magazines from the early Republican period depicting a variety of paternalistic representations of the new republic as personified by Mustafa Kemal).

political, military and literary figures of the time, such as Ziya Gökalp, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü, Mehmed Emin, Ömer Seyfettin and Kâzım Karabekir, whose writings feature prominently in the children's readers and textbooks from the era, reflecting the seriousness with which officialdom took the humble task of teaching children to read.

The ultimate expression of the world of the bayonet appears in the form of the militarization of childhood, especially from 1911 onwards. The Italian invasion of Ottoman Libya and the subsequent war there was a conflict that, however asymmetrical and however brief, had important implications for the conceptualization of the Ottoman/Turkish nation.<sup>16</sup> The shores of Libya may have seemed remote to many in the Ottoman heartlands, but the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912 brought the reality of military conflict much closer to home; the Empire's heartlands responded by adopting a martial footing. Public rallies and demonstrations, increasingly desperate news from the front conveyed by an increasingly prominent press, the physical presence of long lines of refugees with their ox carts in Istanbul, and the overall economic crisis underscored the proximity of the conflict. With the outbreak of the First World War, the militarization of Ottoman society took on unprecedented dimensions.<sup>17</sup> For many, the end of that brutal conflict, in which Ottoman mortality rates made the Western Front seem almost benign, brought little relief. The occupation and invasion of Anatolia by a combination of forces, including the French in southeastern Anatolia and the Greeks in the west, occasioned armed resistance and in many areas outright civil war.<sup>18</sup>

The succession of wars and the resulting militarization of Ottoman society affected children in a variety of ways. Most apposite to this discussion of the messages with which children were confronted as they learned to read was the conflation of education and warfare. The blurring of the lines between the civilian and military duties and responsibilities expected from and modelled for children took a variety of forms. The subtler, or more nearly subtle, methods included framing educational activities such as reading in an imperial or national context. Illustrations increasingly captured students in patriotic poses, whether depicting a child reading in a setting in which the national flag

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16 Murat Belge, "Genç Kalemler and Turkish Nationalism," in Celia Kerslake, Kerem Öktem and Philip Robins (eds), *Turkey's Engagement with Modernity: Conflict and Change in the Twentieth Century* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

17 Yiğit Akin, "The First World War and the Ottoman Empire: The Home-Front Perspective," paper presented to the SOAS Seminars on Turkey, London, March 8, 2013.

18 For a recent account of this period, see Ryan Gingeras, *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912–1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

is draped across the top of the picture<sup>19</sup> or playing football on a field in which the flag flies from a pole situated behind the goal in the background of the image on a magazine's cover.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to the lack of context displayed in the world of the bonbons, the land of bayonets ensured that real-time national referents were increasingly common in the depictions of children and their activities, even if these were only subtly incorporated.

Most efforts to infuse childhood with a military ethos were, unsurprisingly perhaps, much more direct, sometimes jarringly so. Consider the poem entitled "You'll Be a Soldier" [Asker olacaksınız]. Accompanied by an illustration of a toddler marching with a rifle while holding the reins of a toy horse on wheels (Figure 7.1), the poem mixes together the worlds of childhood and the military. The poem reads:

Now shoulder your rifle, mini mini  
 But tomorrow the game will end  
 They'll say to you: Move out, soldier!  
 On your shoulders, pack and rifle...<sup>21</sup>

The shift from the realm of innocent play to deadly fighting is abrupt and even rather surreal.

Other poems presented for child readers are still more direct. The poem that appears under the illustration mentioned above in which the flag frames the reading child, a work entitled "Mektepli" [The student] by the "national poet" Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul), manages to combine bellicosity with zeal for learning:

Friend!  
 I am a little soldier:  
 I have that blood in my veins;  
 My eyes gleam with that fire;  
 I also want to wage war;  
 —O child, what is your strength?  
 —Knowledge!  
 My pen will be my weapon,  
 My book will serve as my fort;

19 Mehmed Fuad Köprülüzâde, *Cumhuriyet Çocuklarına Yeni Millî Kıraat* (Istanbul: Kanaat Kitaphanesi, 1926), 86.

20 *Bizim Mecmua* 18, 3 Ağustos 1922.

21 Seracettin [Hisaroğlu], *Çocuk Kitabı: Kolay Kıraat* (İlk mektep - İkinci sınıf) (Istanbul: Kütüphane-i Hilmi, 1341 [1925]), 51.



## عسکر اوله جقسک !

شپدی تخته تفکنی  
 اوموزلارسک، مینی مینی!  
 فقط یارین اویون بیتر؛  
 سکا دیرلر .. هایدی عسکر!  
 اوموزگده چانطه، تفک،  
 تعینکله .. یوزده فشک؛  
 بر صره به دیزیلیرسک؛  
 یوک آلتنده آزیلیرسک!  
 دره، تپه دیمز یورور؛  
 آتیلیرسک دوشمان گورور

FIGURE 7.1 Illustration for the poem "You'll Be a Soldier"

My days will be full of conquests;  
 In every place I will be at the front.  
 —O soldier, who is your enemy?  
 —Ignorance.<sup>22</sup>

Some texts presented war and its destructive power in much more concrete terms. One children's magazine called its readers' attention to the devastation that resulted from the War of Independence. Describing the effects of the war on Western Asia Minor, what had been "the most prosperous regions of Anatolia," the magazine's editor referred to it as having been turned into "a heap of ashes." He describes how he wept at the site before cursing the "vile and despicable enemy" but then in a dramatic twist links the recovery of the nation to the very children he is addressing: "You are the ones whose minds and efforts will rebuild the nation. All of our hopes rest with you. Work, my dears."<sup>23</sup> The connection between education and militarization became even more concrete as the Turkish Republic both continued to use schools as a vehicle for infusing a martial spirit among its youth and used the army as an institution to educate the broader public, as underscored by the phrase that the government publicized on posters that said, "The Army is the People's School" [Ordu Bir Halk Mektebidir].<sup>24</sup>

It is important to note the heavily gendered way in which children's wartime duties are presented. Girls are expected to help out in the domestic sphere, by working with their mothers. Female literacy is valued mainly for its ability to enable girls to write letters to absent soldier fathers while boys drill and prepare to take up arms for the nation. In one representative children's reader from the early Turkish Republican era, all children are encouraged to love their flag and pay reverence to Mustafa Kemal—the headmaster of the nation—but the roles are quite gender-specific. Boys are represented playing a variety of martial games (marching, shouldering rifles, etc.) while the girls are seen to be taking care of domestic duties (sewing, cleaning, etc.). Girls are shown to employ their educational attainments in a supporting role. A frequent trope is for the good girl, after finishing her housework, to write a letter that will surprise her distant father with her ability to write and therefore to play her part in keeping the nation together during times of turmoil:

<sup>22</sup> Köprülüzâde, *Cumhuriyet Çocuklarına*, 86–87.

<sup>23</sup> *Yeni Yol* 10, 8 Teşrin-i sani 1339 [November 8, 1923], 146.

<sup>24</sup> On the subject of the Turkish "martial spirit," see Ayşe Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation: Militarism, Gender, and Education in Turkey* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 29 ff. For the relationship between education and militarization, see *Ibid.*, 119 ff.

My dear father, my solider father,

It has been a year since you went away. I am going to school. I am learning to read and write. I am even able to write you this letter.

Your loving daughter Yıldız

### Worlds Colliding

For the most part the two worlds we have been analyzing here remained distinct but occasionally they collided, sometimes jarringly so. Returning to the toy soldier depicted alongside the poem “You’ll be a Soldier,” we have an image that highlights the incongruity of the two worlds of youthful innocence and adult concerns. The toddler portrayed here is curiously suspended between the world of toys and games, represented by the lead to the pull-toy hobby horse in one hand, and the realm of violence and death, represented by the rifle with its affixed bayonet held in the other, thus fittingly illustrating the conflicted approach to children during this period of flux and, increasingly, of acute societal and political stress. It would not be the first or the last time that childhood and education were drawn into important political battles, of course. We need only think of the tussles over curricular reform waged in both the late Ottoman and Turkish Republican periods or the debates over the headscarf in more recent years to find other prominent examples. What makes the mixed messages presented to children in the materials we have been surveying here particularly noticeable is the clash inherent in the juxtaposition between the two worlds that were otherwise carefully kept apart.

Some of the difficulty, if not downright ineptitude, in finding a balanced approach to children can doubtless be attributed to the novelty of the situation. The popular press and the idea of public education were still relatively new phenomena in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and authors and publishers were struggling to come to terms with how to address children and with finding the appropriate content to offer the new but growing constituency of—and market for—the young reading public.<sup>25</sup> In attempting to find the right balance, publishers adopted a variety of modes of address, ranging from the patronizing to the collegial and even at times the conspiratorial.<sup>26</sup> There were also many attributes that linked the two worlds. They both

25 For more detail, see Fortna, *Learning to Read*.

26 For examples of children’s publications attempting to forge an alliance against the teacher, see Fortna, *Learning to Read*, 148 ff.

shared important common attitudes towards their child audience, such as the frequently overweening didacticism inherent in their approach to children and the distrust of larger social milieus outside the confines of the controlled classroom or the carefully concocted text.

But as we have seen, the contrasts between the two worlds could on occasion be remarkably sharp. When these worlds collided the result could appear stark. For example, an early Republican-era children's magazine cover featured an illustration of a girl teaching Turkish to her dolls and stuffed animals. Next to a caption which reads "Teacher Nebahat gives a lesson in Turkish," the young girl appears to be earnestly engaged in teaching a class composed of her assembled dolls and playthings, some of which are seated on miniature chairs. Outside of the frame the stern visage of Mustafa Kemal Paşa in military attire surveys the scene. This is yet another image that neatly encapsulates the tension between the serious and the frivolous at work in children's literature from this period.<sup>27</sup> Even the cloistered activity of a child playing with her toys could be confronted, even in pictorial form, with the adult world of politics and nation, thereby producing an odd juxtaposition.

From the perspective of the children, for whom after all these messages were intended, it must have been puzzling indeed to negotiate the dichotomy between these two worlds. Young readers were confronted with a variety of mixed messages. The political ones were perhaps the most obvious. For example, child readers in the last years of the Ottoman Empire were encouraged to devote themselves to the Empire and its sultan.<sup>28</sup> It was not long, however, before they were being encouraged to curse the former Ottoman ruler and to despise the Empire almost as soon as it had been replaced.<sup>29</sup> More coherent were the intended contrasts put before children to reinforce behavioral or moral lessons. The juxtaposition between the good child and the bad child was a standard trope in the literature produced for children—and one of the chief reasons for its rather stilted approach. The prolific late Ottoman writer Ahmed Midhat Efendi virtually made a career out of the didactic style evident in his *Terbiyeli Çocuk* [The Well-behaved Child],<sup>30</sup> published in the mid-1880s, which juxtaposes a well-behaved and a naughty child. Other publications picked up on this theme. One item in a children's magazine from the very early Republican period contrasted a lazy child with his hardworking counterpart.<sup>31</sup> The lazy

27 *Yeni Yol* 46, 16 Teşrin-i evvel 1340 [October 16, 1924].

28 See, for example, İrfan, *Birinci Kiraat*, 8.

29 See, for example, Köprülüzâde, *Cumhuriyet Çocuklarına*, 3.

30 Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Terbiyeli Çocuk* (İstanbul: Kırkanbar, 1303 [1885–1886]).

31 *Yeni Yol* 20, 17 Kanunusani 1340 [17 January 1904], 275.

child has lost everything while his poor, hardworking opposite made something of himself. Another version of this theme was to contrast the literate child with his or her illiterate twin. The former is a happy child who receives presents from his relatives, reads stories to his parents after helping them with the housework and is given money to buy books, while the latter ignores his teachers who punish him, is scolded by his mother for his disobedience and locked in a cupboard for good measure.<sup>32</sup>

The question of how children responded to these mixed messages would require additional research but we can hazard a guess that the responses would have been diverse. It seems likely that some children were eager to join the world of the bayonet while others were content to remain in the safe but illusory world of bonbons. What seems clear is that in their groping for ways to speak to the young, the adults of the rapidly shifting late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican periods attempted to establish a series of clear pedagogical contrasts. This chapter has focused on the juxtaposition of the protected with an engaged conception of childhood in order to highlight one of the many such distinctions being drawn for children in this period. Other examples include the contrasts between good against bad, new against old, Western against Oriental or secular against religious. But children have always been forced to accommodate and overcome the inconsistencies of adults. The transition from Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic was perhaps only a rather exaggerated case of the mixed messages with which children are confronted all the time.

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# Locating Remembrance: Regimes of Time and Cultures of Autobiography in Post-Independence Romania<sup>1</sup>

*Alex Drace-Francis*

## Introduction: Romania as Post-Imperial Polity?

Within the classical Ottoman polity, the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia always occupied something of a borderland position.<sup>2</sup> When they came under Russian protection after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), their autonomy was put on a formal footing, and modern institutions established after the ‘European’ model. Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War led to unification (1859), to the adoption of the new name of ‘Romania’ (1861) and to independence under a German monarch, Karl of Hohenzollern (1878). This new kingdom more than doubled its territory and population after the First World War, with the acquisition of lands from the former Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires in the Paris Treaties of 1919–1920.

This apparently smooth state-formation process, bearing some comparison with the successful earlier unifications in Germany and Italy, has meant that historians have not generally considered Romania as a ‘post-Ottoman’ state. For example, the standard English-language history of modern Romania considers

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- 1 The research for this chapter was initially undertaken in the framework of the “Regimes of Historicity” project at the Centre for Advanced Study, Sofia, in the academic year 2009–2010. I am grateful to the directors of that project, Diana Mishkova and Balázs Trencsényi, for supporting my research and to the research team as a whole for offering commentary on it. I also received invitations to present early versions of my findings at the European History Seminar, Trinity College Dublin (October 2009); at the Centre for the Study of the Balkans, Goldsmiths, London (February 2011); at the Fifth Conference of the Society for Romanian Studies, Sibiu, Romania (July 2012); and at the Central European University, Budapest (May 2013). Thanks to Graeme Murdock, Dejan Djokić, Irina Livezeanu and Constantin Iordachi respectively for affording me those opportunities, and to the audiences for their constructive comments and feedback.
  - 2 Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens (eds), *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities, and Political Changes* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

the country to have followed the ‘classic’ model of European state-building.<sup>3</sup> Ottomanists have accorded little attention to the Romanian experience after 1829,<sup>4</sup> while national historians in Romania viewed Ottoman rule as a largely negative part of their country’s past, rather than as part of an ongoing present.<sup>5</sup>

However, the problem of Romania’s ‘post-Ottomanism’ can be considered not just from the point of view of diplomatic history or historiography, but also from that of contemporaneous representations of childhood and youth experience. Studying the question from this viewpoint can prove especially valuable for understanding cultural dimensions of this process of independence and decolonization. As Laurence Brockliss points out in the introduction to this volume, children were often prime targets for the inculcation of new loyalties and the development of new narratives of statehood, belonging and collective purpose. In this chapter I seek to address these topics by considering two memoirs published around the time of Romanian independence, analysis of which can afford quite significant insights for understanding the changing position of children *vis-à-vis* old and new social and political systems, and also the more symbolic instrumentalization of images of youth in the development of a discourse about the nation.

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3 Keith Hitchins, *Rumania 1866–1947* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

4 Well-known—and otherwise meritorious—surveys of the Ottoman legacy in southeastern Europe give virtually no attention to the Romanian lands: Wayne Vucinich, “Some aspects of the Ottoman legacy,” in Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich (eds), *The Balkans In Transition: Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics Since the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 81–114; L. Carl Brown (ed.), *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi (eds), *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Tea Sindbæk and Maximilian Hartmuth (eds), *Images of Imperial Legacy: Modern Discourses on the Social and Cultural Impact of Ottoman and Habsburg Rule in Southeast Europe* (Münster: LIT, 2011); Frederick Anscombe, *State, Faith and Nation in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Lands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

5 For critical analyses of Romanian historiography on the Ottomans see e.g. Mirela-Luminița Murgescu, “Turcii otomani în manualele românești de istorie din secolul al XIX-lea,” *Caietele laboratorului de studii otomane*, 1, 1990, 257–273; Lucian Boia, *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, translated by J.C. Brown (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2001), 155–160; Silvana Rachieru, “Romanian national histories after 1990: Between Description and Analysis,” *Romanian Journal for Society and Politics*, 5 (1), 2003, 249–262; ead., “The Turks Were not as Bad as Written in History Text Books’: Acknowledging an Ottoman Legacy in present-day Romania,” in Raymond Detrez and Barbara Segaert (eds), *Europe and the Historical Legacies in the Balkans* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2008), 111–120.

The texts in question are the letters of a Wallachian boyar and diplomat, Ion Ghica (1816–1897), and the childhood recollections of a Moldavian peasant, priest and schoolteacher, Ion Creangă (1839–1889). Ghica's and Creangă's memoirs were published almost simultaneously in the same leading Romanian literary journal in the late 1870s and early 1880s. They were also both subsequently published in book form and became classics of Romanian literature. Despite, or perhaps even because of this, they have been rather neglected by historians, either as symptoms of or as reflections on social change.<sup>6</sup> On one level, the case study here focuses on certain technical aspects of the construction of childhood and place through literary evocation, as a common feature of nineteenth-century commemorative practices, albeit in a lesser-known tradition. They may be considered, then, as a local variation on what has been described in other contexts as the “battle for childhood”; or the more general rise of “cultures of autobiography” in nineteenth-century Europe and the Middle East.<sup>7</sup> In this light, Ghica's and Creangă's memoirs exemplify a process of producing symbolic narratives of individuals confronting cultural change, a procedure which has been well established in the light of other cases as a characteristic and significant part of nation-building strategies in modernizing and newly independent states.<sup>8</sup>

On another level, the analysis attempted here seeks to engage with a broader interest not just in different types of historical source, but also in how they configure a conception of modernity, through the production of “regimes of historicity.”<sup>9</sup> In particular, recollections of personal pasts provided a locus for considering the condition of ‘pre-statehood’ (figured as a world affected by institutional intrusions to a much lesser degree, or in a disorderly and violent fashion), while also

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6 They are occasionally drawn upon by historians in a rather informal way, for local color: see e.g. Neagu Djuvara, *Le pays roumain entre Orient et Occident: Les principautés danubiennes au début du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Orientalistes de France, 1989). For an idea of their place in literary history, see George Călinescu, *History of Romanian Literature*, translated by Leon Levițchi (Milan: Nagard, 1988).

7 Andrew Wachtel, *The Battle for Childhood: Creation of a Russian Myth* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990); Benjamin Fortna, “Education and Autobiography at the End of the Ottoman Empire,” *Die Welt des Islams* 41 (1), 2001, 1–31. See also the chapters by Wirtz and Köksal in this volume.

8 See e.g. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?” *Representations*, 37, 1992, 1–26; Javed Majeed, *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity: Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal: Narratives of Selfhood in Gandhi, Nehru and Iqbal* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007).

9 Diana Mishkova, Balázs Trencsényi and Marja Jalava (eds), *Regimes of Historicity in Southeastern and Northern Europe, 1890–1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014); cf. Maria Todorova (ed.), *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst, 2004).

functioning as a vehicle for commentary on the experience of encounter with changing institutions, such as the family, the church, the school and the army, as well as with the broader social and material environment.

### *From Childhood to Statehood*

While childhood was of course understood in Romanian discourse as the origin point of individuals' personal journeys, it also, interestingly, formed part of a series of tropes representing the transition to nationhood, appearing frequently as a metaphor for the nation in broader public discourse at the time of Romanian independence. One of the most important liberal journals of the 1848 generation called itself "The Romanian infant" [*Pruncul român*]; at around the same time, a portrayal of 'the infant Liberty' as a symbol of the nascent new polity was used in cultural propaganda efforts to win sympathy in France and other western countries.<sup>10</sup> One of the pioneers of a new national literature in Romania, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, referred to Romanian literature as being "still in swaddling clothes."<sup>11</sup> According to the Transylvanian Timotei Cipariu, the Romanian nation was "a poor infant, abandoned in the middle of the road."<sup>12</sup> "The Romanian's heart," said the newspaper *Popolul suveran*, was "young and full of love."<sup>13</sup>

What is more, the image of a youthful Romania—whether as innocent and childlike or impatient for adulthood—evolved in juxtaposition with the symbolism associated with other nations (Figure 8.1): France, for instance, was often referred to as "the elder sister" [*la sœur aînée*] of Romania, within a broader web of metaphors about the "European family."<sup>14</sup> The Ottoman Empire, in contrast, was proverbially "old" and "sick."<sup>15</sup>

10 See Angela Jianu, *A Circle of Friends: Romanian Revolutionaries and Political Exile* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

11 Ion Heliade Rădulescu, "Chemare către folos, facere de bine și glorie," [1843] in id., *Opere*, 1, edited by Dumitru Popovici (Bucharest: Fundația Regală pentru Literatură și Artă, 1939–1943), 452.

