

*SAVOIR VIVRE COSMOPOLITE:*  
AHMED MIDHAT'S *AVRUPA ADAB-I MUAŞERETİ YAHUT ALAFRANGA*  
AS A SOURCE FOR MODERNIZATION OF  
THE CODES OF SOCIAL BEHAVIOR  
IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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## ABSTRACT

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This study aims to reevaluate Ahmed Midhat's treatises on Ottoman society by revealing his exceptional objectives, which recently have been used in contemporary interdisciplinary studies concerning the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman social transformation. In view of that, the thesis is formed as a re-reading of Ahmed Midhat's etiquette book, titled *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeretı yahud Alafranga*, according to some recent debates like that of occidentalism, geographic mapping of culture and civilization, the question of cosmopolitanism and elitism, everyday life practices. The most important aim of this thesis study is to expose the ability and the tool-kit of an Ottoman intellectual, who claims himself belong to the Ottoman Nation, making use of the knowledge of the west for domestic politics and arguments in order to propose and create a genuine, self-governing and permanent Ottoman culture. Besides the knowledge of the west, Ahmed Midhat's *Alafranga* represents a very significant literary form that demonstrates the modern change in the intellectual production in Europe. In that perspective, exposing his motivations behind writing an etiquette manual, a literary form which is related to the modern idea of creating a mechanism of self-control for the individuals, and at large for the society itself, is significant the ways in which these motivations represent the ideas of a Tanzimat intellectual on the modernization of the Ottoman

society, considering his sympathy for the Hamidian worldview and modernization projects.

Keywords: Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeretî yahud Alafranga, Occidentalism, European Etiquette, Cosmopolitanism.

## ÖZ

*SAVOIR VIVRE COSMOPOLITE:*  
GEÇ ONDOKUZUNCU YÜZYIL OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞUNDA  
İCTİMAİ DAVRANIŞ KAİDELERİNİN MODERNLEŞMESİ SÜRECİNE  
BİR KAYNAK OLARAK  
AHMED MIDHAT'IN *AVRUPA ADAB-I MUAŞERETİ YAHUT ALAFRANGA'SI*

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Bu tez, yakın zamanda ondokuzuncu yüzyılda Osmanlı'daki toplumsal değişim üzerine yapılan güncel disiplinlerarası çalışmalarda da yapıldığı üzere, Ahmed Midhat'ın müstesna amaçlarını yeniden keşfederek, Osmanlı toplumu üzerine ortaya sürdüğü tezleri yeniden değerlendirmeyi amaçlıyor. Bu doğrultuda, çalışma, Ahmed Midhat'ın *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret-i yahud Alafranga* adlı kitabının, müstagrıblık, kültür ve medeniyetin coğrafi haritalandırılması, kozmopolitlik ve seçkincilik, ve günlük yaşam pratikleri gibi gündemde olan tartışmalar ışığında yeniden okunması olarak düşünüldü. Tez çalışmasının en önemli amacı, kendisini Osmanlı Milleti'ne ait olarak tanımlayan bir entelektüelin, garbın bilgisini özgün, kalıcı ve kendi kendini yöneten bir Osmanlı kültürünü önermek ve kurgulamak için yerel tartışmalar ve politikalar için kullanırkenki başarısını ve yöntemini ortaya koymak. Garbın bilgisinden öte, Ahmed Midhat'ın *Alafranga'sı* Avrupa'da entelektüel üretimin geçirdiği modern dönüşümü kanıtlayan çok mühim bir edebi biçimi temsil ediyor. Bu bağlamda yazarın bireyin, ve bütünde toplumun, kendi kendisini kontrol edeceği bir mekanizma üretmekle ilgili modern fikirle bağlantılı bir edebi biçim olan adab-ı muaşerete ait bir çalışmayı yaparkenki saiklerini ortaya koymak, bu saikler bir Tanzimat entelektüelinin Osmanlı toplumunun modernleşmesi ile ilgili fikirlerini

ortaya koyacađından, yazarın Abdülhamid yönetiminin dünya görüşüne ve modernleşme projelerine olan meyli düşünöldüğünde, mühimdir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşereti yahud Alafranga, Müstagrıblık, Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşereti, Kozmopolitlik.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

‘Speaking back to Orientalism’s discursive enterprise in the last few decades has challenged and nourished the world of cultural studies. Said’s epoch-making *Orientalism* has schematized the general frame of the discourse in the function of liberating the knowledge of the orient from the abuses of the western scholarship, which, through the Orientalism, had supplied western imperial powers during the exploitation of the oriental world for centuries. That struggle has been mainly and firmly based on the desire of the east to participate in the study of itself, considering the fact that the “westerners had for centuries studied and spoken for the rest of the world; the reverse had not been the case.”<sup>1</sup> The major argument of the discourse has been based on the long lasting absence of the eastern actor, and has denied any possible partaking by crying the fact that “the orient was not Europe’s interlocutor, but its silent other.”<sup>2</sup> Deterministic arguments behind that silence seem quite accurate considering, for instance, the Egyptian encounter with the curiosity of the Europeans in World Expositions. “The difference between the curiosity of the European concerning strange places and people, and the ‘general lack of curiosity’ of others”<sup>3</sup> delineates the main epistemic difference and attests to the ranks of the sides. Reflections of the easterners had been announced impotent compared to the ‘European skills’ of inspection, manipulation, organization and domination.

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<sup>1</sup> James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 256.

<sup>2</sup> Edward W. Said, “*Orientalism Reconsidered*”, *Race & Class*, XXVII, 2, (1985), p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt*, (Cambridge: 1988), p. 5. Also see, Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982).

Nevertheless, latest works on colonial period's occidentalist visual and literary productions, translations from European literature and indigenous writers are testing this neglect by recalling Easterners' perception of alterity and methods of dealing with it.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, these attempts can provide us with fragments to understand the domestic cultural and intellectual approaches of the eastern societies. This is not to claim that it would be more accurate to negate ideologically contained spatial alteration and to create a positive record of the east; instead, images on the west produced domestically would reveal, due to domestic quarrels between indigenous parties, the ways in which the occident had become part of a domestic discourse. Xiaomei Chen evaluates Chinese Occidentalism as "primarily a discourse that has been evoked by various and competing groups within Chinese society for a variety of different ends, largely, though not exclusively, within domestic Chinese politics".<sup>5</sup> Specifically in case of Ottomans, the occident had become part of every daily aspect at the turn of the century from the Young Turks to Garbçılar, those who admire both the material and the cultural advance of the west, and the diversity of its use was evident in contemporary Ottoman media. Whereas the first used the ideas produced in Europe in favor of political change in the empire, while shielding Islam from Western intellectuals' attacks; the latter asked for a cultural conversion and "believed that religion was one of the greatest obstacles to social progress and that it should be replaced by science."<sup>6</sup> A third party consisted of those who denied any ideological, social revolution or nationalistic organization based on contemporary European mainstream debates, but had favored an amalgam of modern material progress and Ottoman imperial identity parallel with Abdulhamid II's politics dealing with the changing world.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See for each, James Carrier (ed.), *Occidentalism. Images of the West*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996; Cemal Demircioğlu, *From Discourse to Practice: Rethinking "Translation" (terceme) and Related Practices of Text Production in the Late Ottoman Literary Tradition*. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. B.U. Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences, 2005; Carter W. Findley, "An Ottoman Occidental in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gülnar, 1889", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 1, (Feb., 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Xiaomei Chen, "Occidentalism as Counterdiscourse: "He Shang" in Post-Mao China", *critical inquiry*, vol. 18, no. 4, identities, summer 1992, p. 688.

<sup>6</sup> Şükrü M. Hanioglu, "Garbçılar: their attitudes toward religion and their impact on the official ideology of the Turkish Republic", *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997/2), p. 134.

Ahmed Midhat Efendi (1844-1912) was a very popular figure of this third group, who had presented himself as a model for Ottoman survival in the modern world. This model is based on some qualities, the very ones through which the Ottoman-male individual can protect his precious, authentic Ottoman identity. Ahmed Midhat, coming from a very modest background, owes his career success and popularity to these characteristics, such as diligence and entrepreneurship, the keys to the Ottomans' survival in the financial world that was dominated by the westerners. For Ahmed Midhat, every quality that should be possessed by the Ottoman individual was also supposed to have a religious or national, basis. Ahmed Midhat had not only written, but also ran a printing house. Cautiousness was another quality of him, and for sure of the successful Ottoman. Ahmed Midhat had never resisted the existing regime and took every role that was given. Although he was raised in the office of Midhat Paşa, a very prominent leader of the Young Turks, he did not refrain from criticizing the Paşa after his death in the hands of the Hamidian regime. One of these qualities was religious austerity. Ahmed Midhat was a devout Muslim, who had often condemned bigotry. The ideal Ottoman was supposed to protect his moral character; but never concede his curiosity to bigotry. The most important character of Ahmed Midhat and of the ideal Ottoman as regards this thesis study is curiosity, the interest in the 'other'.

Resisting Orientalist hegemony, which is suspicious of the eastern regimes and their modernization projects, Ahmed Midhat defended the orient under attack in the Orientalists' Congresses, and criticized the westerners due to their lack of knowledge about oriental civilizations and tried to represent the competency of the empire in the modern world.<sup>8</sup> Sponsored by the Ottoman state, his arguments were not based on a clear distinction between the orient and its other, but on the idea that global civilization (*medeniyet-i umumiyye*) can only be realized with the collaboration of the orient and the occident. Written according to this framework, his *Avrupa'da Bir Cevelan* (A Tour in Europe) was given to the British and U.S. ambassadors in Istanbul by the Ottoman state in order to be sent to the libraries in

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<sup>7</sup> Mehmet Safa Saraçoğlu, *Reality with a Moral Twist: Ahmed Midhat's Müşahedat as an Image of an Ideal Ottoman Society*, Middle East Critique, vol. 15, no. 1, spring 2006, pp. 29-30.

<sup>8</sup> Cemil Aydın, "Between Occidentalism and the Global Left: Islamist Critiques of the West in Turkey", Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, Vol. 26, No. 3, (2006), p. 449.

these countries.<sup>9</sup> Ahmed Midhat did not have a political career, compared to the other important intellectuals of *Tanzimat*. He spent most of his life as the deputy manager of the sanitary commission (*Meclis-i Sıhhiye Reis-i Sanisi*).<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the *Cevelan*'s sent off displays the conformity of Ahmed Midhat's ideas with the cultural politics of the Hamidian regime. What makes him significant is his interest in the ways in which the Ottomans can contribute to contemporary civilization.

On the other hand, being the most productive author of the time, Ahmed Midhat has not limited his critique to the orientalists. For him, also the occidentalists (*müstagrips*) were far from understanding the bona fide half of the occidental world, which was not based on the ephemeral, but was the most respectable and worth knowing. His endeavor to reflect the non-ephemeral side of the life in the occident had helped him to reflect on the social and cultural life of the Europeans, unlike the contemporary occidentalist approach, which separated material and moral progress in the nineteenth century Europe.<sup>11</sup> In that sense, although Ahmed Midhat can be seen as a protagonist of the idea of protection of Ottoman social life from European effects, his position in the occidentalist front is questionable, especially if one compares his curiosity to the earlier figures', either Halet Efendi or Sadullah Efendi, neglect of cultural life in Europe.<sup>12</sup>

Given the fact that Ahmed Midhat had favored an Ottoman social life based on an imperial self-understanding, and also appreciated mostly the civilization of the occident, his choice of writing a book on European etiquette is significant and needs to be reconsidered. Before him, there had been no example of such inspiration or excerpption. There was a tradition of courtesy books, mostly based on courtly manners, in the Ottoman context. Mustafa Ali's *Mevaid-un nefais fi kavaid-ul mecalis* (16<sup>th</sup> century) or Esad Efendi's *Teşrifat-ı Kadime*

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<sup>9</sup> BOA (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives), İ. DH., 1248/97831, 02/04/1892.

<sup>10</sup> BOA (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives), MF. MKT., 565/26, 07/Ra/1319 (24/06/1901).

<sup>11</sup> This approach was perpetuated in the twentieth century, throughout which the nationalist anti-colonialism did firstly try to create a protected national cultural basis, see, Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, (London: Zed, 1986).

<sup>12</sup> For a general perspective on Tanzimat occidentalists, see, İbrahim Şirin, *Osmanlı Seyahatnamelerinde Avrupa (1839-1876)*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2005.

(before Tanzimat) were the most important examples in the Ottoman context and were certainly not inspired by any European contemporaries that were analyzed by Norbert Elias on the basis of the fact that courtesy, itself, and the books on good manners represented the hegemonical structure of the regime and any transformation that was observed in these manners can stand for a transformation of the mechanisms of political power. Elias tried to analyze the change in the mechanisms of regime by picturing the change in the standards of behavior of Western societies.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, advice literature had witnessed great changes regarding the content and the literary style throughout the nineteenth century.

Ahmed Midhat's *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeretî yahud Alafranga* (European Etiquette or alla Franca) is the first etiquette book in the Ottoman context inspired by contemporary European examples. Written in 1894, *Alafranga* is a very consistent example of nineteenth century European etiquette manuals, written in narrativistic form that helps the transfer of Ahmed Midhat's treatises on contemporary developments. That very narrative is also reflected in the organization of the book. It is organized as a story of an Ottoman-Muslim-male's travel into Europe, where due to his capability and information about the ways in which he can survive and gain respect by respectable Europeans, he manages to discover the 'real' and 'civilized' part of Europe. Moreover, contrary to the 20<sup>th</sup> century examples that were more "revolutionary" and "change" based, similar to the other early examples in contemporary Europe, *Alafranga* came out of a conservative and traditionalistic outlook and package regarding the problems of social life. Writing a book on European etiquette rules appeared to be a very appropriate way for him to announce his perception of not only the 'other', but rather the civilization and everyday life of the 'other'. His authority as a writer is based on his claim of deciphering the secrets behind the success of the occident, an issue that can be manipulated by a writer who claims himself as an able authority on the issues regarding the 'other', on the basis of his knowledge even on the secrets of the 'other'.

Leaving aside his occidentalist urge, his choice behind writing an etiquette manual is also significant, due to the ideologies and motivations behind the

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<sup>13</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Vol II: State Formation and Civilization*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982; also see, Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Vol I: The History of Manners*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969).

contemporary European etiquette literature, on which Ahmed Midhat tries to formulate his *Alafranga*. Elias' formulated the etiquette rules as being addressed by the political power in order to create individuals, who participated in mechanisms of self-control, refraining from the newly introduced feeling of shame and embarrassment.<sup>14</sup> Foucault, based on his idea of the modern age represents a transition period, "in which, with the collapse of conventional morality, people have to create new and appropriate codes of behavior and ethics",<sup>15</sup> further claimed the social order in modern society as a mechanism in which "the individual is carefully fabricated...according to a whole technique of forces and bodies."<sup>16</sup>

Ahmed Midhat's *Alafranga* was clearly an attempt to inform the Ottoman society about new and appropriate codes of behavior and ethics. Its authoritarian tone aims to impose the new Ottoman individual and everyday life. Nevertheless, *Alafranga* was written in order to attack another hegemony that of *alla Franca* among the Ottomans. Ahmed Midhat wrote *Alafranga* with the feeling of being repressed by some codes of behavior, which for him, were strange to the authentic Ottoman identity. It is significant to be aware of the fact that, writing an etiquette manual, which was certainly related to the modern quest for disciplining the social behavior and the self, Ahmed Midhat was also trying to fight against the repressive voice of the fashion. Like the fop characters in his novels, he employed Frankish behaviors in order to deconstruct the hegemonic order of a foreign culture.

Ahmed Midhat's attempt to deconstruct the hegemony of European culture is very much linked to his choice of writing an etiquette book. Etiquette, as a literary form, had been evaluated and mostly produced by the conservatives in Europe. He starts *Alafranga* by admitting his appreciation with the attempts of European conservatives, which he translates as *efkar-ı atika erbabi*, to protect the social order and traditional codes of social behavior. Nevertheless, Ahmed Midhat

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<sup>14</sup> Beyza Sümer, *White vs. Black Turks: The Civilizing Process in Turkey in the 1990s*, Unpublished Master's Thesis. M.E.T.U., The Graduate School of Social Sciences, 2003, pp. 8-12.

<sup>15</sup> Caroline Evans, "Yesterday's Emblems and Tomorrow's Commodities: The Return of the Repressed in Fashion Imagery Today", Stella Bruzzi, Pamela Church Gibson (eds.), *Fashion Cultures: Theories, Histories and Analysis*, (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 98.

<sup>16</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, (New York: Vintage Press, 1979), p. 217.

at some point doubts the success of these people, questions their impotency for altering some illnesses in the society, such as gambling, drinking, duels and carnivals. Although he understands the fact that the society needs some occasions for relaxation, throughout *Alafranga* all of these practices are condemned and no example of such behavior is proposed. The book of *Alafranga*, is in itself a discussion on the ways in which social order can be imposed, other than representing the codes of social behavior. Comparing with its European contemporaries, the distinct social objective of the book is more evident.

Within this perspective, this thesis is aimed to rediscover Ahmed Midhat's agendas by revealing his particular objectives, which recently have been used in contemporary interdisciplinary studies concerning the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman social transformation. In view of that, I am going to read the book according to some recent debates such as occidentalism, the geographic mapping of culture and civilization, the question of cosmopolitanism and elitism, and everyday life practices. The most important aim of the thesis is to expose the ability and the tool-kit of an Ottoman intellectual, who claims to belong to the Ottoman nation, making use of the knowledge of the west for domestic politics and arguments in order to propose and create a genuine, self-governing and evolving Ottoman culture. Besides the knowledge of the west, Ahmed Midhat's *Alafranga* represents a very significant literary form that portrays modern change in European social life. I aim to expose his motivations behind writing an etiquette manual.

On the other hand, the idea behind this thesis is to expose the pattern that links a variety of generalizations valid for all orientalist and occidentalist works alike. This pattern specifically in that book is "the misjudgment of alla Franca" as being a superficial and temporary notion; the importance of dealing alla Franca as a very traditional, conservateur, very intensive aspect of western life with many rules; the display of how hegemonical it is on daily life practices orbiting fragments and pieces from decoration to traveling. Moreover, in recent arguments on Orientalism, focus has been on the geographical perceptions of the western intellectual and traveler. However, the geographical perception in local literature and the motivation behind its urge to create alter spaces and geographies, in that case that of late nineteenth century Ottoman intellectual, can shift the consistent

and claiming position of Saidian discourse in assigning passive voice to locals and help reconstruct the intellectual history of the non-west.

The second chapter seeks to expose how and for which reasons Ahmed Midhat made use of the knowledge of the west. In this regard, Xiaomei Chen's methodology is important as she evaluates Chinese occidentalism as "primarily a discourse that has been evoked by various and competing groups within Chinese society for a variety of different ends, largely, though not exclusively, within domestic Chinese politics".<sup>17</sup> Ahmed Midhat's occidentalism specifically needs to be analyzed according to his ideological stance about cultural change in the Ottoman empire. Mostly, his novels are based on securing the youth and everyday life in the empire from the "sick customs of the civilized world" (alem-i medeniyetin adet-i keraihi). He notes the words of a professor that he met in Orientalists' Congress in Stockholm: "you orientals and muslims will lead the way to this hardworking Europe"; for Findley, this is ventriloquism.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, the main motive behind *Alafranga* is not to dismiss the cultural and moral aspects of Europe; it is written to introduce the "real" part of Europe that consists of families, mostly from Northern Europe who protect themselves and their community from the malice of "modern-civilized" customs. In that sense, his geographic perception of Europe and civilization is decisive in the way in which it can reply many problems that face him. Not to mention, this mapping was also popular among European scholars. For Hegel, Northern Europe is the center of universal history and the possessor of modernity.<sup>19</sup> Ahmed Midhat's spatial projection in *Alafranga* is occidentalist; however, the space represented in the book is not supposed to be occidental specifically. It is a fictive space, an ideal space, an intermediary space that people live in peace and in order, albeit containing alterities (elite-mass; east-west; material-moral; male-female).

Ahmed Midhat wrote *Alafranga* on this intermediary space, where he can easily take references from different worlds and exchange each other's values.

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<sup>17</sup> Xiaomei Chen, p. 688.

<sup>18</sup> Findley, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Enrique Dussel, "Eurocentricism and Modernity", boundary 2, vol. 20, no: 3, (the postmodernism debate in Latin America), autumn 93, p. 71.

Regarding the textual authority he had established as an occidentalist, who represented the occident to the Ottomans, these transfers made by him between two worlds had not been questioned. The third chapter is based on the idea that Ahmed Midhat was fully aware of the hegemony and burden of the ‘real’ western manners on the western society, and the etiquette writers and the genre itself were in the service of the dominant conservative political milieu. Ahmed Midhat’s dissatisfaction with the survival of the ancient customs in Europe, such as duels and carnivals, is due to the fact that these practices represented a threat to the social order, which means he was enthusiastic about the hegemonic role of etiquette literature. In this sense, being aware of the relationship between etiquette literature and ideology, I try to argue that, Ahmed Midhat aimed to shape the main framework of *Alafranga* along the Tanzimat, especially Hamidian, inspirations of social control and modernity, considering his close relations with the regime. The role of *Alafranga*, as an etiquette book, within this relationship is to impose self-control in the Ottoman society. In doing that, the writer did not exactly transfer European etiquette into the Ottoman context. *Alafranga* was meant to aim to assist the official political agendas by addressing the (re)authenticization of everyday life in the empire, according to modern requirements and principles of civilization and urbanization.

The fourth chapter is meant to expose in particular Ahmed Midhat’s relocation and submission of modern European etiquette in the Ottoman society. The most obvious case, in which he had had a chance to mention the respectable part of the European cultural life, which was itself relatively new in the history of occidentalism itself, was his representation of the European family and its house. The chapter starts with a portrayal of the symbolization of the home and the family in Tanzimat literature. Combined with a feeling of decay, the collapse of the house and the critical position of the son had been constantly used by Tanzimat intellectuals, from Namık Kemal to Rezaizade Mahmud Ekrem. In their hands, family life had been used as a part of a drama, a crisis that remarks a bigger social crisis. Ahmed Midhat’s picture of the European house in *Alafranga* is significant, due to the fact that it is fabricated in a clear-cut dialogue with the Ottoman house and family life. According to his picture of the *Alafranga hane tanzimi* (European house design), the rooms in the European house is organized

according to the rules of privacy, which immediately reminds the traditional Ottoman house plan. Furthermore, Ahmed Midhat emphasizes the different positions of the host and the visitor, according to which the host is responsible for behaving in the good manners of self-representation, and the visitor is obliged to constantly survey his behavior as regards to the etiquette rules. Ahmed Midhat represents a European house life that is coordinated by a complex formation of rules and as a world of symbols. This world also helps to inform the Ottoman society about the newly introduced material and moral issues of nineteenth century Europe, such as modern decoration, furniture, consumer goods, or bourgeois life style and modern woman.

