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The female body as ''social disorder'':
Morality and Honor in Ottoman Muslim Women's Public Appearance

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For many decades the study of women remained ignored in modern Turkish historiography. However, in the late 1980s and especially during 1990s an increasing number of studies, revealed the existence of an Ottoman feminism. This challenged the official history, according to which Kemal Ataturk was the sole emancipator of Turkish women. From that period onwards, studies on late Ottoman women have raised certain inevitable themes and questions regarding the following topics: the all-embracing context of Islam, the practices of segregation and veiling, the existence of institutions such as polygamous marriage, extended households, and the harem. These topics have dominated modern scholarship.Woman's honor and respectability is one of the favored topics in the field of gender studies. These questions do not concern of course, only Muslim women but seem to preoccupy all ethnic and religious groups in the Ottoman Empire.

My paper will focus on the study of the intermingled connection between Muslim women's clothing and the notions of respectability, purity and honor in the late 19th century and early 20th century Istanbul. The paper is divided in two parts: In the first part, I shall try to analyze Ottoman intellectuals' principal ideas on the women's question in the late 19th century in order to show how the discourse on woman and her purpose in Ottoman society was formulated. In the second part, I will direct my attention to the important role of Islamic principles in shaping the clothing habits of Muslim women the relation between the female body and State policy during Abdulhamid II's reign and the Young Turk era. Emphasis will be given to the analysis of the vocabulary of honor used in the official documents and its connotations.

The women's question in late 19th century Ottoman society

With the imperial edicts of 1839 and 1856, and especially, during the second half of the 19th century, the Ottoman state lauched a reform program aiming to modernize the empire. The proximity with the West was primarily reflected in the public sphere through the setting of a series of plans for the urban redevelopment of the capital.[1] Istanbul was radically transformed from an oriental to a modern city, comparable to a European metropolis.

The 19th century was a period of revolution in communications. The city was endowed with a modern and efficient transportation system, connecting differents urban neighborhoods and facilitating communication between the two shores of the Bosphorus. The circulation of both people and material goods was the goal. Communication and mobility were, thus, two fundamental factors essential in determining the westernization of Istanbul.

The construction of both bridges and the first tram line connecting Eminönü to the Hippodrome and Beyazıt Square via the Divanyolu were two important developmments for the overall communication of the capital. Considerable progress was also to be seen in the domain of water transportation. Rowboats and barges connected the shores of the city before regular steamboat service was established in 1851. *Şirket-i Hayriye* was the name of the first Ottoman corporation. Its steamboats carried passengers between İstanbul, Üsküdar and the two shores of the Bosphorus. With the advent of regular steamship service to Izmir and Istanbul, tourism increased dramatically.

The new public transport system facilitated mobility. As the city was connected, women could circulate easier. Moreover, new forms of sociability arose as a result of the adoption of European manners in the daily life. Cinemas, theaters, cafes, restaurants, public gardens, and public transportation seriously challenged the traditional segregation of genders in the public sphere. Thus, the co-existence of men and women in the public sphere brought up the women's question as an immediate and omnipresent social issue in the Ottoman society.

[1] İlhan Tekeli, "Nineteenth century transformation of Istanbul metropolitan area" in Paul Dumont and François Georgeon, *Villes ottomanes à la fin de l'Empire*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1992

The women's question began to gain ground in the form of articles in the Ottoman press and general publications on a regular basis during late 1860's. The very first article on women was published in 1867 by the prominent Ottoman intellectual Namik Kemal under the title "A proposal on the Education of Women". In his text, the author attested that although women constitute more than half of the human population and are human beings just like men, they are deprived of the right to endeavor and perseverance. Claiming that Ottoman Muslim women were perceived only as "source of pleasure", Namik Kemal called through his writing for making education accessible to women and giving them a ''productive role commensurate with their abilities''.[2] In his thought, innumerable evils concerning children's upbringing emerge from women's inferior position and could lead to a nation's degeneration.[3]

Two years later in 1869, provisions were made for the primary education of girls between the ages of six and eleven according to the Public Educational Law. A *Female Teachers' Training College* (Dar ul Muallimat) was established (1870) in order to prepare and train proper female teachers for the girls' schools. Thus, schoolteachers were considered to be the ''first group of professional women''[4] in the Empire. In 1876, girls' primary education became compulsory. During the Hamidian era, the number of girls' crafts schools was highly increased. By the end of the 19th century female education was an established practice in several ottoman cities.