12 In the paper *Învățătorul poporului* in 1848, cited by Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria presei românești* (București: Sindicatul ziariștilor, 1925), 92.

13 "Patrie, naționalitate, România," *Popolul suveran*, 1 (3), 28 June/10 July 1848, in Cornelia Bodea (ed.), *1848 la români*, 2 (Bucharest: Editura științifică și enciclopedică, 1982), 698.

14 On the 'little/elder sister' trope, see Doina Harsanyi and Nicolas Harsanyi, "The Discreet Charm of the Little Sister: France and Romania," *East European Quarterly*, 28 (2), 1994, 183–192; on the trope of the 'European family,' see Alex Drace-Francis, *The Making of Modern Romanian Culture* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 36, 98, 99n.7, 199.

15 The famous trope of the Ottoman Empire as a 'sick man' is commonly attributed to Tsar Nicholas I, but was part of a much older tradition: see A.A. Livingston, "Some Early Italian



complexly *configured* in such a way as to produce an implicit localization of social relations in time and space, both on the level of personal and subjective identity and on that of the public identity of the new state.

### Ion Ghica

Ion Ghica (Figure 8.2) was born in Bucharest in 1816 into one of Wallachia's senior boyar families. His father was a noted member of one of the Ottoman 'Phanariot' families, Christians of the Fener district of Istanbul who formed a subset of the imperial bureaucracy responsible for various aspects of ecclesiastical, fiscal and regional government; while his mother descended from the native nobility of Wallachia. This type of intermarriage was typical of the symbiotic relationship of the two groups.<sup>16</sup>

After the outbreak of the Greek Revolt in 1821 and the demise of the 'Phanariot' regime, Ion Ghica's uncle, Grigore Ghica IV (1755–1834), was appointed Prince of Wallachia. Ghica junior was enrolled in the Saint Sava High School in Bucharest, a newly-established 'modern' public institution. He was subsequently sent to Paris where, along with an education in engineering and mathematics, he got wind of liberal political ideas and made contact with like-minded Romanians from other provinces, particularly Moldavia, where he took up a teaching post at the Academy at Iași from 1840–1843. He participated in the 1848 revolution in Wallachia, and attained high office several times during Romania's road to independence, acting as Prime Minister in 1866–1867 and 1870–1871, and Romanian ambassador to London from 1881–1889. He was also at various times President of the Romanian Academy and Director of the National Theatre. Interestingly, however, he did not break his ties with the suzerain polity until relatively late, and for five years in the 1850s occupied the Ottoman office of Bey of the island of Samos (1854–1859), an experience which forms the subject of a few episodes in his Romanian-language memoirs. In this light he might be considered as part of the 'post-Phanariot' community, which, as Christine Philliou has recently shown, did not automatically disappear after 1821 but continued to play a role in Ottoman governance through to the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup>

16 On the 'Phanariot' families and their role in the history of Wallachia and Moldavia, see e.g. Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History*, translated by A. Bley Vroman (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), 73–74.

17 Christine M. Philliou, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).



FIGURE 8.2 *Ion Ghica and Vasile Alecsandri in Istanbul, 1855.*

In the first phase of his career, Ghica produced a number of informative works, including brochures on economic matters such as the customs union between Moldavia and Wallachia, the adoption of modern weights and measures, political projects and survey reports on the situation of the Principalities.<sup>18</sup> But he also experimented with literary genres, including theatre and fiction.<sup>19</sup>

18 See e.g. G. Chainoi [an anagrammatic pseudonym], *Dernière occupation des Principautés Danubiennes* (Paris: Librairie Militaire de J. Dumaine, 1853); Ion Ghica, *Reorganisarea României* (Bucharest: Ștefan Rassidescu, 1861); id., *Ajutorul comerciantului* (Bucharest: Socec, 1873).

19 Ion Ghica, *Documente literare inedite* (Bucharest: Editura de stat pentru literatură și artă, 1959); Ștefan Cazimir (ed.), *Pionierii romanului românesc* (Bucharest: Editura pentru

His best-known works, published late in life, are *Convorbiri economice* [Conversations on Economics] (1865–1876), *Scrisori către Vasile Alecsandri* [Letters to Vasile Alecsandri] (1878–1886) and *Amintiri din pribegie* [Recollections from Exile] (1889).<sup>20</sup> They were typically serialized in periodicals before being issued as separate works in imposing volumes. As their titles suggest, Ghica's 'Conversations,' 'Letters,' and 'Recollections' adapt the genres of memoir and epistolary dialogue to provide perspectives on contemporary and historical Romania. They are very much 'stories' rather than 'history';<sup>21</sup> nor are they straightforward autobiographies, insofar as they do not furnish a continuous life story and Ghica is actually quite sparse with intimate details of his personal milieu. They nevertheless constitute one of the most extensive contemporary attempts to account for Romania's social, cultural and political transformation, its 'coming of age,' adopting a series of unusual perspectives on this process.

### *'Things of Which I Had No Idea'*

An example from *Convorbiri economice* may serve to illustrate this point. This work, divided into nine parts, consists mainly of standard essays on political and economic issues: the industrial development of Bucharest, the working man, cattle-raising, the decline of the great landowners. In part seven, however, Ghica has recourse to a more sophisticated framework. This section, entitled "Three Years in Romania, or the Correspondence of the Honourable Bob Dowley," deploys the trope of the fictional foreign observer, whose unfamiliarity with local customs provides a pretext for a detailed description of them, in this case to several addressees based in England.<sup>22</sup> Ghica purports to

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literatură, 1962), 3–23. Cf. Teodor Vârgolici, *Aspecte ale romanului românesc* (Bucharest: Eminescu 1985), 31–34, 96.

- 20 In the critical edition of Ion Ghica, *Opere*, in six volumes, edited by Ion Roman (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură, 1967–1988): 1 for *Scrisori*, 2 for *Convorbiri economice*. Elena Piru, "Bucureștii din vremea lui Caragea în evocarea lui Ion Ghica," *Studii și cercetări de istorie literară și folclor*, 8 (3–4), 1959, 455–467 studies Ghica's memoirs against other historical documents of the early nineteenth century. Some extracts from *Convorbiri economice* were included in the collection Doreen Warriner (ed.) *Contrasts in Emerging Societies. Readings in the Social and Economic History of South-Eastern Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Athlone Press, 1965), 156–158, 164–166, 188–191, translated by E.D. Tappe.
- 21 Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985) sees 'stories' [*Geschichten*] as a mode of historical discourse superseded by the more professional 'history' [*Geschichte*].
- 22 This was a common rhetorical device in early Romanian social commentary: see Alex Drace-Francis, "Like a Member of a Free Nation, He spoke Without Shame": Foreign

be translating these letters, which contain “things of which I had no idea”; the enterprise “has neither the approval, nor the sympathy of the government.”<sup>23</sup>

Of particular interest here are the “regimes” of time and space forged by the fictional “Dowley.”<sup>24</sup> The very first letter enables Ghica—under the guise of his English epistolary *alter ego*—to paint a tableau of Bucharest as a classic “city of contrasts”:

The town in which I find myself bears no resemblance to any you may have visited on your numerous travels. Imagine a population of a hundred and fifty thousand souls spread out over a plain which would easily hold over a million inhabitants. The houses, scattered about randomly, look like the stones cast long ago by the legendary Cadmus.<sup>25</sup> Could this town somehow be destined one day to become a great and world-renowned capital; is this why it has taken over so much land? He who lives long, will live to see! For the time being Bucharest has a primitive air. In the *mahallas*, most houses are of a single story! Here and there a taller one can be espied, its white tin roof peeking through the trees, like the beak of a chicken breaking through the eggshell to come out into the light. The spaces between them are taken up with wasteland, ramshackle buildings or pits. To give you an idea, I should say that a few paces up the road from my lodgings is the Princely Palace, which, with its garden, courtyards and guards house, takes up about a hundred yards of frontage on the main street; but beyond it lies a vacant lot of about twice the length.

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Travellers as a Trope in Romanian Cultural Tradition,” in Corinne Fowler, Charles Forsdick and Ludmilla Kostova (eds), *Travel and Ethics: Theory and Practice* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 183–203.

23 Ghica, *Opere*, 2, 283–284. Using internal evidence, Ion Roman (textual notes on pages 543–550) has established that this part of Ghica’s work was composed in 1875–1876. Curiously, a real English travel book with exactly the same title as Ghica’s fictional satire appeared a few years later: see James William Ozanne, *Three years in Roumania* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1878).

24 The concept of ‘regimes’ governing perception was developed by the film theorist Christian Metz, *Le signifiant imaginaire: psychanalyse et cinéma* (Paris: Union générale d’éditions, 1977), and popularized in English-language scholarship by Martin Jay, “Scopic regimes of modernity,” in Hal Foster (ed.), *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988), 3–23. François Hartog, *Régimes d’historicité: Présentisme et expériences du temps* (Paris: Seuil, 2003), applied it to theories of history; cf. Mishkova *et al.* (eds), *Regimes of Historicity*.

25 Cadmus was a legendary Phoenician prince who cast stones among the Spartoi, a race of armed men, causing them to fall down.

A huge courtyard, of around ten acres, in the back of which there is a ruined house, said to have belonged some years ago to a great boyar.

Through the windows of my living room, between the houses and over the eaves, a few miles distant, the eye espies a monastery, which has been patched up and transformed into the summer residence of the Prince Hohenzollern. The streets are narrow and winding. It will evidently take much time before they assume a more regular direction and a less disagreeable appearance.<sup>26</sup>

Bucharest (Figure 8.3) is somehow both enormous and unworthy; immeasurably ancient, but also behind the times. And while it may one day become “a great and world renowned capital,” any chance of it “assuming a more regular direction” will clearly “take much time.” Specifically, the trick of perspective afforded by the trope of the foreign traveller provides a characteristic view of Romanian society between old and new, between disorder and order.



FIGURE 8.3 Rooftop view of Bucharest, 1856 (Photograph, Ludwig Angerer).

26 Ghica, *Opere*, 2, 285–286.

*A Grand and Luminous Century above All Others*

“Three Years in Romania” is effectively a work where techniques are tried out. In *Letters to Vasile Alecsandri*, Ghica expands the frame, offering a retrospect on the modernization of Romania during the author’s lifetime, and he showcases the success of the country in transforming itself from divided and benighted ‘oriental’ provinces to a modern national state. The tone is celebratory:

When I was starting to acquire an understanding of what went on in the world, a new century had entered into the course of time; the nineteenth century, a grand and luminous century above all others, destined to transfigure earthly affairs, from the East to the West. A century which brought with it a completely new civilization, undreamt of and unthought of by previous times; a civilization emerging from the scientific discoveries of human genius, which furnished the oceans, seas and rivers with steamboats; endowed the continents with railroads, lit up the world with gas and the spark of electricity; presented us with the gifts of telegraphy, telephony and photography; transformed all arts and crafts through mechanization and chemistry; multiplied production a hundred and a thousand fold; lifted up mankind from slavery and oppression, to equality and liberty; and saw new states such as Greece, Belgium, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria reborn as if from ashes.<sup>27</sup>

The vocabulary of change deployed here shifts back and forth between ‘positivist’ causalities (science, mechanization) and ‘providentialist’ metaphor (transfiguration, rebirth). Ghica assures his correspondent that “there is no country in the world that has progressed as much as ours in such a short time” and that “nobody has the right to impede humanity’s progress, which derives from man’s physical and moral nature.”<sup>28</sup> At the same time, his experience, including his own personal transition to adulthood, is situated in terms of a geopolitical—but also sensorial—space. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the country was still under Ottoman rule,

[t]he *beilic*<sup>29</sup> on the left bank of the river Dâmbovița at Jicnița, and the *beilik* by St. Vineri Church at Iași were Ottoman barracks. Most of the left bank of the Danube, extending out several kilometres from the river

27 Ghica, *Opere*, 1, 111.

28 *Ibid.*, 125.

29 In Romanian, a ‘*beilic*’ denoted a lodge or barracks used to host Ottoman dignitaries visiting the Principalities.

itself, was a *raya* [circumscription] of the fortresses of Brăilă, Giurgevo, Turnu, Kalafat and other fortified positions. From that time, some river-side villages retain the names Vizir, Mola-Braim, Mola-Scorțariu, Muftiu, Nazâru and others. These villages were under the immediate protection of Turkish overlords from the fortresses; neither the owners, nor the princely authority dared to set foot on these lands, extensive domains which today are tenanted out at yearly rents of several hundred thousand lei each, such as the estates of Brăilă and Giurgiu, the great estate of Princess Ipsilanti, or Paraipanu son of Arsake, and many others which their owners had abandoned or sold for a pittance, as well as the lakes, reed plantations and island-forests from which the Romanians could reap no profit and left to the Turks.<sup>30</sup>

The imperfection and cruelty of the Ottoman regime's juridical system is argued by reference to spatial practices: horse-thieves and murderers were "sent to Telega, Slănic, or Ocnele-Mari, or cast into some abandoned mine"; pickpockets, on the other hand, were "brought into the marketplace to be lashed on the back"; in the same locality sinful women would be exhibited "tied to a post, their heads shaven"; boyars' sons would be invited to coffee, "in the room of the *cămăraș*, the *tufecchi-bașa* or the *baș-ciohodar*, and a few switch-blows applied to the soles of their feet, prior to exile in a monastery."<sup>31</sup>

All this is being recollected by Ghica in serene old age, together with his friend, on a winter country evening "sitting on chairs by the fireside, with the snow hitting the window panes, and sweet and luminous flames before us."<sup>32</sup> This intimate present-day position of warm and sheltered comfort becomes the vantage point from which the penal vicissitudes of the Old Regime are not only recollected, but also pushed firmly back into the past by being represented as arbitrary and violent.

### *Spaces of Remembrance*

Many of Ghica's twenty or so *Letters* trace changes in schooling, travel, domestic architecture and civil and political arrangements since the 1810s. Others furnish biographical portraits of illustrious or curious figures, be they Romanian national writers, notable bandits or 'haiducs' like Tunsu and Jianu, or the English adventurer and pamphleteer David Urquhart.<sup>33</sup> Many of them open

30 Ghica, *Opere*, 1, 112.

31 Ibid., 116.

32 Ibid., 126.

33 On Ghica's relations with Urquhart see Cornelia Bodea, "David Urquhart, the Principalities and the Romanian National Movement," *Nouvelles études d'histoire*, 7, 1985, 207–230.

with the author picturing himself in a given situation or unusual ocular/sensory perspective—not so much sites of memory as of remembrance.<sup>34</sup> The device also acts as a bridge between the private, interior world of individual experience and the social recollection of the history of an institution and its collectivity, still symbolized by individual, localized stories.

For example, on October 25, 1886, Ghica wrote to Alecsandri, from the comfort of a London club, recalling the time, over fifty years before, when

coming out of school, I had set off on the way home, taking the little lane which began at the gate of the ‘St. Sava’ College, between Petrescu’s house and the house with a porch belonging to the Greek abbot of the monastery, and ended at the corner where the boulevard met with Academy Street, where on one side, on the right, stood Dobrotineanu’s house, and on the other, that of the *spahi*. The school gate was a few steps away from the church door, roughly where Lazăr’s statue has been erected. There the apple-sellers and fruiterers used to set up stall, with their baskets and tables.

A great oik of a student, large as an ox, had knocked down a weak and pale boy, pushing him to the ground and pummelling him with his fists.<sup>35</sup>

Ghica goes on to explain that the David who has been thumped in this way by the schoolboy Goliath—he uses just this analogy—was none other than Nicolae Bălcescu (1819–1853), later to become a liberal politician and historian, a tireless fighter for Romanian rights who died prematurely and romantically of consumption in Sicily, leaving a famous work of history, *The Romanians under Prince Michael the Brave*, to be published posthumously. One dimension of the parable is obvious: small, frail individuals fall victim to school bullies, but nevertheless learn to fight back, just as—the reader can easily infer—small nations do. At another level, however, the effect of Ghica’s narrative comes from it being embedded in sensory evocation of the historical topography of Old Bucharest (Figure 8.4), where Greek churchmen (“the abbot”) and Ottoman soldiers (“the *spahi*”) lived cheek by jowl with

34 Glossing Ghica, Valeriu Cristea, *Spațiul literaturii* (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1979), 230–231, writes of ‘spaces conducive to remembrance.’ Seymour Chatman, *Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NJ: Cornell University Press, 1978), 96ff, distinguishes between ‘story space’ (where the narrator is situated) and ‘discourse space’ (where the action takes place). Cf. Sabine Buchholz and Manfred, “Space in Narrative,” in David Herman, Manfred Jahn and Marie-Laure Ryan (eds), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (London: Routledge, 2005), 551–555.

35 Ghica, *Opere*, 1, 444–445.



FIGURE 8.4 *Charles Doussault, Bucharest Street Scene, 1841*

Romanians (“Petrescu”). And at yet another, these narrow streets with closed-in vistas, metonymic of the past, are placed in implicit opposition to the urban landscape of the modern 1880s, with its statue of “Lazăr,” (Figure 8.5) the teacher from Transylvania who had pioneered Romanian-language schooling in the 1810s, now commemorated in the modern way, in marble, at the corner of modern, perpendicular boulevards, in a city with an Academy.<sup>36</sup>

### Ion Creangă

On the surface, Ion Creangă (1839–1889) seems to be a completely different kind of writer from Ion Ghica.<sup>37</sup> He was born in Moldavia, not Wallachia; in

36 Some details on the activity of Gheorghe Lazăr (1779–1823) in Drace-Francis, *Making*, 50–52, 101. The statue in question, erected in 1886, is still standing today outside the University of Bucharest.

37 There is a dearth of recent scholarship in English on Creangă. Among older works, Călinescu, *History*, 403–415, and R. Loring Taylor, “Romanian Folklore and Ion Creangă’s



FIGURE 8.5 *Statue of George Lazăr, Bucharest, erected 1886. Author's photograph.*

a peasant village, not in the city; and a generation after Ghica. He had little interest in science, and neither reached high office nor travelled either to the West or the East. His main education was in schools and seminaries in or near his village, located in Neamț county, near the Carpathian Mountains bordering on Transylvania; and subsequently in Iași, where he arrived just as

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Recollections of Childhood," *Children's Literature*, 4, 1975, 70–79, provide biographical-critical perspectives.



FIGURE 8.6 *Ion Creangă in deacon's robes* (from *Șezătoarea: Revistă pentru literatură și tradițiuni populare*, 6–7, 1901, 120).

the city was losing its status as capital of Moldavia on account of the Union of the Principalities at the end of the 1850s. A man of uneven temperament, he served as deacon to various churches in Iași (Figure 8.6), and subsequently as schoolteacher; but in both these capacities he attracted the opprobrium of the authorities for his unorthodox behaviour. His marriage to a priest's daughter was unhappy, and he divorced in 1867—a further badge of dishonour for a would-be candidate for holy orders. Soon afterwards he was divested of his clerical duties and resigned himself to running a tobacco warehouse, while cohabiting with an older woman and an extensive menagerie of cats.

Creangă was rescued from this unpropitious predicament when he came into contact with the influential *Junimea* [Youth] literary society, effectively a



FIGURE 8.7 *Creangă in a more modern portrait, as ‘writer.’*

club where lesser scholars and functionaries could mix with the city’s political and administrative elite.<sup>38</sup> One of these, the university professor and critic Titu Maiorescu (1840–1917), found Creangă teaching posts and commissioned him to write school manuals for use in the new primary education system (Figure 8.7).

#### *‘What Village is That?’*

Creangă’s literary output—like that of Ghica—developed from producing pragmatic, didactic works, to more literary ones. In his earliest published book, a school manual entitled *New Method of Reading and Writing for Use in Primary Class 1* (1868), he portrayed the new nation-state of Romania in a text designed for young pupils to read out in short simple sentences almost entirely in the first person and present tense. A section on “My Fatherland” illustrates the type of spatial regime fostered in this work:

38 Details on this society and its cultural-political importance in Hitchins, *Romania*, 56–65.

### *My Fatherland*

I am of *Romanian* nationality, because my parents too are Romanians; I have a big and beautiful Romanian land, which is my fatherland. In my fatherland there are many Romanians. These Romanians are citizens of my country; they are my brothers. Romanians have a duty to love and assist one another in all their needs. I love my fellow Romanians with all my heart, but I cannot help them, for I am still small and I know not how to help them; but when I grow up and learn to read and write, then I will know.