## CHAPTER 2

### ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND CIVILIZATIONS

In the process of the Ottoman intellectuals being engaged in the knowledge of the occident, they were presided over by domestic impulses whether protectionist, conservative or westernist. In fact, most of their comments on European civilization and everyday life seem superficial and their objections to the western intellectuals studying the orient were mainly established on defending the religion. Ahmed Midhat describes the position of Ottoman intellectuals, including him, as having “become occidentalists, who are responsible for importing the knowledge of the west.”<sup>20</sup> Not to forget, although the word ‘müsteşrik’ clearly stands for ‘orientalist’, i.e. ‘müsteşrikler kongresi’ (the Orientalists’ Congress), and the word ‘müstagrib’ for ‘occidentalist’; they are not antonyms. In Ottoman Turkish, ‘müstagrib’ is, “who deems strange or unusual; who wonders at.”<sup>21</sup> For him, this unevenness represents the impotency of Ottoman intellectuals regarding their analyses on the occident, which consolidates his authority in deciding what real, authentic European and alla Franca is.

This chapter is about Ahmed Midhat’s position involving domestic change and his quest for authenticity regarding the knowledge of cultural life of the occident. *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret*i was written to expose that ignorance and introduce young Ottomans about the real splendors of the occidental life, which were more in number than “the insults to the humankind” in the occident, not to be duplicated but to scout its compatible fragments with the life in the orient. Moreover, those fragments mentioned in the book contradict the general occidentalist opinion of a so-called European moral decadence: in his inquiry on Ahmed Midhat’s Occidentalist methodology, Carter Findley questions “if

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<sup>20</sup> “Maarif-i garbiyyeyi şarka idhale sa’i birer ‘müstagrib’ olmuşuz.” Ahmed Midhat, *Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan*, (İstanbul: Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 1307/1890), p. 6. All translations are mine, if not stated.

<sup>21</sup> “Müstagrib: 1- who deems strange or unusual; who wonders at. 2- who laughs. 3-(a devil) most malignant.” Sir James Redhouse, *A Turkish and English Lexicon*, (Constantinople: 1890). Also see, Şemseddin Sami,, *Kamus-ı Türki*, (İstanbul: İkdâm, 1317/1901), p. 1339.

European etiquette was a fit subject for a book, then was all Europe's "moral progress" really decline?"<sup>22</sup> This quest defines his unique standing considering the general description of the relationship between the Occidentalists and the Orientalist discourses, which claims both equally based on stereotypes and "unfortunately exhibit a tendency to lapse into an equally chauvinistic discourse."<sup>23</sup>

In search of a modern Ottoman urban culture, I aim to expose the ways in which Ahmed Midhat utilized the idea of the occident and the occidental, dispersed and reconstructed European geography by generating alterities according to his Ottomanist ideas and manufactured a figurative, ideal space throughout his career as an Occidentalists. *Adab-ı Muaşeret* supplies that space with decorum and numerous requirements and policy. It not only guides one the way to enter the prestigious circles in Europe and helps to represent the Ottoman individual himself and his civilization, but also helps to witness the decent "real" part of Europe and dismiss the one, for instance, in Zola's realist novels that depict European 19<sup>th</sup> century as totally illicit. Ahmed Midhat's favorable characters in his novels receive that spatial perspective before their advent to Europe that they make in a mature age. In Europe, these characters visit places that they can practice this information and close the eyes to the others in which they can come across the offensive part of the occidental world that was not "worth knowing". Throughout this chapter, though, the construction of the perception at home, before the voyage to the occident, will be analyzed by using Ahmed Midhat's general attitude towards the "other", the "farther".

In fact, his own explanation of the reasons why to gain knowledge of European manners is so vital, reveals his agenda:

"First of all, thanks to its population (300 million), Europe is the most important part of the science of geography. Secondly, in order not to violate our national manners by assuming every scandal as "licit if alafraŋga"; and, hence, not to Thirdly, due to the fact that the Ottoman public has been acknowledged about the European literary works, it is necessary to inform it about the context that they had been producing.

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<sup>22</sup> Carter Findley, "An Ottoman Occidentalists in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gülnar, 1889", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 103, No. 1, (Feb., 1998), p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Tamara S. Wagner, *Occidentalism in Novels of Malaysia and Singapore, 1819-2004: Colonial and Postcolonial Financial Straits and Literary Style*, (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), p. 202.

Fourthly, in order to provide the possible Ottoman visitors with the knowledge of European manners in order to shorten their time of adjustment there.”<sup>24</sup>

By elaborating on his own reasons of writing the book, firstly I will try to interpret the relationship between his general perceptions of the modern civilization and the 19<sup>th</sup> century transformation of geography and borders contextualizing the growing apprehension between two worlds. Regardless of the direction of the tension associated with the unilateral rule of the west, I am going to focus on his occidentalist description of the ‘other’ and to compare his conception of geography and civilization with other observers, mainly with Al-Tahtawi, who also had managed to be genuine in his views on the same concept. Once admitting Ahmed Midhat’s reaction to the changing physical-cultural environment, I will pay attention to the daily usage of the term “alafranga” and Ahmed Midhat’s problems with it, which we can see in all of his works on the occidental life both in Europe and in the empire. In that sense, the well-known alla Franca-fop (*alafranga züppe*) character of Tanzimat is going to be dealt with as the symbol of cultural change and without doubt the Ottoman society’s anxiety over cultural change. It is very crucial to admit the concept of alafranga as a widely-used, widely-effective and widely-objected one. Moreover, the concept itself had transformed in time, whereby its perception had changed. Lastly, I will try to investigate the general character of the book by extracting the parts that picture individual encounters between the westerners and the easterners, with comparative perspectives brought forward from his literature and his personal experiences. The main purpose of *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret-i yahud Alafranga* is to provide the rules for such an encounter in pursuance of the claim that in every

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<sup>24</sup> “Birincisi üçyüz milyon nüfusun ahval-i medeniyesini mümkün mertebe öğrenmiş olmak ki coğrafya ilminin en büyük bir şubesi demektir. İkincisi ‘alafrangadır’ diye her türlü rezaleti mübah addetmemek ve bu yol ile kendi adab-ı milliyemizi dahi bozmamaktır. Üçüncüsü Avrupa’nın roman, tiyatro makalat-ı edebiye ve hikemiye yolunda yazılmış olan bunca asarı aynen veya tercemeten cümlemiz tarafından okunmakta bulunup usul-i muaşeretçe bunların hangi nokta-i nazardan yazıldıkları bilinmedikçe mütalalarından bihakkin telezüz ve istifade mümkün olamayacağından bu cihet-i istifadeyi de temin eylemek. Dördüncüsü adab-ı muaşeretten hiçbirsey bilinmediği halde Avrupa biladına gidilir ise birçok vakitler acemilikle zaman sarf edileceğinden ve hatta pek çok kimselerde emsali görüldüğü veçhile Avrupa’da birkaç sene oturulduğu halde yine bir şey öğrenilmeksizin avdet olunacağından Avrupa’ya gidecek olanlara, daha gitmeksizin orası hakkında bir fikri-i icmali vermek.” Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret-i yahut Alafranga*, 1312/1894, eds. İsmail Doğan, Ali Gurbetoğlu, (Ankara: Akçağ, 2001), p. 62. From now on “*Alafranga*”.

encounter, there will not appear any conflict if ever the person in charge would behave favorably and the space be organized according to the required rules of decorum. This ideal of him had been represented in his novels as well, considering the individuals visiting the residences of the ‘other’, their comments on the procedures of the visit, the ‘other’s dwelling, private life, and relationships within the family. Visitors can be Ottoman or Frankish and the dwellings are in Istanbul or in Paris; the essential point here is that the personalities and the spaces are very much acceptable, modest, without any extreme, giving Ahmed Midhat the opportunity to expose his ideal in an intelligible manner.

### **2.1. Occidental Mapping of Civilization and Culture**

“both geographical and cultural entities-to say nothing of historical entities-such locales, regions, geographical sectors as "orient" and "occident" are man made.”

Said, *Orientalism*

The question and ambiguity of the geographical definition of Europe has been part of many occidental accounts, especially of travel accounts. Al-Tahtawi’s definition of the eastern border of Europe mentions “the lands of Greeks, Constantinople, the Khazars, the Bulgarians, Wallachia (Eflak), the lands of the Serbs”.<sup>25</sup> Constantinople here is understandable for geographic and cultural reasons although it was the seat of a Muslim empire. However, his description of Europe starts with Alexandria, the first stop after his departure from Cairo, which is far “beyond” this border. For him, Alexandria closely resembles Frankish cities, as he confesses that he had not seen any of the latter: “I got this impression from the things I saw there and which do not exist anywhere else in Egypt.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, he mentions the high amount of non-Muslim population and widely used lingua franca. In his first step to France, he confirms his earlier assumption as he sees Marseille is very similar to Alexandria, except streets that are wider in the first! I am not claiming that his imagination of Europe is the result of his perception of his own country, whether it would be accurate or not. His imagination is significant as it is speculating on the boundaries between cultures,

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<sup>25</sup> Rifa’ a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, *An Imam in Paris: Account of a Stay in France by an Egyptian Cleric (1826-1831)*, (trans.) Daniel L. Newman, (London: Saqi, 2004), p. 114.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 131.

shifting margins between cultures and trying to define the location of the “other”, not to mention political agendas. Accepting the fact that the intelligentsia’s pioneering position in society is questionable; the individuals that I mention in this paper had assigned themselves as the teachers of the mass or were assigned by the government to produce a formal look about what was going on. Therefore, understanding their own processes of constructing or deconstructing the boundaries between civilizations, cultures and societies is crucial: “on way of penetrating the core of this society and its mentality is to ask how and where it established the borders of who was in and who was out.” what people in a given place and time view as sub-human tells us a good deal about the way in which they see the human condition.”<sup>27</sup>

Those cities involved in the comparison, which experienced the cultural, economic and spatial change earlier than the rest of the region, repeatedly harbored the perceptions of the local intelligentsia on geography and on boundaries. Obviously, the referential value of these cities owes their increasing presence in accounts to the efforts of the process of modernization. Yet already, the presence of lingua franca and non-Muslim populations seems to be the most tangible point. For one of the reasons in writing his *Alafranga*, Ahmed Midhat states the unavoidable presence of “Europeans” in Istanbul and “Ottoman” ignorance about their manners: “although there are hundreds of thousands of Europeans in our city, we are unaware of their manners and etiquettes.”<sup>28</sup> It is apparent that his concern is to expose how ignorant “Ottomans” are about the “European ways of doing things” even if they live side by side. Nevertheless, his geographical vision furthers that approximation between cultures: “Europe is not only close at hand, but it is also inside us. We, too, are in the European continent.”<sup>29</sup> First of all, we can see that the geographical perception supports the elimination of strangeness of the knowledge of the “other”, which seems to very much belong to the enlightenment ideology. Secondly, it seems crucial that his

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Burke, “*Stereotypes of Others*”, in *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, (London: Reaktion Books, 2001), p. 193.

<sup>28</sup> “Hele şehrimizde birkaç yüz bin Avrupalı vardır da usul ve adab-ı muaşeretlerinden haberdar değiliz.” *Alafranga*, p. 59.

<sup>29</sup> “Avrupa yanı başımızda bulunmak şöyle dursun adeta Avrupa bizim içimizdedir. Biz dahi Avrupa kıtasındayız.”, *ibid.*

declaration includes a sense of “we” as belonging to the European continent. That “we” is clearly Ahmed Midhat himself, the residents of Istanbul; but also his audience, which consists of an assortment of people, considering that he was a popular writer. Thirdly, his assumption reflects not only the tension between civilizations and the geographical entities but also indicates his awareness of the transparency in between them.

The relationship between civilization and geography has always been central to the Eurocentric formation of “civilization” following the stance of enlightenment. Notwithstanding the domestic issues regarding the relations with the west and the fundamental differences between agendas, the occidentalist framework generally pursued the same path in constructing the alterities and internalizing modernity. In that sense, we can notice that the age of enlightenment, the modern age or the so-called epistemic shift reflects on occidentalist works, (re)modeling the general framework of the relationship, but moreover augmenting the receptivity of Eurocentric historical time and modern intellectual paradigm. What are crucial here the domestic agendas of the occidentalists. Supporting the intellectual baggage of his master Muhammad Ali’s effort of modernizing Egypt; Al-Tahtawi mentions Franks’ faith in reason: “they reject anything that transcends the rational”<sup>30</sup> or their commitment to work: “they never neglect their work. Rich or poor, none of them tires from working.”<sup>31</sup> These comments that we can see in most of the occidentalist works, not surprisingly, set the eastern outlook off to acknowledge the ontological and epistemological difference between two worlds that was once suggested to understand the methodology of Orientalism by Said.

According to Tavakoli-Targhi, the dependence of occidentalist works, which are Iranian in his case, to the domestic agendas (nationalist, modernist, westernist etc.) opens the way to the orient’s “own orientalizing.”<sup>32</sup> The line of reasoning of contemporary nationalism was bringing up invented traditions or auspicious epochs from ancient history to lean on; but on the other hand, it was

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<sup>30</sup> Rifa’ a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, p. 179.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p., 176.

<sup>32</sup> Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography*, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 8.

the time to blame “tyranny, despotism, backwardness, decadence” in the orient. For occidentalists like Ahmed Midhat or al-Tahtawi, these were not the referential points that would be borrowed from Orientalism; the status of their nations in contemporary civilization was not in difficulty and to be reminded in every occasion. Their classification of humanity was not much different from that of the Orientalists’ and had been repeated throughout the century: “the first category is that of wild savages (hamal), the second of the uncivilized barbarians, whereas the third comprises people who are cultured, refined, sedentarized (tabaddur), civilized (tamaddun) and have attained the highest degree of urbanization (tamassur).”<sup>33</sup>

Considering his political support of the contemporary Ottoman regime, expecting Ahmed Midhat to have a different kind of conception about this categorization considering the vibrant vision of Abdulhamid II’s rule about the *raison d’etre* of the empire and its mission of civilizing different Muslim groups residing especially in the southern part of the empire is difficult and in the end he thinks no different.<sup>34</sup> Despite the fact that throughout the century different agendas of different cadres about Ottoman progress had struggled; obviously, these are not differ much when it comes to recall the “miserable” situation of backward people in the empire, whether they be Muslim like Arabs and Kurds or non-Muslims like Armenians or Bulgarians according to certain criteria that they all had borrowed from European Orientalism.<sup>35</sup> Midhat Paşa, a very significant character of opposition against the Hamidian regime, underlines the central role of empire in the region, be it geographical or cultural, in civilizing and enlightening:

“the nations of the east and of the north had not yet emerged from the state of barbarism in which they existed. As a consequence of this state of things, there was an influx of crowds of immigrants from all directions toward the Ottoman countries.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Rifa’a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, p. 102.

<sup>34</sup> About the Ottoman mission civilisatrice in the Abdulhamid II era, see, Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998); “the ottoman state was encouraged to do the same (as the colonizers) and spread the light of Islam into savage regions”, p. 148.

<sup>35</sup> Ussama Makdisi, “*Ottoman Orientalism*”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 3, (Jun., 2002).

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 789.

Nevertheless, his definition of the third group, which belongs to the civilized part of humankind, is different from that of the general orientalist prediction. That is to say his definition of the non-European world, which has generally been treated differently in Orientalism, was one of his standpoints as he speaks back to the orientalist vision of the global picture. He shares this critical stance, as most of his ideas about the “ideal” Ottoman life, with his mentor Osman Hamdi Bey, whom he also traveled to Paris with.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, he strongly criticizes the Eurocentric and Christian-centric definition of the civilized world:

“for Europeans, it is Christianity that determines the border between barbarianism and civilization; and, whether or not a tribe is ignorant about the religion and its real meaning and involves in every attack to the civilization and religion, Europeans would call them civilized while they announce the most civilized people of China and India as barbarians due to the fact that they do not accept Christianity.”<sup>38</sup>

For him, the main criteria for a nation to be called civilized are morality, virtue, kindness and solidarity, which had obviously been references of 19<sup>th</sup> century occidentalists as they emphasize moral championship of the non-western world over the west.<sup>39</sup> According to this perspective, these civilized nations (Arabic, Turkish, Indian, Chinese etc.) cannot be excluded from the designation of the civilized (mütemeddin) world due to their clumsiness in keeping up with the 19<sup>th</sup> century European progress.

Following the design of the concept of a global history in the age of enlightenment and the idea of “spirit” that signifies the episteme of the age, in that sense of modern, the contemporary modern center of universal history and possessor of modernity and everything that belongs to the modern was becoming Europe. Besides, many of the oriental travelers were admitting the European

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<sup>37</sup> See Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan, ibid. ; for Osman Hamdi’s “speaking back to orientalism”, see, Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 41.

<sup>38</sup> “Avrupalılar için vahşet ve medeniyet arasını tahdid ve tayin eyleyen şey hristiyanlık olup bir kavim ne kadar vahşi olursa olsun hristiyanlığı kabul eyledikten sonra hikmet ve diyanet hakkında zerre kadar fikr-i mahsus bulunmasa ve medeniyet ve diyanetin asla tecviz etmeyeceği meayib ve mezalimin kaffesini mürtekip bulunsa bile onu Avrupalılar yine sivilize yani mütemeddin addederek nasraniyeti kabul etmedikten sonra Çin’in Hind’in en mütemeddin halkını bile barbar addederler.” Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Rikalda yahut Amerika’da Vahşet Alemleri*, (İstanbul: 1307), p. 74, quoted in Okay, p. 39.

<sup>39</sup> Okay, p. 39.

superiority or in any case could not hide their enthusiasm as they mention the material progress that they had witnessed; it was certain that there was no hesitation about the position of Europe in civilized world and its distance from a state of savagery and barbarity: “the countries of Europe are well endowed with all types of knowledge and refinement, which, no one will deny, are conducive to sociability and embellish civilization.”<sup>40</sup> Al-Tahtawi, thanks to his over-excitement about his travel and the existing French effect in Egypt that he had been experiencing, follows his appreciation of Europe by announcing France “through its great attachment to the arts and sciences...the greatest nation in terms of its manners and culture” and its capital Paris, the subject of his book *Takhlis al-Ibriz fi Talkhis Baris*, “which, is the seat of the king of the French...the greatest of the Frankish cities.”<sup>41</sup>

Obviously, Paris had been central for Ottoman intellectuals in reifying and spatializing their urge on cultural modernization of the empire drawn to a degree of a fetish city, a wonderland.<sup>42</sup> Most of Ahmed Midhat’s novels take place in Paris; and, most of his characters enjoy the splendors of modernity there, which they had yearned for and dreamed of before taking a chance to leave Istanbul, which, despite the Parisian lifestyle in Pera, was not sufficiently qualified to offer modernity. One of his enamored-of-Paris characters congratulates himself for his decision:

“-Wasn’t I right by claiming that the real-city is Europe and our Istanbul is a big village? Comparing to these entertainments of Paris, Istanbul’s most wonderful ones are like village party!”<sup>43</sup>

Some fifty years after Al-Tahtawi, Ahmed Midhat’s evaluation of Paris following his visit, will be significantly different from that of his predecessor’s due to the difference of his criteria for being civilized. Depending only on material progress and ignoring morality, decency, chastity, humanity and faithfulness that he sees as the prerequisites of happiness of mankind, he represents Paris not as the center of

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<sup>40</sup> Rifa’a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, p. 213.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> See Halil Gökhan, Timour Mouhidine (eds.), *Türk Edebiyatında Paris*, (İstanbul: YKY, 2000).

<sup>43</sup> “-Asıl şehir Avrupa olup bizim İstanbul ise bir büyük köy olduğunu iddia da hakkım yok mu imiş? Paris’in bu alemleri yanında İstanbul’un en parlak alemleri adeta köy derneği gibi kalıyor!”, “Paris’te Bir Türk”, in *Letâif-i Rivayat*, p. 306.

civilization in the world but also the center of blasphemy, anarchy, barbarity and savagery.<sup>44</sup>

In most examples of Ottoman Occidentalism, the most remarkable measure of civilized life appears to be the conditions of family life. Family was emphasized as the most fundamental unit in society the way in which it requires, provides, manages and sustains basic criteria of civilized life such as morality, virtue, kindness and solidarity. Obviously, according to these criteria, Ottoman families, due to their traditional character, were epitomized as the source of a refined lifestyle.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, questioning the living conditions of European families had become very popular among the Ottoman press and literature. They were seen as dysfunctional units in supplying their members an honorable living and education, which still were not, and most probably will not be, dispensed in Istanbul even if there was an increasing risk approaching from Europe. In fact, the general belief among the occidentalist observers was that the European family did lose its authoritative power in society; while, their comments in Muslim countries were still operating on the conditions of family as the most important organization being responsible for the success or failure of the transformation of progress that they witness.

Furthermore, a very important instrument in occidentalist criticism against the everyday life in European metropolis appears to be the weakening authority of religion. The ongoing debates between orientalist and occidentalist intellectuals were mainly on the origins of religions and on the role of religions on current corruption and decay in states and societies. Islam had been the very basis of European intellectual's attack on the oriental regimes and everyday lives. Eastern intellectuals tried to respond these attacks by writing refutations, which in time had become a genre itself. Nevertheless, for their parts, trying to understand the western other, occidentalists' argument was mainly based on the attacks, both

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<sup>44</sup> Okay, p. 258.

<sup>45</sup> In fact, these suppositions are highly questionable. On mistaken judgements by contemporary observers of the Ottoman household, see Alan Duben, "*Household Formation in Late Ottoman İstanbul*", *IJMES*, Vol. 22, No. 4, (Nov. 1990), pp. 420-422.

from intellectuals and ordinary Europeans in Europe, to the religion (Christianity), which debilitate religion to the point where it cannot coordinate social order.<sup>46</sup>

Ahmed Midhat's response to the changing position of religion in the daily lives of Europeans acclaims his typical mind-set about the relationship between human geography and civilization. He tries to make a distinction not depending on the original antagonism between Christianity and Islam but according to the degree of the influence of religion, which he thinks by and large despairing in Europe. In order to emphasize that emergent peculiarity and to favor the eminent role of religion in the east, Ahmed Midhat's oriental Christians are not separate from that of Muslims in terms of high moral standards, family values and life depending on kindness, solidarity and faith.<sup>47</sup> Those who threaten that harmonious life are the European visitors and adventurous foreigners, who play their parts as adventure-seeking, trouble-making vicious "foreigners" in most of his novels that take place in Istanbul.