Women's question gained also ground in the daily press. *Terakki-i muhadderât (Women's Progress)*, the first women's periodical appeared in 1869 consisting of some 48 issues. From this date until the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, seven more women's periodicals were published[5]. The longest-lived, however, among these periodicals was *Hanımlara mahsûs gazete (The Ladies' Own Gazette)*, published for 14 years between 1895 and 1909. *Hanımlara mahsûs gazete* was a real avenue for the expression of women's voices in the public debates regarding women's issues. Among its writers, besides men, one can notice the names of several women too. The topics of these periodicals varied greatly: cooking and childrearing, efficient house

[2] Elisabeth Brown-Frierson, *Unimagined Communities. State, press and Gender in the Hamidian Era*, Unpublished Ph. D.Thesis, Princeton University 1996, p.104.
[3] *Idem*.
[4] *Ibid*, p.99.
[5] The periodicals published were: Aile (1880), Şüküfezar (1887), Mürüvvet (1887), Parça Bohçası (1889), Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (1895), Hanımlara Mahsus Malumat (1895) Alem-i Nisvan (1906).

management, beauty and health advice, hygiene, fiction and other literary texts, fashion and sewing patterns, advertisements.

Aside from women's periodicals, this period also witnessed the publication of numerous books by Ottoman Muslim intellectuals concerning women's roles and social status[6]. We will briefly stop to consider the most important among these publications. The first one is Şemseddin Sami's work *Kadınlar* (1879). Based on the idea that the improvement of women's status can be the impetus for the progress and the salvation of the nation, the writer deals in his book with the place of women in society, women's status according to Islam and the significance of education in order to allow them to fulfill their societal duties. Contrary to conservative intellectuals, who argued that women's education could lead to moral and mental disruption, Sami defended it by pointing out that "all the great men of the world have had educated mothers".

Another important work on the women's question was *Women of Islam* (*Nisvân-ı İslâm*) which appeared in 1891. Its author, Fatma Aliye, was the daughter of Cevdet Pasha and sister of the poet Nigar hanim and became well-known as one of the first modern Ottoman women writers. Covering a wide range of themes shifting from polygamy and slavery to comparisons concerning fashion, marriage and divorce in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, Fatma Aliye's book was written as an answer to the criticisms against Islam from Western societies. It is worth noticing however, that although the writer defends Islam, she did admire European women's accomplishments, and demanded of her own society the same conditions which permitted Western advances in literacy and literature. She claimed that "Knowledge is one of the benefits which the very magnificent God, the possessor of knowledge and superiority, granted to all his slaves, both men and women". Thus, Fatma Aliye represents what one could call "a modernist Islam". In her thought, literary Ottoman women are to be men's partners in the effort to bring progress to Ottoman society, an effort supported by the Sultan himself. Thus, she praises Abdulhamid's reforms in education with the establishment of several girls' schools throughout the empire. It is, however, striking to notice that according to the author women's participation to the

[6] By the end of the nineteenth century, the women's question was in the agenda of all Muslim intellectuals. The works of the Egyptian intellectual, Qasim Amin entitled "The Emancipation of Women" (*Tahrîr al-mar'a*) and "The New Women" (*al-Mar'a al-jadida*), published in 1899 and 1901 respectively, were very influential in this domain.

public sphere is defined as a matter for the literate. Men who supported literary women were perceived to greatly contribute to the learned world, while those who protested were perceived to be opposed to the advancement of civilization.