My country is called *Romania*: it is composed of two big countries: one is called *Wallachia*, and the other *Moldavia*. In Romania there are many villages and market towns. In the villages live peasants, who work the land and raise cattle. I know why the peasants work the land. They produce: wheat, maize, rye, barley, oats, potatoes, buckwheat, cabbage, etc.<sup>39</sup>

This might be considered an extreme example of the ‘propositional’ mode of writing.<sup>40</sup> However, even in his didactic writings, Creangă had recourse not simply to this kind of present-continuous statement, in which the pupils locate themselves rather abstractly, through enunciation, amidst the products and activities of the wider collectivity. He also adopted more sophisticated pedagogical procedures, almost certainly a result of the influence of his patron, Maiorescu.<sup>41</sup> To this end, Creangă devised tales, proverbs and micro-narratives to socialize young school children into the problem of understanding spatial relations, which are simultaneously quite complex social relations. The following

39 I. Créngă, C. Grigorescu, G. Ienăchescu, N. Climescu, V. Recénu, A. Simionescu, *Metodă nouă de scriere și cetire pentru usul clasei I primară* (2nd edition, Iași: Tipografia Națională, 1868), 47.

40 Roy Harris, *The Linguistics of History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004) distinguishes between “representational” and “propositional” historical discourse.

41 Maiorescu had studied in Germany and had undertaken a fact-finding excursion to Prussia in 1863 to study the school system there. On his return, he spoke out against “overly complex modes of education,” recommending that pupils be taught to identify thoughts and propositions; to distinguish words and syllables, subject and object, animate and inanimate objects; and learn to express their sensory experience of their environment, rather than use expensive equipment or memorize and recite generic information. Titu Maiorescu, “Sciri scolare de la 1 Septembrie 1863 până la 31 August 1864,” *Anuarul Institutului Vasile Lupu (școla normală de la Trei-Ierarchi) din Iași* (Iași: Adolf Bermann, 1863–1864), 57.

example is an improvization on the character of *Păcală*, a stock ‘fool,’ hero of many a Romanian joke or anecdote:<sup>42</sup>

A merchant, travelling through various villages and towns, to buy grain, maize and other products, came one day to a bridge; and just as he was about to cross it, he saw a man taking a rest there: that man was *Păcală*.

The merchant—keen, like any merchant, to extract some information from him—went up to him and asked:

- My good fellow Christian, where are you from?
- Well, from our home village, replied *Păcală*.
- From which home village?
- Look, the one over there: right by that riverbank—pointing the merchant in the direction of a hill.
- Well; but what village is that? I know it not.
- Well! How can you not know it. It is our village, and I come from it.
- Not like that, you fool! I am asking you, that village, whose estate is it part of and how is it baptized?
- Lord! You mean you don’t know that the estates are the nobleman’s, and this one belongs to our sire, who lives in Bucharest? And the priest baptizes the village, in a cauldron of water, as it is written in his books.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to most traditional ‘*Păcală*’ fables, which end with a simple moral [*pildă*] or adage [*zicală*] which aims to correct or direct the audience’s behaviour, Creangă’s adaptation introduces modern psychological elements: an understanding of the spatial, social and cognitive assumptions of two people encountering each other at a crossing-point, where modern commerce meets traditional community values, and outsiders and insiders struggle to reconcile their different cultural horizons.

42 On the history and variants of ‘*Păcală*’ stories in Romanian see Mihai-Alexandru Cancioviici, “Prefața,” in Sabina-Cornelia Stroescu (ed.), *Snoava populară românească* Volume 1 (Bucharest: Minerva, 1984), v–xlvi.

43 Ion Creangă, “*Păcală*,” *Învățătorul copiilor*, 2 (4th edition, Iași: Tipografia Națională, 1874), 49–50; reprinted in id., *Opere*, edited by George Călinescu (Bucharest: Editura de stat pentru literatură și artă, 1953), 293–294.

### *From Pedagogy to Autobiography*

Creangă's didactic writings were extremely influential in the Romanian schooling system: his *Reader* became the single most widely distributed work at primary level;<sup>44</sup> while his adaptations of fables became classic tools for instilling social norms. His *Amintiri din copilărie* [Recollections of Childhood] are even more celebrated. First published serially—just as Ghica's letters had been—in *Convorbiri literare*, they were gathered into book form shortly after Creangă's death in 1890.<sup>45</sup> As with Twain's Mississippi or Dickens's evocation of the Kent marshlands in *Great Expectations*, part of the appeal of Creangă's text lies in its setting, in the Moldavian village of Humulești, at the crossroads between the province's western pastoral uplands and its eastern plains.

The text to some extent resembles a dramatic monologue, as Creangă the narrator repeatedly contrasts his present, relatively sombre state to that of the happier, livelier child Ion—or *Nică a lui Ștefan a Petrei* [Peter's Stephen's Johnny], to use the formulaic name he went by as a child, following the commonly-used diminutive patronymic system of naming. The broad 'macro-narrative' sketches Creangă's general process of socialization, as he moves from his mother's hearth, around his family home, to the local church school, around the village and then further afield: first in the neighbouring settlements of Broșteni and Târgu Neamț, then catechism school in the township of Fălticeni, until finally, at the age of about sixteen, he makes the 60-mile journey to the seminary at Socola Monastery, just outside Iași, to complete his priestly training. This bigger story is one of, first, alienation from the intimacy and security of home; and then of integration into a modernizing national society.<sup>46</sup>

### *Scenes from the Past*

Although in his textbooks Creangă had paid notable attention to the geography of the new Romania, *Recollections of Childhood* gives relatively little attention

44 George Călinescu, *Ion Creangă: Viața și opera* (Bucharest: Editura Minerva, 1972), 52, 72.

45 Ion Creangă, *Amintiri din copilărie*, in *Convorbiri literare* 14 (10), January 1881, 365–376; 15 (1), April 1881, 1–14; 15 (12), March 1882, 445–461; id., *Scrierile*, 2 (Iași: Tipo-litografia Goldner, 1892). I have used the critical edition, Creangă, *Opere*, edited by Călinescu. There are three notable English translations: *Recollections*, translated by Lucy Byng (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1930); *Recollections from Childhood*, translated by A.L. Lloyd (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1956); and *Memories of my Boyhood*, translated by Ana Cartianu and R.C. Johnston (Bucharest: Minerva, 1978). Translating Creangă is notoriously difficult: the versions presented here are based on a mixture of the Lloyd or Cartianu-Johnston translations, with my own emendations after comparison with Călinescu's edition.

46 Mircea Vulcănescu, "Ion Creangă văzut de generația actuală," *Gând românesc* 3 (1), 1935, 1–16 sketches a framework.

to portraying 'national' landscape.<sup>47</sup> Critics have often considered this to be a weakness of Creangă's style, a consequence of his allegedly "unsophisticated," peasant nature, "overcome with the urge to fabulate."<sup>48</sup> However, his evocations of interiors and other spaces are in fact remarkable for their carefully articulated and coordinated specificity:

Sometimes I stop and call to mind the times and the people there used to be in our neck of woods when I, dear Lord, had begun to reach early boyhood in my parents' house in the village of Humulești, right on the Neamț river, a large and cheerful village split into three parts: Vatra Satului, Delenii and Bejenii—as you might say, the Heart of the Village, the Uplanders and the Strangers. And you know, even in those days Humulești was no dead-end village; it was an old-established settlement of free peasants, a well set-up place, with its comfortable folk and their lively lads and pretty girls who knew how to spin a dancing partner just as well as a weaving-shuttle, so that the whole village would hum with the sound of the looms from one end to the other. It had a fine church too, with priests and singers and parishioners of the kind who did their village proud. And Father Ioan, who lived at the foot of the hill, Lord God, what a velvet true heart of a man he was! It was he who made them plant all those trees in the graveyard, which was marked and bounded with a shingle-roofed fence; and what a fine little room he had built by the church-door for a school; and you should have seen how tirelessly that priest used to go round the village from house to house, accompanied by Vasile the church cantor who was also the schoolteacher, a sturdy, handsome bachelor, counselling the people to send their children to get some learning. And so a whole crowd of boys and girls gathered at the school, and I was one of them, a puny little boy, blushing and frightened of my own shadow.<sup>49</sup>

47 This has formed the object of other studies of post-Ottoman national cultures: see e.g. Robert Shannon Peckham, *National Histories, Natural States: Nationalism and the Politics of Place in Greece* (London: I.B. Tauris 2001); the case of Romania awaits more detailed study, but see Valentin Nicolescu, "Nature and Identity in the Construction of the Romanian Concept of Nation," *Environment and History*, 20 (1), 2014, 123–141.

48 E.g. G.I. Tohăneanu, *Stilul artistic al lui Ion Creangă* (Bucharest: Editura științifică, 1969), 38, 114; Mihaela Mancaș, *Limbaajul artistic românesc modern* (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2005), 172–190. A rare and valuable attempt to rebut the thesis of Creangă's "descriptive weakness" is Valeriu Cristea, *Despre Creangă* (Bucharest: Editura Litera, 1989), 100–107.

49 Creangă, *Opere*, 17 (Lloyd trans., 15–16; Cartianu-Johnston trans., 13–14).

Creangă's text produces a gradation of focus, starting from the generalized notion of "our neck of the woods," then mentioning the name of the village, then situating it ("right on the Neamț river"), then enumerating its parts, before moving on to characteristic activities (weaving, dancing), and then to individual places (the churchyard, the schoolroom), and finally to interiors, which then form the scene of more detailed incidents.<sup>50</sup> After this opening, the *Recollections* move quite rapidly into 'episodic' mode, recounting scenes and adventures relating to Creangă's boyhood and schooling.

### *The Kinetics of Socialization*

The appeal of Creangă's text lies, then, in the creation not of a typical Romantic landscape—timeless, unpeopled<sup>51</sup>—but in places "transformed into space through cultural practices," enlivened with movement, sounds, changing interrelations between moving people, objects, buildings and wider social frames.<sup>52</sup> Here is his account of himself running away from school in fright after being quizzed on his homework:

I made for the door, slipped out quickly, and, with no hanging about the school, took to my heels homewards! A glance over my shoulder showed me two hulking brutes coming after me. Then didn't I just start running so fast that my feet struck sparks out of the ground! I passed our house without going in, I turned left and entered the yard of one of our neighbours; from the yard I went into the stableyard, and

50 This corresponds to anthropologists' understanding of communities operating a concentric set of boundaries, creating progressively wider social arenas (the room, the house, the garden, the community, etc.), but also a centre and a margin. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, translated by Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), 141–143. These complex spatial interrelations are figured in language, especially through the function known as 'deixis': Friedrich Lenz, "Introduction" to id. (ed.), *Deictic Conceptualization of Space, Time and Person* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2003), vii–xiv.

51 On Romantic landscape as atemporal and unpeopled, see Mary Louise Pratt, "Scratches on the Face of the Country; or, What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1), 1985, 120–121.

52 I draw here on Michel de Certeau's distinction between location (*lieu*) as a stable indication of fixed positions, and space [*espace*]—a "practised place [...]" enlivened by the aggregation of movements taking place within it." Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien, 1: Arts du faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 172–173. Cf. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (3rd edition, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 136–138.

from the stableyard into the maize field, newly hoed and earthed up, with the boys after me. Before they reached me, scared out of my wits as I was, I somehow managed to burrow into the mound at the root of a maize stalk. My enemy, Nică, Costache's son, with Toader, Catinca's son, an equally repellent brute, passed by me, saying just what they were going to do to me. Surely the Lord blinded them, so that they could not find me! After a while, hearing no rustling of maize leaves, not even a hen scratching the ground, I suddenly darted out, with earth on my head, and rushed home to mother and began telling her with tears in my eyes that I would not go back to school, no, not if they were to kill me. The next day, however, the priest came to our house and settled things with father; they calmed me down and took me back to school again.<sup>53</sup>

Like most small boys, Creangă is always getting himself into, and out of, a series of smaller or larger spaces which either excite or terrify him. The scene functions not just as a comedy of incident but as a subtle allegory of the broader complications and encounters that modern socialization brings.

#### *The Ethnographic Imperfect*<sup>54</sup>

Other scenes are characterized by a strongly ethnographic attention to detail. Creangă's childhood home in Humulești is remembered through

the big pot in the hearth to which my mother used to tie a string with little balls of wool on it, so that the cats could play till they nearly went crazy, and the whitewashed ledge of the fireplace to which I used to cling when I first began to walk, and the stove where I hid when we boys played hide-and-seek.<sup>55</sup>

A tavern is described as follows:

In one corner there were a few bushels of beans; in another, hemp seed; in a third corner a heap of fine apples and Rădășeni pears that will keep

53 Creangă, *Opere*, 19–20 (Lloyd trans., 19; Cartianu-Johnston trans., 16–17).

54 Here I adapt the concept of the 'ethnographic present' used by anthropologists: see e.g. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 60; Roger Sanjek, "The Ethnographic Present," *Man*, 26 (4), 1991, 612–615.

55 Creangă, *Opere*, 33 (Lloyd trans., 43; Cartianu-Johnston trans., 36).

over winter till after Easter; in the fourth, peas and broad beans divided by a wide plank and nearby some Turkish pumpkins; dried pears in a wooden tub, as sweet to the taste as figs; further on, a heap of reels of hemp and flaxthread; on the rafter, hanks of worsted and yarn dyed in every colour, for making carpets and runners. Then shelves and corner cupboards, crammed with oakum, combings and other bits and bobs, as was usual in the house of a well-to-do farmer in those days. As soon as we were all assembled in that delightful room, the hostess closed the shutters, lit the candle, and came back in no time at all with a large earthen jug full of Odobești wine; and as she poured it into the glasses its bubbles shot up six inches into the air, it was so strong.<sup>56</sup>

As with the scene in the inn, the narrative moves from enumeration of objects to evocation of movement and action. A similar shift is observable in another passage describing a cobbler's workshop where Creangă and some schoolmates briefly boarded. First of all, the cobbler's house is evoked in a relatively static 'list':

benches and beds all round the walls, and one more by the stove, and they were all taken. Our host, after working the whole day through, would take it easy upon the stove, among boot-trees, shoemaker's lasts, sole-extenders, a shoemaker's table, knives, sharp double-bladed knives, sleeking-steels, straps, pegs and leather gussets, needles, prongs, tongs, files, shoemaker's hammers, leather, thread, a broken plate with green vitriol, cobbler's wax and everything a cobbler might need.<sup>57</sup>

It is then 'populated' and set in motion:

With us lived Bodrângă, an old codger, shiftless but full of fun. For a little food and cheap tobacco, the kind you can buy six pounds of for a *para*, he did all the household tasks: he would cut wood, light the fire, carry water, sweep, and tell us tales all night long, crouching with his nose almost into the embers; or he would play on his flute, *doinas* that would wring your heart, and the *corăbiească*, the *măriuță*, the *horodincă*, the *alivenci*, the *țitură*, "At the tent door," *horas* and other sprightly tunes that would set a fellow's feet a-tingling. We used to dance till the floorboards were

56 Ibid., 65 (Lloyd trans., 100; Cartianu-Johnston trans., 80).

57 Ibid., 57 (Lloyd trans., 85; Cartianu-Johnston trans., 69).

drenched and the soles flew off our boots, heel and all—for by now I had begun to wear boots.<sup>58</sup>

This movement from description to narration clearly functions as a way of ‘animating’ and enlivening what would otherwise be a fairly dry inventory of traditional village culture. At the same time, however, it marks the threshold of a new phase in Creangă’s life—“for by now I had begun to wear boots.”

While domestic interiors appear to provide clues and insights into the world of an apparently real individual, they also serve to suggest the presence of the outside world. Locally described and situated walls, gardens, rooftops, fences and windows can imply villages, cities and more distant units.<sup>59</sup> Specific details lead to general cultural codes.<sup>60</sup> These codes are then theatrically ‘performed’ to a greater or lesser degree, enabling readers to be drawn into the heart of an imagined community through devices such as monologue, conversation or epistolary exchange. This enables Creangă’s Moldavian micro-experience to be not just representable but representative, as the village is understood in terms of the interactions that take place within it, turning it into a symbol of the individual’s socialization and into a concentrically-graded series of communities. Most of the narrative impetus, therefore, is achieved through a transition from stasis to motion, from inside to outside spaces, from home to school, from the village to wider world.

In contrast to Ghica’s text, there is actually no evocation of the ‘site of remembrance,’ except for a small conventional note at the end of each instalment.<sup>61</sup> The act of recollection is portrayed as somewhat dangerous, conducive to melancholy:

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58 Ibid.

59 Mancaș, *Tablou și acțiune*, identifies this procedure in Ghica. It is a common one in nineteenth-century prose: see e.g. Michael Irwin, *Picturing: Description and Illusion in the Nineteenth Century Novel* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979), 107–157; William J. Berg, *The Visual Novel: Emile Zola and the Art of His Times* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 1992), 224–228.

60 James H. Reid, *Narration and Description in the French Realist Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 20. On *Amintiri* as repository of cultural codes, Ion Holban, *Spațiul memoriei* (Iași: Editura Junimea, 1984), 181–191.

61 His patron Maiorescu had moved to Bucharest in the late 1870s; as the first part of the *Amintiri* is dedicated to the latter’s daughter Livia, it is likely that the text was read in his house. Also, despite the romantic myth of Creangă having written all his works in his ‘hovel’ [*bojdeucă*] on the outskirts of Iași, the original publications were actually noted as having been composed in Bucharest between 1880 and 1881.

False and fickle is man's thought, carrying him on the wings of a ceaseless longing that never leaves him in peace till he goes down to his grave. And woe betide the man who lets his thoughts take hold of him; the water gradually pulls him under, and from the greatest joy he suddenly plunges into the depths of sadness.<sup>62</sup>

For the same reason, however, it is considered both legitimate and therapeutic to talk of childhood, "for it alone is happy and innocent, and that is God's truth."<sup>63</sup> This somewhat bleak and sententious outlook on the present serves as a counterpoint to the vivid, comic scenes from the past.

Creangă's general strategy of 'situated recollection' may be understood in comparison to similar developments in other literatures, where the creation of national scenes, landscapes and experiences associated with childhood memories is an established and well-studied procedure.<sup>64</sup> The most traumatic encounters that the narrator's childhood self undergoes reveal the arbitrary and often still cruel modes of coercion used by the new institutions—the priest-teacher Father Ioan, who cruelly flogs the class sweetheart Smărăndiță; the army recruiters, who press-gang the village teacher in front of the school-children; and the series of alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional priests, teachers and guardians into whose care he is entrusted.

On the surface, Creangă's work seems to have little to offer an analysis of 'post-Ottoman' cultures. The Ottoman suzerain is but rarely mentioned, except in an anecdote recounted by Creangă's maternal grandfather, who recollects participating in the anti-Ottoman revolt of 1821. But in the very process of summoning up the image of a bounded, self-sufficient, hard-working, Christian world, the country's Ottoman legacy is overwritten and replaced with new regimes of memory. What is 'post-Ottoman' about it, then, is not the portrayal of the imperial past, but the portrayal of the child's struggle to locate himself in a new world; it both constructs a sense of archaic, autochthonous virtue in the peasant village, and hints at the problematic incursions of the new state in attempting to socialize and control its newest resource, in the form of its children.

62 Creangă, *Opere*, 34 (Lloyd trans., 45; Cartianu-Johnston trans., 37).

63 Ibid. These seems to have been a fairly commonplace sentiment. Cf. one of Creangă's few antecedents in Romanian autobiography, Iračie Porumbescu (born 1823): "In old age man lives off memories. Present times are hard, the future uncertain; happy is he who, having recollections, can relive them in his mind." *Scrierile lui Iračie Porumbescu*, edited by Leonida Bodnărescu (Cernăuți: Societatea Tipografică Bucovineană, 1898).