Concomitant to his discursive method regarding the self and the other, his quest for "authentic civilization" follows a geographical path with inconsistencies and ambiguities that increases the credibility of his ideas and authority of himself as being the "teacher" of the Ottoman public. By the use of that methodological framework, he also offers a "divided" other according to the "intercourse" between geography and civilization. In that context, he announces the civilized part of Europe as its north. Unlike al-Tahtawi, Ahmed Midhat had had a chance to see northern Europe during his visit and had met intellectuals from this region during the Orientalists' Conference in 1889 that took place in Stockholm. His motives behind his praise of that geographical area are, firstly, that the newcomers to industrialism, which he admires, are mostly in this part of Europe. Secondly, the region had had the advanced and officially-promoted circumstances of entrepreneurship, which he believes would be fundamental for an Ottoman modernization. Thirdly, despite all its material progress, he observed that the moral, traditional lifestyle was still surviving in the region.

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<sup>46</sup> For instance, see, Namık Kemal, *Renan Müdafaaamesi*, (İstanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1326/1910).

<sup>47</sup> Orhan Okay, p. 293.

Both al-Tahtawi and Ahmed Midhat were aware of the role of their civilizations in history, not to forget the 19<sup>th</sup> century course of the rise of historicism in both countries, and they both had ideas about misconceptions. Al-Tahtawi recalls this “potential”:

“If only Cairo were maintained and amply provided with the means of civilization, it would surely be the queen of cities, the pinnacle of the cities of the world, and thus live up to the widespread colloquial saying of its people that Cairo is ‘the mother of the world’ (umm al-dunya)”<sup>48</sup>

Ahmed Midhat had dreamt of an Ottoman ethnographical museum, which certainly would be magnificent, during his visit to the ethnography museum in Stockholm.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, he was aware of the fact that the idea behind the museum stems from an ideology embedded in modern civilization. Interestingly enough, his ideas regarding the continent were very much consistent with the general intellectual perspective of the enlightenment, which places northern Europe as the bearer of the ideology of modernity due to its performance in industrialism but also due to the general belief that southern Europe had completed its leading role in the history of civilization. The new Eurocentric concept of history-writing was actually meant to be a northern-Eurocentric one that respects the role of the south in classical age but dismisses its function-ability in a totally new world. Hegel, for his part named these leading actors in different ages as the bearers of the “spirit” of ages; and, now, northern Europe is the bearer of the “spirit” in modernity: “the “beginning” and “end” of history is Europe. But there are various Europes. There is southern Europe: Portugal, Spain, southern France, and Italy. There is the spirit dwelt in antiquity, when the north was still “uncultivated”. But southern Europe is not marked with a “nucleus (kern) of development in itself”....but there are also two distinct northern Europes. One is Eastern Europe, consisting of Poland and Russia, which have always existed in relation to Asia. The one that needs to be spoken of, however, is Western Europe: “Germany, France, Denmark, the Scandinavian countries are the heart of Europe”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Rifa’ a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, p. 170.

<sup>49</sup> *Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan*, p. 236.

## 2.2. Rise of Alafranga to be the Fashion-Doubtless in Istanbul

Introduced by the earliest western observers, the term “alla Turca” was an endeavor to generate “a synthetic model of Ottoman-Turkish culture. The first reason was the need to describe the ‘operational code’ of a dangerous neighbor, and second, the real contrast between the institutions of the Ottoman Empire and those of Western Europe.”<sup>51</sup> Still being used in daily conversation in Turkey, “alla franca” and “alla turca” symbolize the encounter between different lifestyles within the society, both having positive and negative connotations; not to mention, the term “alla Franca” is as contaminated as its opposite and can be evaluated as “the operational code of a dangerous neighbor”. Besides its morally questionable image, the Frankish way of doing things has always been interpreted as the modern way of doing things; it belongs to the age and is more open to innovation and change. Despite it stating the Frankish world; its perception denotes the universal, unlike its counterpart that signifies national authenticity. Despite and probably with the help of this modern, innovative and universal overtone, its acceptance had been very convoluted even in big cities, upper echelons of the society and among young people and cosmopolitan environments.

The objections to the introduction of alafranga were very central at this point vis-à-vis the public opinion and suspicion. The most ostensible protests were based on increasing women presence, promenades along Bosphorus, excessive consumption etc. Surprisingly enough, in Tanzimat era, a very early comment on the subject by the great scholar Ahmed *Cevdet Paşa* was not accusing Europeans but the immigrants from Cairo and their seductive effect on Ottoman elite, especially women from palace circles.<sup>52</sup> Later on, as a result of increasing European population and increasing influence of embassies in urban

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<sup>50</sup> Quoted in, Enrique Dussel, “Eurocentricism and Modernity”, *Boundary 2*, Vol. 20, No: 3, The Postmodernism Debate In Latin America, (Autumn, 93), p. 71.

<sup>51</sup> Şerif Mardin, “Power, Civil Society and Culture in the Ottoman Empire”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 11, No. 3, (Jun., 1969), p. 258.

<sup>52</sup> Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezahir*, v. 1, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1953), p. 13-20.

life, the object of grumble became alafraŋga and its associates. According to Mardin, “by the 1870s the inevitable had happened: the second generation of the new class succumbed to the softness and protectiveness of an urban life over which it ruled unchallenged.”<sup>53</sup> Mass opinion in relation to alafraŋga had become more coherent and rigid in time: “living alla franca, that is to say living comfortably.”<sup>54</sup>

Excessive consumption seems to be the most obvious motive behind this rupture and also signifies the breakout within the elite itself. One generation after *Cevdet Paşa*, the elites who questioned the new class were, “those who could not profit from the advantages of the new status of private property: the members of the elite who had not been able to acquire alla Franca wealth.”<sup>55</sup> Ahmed Midhat, as a modest craftsman living in the modest means and does not belong to alla Franca circles, inescapably objected the new class due to conspicuous consumption and their “alafraŋga” inventions which, he was aware had nothing to do with the life in Europe; alafraŋga in Istanbul is very exclusive and attracts suspicious ones and scorns “the man in the street.” Besides the resentment from the men in the street to the suspicious individuals, alafraŋga had been criticized via the change in officially designed and pioneered everyday life. The change in the urban landscape, for instance *İbrahim Paşa*’s amusement parks, and increasing presence of women in public stepped anti-westernism up.<sup>56</sup> In the last days of the empire, this difference between Tanzimat generations was analyzed according to a very ideological, still anti-westernist, frame that used alafraŋga and its transformation in time as the central representative. In 1920, Yakup Kadri would write that relationship between alafraŋga and cultural breakout down:

“There had been two eras in Istanbul: one is Istanbulin, the other is redingot...Ottomans have never been classy, clean and gentle like they were in this Istanbulin era. The biggest achievement of Tanzimat-ı Hayriye is that Istanbul gentlemen wearing Istanbulin. This costume gave

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<sup>53</sup> Şerif Mardin, “Super Westernization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century”, Peter Benedict, Erol Tümerterkin, Fatma Mansur (eds.), *Turkey: Geographic and Social Perspectives*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), p. 407.

<sup>54</sup> “sırf alafraŋga –yani rahat yaşamak için-“, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Felâhât Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, 1292/1875, (İstanbul: Morpa, 1992), p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Mardin, *Superwesternization*, p. 423.

<sup>56</sup> Mardin, *Superwesternization*, p. 433.

birth to a new type of man and Turks in this costume appeared as a new special nation between wild Asia and ruthless Europe for the very first time. Considering the lifestyle and manner of dressing, this nation was plainer and more considerate than the oriental nations; according to sentiments and mentality it was appearing as the sum of Mediterranean Civilizations...All of these people were afraid of public things, careful in their pleasures and anger, modest family fathers and gentle konak owners...Then came the redingot age and from this sprung up a half-servant, half-slave, hypocrite, cheap generation...In the hands of these men, konak-life in Istanbul had turned into köşk-life. No style of living, dressing or thinking was survived; everything had run out of tradition; every mind were surrounded by a distasteful, degenerate Art Nouveau and Rococo interest; our morals and manners were ‘rococoized’ like our buildings, furniture, garments...”<sup>57</sup>

Being aware of that authority of the expression “alafranga” in contemporary daily life of the capital and widespread debates around it, Ahmed Midhat’s motivation in writing *Adab-ı Muaşeret yahud Alafranga* is to expose how complex and difficult is the Frankish way of doing things and to criticize its deceptive usage in daily life that is hiding every insult to the civilized life:

“Alafranga!... Has there been any mouth left without using that expression in last thirty forty years? It comes from every mouth even if it is irrelevant. Sometimes the power of this expression reaches to the point of certainty. “Its supposed to be alafranga!...” Who can object anymore?”<sup>58</sup>

Besides the hegemony of the imprudent and fashion-doubtless, the expression *alafranga* was in the service of dismissing and depreciating the traditional ways of living, the *alaturka* as it sounds irrelevant to the age. Moreover, as *alafranga*

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<sup>57</sup> “İstanbul’da iki devir oldu: Biri İstanbullu; diğeri redingot devri...Osmanlılar hiçbir zaman bu İstanbul devrindeki kadar zarif, temiz ve kibar olmadılar. Tanzimat-ı Hayriye’nin en büyük eseri, İstanbullu İstanbul Efendisidir. Bu kıyafet dünyaya yeni bir insan tipi çıkardı ve Türkler bu kıyafet içinde ilk defa olarak vahşi Asya ile haşin Avrupa’nın arasında gayet hususi yeni bir millet gibi görüldü. Yaşayış ve giyiniş itibariyle Şimal kavimlerinden daha sade ve daha düşünceli olan bu millet, duyuş ve düşünüş itibariyle Akdeniz kıyılarındaki medeniyetlerin bir hülasesi şeklinde tecelli ediyordu...Hepsi de umumi işlerden çekinir, hiddetlerinde ve hazlarında ölçülü, namuslu aile babaları ve kibar konak sahipleri idiler...Sonra redingot devri geldi ve redingotu içinden yarı uşak, yarı kapıkulu, riyakar, adi bir nesil türedi...Bunların elinde İstanbul’da konak hayatı birdenbire köşk hayatına intikal ediverdi. Ne yaşayışın, ne düşünüşün, ne giyinişin üslubu kaldı; her şey gelenek dışına çıktı; her beyni tatsız ve soysuz bir Arnuvo ve bir Rokoko merakı sardı; binalarımız, eşyalarımız, elbiselerimiz gibi ahlakımız, terbiyemiz de rokokolaştı...”, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Kiralık Konak*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), p. 10-11.

<sup>58</sup> “Alafranga!... Otuz kırk seneden beri bu kelimenin ziyaret etmediği ağız mı kalmıştır? Her ağızdan, olur olmaz münasebetler üzerine bir ‘Alafranga’ sözüdür çıkar. Bazen bu sözün kuvveti bir hüküm-i kati derecesine varır. ‘Alafranga’ imiş!... Artık buna kim itiraz edebilir?”, *Alafranga*, p. 59.

was becoming a superior alternative, it had become all that is not alaturka, non-alaturka: “Ever if alaturka society casts me out, the European society would not turn me down.”<sup>59</sup> Regarding that it also had become a discourse generating references for every aspect of the capital’s daily life and representing and being represented the other’s body, language, and location; alafranga was not only “the Frankish way of doing things”, but also standing for the “Frankish world”.

The most visible agent to blame for the intensity of the concept of alafranga in daily debates was the great interest in foreign language education and the increasing use of foreign words and expressions in daily life. In fact, Ahmed Midhat literally tries to expose the symbolic difference between “Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeretı” and “Alafranga”. Ottoman version sounds solemn and more direct to the point, while the term “Alafranga” associates the world of the “other” that would obviously violate the world of “us” and mostly generates antagonism. In his attempt, therefore, Ahmed Midhat also tries to correct the conservative, anti-western reading of the concept. On the other hand, the French version leads to semantic confusion, not to mention its hegemony in some circles: French is prerequisite of living alafranga in Beyoğlu.<sup>60</sup> The curiosity in using French expressions in everyday talk was touched on in many of Ahmed Midhat’s novels.<sup>61</sup>

These fop characters were used as symbols of mimicry. Even recent historianship reflects the displeasure with their ambiguous identities: “for many years this school (Galatasaray) graduated excellent men, but also many Francophile intellectuals whose alienation from their own culture and disdain of their own society was no different from the attitudes of the colonial intelligentsia towards their own societies.”<sup>62</sup> Obviously, the change caused by education and

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<sup>59</sup> “Alaturka sosyete beni kendi hududundan harice tardedecek olursa Avrupa sosyetesı beni reddetmez.” Ahmed Midhat, *Jön Türk*, (İstanbul: Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 1326/1910), p. 62.

<sup>60</sup> Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Bekarlık Sultanlık mı Dedin?, in *Letaif-i Rivayat*, 1302/1886, eds. Fazıl Gökçek, Sabahattin Çağın, (İstanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 2001), p. 272.

<sup>61</sup> Felatun’s father Meraki Efendi corrects his maid’s language: “Birgün ‘Mehmet!.Beyefendi ne yapıyor?’ deyip de Mehmet’ten ‘Çorba içiyor cevabımı alınca ‘Oğlum öyle söyleme, ona alafrangada ‘sup yiyor’ derler demiş ve Mehmet ‘Hayır efendim! Allah göstermesin!.Sopa yediği yok, çorba içiyor’ dediği halde bile Meraki Efendi meraklanmayıp ‘Oğlum! Alafrangada çorbanın adı sup’tur; bunları birer birer öğrenmeli’ diye bir öğüt vermişti.” *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, p. 17.

increasing concern on foreign language was stronger the way in which mostly it was believed that the French language is very simple and lacking literary power for instance that of Arabic or Persian: “if a teacher wants to explain a book, he does not need to decipher or analyze the expressions first since the words are clear by themselves.”<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, the Ottoman language is more elegant but more complex and hard to learn and for instance in Ahmed Midhat novels, surely foreigners are having problems with learning but they cannot keep themselves from singing pleasant Ottoman songs.<sup>64</sup> In that context, those who learn French had generally been criticized by the former generation due to their “failure” in literature, lacking writing and reading skills and necessary sentiments; therefore, to claim that they obtained status through that kind of Frankish education in the society and even among intellectual cadre is incomplete, yet it is certain that they were the object for both.

The extra gist of these actors, contributing Ahmed Midhat the chance of explaining the western civilization according to his own ideology, was that they characterize and cause the “ignorance” on the western culture:

“Desire to imitate everything European can be seen here. This desire to imitate something unknown to us usually leads imitation of unadvisable and unpleasant aspects of Alafranga, and negligence of reasonable and praiseworthy ones on the other hand.”<sup>65</sup>

Besides, the objective behind that mimicry is to consolidate the hegemony of these people on the knowledge of what is Frankish and what is not.<sup>66</sup> Though the superficiality was obvious, it provided space for criticism: “many of the lesser bureaucrats had only a superficial knowledge of the west, combined with a snobbish rejection of traditional ottoman ways....bearers of an alien culture, made

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<sup>62</sup> Kemal H. Karpat, “*The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908*”, IJMES, Vol. 3, No. 3, (Jul., 1972), p. 259.

<sup>63</sup> Rifa’a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, p. 253.

<sup>64</sup> *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, p. 66.

<sup>65</sup> “Lakin bizde her şeyi onlara taklide heves görülür. Bilmediğimiz şeyleri taklitteki hevesimiz dahi bizi ekseriya alafranganın gayri matbu’ ve gayri müstahsen olan cihetlerini taklide makul ve memduh olan şeylerini gafletle ihmale sevk eyliyor.” *Alafranga*, p. 59. See also Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, (Montreal: McGill UP, 1964), p. 284-5.

<sup>66</sup> On the concept of ‘mimicry’, see, Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 85-93.

them extremely unpopular in traditional Muslim circles. Westernized Ottoman Christians and certainly foreigners often ridiculed them as orientals impersonating a civilization they did not understand.”<sup>67</sup> Being aware of this superficiality, Ahmed Midhat had tried to make fun of them, in many of his works, in order to dismiss their unquestionable authority on the knowledge of the west.

Nevertheless, this authority of ‘misguided’ Frankish ways was not easy to rule out due to the complexity and multiplicity of the factors that were not only operating in public life but also affecting the family life. An important agent of complexity and transcendence of the (mis)conception or discourse in everyday life of Ottoman families had taken their parts in Ahmed Midhat novels as foreign tutors, “institutrice”, to Ottoman kids. Besides the evident power of education, these agents were symbols of western innovation and Ottoman decay considering the incompatibility of the traditional Islamic tutorship in modern world. In fact, he was in favor of western educational methods and accepts the disability of Ottoman methods. However, his objection was based on the lack of pedagogical knowledge and foreign tutors’ invincible role in filling this gap. Quite surprisingly, European etiquette writers were also complaining about the replacement of maternal education with tutorship: “les nourrices et les bonnes maltrahaient ou pervertissaient les pauvres petits enfants qui leur étaient confiés”.<sup>68</sup>

In *Bahtiyarlık*, he reminds the reader of a recent incident that took place in Galatasaray School (Mekteb-i Sultani) based on the contents of the Ottoman History course in which Ottomans are proclaimed to be natural born apathetic and barbarian.<sup>69</sup> The western curriculum surpassed contemporary Ottoman one that was based on religion and its grammar; it was encompassing social and private life according to the requirements and charm of the day and unsurprisingly favoring alafanga while ejecting alaturka from houses of the wealthy and even middle-class Ottoman families. These tutors did not themselves represent rivals to the traditional system; instead, their powerful presence and position, which can be witnessed in late Ottoman literature, at the new Ottoman house in order to inform

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<sup>67</sup> Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1997), p. 69.

<sup>68</sup> Louise d’Alq, *Notes d’Une Mère*, (Paris: Bureaux des Causeries Familiales, 1883), p. 18.

<sup>69</sup> “*Bahtiyarlık*”, in *Letaif-i Rivayat*, p. 314.

Ottoman youth about the contemporary western culture and lingua franca that they learned at home, without adopting it to the Ottoman culture. Apparently, the authenticity of that knowledge of the western culture is problematic for Ahmed Midhat as he suggests his readers to inquire about the institutrice and not to hire some woman who does not have any quality than being French.<sup>70</sup>

Another agent which he paid attention was the effect of contemporary European literature on Ottoman youth. As a matter of fact, being most probably the leading actor of change in the Ottoman literature throughout the second half of the century, he was writing in western style. Furthermore, out of 158 books that he produced in western style, 39 were derived and also translated from a foreign source.<sup>71</sup> That admiration, in a way, indicates his taste of style, which, in turn, leads us to his position regarding the contemporary ideological debates among writers: he demands novels to be written to search for the desire for the ideal; therefore, dismissing naturalism, which he considers ignoring the pleasant stories in the society in order to impose a radical ideology.<sup>72</sup> For him, the obligation of the writer is to represent both good and evil to manipulate the individual to make a choice. That stylistic taste is compatible to his general attitude whenever he comments on European society. While Zola's Paris was not the place for honest people to live, Ahmed Midhat denies mentioning the slums in order to praise the still respectable, and for him the majority.<sup>73</sup> In the end of his *Alafranga*, he admits the content of the book as totally embracing "the honest part of social etiquette" and "immorality-free": "the reason is obvious. Due to the fact that, the immoral sect of Europe is not top secret, it is free from the burden of depiction."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmed Midhat Efendi*, (İstanbul: MEB Yayınları, 1991), p. 311.

<sup>71</sup> Cemal Demircioğlu, *From Discourse to Practice...*, p. 217.

<sup>72</sup> Zeynep Seviner, "Tabiiliğin Medar-ı Azamı: Ahmed Midhat Ahlakçılığı ve Natürizm" in *Merhaba Ey Muharrir! Ahmed Midhat Üzerine Eleştirel Yazılar*, Nüket Esen & Erol Köroğlu (eds.), (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2006), p. 91.

<sup>73</sup> See, Fatma Betül Cihan, *The Image of Western Women in Ahmed Midhat's Discourse on Westernization*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, B.U. Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences, 2006, pp. 74-76.

<sup>74</sup> "Bizim bu kitapta yazdığımız şeyler hemen kamilen adab-ı muaşeretin namuskarane cihetine ait olup Avrupa'nın fuhşiyata ait olan ahvaline hemen hiç iltifat etmedik. Bunun sebebi bellidir. Avrupa'nın fuhşiyat ciheti gizli kapaklı bir şey olmadığından i'lam ve tarif külfetinden azadedir." *Alafranga*, p. 271.

The popular discourse on alafanga had usually worked on European moral values via mythmaking. Ahmed Midhat tries to invalidate these generalizations:

“it is believed that the women in Europe are completely free insomuch that her husband cannot come in without her permission while she was meeting her friend. We cannot even briefly describe how absurd is that opinion. It is necessary to learn about the European manners in order to understand how invalid that judgment is.”<sup>75</sup>

In that sense, he challenges the general framework of the popular debate on “European immorality”, which utilizes women presence in public space, reminiscent of other eastern observers of “the European ways of doing things”.<sup>76</sup> Occidentalism’s emphasis on immorality is as old as orientalist reading of the east through its women. Even in early accounts on the occident, eastern writers try to make a connection between European decadence and prostitution.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, Ahmed Midhat’s balanced views (that is not to say unprejudiced), which separates European culture and manners from “immorality”, cannot go well with the general character of the Occidentalism that separates the material from moral progress of Europe. Furthermore, he admits many aspects of European daily praxis as even superior to alaturka such as the appreciation of modesty, the avoidance of using bad language, the respect for personal privacy and family life etc.<sup>78</sup> His attempt and insistence of displaying the moral part of alafanga demonstrates his uneasiness with the established disregard of it while questioning the established bias.

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<sup>75</sup> “Avrupa’da kadınlar tamamiyle serbest olup hatta bir kadın kendi dostu ile musahabe eder iken kocası gelip de alafangaca kapıyı dakk eylese kadın duhule müsaade vermeyince kocası giremez zannolunur. Bu zannın ne kadar batıl olduğunu burada muhtasaran bile izah edemeyiz.” *Alafanga*, p. 59-60.