Finally, some years later, in 1897, the first women's almanac, *Nevsâl-i nisvân* was also published there. The above almanac was closely connected to the nascent Ottoman women's movement since it included essentially women writers' writings on aspects of the women's question in the Ottoman context. More precisely, emphasis must be given to an article entitled "Ottoman women's progress", which deals, in a praising tone, with women's progress in the late 19th century. The following quotation reveals the way the almanac's publishers interpreted the term "women's progress":

> *Undoubtedly, a country's progress requires women's education and training in an equal degree [to those of men]. A people is constituted by families. If only one part of the family, namely the man, is educated and the woman not, that family and subsequently the society cannot really progress. The progress of all parts is required. Learned men state that a people's progress can be measured by its women's degree of education. They are certainly not wrong. A well educated woman raises well educated children. Only these children can contribute to their people's progress and wealth […] Women are humanity's mothers on the education of which the future wealth of a people depends*[7].

The ideas presented above are not at all different from those described by the Ottoman intellectuals. The necessity of an educated motherhood is undoubtefully emphasized as it was a common belief that only educated mothers could raise good and ardent patriots.

Women's moral and intellectual education was considered to be the basis for the progress of society and by extension the nation. Of course, the level of education in question was not the sort to educate ''female scientists'' but an education corresponding to the female disposition. In this connection, it was argued that female education must be restricted to the household circle, the domain where women could gain honor and serve the state. In the Hamidian era, women's rights to education evolved, as Frierson points out, "from an abstract virtue and measure of modernity, to

[7] Özgür Türesay, *Etre intellectuel à la fin de l'Empire ottoman: Ebüzziya Tevfik (1849-1913) et son temps, Thèse de doctorat non publiée,* INALCO, Paris,2008.

a set of specific notions about what girls should be taught and for what ends".[8] Thus, the education of women and especially of young girls became an issue of central importance for a) the definition and formation of a new modern Ottoman subjecthood and b) later during the early Republican era for the construction of a new civic identity based on national duties.

Female body and Public Sphere during the Hamidian Era

Abdulhamit's reign is a subject of great controversy for modern historians. While some of them present Abdulhamit II as a bloodthirsty tyrant, others draw a different picture by arguing that his reign was marked by radical reforms aiming to further westernize the Empire. (administrative centralization, spectacular development of the communication network, railway construction, improvement of technical means, establishment of new schools).

However, it is striking to notice that despite his efforts towards westernization and modernization, Abdulhamit II more than any other ottoman Sultan increased his contacts with the Islamic word and ''appealed to Muslim solidarity using the title and symbols of the caliphate''.[9] The Sultan supported in fact the more conservative Islam. The construction of the Hejaz railway from Damascus to Medina, in order to serve pilgrims to Mecca is the most obvious proof of the Sultan's pan-Islamic policy.

Despite the fact that religion was a political instrument, it also determined to a great extent the Ottomans' daily life. Islamic principles played an important role for example in shaping the clothing habits in the Ottoman Empire – at least outside home. It seems that women were more problematic than men in terms of clothing and thus preoccupied more the authorities.

[8] Frierson, ibid, p.
[9] Erik Zürcher, *Turkey a Modern History of*, London, New York, I.B.Tauris,1997, ,p.83.

Ottoman women's traditional outdoor dress consisted of the *ferace*[10] and *yaşmak*[11] -(veil). The *ferace* was a long robe with wide sleeves which covered the entire body from the shoulders to the feet while exposing the fingertips; it was fastened with a row of buttons. The part of the *ferace* which attracted the most attention was the collar (*yaka*): it ran the entire length of the garment, from the shoulders to the ground. Its length gave the impression of being a second separate part which served to complete the *ferace*. The collar was richly ornamented with lace, braids, pleats or ribbons, according to the fashion of the era.