64 Wachtel, *Battle for Childhood*; Carol Singley, *Adopting America: Childhood, Kinship, and National Identity in Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

## Conclusions

It is clear that the appearance in a given culture of techniques for rendering ‘landscapes of memory’ has not merely technical but wider cultural significance.<sup>65</sup> What Lucian Boia has said of fiction and other informal modes of cultural transmission, that they have “incomparably greater influence over the public than a historiographical masterpiece addressed to an elite readership,” is surely especially true for first-person life stories, whose popularity with the general reading public has often far outstripped the academic attention accorded to them.<sup>66</sup> A particular advantage of looking at spatial regimes in autobiographical texts is the insights they offer us into how historical discourses are not just produced, but also situated within a given social environment. Beyond drawing the reader into the fabric of everyday life, however stylized, they dramatize attitudes towards change and embed them in a memorable context, be it a broader tableau of political and technological transformation (as in the case of Ghica) or a story of a country boy’s anxious encounter with imperfect public institutions (in that of Creangă). At the same time, the contrast between the two cases illustrates, as in the diversity of Ottoman examples analysed by Benjamin Fortna, that there was no single template for imagining ‘modernization’ and national destiny in the emerging new Romanian literary culture.<sup>67</sup> Rather, they exemplify different strategies for capturing and representing, through the practice of literary recollection, historical attitudes and subjectivities at the time of the creation of the national state.<sup>68</sup>

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66 Boia, *History and Myth*, 7.

67 Fortna, “Education and Autobiography.”

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## Presenting Ottoman Childhoods in Post-Ottoman Autobiographies

*Philipp Wirtz*

While many of the personal narratives to come out of the turbulent era that is the late Ottoman Empire are political memoirs dealing with weighty matters of state, there are also a large number of autobiographical texts that deal with their authors' personal development. In the following chapter in this volume, Duygu Köksal presents two examples of such life stories; here, I examine a broader selection of authors in order to survey some dominant topics treated in autobiographical narratives of childhood in the Ottoman world.

The first section considers the influence of parents and other relatives, a subject to which most of the authors I am considering devote a lot of attention. The next topic is the physical environment in which authors spent their childhood: the house, and sometimes a garden, and the neighbourhood or town quarter [*mahalle*]. In the third section, I investigate some examples of how what I call 'childhood culture' is remembered. Under this topic, I count games and other pastimes, as well as cultural activities like the telling and reading of folktales. One very interesting aspect of 'childhood culture' which should be considered is the perceived or actual clash of 'new' and 'old' worlds, of structures and customs which had been in place for a long time, in relation to new cultural phenomena brought about by the reforms of the nineteenth century. These clashes are sometimes recounted by authors in a childhood context, as they were perceived as either positive or noteworthy, or as faultlines in otherwise peaceful family lives.

Narratives of childhood are found in many of the autobiographies produced in the late Ottoman and early Turkish Republican era; some accounts are very extensive, and some autobiographies actually have the author's childhood as their main focus. For this chapter, I have tried to assemble examples from a variety of texts to convey a sense of the plurality of backgrounds and experiences. Given that not every autobiography gives the same amount of space to childhood experiences, it is inevitable that some authors make shorter appearances in this paper than others; also, in order to avoid repetition, I have not always recounted the whole childhood section of every autobiography used.

The history of childhood is a comparatively young discipline, starting with Philippe Ariès' work, and especially his *Centuries of Childhood* (1962). Since

then, historians have ‘discovered’ the child and childhood as objects worthy of their interest.<sup>1</sup> While many of the seminal early works on this subject focused on Europe, the latest development is the consideration of childhood in a global context, including the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> The value of first-person narrative in studying Middle Eastern childhoods has been widely acknowledged, and autobiographies penned in the Middle East are becoming increasingly available to the non-specialist reader in translations. It should be noted, however, that this type of narrative does not always come neatly labelled as a dedicated autobiographical narrative—a book dedicated to the memories of a person identical with the author on the title page—as understood by Philippe Lejeune’s concept of the ‘autobiographical pact.’<sup>3</sup> The autobiographical monograph, as Dwight Reynolds suggests, is a fairly recent development in Middle Eastern literatures, dating to the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. Before this, personal reflections have to be gleaned from sources as varied as travel accounts, biographical dictionaries or works of mystical reflection.<sup>4</sup> While my analysis of necessity presents only a small selection from the autobiographical narratives available, it is hoped that this paper on remembering childhood will provide a small contribution to this effort.

### Family Circles: Parents and Other Relatives

The journalist and newspaper editor Ahmed Emin Yalman (1888–1972) begins his autobiography<sup>5</sup> with recollections about his early childhood, starting with

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- 1 For a concise introduction into this field, see Heidi Morrison, “What is the Global History of Childhood?” in Heidi Morrison (ed.), *The Global History of Childhood Reader* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 1–8. A broader synopsis is provided in Ulrike Freitag and Nora Latfi, “Daily Life and Family in an Ottoman Urban Context: Historiographical Stakes and New Research Perspectives,” *History of the Family*, 16 (2), 2011, 80–87.
  - 2 For a recent, carefully edited anthology of Turkish childhood memory narratives in German translation, see Klaus Kreiser and Patrick Bartsch (eds), *Türkische Kindheiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Literaturca, 2012).
  - 3 Philipp Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, translated by Katherine Leary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 3–30.
  - 4 Dwight F. Reynolds, “Childhood in One Thousand Years of Arabic Autobiography,” *Edebiyât*, 7, 1997, 380 ff. For a more detailed study of this, see id. (ed.), *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). For the phenomenon of Sufi autobiography, the work of Cemal Kafadar has been ground-breaking, see his “Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in 17th Century Istanbul and First Person Narrative in Ottoman Literature,” *Studia Islamica*, 69 (1989), 121–150.
  - 5 Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Yakın tarihte gördüklerim ve geçirdiklerim*, 1 (Istanbul: Yenilik, 1970).

a short sketch of his parents. The authors' father Osman Tevfik Bey is described as "very bright [*uyanık*], very active [*hareketli*], a very good man." His mother Hasibe Hanım matched his father in benevolence [*iyilik*], selflessness [*fedakârlık*] and love of good.

The positive picture of the author's parents is matched by his observations on his birthplace Salonica and the city's meaning for the Ottoman Empire. Yalman describes Salonica at the time of his birth as the Ottoman Empire's "main window to the West," and as more "liberal" [*serbest*] than any other part of the Ottoman lands; a city where the reforms of the nineteenth century, the period of re-ordering, or Tanzimat, took root most firmly. Thus it comes as no surprise that Yalman describes both his father and his birthplace with the same adjective, *uyanık*, meaning "bright" or "wide awake." He continues by stating that the outstanding position of Salonica was also due to the city's schools having been the best in the Empire and the most progressive. Yalman also relates in this context that his father was a teacher in these outstanding schools, a teacher of calligraphy at a time when having neat handwriting was considered a desirable skill.<sup>6</sup> What is more, at some point he was the teacher of a boy named Mustafa, who was to become, as Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the future saviour of the nation. It becomes very obvious for us here how Yalman contextualizes and interweaves his father and his birthplace, the character traits of the former and the atmosphere of the latter.

It is intriguing to observe in this chapter's particular context of childhood, upbringing and the self that Ahmed Emin Yalman explicitly puts his own personality in the context of his birthplace's special atmosphere, as if the boy Ahmed could not have developed any other personality under the *genius loci* of late nineteenth-century Salonica. As the eldest child, Yalman was quite pampered and grew into a little rascal [*afacan*], who gave the servant girls entrusted with his care a hard time, but who could always count on the mild indulgence of his doting relatives. From very early on the boy showed a fervent "addiction to liberty" [*hürriyete delice düşkümdüm*], and Yalman presents his own love of freedom to the reader of his autobiography as matching the progressive atmosphere in Salonica. The little adventures and misfortunes into which the "love of liberty and yearning for justice" [*hürriyet sevgisi ve adalet hasreti*] brought the boy are counted by Yalman as among his earliest memories.<sup>7</sup>

The officer and politician Kâzım Karabekir (1882–1948) puts his own family history into the wider context of Anatolian history from the beginning of

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>7</sup> Yalman, *Yakın tarihte*, 13.

*Hayatım*,<sup>8</sup> his collection of autobiographical notes, establishing a lineage of warriors reaching back to Seljuq times. As his autobiography progresses, Karabekir gives the reader some further background on his parents and other relatives. His father is first introduced with an anecdote that reflects Karabekir's concern with showing himself as part of an ancient family of soldiers. He tells how, on the outbreak of the Crimean War, government officials came to the village of Kasaba, where his paternal grandfather had his estates, to register the young men of the area and enrol them for military service [*asker yazmak üzere*]. The peasants reacted by hiding their sons to avoid them being conscripted. The grandfather was "saddened" [*müteessir*] by this attitude and had his own son (Karabekir's father) conscripted first, in order to preserve the honour of the village. Everyone else followed his example, and the sons of Kasaba duly went to war.<sup>9</sup> Karabekir continues with a description of his father's distinguished war service, first at the siege of Silistre<sup>10</sup> and later in the Crimea, followed by other stages in his career.<sup>11</sup>

Karabekir also devotes a section to his mother, describing her ancestry and her personality, although in less detail than in the case of his father. Karabekir's mother originated from a family of merchants and landowners in Istanbul. Karabekir lists some of her noteworthy ancestors and briefly mentions his own recollections about his mother's family.<sup>12</sup> He continues by stating that, like his father, his mother was also from

a pure and in every respect noble Turkish family. In herself, she combined beautiful characteristics such as cleanliness, diligence, neatness, thriftiness, eloquence and love for her family.<sup>13</sup>

Yalman's and Karabekir's autobiographies are examples where a father takes centre stage in remembering one's childhood. Other authors put more emphasis on the role of their mothers. In some cases, the main importance of the mother is to balance the strict and harsh father by her friendly and loving character. One example is *Hayat ve Hatıratım*,<sup>14</sup> the vast autobiography by the

8 Kâzım Karabekir, *Hayatım* (2nd edition, Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009).

9 *Ibid.*, 21.

10 Today, Silistra in northern Bulgaria. The Ottoman defenders of the city withstood a three-month siege by the Russian Army in 1854.

11 Karabekir *Hayatım*, 22–24.

12 *Ibid.*, 25 ff.

13 *Ibid.*, 26.

14 Rıza Nur, *Hayat ve Hatıratım*, 1 (Istanbul: Altındağ Yayınevi, 1967).

doctor and politician Rıza Nur (1879–1942). Hülya Adak, in her analysis of this work, has called Nur's multi-volume memoir a "misanthrography," referring to the negative treatment Nur metes out in the book to almost everyone he ever met in his life. According to Adak, Rıza Nur's mother is the only person in the entire book apart from himself who is shown in a positive light.<sup>15</sup>

Nur's father is presented as a rather unlikeable character, a shoemaker who was called Mahmut Usta ("master Mahmut") or Mahmut Efendi on account of his knowing how to read and write. He is described as a harsh or strict [*sert*] man, who frequently beat his children. Although he sometimes behaved rudely towards her as well, Rıza Nur's mother seems to have coped with her husband's behaviour and provided a milder, balancing influence in the family. Nur calls his mother "saintly" [*mübarek*]. He writes that he loved his mother "madly" [*deli gibi*], adding that however beautiful and intelligent the women he met in his later life were, he could never love any woman with the same intensity as he loved his mother. Nur describes her as a person who embodied a whole catalogue of positive qualities. Not only did she work tirelessly in the household, raise five children and help in the father's shop; she was also generally "efficient" and intelligent, to the point that "her every utterance had an inner meaning." Nur's mother never spoke up against her husband and she endured his uncouth ways without open complaint, only withdrawing into her room occasionally to cry in secret.<sup>16</sup>

He recalls one anecdote in particular which happened when he was studying medicine in Istanbul and came home to Sinop during his holidays. One day, he witnessed his father scolding his mother unjustly and then storming out of the house. Nur's mother then went to her room, where her son found her in tears. He grew angry, exclaimed "Enough already!" [*artık yeter!*] and offered to confront his father. His mother, however, asked him not to do so, as such treatment was to be accepted, it being a woman's duty to obey her husband: "Their [women's] paradise is under their husbands' feet."<sup>17</sup>

Throughout his autobiography, Rıza Nur is very concerned with presenting himself in a positive light. Accordingly, he states at the end of the passage referring to his mother's character that she passed all her good qualities on to her son, especially the love of virtue [*fazilete sevkeden*]. In an only slightly

15 Hülya Adak, "Who is Afraid of Rıza Nur's Autobiography?" in Olcay Akyıldız, Halim Kara and Börte Sagaster (eds), *Autobiographical Themes in Turkish Literature: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2007), 138 ff.

16 Nur, *Hayat*, 55.

17 Ibid., 56.

more humble tone, he adds that he would not have become what he became if it had not been for the way his mother had raised him.<sup>18</sup>

Another autobiography which presents the author's mother as an important figure is *Bir devrin romanı* (1978), by the poet and novelist Halide Nusret Zorlutuna (1901–1984).<sup>19</sup> Zorlutuna's mother appears at the very beginning of the narrative in a specific role: as a beautiful and gentle woman who teaches her small daughter how to read. As Halide Nusret's father was absent from the family during her early years (he was in exile until the Young Turk revolution in 1908), her mother naturally was the strongest influence in her upbringing. She is portrayed in a very positive way: as with the narratives of Karabekir and Nur, Zorlutuna's mother also stands for virtue, among other positive qualities. This view of virtue, when necessary, was imparted forcefully. Halide Nusret Zorlutuna remembers how she got the first beating of her life from her mother, for stealing fruit from a neighbour's garden. The author recalls that she did not cry, but rather her mother shed tears over meting out a necessary punishment to her beloved daughter. However, the lesson was a salutary one; Halide Nusret Zorlutuna states that from that day onwards, she never took anything that was not hers, not even "ownerless money I saw lying by the roadside."<sup>20</sup>

A happier memory of her mother is also connected to learning. Halide Nusret recalls how she was taught needlework by her mother together with her friend and playmate Fahriye, who later became a famous seamstress. In her teaching, Zorlutuna's mother acted like "a born pedagogue, tender but at the same time with authority;" the author is sure that her mother would have made an ideal teacher.<sup>21</sup> Zorlutuna stresses repeatedly how intelligent and well-read her mother was: "My mother was after all a very intelligent woman who used her head, she neither drank coffee nor smoked cigarettes, the only strong addiction she had was to reading."<sup>22</sup> That young Halide became a reader and, eventually, a writer is credited to her mother, who not only taught her the alphabet, but also introduced her to the joys of reading. We will return to this part of Zorlutuna's narrative in the second part of this chapter. Young Halide's most joyful moment came when her father was able to return from imprisonment and exile after the 1908 revolution. The language of her account, with the text interspersed with joyful exclamations like *Yarabbî!* [Oh Lord!], conveys some of the excitement that a small girl about seven years of age must have

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18 Ibid., 55.

19 Halide Nusret Zorlutuna, *Bir Devrin Romanı* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1978).

20 Ibid., 16.

21 Ibid., 19.

22 Ibid., 17.

felt. The event was preceded by a major house-cleaning, Halide was dressed in new clothes and she was made to learn Namik Kemal's poem *Hürriyet* [Freedom] by heart in order to declaim it from the stair head when her father entered the house. She claims that she understood the sense of the poem perfectly: "Freedom was gained, and my daddy had come!" Zorlutuna recounts how the word and concept 'freedom' became forever illustrated and embodied in the triumphal return of her father to his family.<sup>23</sup>

İrfan Orga, an erstwhile Turkish army officer turned journalist, travel writer and biographer, lets the reader follow the dramatic transformation of a happy childhood world into chaos following the outbreak of the First World War, which left the family in disarray when Orga's father died of wounds during the Gallipoli campaign. Orga's autobiography *Portrait of a Turkish Family*<sup>24</sup> (first published 1950) recounts in vivid and saddening detail how Orga's mother and grandmother tried to earn a living and keep the family from collapsing. This was made difficult by the fact that they were two rather pampered upper-class Ottoman ladies, used to leaving the practical affairs of life to their menfolk and servants. However, *Portrait of a Turkish Family* initially portrays a childhood idyll. The first five chapters of the book are devoted to introducing Orga's family, consisting of his parents, grandparents, his younger brother and the family servants, and to relating the author's earliest memories. The narrative is tinged sometimes with nostalgia, sometimes with humour. Some passages serve a double duty of conveying cultural or ethnological information, for example about Turkish baths and the circumcision ceremony for young boys. Orga wrote for a non-Turkish audience, so these passages were composed with both informing and entertaining the reader in mind.

Reflecting the title of his autobiography, Orga does not introduce his family members one by one, as some other authors do, but rather presents his early upbringing as a collective effort by the whole family, starting with his father who had an almost ritual obligation to begin his son's day by tossing little İrfan into the air a couple of times each morning. The boy was then handed, with admonishments to be good, to İnci, his young nursemaid. She would then proceed to the "prolonged battle" of washing her young charge and the "torture" of combing his hair.<sup>25</sup> The nurse İnci was the daughter of another maid and whose father was a servant in the imperial household. The high number of servants in the household of Orga's extended family emphasize their elevated and privileged status.

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23 Ibid., 21.

24 İrfan Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family* (London: Eland, 2004 [1950]).

25 Ibid., 8.

The highlight of the day for the boy came when, ablutions concluded, he was handed to his mother for inspection and caresses. Orga describes his mother as the very pinnacle of beauty, refinement and delicacy, a creature more like a decorative porcelain figure than a living woman:

She was always very slender and liked to dress in pastel colours, soft shimmering silks that smelt of lavender water of eau-de-cologne. She was a gentle, silent person, her hands delicate and useless-looking and weighted down with the number of flashing rings that she invariably wore. [...] She rarely went out and never alone but spent most of her time on the terrace or sitting under a fig-tree in the garden, much as the women in her family had done for generations before her. She appeared perfectly happy, content to be solely an ornament in her husband's home.<sup>26</sup>

Orga continues the description with his grandparents, who, as grandparents the world over often do, spoiled him a lot. Several pages of his account are used to describe how he, as a boy, would accompany his grandfather on his morning walk to the coffee house, playing outside while his grandfather enjoyed his coffee and *nargileh*. Not being taken on these excursions, and generally the withdrawal of his grandfather's favour, was actually used as a punishment for various misdemeanours.<sup>27</sup> The first irruption of loss and grief into this happy childhood world is presented very soon in Orga's narrative, when, on one of these morning walks, his grandfather suffered a stroke or seizure. The kindly old man was taken home to what turned out to be his deathbed. Orga claims to remember the events around his grandfather's death in great detail, even that he half-heartedly played with toy blocks while waiting to be called into the sick room to see his grandfather one last time. In an almost Proustian moment of clarity, Orga recalls how afterwards, sitting on the landing in front of his grandfather's room

I started to cry suddenly, [...] and I still remember, as if it were yesterday, how a big, fat wood pigeon flew past the window, coo-cooing in his soft throaty voice. It is still the best-remembered sound of that day.<sup>28</sup>

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26 Ibid., 9.

27 Ibid., 9–13.

28 Ibid., 15. The link between sensory perception and memory ('Proustian memory') is by now confirmed by neuroscientific research, see Susanne Nalbantian, *Memory in Literature: From Rousseau to Neuroscience* (Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 61.

After this sad episode, Orga's narrative quickly veers back towards the idyllic and picturesque; the next family member to be portrayed, in the chapter "An Autocrat at the Hamam," is his grandmother. This formidable lady would go on weekly trips to the bathhouse [*hamam*], with little İrfan coming along until he was about five or six years old, the customary age when boys would no longer be allowed into the women's bath. The bathhouse was an institution of crucial importance for the social fabric of Ottoman cities. For women, whose access to public gatherings was strictly regulated and who lacked spaces like the coffee house or *kıraathane* open to men, the bath was almost the only place to socialize. The *hamam* not only fulfilled a hygienic function in a time when most houses had no individual bathrooms, but also served as a social club and 'wellness centre,' perhaps imaginable as a cross between a modern-day gym or health club and a café. The bath was an exchange for news and gossip, as well as a place where mothers of marriageable sons would inspect potential daughters-in-law and where alliances between families were brokered.<sup>29</sup> İrfan Orga describes the *hamam* and his grandmother's excursions to the bath in great detail, an excellent example for the way in which 'Ottoman worlds' were presented to western audiences. By presenting the *hamam* as the scene for aspects of family life, Orga not only informs, but also 'turns around' western ideas about the *hamam* as a highly eroticized Orientalist fantasy, populated with voluptuous *odalisques*.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, for a Turkish reader in the 1950s, accounts like this would have been heavy with their own memories, including nostalgia for an institution that was dying out as a result of the modernizing effort of the Turkish state.<sup>31</sup>

### House, Garden and Neighborhood

Many Turkish or generally post-Ottoman autobiographies contain descriptions of the physical environments in which their authors grew up. I will take a look at these topics by examining some descriptions of houses, gardens and

29 On the meaning of the *hamam* in Ottoman culture, and the *hamams* of Istanbul in particular, see Kate Fleet and Ebru Boyar, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 249–270. For the story of one particular *hamam* through the ages, see Nina Chichoki (Ergin), "Continuity and Change in Turkish Bathing Culture in Istanbul: The Life Story of the Çemberlitaş Hamam," *Turkish Studies*, 6 (1), 2005, 98–112.