<sup>76</sup> On European women through eastern eyes, see Gilles Veinstein, *İlk Osmanlı Sefiri Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi’nin Fransa Anıları*, (İstanbul: Özgü, 2002); Rifa’a Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, p. 253.

<sup>77</sup> Dror Ze’evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900*, (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2006), p. 162.

<sup>78</sup> Okay, p. 120-121.

### 2.3. In Search of the Rules for Representing the ‘Self’ to the ‘Other’

Considering the differences between Ahmed Midhat’s definition of civilization and the strict Eurocentric one, his evaluation of Paris, to which he reserved one third of his travel book, can be accepted as the most original part of his designation of civilization and gave him an opportunity to fulfill his exceptional occidentalist views and a chance to propose a definition of civilization and description of its rules and borders in the cityscape and to expose himself as an authoritative power dealing with the Ottoman society’s relationship with and knowledge about the European:

“...all Europe cannot be like Paris; in fact, all Paris cannot be like Paris. In Paris, especially in some provinces of France and in other countries in Europe, people are so much obligated to obey the rules and procedures of good manners and etiquette, the burden of these aforementioned can exhaust them.”<sup>79</sup>

Therefore, the rules of etiquette function in order to integrate people, whether in cities or in the country, separate them from the excessive types and constitute a common culture that allows the decent to live without any inconvenience. This main argument of his can also be traced back within his literary career. Considering the amount of his writings that include and observe the relationship between two civilizations, which were both under construction, under transformation, and obtaining domestic authority; on the other hand, were influencing, trying to oppress but also very much curious about each other, the spaces that he makes use of and put this interplay into and the actors, who were designed especially in order to picture the abovementioned communication and to expose Ahmed Midhat’s ideals, worth analyzing. Furthermore, in these encounters, both spaces and actors are fabricated according to their compatibility with social manners, whether of Europe or Ottoman; and spoilers are therefore to be the corrupt, treacherous, decadent etc. Without exception, every member of a

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<sup>79</sup> “Lakin bütün Avrupa Paris gibi olamaz. Hatta bütün Paris dahi bu halde değildir. Paris’le, bhusus Fransa’nın sair vilayetlerinde ve hele Avrupa’nın diğer memalikinde halkın büyük bir kısmı hüsn-i muaşeret hususunda o kadar usul ve adaba riayet mecburiyeti altında bulunurlar ki, adab-ı mezkurenin icap eylediği külfetler kendilerini bile yorarlar.” *Alafranga*, p. 61.

decent society and worth meeting should know and obey the manners or etiquette. His general appreciation of European manners in his book and expectation of them to be observed by every member that belongs to the European or “alafranga” society and can be observed in the spaces they belong to, bearing in mind that he usually mocks the latter for not knowing it-self or having its-self, offers a universalistic tone to his ideals and, therefore, spaces or actors.

On the other hand, one of the differences between Orientalism and Occidentalism in the nineteenth century was the fact that the latter did not have academics and institutions and did not have the same amount of material reference as did Orientalism which is the foremost prerequisite of forming a discourse for Edward Said.<sup>80</sup> Due to that lacuna in occidentalist studies, Ahmed Midhat had apparently relied on western sources in the course of picturing European capitals and metropolises in his works that he depicted before his visit to Europe; and, furthermore, he had continued to make use of western sources that he bought from Europe following his return. Nonetheless, despite the fact that the subject of my case study, *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret-i*, owes the details of etiquette rules to Mm. Louise d’Alq’s *Le Savoir vivre en Toutes les Circonstances de la Vie* (1877) and Bertall’s *La Comédie de Notre Temps* (1874-1876), Ahmed Midhat clearly reflected his own ideology and agenda throughout the book for his Istanbulite audience; in this regard, to maintain his criticism, which western sources lack, he generated his own references from his own experiences of alterity. In that sense, 19<sup>th</sup> century double life in the Ottoman capital appears to be a very appropriate reference, which reserves the alteritist discourse with both physical and cultural urban encounters for him; and furthermore, supplied him with a chance to observe the individual encounters between the occidental and the oriental in different physical environments. Interestingly enough, he obliquely portrays his methodology that depends on personification, spatialization and storification of Pera environment that was the most ‘westernized’ at the time:

“What an extraordinary place is that Beyoğlu! European novel writers are occupied with Paris but our Beyoğlu is more surprising than Paris.

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<sup>80</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 94. Said mentions for instance Edward Lane’s *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* having this authority that “was imperative for anyone writing or think-ing about the Orient, not just about Egypt”, and, therefore, cited and read widely.

Wherever one looks at, a novel appears. Whoever one run up against, he would certainly be related to a novel.”<sup>81</sup>

Understanding the role of Istanbul in his occidentalist effort of composing the alterity is very decisive the way in which his urban activity there supplied him with a chance to observe the shared manners and common values of alter groups and their efforts of getting them accepted by the other; not to forget, Ahmed Midhat’s role was not to spy on these encounters; he was one of the participants. In this course of representation, he had managed to denounce and disregard disproportionate members of both parties and questioned the legitimacy of spaces housing the extreme positions such as conservatism, even Puritanism, that he believed had been generally shared by the members of both societies.

One of the most biblical characters created by Ahmed Midhat, *Rakım Efendi* in *Felâhî Bey ile Rakım Efendi* is distinguished not only with his morals but also his representation of himself and his attitude towards the “other”. He is a self educated character, who learned about both oriental and occidental sciences and has good command of French; besides was brought up according to Islamic morals and Turkish manners.<sup>82</sup> All information about *Rakım* comes from his foreign contacts, which had become wondered as they getting to know him; until French piano teacher Mm. *Josephino*’s visit, we cannot imagine the compatibility between modesty of his personality and his one-storey, traditional Ottoman and, thanks to the slave girl, very clean dwelling in Salıpaazarı. Salıpaazarı is a traditional Ottoman neighborhood to live unlike Pera, although they are very close. Due to his daily works, his everyday is divided into two between these environments; however, that does not confuse him anyway and he does not directly convey his feelings about the dwellings or the personage in Pera, in a total aloofness. On the other hand, his foreign visitors become amazed with the very first step they take into the house in Salıpaazarı:

“*Josephino* found *Rakım*’s living room very beautiful. Likewise, as she saw the well-kept garden from the room she got delighted more and said:

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<sup>81</sup> “Şu Beyoğlu ne yaman memlekettir! Avrupa romancıları Paris’e göz dikmişler ama bizim Beyoğlu birçok cihetlerce Paris’den de yamandır. Hangi tarafa bakılsa bir roman görülür. Hangi adama tesadüf edilse mutlaka bir romana taalluku vardır.” Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Müşahedat*, (İstanbul: Tercüman-ı Hakikat, 1308/1891), p. 121.

<sup>82</sup> Okay, p. 48.

- Monsieur *Rakım*! I liked your house very much. What kind of a good taste you have! The room is like a box. But, I want to see the other rooms.  
- Madame, there are no rooms other than our bedrooms.  
...Josephino did find the other rooms in a very clean condition. Everything is in their own place, everything is in order. She had become so pleased that she confirmed what kind of happiness to own a house like this.”<sup>83</sup>

In time, he gets hired by an English family, which recently left Canterbury to live in Asmalımescid Street, to teach their two young daughters Ottoman in their house; no need to say they all become fascinated with this young man and, therefore, with moral conditions of the Ottoman society. Obviously, notwithstanding his role of representation, *Rakım* is also a visitor to them and thanks to this position he never fails to observe these strangers, their lifestyle and manners and compare them to his. Nevertheless, he never happens to be amazed with these due to the fact that his foreign friends are decent people otherwise they would not know *Rakım*; in addition, he is also acknowledged with and prepared for European manners. Obliquely, Ahmed Midhat tries to expose that one being European does not mean that he is supposed to be decadent and live without manners and rules, which in fact European manners are very distinguished and efficient and in the same class with Ottoman’s.

This English family are also acquainted with *Rakım*’s antithesis *Felatun Bey* and hosting him sometimes at their family-house too. Nevertheless, whereas *Rakım* had been a member of the family due to his knowledge of and respect for their manners, *Felatun* could not continue this relationship and was deprived of a “privilege” after his inappropriate behavior (after approaching the lady of the house whom he mistook for the maid). The image of Ottomans in European eyes had always been very crucial for Ahmed Midhat. Obviously, *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret-i yahud Alafranga* was primarily written as a code book for entering the European social environments in Europe and in Istanbul as well; on the other hand, his positive characters who had gained this privilege were not able to do so, specifically, due to their good command of European manners or *alafranga* but to

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<sup>83</sup> “Jozefino, Rakım’ın salonunu pek güzel buldu. Hele salondan bahçeye bakıp da orasının pek bakımlı olduğunu görünce daha çok memnun olup: Jozefino- Mösyö Rakım! Evinizi pek beğendim. Ne tabiat sahibi imişsiniz! Vallahi kutu gibi bir saloncuk. Ama odalarınızı da görmek isterim. Rakım- Madam! Bundan başka yerlerimiz yatak odalarımızdır... Jozefino odaları tertemiz bir durumda buldu. Her şey yerinde, her şey düzeninde. O kadar memnun oldu ki, böyle bir eve malik olmanın mutluluk olduğunu bir kez yineledi.” *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, p. 47.

their habitus (both inherited and characteristic, apparently in *Rakım*'s situation) and by and large to their performance in alaturka and Islamic morals (*avec l'esprit oriental et les idées Musulmanes*<sup>84</sup>).

Another character, who was able to gain the respect of foreigners and successfully represented Ottoman nation and Islamic civilization with his performance, created by Ahmed Midhat before his visit to Europe, was *Nasuh* in *Paris'te Bir Türk*. Like *Rakım*, *Nasuh* was also a self-educated young man. He is very able in French language that he even translates poetry from Arabic, Persian and Turkish to French. He is interested in philosophy and politics, too. Naturally, he is giving of impression of morality and honesty from the very first sight. He becomes famous among the sophisticated and elite people of France! Some Monsieur de Belarbré could not forbear admitting that:

“Despite the fact that I haven't met him yet; according to the information I got from those who met him an as far as I have seen his works and investigated about him. This Turkish *Nasuh Efendi* has been able to represent his nation positively in Paris, which is the universal capital of civilization.”<sup>85</sup>

Thanks to this respect and admiration that he established among the foreigners, he was able to convince them of some Ottoman and Islamic customs, even like polygamy that was one of the main issues of daily debates in Europe about Islamic sharia, like a missionary. Via reminding the difference between man and woman, *Nasuh* was very surprisingly mentioning the difference between idealism behind European law and realism behind that of Islamic:

“Our Mohammedan Law (Şeriat-ı Muhammediyye) does not consider humankind as superior to his humanity and consider him as angel and construct its system on that fact unlike Christian Law (Şeriat-ı İseviyye). It deems giving free space for every human need necessary. If it was not letting polygamy for a man who cannot be satisfied with one woman, it could not name prostitution as promiscuous.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Rifa'a Rafi' al-Tahtawi, p. 281.

<sup>85</sup> “Zira henüz kendisini görmediğim ve fakat asarından ve kendisini görenlerden aldığım malumat üzerine görmüş ve ahvalini tedkik etmiş kadar tanıdığım Nasuh Efendi isminde bir yeni Türk doğrusu milletini umum alem-i medeniyetin payitahtı demek olan Paris'te hüsn-i suretle teşhir eylemiştir.” Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Paris'te Bir Türk*, (İstanbul: Kırkanbar, 1293/1876), p. 365, quoted in Okay, p. 26.

<sup>86</sup> “Bizim şeriat-ı Muhammediye şeriat-ı İseviye gibi insanı insanlığın fevkinde yani melek olarak farzedip de ahkâmını ona göre bina etmiyor. İnsanın her ihtiyacının önünü açık bırakmağa lüzum görüyor. Eğer bir karı ile mümkün değil iktifa edemeyecek olan erkeğe taaddüd-i zevcat için cevaz

Questioning European idealism in 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ahmed Midhat tries to provoke those who believe in superiority of European systems to the Islamic ones according to which the transformation of the cultural life will/should be alafranga. Moreover, he opens a way to discuss the contemporary general understanding of civilization and its arrangement in everyday life, not to forget its so-called incompatibility with Islamic layout, interestingly enough as we recall his observations on current clashes between ‘civilization’ and Christianity and contemporary disfavor of the concept of religion in Europe.

Considering the fact that *Paris’te Bir Türk* was published years before his visit to Europe, we can admit that Ahmed Midhat had already been occupied with the idea of Europe in a most detailed way to a degree of analyzing its institutions, codes, missing parts of its civilization etc. Furthermore, *Nasuh* had been to every kind of spaces in Paris like taverns, bars, libraries, theatres, bordellos, villas and chateaus of the elite etc. Introducing one of his stories that take place in Paris, Ahmed Midhat declares the city exposed to the limits:

“The story is taking place in Paris but is it possible for the concept not to be understood as if Paris is unknown to us? Isn’t it more obvious even more than Istanbul?”<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, *Nasuh* never gets illusioned, confused or lost his temperament or his missionary duty considering that it is the first time him, a Muslim Ottoman, in Europe; on the contrary he keeps his detached position on every Parisian aspect and his position as an interlocutor unlike the non-European individuals that were mentioned as submissive for instance in Mitchell’s description of the asymmetrical encounters the way in which “throughout nineteenth century non-European visitors found themselves being placed on exhibit or made the careful object of European curiosity.”<sup>88</sup>

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göstermemiş olsaydı fuhşu namussuzluk olarak addetmemesi lazım gelirdi.” *ibid.*, p. 160, quoted in Okay, p. 204. Presumably, he uses the term Christian Law for contemporary 19<sup>th</sup> century civil codes in Europe, which are, in fact, fundamentally different.

<sup>87</sup> “Vak’a Paris’te geçiyor, ama sanki Paris bize meçhul müdür ki dakayıki anlaşılamasın? İstanbul’dan daha bile maruf değil midir?”, “*Diplomalı Kız*”, in *Letaif-i Rivayat*, p. 593.

<sup>88</sup> Timothy Mitchell, p. 2.

His mission is also very crucial due to the fact that most of the Europeans do not have a chance to visit Turkey; and, hence, form their negative judgments derived from “their self-righteous courage that produced so much errors.”<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, their judgments were also maintained via the “westernized” Turks (obviously, not favorable for Ahmed Midhat) that they become acquainted with in Paris. *Fatma Aliye*, Ahmed Midhat’s adoptive daughter, was also complaining about the trouble “that foreigners had no idea of what true Muslim Turks were like as they only came into contact with westernized Turks. *Fatma Aliye* felt, therefore, that it was necessary to invite visiting dignitaries into true Muslim homes and show them true Turkish life.”<sup>90</sup>

Exhausted by European misjudgments about his own society, *Nasuh* and Ahmed Midhat’s other favorable characters visiting Europe, managed to be critical about the Ottoman failure in representing itself. Their personal efforts, including Ahmed Midhat during his own expedition, were based on ameliorating the Ottoman image that was in perils in the hands of alafraŋga types. Nevertheless, Ahmed Midhat was aware of the fact that the mission cannot be handed over to these individual efforts. Like many other occidentalists, he was alerted by the European discovery of tourism and the concern for spatial display; he was surprised with officially sponsored city maps, guides, books etc. notwithstanding the amount of hotels, restaurants. Many of those Europeans who think negatively about Istanbul were complaining about the disorganization in the city. However, the problem was not specific to Istanbul; considering the abovementioned advance of Northern European countries in 19<sup>th</sup> century developments, no other region could provide the requirements of tourism. *Nasuh* would regretfully agree with his Polish friend, who was complaining about the fact:

“*Gardiyanski*: Now there is no place left in England, France, Germany and Austria that is not planned yet. Even the most important cities in Spain, Italy and Russia do not have plans; due to the fact that the people have no worries about it even if they are advised to prepare them. Eyes of the world do not see these places and these places do not represent themselves

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<sup>89</sup> Quoting Halit Ziya (Uşaklıgil), Zeynep Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse”, *Orientalism’s Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture and Photography*, Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts (eds.), (Durham: Duke U.P., 2002), p. 20.

<sup>90</sup> Deringil, p. 148.

to the eyes of the world. Do not ask especially over the Ottoman State. Even the capital does not have a plan yet.  
*Nasuh*: I regretfully have to confirm your words.”<sup>91</sup>

Carter Findley points Ahmed Midhat’s own experience as a tourist in Paris out, the way in which he reads the plans of the city everyday, studying his daily trips on maps.<sup>92</sup> One of the reasons behind that meticulousness was the fact that he was aware that the time will not be enough for the entire city; therefore, he was desiring at least to visit every place worth knowing, especially museums and libraries and the world’s exposition.

On the other hand, Ahmed Midhat, reminiscent of many Orientalist and Occidentalist, strongly relies on his pre-knowledge about Europe according to which he knows what to expect:

“...since fifteen years I have never paused writing and analyzing European capitals and metropolises my travel cannot be compared to those people’s who suddenly finds themselves in a country that he does not know and where to apply and what to see.”<sup>93</sup>

Besides his super-balanced personality and the effect of Ottoman civilization upon him, *Nasuh Efendi* owns this comfortable relationship with Europe to previous research and the books on Europe that he had read.

Those who turned back to the homeland at the end of Ahmed Midhat novels are divided into two according to the course of their experience in Europe. The unflattering characters who had tasted the ‘vulgar delights’ of alafraanga leave Paris having learned their lessons and start to live happily in the country in most modest means or they leave Paris with no money left therefore there are left no choice but to live silently afterwards. Members of the second group who had

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<sup>91</sup> “Şimdi İngiltere’de, Fransa’da, Almanya’da, Avusturya’da adeta muhtasaran planı yapılmamış yer yok gibidir. İspanya, İtalya, Rusya’ya, gelince, orada halk böyle şeylerin kadrini bilmediklerinden maada kendilerine irae edilse bile ehemmiyet vermediklerinden en büyük memleketlerinin de planları yoktur. Alemin gözü oraları görmez ve oraları kendilerini alemin gözüne arzetmezler. Hele memalik-i Osmaniye’yi hiç sormayınız. Henüz payitahtın bile mükemmel bir planı yoktur.” *Paris’te Bir Türk*, p. 315, quoted in, Orhan Okay, pp. 80-81.

<sup>92</sup> Findley, p. 24.

<sup>93</sup> “...onbeş seneden beri Avrupa pay-i tahtlarıyla büyük şehirlerini tedkik ve tetebbu’dan hemen hiçbir zaman hali kalmamış olduğumdan bu defa o mahallere gidişim kendisini hiç bilmediği memlekette birdenbire buluveren ve nereye başvuracağını ve neleri temaşa edeceğini bilemeyen adamların seyahatlerine katiyen makis olamaz.” *Avrupa’da Bir Cevalan*, p. 3.

every reason to be proud of successfully completing the mission without even one blunder arrive in Istanbul proudly and continue to live there due to their solid personalities and the quality of their stay in Europe. *Şefik in Yeryüzünde Bir Melek* is an example of the latter:

“As a matter of fact, *Şefik* has been to Europe many times. However, he has never been to the places of miserable. He has been to its schools and universities. Hence, he is still Istanbul’s virtuous and the shyest young man.”<sup>94</sup>

Clearly, Ahmed Midhat’s “real” travel generally confirms his characters’ experience which confirms and augments his influence as an occidentalist and consolidates his textual authority. Therefore, the writer himself and his characters are not expected to be mistaken about what is and what is not the occident and the occidental; not to forget, like everything he wrote about the occident, *Avrupa Adab-ı Muaşeret-i yahud Alafranga* is the projection of everything can be found in Ahmed Midhat literature, reflecting his balanced and authentic views which specifically in that book appears to be emphasizing on complexity and hegemony of etiquette rules in 19<sup>th</sup> century European world; furthermore, is a result of a very self-confident, authoritative writing experience.

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<sup>94</sup> “Vakıa Şefik birçok vakit Avrupa’da bulunmuştur. Ancak Avrupa’nın esafil-i süfela mahallerinde bulunmamıştır. Mekteplerinde, darülfünunlarında bulunmuştur; binaenaleyh Şefik hala İstanbul’un iffetli, en mahcup bir genç adamıdır.” *Yeryüzünde Bir Melek*, (İstanbul: Kırkanbar, 1292/1875), p. 505, quoted in Okay, p. 30.

### CHAPTER 3

#### SOCIAL ETIQUETTE AS AN APPARATUS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

Especially from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century on, the already emerging book market was triggered by the influx of etiquette manuals, which has become an independent genre in time. The reason behind was definitely the change in the means of production, class formation, political environment, immigration, urbanization, separation of private space and life from that of public, (re)organization of daily life, increasing number of personal interactions due to professional obligations or social interests and so on and so forth.

The center of attention in this chapter will specifically be the public settings in which a civilized social self is expected to perform. In this regard, considering the general storyline of Ahmed Midhat's etiquette book that is based on the 19<sup>th</sup> century French etiquette rules performed by an Ottoman male figure, socially constructed identities and responsibilities of a 19<sup>th</sup> century individual and the success and quality of the social performance will be dealt with respect to the Ottoman social and individual provisions and changing urban social praxis. *Alafranga's* starting point is the similarity between a European-Christian's and an Ottoman-Muslim's positions facing the city, which reflect the relationship between urbanization and civilization. Urban life, per se requires and represents good manners not only in western, but also in oriental culture, given the fact that, linguistically, the city (*medina*) is the space of the civilization (*medeniyya*) in Arabic and, for sure, in Ottoman language. Ahmed Midhat's role here is to apprehend the familiarity between oriental and occidental mentalities as he discovers the importance given to the idea of the city in Europe and to the everyday lives of urban dwellers, the civilized (urbane).

Definitely, this chapter is mostly based on Ahmed Midhat's relationship with the urban spaces: ships, trains, hotels, restaurants, taxis, coffee-shops, theatres, toilets, public spaces in short, will be the landscapes for my analysis of *Alafranga*. His perspective is significant due to the fact that he awakens to an unusual social behavior that is brought by the changing physical environment in

the city. Besides the advance of codification and control of proper behavior in urban space, the expectation of a social performance contained by the boundaries and/of identities that are socially constructed is also worthy of analyzing and is going to be emphasized obliquely and constantly.