The *yaşmak*, or veil, was of white muslin or very fine gauze, covering the woman's face. It consisted of two parts, top and bottom, which were tied behind the head, leaving a gap at eye level.[12] In the early nineteenth century, when the first signs of Westernization in dress appeared, the neck of the *ferace* widened and acquired rich decoration. The *yaşmak* became more refined.[13]

In the late nineteenth century, the *ferace* and the *yaşmak* gave way to the *çarşaf* .[14] This was a piece of clothing, initially quite broad, which covered the entire body, and was also known as the *torba çarşaf* (sheet sack). It consists of three parts: a sort of cape, folded at the waist and covering the upper body, a skirt, and a black veil (*peçe*), which covers the face.

In 1892, afraid for his life and fearing that its broad shape could be used to hide weapons, Abdülhamid II prohibited the wearing of the *çarşaf* in Yıldız Palace, forcing the women of the palace to once again don the *ferace*. The

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[10] The color and degree of ornamentation of the *ferace* indicated the social origin of its wearer. The upper classes preferred the *ferace* brightly colored, with decoration at times verging on the extravagant. Women of the lower orders, however, dressed without pretention, choosing monotone *ferace* in more conservative shades like black, blue and dark green. In general, the *ferace* was made of exquisite wool fabric but also of merino, Lahore shawl, cashmere, taffeta, satin, cloth, moire, brocade, Damascus silk, etc. The preferred material, however, was angora (*Engürü Sofu*) because it was resistant and its color did not fade easily, which allowed it to preserve its charm.
Ekrem Reşad Koçu, "Ferâce, Kadın Ferâcesi", *op.cit*., pp.108-111.

[11] "Yaşmak", *ibid*, pp.240-241.

[12] There were two different ways of tying the *yaşmak*: *kapalı* (closed) or *açık* (open). With the *kapalı yaşmak* the muslin was thick and covered the entire face except the eyes and eyebrows. In contrast, the fabric of the *açık yaşmak* was thin and semi-transparent, revealing a portion of the face and hair. As such, the first style could be considered as rather conservative, while the second, more modern. *Idem*.

[13] Önder Küçükerman, *The Industrial Heritage of Costume Design in Turkey*, (trans. Joyce Matthems), Istanbul, GSD, 1996, pp.161-162.

[14] The fabric chosen depended primarily on the economic resources of the consumer. Regarding colours, conservative women and the elderly preferred dark colours such as black, navy blue, purple or violet, while the youngest and most modern chose bright colours like light green, turquoise, azure blue, lilac or red orange."Çarşaf", ibid, pp. 64-68).

wearing of the *çarşaf* was also banned in the district of Beşiktaş, as it was the location of the sovereign's residence. But the ungainly *çarşaf* was preserved with the lower and middle classes, and made of cotton, wool or silk materials such as taffeta, satin, alpaca or crepe de chine.

Giving great emphasis to the Islamic principles, the Sultan wished Muslim women to be immersed in the traditional Islamic virtues of chastity and morality. Consequently, deviations from the established order were forbidden. In other words, all types of innovations in clothing were not welcome from the State. Tight feraces or semi-transparent yasmaks leaving uncovered the face and the hair were regarded as immoral. Issues of honor relatively to women's presence in the public sphere were part of the daily agenda of the authorities.

It is interesting to notice that Abdulhamit II's reign marks a modern system of mores (adab). While the Sultan appealed to Islamic and Ottoman tradition as far as women's public visibility and presence are concerned, he also appealed to modern manners introduced by the western style of life (scientific household management and rearing of children) as far as women's education and behavior inside the house are concerned.[15]

Scrutinizing the Ottoman archives of the late 19th century, one surprisingly realizes to what extent the concept of ''honor '' (namus/irz) had become omnipresent in the daily life. The authorities (police) efforts to control or dictate the length or the thickness of the veil were always legitimated in the name of honor. When women were circulating with cloths not conform to the Islam, the conservatives elements of the society such as the turbaned hodjas were protesting creating social unrest and disorder.