30 Nina Ergin, "Between East and West: Modernity, Identity and the Turkish Bath," *Trondheim Studies on East European Cultures and Societies* 29, 2010, 26.

31 Chichoki [Ergin], "Continuity and Change," 108.

the neighbourhood [*mahalle*], all of them important dimensions in Ottoman society and in Turkish social life to the present day. As regards autobiography as the expression of an individual, the house in particular is recognized as crucial, as the setting for the development of a protagonist's personality and interior life, a notion closely connected to developmental psychology.<sup>32</sup> Houses and domestic spaces are also useful concepts in observing a generation or a whole society; since they are products of a specific society, "they express and reinforce their norms, social practices and ideologies."<sup>33</sup> In the Turkish context, the house, and in particular the type of house known as 'Ottoman house' or re-interpreted as 'Turkish house,' holds a special place in cultural heritage. Carel Bertram has demonstrated how the 'Turkish house' is firmly rooted in Turkish collective memory through its constant representation in literature and the visual arts. Bertram argues that the house is thus made much more of a collective or shared than a merely autobiographical memory.<sup>34</sup> While this point is persuasive, I argue that this collective memory 'pool' is certainly fed by autobiography certainly feeds as autobiographies are produced, reprinted and consumed.

The traditional neighborhood within a town or village, the *mahalle*, is another crucial constant for Ottoman and post-Ottoman social life. The *mahalle* in its inhabitants as a body was important both as a framework for social relationships and as a group which controlled and regulated the moral or social behaviour of its members, for example by detecting and exposing unacceptable sexual behaviour. From Ottoman times, there are many sources relating violent and quite effective vigilante-type actions taken against criminals and those accused of 'immoral' behaviour.<sup>35</sup> In the case of children, the *mahalle* also served a network within which they were looked after and controlled by a wider circle of persons than their immediate family, for example by neighbors. The neighborhood was thus a place in which solidarity as well as control was enacted. Thus was the physical as well as social context in which children functioned;<sup>36</sup> broadly similar basic

32 Kathy Mezei, "Domestic Space and the Idea of Home in Auto/Biographical Practices," in Marlene Kadar, Linda Warley, Jeanne Perreault and Susanna Egan (eds), *Tracing the Autobiographical* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2005), 85.

33 Ibid., 81.

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

35 Fleet and Boyar, *Social History*, 126–128. *Mahalle baskısı* [neighbourhood pressure] is still a well-known concept in contemporary Turkish social life.

36 Bekir Onur, *Türk modernleşmesinde çocuk* (Ankara: İmge, 2009), 213.

structures and functions of domesticity and neighbourhood space can be found in many parts of the Ottoman Empire and they often transcend social boundaries as well.

this section will note how the triangle of childhood living space house–garden–*mahalle* was remembered and described by authors who grew up in this environment. My two following examples are drawn from provincial cities as well as contexts less refined than the genteel, middle class surroundings of the Ottoman capital which the reader has encountered earlier in this chapter or in Akşit's chapter of this volume.

In his autobiography *Hayat Hikâyem* (1973),<sup>37</sup> the businessman Vehbi Koç (1901–1996) describes life in a provincial town, in this case Ankara, at the beginning of the twentieth century. In general, his account is very matter-of-fact, almost laconic; it gives an unadorned description of rather harsh realities without any kind of nostalgic embellishment. Koç compares the living conditions of his childhood with the present, describing how the people of Ankara had to make do without electricity and plumbing. Water to wash clothes was taken from wells located in peoples' gardens or, failing that, from neighbourhood wells, while poorer inhabitants drew water from streams. Bodily hygiene was attended to in public baths. Houses were lit by kerosene lamps, which according to Koç came in different kinds, classified by number. Thus, number eight lamps were used for reading; number fourteen lamps were only brought out for guests. The lack of electricity meant that perishable foodstuffs had to be lowered into wells to keep them cool.<sup>38</sup> Another modern amenity lacking from "old Ankara" was street lighting. Koç relates how the townsfolk organized their daily schedule according to the daylight hours and corresponding Muslim prayer times, with shops opening at dawn and closing at sunset. When someone had to venture out after dark, for example to go on a visit, they would have servants carry candle lanterns [*mum fenerleri*] ahead of them. The lack of coal stoves or electric heating meant that in Vehbi Koç's youth, houses never seemed to be warm enough. He remembers how in winter, only one room was used for sitting in his home, to save heating fuel. To heat this sitting room, the family, like many others, used a brazier<sup>39</sup> which was put under a low table with a quilt spread over it. The family would then sit around the table with their legs tucked

37 Vehbi Koç, *Hayat Hikâyem* (Istanbul: Vehbi Koç Vakfı, 1973).

38 Koç, *Hayat*, 9.

39 Called a *kürsü* by Koç, a word of Arabic origin which in Turkish usually means 'lectern' or 'pulpit.' *Kursi* or *korsi* is still used as a word for 'brazier' in Farsi. The more common Turkish word for brazier, also used in other autobiographies, is *mangal*.

under the quilt. In the case of very severe cold, people in Ankara would resort to sealing windows with a paste of flour and water to improve insulation.<sup>40</sup>

Koç continues with some details on food and table culture. Among the details he gives is that *pekmez* (a type of molasses or treacle made from grapes) was used to sweeten tea when people could not afford sugar. Stressing the differences between ‘then and now,’ the author describes how there were no bakeries or public bread ovens [*şehir fırınları*] in his childhood and how the families of his neighbourhood would bake bread in ovens in their own or their neighbours’ houses. At the table, cutlery known to Koç’s 1970s readers was in short supply. He remembers how only his grandfather used a knife and fork and a separate plate, while the rest of the family ate from a communal dish using wooden spoons.<sup>41</sup>

As he describes the house and the neighbourhood on the outskirts of Edirne in which he grew up, the writer, teacher and political publicist Şevket Süreyya Aydemir (1897–1976) paints a picture which is a mix of light and dark colours. In the first place, the reader becomes acquainted with surroundings far more basic than the living conditions in Vehbi Koç’s childhood home. Aydemir’s childhood world contrasts sharply with the sheltered, relatively refined worlds in which, for example, Ahmed Emin Yalman or Halide Nusret Zorlutuna grew up. Aydemir’s city quarter was an almost rural area of small houses surrounded by gardens and orchards, connected by narrow alleys covered in dust in summer and mud in winter.

In his autobiography *Suyu Arayan Adam* (first published 1959),<sup>42</sup> Aydemir initially presents an ambience of depression and latent violence due to the inter-communal tensions in the Ottoman Balkan provinces. In very captivating language, he creates an image of the physical environment which matches the feelings which the inhabitants may have had about their lives and times. The area Aydemir grew up in was on the outskirts [*kenar mahalle*] of Edirne, mainly inhabited by refugees (*mühacir* or *göçmen* in Aydemir’s text) from the northern Balkan territories the Ottoman Empire had lost in the course of the nineteenth century. Aydemir matches the physical state of the neighborhood with the mental atmosphere in the way he describes the area as *basık*, meaning “low” both in the physical and the psychological sense. The houses on the neighborhood were very humble dwellings of mud-brick and wood, surrounded by gardens and

40 Koç, *Hayat*, 10.

41 Ibid., 11.

42 Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam* (2nd edition, Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1971 [1959]).

connected by unpaved roads.<sup>43</sup> Yet for all the poverty, violence and political uncertainty, Aydemir is also able to take pleasure in many aspects of his childhood life. His parents' house was typical for the area in having no running water or furniture except some wooden shelves; devoid of electricity, it was lit by candles and kerosene lamps. Aydemir recalls how his parental home was considered as one of the better houses of the neighbourhood, as it had more than one room and a separate kitchen.<sup>44</sup>

Furniture was non-existent, except for shelves used to store vegetables and hay-stuffed cushions [*ot yastıkları*]. The floors were covered with mats or kilims. Aydemir recalls his amazement at encountering a real chair and actually sitting on it in a barbershop in town, an adventure of such momentousness that he told his playmates about it for days.<sup>45</sup> The living quarters served as storage areas for fruit and vegetables; Aydemir mentions corn cobs, pumpkins and strings of red peppers on wooden shelves, and bunches of grapes that were kept in dark corners away from dust. The only other accoutrements of the house were the already mentioned kerosene lamps and a water container with a copper drinking vessel kept next to the door.<sup>46</sup> All this is stated by Aydemir in a matter-of-fact way, which does not necessarily read like an accusatory report on lower-class living conditions.

The space which alleviates the general drabness and poverty of Aydemir's childhood scenario is the garden of his childhood home. This garden was particularly well-tended and beautiful because, as Aydemir recalls, his father considered trees as "sacred creatures" and everyone in the house loved flowers. He himself, along with his mother, would plant different kinds of flowers around a terrace [*taşlık*] behind the house and collect sods of turf from meadows around the town to put around the flowerbeds. Young Şevket and his mother would follow the growth and development of the plants carefully together. The blossoming of certain flowers, for example of a type of lily, was celebrated with the custom of decorating the flowers with tinsel. These occasions, he remembers "were feast days for our house."<sup>47</sup> This passage is striking for its immediate proximity to sequences in the same chapter which describe violence and poverty. The garden of the childhood home is presented like a hospitable island in an extremely unfriendly environment.

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43 Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan*, 12 ff.

44 Ibid., 12.

45 Ibid., 13.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid., 12 ff.

The American writer Leon Sciaky (1894–1958) was born and raised in the vibrant Sephardic Jewish community of Ottoman Selânik (Salonica, modern Thessaloniki). He begins his autobiography, *Farewell to Salonica: City at the Crossroads*,<sup>48</sup> not immediately with his parents, but instead guides the reader into the house in which he was born, and which had been the *konak* [mansion] of a high Ottoman official before becoming the Sciaky family home. Behind an unassuming facade, the house was spacious, divided into a public and a private sphere. Of the latter, the most important room was the main living room, in which, as Sciaky puts it, “the two antipodal tendencies which were to leave an indelible stamp on my life”<sup>49</sup>—namely the polarity of Levantine and western European customs, tradition and modernity—was typified by the very furniture. One end of the room was filled with furniture made in Paris and Vienna (like a grandfather clock, walnut dining table, gilt-framed mirrors etc.), while the other—in sharp contrast—contained no furniture except two low divans covered with pillows. For Sciaky, it was as if the two halves of the room “glared uneasily at each other.” Home is where the heart is: the Sciaky family would instinctively gravitate towards this “Oriental” side of the salon, the mother doing embroidery, the grandmother for a quiet cigarette.<sup>50</sup> Sciaky gives this childhood scene a higher meaning in the interpretation of his personal fate. For him, the coexistence of two lifestyles in the microcosm of the home exemplified the two main cultural influences which were to shape his whole life.

One last aspect of *mahalle* life in Ottoman times deserves mention here. The omnipresent street dogs had always been a feature of everyday life in Ottoman towns and villages and caught the eye of almost every foreign or local observer.<sup>51</sup> These animals, beloved neighbors rather than pests, also appear in autobiographical accounts, such as Rıza Nur’s *Hayat ve Hatıratım*. Nur gives a detailed account of these semi-feral dogs and the role they played in the life of his hometown. According to Nur, these dogs belonged to specific *mahalles*, did not cross the borders of their home territory, forcefully expelled every strange dog that ventured into their beat and also kept a watchful eye on

48 Leon Sciaky, *Farewell to Salonica: City at the Crossroads* (London: Haus Books, 2007), 15.

49 *Ibid.*, 15.

50 *Ibid.*, 16. In the Gulf region today, the custom of having a traditionally furnished sitting room (*majlis*) as well as a modern one still exists (Information by Matthias Determann, SOAS).

51 Fleet and Boyar, *Social History*, 273 ff. On early modern European accounts, see Metin And, *Onaltıncı yüzyılda İstanbul: Kent, saray, günlük yaşam* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009), 90.

human trespassers. While the dogs were considered unclean, Nur concedes that they had another vital function besides being guard dogs. Since there was no public garbage removal service in late nineteenth century Sinop, the townspeople would simply throw refuse into the streets, where it was eaten by the dogs. For this service, the dogs were much loved by their human neighbors.<sup>52</sup> Up until this point, Nur's account closely resembles that of other authors, who mostly write about the street dogs of Istanbul.<sup>53</sup> It is as if Rıza Nur, eager to provide exact ethnographic information—as promised in his foreword—had to make sure to mention the street dogs, if only in a rather generic way. Nur does not give a more personal perspective on these ubiquitous animals until the end of the passage, when he mentions some favorite dogs which had names. Ever the fastidious auto-ethnographer, he mentions that these names were traditional names which had been given to Turkish dogs for centuries, such as Black Head [*Karabaş*], even if the dog in question had no black head.<sup>54</sup>

### 'Childhood Culture'

Many, if not most, autobiographical narratives of Ottoman childhoods include aspects that can be broadly defined 'non-physical,' and which I would place under the umbrella term 'childhood culture.' By this I mean the games played by children, children's participation in and perception of religious ceremonies or feast days—which includes a glance at individual religious experiences—and cultural activity in a more narrow sense. This includes oral 'folk literature,' for example, storytelling; traditional performance, such as the shadow theatre, and the childhood 'discovery' of the printed word, of books and newspapers in the home setting.

Some childhood memories recall the clash of old and new, 'tradition and modernity.' Such stories and how they are presented offer a vivid insight into how authors of autobiographies perceived their childhood worlds in retrospect, and how they sometimes took sides in this conflict. I have therefore chosen to include a short section on the sometimes uneasy encounter of what was called in the late Ottoman parlance '*alla turca*' and '*alla franga*'<sup>55</sup> cultures.

52 Nur, *Hayat*, 65 ff.

53 For one example, see Klaus Kreiser, *Istanbul: Ein historisch-literarischer Stadtführer* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2001), 51 ff.

54 Nur, *Hayat*, 66.

55 Roughly translatable as 'in Turkish style' and 'in European ("Frankish") style.'

## Games and Pastimes

Rıza Nur presents a very detailed account of the games and sports enjoyed by children as well as adults during his childhood in Sinop during the 1880s. Nur's almost ethnographic attention to detail lives up to the promise he gave in the introduction to *Hayat ve Hatıratım*, where he states that gathering such information is one of the purposes of his autobiography. He begins his section on the subject by stating without false modesty that even though he was smaller than many of the other children in his neighbourhood, he was chosen as their leader.<sup>56</sup> He then presents a list of ten games with detailed explanations and their traditional names, from hide-and-seek [*saklanbaç*] or a form of tag [*esir almaçığı*] to different types of ball games. The latter were also played by adults, in addition to *cirit* [javelin throwing on horseback] and horse races.

The exact details of the different games are not crucially important for us at this point. What is more interesting is the meaning and significance Nur gives to these games. He calls them “national games and sports” [*Millî oyun ve sporlar*], and places them in the larger context of the Turkish national heritage, stressing the fact that there are “national sports” in Turkey as well as in western countries. Nur deplores the fact that these games had been abandoned [*terk edilmiştir*] and explains this process as follows:

This means that there have been sports among the Turks just as among the contemporary Europeans. This means the Turks were very good [at this] in the past. Later they deteriorated. The Europeanizing [*Avrupakârî*] reform effort ruined them completely, because they demolished the old, national things and put those of the Europeanizers in their place. This renewal is for us merely an interregnum [*fetret devri*].<sup>57</sup>

A few pages further on in his narrative, Rıza Nur returns briefly to a description of the sports played by adults during his childhood. These took place on Fridays and included wrestling [*güreş*], horse races [*at yarışı*], mounted javelin throwing [*cirit oyunu*] and ball games. He presents these pastimes as cultural assets about to become extinct; by the time he was twenty years old (that is, around 1900), games such as these were considered unsuitable for adults and were no longer practiced. Nur deplores this development: “How good were the customs of the ancestors, and how their progeny has sunk into ignorance [*cehalet*]!”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Nur, *Hayat*, 64.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

The basic tenor of this account is, as in other parts of Nur's narrative, pride in a Turkish national heritage that is equal or superior to anything introduced during the Ottoman reform period by those he calls "Europeanizers." This criticism is actually twofold. First, it can be understood as aimed at the proliferation of *alla franga* influences during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. However, it is useful for us to keep in mind that Nur had also become a vocal critic of the new republic and was forced into exile for his views.<sup>59</sup> The dismissive labelling '*Avrupakârî*' can equally allude to the Kemalist reforms which unfolded in Turkey while Rıza Nur was in exile, cut off from his native land and its changing scene following his falling-out with the Kemalist regime in 1926.

### 'Folk Literature,' Storytelling and Reading

Şevket Süreyya Aydemir tells of evening gatherings in his family's house or garden. The women of the neighbourhood would assemble at a different house each evening, to socialize and exchange stories, sometimes about their own fate as refugees, or the latest news or rumours about guerrilla activities [*komitacılık*].<sup>60</sup> In a happier mood, the works of famous *âşık* poets would be recited at such gatherings. In addition, stories of wars, epics [*destanlar*] and love stories [*aşk masalları*] such as those about Leylâ and Mecnun were told, as well as stories about fairies and jinns [*cin peri hikâyeleri*].<sup>61</sup> The latter impressed the boy especially, who imagined the *dramatis personae* of jinns, fairies and giants becoming real in the dim light of the paraffin lamps.<sup>62</sup>

In spite of the poverty of the area, books were also present at these gatherings, out of which stories were read aloud. Aydemir recalls how the gatherings in which books were read were held only in his house, as his mother and he himself (having been taught by his mother) were the only persons in the neighbourhood who could read, and he also comments on the effects reading could have on a child in a largely illiterate environment. First of all, reading bestowed prestige. Aydemir remembers how he would have an appreciative audience, sitting in a large mulberry tree in his parents' garden or at the evening gatherings, reading from a collection [*divan*] of *âşık* poetry or books of legends, war stories and romances. He recalls that his performances made him a respected

59 See Adak, "Who is Afraid?" 127ff, 131.

60 Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan*, 13, 23.

61 Ibid., 25.

62 Ibid., 26.

person for the adults in his community, despite his age, while the children of his own age accepted his slightly “different” status.<sup>63</sup>

As well as this, he also felt the effects of his reading matter: the stories he read or heard fired his imagination, making him want to participate in them and enabling him to leave his drab surroundings, if only in his thoughts. He was left with the dream of actually leaving and having adventures when he had finally grown up;<sup>64</sup> and his autobiography shows that his wishes were eventually fulfilled. The First World War took him to the eastern Anatolian front; he lived in the Caucasus after the war and eventually moved to Moscow to study. On returning to Turkey, he was first imprisoned for his political beliefs, but eventually freed and then able to embark on a fruitful career; perhaps not the fanciful exploits young Şevket would have imagined—but adventures nonetheless.

As Duygu Köksal demonstrates in the final chapter in this volume, the *Memoirs of Halide Edip*<sup>65</sup> contain very detailed reflections on cultural influences on the author, who presents herself as having been something of an ‘inward-looking’ child who spent a lot of time reading, or listening to stories. As a motherless girl growing up in a turbulent extended family, the family servants were an important constant in her early life, personalities who provided some measure of stability and who also told her folk stories. The first stories young Halide heard were Circassian folk tales told by Fikriyar, a servant of her stepmother. Halide Edip claims to remember little of these except a story about a particularly ghastly and frightening female demon.<sup>66</sup> However, the most important supplier of stories to the little girl was the manservant Ahmed Ağa, who not only told stories but possessed books, cheap editions on “funny yellow paper” and in “bad Persian print,” probably similar to the cheap books which Şevket Sürreya Aydemir mentions.<sup>67</sup> The first book Halide read under the tutelage of Ahmed Ağa, who helped her make sense of difficult words and passages, was the great Turkish epic of Battal Ghazi, a heroic fighter against the Christians in medieval Anatolia. While this story of adventure and heroic exploits certainly captivated her younger self, Halide Edip remembers that it

63 Ibid., 23ff and 26.

64 Ibid., 26.

65 Halide Edip Adivar *Memoirs of Halide Edip* (London: John Murray, 1926).

66 Ibid., 90. Halide Edip calls the demon *peri*, a term from Persian mythology which is more commonly used for more benign, fairy-like creatures.