Growing curiosity in etiquette rules was strictly tied to the physical expansion of urban centers and the creation of a modern urban culture in Europe starting from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Nonetheless, as was pointed out firstly by Norbert Elias, 18<sup>th</sup> century formation of the good manners is very much linked to power. Unlike traditional approach that identifies good manners with ceremonial display of the royal rule, he emphasizes the fact that, in the age of Louis XIV, etiquette represented “an instrument for the ruling of subjects”. For him, “if power exists but is not visible in the appearance of the ruler, the people will not believe in it. They must see in order to believe. The more a prince distances himself, the greater will be the respect shown to him by the people.”<sup>95</sup>

Throughout the following century, instead of courtesy books that had been the source of reference for men before to behave appropriate in the office and the court and advising the ruler about the manners, through which he can establish the authority of his rules in front of the eyes of his subjects, the etiquette books was become popular among urban middle classes and both genders, thanks to the political, social and economic transformation.<sup>96</sup> This change in literary style signifies an epistemological change, which was observable not only in literature but also in many fields at the time, also reflecting the impact of changing power relations and means and possessors of dominance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century European society to its culture.

Despite the fact that the rise of etiquette as a genre can be described as servicing the rise of the middle class and liberal politics by inculcating civility to modern individuals, the genre can be linked to a sort of indoctrination under which lies strong power relationships and the apparatus of the existing regime. Therefore, one further aim of this chapter is to calculate and to expose the role of power mechanisms embedded in social relations and institutional interests in 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Court Society*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 118.

<sup>96</sup> See, Michael Curtin, “*A Question of Manners: Status and Gender in Etiquette and Courtesy*”, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 57, No. 3, 1985.

century everyday life. In this regard, social reorganization and the disintegration of absolutism and royal manners, which had been installed synchronically with the popularization of the genre, is going to be dealt as regards to the transformation in the methodology of power and domination; since “openness, even democratization, does not imply a relaxation of power but a reconfiguration, and reconstitution, of its mechanisms.”<sup>97</sup>

The modern history of etiquette book writing can be evaluated in two phases itself: 19<sup>th</sup> century examples were mostly written as narratives and included the treatises of the writer; however, later examples were in reference format lacking any political lesson to be learned. The most important point about this break up within the genre is that the context had become questionable due to social change, and to be diffused into “the reference format (which) would seem to fit the changed perceptions, and probably the changed circumstances of social life ideally.”<sup>98</sup>

In this perspective, Ahmed Midhat’s book can undeniably be announced as being in the narrative format based on which an Ottoman man starting his journey to Europe and his first experiences in the city (Paris) that has been adorned by the great contemporary change in everyday life and urban space; and in time, thanks to some recommendation papers and personal relationships, his entrance into the elite environments. Although the boundary between public and private spaces is hardly neat and suffers constant interventions from both sides, I am going to reflect the writer’s own organization and classification in order to grasp the ideology behind his narrativistic style.

This chapter starts with a description of the physical and cultural environment in which the genre of etiquette was given birth. Closely connected to the change in urban episteme, the genre aims to relieve the social effects of modern crisis, which was obvious in the urban space, by standardizing social behavior. Nonetheless, in doing this, standards- setters represent the new urban life as is full of perils and the new urban dwellers as are needing supervision. Control of the new urban dwellers and, moreover, setting the city map according

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<sup>97</sup> Jorge Ardití, “*Etiquette Books, Discourse and the Deployment of an Order of Things*”, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 16, no. 4, 1999, p. 25.

<sup>98</sup> Jorge Ardití, p. 36.

to the moral standards is very much linked to the concepts of hegemony and power per se. Within that perspective, remembering the urban adventures of our fop characters in contemporary Ottoman literature and writers' reactions to the change in the urban space pledges many, including political intentions.

According to his representation of the European society as was divided into two, thanks to his sympathy for the conservatives, Ahmed Midhat limits his opinions about the idea of the standardization of social behavior and the genre of etiquette to the European conservative efforts. The main theme of the second section of this chapter is his critique of the success of the project and his uneasiness in understanding the unfavorable manners existing in the public, despite the intellectual power and relentless attempts of conservative ideology in ameliorating the social life. Even Victorians failed to rearrange the everyday life in the public space according to their ideological-moral objectives.

Lastly, I elaborate on the ideological framework of communitarianism, in which *Alafranga* was written. Ahmed Midhat is aware of the fact that, European etiquette manuals do not claim to be valid for and is not supposed to be accepted by everyone. Therefore, his manual was meant to represent the manners of the new public life for a specific group of people, those who directly faces the western cultural effects. This last section of the chapter is, in that sense, based on Ahmet Midhat's quest for authenticity for the new Ottoman public life; a quest that involves cultural agenda of a dominant ideology of the time and its position vis-à-vis cosmopolitanism and authenticity, if not necessarily nationalism.

### **3.1. Nineteenth Century Etiquette Literature and the Control of the Public Space**

The dichotomy between the country and the city has been the very basis of western perspective on the land-based interpretation of social history, according to which the concept of the country associates with "peace, innocence and simple virtue", while the city has been recognized as the centre of "learning,

communication and light.”<sup>99</sup> Inescapably, every encounter between settlers has tended to uncover differences, even hostilities; on the other hand, appreciation, admiration, compromise and even mimicry. The main inspiration behind etiquette literature, courtesy books or manuals on manners and customs is the necessity to minimize the lack of knowledge about the ‘other’ and hence dismiss any vexatious to arise.

The boom in the genre in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century can be linked to many causes: it was a heyday for urbanization and migration; the concept of the city was extremely appealing and multilayered, insomuch as losing its original boundaries, which social observers could not refrain from mentioning; many new institutions that belong to the modern city were installed; the city was becoming a meeting point for different people with different identities, which required manuals on *savoir vivre cosmopolite* and so on and so forth. Therefore, the genre was prominently linked to the very change in the urban(e) episteme and at least tried to minimize the differences by teaching “how to live in the chaotic, cosmopolitan capital, how to deal with strangers on the basis of impersonal norms, how to be, in a word, ‘urbane’.”<sup>100</sup> Not to forget, these encounters, the city involved, were not happening in a consistent city-scape and advices of the so-called experts were not for all members of the society. They were for the ‘public’, for which Haussmann installed his urban planning.<sup>101</sup> The others were irrelevant in the ‘city’, as mentioned both in the etiquette literature and the new plan: the expropriations that were installed during Haussmannization in Paris led low-income groups to be de-housed and made things worse for them.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, that traumatic change was not fully operated under modern iconography and

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<sup>99</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and The City*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 1. The content of Williams’ book is limited by the historical course of the dichotomy in England; however, since antiquity it has been willynilly referred in every society and every period.

<sup>100</sup> Michael Curtin, p. 402.

<sup>101</sup> Leonardo Benevolo, *History of the Modern Architecture*, (Cambridge, Mass.: M. I. T. Press, 1971), p. 136.

<sup>102</sup> İlhan Tekeli, “*Türkiye’de Kent Planlamasının Tarihsel Kökleri*”, *Türkiye’de İmar Planlaması* (Ankara: Odtü Şehir ve Bölge Planlama Bölümü, 1980), p. 15.

modern inventions of representing authority; the new prefect of Paris had often used tradition and its iconography.<sup>103</sup>

Coherently, the etiquette genre had established its rules alongside the traditional aristocratic manners. Most of the books were based on yearning for the older generations and their lifestyles and trying to understand the reasons of their detachment from contemporary values. Louise d'Alq's interpretation of the withdrawal of aristocracy from the public space and her disappointment with the newcomers, for instance, is quite sentimental:

“Nous venons de traverser une époque où le bon ton, grâce à certaines pièces en vogue, a été mis à la porte de la société française, même la plus aristocratique, et il serait facile de citer telle duchesse, dont les ancêtres furent au nombre des croisés et dont la noblesse remonte à un trône, qui, la voix haute et la canne à la main, faisait des fromages en plein Champs-Élysées. C'était à qui aurait le plus mauvais genre. Il est triste de l'avouer, le sexe féminin s'est laissé entraîner dans ce précipice avec une promptitude tenant du vertige. Qui avait été cause de cet entraînement? Évidemment des jeunes gens mal éduqués, aux sentiments bas, à l'intelligence bornée. Cette mode, car c'en était une, a eu son temps; espérons qu'elle est tombée, remplacée; répétons-le bien haut, afin que tous ses enthousiastes le sachent bien. Avec les chignons bouclés, les gardénias à la boutonnière, les vestons courts, la mode de l'air impertinent a cessé d'exister; ceux chez qui elle a laissé subsister quelques lueurs d'esprit se hâtent de l'abandonner, afin de ne pas être en retard, et d'ici peu ils nargueront qui la suivront encore. Le bon ton, les manières distinguées, le respect de ce qui est vénérable et sacré va donc revenir. L'influence du bon reprendra le dessus. Nous ne nous laisserons plus mener par des êtres qui valent moins que nous.”<sup>104</sup>

According to Curtin, the replacement of the values in time depends on the aristocracy's failure in its connection with the moral values.<sup>105</sup> Notwithstanding the etiquette books' attempt of revitalization of the bondage between morals and manners; due to the change in the amount and the identity of the audience, the social claim of the new genre was developed to be more 'democratic'. Nevertheless, every book that was published and acquired fame paralleled its democratic makeup with an endless endeavor for shaping the extremes into

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<sup>103</sup> Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution : Writing the Nineteenth-Century City*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 115-117.

<sup>104</sup> Louise d'Alq, *Notes d'Une Mère*, p. 42.

<sup>105</sup> Michael Curtin, p. 403.

socially accepted norms, and thus generated and applied the modern rules and methods of domination of members of the society. The process becomes more clear, if use Foucauldian jargon according to which the meaning or applications of hegemony can be rewritten:

“Hegemony contributes to or constitutes a form of social cohesion not through force or coercion, nor necessarily through consent, but most effectively by way of practices, techniques, and methods which infiltrate minds and bodies, cultural practices which cultivate behaviors and beliefs, tastes, desires, and needs as seemingly naturally occurring qualities and properties embodied in the psychic and physical reality (or ‘truth’) of the human subject.”<sup>106</sup>

In his famous etiquette book, *How to Behave*, Samuel Wells, the most popular American etiquette writer in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, clearly constitutes his attempt as guiding the youth according to the principles of American democracy, of which he is proud of being an advocate:

“This is an honest and earnest little book, if it has been prepared expressly for the use of the young people of our great Republic, whom it is designed to aid in becoming, what we are convinced they all desire to be, true American ladies and gentlemen.”<sup>107</sup>

Manners are not only meant to operate in guiding the members of the society according to a certain ideological agenda, but are also designed to be an important ingredient of it, a guide to define the topoi of the cultural ideals of American democracy. Manners represent what is already implicit in the political foundation: “courtesy is the beautiful part of morality, justice carried to the utmost, rectitude refined, magnanimity in trifles.”<sup>108</sup>

Certainly, that straightforwardness owes much to the contemporary unique role of political milieu in the U.S. European examples of etiquette literature. Nevertheless, the literature could not directly impose certain ideals without

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<sup>106</sup> Barry Smart, “The Politics of Truth and the Problem of Hegemony”, David Couzens Hoy (ed.), *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 160. For ‘governing the self’ and ‘governing others’, see, Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power”, Dreyfus and Rainbow (eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>107</sup> Samuel R. Wells, *How to Behave: A Pocket Manual of Republican Etiquette and Guide to Correct Personal Habits*, (New York: Fowler & Wells, 1887), preface.

<sup>108</sup> From a popular magazine of the time *Life Illustrated*, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 22.

fighting complex methods of intelligibility, established orders and environments. In this regard, contemporary transformation of the physical and mental environment had functioned both as the most obvious collaborator and as the most intact and immediate component of etiquette literature. Being the material location where the ideological activities of all members of the society occur; nevertheless, public space challenges non-conformists and tries to marginalize the already marginal for the sake of the dominant; therefore, public space, generally, is “a controlled and orderly retreat where a properly behaved public might experience the spectacle of the city.”<sup>109</sup> Due to the positive role of the etiquette literature in its control, public space, which does not change instantaneously but after experiencing a convoluted process during which the society tries to find representations<sup>110</sup>, had been central to the theme, referred frequently and had inspired not only the grateful ones like Samuel Wells but also many other critiques of the ongoing change.

Spatialization of moral breakdown had become a chief method for reflecting the social ‘sensibility’ in the whole western literature in the period. Nevertheless, the slums of Paris mentioned in Zola novels were indifferent to the etiquette literature. Public space in these manuals appears as where one should be alarmed in order not to break the rules of being superior in morals and thus in social status by avoiding any danger of immorality that would probably test the one in these new spaces. The person who questions the authority of these manuals would, therefore, either be dismissed from the upper echelons of society or be anyway ruined by the new circumstances and lose his way around new spectacles that are unknown to him due to lack of supervision. The new environment is not necessarily dangerous but definitely one cannot easily profit from the ‘modern’ treasures without guidance of the etiquette.

Contemporary Ottoman literature was, frequently indirectly, alerting the public about the threats in public space. Similar to the Western examples, in Ottoman novels, the ones in perils in public spaces were especially the women and the young who need guidance. One of these fashionable places was public

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<sup>109</sup> Don Mitchell, “*The End of Public Space? People’s Park, definitions of the public, and democracy*”, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 85, 1995, p. 115-116.

<sup>110</sup> See, Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford & Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), p. 34.

gardens. In Rezaizade Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası*, a very successful literary piece from the period, the whole feeling of the cultural decadence of the time was intentionally assembled harmoniously with the change of the nature in *Çamlıca* public garden. Surprisingly enough, the garden here does not renew itself every year according to the natural laws; it was "made, used and got rid of...it had been no more than a fashion."<sup>111</sup> The main character in the novel, Bihruz Bey, was, not surprisingly, an alafanga fop, driven by the charm of this fashionable place where would witness his tragic end. In case, *Çamlıca* symbolizes not only the ephemeral, the decadent, but the spatial symbol of impiety of the new, break with the traditional.

The perils of the public garden have usually been mentioned in etiquette books. In one way, they referred to novels, newspapers, magazines, even public rumors; nonetheless, the most important motive behind their insistence in symbolizing it was the contemporary emerge of the consciousness of the distinction, and the boundaries, between public and private space. Public garden per se does not exactly fit into the category of public space. That misfit was enough for etiquette writers to inform firstly the weaker: the women and the young. For instance, French mentors, including Louise d'Alque, warn Parisienne woman not to walk alone with a man on the promenade of a public garden<sup>112</sup>, while they also recommend them to have an accompany while visiting the doctor, even the priest. Spread of excessive cautiousness from private to the public not only exposes the persistence of contemporary prevailing Puritanism in organizing the everyday life of the individuals but also the fact that the new public space appears as a threat for the respectable and thus needs inspection, objectification, in this case, in etiquette books.

More or less, one of Ahmed Midhat's motives behind writing an etiquette manual should be confirmed as naming the "mistakes" he witnessed in public space and confronting the current hegemony of so-called alafanga in the Ottoman urban society and the individuals behind that. Still, while his work is based on

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<sup>111</sup> Jale Parla, pp. 131-132.

<sup>112</sup> Michèle Plott, "The Rules of The Game: Respectability, Sexuality and the Femme Mondaine in Late-Nineteenth-Century Paris", French Historical Studies, Vol. 25, No. 3, (Summer 2002). On the duties of Parisian "respectable" woman, see Louise d'Alq, *Le Savoir Vivre en Toutes les Circonstances de la Vie*, (Paris: Bureaux des Causeries Familiales, 1881).

correcting the false understanding of contemporary western life at home, he starts his analysis by confirming the hegemony and burden of the “real” western manners on the western society. Moreover, despite the fact that clearly he is favoring “those being conservative in social manners”<sup>113</sup>, he is aware that the conservative critique, per se, is not exempt from power relations and knowledge.

Most of his writings on the city life consist of analogies from country or rural life, whether it be on human relations or, on environmental distinction proper. Ahmed Midhat’s daily life also, quite interestingly, is based on the traffic between the city and the country. His villa was in *Beykoz*, a long way from the core of the city which was only accessible with the ferry, while he was publishing his newspaper, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, in *Pera*. Most probably, this traffic that he mentions many times, and on which he plainly bases the story in *Müşahedat*, had helped him to be constantly vigilant about the distinction between the two atmospheres. As a matter of fact, obviously, the opposition between the two can be traceable in his autobiographical narrative and can be defined along the lines of his judgments that represent the country as an abode of the pure and the moral.

In Ahmed Midhat’s works, the purity of nature and its indications on life in the country had been frequently proposed as the opposite of city life, even as the ultimate cure for the tainted city dweller, or as the last shelter left for the defeated one in the city. For instance, *Felâh Bey* finally finds peace, after he loses everything in Istanbul, in a West-Anatolian town where he was appointed as an officer of modest means. In *Bahtiyarlık*, *Şinasi Efendi* plans to go to the country following his graduation from *Galatasaray* High School in order to build a life of his own, believing that:

“in the cities, how much wealth and fortune one has, he would be that much interrupted. Prosperity and happiness are away from big communities.”<sup>114</sup>

After his graduation, *Şinasi* settles down in Bursa, where “Ottoman splendor started to impress the world”, and installs new agricultural techniques. The choice of Bursa reflects the contemporary historicism of Ottoman intellectuals, and in

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<sup>113</sup> “adab-ı muâşeretle muhafazakar olanlar”, *Alafranga*, ibid.,

<sup>114</sup> “şehirlerde insanın serveti, ikbali ne çok, ne kadar yüksek olursa rahatsızlığı da o kadar artar. Refah ve saadet büyük cemiyetlerden uzak yaşamaktadır”, “*Bahtiyarlık*”, in *Letaif-i Rivayat*, p. 283.

fact, of the state itself. In view of that, Ahmed Midhat tries to place the so-called Ottoman modernization on the foundation of the original ideals of the empire.

The pure nature, rivers, mountains, plains appears as the answer to the corrupt life in the city and can place a happy life both for the individual and the empire. Nevertheless, Ahmed Midhat also appreciates many aspects of the city (work, innovation, knowledge, discussion with strangers). In that sense, the symbolic purity of the nature does not stem from the antagonism between the country and the city. Ahmed Midhat's objection is very much linked to the 'burden of the city life' on the individual's life:

“Man in the city faces so many obstacles and difficulties caused by the civilized lifestyle....he cannot bear this and becomes subject to weakness.”<sup>115</sup>

The individual here is certainly young, male, educated, enterprising and hard-working, and has an urge to make a living out of commerce, information or technology etc. His own entrepreneurial story and urge, remembering his excitement for the printing press that he saw in Paris World's Exposition,<sup>116</sup> therefore, must confirm his awareness of the fact that urban life is an obligation. Correspondingly, his main motive behind writing an etiquette book was not to dismiss public life and to encourage the new generations of the 'modern' empire to start a living in the country; in case they have to live in the city, his duty is to inform them about the complicatedness of the urban life and educate them about the rules of survival, and most significantly, about the moral-social barriers involved in making a personal fortune.

The disciplined body and the epistemic difference generated by the modern urban life he witnessed in Europe, especially in Paris, define the general characteristic of his *Alafranga*. Ahmed Midhat, first of all, sees European manners as very hegemonic and even feels sorry for the European “people (who) are so much obligated to obey the rules and procedures of good manners and

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<sup>115</sup> “Şehirlerde bir adam yine maişet-i müdemmeddinane muktezasından olmak üzere o kadar çok müşkülât ve mevani' içinde bulunur ki...bunları iktiham edemeyerek duçar-ı fütur olurlar” in “*Bahtiyarlık*”, *Letaif-i Rivayat*, p. 283.

<sup>116</sup> Ahmed Midhat expresses his enthusiasm about the machine, describes it in details, imagines his turn back home with the machine and sighs his country's disadvantage in technology; *Avrupa'da Bir Cevelan*, p. 680-682. Mardin calls A. Midhat, 'homo economicus', in Şerif Mardin, *Jön Türklerin Siyasi Fikirleri*, (İstanbul: İletişim, 1996), p. 54.

etiquette, the burden of which ...can exhaust them.”<sup>117</sup> Nonetheless, he does not refrain from applauding this hegemonic arrangement and its role over the conservation of moral values and social order. Furthermore, he announces the etiquette rules are even monitored by police forces in order to maintain public order:

“Even the most unveiled women cannot be and act out of etiquette rules. The police is obliged to arrest them immediately...In public, rich-poor, mischievous-docile, everyone is obliged to obey the public manners according to law; those who violate would be punished.”<sup>118</sup>

Transparency between juristic law and etiquette rules reifies the characteristics of the modern methodology of disciplining the individual’s body. This transparency symbolizes the transformation of the methodology of discipline which is no more based on sovereignty, a superior, ethereal power, but on the interaction between powers which produces a knowledge of practices that has been embodied in etiquette literature, at least in our case. This interaction was constituted and has been operated in order to “cultivate more ‘useful’ and ‘docile’ individuals and to administrate and manage populations.”<sup>119</sup> Consequently, the individual becomes educated in order to participate in society, sign its contract, behave in public order, fit in new spatial sequence; “recognize ourselves as a society, as a part of a social entity, as a part of a nation or a state.”<sup>120</sup> Ahmed Midhat interprets the political role of etiquette quite simply as represented in the everyday life of Europeans the way in which,

“although, European society is divided into different classes, there is a strange unity in their social manners and etiquette. For instance, there is a fixed time for having breakfast or dinner during which everyone in the city is present at table.”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> “...hüsn-i muaşeret hususunda o kadar usul ve adaba riayet mecburiyeti altında bulunurlar ki, adab-ı mezkürenin icap eylediği külfetler kendilerini bile yorarlar”, in *Alafranga*, p. 61.

<sup>118</sup> “En başı açık karılarda bile kadınlık adab-ı umumiyesine muhalif ahval ve hareket görülemez...Enzar-ı umumiyyede zengin-züğürt, yaramaz-uslu herkesin adab-ı umumiyyeye riayet-i ahkam-ı kanuniyeden olup mütecasirleri hakkında nakdi ve cismani cezalar muayyendir”, in *Alafranga*, p. 88-89.

<sup>119</sup> Barry Smart, p. 161.

<sup>120</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Political Technology of Individuals”, L. H. Martin, H. Gutman and P. H.Hutton (eds.), *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p. 146.

Considering the main ideology of the Hamidian regime and its intervention in the citizens' everyday life by mass schooling, a postal service, railways, lighthouses, clock towers, lifeboats, museums, censuses and birth certificates, passports, as well as parliaments, bureaucracies and armies<sup>122</sup>, and regarding Ahmed Midhat's support of the existing regime, *Alafranga*, can be described as a cultural attempt which is based on the idea of individual's integration into the society and cooptation by the political hegemony that tries to design it. In that interplay, the organization of public space was not meant to be the ultimate aspiration but the precursor to the success of national policy in organizing the Ottoman population. Specifically, *Alafranga* was not only the product of a desire to inform the public about the society's limits and expectations, but also to update them about the latest governing political context, both European and Ottoman, in which manners were written.