In my research, I intend to examine:a) the relation between women and the State in daily life but also in periods of great religiosity such as the Ramadan. Were Muslim women more restricted during the Ramadan or not? Which punishments were imposed to those who violated the established order?

b) the veil as an ethnic boundary symbol between Muslim and non-Muslim.

c) the contacts between Muslim Christian women and the evolution of mores in the Ottoman society.

[15] Frierson, *ibid,* p.160.

Muslim women between modernity and conservatism: the 1908 revolution

During the Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918) many important changes were brought to Muslim women's position. This was due to fact that the Young Turks hoped for the regeneration of both state and society. Contrary to the hamidian absolutism and censorship, they wished to see society progress and evolve towards a more democratic regime. The new regime became quickly aware of the crucial role women could play in the process of modernisation. The increased public visibility of women was perceived as a further step towards modernisation. The Young Turk strongly believed that a nation's women rights and behaviour are indicators of that nation's progress. During this period Muslim women were transformed from plain 'objects' to constructive and valuable social agents.

The Second Constitutional Period (1908-1918), gave the opportunity to all women, irrespective of social class, to participate in the public sphere by abolishing social discrepancies of the past; one such example was the unwritten rule according to which only daughters, wives and sisters of high-ranking administrators and pashas could have their voices heard through the writings in women's magazines. The most striking evidence of the Young Turks' popular policy was the replacement of the word *hanım* used for upper class women, by *kadın* a word used until that date, referring to maids and housekeepers.

The new regime aimed to create women guardians of moral values, capable of accomplishing their "social duties" *(vezâif-i içtimâ´iyye)* that is, mainly the education of the children who would be the future patriots. The main rupture between the hamidian and the Young Turk era was that after 1908 women started to gain importance not because of their biological capacity to give birth but as a carriers of culture and ideology. Women were perceived as the principal actor for the construction of the "new" citizen.

The interaction between the family and the State was one of the principal objectives of the Young Turk government. In this context, the family and woman were integrated in the social agenda of the new regime.[16] The patriarchal family was to be replaced by the model of the nuclear family based on the male-female partnership and woman to be integrated into the public sphere.

The development of the female press attests to the importance attributed to women by the new regime. From 1908 to 1918, we count more than twelve female periodicals; out of which three, *Demet*, *Kadın* and *Mehasin* were published a short time after the revolution. Mehmed Cevdet, the "economic spirit" of the Committee Union and Progress, attested that from now onwards women will possess their own press and that the new Constitutional regime will not neglect them but, on the contrary, will put the stress on their ‘’*significant position and influence in the advancement of this nation."*[17]

Additionally, the same period witnessed the establishment of various women's associations aimed at promoting charity and educational activities. The most important among them are the following: a) *Kırmızı-Beyaz Kulubu* (Red and White Club), b) *Cemiyeti Hayriyye-i Nisvaniye* (Women's Charity Association), and c) *Teâli-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* (Association for Women's Education).

Finally, we notice a considerable increase in publications concerning the women's question. Ahmed Rıza, Selahaddin Asım, Kasım Emin, Ahmed Muhtar and Celal Nuri are some of the writers who tried to change through their pen the established perception of women's status. In fact, these authors promoted the idea already expressed in the 19th century that women represent the other half of humanity and therefore must not be excluded from social life.

The atmosphere of liberty that dominated the country in the aftermath of the revolution gave a new impetus to the women's question as several Muslim women did not hesitate to go out accompanied by their husbands so as to visit the theater or other places of entertainment such as casinos. Some women even refused to sit in the compartments of ships, the trams, or the funicular reserved to them[18]. Others were

[16] Zafer Toprak, "The Family, Feminism, and the State during the Young Turk Period, 1908-1918", in *Première Rencontre Internationale sur l'Empire Ottoman et la Turquie moderne,* Istanbul-Paris, Edition ISIS, 1991, p.422.
[17] Mehmed Cavid, "Kadınlara Dair [1]", *Kadın*, No:1, 13 Teşrînievvel 1324,/[26 October 1908], p.2.
[18] Sacit Kutlu, *Didar-ı Hürriyet Karpostallarla İkinci Meşrutiyet 1908-1913*, Istanbul, Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2004, p.136.

dressed *alafranga* (in the European style) and rejected the veil. Muslim women believed that the time had come to experience the liberty which their Christian compatriots already enjoyed.