67 Ibid., 115. Benjamin Fortna points out the similarities in Halide Edip’s and Şevket Süreyya Aydemir’s respective “reading careers,” see Benjamin C. Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 184 ff.

she found her real hero in Ali, the champion of Shi'i Islam and another saintly hero. This figure appealed to her as a hero who not only put fear into his enemies, but also was a just leader under whom women and children felt secure and who "killed dragons that ate people up. He destroyed the personified fear of the primitive mind."<sup>68</sup> It is not surprising to see how a girl like Halide Edip, shaken by a tumultuous family life,<sup>69</sup> would turn towards a protector-figure like this. The tales she read in Ahmed Ağa's cheap books "opened to me the folklore, the popular Turkish literature which none of the rest of my generation of writers have enjoyed."<sup>70</sup>

Halide Nusret Zorlutuna also became a voracious reader in her early childhood, in her case due to the influence of her mother, who, as we have heard above, was "addicted to reading."<sup>71</sup> Reading, alone or together with her mother, is among the most fondly remembered pastimes in Halide Nusret's childhood. She gives detailed information of what was read in her home. Her mother subscribed to several newspapers, a practice which according to the author was not common at the time. After the midday meal, Halide and her mother would lie on the bed together reading the newspaper *İkdam*. In addition, Zorlutuna's mother kept subscriptions for several other magazines, including the influential *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* [Ladies' Own Journal].<sup>72</sup>

Other texts read—and recited—in the household were poems, for example by Namik Kemal, which little Halide would learn by heart and repeat "parrot-like" [*papağan gibi*], just as her first school lessons, without entirely understanding the content. The true meaning of the poems only dawned on her much later. This led to a potentially embarrassing or even dangerous situation, as many of these poems were considered seditious and were banned during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Therefore, Halide's mother impressed upon the little girl never to recite these poems in public.<sup>73</sup>

Also among the literary influences in Halide Nusret Zorlutuna's life were serialized novels [*tefrika romanlar*] in the daily newspapers. These works were

68 Halide Edip, *Memoirs*, 115.

69 Along with the death of her mother, the subsequent polygamous marriages of her father. For a closer analysis of Halide Edip's narrative position and technique, see Nazan Aksoy, *Kurgulanmış benlikler: Otobiyografi, kadın, cumhuriyet* (Istanbul: İlteşim, 2009), 82–90.

70 Ibid.

71 Zorlutuna, *Bir Devrin*, 17. For a more detailed discussion of Zorlutuna's and other authors' memories about reading, see Fortna, *Learning to Read*, 175–205.

72 Zorlutuna, *Bir Devrin*, 17. For a thorough study on this journal, see Ayşe Zeren Enis, *Everyday Lives of Ottoman Muslim Women: Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (Newspaper for Ladies) (1895–1908)* (Istanbul: Libra, 2013).

73 Zorlutuna, *Bir Devrin*, 18.

not only read, but transferred into the sphere of playing as well: Halide Nusret used to re-enact the adventures of the heroes in these novels with her dolls, sometimes matching the storyline, sometimes creating her own plot;<sup>74</sup> the recollection of this episode clearly aims at showing the future woman of letters at work in an early outburst of creativity.

### Old and New, 'alla franga' and 'alla turca'

Experiences of reform and innovation and the sometimes precarious coexistence of traditional and modern are salient topics in Middle Eastern autobiographical literature, and post-Ottoman Turkish autobiography is no exception. These experiences are sometimes related in the context of childhood.

In the case of Ahmad Emin Yalman, the state of coexistence of 'new' and 'old' was to be observed at close range in the home inhabited by his extended family. In this house, the boy Ahmed observed "two opposed worlds" [*iki zıd âlem*], typified by his father and his uncle. His *amca*, his paternal uncle, was firmly attached to a traditional way of life, punctual in his five daily prayers and observing every religious rule. He abhorred modern, 'western-style' pastimes such as worldly literature, the theatre and travel or inventions such as photography, and he held strong views on dress. He would never even touch a white shirt and starched collar and jacket, but instead wore a collarless shirt and long coat.<sup>75</sup>

By contrast, Yalman's father was a man of the new times, described by his son in a shorter, earlier, English version of his autobiography as "progressive, perhaps even a revolutionary,"<sup>76</sup> who went around in the highest starched collars he could get, and with colourful ties and suits according to the latest fashion. He loved poetry as well as music and the theatre, and was enthusiastic about travel. In spite of his brother's dislike of this modern technology, Ahmed's father had photographs taken of every member of the family (probably with exception of the *amca*) and displayed them framed on the wall.<sup>77</sup> Yalman's mentioning of photographs is very interesting: several studies have shown how photography became an important part of Ottoman everyday culture in the

74 Ibid., 18 ff.

75 Yalman, *Yakın tarihte*, 21.

76 Ahmed Emin Yalman, *Turkey in My Time* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 13.

77 Yalman, *Yakın tarihte*, 21 ff.



FIGURE 9.1 *Photographer Ali Sami poses with his family.*

mid-to-late nineteenth century. There is even visual evidence for how photographs were displayed in a domestic setting very much like that described by Yalman. In his study of how children learned to read in the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic, Benjamin Fortna complements his discussion of reading books and newspapers in a family setting with a photograph that shows the family of the photographer Ali Sami (Figure 9.1). Several individuals are gathered in a *salon* with a casual-looking but probably staged display of newspapers that were read by members of the family. The image also shows framed photographs displayed on a sideboard, in a similar way as they would have been found in Yalman's childhood home. This illustration, seen against Yalman's description, is a rather fascinating interaction: we can put side-by-side the textual (Yalman's autobiography) and visual (Ali Sami's photograph) depictions of photography in a family setting.<sup>78</sup>

78 For a more detailed discussion of this illustration and its implications, see Fortna, *Learning to Read*, 195. On the use of photography in late Ottoman families see also Nancy Micklewright, "Late Ottoman Photography: Family, Home and New Identities," in Relli Shechter, *Transitions in Domestic Consumption and Family Life in the Modern Middle East: Houses in Motion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 65–84. For a discussion of this particular photograph, see page 80.

Throughout his autobiography, Yalman voices open approval for modernization and change and his account of his uncle is very much in keeping with this overall tone. Yalman calls his uncle's attitude "conservatism and stagnancy" [*muhafazarlık ve durgunluk*] and he accuses his uncle of having "neither need nor yearning for innovation, change or adventure."<sup>79</sup>

Kâzım Karabekir gives a very interesting account of both the technical innovations existing in Istanbul during his childhood as well as the ways in which technology was still lacking. He relates how people in Istanbul knew about some innovations, which were becoming standard elsewhere, only from newspapers or by word of mouth. Thus, Salonica already had an electric tramway, while the Ottoman capital had to be content with horse-drawn tramways, drawn by "weak hacks, in a deplorable state under the whip [of the drivers]."<sup>80</sup> The sorry state of the Istanbul tramway horses is a topic remarked on by many other contemporary authors.<sup>81</sup> One detail which Karabekir leaves out in his account is that at the same time (in the 1880s), the *Tünel* underground railway was already in service, contemporaneous to the underground railways being built in London and New York. At the same time, modern passenger steamships of the *Şirket-i Hayriye* ferry lines were already plying the Bosphorus. The most likely explanation for omitting this is probably that Karabekir meant to present the Ottoman capital under the old regime in as backwards a light as possible.

Likewise, the telephone and the automobile were only known from hearsay in Karabekir's childhood. It was only from travellers who had been to Europe that people in Istanbul heard about the proliferation of these technologies elsewhere. The first car Karabekir claims to have seen was a miniature model in a circus in Beyoğlu.<sup>82</sup> Here, again, his account has to be taken with some degree of caution as research has shown that technological progress found its way into the Ottoman capital much faster than Karabekir suggests.<sup>83</sup> Karabekir explains this state of affairs by Sultan Abdülhamid II's aversion to technology: the Sultan was "suffering from persecution mania" [*vehimlîymiş*] and therefore was firmly opposed to any technological device which could be used either for the diffusion of seditious thought or pose a threat to the ruler's personal security. On the other hand, though, we again have to keep in mind that Abdülhamid

79 Yalman, *Yakın tarihte*, 22.

80 Karabekir, *Hayatım*, 175.

81 Kreiser, *Istanbul*, 54 ff.

82 Karabekir, *Hayatım*, 175.

83 See for example the chapter on nineteenth-century Istanbul in Fleet and Boyar, *Social History*.

was certainly not adverse to the use of technology when it suited his ends: the proliferation of railway and telegraph lines were both very useful in controlling an empire.<sup>84</sup> It seems to me that Karabekir is less interested technology for itself, but rather recounts how there was a lack of technological progress as an opportunity to launch into a general tirade about how the Ottoman state declined under the rule of Abdülhamid. He also criticizes more generally the lack of knowledge, and of the free exchange of ideas and information:

While Macedonia was on fire [...] <sup>85</sup> nobody in Istanbul knew a thing. Every [enemy] nation took enormous measures towards our ruin; we committed a crime by not getting information and not spreading news to our fellow countrymen. God confound it [*Allah kahretsin*], what despotism! The poor uninformed people were biddable and humble as sheep and the most disastrous [thing was] that they believed a man who had not even received a primary education enjoyed all prosperity and felicity [solely] by virtue of being omnipotent and God's deputy on earth. And whoever did not believe it was imprisoned for saying or writing this.<sup>86</sup>

The passage, almost a rant, is an excellent example of how an autobiographical narrative of an author's childhood environment can be extended into criticism in a wider context, in this case the way the Ottoman state was run in the late nineteenth century.

### Conclusion

This chapter has drawn attention to three main themes common in memories of Ottoman childhoods. The first is the sense of the authors as bearing witness. The authors describe what was for them reality, but what is history for their readers—or *shared* history if the reader happens to be a contemporary of the author. With some authors this amounts to a mere description, sometimes a comparison of 'back then' versus 'now,' as in Vehbi Koç's account. Whether such a narrative has meaning beyond the description of facts is hard to say,

84 Karabekir, *Hayatım*, 174. Sultan Abdülhamid's peculiar position on technology and his pathological fear of coups and assassinations is well known, see François Georgeon, *Abdulhamid II: Le Sultan Calife* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 159–164.

85 The exact meaning is not made clear, but Karabekir either refers to the 1875–1878 'Great Eastern Crisis' or the unrest in Macedonia which preceded the 1908 Young Turk Revolution.

86 Karabekir, *Hayatım*, 175.

but it possible that an author like Koç is trying to get his reader thinking about the relative ease of the reader living in the 1970s, compared to houses without electricity and plumbing in the Ankara of Koç's childhood. A similar case could be made in reading Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's childhood story.

Sometimes it is possible to detect within these descriptions of the past a hint, to a greater or lesser degree, of criticism of the present, the time when the author was writing. In its most trenchant form, we see this in Rıza Nur's description of material culture, especially the games and sports played in Sinop during his childhood. Nur's account moves from a matter-of-fact, ethno-sociological description into a flamboyant speech in defence of these games as dying cultural assets and against a current of, in his opinion, artificial and unhealthy modernization. Once more, the author's personal circumstances explain the tone of the narrative: Nur himself had been in the service of first the Ottoman state, as a doctor, and then the Turkish Republic, as minister, diplomat and National Assembly member. However, once rejected by the state, accused of sedition and forced into exile, Nur dips his pen into a rather acidic ink and accuses both entities of diluting the national heritage.

While the tone of the description ranges from relatively neutral to belligerent with some authors, in others it is tinted with nostalgia, as in the case of İrfan Orga, opening up a second dimension of childhood memories. In Orga's autobiography, his family takes centre stage and the narrative appears as an effort to bring back to life and commemorate the lost human cast of his life story.<sup>87</sup> The element of nostalgia and sadness is—understandably—strongest in authors displaced from their native land and in some cases living in exile, precisely the situation Orga found himself in when writing his childhood memoir.

A third theme intertwined into the pages of childhood memory is the question of how the 'past world' has affected the author, what lasting meaning authors ascribe to their childhoods. This leads us directly to the way in which autobiographical memories of Ottoman childhoods told to a post-Ottoman audience contribute to answering our main question. Throughout this chapter, we have been concerned with finding out how the 'Ottoman world' is described. Generally, the Ottoman setting of an author's early years is never unambiguously praised or condemned in childhood narratives. Many authors had generally happy childhoods, but even with them, some negative influences can be detected, be it the death of a relative as with İrfan Orga or a harsh, strict father figure as with Rıza Nur. The fact of having grown up in a specific location at a certain time becomes especially fraught with meaning

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87 See specifically Orga, *Portrait*, 9.

when authors contextualize their personal lives with the historical events taking place around them. Most, if not all autobiographies used in this analysis give some sense of personal lives being affected by historical events at a time rich in change and turmoil. Some authors accentuate this aspect of their remembering more than others. Halide Nusret Zorlutuna includes several such episodes in her childhood memories, not all of which could be discussed here. I have, however, shown one example, her story of her father's return to his family after the 1908 revolution. Zorlutuna describes this event as a national and personal red-letter day: "Freedom was gained, and my daddy was home!"

This is but one anecdote. If one were to look at more texts and in more detail, other and more illustrative examples would come to light. For instance, Şevket Süreyya Aydemir's childhood narrative is an even more extensive example of the contextualization of childhood with history unfolding around the child, as he closely interweaves the account of his early life with the sad story of Rumeli. He shows a child growing up literally within earshot of the bitter violence that marked life in the Ottoman Balkan provinces during the early twentieth century.

Another important function of the 'Ottoman childhood' is having made persons *what they are*. Authors, for instance, remember learning from their parents, for example through their parents' exemplary character, as in the case of Rıza Nur or Kâzım Karabekir. Sometimes children learned from their parents quite literally, being taught to read or write, as Halide Nusret Zorlutuna was by her mother. The intellectual, cultural content of the Ottoman world—'cultural capital,' as one could call it—was imparted during childhood. We have heard about storytelling and reading as ways for this cultural process of passing on knowledge, by parents, other relatives or family servants.

One could of course argue that the same, or very similar, types of cultural practices were still in use during the Turkish Republic—so how is a 'Republican childhood' different from an 'Ottoman' one? On the one hand, obviously some aspects of Ottoman childhoods, like certain cultural practices, were irretrievably lost or in danger of dying out when the autobiographers penned their works. Once again, one could mention Rıza Nur as an example. He deplores the disappearance of the pastimes of his childhood days not only as a loss in itself, but as damage to the national cultural heritage. His critical stance takes on a third dimension if read generally as criticism of the 'new regime,' something which at first surprises the reader but which makes a lot of sense given that the later parts of Nur's vast autobiography are concerned with precisely this line of criticism. Another example would be Halide Edip remembering the different ways in which she 'consumed' popular literature and especially the works of the Turkish folk tradition and Middle Eastern classics, such as Persian

epics. She deplores that contemporary Turkish writers (of the time when she was writing, the late 1920s) do not make more use of this rich tradition, which was a bold statement at a time when the language and script ‘revolutions’ were about to get under way and the cultural politics of the Turkish Republic were geared towards moving away from ‘old style’ forms and genres. Thus, childhood memories could not only mean memory of things past alone, but also serve as a template for criticizing the author’s present.

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## Escaping to Girlhood in Late Ottoman Istanbul: Demetra Vaka's and Selma Ekrem's Childhood Memories

*Duygu Köksal*

To the extent that childhood stays with us through reminiscences, traces of memory and impressions, writing one's childhood and recollections of growing up is an act of self-reflection and self-understanding. In many autobiographies, the part devoted to childhood is quite brief: narrating one's childhood in detail is a difficult exercise in memory, and it may be felt that the subject is of lesser interest to readers than later life. However, although an autobiographical work is a combination of fact and fiction, personal accounts of growing up are important sources for historical research; firstly, because they provide clues to the psychological make-up, family background and socialization of the person studied; and secondly, because they shed light on the whole process of the narrative reconstruction of early life, closing the distance between the present and the past. This chapter uses Demetra Vaka's *A Child of the Orient* (1914) and Selma Ekrem's *Unveiled* (1930) to explore different experiences of Ottoman childhood in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Istanbul, and how these were presented to foreign audiences. Both authors' coming-of-age narratives were written in English for Anglo-American audiences.<sup>1</sup> I also refer to Demetra Vaka's earlier book, *Haremlik*,<sup>2</sup> and her novella *Bribed to be Born*. This is a story about an Istanbulite Greek girl, and was greatly inspired by her own familial relations and upbringing. Her husband reported finding this among her papers after her death, and it was published posthumously in 1951.<sup>3</sup>

Demetra Vaka (1887–1946) was a novelist, a journalist and travel writer, and her writings include Orientalist works on the Muslim women of the Ottoman

1 Demetra Vaka, *A Child of the Orient* (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1914); Selma Ekrem, *Unveiled: Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* (New York: Ives Washburn, 1930). A facsimile reprint of Selma Ekrem's book, with a new introduction by Carolyn Goffman, was published in 2005; id. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005).

2 Demetra Vaka Brown, *Haremlik: Some Pages from the Life of Turkish Women* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1909). A facsimile, with a new introduction by Yiorgos D. Kalogeras, was published in 2005; id. (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005).

3 Demetra Vaka (Mrs Kenneth Brown), *Bribed to be Born* (New York: Exposition Press, 1951).

Empire. She also wrote more broadly on the late Ottoman Empire and its politics, the Eastern Question and the politics of the Great Powers, as well as Greek nationalism. Her ideological formation is a mixture of Greek nationalist ideas that she received from family members, a soft Ottomanism that she inherited largely due to her father's bureaucratic post in the Ottoman administration and a critique of modernity that she developed in her later life, especially while living in the United States.

Selma Ekrem (1902–1986) settled in the United States as a young woman, and she worked in Turkey's diplomatic missions in New York and in Washington. She was a lecturer and a journalist writing on the birth of modern Turkey until 1970s. Along with *Unveiled*, she was also the author of two books for youngsters: *Turkey, Old and New* (1947) and *Turkish Fairy Tales* (1964).<sup>4</sup> She was the daughter of an upper-class, westernized bureaucratic family that witnessed the transition from the Empire to the Turkish Republic. Her ideological background combines an Ottomanism (Ottoman patriotism) mostly inherited from her family's bureaucratic and military position, a modernizing and liberal attitude critical of the Hamidian absolutist regime and later Turkish nationalism.

The Greek girl Demetra Vaka and the Turkish girl Selma Ekrem belonged to different communities of the Ottoman Empire and their writings demonstrate that their experiences of the age of dissolution of the Empire, nationalism and war were shaped by the particular circumstances of their communities. However, as children of Ottoman bureaucrats and modernized upper-class families, they shared an ideological environment; indeed, I argue here that they were raised according to quite similar childhood models. Although Vaka was about fifteen years older than Ekrem, they both grew up at a time of socio-economic, material and ideological change: this was a period not only of changing clothes, homes, furniture and consumption patterns, but also a time when Westernization, Enlightenment values, constitutionalism and nationalism were very much in the air. Both their accounts of childhood are retrospective examinations of the nationalist strife, imperialist projects, modernization currents and social transformation experienced in the last decades of Ottoman Empire. This chapter will compare and contrast the two girls' development from childhood into girlhood, which in both cases led to their migration to the USA. I argue that both girls sought to escape the social conventions and moral obligations of their respective communities and deliberately opted for a childhood which extended into girlhood, compared to peers in their respective communities. In both cases, a prolonged girlhood was their response to familial and

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4 Selma Ekrem, *Turkey, Old and New* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1947); ead. *Turkish Fairy Tales* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1964).

social pressures pushing them directly into womanhood. Both girls' escape to the USA—the land of freedom—should be understood in light of these attempts to prolong their girlhood.<sup>5</sup>

Vaka's late nineteenth-century childhood narrative is focused on the changes taking place within the modernizing Greek community of the Empire, and her encounters with an Oriental (i.e. Muslim) childhood. Her childhood narrative is organized around her feelings of difference, superiority and revulsion *vis-à-vis* Muslim children, although with simultaneous feelings of sympathy, pleasure and appreciation of her Muslim friends. Her writings are perfect examples of the larger body of Orientalist literature, since Vaka's account of Muslim children represents an unchanging reality, as if they were never touched by modernity, while Greek children were changing through modernization. In fact, Vaka seems to wish that the Muslim Orient she depicts to western audiences would never change. Ironically, she named her autobiographical work *A Child of the Orient*, putting herself in the shoes of an Orientalist writer who was herself almost an Oriental, but not quite.