### **3.2. Duels & Carnivals: An occidentalist inquiry on the European success story**

The history of 19<sup>th</sup> century etiquette literature had been closely related to the public sphere and due to latter's ambiguous nature, it had not always smoothly and successfully operated its objectives in changing the society. Ahmed Midhat, for his part, describes the European public as it were divided into two different groups: conservatives and radicals; and, compares this duality with the contemporary milieu in the Ottoman Empire in where the people were divided into two, as well: *efkar-ı atika erbabı* and *efkar-ı cedide erbabı* (those who claim old ideas and those for the new); yet, he cannot refrain from adding that the relationship between the two is radically different than those two in Europe:

“For us (Ottomans), those who claim old ideas are in common with those who claim new ideas in many issues and those who claim new ideas are fond of those who claim old ideas regarding many matters. In Europe, on

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<sup>121</sup> “Avrupa’da sunuf-u halk bu kadar münkasim ve muhtelif olmakla beraber cümlesinin adab-ı maişet e muaşeretinde garip ve acaip bir ittihat vardır. Mesela, kuşluk ve akşam taamları için vakit ve saat muayyen olup, o saatte bir şehir halkı tamamen sofrada bulunur”, in *Alafranga*, p. 87-88.

<sup>122</sup> Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, p. 9.

the other hand, due to the fact that these groups have been alienated from each other, they fall out with each other.”<sup>123</sup>

Ahmed Midhat’s faith in this affiliation between two different groups in the Ottoman ideological environment is significant. Firstly, he sees this as an advantage of the Ottoman society over European in dealing with the modern social problems. The calamities between two groups in Europe are out of the question in the Ottoman example. As a matter of fact, he is a pro conservative due to the fact that the European conservatives’ insistence on the protection of the family and its values and religious penchant encourages him to identify with the European conservatives. Nonetheless, more than identification and support, his connection with conservatives was based on his quest for guardianship and rehabilitation for society and supervisee for modern social change. In that sense, secondly, as a conservative, he consolidates his position in guiding both sections of the Ottoman society, of the Ottoman youth. None of the sections of the Ottoman society would ignore his tutorship.

The failure of European civilization as represented in the public space is, first of all, its members’ insensitivity to the other members of the society, to their nationals, to those who are helpless. He is in no doubt that,

“if a man dies on the street, anyone from the thousands of spectators does not feel himself obliged to give him a glass of water...instead, he takes pleasure in watching.”<sup>124</sup>

Institutionalization of social help through philanthropic societies and governmental intervention is, for him, beneficial and must be followed in the Ottoman Empire as well. Nonetheless, not to forget, it represents the failure in humanity and preventing people from taking individual measures instinctively. He questions if the number of casualties in Bazaar de Charité fire would be so high if

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<sup>123</sup> “Bizce efkar-ı atika erbabı birçok noktalarda efkar-ı cedide ile müşterek ve efkar-ı cedid erbabı dahi birçok noktalarda efkar-ı atıkaya münhemiktir. Avrupa’da ise bu iki sınıf halk çoktan beri yekdiğerinden teba’ud eylemekte buldukları cihetle araları pek ziyade açılmıştır.”, *Alafranga*, p. 83.

<sup>124</sup> “Muhakkaktır ki, Avrupa’da bir insan sokakta düşüp vefat etse, temaşasına koşan binlerce adamdan birisi bir yudum su vermeye kendisini mürüvveten mecbur görmez”, *Avrupa’da Bir Cevlan*, p. 372.

people were acting according to their self-conscience and not wait for the authorities to intervene.<sup>125</sup>

Another sign of decadence, for Ahmed Midhat, in European civilization is the change in the relationship between friends and neighbors. Friendships are made if the parties can benefit from each other. To be accepted by Europeans,

“a visitor in Europe must be talkative. One should not forget the fact that Europeans are unwilling to change their intimate circle of friendship and relationship. Moreover, they are reluctant to make friendships which they cannot benefit from of which cannot entertain them.”<sup>126</sup>

Similarly, the relationship between neighbors in the city is highly different than the one in his ideals and, in fact, than it was in the empire. Interestingly enough, while he was certain that there are strict rules, of which he offered a detailed description in *Alafranga*, in meeting the other dwellers in a hotel, for instance, in *Paris'te Bir Türk*, Nasuh Efendi tries to introduce himself freehearted in order to expose his dislike of these manners – procedures or gestures - that he finds reflecting the current failure in setting up the intimacy in personal relations.<sup>127</sup> For instance, flirting with a woman requires hardcore etiquette knowledge; however, at the end, it appears that this painstaking process is to conduct carnal relationship and no more. Or, the etiquette rules that were obeyed in order to make friendships were not done so in order to make friends but to make business transactions etc.

Superficial human relations and members of the ‘civilized’ world’s indifference to the others and estrangement to human suffering not only formed the very basis of his critique of the occident but also helped him formulate his notion of what has to be protected during change in the Ottoman Empire as well as the other non-western countries. He made use of Russian occidentalists, whom he had a chance to know during his visit to Europe, in order to verify his idea of civilization’s inability in ameliorating the society:

“While there is so much apathy and egoism among people who had reached the highest degree of civilization, in those nations in the lower

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<sup>125</sup> Okay, p. 283.

<sup>126</sup> “Avrupa’da bulunan insan pek deryadil olmalıdır. Hatırdan çıkarmamalıdır ki, Avrupalılar daire-i muarefe ve münasebetlerinin tevsi’ini pek de istemezler...Hele kendilerine nafi’ olmayacak ve hiç olmazsa kendilerini eğlendirmeyecek olan muarefeler, münasebetler hususunda gayet nazlı ve müstagni olurlar”, in *Alafranga*, p. 162.

<sup>127</sup> Paris'te Bir Türk, p. 127.

echelons of this degree, like Russians like us, the happiness arise out of pure humanism is very much superior.”<sup>128</sup>

According to Ahmed Midhat, it is the negative change in human face-to-face relations in the western world that causes intensive official, judicial intervention in the everyday lives of the citizens. Although, the intervention is highly institutionalized, complex, and somehow also incorporates voluntary action and intellectual production (which are often ostentatious as it was in Victorian England etc.) was not always successful. The position of his comrades in Europe is certain regarding the malevolence of modern life; yet, there are old habits born of ‘ignorance’, which are surviving and surviving fine, to be fought against and to be altered.

Many evils excoriated by him -duels, gambling, homosexuality, carnivals- had long been invented before modern cultural change, well before Europeans’ advancement to the ‘highest degree of civilization’. Moreover, these customs born in aristocratic circles, had survived mainly among the elites and generally were not making sense for what Ahmed Midhat calls the ‘radicals’. In fact, the campaign against these social evils was on the agenda of those intellectuals and also the menaces caused by these customs were being mentioned permanently in etiquette books.

“The genre was not simply an idealization of the aristocratic way of life. For example, the duel, which was the essence of the aristocratic code of honor, was condemned almost unanimously.”<sup>129</sup>

Sharing that sensitiveness that he also translated in *Alafranga*, his objection concerns the failure of the modern (re)formation of everyday lives of members of the society (including intellectual efforts for reform) in fighting against those social evils through organizational and governmental power, judicial reform and endless administrative efforts for controlling public life. In a way, his astonishment relies on the problems he witnessed in the aristocratic lifestyle that

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<sup>128</sup> “Terakkiyat-ı medeniye meratibinin balasına varmış olan halkta hodgamlık kayıtsızlık pek ziyade oluyor ise de bizim gibi, Ruslar gibi henüz bu meratib-i medeniyenin aşağı kademelerinde bulunan milletlerde safiyet-i beşeriye mukteziyatından olan mürüvvet daha pek çok ziyade oluyor”, in *Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan*, p. 359; Carter Findley draws attention to Social Darwinism here, Findley, p. 28.

<sup>129</sup> Michael Curtin, p. 397.

are contrary to what he expected. His first sentence under the headline of ‘duels’ exposes his mirabiledictu:

“Here you are one barbaric custom still surviving in the civilized world! Yes! Barbaric. One man’s ex mero motu act for providing justice is barbaric, due to the fact that, in the civilized world, only courts and codes are entitled to provide justice. Although many European intellectuals have filled papers against this custom, no benefit had been gained.”<sup>130</sup>

Stories on duels represent the most obvious tragic side of European society, and Ahmed Midhat made use of it in order to advocate intellectual and legal intervention to social ills, even if they are infrequent and peripheral. To the utmost, society and the public space must be controlled and supervised.

This high-leveled persistence, firstly, is derived from his own role in Ottoman society as an ‘educator’ that he announced for himself and on which he had grounded his career as a writer. *Alafranga* is like a manifestation of this self-assurance and responsibility per se. The outcome of this persistence is the solidification of this very self-assignment as him being an educator. For an average Ottoman reader, it must have been very hard to survive his confidence and power as a writer narrating Europe, the ‘other’, considering the fact that the writer is even trying to put under European intellectuals’ and authorities’ nose. On the other hand, this persistence of Ahmed Midhat is explicable regarding his insurmountable faith in the influence and power of intellectuals, in this case European, on society. This highly problematic faith stems not only from his belief in his own position in his society but also from his observations on European society, according to which, social control was multifaceted, complex and highly pervasive and the right to commit violence was transferred to the hands of legal forces, the government.

Furthermore, still-vivid, duels are providing him a chance to criticize and condemn the old values of Christian Europe, the former European lifestyle, aristocracy, elites etc., which he had always defended and preferred. In his stories taking place in homeland, the only incident about duels took place in *Yeniçeriler*

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<sup>130</sup> “Alınız size medeniyet aleminde hala hükmü cereyan edegelen bir adet-i vahşiyane!...Evet! Vahşiyanedir. Zira ihkak-ı hakk denilen şey cemiyat-ı medeniyede heyet-i adliyeye ve ahkam-ı kavanine tevdi kılınmış olduğundan bir adamın ho be hod ihkak-ı hakka kalkışması pek vahşiyane bir adettir. Avrupa’ca erbab-ı fikir ve kalemden yüzlerce adamlar bu adetin aleyhinde sayfalar doldurmuşlar ise de hiçbir faydası görülmemiştir”, in *Alafranga*, p. 260.

(1871) and *Hüseyin Fellah* (1875), in which the incidents involved the Janissaries and Albanians whose credibility in society was low at that time and both were acknowledged as having their particular barbarous customs in the Ottoman society. Needless to say, during the Tanzimat era, the Janissaries had been constantly condemned or their customs had been employed in order to illustrate the evil and what is to be beware of. Nevertheless, in Europe, duels were mainly experienced in the aristocratic circles and committed in the hands of the elite. This comparison and criticism expose Ahmed Midhat's balanced views on European society. His support for the aristocrats and aristocratic lifestyle is determined and bordered by his own opinions and his duty as an educator of the Ottoman society.

Notwithstanding, the originator of the manners that he wanted to impose, and the source of his inspiration about etiquette rules were the European aristocrats, whom Ahmed Midhat was not holding responsible for the evils in the public space. Nonetheless, he does not forget to evaluate their performance in rehabilitating the public space by producing knowledge on the ways in which the everyday life in the public space should be, or to criticize them for leaving the public space to the radicals and their contamination. Yet, the aristocracy here implies a very homogenous group the way in which, as it is marked in its role of tutoring the society, the members of it are never involved in the evils in public life, not to be encountered in 'rabbit balls', carnivals, taverns, bars, pubs, brothels, dances, parties etc. Needless to say, Ahmed Midhat's optimism is extremely naïve and his description of aristocratic lifestyle is incorrect.

Although, Ahmed Midhat's ideas are far from being objective, his points of objection are useful the way in which they illustrate the authoritarian, hegemonic, governmental discourse. Moreover, his identification of evils in the public space with the west (things that belong to the west and produced by the west and born in the west) generates remarkable representations, like the one he created in his *Carnival* (1881). Carnival per se can be regarded as a time during which the social order happens to be in perils; and therefore, has been a subject of etiquette manuals frequently in their *mission domestication*. Notwithstanding, the idea of carnival has been analyzed by many intellectuals in terms of its

relationship with power and hegemony, and mainly suggested as an imprint of resistance in a totalitarian society.<sup>131</sup>

Ahmed Midhat starts his novel by explaining the carnival as a time period, during which people are offered freedom from rules, and by linking the birth of the carnival to the need for social relaxation for people, who were under so much burden and isolated in their own classes, in certain social practices, in old ages:

“...in the old ages, among many civilized ancient nations like the Romans, people were divided into many classes as elites and warriors and artisans and slaves. Like it was only entitled for carrying swords to a certain class, public gaiety too was entitled to a certain one. In brief, every one of the classes had had different privileges of which the others envy.”<sup>132</sup>

As a matter of fact, his version of the carnival does not prominently agree with the widespread western understanding that acknowledges the carnival as unique to, and as some symbol of resistance among the suppressed classes:

“notwithstanding everyone dress in the clothes of those who belong to the other occupations, like soldiers wear the clothes of the civilians vice versa and even the urban dwellers wear the clothes of the villagers or barbarians vice versa, people even dare to dress up contrary to the nature, like men wear women’s clothes vice versa.”<sup>133</sup>

Moreover, although he is very susceptible about moral corruption, his objection represents his concern regarding the change in the definitions of social order. For him, the carnival represents social disorder in which social classes and their roles in social order deceive their value. As he describes the individuals in this setting with all their dresses and masks (*nikap*), he elaborates on ambiguity and transgression (societal, spatial, and temporal).<sup>134</sup>

Yet, he seems to understand that these festivities, which are once a year, at a certain time, can be avoided, have a historical background, and also can relax social stress and prevent social unrest. Nevertheless, his anxiety relapses as he

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<sup>131</sup> See, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984); on the relationship between hegemony and carnivals in early modern European social formation, see, Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, (London: Temple Smith, 1978).

<sup>132</sup> Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Karnaval*, 1298/1881, transliterated by Kazım Yetiş, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>134</sup> “Karnaval her memleket için bir mevsim-i esrardır.”, *ibid.*, p. 15.

discovers and personally experiences that modern balls and dance parties in Europe, or in Pera, were mainly performed by the elite. He identifies them with the carnivals:

“this ball thing means that social groups gather in order to perform the freedom that is needed to be in the carnival, not on the streets but in a large hall.”<sup>135</sup>

Compatible with the general character of *Alafranga*, the festivities on the streets were not mentioned and disregarded as they were seen incompatible with some respectable manners and rules. In spite of that, the balls which were organized and attended by the elite were mentioned elaborately. Unlike the general design of *Carnival* that is based on the moral corruption in these festivities, whether executed on the streets or in large halls, the balls that were described in *Alafranga* ran on a very sophisticated and indeed suffocating etiquette package including how to present yourself to the landlord, how to ask for a dance, or even what to do when you break some accessories of the woman you dance with. His previous negative bewilderment about the carnivals turns into a description of a disciplining process, appropriate to the dominant concern over the entire course of *Alafranga*, during which, the original essence of the carnival that is based on freeing the individuals from social boundaries dissolves.

### 3.3. The Quest for a National Idiom for Modern Etiquette

Quite superficially, for Ahmed Midhat, conservatives are those who:

“do not change and insist to protect the status quo. However, even conservatism is divided into different classes. (For instance): those who are conservative in politics try to protect the existing laws and the current system. There are also those conservatives in religion, who are, although they are not devout in religion, consider themselves to be entitled to protect religious zeal due to their ex mero motu position in the conservative class...”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> ibid.

<sup>136</sup> “Elde mevcut olan şeyi değiştirmeyip ala halihi muhafazada sabit-kadem olanlar demek olur. Amma muhafazakarlık dahi birkaç sınıfa ayrılır. Siyasyatta muhafazakar olanlar usul ve kavanin-i hazıra ve mevcudenin asla tedbil olunmaksızın muhafazası gayretinde bulunurlar. Diniyatta dahi muhafazakarlar vardır ki, dinlerine itikatları olmasa bile mücerret muhafazakar sınıfında buldukları için gayret-i diniyeyi kendilerine ziyet ittihaz etmişlerdir”, in *Alafranga*, p. 83.

European conservatism and the everyday life of its members, according to Ahmed Midhat, is somehow analogous to the ‘oriental-Muslim’ lifestyle and contributes to his opinions about the distinction between eastern and western civilizations, as we have seen through chapter 1. The main reason behind his appreciation of the European conservatives and his proposal of the ‘compatibility’ between the two worlds is mostly derived from the fragments from the everyday life practices of the European conservatives, which he witnessed and employed in many of his books including *Alafranga*, and described as the ‘real life’ in the west, and through which he can easily find parallels. Furthermore, Ahmed Midhat is quite sure about the fact that the number of those conservatives has been underestimated by the Ottomans. Those who had a chance to know Europeans through their encounters in Europe or in Istanbul cannot identify the life neither in these conservative circles nor in the homes of European elite, since,

“those who know Europe only through hotels, balls, private rabbit balls (?), or some inane theatres cannot see these distinguished people in there.”<sup>137</sup>

Nevertheless, conservatives’ distance from the public space does not mean that they cannot generate ideas by which problems can be solved. The main proposal of the conservative lifestyle to reproduce public space was a traditional communal life based on puritanism which also contributed to Ahmed Midhat’s main frame of ideas on modern Ottoman social life.

The most shortcut way to evoke traditional community life was historicism and to dramatize the effect of social change and disorder. In that sense, writing an etiquette manual provided him with a chance to adopt traditional Ottoman social rules that had maintained social order for a long time. “Etiquette that once had dictated acceptable behavior for the different classes”<sup>138</sup>, for different millets, in Ahmed Midhat’s book, turned into a set of rules for maintaining the social order that was thought to be in perils subsequent to the official reformation documents, which drastically changed the formation of the relationship between different

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<sup>137</sup> “Avrupa’yı yalnız otellerde, balolarda, umumi tavşan balolarında, olur olmaz tiyatrolarda görenler bu hüsn-i hal erbabından olan takımını göremezler. Bunlar oralarda görülmezler ki, görebilsinler”, in *Alafranga*, p. 86.

<sup>138</sup> Rifa’at Ali Abou-El-Haj, *Formation of the Modern State: the Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), p. 21.

groups in Ottoman society, of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. His cultural effort to embellish new social organization with the rules on everyday life practices appears to propose a revised edition of a traditional Ottoman communal life by putting forward the idea that the lives of respectable modern Europeans also are not deprived of social control and communal leadership and religious austerity.

Throughout the course of the book, etiquette rules are determined to be the social codes for penetrating into respectable European society, which he thought to be consisted of conservatives, aristocrats or elites. As the individual gets his chance to go into the inner circle, he can experience the ‘real’ Europe, which is pompous but not temporary. Pompous here stands for a predilection of those members for cherishing the European history and civilization. As a matter of fact, as the feeling of temporariness prevails in the everyday lives of the mass and the ‘radicals’, the subjects of *Alafranga* becomes more audacious and grotesque in their social manners, as it was the situation in Victorian England for instance.

Ahmed Midhat’s personal appreciation of etiquette was not only derived from its role as an agent for entering aristocratic circles, but from all the power that it endowed in resisting the feeling of temporariness, estrangement and decadence, and certainly more practical concerns like debauchery, corruption and unconcern of citizens to the problems of others. In this regard, his method of interpretation and/or construction of culture correspond to Zeynep Çelik’s definition of the methodology an anthropologist “invented the culture he studied on the basis of his own culture...enveloped in his own world of meanings, he made analogies or translations from one culture to the other.”<sup>139</sup> His translation is firstly based on the tragedies of cultural failure or being on the edge of it; a sensitivity that required the whole society to be alarmed and to disregard the marginal members or examples (translations), the apostles of Tanzimat literature’s fop characters in the west. Secondly, his translation of Europe is not based on the marginalization of Europe but on the formation of an affiliation in which the terms would be “enveloped in his own world of meanings”, world of values that are still alive in both geographies and also had been shared by many European intellectuals, the fact that was emphasized frequently by Ahmed Midhat.

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<sup>139</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient. Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth Century World’s Fairs*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 10.

Accompanied by the romantic, conservative predilections in the west, an Ottoman conservatism becomes updated and ideologically more consistent. Preserving the authenticity, Ahmed Midhat tried to redefine the formation of the Ottoman social, cultural life with recourse to the language and discourse of European conservatism.

In this context, the values of community and traditional Ottoman social patterns were suggested as assuring the phase of social adjustment to be silent and supervised, and finally as the highest degree for a society to live in harmony, the very same idea of which European etiquette manuals had suggested in general. Moreover, values of community in the Ottoman context substitutes the aristocratic origins of the genre in Europe, which is responsible for producing the idea of acceptable behavior and also the idea of a requirement called social, communal control. The problematic of social control and social hegemony is in a way more illustrative in our analysis of an occidentalist study, than linking the birth of the genre to contemporary urbanization, capitalism and civil society in Europe, which limits our understanding of Ahmed Midhat's motives behind writing an etiquette manual and translating European everyday life to the Ottoman perspective, since the existence of those concepts in the empire is open to discussion.

Not only for speaking back to the western academia which traditionally have seen Ottoman social mechanisms alien to rationality that is the basis of European civilization, but also due to the fact that, obviously many contemporary Ottoman intellectuals had tried to manage those mechanisms by chanting communitarian values, Şerif Mardin has been trying to analyze or indicate the relationship between the concepts of 'civil society' and 'community'.<sup>140</sup> In that sense, his main evaluation of Ahmed Midhat literature is based on the latter being the apostle of Ottoman communitarianism, who represents the authentic formation of 'civil society', as well as the authentic formation or standards of a modern Ottoman urban life, facing the contemporary disturbances stemmed from a foreign 'cultural penetration'. An Ottoman writer who tries to undo that uneven contact, not by trying to take advantage of a so-called ontological difference between cultures but by negating it instead via emphasizing communitarian values

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<sup>140</sup> Şerif Mardin, *Superwesternization*, pp. 412-413.

in both, even if his observations of other culture be contaminated, promises an original outlook in studies of whether community represents civil society or not.