French traveler Marcelle Tinayre attests in her memoirs that Muslim women – especially those who had served the Committee of Union and Progress – welcomed the revolution with joy and hope being convinced that the Young Turk revolution would also be a revolution for women's status[19].

The question to ask, however, is what were Muslim women's expectations of the 1908? What did they aim to gain and to what extent did they believe that their life conditions would ameliorate? How did they perceive the term "liberty"? A first answer regarding this issue comes from Emiye Semiye's article published in the periodical *Kadın*. Emine Semiye emphasized the need of Muslim women to be surrounded by "merits" and not live like prisoners in the harems[20]. The writer was asking for a greater share of the public sphere for women that is education, public visibility and participation in the professional life.

Young Turk liberalism led several Muslim women to grant themselves as much freedom as they could use in the aftermath of the revolution. For the first time ever they dared going to the theatre, walking on the street unaccompanied by a man and throwing off their veils.

Muslim women *(muhadderât-ı İslâmiyye)* were attacked and harassed mainly because they refused to wear the veil or because they were dressed according to western fashion. In the aftermath of the revolution dress was included within the framework of social transformation and thus became one of the most often debated issues of the period. Chic and elegant Muslim women started wearing a new type of çarşaf, known as «*Meşrutiyet çarşafı*»[21] *(çarşaf of the Second Constitutional Period).* This led to a radical change for the çarşaf. The cape was shortened and the naked arms were covered with long gloves. The hemlines went up. The "new çarşaf" conformed to the lines of the body, thus emphasizing the female silhouette. Finally, the veil became thinner and more easily lifted.

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[19] Marcelle Tinayre, *Notes d'une voyageuse en Turquie*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1909, p.13.
[20] Emine Semiye, "Muhterem Birâderimiz Cavid Beyefendi'ye", *Kadın*, no.9, 8 Kânunievvel 1324/ [21 December 1908], p.3.
[21] Reşad Ekrem Koçu, "Çarşaf" in *Türk Giyim, Kuşam, Süslenme Sözlüğü*, Ankara, Sümerbank Kültür Yayınları, 1967, pp.65-68 and Sebahhattin Türkoğlu, "Çarşaf" in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 8, Istanbul, 1993, pp.231-232.

Such behaviour raised a storm of indignation among conservative men who were furious to see in the street women in short skirts and without veils. Physical attacks and harassment against Muslim women dressed *alafranga* were a common occurrence in the Ottoman capital. The crowd verbally assaulted women or in several cases, tore women's clothes with small knives.

The question of dress and more precisely, the practice of veiling (tesettür) were debated. Muslim women readers in the female periodicals questioned why such incidents took place in an era of liberalism and argued that such bigotry was not in evidence during the repressive rein of Abdulhamid II. In addition to this, they claimed that this situation is completely contradictory to the spirit of the new regime and unfortunately, the Young Turks' efforts were condemned to fail.[22]

Some women writers considered the veiling to be a cause of regression for the nation because it limits women's participation in public affairs.[23] Moreover, several male reformists, including Kazim Nami, likewise argued that the veil is a "symbol of captivity" and that in a period of modernity it should be abolished. However, more moderate authors stated that a social habit could not be changed in a short period and consequently no reasonable Turkish woman should ask to unveil. Attacks against women were considered to be an insult to the nation's morality. Many articles demanded the exemplary punishment of the guilty people and stated that the police's first priority should be to assure women's security.[24]

Scrutinizing the Ottoman press, it is obvious that the majority of the events took place in the Ottoman capital and more particularly in the traditional districts of Istanbul, such as Beyazıt, Üşküdar, Gedikpaşa, in the area around the Şehzade mosque and Hagia Sophia etc. In other words, the attacks occurred in areas inhabited by conservative Muslims who had not adopted the Western ways of life which predominated in Beyoğlu.