Ekrem's early twentieth-century childhood, on the other hand, delineated by ideological change, political strife and war meant harsher conditions for Istanbul's children of all communities. By then, Vaka was already a young woman getting established as a writer and journalist in the USA. Ekrem, like Vaka, was born to a Westernized upper-class family. Her paternal grandfather was Namık Kemal, a famous Young Ottoman figure, whose liberal ideas had inspired generations of Ottomans;<sup>6</sup> his son, her father, was Ali Ekrem, an important literary figure of the *Servet-i Fünun*, who first served as a secretary of Hamidian court and later, like Namık Kemal, as a governor in several Mediterranean provinces and islands of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>7</sup>

In Ekrem's childhood narrative, her central sentiment is the deep anxiety and insecurity experienced by her family under the Hamidian regime and later under conditions of ethnic strife and war (the Balkan Wars and the First World War). However, despite the tumultuous external conditions, the narratives demonstrate that Ekrem's earliest childhood was overall more protected and 'childlike' than

5 It was Elif Ekin Akşit who drew attention to the gradual rise of the idea of Muslim and Turkish girlhood in late Ottoman society. See her *Kızların Sessizliği, Kız Enstitülerin Uzun Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), especially 132–139.

6 For a comprehensive analysis of the Young Ottomans' ideas see the classic work by Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

7 For details of Ali Ekrem's early life and the story of his own childhood see his autobiographical work Ali Ekrem Bolayır, *Hatıralar*, edited by M. Kayahan Özgül (Hece Yayınları: Ankara, 2007).

Vaka's, as she lived in an unquestioned ideological environment of Ottomanism because of her father's official position; it appears that she was rather unaware of the nationalist ideas at the time of the First World War. This peaceful childhood, though, was soon destroyed with the arrival of nationalist uprisings and war. Her narrative also shows that she was either uninterested in, or chose not to write about, children outside her family, either Muslim or non-Muslim.

This attitude sharply contrasts with Vaka's interest in Muslim children, and is probably due to the luxury that Ekrem enjoyed as a member of the Turkish ruling elite. Vaka's childhood in contrast, reflects an awareness and sensitivity with regard to communal difference. The narrative demonstrates that her childhood world was to a much greater extent filled with signs of national identity, or concepts like history, civilization, race, etc. Ekrem's Ottoman patriotism gradually develops during her father's posts in Jerusalem, Beirut and the Aegean Islands and evolves into a Turkish nationalism with the Balkan Wars and the First World War. As she grows, she becomes more consciously aware of her Turkish identity and the freedoms modernization offers to a Muslim girl. She is rather surprised, or even shocked, to see her childhood world crumble as non-Muslim elements of the Empire revolt against the Ottoman regime.

In what follows, I will develop Vaka's and Ekrem's stories separately, whole paying attention to parallels, similarities and divergences. I then elaborate both girls' views as regards to clothing, fashion and veiling.

### Vaka's Story

#### *A Greek Childhood in Late Ottoman Istanbul*

Demetra Vaka was born in 1877 in the largest of the Prince Islands of the Marmara Sea [*Büyükkada*], to a Greek family. Demetra's father was a bureaucrat of the Sublime Porte, so Demetra's family belonged to the cosmopolitan culture of the Ottoman capital in addition to being part of the culture of the modernizing Greek bourgeoisie. Demetra's ideas about children, women, family, marriage and her own *bildung* should be understood against the diverse effects of this intellectual and cultural background. While being exposed to Greek nationalist ideas from her family and from her community, she spent a lot of time with Muslim girls and boys of her own age, some of whom she befriended for a lifetime. Living in a time of political turmoil and dissolution of the Empire, her childhood was under the multiple influences of the Greek nationalism of her uncle, the Phanariot culture of a distant aunt and the late Ottoman cosmopolitanism of her father.

However, although she reflected the mindset of the well-educated, upper-middle classes of Istanbul's Greek bourgeoisie, her educational formation was quite exceptional among Greek women of her day. When she was eighteen, Demetra went to the USA as an unpaid governess for the children of the Greek-Ottoman consul to New York, and she later settled there, continuing to work as a journalist and teacher. After her marriage to an American writer, Kenneth Brown, she started a literary career in America, writing and publishing in English.

Demetra's father is at the center of her narrative; by holding a bureaucratic position, he is her link to the Muslim families and way of life. He is the one who cares about Demetra's learning Turkish, and as a politically moderate figure he was perhaps closer to Ottomanism than Greek nationalism. Demetra's mother, in contrast, does not speak Turkish and rejects socializing with Turks. Demetra's rare accounts of her mother are usually in relation to the Orthodox religious rituals that she performs, her disciplining presence and her bourgeois sensitivities. Demetra seems to be a rather lonely child, who felt closer to her father than her mother.<sup>8</sup> About her mother, she wrote:

I believe that every time I came before her she wondered anew how I happened to be her child; for she was tall and beautiful, and very conventional in her desires, and I was small and elfish, and my desires were usually for things she could not imagine any person wanting.<sup>9</sup>

Demetra was exposed to the values of the Greek Enlightenment, through her formal and informal education. She received a classical education, studying ancient Greek and Latin, learned French and later pursued her studies in Paris, which she had to terminate upon the death of her father. Her writing frequently underlines the importance she gives to her own educational formation. Devouring books and valuing reading above everything else, Demetra is a perfect example of the authority the 'reading culture' had on the bourgeois classes in nineteenth century. Indeed, as a youngster she was very proud of her observing and dissecting mind, which she contrasted with that of the Oriental children who accepted things without much questioning. Of her Muslim friend Sitanthy she wrote: "Her mind received without stimulating her imagination. But I was a Greek child, with a mind as alert, an imagination as fertile as hers were placid and apathetic."<sup>10</sup>

8 In *Bribed to be Born*, Vaka portrays a positive and caring father figure as opposed to a rather distant, self-absorbed mother, preoccupied with her looks, fashion and consumption.

9 Vaka, *Child*, 158.

10 *Ibid.*, *Child*, 100.

Values of the Enlightenment gradually penetrated into the culture of the Greek bourgeoisie of the late Ottoman Empire through education, commercial ties and relations with the Greeks of Europe.<sup>11</sup> Demetra also inherited ideas of Greek nationalism, through her relatives and community. In *Bribed to be Born*, Vaka narrates the upbringing of a little Greek girl by her great-aunt from a Phanariot background. In this novel, the little girl's aunt declares that the aim of education is "service to the Race"; that is, the Greek community. The philanthropic activities, charitable foundations and schools of the Phanariot community, as well as their daily lives around the Patriarchate, are told in detail. The Greek Phanariot community is portrayed as living a completely segregated life from the Muslims, with its own conventions, culture and social rules. Though much more conservative than the liberal Greek bourgeoisie of the time, Phanariots too, according to Vaka, had inherited values of the Enlightenment and were gradually accepting the bourgeois mentality, such as, for example, the changes in Greek women's lives brought about by economic development.

As a child, Demetra had no doubt that the Greeks were heirs to the highest civilization the world had ever known and thus they were the heart of Western civilization. However, as she grew older the mores and conventions of her own Greek community began to stifle: "I liked neither the attitude of men towards the women nor of the women towards life, among the people of my race."<sup>12</sup> Apparently, the late nineteenth century Greek community did not offer many alternatives to young girls other than marriage and motherhood:

the usual fate of a Greek girl, who has to sit and wait until a marriage is arranged for her, seemed to me the worst thing that could befall me. And if the fate of the Greek girl with money was terrible, what could I think of a girl like me, who had no dowry?<sup>13</sup>

11 See Maria Christina Chatziioannou "Creating the Pre-Industrial Ottoman-Greek Merchant: Sources, Methods and Interpretations," in Lorans Tanatar Baruh and Vangelis Kechrotis (eds), *Economy and Society on Both Sides of the Aegean* (Athens: Alpha Bank, 2010), 311–336. Also Meropi Anastasiadou, "Greek-Orthodox Households in Istanbul (19th–20th Centuries)," *id.*, 397–422.

12 Vaka, *Child*, 251.

13 *Ibid.*, 193–194. For the controversial values of the newly rising Greek bourgeoisie, see Paschalis Kitromilides, "The Enlightenment and Womanhood: Cultural Change and the Politics of Exclusion," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 1 (1), 1983, 39–61, reprinted in *id.*, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994); Maria Anastasopoulou, "Feminist Awareness and Greek Women Writers at the Turn of the Century: The Case of Kalliroe Parren and Alexandra Papadopoulou," *Journal of Modern*

Ultimately, she decided that her individuality, leading her life as she chose, weighed heavier than serving the Race, and she decided to go to America: "I lived in that dream of wonderful usefulness which was to be mine, and which was to save me from the martyrdom of the women of my race."<sup>14</sup>

Embracing values of Enlightenment, Demetra was critical not only of the Ottoman system in which Greeks lived, but also the limitations put on women by her own Greek community. In her view, her Greek community was superior to Turks in many ways, but still Oriental in some areas.

### *Narrating Oriental Childhood for Western Audiences*

Vaka's career as an Orientalist writer in America demanded an emphasis on the different, exotic and uncivilized qualities of the Ottoman Orient. Vaka, however, strove hard to differentiate her literary and travel writing from Western Orientalist literature. She did not hesitate to present herself as an Ottoman woman from Istanbul to a western readership, and enjoyed the insider's position this identity provided her as a writer.<sup>15</sup> Her Istanbulite credentials, it seems, permitted her to write in a much more authoritative voice and distinguish herself from the vast literature depicting the Ottoman Orient.

When she wrote *A Child of the Orient*, Vaka was a married woman settled in America for almost ten years. The book introduces the Orientalist stereotypes drawn from her childhood. Turks are described as an Asiatic people, associated with slavery, despotism, military aggression, polygamy, suppression of women, indulgence of the senses, etc. As the book unfolds, though, these negative traits ascribed to Turks are often counterbalanced by such positive characteristics as spontaneity, delicacy, emotionality, hospitality or practicality, which Demetra experienced in her everyday contacts with Muslim people:

In the abstract, the Turks, from the deeds they had done, had taken their place in my mind as the cruellest of races; yet in the concrete that race

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*Greek Studies*, 15 (1), 1983, 1–28; reprinted in Philip Carebott (ed.), *Greek Society in the Making, 1863–1913* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997), 161–175.

14 Vaka, *Child*, 193.

15 For Demetra Vaka's complex identity see Yiorgos D. Kalogeras, "Contested, Familiar and Exotic Spaces: The Politics of Demetra Vaka Brown's Identity," introduction to Vaka Brown, *Haremlik* (2005 edition), v–xxv, especially viii–xii; Eleftheria Arapoglou, "Vaka Brown: The Historicized Geography/Geographic History of an Immigrant," *Journal of Modern Hellenism*, 21–22, 2004–2005, 83–103. Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel, and the Ottoman Harem* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 28–31.

was represented by the dark-eyed, pretty little Kiamele, the sweetest and brightest memory of an otherwise bleak infancy.<sup>16</sup>

Kiamele was a Muslim girl who was brought home as a companion to Demetra by her father and from whom she had learned Turkish. Apparently, quite early in her life Demetra came to realize that her devotion to Kiamele was in contradiction with how she felt about the ruling race, the Turks.

Memories of other Muslim children are crucial for Vaka's childhood narrative. It is as if through these memories that she acknowledges and appreciates her Greek childhood. In several chapters of *A Child of the Orient*, Vaka compares her own Greek upbringing with the child rearing practices in the Turkish families she visits. Families, food, clothing and manners at the homes of her best friends Djimlah and Nashan are explained in detail. Billie Melman, in her important book *Women's Orients*, observed how Victorian female travelers were impressed by the visibility and presence of children and slaves in the *divan*, or the reception room of the *harem*. These British women mostly came from middle-class homes, where the visibility of children and servants was "timed and regulated." The Oriental homes, to them, were characterized by "lack of discipline" and indulgence towards children: "While the children were normally "banished from the middle-class parlour or the drawing room," in the *divan*, the British travellers observed, children "show up unexpectedly and are shown off." It was astonishing to see that in the harem, the children ate with adults, and they were spoken to and taken care of in public.<sup>17</sup>

In a similar manner, Vaka's observations about the harem and Oriental children reveal the newly rising middle class cultural concerns of Istanbul's Greek bourgeoisie. Her best friend Djimlah's house is the first harem Demetra enters as a little child:

There was little furniture in the house, just rugs and hard sofas, and small tables upon which were always sorbets or sweets, and cushions of all colours piled up on the rugs, where babies or grown-ups were always lying slumbering [...], the whole place seemed to me like a play-box, transformed into a fairy house, from which discipline, like a wicked fairy, was banished [...]. The amount they permitted me to eat was incredible [...]. Djimlah and I practically owned the house [...]. No one said "No" to

16 Vaka *Child*, 15–16.

17 Billie Melman, *Women's Orients: English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 157.

us, whatever we did, and the old *hanoum* let us ruffle her beautiful clothes and disturb her even when she was asleep.<sup>18</sup>

Her accounts of these harems reflect Vaka's cultural prejudices; obviously, in these descriptions she is following the basic trends in Orientalist depictions of the Oriental *harem*.<sup>19</sup> Demetra, growing up with the values of the Enlightenment and Victorian middle class sentiments in a Greek bourgeois family, reacts to what she perceives as the Oriental childhood and upbringing, but as she matures she begins to relativize such concepts as rationality, discipline, self interest, individualism, etc. In her mind, the feeling of superiority is gradually giving way to an acknowledgement of possible flaws in her own westernized upbringing:

[...] As I grew older, the vast contrast between my race and theirs became more and more clear to me; and I had the distinct feeling of partaking of two worlds, mine and theirs [...]. In my home there were duties from my babyhood, duties which had rigidly to be performed; and things to be learned, remembered, and to be guided by. The words duty and obligation played a great role in my Greek home, and these two words, so stern, so irreconcilable with pleasure, were absent from the Turkish homes.<sup>20</sup>

She confesses that she really enjoyed the time spent with her Muslim friends and admitted that in this 'Oriental model,' too, there were things to be appreciated. In *Haremlik*, she writes admiringly of the simplicity and peace she finds in Oriental children:

It has always been a mystery to me that the Turks, who can produce such types of purity as we can hardly conceive of in our Western civilization, should be supposed by us to be voluptuous and sensual [...]. Often meeting a group of [ordinary Turkish children], and especially of little girls I have stopped and watched them with pleasure, because they looked so pure, so simple, above all so childlike.<sup>21</sup>

Vaka depicted the Oriental childhood that she discovered through her friends as a happier and more carefree childhood than her own:

18 Vaka, *Child*, 30–33.

19 Melman, *Women's Orients*, especially Chapters 4 and 5.

20 Vaka, *Child*, 33.

21 Vaka Brown, *Haremlik*, 204.

I rarely invited [Djimlah] to my house. First, because my mother positively objected to Turks; and secondly because I had so little to offer her. She would have to share my life as I shared hers, and my life meant lessons, duties and discipline; so I preferred to go to her, and on Saturday nights I usually slept there.<sup>22</sup>

While associating Oriental childhood with pleasure, spontaneity and fun, though, Demetra felt that ultimately duty, discipline and hard work were more important qualities that made up an individual. "Usefulness" to one's nation and to society was a key concept for the young Demetra. It is as if she perceived life in clearly segregated spheres of enjoyment and work:

I came to them ready to enjoy them [...] and yet as years went by, deep down in my heart I felt glad to be a Greek child, even though I belonged to the conquered race; and I began to return to my home with greater satisfaction than I had at first, and to put into my studies a fervour and willingness which might have been less, had I not been a visitor to these Turkish households.<sup>23</sup>

A sense of superiority *vis-à-vis* Oriental children and a rather early awareness of the existence of different models of childhood, indicate that Demetra, as a member of a non-Muslim community, was more conscious of ethnic, religious and cultural differences than Ekrem, who was a member of the Muslim ruling elite.

In religious matters, as in other issues, Demetra defended her own position strongly among her Muslim friends. One day, playing with Djimlah, there is a disagreement over the meanings of 'God' and 'Allah.' Demetra is quite sure that the Christian 'God' is different from the Muslims' 'Allah,' while Djimlah asserts that "there is but one God, that is 'Allah' and we are His children."<sup>24</sup> Finally, it is Djimlah's grandmother who consoles the two girls and resolves the problem:

Well, my sweet *yavroum*, you are all mixed up about just where you stand before God. At present you stand nowhere, because you are only babies.

22 Vaka, *Child*, 60–61.

23 Ibid., 35.

24 Ibid., 49–50.

As you grow older your place will be determined by your usefulness in the world, your kindness and gentleness [...].<sup>25</sup>

Demetra is then consoled, and contemplating on this particular event she writes:

Just as my idea of the ferocity of the Turks in their homes had long ago vanished, so what they believed and taught God to be appealed to me; and although I retained my own idea of the relative importance of the two races in this world, I could not help feeling that perhaps the old *hanoum* was right and that our positions before God was less a matter of creed and belief than of how we lived our lives.<sup>26</sup>

Orientalist literature representing Oriental people as primitive, uncivilized and childlike is a characteristic that has been often noted.<sup>27</sup> For Demetra, not only were Muslim children more childlike than Greek children, but Turkish women were also childlike in their spontaneity and simplicity. They laughed like children and disclosed their feelings, happiness, fun and sorrow unreservedly:

[...] as I grew older, I liked the Turks more and more, though in my liking there was a certain amount of protective feeling, such as one might feel for wayward children, rather than for equals.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, the childhood metaphor was extended to women and served Vaka's literary interests.

In sum, Muslim childhood was both a counter-model against which Vaka could measure the superiority of her own Western upbringing, and a vintage point from which she could evaluate Western modernity. In other words, to the extent that she found in Muslim children qualities serving as an antidote against the harshness of modern life, her nationalist/Orientalist bias with respect to Muslim childhood faded away. Conceived as a site of

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25 Ibid., 59.

26 Ibid.

27 Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), especially Chapter 1 (1–63).

28 Ibid., 35.

purity, innocence and spontaneity, Muslim childhood seems to have served Vaka's romantic criticism of modernity.<sup>29</sup>

### Ekrem's Story

#### *A Turkish Childhood Encountering Modernity*

Ekrem's childhood narrative attests that there were multiple child rearing patterns among Istanbul's Muslims in the late Ottoman Empire. The division, it seems, was not necessarily along class lines, since many upper-class families as well as the palace could retain traditional (Oriental) childhood model, whereas more modest families with newly rising bourgeois, military or bureaucratic backgrounds were receptive to modern child rearing practices;<sup>30</sup> rather, the major dividing line was between Westernized and non-Westernized families. Obviously, the childhood narrated by Ekrem does not fit the Oriental model of childhood depicted by Vaka. In fact, one has a sense that Ekrem's memories attempt to correct the Orientalist biases about Turks, and to show Western readers how at least some Turkish families were accommodating to a modern life style.<sup>31</sup>

Selma Ekrem was born in 1902, in Istanbul. As noted above, her grandfather was the famous liberal Ottoman writer Namık Kemal, and her father, Ali Ekrem, was a literary figure in modern Ottoman literature group, the *Servet-i Fünun*. He was also a professor of literature in Galatasaray *Sultanisi* [High School] and Istanbul *Darülfünun* [University], employed as a secretary in the Hamidian regime and later served as governor in Jerusalem, in Beirut and the Aegean Islands of Rhodes and Mytilene. Her mother was Zeynep Celile Hanım, daughter of Djelal Pasha, the French-educated son of a wealthy family who was an aide-de-camp of Sultan Aziz and a general in Sultan Hamid's army. Selma

29 Judith Plotz, *Romanticism and the Vocation of Childhood* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), especially Chapter 1 (1–40).

30 For various developments in late Ottoman children's lives see Cüneyd Okay, *Osmanlı Çocuk Hayatında Yenileşmeler, 1850–1900* (İstanbul: Kırkambar Yayınları, 1998); id. *Eski Harfli Çocuk Dergileri* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1999).