Belonging to the most popular initiator of conservative communitarianism and Ottoman modernization, Ahmed Midhat's ideas represent the formation of a transformed Ottoman-Muslim middle class, regarding its social life and perception of social change in progress. On the path of transformation of community into society, the inescapable end as had supported by *Islahat Prescript* (1856), his novel characters and their social behaviors had been produced to exhibit ideal members of Ottoman community, of Ottoman society, of Ottoman nation.<sup>141</sup> Most of these represent alter-ego of the writer for many researchers, live in the house that they inherited from their fathers, protect the family from dissolving and form some kind of division of labor in the household, appreciate European material progress but are afraid of a possible moral 'progress', do not violate the rules of the conservative society.

In that perspective, *Alafranga* had been prepared in a long period of time and obviously can not be evaluated as was totally attributed to its writer's experiences during his voyage in Europe or to the western etiquette manuals and their writers he referred. Although the book is modeled after a European genre, its very gist is political and had been materialized throughout Tanzimat literature and not only by Ahmed Midhat but by every writer who had written in the era. The main political gist of the book is linked to the communitarianism regarding the obvious purpose of the book, which is organizing the relationships between the members of a community on transformation. In fact, his agenda let him be inspired from the writings of some French aristocrats, whose ideas were close to represent everyday life of a community, but not American republicans etc., for whom standing and writing for the society was making more sense than for the community.<sup>142</sup> The American etiquette was born in accordance with the rise of the middle class; on the other hand, for Europe we cannot mention a 19<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>141</sup> For a close analysis on the relationship between Ahmed Midhat's novel characters and his communitarianism, see, Jale Parla, "*Osmanlıktan Cemiyetçi Türk Milliyetçiliğine Ahmed Midhat'ın Romancılığı*" in *Merhaba Ey Muharrir! Ahmed Midhat Üzerine Eleştirel Yazılar*, pp. 33-40.

<sup>142</sup> In order to understand the difference with the American example, please see, Jorge Arditi, *ibid.*

middle class as a solid, self-confident entity.<sup>143</sup> Obviously, writing for the Ottoman-Muslim middle class, even existence of which was questionable, the European example is more intelligible for Ahmed Midhat.

Ahmed Midhat's observations on European etiquette or his making use of it in order to promote and defend community life does not only stem from his agendas or from the fact that he was alarmed by the decadence of urban life. 19<sup>th</sup> century etiquette manuals in Europe had been produced to educate the members of the society about their responsibilities to the other and to remind them of the fact that either in public spaces or face-to face, position of an individual in a social interaction is limited to the needs and expectations not of the individual himself, but of the society. Consequently, modern social life in Europe, according to him, cannot be represented by westernized fops, who were extraterrestrial to the life of the society that they live in, and hence, could not internalize the substance of modern European social life; whereas, the respectable characters, such as *Rakım Efendi*, could always manage to create better personal relationships with Europeans for they were aware of those rules, and therefore, the rationale of modern European social life or whatever life in which people interact.

In that sense, although it sounds peculiar, authenticity and commitment to the authentic values, either personal or communal, is a prerequisite for a harmonious, as well as disciplined and supervised public life; whereas, cosmopolitanism and its cultural standards are offensive. The genre itself had witnessed constant debates throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in Europe, between those who try "to make the manners and morals of the individual conform with recognized standards of civilization" and those who defend the claim that "manners were supposed to be the product of unique cultures and appropriate only in the context that gave them birth...they were the expression of the identity of a particular community..."<sup>144</sup> As a matter of fact, according to Sami Zubaida's definition of a cosmopolitan behavior of an Ottoman intellectual that is made by "all this with styles of life which oscillate between the Ottoman and the European, with patterns of personal relationships, cultural mixes and a geographic

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<sup>143</sup> Michael Curtin, p. 413.

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.*, p. 408.

compass”<sup>145</sup>, Ahmed Midhat remains austere the way in which, he published his *Alafranga* according to the principles that are preserving communal identity and culture and reconstructing communal integrity which was under attack. Not to forget, besides its universal claims, the genre itself was an endeavor to assimilate individuals into the everyday life principles of their environment and entourage, either aristocratic or urban or traditional or modern.

Notwithstanding reflecting an occidentalist outlook on European everyday life and being an effort to understand the quest of European intellectuals towards establishing the standards of a civilized life, *Alafranga* was meant to assist the official endeavors for articulating social actors into the contemporary official political agendas. That assistance was aiming at the (re)authenticization of everyday life in the empire, esp. in its capital, according to the modern requirements and principles of civilization and of urbanization. Although, the task seems ambiguous, it can be regarded as an advantage for Ahmed Midhat considering his general literary attitude consists of transitions between ideologies, geographies and cultures and, moreover, his close relations with the Hamidian rule and its politics, from which, he and the people or the community he represent had acquired their *raison d’etre*.<sup>146</sup>

Being a member of the “new Ottoman nation”<sup>147</sup>, in public, the Ottoman individual is expected neither to mimic what is European nor to fit completely into *alla Franca* society. On the contrary, he (also the individual is to be Ottoman male) is expected to perform his and his nation’s new identity and further to question if these manners are civilized and decide which behavior would be proper for his own national and religious deeds. Therefore, the new Ottoman is expected to behave as he was trained, by his tutor Ahmed Midhat, the role model of the new Ottoman; furthermore, he is expected to be alarmed all the time against violating the manners of his own nation and religion or against any attack from

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<sup>145</sup> Sami Zubaida, “Cosmopolitanism in the Middle East”, in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Authenticity in the Middle East*, (Surrey: Curzon, 1999), p. 22.

<sup>146</sup> On this subject, see, Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 411.

<sup>147</sup> “yeni bir Osmanlı milleti”, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Üss-i İnkilap*, (İstanbul: Takvim-i Vekayi, 1294/1878), p. 10.

outside insulting national and religious pride. Ahmed Midhat, on his own, constantly performs field exercises during his encounters with foreigners, warns his reader about any possible offense, and also obliquely instructs them about the symbols of the new identity that are first to shield.

As a matter of fact, theoretical debates with European intellectuals and ‘refutation (reddiye) literature’ were not the only battleground at the time and, for instance, Selim Deringil gives many examples showing non-intellectual struggle for image-ameliorating, esp. by the Hamidian rule.<sup>148</sup> Ahmed Midhat, for his part, gives non-official examples of these efforts whether with referencing his own experiences or with creating encounters in his stories. Addressing the Ottoman public, etiquette rules in the course of encounters with the ‘other’ facilitate him to express the importance and the context of those rules, specifically regarding any opportunity of representing Ottoman-Muslim identity, in which they have been created.

Representing this very specific identity, Ahmed Midhat mentions the *fez*, the most-widely used accessory of urban males, both in his travel book in which, he narrates his own real experiences and in his etiquette book in which, one cannot know whether the story is real or made up by him according to his agenda. One of these real experiences in his travel book depends on the materialization of his national-religious pride on his *fez*, an originally Moroccan headgear. In his dialogue with someone who luckily knows French in the train station in Cologne, he does not miss the chance to frantically express his nationality as he was asked if he was French:

“- No! Here is my national headgear on my head, I am an Ottoman”<sup>149</sup>

Therefore, the world of etiquette rules he is trying to describe is not absolutely meant to form a uniformed public behavior and does not have to be followed by everyone in everywhere. In his *Alafranga*, he warns his Muslim reader about their friendly duties to refrain from offending the Frankish; nonetheless, he also warns them about the instances when they should not retreat:

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<sup>148</sup> Deringil, *ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> “Hayır! İşte milli serpuşum başımda, Osmanlıyım!”, in *Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan*, p. 82.

“- something inappropriate for the rules and manners of our religion, like taking off the fez and drinking holy water (in the church), is no way whatsoever would be done...Ottoman-Christians can accept and enjoy that holy water; however, someone Muslim should not do that dishonesty...Likewise, although to uncover one’s head in the church is required for the non-Muslim, it is not so for the Muslim. The fact that the Moslem wears fez; and the fact that not covering their head would be evaluated as disobedience has already been learned by the Europeans, let alone protesting Moslem for not taking off their headgears, they even appreciate it.”<sup>150</sup>

Ottoman intellectuals’ consideration of the relationship between Muslim and non-Muslim elements of the empire has been one of the main concerns, in which we have questioned the consistence of the idea of Ottomanism, considering the asymmetrical positions of these elements. In that sense, Ottomanism as a quest for a supranational outlook or these intellectuals’ legitimization of it has been seen as the reflection of ambivalence and paradox. Nevertheless, as we can see here or in many other examples, the idea of supranationality exhibits the existence of authenticities or even nationalisms, even from official hands, in a surprisingly very self-confident manner. That authentic approach, therefore, is not only a Muslim or Ottoman reaction to western cultural penetration, but also an effort to construct an identity that encapsulates identities, a nation that encapsulates nations, which had been seen as natural for Ahmed Midhat, at least, who wrote many stories about different elements of the empire and displayed every kind of interaction, mobility or clash between identities.

Instead, he claims that Europeans would be happier to see Ottomans in Ottoman clothes; and to be mimicked would offend Europeans:

“It is disliked by Europeans that we wear tail-coats in European salons, due to the fact that our plain-collar and single-line-buttoned coats are equivalent to these tail-coats of Europeans, and hence, are our *official-civilian* costume. Preferring our own coats is the naturally, convenient manner.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> “Lakin baştan fes çıkarmak ve ab-ı mukaddes içmek gibi akaid ve adab-ı diniyemize, muğayir olan şeyleri zinhar yapmamalıdır...Nasara dininden olan Osmanlılar kendi dinleri muktezasınca bu ma-i mukaddesi kabul ve nuş edebilirler. Fakat Müslüman dininde olan bu sahtekarlığı yapmamalı, ve din-i nasarayı bu veçhile istihza etmemelidir...Kezalik kilise içinde baş açmak İslamdan ma-ada cümle için lazım olduğu halde Müzlümanlar için lazım değildir. Müslümanın ta’zimi fesini başına koymakta olduğu ve açık başlılığın riayetsizliğe hamlonulacağı elyevm Avrupaca dahi öğrenilmiş olduğundan Müslümanların başlarından fes çıkarmamalarına itiraz şöyle dursun bunu takdir dahi ederler”, in *Alafranga*, pp. 212-213.

As a matter of fact, he also tries to impose the idea of authenticity, and tries to legitimize it by representing it as the real expectation of Europeans. In *Kafkas*, the leading character, one very favorable figure, knows how to dress like Europeans and every aspect of alla Franca and actually always wears European clothes. Nonetheless, he goes to see his Russian girlfriend by wearing the attire that is special to Caucasus, according to his girlfriend's desire.<sup>152</sup>

His obsession for attire does not only stem from his insistence on warning Ottomans against mimicry. Orhan Okay reminds that the attire had been a very important symbol of the transformation not only of the everyday life but also the official or military life in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, it is expected to be for Ahmed Midhat to be curious about this very important symbol of change; a curiosity that is not only exclusively linked to the fear of western cultural penetration, but also related to the representation of the well-being of the social structure of community. According to Quataert, "by donning lace dresses or cutaway coats in the latest Parisian fashion, individuals were seeking to mark their social differentiation and modernity-that they were part of the new, not the old, and were superior to those in their own society who did not wear such attire."<sup>154</sup> In that sense, the garments of his westernized characters underline the fact that the adoption of western fashion is not fully about westernization but also about social differentiation and status, which are very problematic in relation to the social structure in Ottoman community life or require a very challenging process for being redefined or digested. Contrary to the dress that marks the distinction and social differentiation, the dress was thought to be a symbol of imperial harmony.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> "Biz Osmanlıların düz yakalı ve bir sıra düğmeli setrilerimiz Avrupalıların iş bu kuyruklu setrileri makamına kaim yani *resmi-sivil* kisvemiz olduğundan bizim için Avrupa salonlarında kuyruklu setri giymek Avrupalılarca dahi hoş gitmemesi lazım gelen bir haldir. Kendi setrilerimiz tercih olunmak bil-veche muvafik adaptır", in *Alafranga*, p. 126.

<sup>152</sup> Ahmed Midhat, *Kafkas*, (İstanbul: Kırkanbar, 1294/1877), p. 19-20.

<sup>153</sup> Okay, p. 131.

<sup>154</sup> Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 152.

On the other hand, Ahmed Midhat's own experience in Orientalists' Congress explains much about his discovery of the attire as a symbol of ontology, according to which Europeans portrays the world. As Carter Findley puts it, "Ahmed Midhat discovered that while those in Eastern dress were not expected to know how to behave, Easterners in Western dress would not be forgiven the least mistake."<sup>156</sup>

'Not to be expected how to behave' does not make sense for Ahmet Midhat, apparently; *Alafranga* was made to supply Ottomans with the information they need for not to be criticized by Europeans. The reason why he expected Ottomans not to refrain from some of their national manners, although mostly they had been invented in the same century, is very much linked to the fair position he asks for Ottomans in the map of civilization. His criticism on some European manners and some mistakes in practice in European everyday life obliquely remarks the contemporary official Ottoman claim or wish that the civilized world would be incomplete without Ottoman existence. In that sense, the motivation behind *Alafranga* is more complex than simply being a tutorial for Ottomans in their encounters with Europeans. It is a part of a design, according to which the Ottoman society would be created as a more solid and independent entity, and to reproduce its authentic manners.

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<sup>155</sup> See, Ahmet Ersoy, "A Sartorial Tribute to Late Tanzimat Ottomanism: *The Elbise-i Osmaniyye Album*", Muqarnas, Vol. 20, (2003).

<sup>156</sup> Carter Findley, p. 45.

## CHAPTER 4

### REORGANIZATION OF THE OTTOMAN HOUSE AND FAMILY LIFE

Changes in the interior plans of dwellings and in the domestic living practices of dwellers have been regarded as repercussions of the ‘secularization’ of the Ottoman house. These were seen as one of the very fundamental modifications in 19<sup>th</sup> century history of the empire, regarding the fact that spatial changes as well as literary change are indices of larger transformations. Accordingly, in his recent study on the last two centuries of the empire, Donald Quataert mentions that, “in the Ottoman world, the home often was the testing ground for social innovation...for example, the prevailing Ottoman practice of separate socializing for males and for females was experimented with and then broken at home...couples began visiting close friends together.”<sup>157</sup>

According to its pedagogical spirit, contemporary *Tanzimat* literature for its part represented the transformation in domestic patterns, and tried to encourage the introduction of some new manners, to counsel the public about the correct behaviors, or warned them about the calamities that can be brought by alien inventions. In understanding that ‘testing ground’, the house itself and the everyday life (especially of Istanbul), Ottoman literature, which was itself in transformation, supplies us with a picture that has not been comprehensively shown by statistical research due to lack of material sources.<sup>158</sup> In that sense, chapters devoted to domestic manners and house design in *Alafranga* should be evaluated in relation to the whole literary oeuvre of Ahmed Midhat, the largest one in the period, where he often pictures urban family life and contemporary housing patterns.

Ahmed Midhat’s image of the family and its condition in the society is not different from the mainstream Ottoman idea of civilization and the condition of the family in society. Witnessing a family woman get harassed in the street, an

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<sup>157</sup> Quataert, pp. 151-152.

<sup>158</sup> Alan Duben, Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, Family and Fertility, 1880-1940*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 21.

Ottoman ambassador reported from Amsterdam in 1865 the fact that there the “families are ruined everyday by such malicious attacks. Therefore it would be correct to say that this is a savage country.”<sup>159</sup> Protection from outside attacks, the security of family life, appears as a certain prerequisite of civilized life in contemporary Ottoman official or intellectual thought. The main criticism of Ahmed Midhat about everyday life in Paris, ‘the center of modern civilization’, is the poor conditions in which families survive or are ruined. He gives statistics about what he saw in some Parisian newspapers, which mentioned high rates of illegitimate births and the striking housing shortage in the metropolis.<sup>160</sup> These facts showed the fact that this European metropolis was lacking the basic requirements of a family-oriented civilized life the maintenance of which was, the role of the father in the family. Ahmed Midhat had a strong faith in patriarchal family life, and the house, where family, the heart of the society, survived in solidarity, and children grew up in good physical and mental shape. Carter Findley exposes the fact that the intention behind Ahmed Midhat’s representation of Parisian family life in his Occidentalizer approach, which is based on the idea of material progress and moral decay go hand in hand in contemporary Europe, is to show the Ottomans that they would succeed if they can manage the transformation they are experiencing and protect their moral values, certainly by protecting the Ottoman family.<sup>161</sup>

Nevertheless, European family life and the European ‘modern’ house that was pictured in the *Alafranga* represent a very different outlook than proposing binary oppositions between the east and the west, and are far from promoting the protection of Ottoman family life and dwelling practices. The European family and its house, by taking a serious place in Ahmed Midhat’s etiquette book, prove that these elements of European society were still not part of European moral decay, which had been certainly the main argument of Ottoman occidentalizers and, earlier Ahmed Midhat, himself. In that sense, this chapter is meant to be an attempt to question the legitimacy of this major occidentalizer motto, which is

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<sup>159</sup> BOA (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives), HR. TO. (Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası), 491/79, 05/01/1865; trans. in Deringil, p. 141.

<sup>160</sup> *Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan*, p. 767. Also see, Findley, pp. 46-47.

<sup>161</sup> Carter Findley, pp. 47-48.

‘material progress and moral decay go hand in hand in Europe’, considering the fact that Ahmed Midhat dwelled extensively on the European family and its house. In *Alafranga*, the subject was discussed as part of European cultural life, which is itself a proof that European cultural life was not disregarded or categorized as something to be abhorred or avoided.

The first part of the chapter is an analysis of the symbolic use of the house in late Ottoman literature for ideological purposes by Tanzimat intellectuals. For that purpose, I suggest to reread Ahmed Midhat’s *Felâhât-ı Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, which pictures the quest for a new cultural life characterized by the lives of two very different young men, in order to understand the literary uses of the house and dwelling practices. In that quest, the fortunes of these different characters are being decided by their different dwelling conditions; while *Felâhât* becomes *bimekan* as a consequence of his degenerate life, *Rakım* manages to maintain his father’s house and becomes successful. Furthermore, depending on the pictures of family life in literature, I try to expose the fact that family life had been a very central subject at that time, and was used for articulating different ideological positions and agendas.

The second part of the chapter is based on Ahmed Midhat’s picture of the design of the European house under the title *hane tanzimi* (house design), which was as a description of a visiting experience. His observation of the European house deals with the regime in the house and its spatial manifestations, which are organized to implement the rule of the owner of the house and the position of the visitor in the house. In that sense, he successfully constructs an image of the interior that is not all open to the intruder; transparency not being evident in European house design. Moreover, Ahmed Midhat describes everyday life and spatial organization in separate spaces that belong to different genders by emphasizing the very different everyday lives of women and men in the house. Besides shaping the relationship between the host and the visitor, and between family members, house design becomes a scene of representation, where the family, its lifestyle, ideology and social status, is displayed within the framework of good manners.

#### 4.1. Connotations of Home and Family in Late Tanzimat Literature

The family and its house had constantly been used in Tanzimat literature in order to signify social change. It promoted or criticized change by condemning the old or the new; while using the image of the house to indicate the changing relations between family members or the altering gender roles. In that framework, the plots that had been constituted around the family and its house stood as a synecdoche of the well-being of the empire; so the discourse, which announced the condition of crisis, repeatedly transubstantiated the individual and the living space as the society and the homeland, respectively, with relation to grand political objectives such as, westernism, Islamicism or nationalisms. Therefore, an analysis of the *Tanzimat* home or its implications, with all of its psycho-spatial connotations, requires constant awareness of the political milieu. The symbolism, serving different agendas, could manage to generate common references for different political groups. Namık Kemal, a very famous Jeunes Turcs figure indicates that:

“The homes in a society are like the rooms in a house. Can one find comfort in a house constantly plagued by hatred and infighting? Could it prosper? Would happiness be possible?”<sup>162</sup>

Namık Kemal points out the fact that constant disturbances in the house and in the country, at the same time, require to be vigilant or to be alarmed constantly. These, hence, delay ‘prosperity’ and ‘happiness’, the concepts employed for the metonymical use of the nation and the house in *Tanzimat* literature. The decadent everyday life, for instance in *Recaizade’s Araba Sevdası* or in many of Ahmed Midhat’s novels, goes parallel with the decadent everyday life outside. In that sense, the ‘family crisis’ that had widely been mentioned at the time also refers to a ‘country crisis’. Furthermore, the home in question is not that of the nuclear family that will be promoted and become fashionable in the Republican era. It, physically and mentally, belongs to the traditional extended family, which lives in

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<sup>162</sup> “bir mülkün evleri, bir evin odalarına benzer”, Namık Kemal, “*Aile*”, İbret (1872), quoted and translated in Alan Duben, Cem Behar, p. 196, ‘Mülk’ here is translated as ‘society; yet, ‘country’, if not ‘homeland’, would be more convenient.

a *konak* type house; and the country in crisis is yet unimaginable as monolithic and/or isolated.<sup>163</sup>

*Felâtin Bey ile Rakım Efendi* (1875) is one of the best organized literary pieces, of the time, using metonymical devices in constructing the individuals' position in such times of crisis. Nonetheless, according to the general literary tendency of the time, Ahmed Midhat used a didactic tone that implied the author as a guiding father figure and further complicated the metonymical relationship between the home and the country, by using contrasting characters that are his favorite *Rakım* and the decadent *Felâtin*. Although notifying the reader about the benefits of *Rakım*'s ways in governing his life and the reasons behind *Felâtin*'s failure, the mechanism of alterity, here, operates more intricately.

Symbolism, which refers to the synecdochal relationship between 'family crisis' and the bigger 'social and cultural crisis', starts with the loss of guidance. Tanzimat writers were all confident about the fact that the duty of the literature and themselves in times of crisis is guidance of the society.<sup>164</sup> Cultural crisis, per se, as it was tried to be portrayed through the changing everyday life patterns of Ottoman families of a limited urban environment, "concern(ing) perceptions, mentalities and radical changes in fundamental values and meanings."<sup>165</sup> Specifically in the novel, crises, which imply the shift in cultural references, start with the loss of the father, without whose tutelage, the young would be tested constantly according to his success in protecting the well-being of his household that he inherited from his father. Considering the oblique literary relationship between the well-being of the house and the country, Ahmed Midhat and many other Ottoman intellectuals (for sure including Namık Kemal) acknowledge the situation of crisis in the empire, not only related to political field but also related to the cultural repertoire of the Ottoman individual who had lost his paternal leadership, which Tanzimat writers, mainly Ahmed Midhat, had tried to provide.

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<sup>163</sup> See, Elif Bilgin, *An Analysis of Turkish Modernity through Discourses of Masculinities*, Unpublished Doctoraal Thesis. M.E.T.U., The Graduate School of Social Sciences, 2004, p. 94.