Women were harassed and aggressed because the Islamists were opposed to women's entrance in the public sphere. For them women's rights, education and social participation were interpreted as the causes of social disorder and a reversal of the established norms. Thus, women's position in society is transformed into an

[22] Ayşe İsmet, "Feryâd", *Kadın,* no.20, 23 Şubat 1324 /[8 March 1909], p.10.
[23]Zekiye, "Kimden İstimdâd Edelim?", *Mehâsin,* no.12, Teşrînievvel 1325/ [November 1909], p.838.
[24]"Esef ve Hayret", *Demet,* no.3, 1 Teşrin-i Evvel 1324/ [14 October 1908], p.1.

important social problem with political implications. The street becomes the arena where two contradictory social projects intertwined: modernity and traditionalism.

The above attacks show clearly that the Young Turk revolution did not succeed in satisfying Muslim women's position in society. Writers like Emine Semiye advised her compatriots not to seek after radical changes because until that time none of their demands had been satisfied[25]. Furthermore, the articles published the following years in the women's periodicals confirm Muslim women's disappointment that the 1908 revolution had not brought them more liberty and equality. In 23 July, 1911 exactly three years after the 1908 revolution, an author called Fahrünnisa attested that women had not been emancipated from their captivity and that if women really wanted to have a place in society and progress, they (women) had to take into consideration that they are human beings too and consequently, have rights[26]. Fahrünnisa's discourse reveals that still in 1911 Muslim women were not conscious of their gender nor had they realized the rights they had dreamt of in the beginning of the revolution.

The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the First World War (1914-1918) had a tremendous effect on Muslim women's lives. According to J.W.Scott, the war managed to disrupt the established gender relationships, i.e. the familial and natural order of families, with men in public roles and women at home[27]. As men had to join the army, women were transformed into breadwinners. Consequently, the number of women working outside home increased. Some of them worked as nurses and teachers. Others were hired in the textile industry or in the offices of the Ottoman government (postal services, telephone companies etc)[28]. In 1914, women were accepted to university and in 1917 they gained the right to divorce and not to be married before the age of 16. This way, they managed to gain rights once reserved only to men.

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[25] Emine Semiye, "Muhterem Birâderimiz Cavid Beyefendi'ye ", *Kadın*, no.9, 8 Kânunievvel 1324/ [21 December 1908], p.4

[26] Fahrünnisa, "10 Temmuz Münâsebetiyle", *Kadın (İstanbul)*, no.10, 10 Temmuz 1327/[23 July 1908], p.2-3.

[27] Joan W. Scott, "Rewriting History", in Margaret Randolph Higonnet et al., *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars*, New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1987, p.2.

[28] Yavuz Selim Karakışla, "Osmanlı'da Kadın Fotoğrafçılar", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol.13, no.75, March 2000, pp.18-20 and, idem, *Women, War and Work in the Ottoman Empire: Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women, 1916-1923*, Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Center, 2005.

In conclusion, one could say that 1908 indeed marked a turning point in the evolution of the Ottoman feminist movement as it permitted Muslim women to gain more visibility in the public sphere; however, it was long after the revolution that women's demands were satisfied. Moreover, starting from the Hamidian era the female body was always in the center of social unrest and disorder. One could, thus, support that the female body became the mirror where male expectations for the future of the society were reflected. Modernists as well conservatives fought each other through restrictions and punishments relatively to women's dressing or public visibility. Furthermore, in this ''unofficial'' war a special vocabulary was used. Political plans were identified or not through the nexus of female purity and honor. These concepts became more than ever omnipresent in the daily life.