31 While trying to stand against Orientalist bias, Ekrem employed an Orientalist discourse herself when depicting the Arabs she met in Jerusalem, in the desert or in Beirut. Both Carolyn Goffman and Özlem Ezer have noticed that Ekrem was writing as an "Ottoman Orientalist" herself when portraying the Muslims of the Eastern provinces as filthy, savage, and underdeveloped. Carolyn Goffman, "Introduction," in Selma Ekrem, *Unveiled* (2005 edition), xiv–xv; Özlem Ezer, *Üç Kadın Seyyahımızın Kaleminden Doğu, Batı ve Kadın, 1913–1930* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2012), 104–116.

experienced the political turmoil and unstable environment of late Ottoman society very closely, due to her father's uneasy relationship with Sultan Hamid and his subsequent assignment to posts away from the capital. Her childhood was marked with these official missions in the provinces, frequently packing and moving house. As a child she was mostly educated at home by older relatives and a French governess. She briefly studied the Koran with a *hodja* and Turkish with a male teacher.<sup>32</sup> Ekrem later went to the American College for Girls in Istanbul. Around 1923 she went to the USA, in search of a new life of freedom. She made a living there giving lectures about Turkey to American audiences and writing regularly for newspapers and journals such as the *Christian Science Monitor*.<sup>33</sup>

In Ekrem's family, with its bureaucratic and literary credentials, education was considered very important for both boys and girls. Thus Ekrem was raised in an environment of freedom and domestic equality with boys, while facing the pressures that late Ottoman society placed on girls and women. In her extended family, there were both Westernized and quite traditional figures who were equally respected and loved by Selma. In the outside world, on the other hand, a growing-up Selma faced public harassment from both male and female crowds for not wearing the loose black gown called *charshaf*. The issue becomes an existential matter for Selma and she takes a vow not to wear the *charshaf* or veil. Selma's childhood ends with the *charshaf* crisis and the ensuing realization of the merits of modernity.

Her family's Ottoman bureaucratic background, her Turkish patriotism, her admiration of Anglo-Saxon culture and American women, gave her mixed feelings of loyalty. Ultimately, after travelling and living in the USA like Vaka, Ekrem paid homage to the family values, parent-child bonds and manners she had grown up with in late Ottoman society. As for Vaka, Ekrem's admiration of things American went hand-in hand with a critique of certain aspects of modern life that she encountered in the USA.

Like Demetra's father, Selma's father is at the center of her childhood narrative and seems to be a source of confidence and security in an otherwise unsafe environment: it is on her father's facial expression, mood and comportment that Selma's and the whole family's mood depends. The family seems to have adopted the European middle-class ethos where respectability, etiquette and education are valued. Yet Selma's family diverges from the Victorian middle class ideals remarkably in other areas, and Selma's extended family of aunts,

32 Ekrem, *Unveiled*

33 Goffman notes that she wrote for the *Christian Science Monitor* regularly from late 1950s to 1972; Goffman, "Introduction," v.

uncles, cousins and her grandfather is a combination of the Eastern and Western middle-class models. While males are at the top of the family hierarchy, women have an undisputed authority in domestic affairs and the running of the house. Selma's mother is the homemaker, and also a rather Westernized figure, a sensitive but persistent woman; Ekrem often recounts her mother smoking in her nervousness or anxiety. For Selma as a child, her mother is a source of authority for her and the servants, and of organization and soft discipline. Ekrem's narrative indicates that she received care and softness more from her nurses than from her constantly busy and worried mother. Selma's education is never as intense and value-laden as that received by Demetra; her training as a child is rather unsystematic and sporadic, although the family is keen on the education of the children, with her older brother and sister sent to French convent schools after their home education. Overall, in Ekrem's narrative the topic of education does not receive the same attention as it does in Vaka's. In Vaka's narrative, children's education is vital not only for the nation's progress but also for personal interest and development.

Home is at the center of Selma's childhood. Home represents coziness and safety and an escape from the turbulences of the outside world, and it is also a site of leisure, play and joy as well as obedience. From Selma's narrative it is clear that respect for adults and the elderly was of critical importance; yet children could spend time with the adults, eating and playing with them. Especially, her grandfather's big house up the hill in Arnavutköy is a refuge to where the family always returned from her father's missions in the provinces, and where Selma seems to have passed her happiest days. In this dreamlike episode of her life, Selma enjoyed a beautiful garden, numerous rooms, servants and a big family; with her older brother and sister as well as her little sister and cousins, Selma appears always to have had company around her, and her autobiography does not mention other children.<sup>34</sup>

Her great grand-mother's house in Yildiz is another dearest place. The house represents old-time manners and culture untainted by modernity:

[...] the instant I was in it I knew I had come to a world different from my own. A world that was like an old Turkish embroidery hiding away in a deep trunk that dazzles one with its bright play of colors when it is brought to the light so that one looks at it long with love and admiration.<sup>35</sup>

34 It should be noted that Selma did not include in her memoirs the tragic suicide of her brother Cezmi due to an unrequited love in 1917 or the loss of her older sister in Cairo due to typhoid fever. Ali Ekrem, *Hatıralar*, 165 n., 221 n.

35 Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 182.

The house is described in terms of “a crack in the door,” “a dark but not gloomy hall,” “straw-matting,” “snow-white rooms,” “a low white divan,” “soft mattresses on the floor,” and “a faint fragrance of lavender,” all associated with cleanliness, comfort and serenity.<sup>36</sup> Ekrem confesses her feelings about her great grandmother:

She looked at us from her world that now lies in heaped-up memories, a world that is never to come back, the fragrance of which lingers only among a few chosen people. Great-grandmother was to me the old Turkey that was more enchanting than any fairy tale.<sup>37</sup>

The great grandmother represents the past *bairams* [holidays], philanthropy, visitors and old retainers and slaves, a house where “ladies and kalfas ate together.”<sup>38</sup>

In spite of all the respect and reverence felt for her great grandmother, Selma acknowledged that she belonged to a bygone era:

She whom I loved and admired was a different person from a world different from the world I knew. With all her greatness and her wit, she too had bowed to all restrictions and had worn and was still wearing her black tcharshaf. The old days were beautiful, my grandmother I loved, but I could not be like her.<sup>39</sup>

Upon arrival in America, Selma met young American girls around her own age. Her observations of these girls allowed Selma to contemplate her own girlhood in Istanbul. When a group of girls came to visit them at her friend’s house in Washington, DC, she felt a stranger: “Some of these American girls were of my own age and some even younger, but before them I felt myself a child.”<sup>40</sup>

The girls’ talk about dates, boyfriends, make-up astonished Selma, who never mentioned boys, sexuality and romantic relations in her memoirs:

The talk centered round the person whom the girl who had closed the phone referred to as the “boyfriend.” I came to learn that this distinctly American commodity existed in the life of almost every girl. Some of the

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36 Ibid., 185–187.

37 Ibid., 186.

38 Ibid., 188–189.

39 Ibid., 190.

40 Ibid., 309.

girls had a number of them and some changed them at will [...]. He was not the dutiful aloof fiancé of pre-war European type, chosen by parents and accepted by dutiful daughters.<sup>41</sup>

Interestingly, Selma, who admired the political and social freedom of these girls, questioned them when it came to relations with the opposite sex. She even thought American girls matured too early and acted like grown-up women in matters concerned with the opposite sex:

I could not find children in America. Even little schoolgirls were grown up, went to dances, and rouged their faces. Could these girls listen entranced to the tales of djinns and peris which my old nurse had told so lovingly and which I had listened to for so many years [...]? Fairies and fairy tales were out of style here in this era of jazz and Charlestoning. I never could sail my kite in this wind [...]. The freedom I wanted would have to be tempered with some submission to the days that were no more.<sup>42</sup>

Selma had just escaped the circumstances which were pushing her into an early womanhood in Istanbul, and her protected world of girlhood would not yet incorporate anything reminding her of womanhood. In the American girls, she had sensed an eagerness to become a woman and she found this disturbing. Sticking to a rather desexualized girlhood, she rejected dates, boyfriends and make-up. For her, girlhood was not a preparation for womanhood but more an extended stage of childhood and she was determined to keep it like that.

#### *Ekrem's Politics: From Ottomanism to Nationalism*

The atmosphere in Selma's home was always charged with politics wherever they went. While political issues were not discussed with children, Selma tried to pick up pieces of information by asking her nurse and servants. Her father's posts ensured that ethnic struggle among the different religious communities, Arab nationalist revolt and Greek nationalism made deep impressions on Selma's otherwise peaceful childhood world. These missions in the distant provinces of the crumbling Empire were associated with feelings of fear, anxiety and a deep distrust passed on to Selma from her mother's and father's facial

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41 Ibid., 310.

42 Ibid., 313.

expressions, from the whispers of adults, from the stressful atmosphere at home.

The financial security of Selma's upper-class, well-to-do childhood household seriously declined with the loss of her father's occupation as a governor of Mytilene after the capture of the island by Greece in the Balkan War. Apparently, Selma did not question the meaning of ethnic revolt in her own Ottoman childhood existence. It is only after the declaration of the Balkan War, witnessing the rejoicing of the Greek passengers on the ship to Mytilene did Selma feel anger:

For the first time I had felt a dislike for a group of people that I did not even know. Their rejoicing had cut me [...]. Turkey was one big graveyard [...]. And to think that these people on the boat were gay, as they went to join the armies that would fight my country.<sup>43</sup>

During Greek army's subsequent occupation of the island of Mytilene, she started painfully to realize that her fragile childhood world as a member of the Ottoman ruling class was shattering for good. During the whole family's captivity in Piraeus, she says she physically met "the enemy." Her family's living standards further declined after the First World War and the occupation of Istanbul by the Allied armies; the occupation also brought a further realization that her old Istanbul was gone.

In this heavy atmosphere, the American College for Girls was like a safe haven where Selma could stay away from politics and war and become a child again:

I loved the school now, in its four walls I put everything else out of my mind. There the horror of war and death had to be forgotten with books. There I did not hear the rustle of newspapers, the moans of poverty, the talk of food and clothing, and the criticisms that my hat roused. [...A]nd only then did I become a child.<sup>44</sup>

But when the Allied occupation of Istanbul was met with joy and celebration among the non-Muslim girls of the college, Selma clearly felt her nationalist feelings being aroused. Celebrating crowds on the streets deepened her pain and anger:

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43 Ibid., 215–216.

44 Ibid., 270.

At college mournful groups of Turkish girls pored over the newspapers [...]. The occupation of Symrna by the Greeks had revolted us [...]. Turkey would cease to exist—a greater disaster than the Great War had fallen upon us [...]. We could not bear to look at the other girls, those who were not Turks and who lived their happiest days in our blackest ones.<sup>45</sup>

On her return to Turkey from the USA in 1923, Selma realized that she had arrived in a new Turkey, the new Republic:

The child of old Stamboul would live as a dim memory in my mind, for old Stamboul was dead and buried under the centuries [...]. But no matter how happy I was in Turkey, the far-off call of America would never leave me.<sup>46</sup>

No matter how much she appreciated the changes the Republic brought, she would return to America longing for the action, restlessness and tonic it offered. Her later writings attest that Selma's nationalism remained as a short-lived defensive response to ethnic uprisings and war, and did not determine her adult identity. As a writer, she preferred to write nostalgic pieces about old Istanbul.<sup>47</sup>

### Clothing for Girls

Clothing was an important issue for both Demetra and Selma, since theirs was a time when traditional clothes were slowly being replaced by Western children's clothes.<sup>48</sup>

In Istanbul's Greek community western clothes had already become a sign of status and prestige, while among the upper class Muslims, too, Western fashions were gradually being adopted. Memories, photographs and advertisements reveal that children's clothing followed the Western fashion as well. A favorite costume was sailor's clothes for both boys and girls. White linen clothes and hats for children were indispensable for upper-class and Westernized Greek children.<sup>49</sup> Vaka recalls: "I never wore anything myself

45 Ibid., 280.

46 Ibid., 319.

47 Goffman, "Introduction," vi.

48 Cüneyd Okay, *Osmanlı Çocuk Hayatında*, 79–83.

49 Yorgo L. Zarifi, *Haturalarım, Kaybolan Bir Dünya; İstanbul 1800–1920*, translated by Karin Skotiniyadis (İstanbul: Literatür, 2005).

except simple white linen, with an English sailor hat, my sole adornment the name of her majesty's dreadnought on its ribbon."<sup>50</sup> She found the traditional Muslim women's and little girls' clothing too exaggerated and tasteless, as her story of Nashan indicates.

Demetra got to know her friend Nashan during a walk she was taking with her father. The little girl Nashan was on a donkey dressed up in fancy and exaggerated clothes:

I knew her by sight, as children know each other, and she always aroused the liveliest interest in me on account of her costumes [...]. Today she had a velvet gown, trimmed with gold lace, and made in the latest Parisian fashion for grown-up women. Her silk mittened hands [were] bejewelled with rings and bracelets [...]. On her head perched a pink silk hat [...].<sup>51</sup>

When the two groups saluted each other, Nashan remarked: "Father, this is the little girl I was telling you of—the one that always dresses in sheeting." And Demetra replied: "And you are dressed like a *saltimbanque!*," Nashan in turn replied: "Oh, it's not true [...]. I am dressed like a great lady."<sup>52</sup> The next day Demetra and her mother were invited to Nashan's home, the *konak* of a powerful pasha. Demetra's mother, who had never crossed the threshold of a Turkish harem before, was forced to accept the invitation. To their surprise the pasha's wife, who had come from Anatolia, asked for her advice on Nashan's clothes:

In very polite words my mother conveyed to her that European women did not wear gaudy clothes in the streets [...] and the woman from the remote district of Anatolia comprehended that her child was not dressed as a well-dressed European child would be.<sup>53</sup>

From that day on, Nashan also started to dress in "sheeting" and began to be educated in a European manner. It is ironic that years later Vaka deplored that Nashan had grown alienated from her native culture: "Usually, I am sorry to say, she more and more lost her native simplicity, with her acquirement of European culture, and more openly despised the customs of her own country."<sup>54</sup>

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50 Vaka, *Child*, 74.

51 *Ibid.*, 73–74.

52 *Ibid.*, 75.

53 *Ibid.*, 82.

54 *Ibid.*, 83.

Photos from Ekrem's book also show that the women of her family were dressed in Victorian-style dresses and hairstyles at home and in the garden, while wearing the *charshaf* in public. Linen dresses and sailor's clothes again seem to be the typical attire for children. Selma wrote that her mother always made them wear blue sailor suits and a blue woollen sailor cap with two black ribbons hanging down her back: "I loved my sailor suit for it had such deep friendly pockets and I was proud of my cap. Mother always made us wear these suits, which she bought at an English store."<sup>55</sup> In informal family photos the girls do not wear hats, while men and boys wear the fez, yet out on the street the Ekrem family's girls wore western hats and continued wearing them until they were met with repeated negative public reactions.

Often, passing by a coffee house, they would be harassed by old men:

One old man rose to his full height and shook the slender neck of his nargile at us: "It is a sin, hanoum, a sin" he shouted. "Your children are wearing hats as the Christians do. Are you not a Moslem?"

The voice of the man filled the street and the other people turned to us in wrath [...]. Then a crowd of old women, faces hidden in thick veils, were round us gesticulating and heaping maledictions on our heads.<sup>56</sup>

Selma was the only girl in the family who did not give in to street mobs' pressures. As a young girl, wearing the hat was such a vital issue for her since she did not want to put on the *charshaf*:

One escaped sultans and cyclones but not the tcharshaf. Millions of women had worn it before me. And to my eyes came these women, in thick clusters, wrapped in blackness, their faces covered [...]. I would fight, I would tear these shadows from me, the million bundles could sneer at me and revile me, but I would not be a bundle. I wanted to feel the wind and the air on my face forever [...].<sup>57</sup>

While her older sister and mother did not mind wearing the *charshaf* in public places, Selma simply rejected wearing it. Interestingly, despite all the public pressure and finally police orders to put on the *charshaf*, her family did not make Selma wear it; instead, they sought for alternative solutions. Selma's mother agreed, saying: "They are too young for the tcharshaf and I cannot

55 Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 46.

56 *Ibid.*, 194–195.

57 *Ibid.*, 180.

make them wear the bash-urti, that white rag which others tie over their children's heads."<sup>58</sup> Thus Selma was first made to wear the Arab girls' headgear *kufie*, then a bonnet with big ribbons and finally, when these also drew considerable public protest, she had her hair cut like a boy. "With that hair and a hat I could not be Turkish. Surely I must be an eccentric American left in Stamboul by mistake. And thus with pretense and fear I wore my hat."<sup>59</sup> Selma's revolt, it seems, was so strong that she was ready to leave behind her Turkish identity and crossdress as a boy.

Vaka, who consistent with the Orientalist genre always admired Oriental clothing, described Oriental women's' clothing at length in her books. According to her, Istanbul's women looked best in their traditional clothes and when they did not imitate western clothing. She was very happy, for example, to see her friend Nashan to proudly put on the richly embroidered Anatolian garments sent by her fiancé's mother.<sup>60</sup> Vaka did not express any distaste for the *charshaf* and veil worn by Muslim women. While noting "the initiation to *charshaf*" of her Muslim friends, Vaka actually used a matter-of-fact-tone in total contrast to Ekrem:

That year was a memorable one in our lives, because it was the last in which my three playmates would be permitted to go uncovered, and play with children of both sexes. They were now nearing the age at which little Turkish girls become women, must don the *tchir-chaff* and *yashmak* [... Djimlah's grandmother] decided that it would be very good for the three Turkish girls to go twice a week and spend the morning at Nizam, where all the European children congregated. She wanted Djimlah to see as much of the European world as possible before she was secluded.<sup>61</sup>

Vaka also observed that some Muslim families were already permitting their girls to go around with uncovered hair:

[Semmeya] was much older than any of us, and she ought to have been wearing the *tchirchaff*, and to have been living in the seclusion of the *haremlük*, but her people were not very orthodox, and Semmeya had a way of her own of getting what she wanted [...].<sup>62</sup>

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58 Ibid., 196.

59 Ibid., 269.

60 Vaka, *Child*, 215.

61 Ekrem, *Unveiled*, 111–112.

62 Ibid., 113.

Clothing seems to have become a sign of modernization, civilization and cultural identity in this period of change in the Ottoman Empire more than ever. Clothing was a much more sensitive issue for Selma than it was for Demetra. For Demetra, her westernized clothing was a sign of civilization and progress, underlining her difference from Muslim children. Yet overseas in America, as an author describing Oriental women, she expressed her admiration of Oriental clothing.

For Selma, how she was going to be dressed was an existential matter and she was aware all the time of the implications of her clothing. She knew well that wearing the *charshaf* would be seen a sign of her initiation into Muslim womanhood, an identity she refused to take up.

### Conclusion

Both girls grew up in modern and privileged families of Istanbul. Due to their fathers' professions, both were exposed to the political currents and instability in late Ottoman Istanbul. Both girls took Enlightenment values so seriously that they left their homes to start life anew in America. Appreciating the freedoms gained by American women and enchanted by the pace of modern life in America, they nevertheless longed for the protection that Ottoman society had offered, now lost.

Vaka's early encounter with Greek nationalism gave her a greater political awareness than Selma. Her childhood recollections reflect a rather serious, disciplined and inquisitive character. Ekrem's political consciousness and national identity develop at an older age, and this is why her childhood memories have a more dreamy and impressionistic quality. While Vaka's writing portrays a determined child who is resolved to free herself from social and political bondage, Ekrem's childhood self simply watches and is carried away by events. The turning point for Ekrem is the veiling issue, where she asserts herself as a young girl for the first time.

Both Vaka's and Ekrem's memories ultimately challenge the Orientalist discourse on late Ottoman life. Assured that her own upbringing and education are superior, Vaka writes in the Orientalist style when describing her Muslim friends. However, I have argued here that Vaka's writings on Oriental childhood waver between a modern, bourgeois moralist stance praising rationality, order, discipline and work as values essential for her own cultivation, and a simultaneous fondness of the childlike, indulging, sensual and disorderly features that she finds in Muslim children. Ekrem's memories, on the other hand, were written as a response to Orientalist depictions of Ottoman Muslims' lives. Challenging the

clichés about an Orient frozen in time, the story of her childhood emphasizes change, disruption and the tension introduced by the arrival of modernity.

Selma's childhood, like Demetra's, was a modernizing childhood, but with peculiarities. Her childhood in a Muslim family witnessed deeper tensions with regard to westernization than that of Demetra's Greek childhood, where she could more easily revolt against the Oriental ruling culture and adopt Westernization. Perhaps the most important tension Selma experienced was her refusal to wear the *charshaf* and the veil as a sign of moving from childhood to womanhood. In doing that, she wanted to protect herself from an abrupt move into womanhood, and spend more time in girlhood.

For both girls, leaving childhood and moving ahead into womanhood was a challenge. Instead, girlhood offered a safer realm, where they could exercise freedom, mobility and individuality. By settling and working in America, they could prolong their girlhood. Opting for girlhood was their feminist response to religious and communal pressures.

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