<sup>164</sup> Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar*, p. 19. Parla's quest for the imprints of 'the clash between the generations' in Tanzimat literature reflects Mardin's suggestion of a certain mental shift considering Tanzimat's intellectual milieu, see Şerif Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

<sup>165</sup> Alen Duben and Cem Behar, p. 200.

Although, they tried to accomplish that guidance by using newly introduced literary forms like the novel or etiquette books, ‘advice manuals’ for the young male as a genre itself had been widespread in Ottoman literature, as it was in contemporary Europe.

Even though, the main theme of the book has been seen prominently as the problems caused by Westernization<sup>166</sup>, composing a story of crises following the loss of the father, Ahmed Midhat proposes the foreign effects as providing damages of a secondary degree, and moreover, exposes the ways in which these damages can be portrayed via the lives of *Rakım* and *Felatun* and by the agency of the alterity produced in describing their social conditions, and the critical decisions they make when they face obstacles. Moreover, the loss of the father provides the writer with a chance to indicate the crisis between generations and also signifies the young generation’s exhausting effort to organize or reproduce an epistemology of its own, not to forget, without paternal guidance, which Jale Parla considers to be one of the major factors behind the birth of *Tanzimat* literature.<sup>167</sup>

As a consequence, the survival of the inherited house represents the survival of an ontology that involves an intricate amalgam of epistemologies, while the collapse of it corresponds to an epistemological decadence that had been the main aspect in Ahmed Midhat literature. In that perspective, *Rakım* and *Felatun*’s relations with their dwellings, the ways in which they interpret their relationship with their houses and their endeavor to change and protect what they inherited suggest the Ottoman young male’s position vis a vis the difficulties of epistemological shift without the existence of paternal guidance.

Having lost his parents in his early ages, *Rakım* made money for the first time in his twenties, by translating a book from French. Instead of spending the money for upgrading his living conditions or for some luxury, as it was the rule of the day in Istanbul, he chose to repair his very worn out house that he inherited from his family, furnishing it according to his taste and separating a part of the house for some distinguished books in Turkish and French.<sup>168</sup> Restoring the

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<sup>166</sup> By every scholar, who have dealt with the book including Parla and Okay.

<sup>167</sup> Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar*, pp. 9-23.

inherited house with the money that comes through assiduity and knowledge helps protecting the honorable memory of the house and the predecessors, especially the father. Furthermore, in renewing the house according to his taste, *Rakım* symbolizes the quest of the new generation for an authentic epistemology

For his part, *Felatun* chose to leave his family house after his father's loss, for living in a hotel room with his French mistress. A term that was constantly used by Tanzimat intellectuals, *bimekan* (spacelessness) describes the situation of detachment from the protection of culture, tradition and society, which were symbolized in the concept of the father's house, in lieu of 'vulgar delights' (*lezaiiz-i süfliyye*), due to one's weakness regarding the absence of father, ignorance and sentimentality, or even effeminacy.<sup>169</sup> On the problem of dwelling in Paris city, Ahmed Midhat exposes the fact that *bimekan* had become an unavoidable characteristic of western urban life and turns the problem of the ownership of the house into a matter of 'happiness', which should for him be a measure of civilization:

"The happiness, which is derived from authentic austerity, authentic residence that means to be the authentically 'being spaced', gets completed in one's own home. I do find the perfect manner of the happiness in the home that is possessed by its dweller."<sup>170</sup>

Although, Istanbul, exactly at that time, was living a massive dwelling shortage due to fires or considerable amounts of immigration,<sup>171</sup> Ahmed Midhat exposed an Istanbul, where the dwellers were very lucky to stay in their own possessions. Even if, he was not aware of the actual situation or was consciously distorting the story, his endeavor to evaluate the degree of civilization according to dwelling conditions and ownership patterns is noteworthy.

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<sup>168</sup> *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi*, p. 25.

<sup>169</sup> Jale Parla, *ibid.*, p. 99-101. On the concept of *bimekan* also see, Zeynep Uysal, "Ahmet Mithat'ta Mekansızlar ve Yurt" in *Merhaba Ey Muharrir! Ahmed Midhat Üzerine Eleştirel Yazılar*, pp. 276-284.

<sup>170</sup> "tasarruf-u hakiki, sükunat-ı hakiki yani temmekkün-i hakikî ve o yüzden muntazar olan bahtiyarlık insanın kendi hanesi derununda tekemmül eder. Bahtiyarlığın asıl suret-i mükemmelesini insanın kendi malik olduğu yuvasında buluyorum", *Avrupa'da Bir Cevelan*, pp. 766-767.

<sup>171</sup> Alan Duben & Cem Behar, pp. 33-35.

Living in hotel rooms, being a *bimekan*, *Felatun* had completely lost any attachment to the Ottoman society and its rules. After giving in to ‘vulgar delights’ and spending time ‘without a space’ of his own, he lost his every possession. Also due to the fact that he was mis-educated, he had no choice but to leave the city of Istanbul for an island in the Aegean Sea. The island, also being a metaphor itself, depicts the fact that leaving the father’s house, one is doomed to be a *bimekan*. Instead, a third character in the novel, *Canan* comes to inhabit a space at the end as she was educated in time and followed the rules of *Rakım*’s household. *Canan*’s story, being an orphan and a slave, suggests that the obligation of an Ottoman gentleman is not only to avoid falling into the situation of *bimekan*, but also to construct the space for those who are *bimekan*.

Not to forget, *Felatun*’s ‘spacelessness’ and *Rakım*’s ‘happiness’ symbolize states of epistemological adherence or crisis. Both living in cosmopolitan environments and having many friends or lovers among foreigners, the harmony between their identities and their environments was decided by their knowledge and education. This also exposes the ways in which the writer identifies himself considering the fact that, Ahmed Midhat himself was not living far from cosmopolitan environments or unfamiliar to foreigners. Ahmed Midhat explains the main motivation behind his *Alafranga* as to inform Ottomans about *savoir vivre cosmopolite*.<sup>172</sup> In that sense, in an analysis of the book, cosmopolitanism and cosmopolite life style cannot be equated with degeneration and ‘spacelessness’. His ultimate quest for collectivity and strong social norms in the Ottoman perspective does not contradict that interest for cosmopolitanism, due to the fact that for Ahmed Midhat a solid Ottoman identity is the first prerequisite to be successful in cosmopolite life. On the survival of the Ottoman young male in a cosmopolitan environment, I find Yerasimos’ argument is supportive. Although he refers to intellectuals, his schematic picture of the individual sheds light on Ahmed Midhat’s representation of himself and his male Ottoman characters:

“In this intermediate space (cosmopolite space), he meets like-minded people and can eclectically choose those elements from each culture, to

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<sup>172</sup> Ahmed Midhat’s own expression, *Alafranga*, pp. 60-61.

find a new synthesis whose quality forms the strength of the new cosmopolitan culture”.<sup>173</sup>

Those specific words define the story of the model individual, such as *Rakim*, which Ahmed Midhat raises through many of his novels and books like *Alafranga*. These are the stories of Ottoman males (probably including Ahmed Midhat himself) journeying into urban Europe, or to Europeanized districts in Istanbul, into the cosmopolitan life. They are curious about what is going on around; however, this curiosity is not getting them into trouble due to their solid identity and knowledge. The important point here is the fact that the configuration of this self-confident, rooted identity is not given by birth but by education: the model Muslim-Ottoman-male is one with a reasonable knowledge of the other's life and identity. Education is prerequisite of this identity, the point where *Felatun*-like characters fail, according to which the popularities of *Rakim* and *Felatun* were decided in a very definite manner. That definition also explains the reason of which *alla Franca* fop characters were created and had become scapegoats of 'wrong westernization', at the time:

“Many of the lesser bureaucrats had only a superficial knowledge of the west, combined with a snobbish rejection of traditional Ottoman ways....bearers of an alien culture, made them extremely unpopular in traditional Muslim circles. Westernized Ottoman Christians and certainly foreigners often ridiculed them as orientals impersonating a civilization they did not understand.”<sup>174</sup>

They were ridiculed by foreigners, due to the fact that they really do not understand the roots of these practices. Ahmed Midhat's duty was to inform these pathetic figures about the ways in which they can succeed their cosmopolite experience.

Accordingly, one of the main purposes of the *Alafranga* is to educate Ottoman young men about the ways in which contemporary Europeans dwell. Nevertheless, taking into account the fact that, the book is based on an ideal environment and the European everyday life is idealized to the utmost, Ahmed Midhat's main intention seems to be informing the Ottoman young men about the

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<sup>173</sup> Roel Meijer (ed.), *Cosmopolitanism, Identity and Authenticity in the Middle East*, (Surrey: Curzon, 1999), p. 5.

<sup>174</sup> Zürcher, p. 69.

benefits of combining successfully some favorable aspects of the Ottoman dwelling with some aspects of European one. In this sense, while he criticizes Europe for not being comparable to oriental nations on the subject of hospitality, he also criticizes many aspects of Ottoman domestic manners, for instance, the way Ottomans dine:

“In this quarter (of the world), from of old, tables had been set in the rooms that were accepted and used as salons. Are not these rooms having three bays on the sides? Into the corner, where two bays associate, proper to the height of cushion, there a chair was put, on which a tray and on that spoons, breads, mats were organized. Although, in that manner, effendis could have their dinners more or less easily, due to the fact that there was a cushion was laid for the second or third-degree companions, it had required too much effort for the seniors to pick something up from the table, which reaches to the level of their chins. What about clearing the table afterwards? Although, the crumbs that are jumbled by the damage of those who attacks to the table, bones, dirty spoons, and the rest were not something to stare with full stomach; it is acceptable if they were collected one by one, the tray that is larger than one meter is unable to pass through the doors of that time? Yah? Servant will come and collect that ruin one by one and put them into the cases in his hand; later, will wipe the tray with -the degree of cleanliness is needless to say- rag and finally will take it away by rolling like a wheel chair. Lots of labor and troubles, as well as disturbance and ugliness.”<sup>175</sup>

The genre of etiquette or *alla Franca* in the empire had often used these comparisons and it had never sacrificed from its educational purposes and political agendas. The concept of balancing (*mülemma*) or comparison (*kıyas*) had never lost its significance in the genre. Nonetheless, in time, changing political agendas led to the reformulation of the concept and the genre repeatedly and in different directions. Ahmed Midhat’s, (as well as that of his favorable characters

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<sup>175</sup> “Bizde minel-kadim sofralar, salon ittihaz edilip oturlan odalara kurulurdu. Bu odalar üç yan kerevetli değil mi ya? İki kerevetin telaki eyledikleri zaviyeye minderin irtifasına mütenasip yükseklikte bir iskemle getirilip konularak onun üzerine sini ve onun da üzerine kaşıklar, ekmekler, nihaleler tertip olunurlardı. Bu halde minder üzerinde oturan efendiler biraz eğilerek az-çok rahatça taam edebilirlerse de karşılarında bulunacak ikinci, üçüncü derecedeki akiller için yere erkan minderini konulmuş bulunduğundan bunlar üzerine oturanların hemen hemen çene hizalarına gelen sofradan tenavül edebilmeleri epeyce müşkilatı mucip olurdu. Ya sonra sofrayı kaldırmak? Sofraya hücum edenlerin dest-i tahripleriyle birbirine karışmış olan ekmek kırıntıları, et kemikleri, kirli kaşıklar, filanlar tok karnına hiç bakılacak görülecek şeyler olmadığı halde bunlar def’aten kaldırılıp götürülecek olsa cana minnet ise de bir metrodan ziyade kutru olan sini o zamanın oda kaplarından sığmaz ki sofraya takımıyla kaldırılıp götürülebilirdi? Ya? Ayvaz gelip bu enkazı birer birer toplayıp elindeki kaplara koyacak, badehu derece-i tahareti kabil-i bahsolmayan bir paçavra ile siniyi silip nihayet onu bir araba tekerleği gibi yuvarlaya yuvarlaya götürecekti. Hem birçok hizmet ve tekellüf, hem rahatsızlık ve hüsnsüzlük.” Quoted in Okay, p. 128-129; Ahmed Midhat Efendi, *Taaffüf*, (İstanbul: İkdâm, 1313/1895), p. 222-228.

like Rakım), abovementioned balanced position between authenticity and cosmopolitanism changed into different attitudes, one of which was the superwestern one of Abdullah Cevdet or superauthentic one of Turkish nationalists. With these characters, also the everyday life of the Ottoman family was evaluated and reflected on the genre in diverse manners. That is to say, the symbolic use of the Ottoman family and the spaces of everyday life had not lost grounds as a literary tool until the very end of the empire. In a positivist manner, the Ottoman family had emerged as a field of social research and had been commissioned by nationalistic ideology:

“Unionist intellectuals in search of national identity relied upon the family as the germ-cell of the nation-state and family morality as the source of national solidarity.”<sup>176</sup>

Twenty years later, Ahmed Midhat’s picture of the ‘Ottoman style of dining’ was repeated in a very same manner by Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi, who was one of the writers of the Constitutional Period (1908) and one of the first Turkish publishers of Bab-ı Ali:

“The table is consisted of a large tray put on a little chair. Grand parents, children; all arranged by the tray. A dish arrives, and everyone’s fingers are in the plate; a glass comes, and everyone is using the same glass. Tray is full of crumbs and spillage, no harm. It is being eaten with a rush as if they are in a campaign; nobody talks to each other. They are getting off as if they are being freed from a big burden. They crouch on sofas or on the pillows lying on the floor.”<sup>177</sup>

Nevertheless, the criticism on the latter is not based on the ignorance of the family about manners. The criticism here is based on the family’s inconsistency to the desired model. This model had been created according to the ultimate requirements for the family, as the microcosm of society, to survive in modern

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<sup>176</sup> Zafer Toprak, ‘The family, Feminism and the State during the Young Turk Period, 1908-1918’, in Edhem Eldem (ed.), *Première Rencontre Internationale sur l’Empire Ottoman et la Turquie Moderne, Institut National de Langues et Civilisations Orientales, Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, Varia Turcica XIII* (Istanbul & Paris: Edition Isis, 1991), p. 451.

<sup>177</sup> “Sofra küçük bir iskemle üzerine mevzu geniş bir siniden ibaret. İhtiyar peder ve valide çoluk-çocuk sininin etrafına dizilmiş. Bir kap yemek geliyor, bütün eller o sahanın içine dalıyor, bir bardak geliyor on kişi aynı bardaktan içiyor. Tepsinin üstü ekmek kırıntısıyla, kaşık döküntüsüyle dolmuş, zararı yok. Seferber halde imiş gibi alelacele yeniliyor, kimse kimseyle hemen hiç konuşmuyor. Ağır bir yükten kurtulmuş gibi sofradan kalkıyorlar. Ya sedire ya yere mevzu küçük minderlere çökülüyor.”, Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi, *Avrupalılışmak – Felaketlerimizin Esbabı*, (Dersaadet: Kitaphane-i İslam ve Askeri, 1332/1914), pp. 29-32.

world. In order to meet those basic requirements, a family, in this case a Turkish family, is entitled to organized around some basic rules about dwelling practices. Tüccarzade also pictures the model everyday life of the model Turkish family and its institutional organization:

“Take a family of middle income and fixed budget. Its members live in a big apartment house or in a small villa in Erenköy. Made up of an old mother and a father, a young woman, a clean and well-dressed man, three (grand)children and a maid, this family naturally has some close and distant relatives as well. The young man is well educated, bright and knowledgeable, has a flair for entrepreneurship, and is courageous. He works at a state office in the daytime, and reads his papers and books at night. He gets up early every morning, takes a shower and shaves, puts on his pressed clothes, and goes into the dining room. The kids are up, their mother is neat and kempt, and both parents are dressed plainly. They gather around a table covered with white cloth. They have breakfast - coffee with milk, chocolate. The young man kisses his parents’ hands and the cheeks of his children, bestows a sweet kiss on her wife’s lips and goes out happily and in high spirits. He arrives at work at the same time every day, and works without break until noon. He goes back home at the same time in around a big table in a nicely decorated dining room. Everyone has his own fork, knife and plate. They definitely don’t eat out of the same plate, or drink water out of the same glass. A maid with a white apron serves them throughout the meal. The young and pretty woman, with kempt hair and a plain blouse, tells stories to her children. This family, made up of children, young and old people have a joyful dinner together. The evening prayer is called. The grandmother and grandfather perform their prayers. Then the young mother sits at the piano and plays some national pieces. The children happily listen to the music. When it is bedtime, their mother reads them from the Quran. She strengthens their religious education with godly love. There is no sign of disorderliness or religious conservatism in this happy home. There is no over-spending. Everyone tries to save as much as he can. Everyone in the family is literate, even the maid. The young woman even knows French. She does not cover herself excessively. Among relatives and friends she is comfortable yet proper. On Fridays all the men and women go out together for a walk. Even in the way she walks one can see her innocence and namus. The children go to school regularly. They are dressed like non-Muslim children, neatly and in a healthy way. Some nights they line up beside their mother and look at the pages of a picture book, listening to the stories their mother tells them. This is a life of well-being and happiness; love reigns in the house. The young man seeks well-being, fun and happiness only at home. He never takes a drop of alcohol, never goes to coffeehouses. As for the woman, she does not even glance at other men.”<sup>178</sup>

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178 “Vasat derecede bir maişete ve belirli bir bütçeye malik bir aile tasavvur ediniz. Şişli’de bir apartmanda ya da Erenköy’de küçük bir köşkte oturuyor. Yaşlı bir anne ve baba, genç bir kadın, temiz ve düzgün giyimli bir erkek, üç çocuk ve bir hizmetçiden oluşan bu ailenin tabii ki bazı

The attempts for re-organizing the everyday life of the Ottoman family, started by *Tanzimat* writers, such as Ahmed Midhat, and formalized later in the Constitutional Period, is comparable to the attempts made by contemporary European intellectuals, particularly etiquette writers. Norbert Elias, in *The Civilizing Process*, has linked that process of change between 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries to an epistemological change, which constitutes social codes with the idea of the changes in the formation of power and government. In that sense, Elias suggests that ‘civilized’ social behavior had been constituted over centuries and had been imposed not by the government but by rendering the individual as part

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akraba ve yakınları da vardır. Genç erkek iyi terbiyeli, okumuş, sahib-i malumat ve zekâ, müteşebbis ve cesur. Gündüz bir vazife-i resmiye ile meşgul. Gece gazetelerini, kitaplarını muntazaman okuyor. Her sabah erkenden kalkıyor, yıkıyor, traş oluyor, hergün yaka ve kolalarını değiştiriyor, iç ve dış gömlekleri tertemiz, ütülenmiş elbiselerini giyiyor, yemek odasına geçiyor. Çocukları kalkmış validesi de temizce taranmış, peder ve valide de sadece giyinmiş. Beyaz örtülü masanın başına geçiyorlar. Sabah kahvaltısını, sütlü kahve ve çikolata ile içiyorlar. Rafadan yumurta ve bisküvi yiyorlar. Derken genç adam peder ve validesinin elinden, çocukların yanaklarından öperek, zevcesine de tatlı bir buse kondurarak şen ve sevinç içinde çıkıyor. Hergün muayyen saatte dairesine gidiyor. Öyle vaktine kadar harıl harıl çalışıyor. Bir saat süren öğle taamını temiz bir lokantada geçiriyor, yine dairesine dönerek akşama kadar çalışıyor. Akşam olunca belirli bir saatte evine dönüyor. Çocukları ta kapıda kendim karşılıyor, aralarında aynı buse-i muhabbet teati olunuyor. Güzel bir şekilde düzenlenmiş yemek odası temiz ve zarif evani ile parıldıyor geniş bir masanın etrafına bütün aile toplanıyor. Herkesin çatalı, bıçağı, tabakları ayrı. Katiyen bir tabaktan, muhtelifen yemek yenmiyor. Bir bardaktan iki kişi su içmiyor. Masanın üzerinde billur bir çiçeklik, rengârenk güzel menekşelerle donatılmış. Beyaz bir göğüslük takmış olan hizmetçi kız fırıl fırıl hizmet ediyor. Saçları taranmış, sade keten bir buluzla bürünmüş, sevimli ve genç kadın çocuklara ait bazı fıkralar anlatıyor. Çocuk, genç ve yaşlı insanlardan mürekkep bu mesud aile, kemal bir iştah ve lezzetle taam ediyor. Kahveler içiliyor. Küçük salona istirahata çıkılıyor. Yatsı okunuyor. İhtiyar baba ve nine hep birden namazlarını kılıyorlar. Sonra hanımefendi piyano başına geçiyor bazı milli ve vatani parçalar çalıyor. Çocuklar sevinerek musikiyi dinliyor. Yatılacağı vakit genç valide çocuklarına Kuran’dan bir sure okutuyor. Onların saf kalplerini muhabbet-i ilahiye ile teshir ederek terbiye-i diniyelerine takvîyet veriyor, sonra temiz bir yatağa yatırıyor. İhtiyar dede vaktinde alem-i ticarete yuvarlanmış, biraz servet edinmiş. Şimdi evladının yanında mesudane yaşıyor. Fakat hergün gazetesini kemal-i merakla okuyor, memleketinin ahvalinden daima haberdar olmak istiyor, köyde bulunduğu müddetçe bahçede çalışıyor. Bu aşçıyan-ı saadette intizamsızlık, geçimsizlik, taassup esarı katiyen görünmüyor. İsrâf hiç yok. Tasarrufa son derece riayet var. Senelerce kapılarına bir alacaklı müracaat etmemiş. Bütün ev halkı hatta hizmetçi bile okuyup yazıyor. Genç kadın Fransızca’ya da vakıf. İfrat-ı derece-i müsteviriyette. Akraba ve talikat arasında kemal edep ve serbestiyle davranma hâkim. Cuma günleri erkek kadın bütün aile beraber gezmeye gidiyorlar. Kadın sadelik içinde güzel ve zarif giyiniyor. Yürüyüşünde bile iffet ve ismet nazara çarpıyor. Çocuklar muntazaman mektebe gönderiliyor. Frenk çocukları gibi temiz ve sıhhi giydiriliyor. Bazı geceler validesinin etrafına dizilerek resimli kitapların sayfalarını karıştırıyorlar, validesinin hikâyesini dinliyorlar. Erenköy’de oturdukları köşkün ön tarafı sarmaşıklarla, akasyalarla, yabani güllerle kuşatılmış, pencerelere asla kafes takılmamış, bahçe duvarı yok, her taraf açık. Bol bol ziya duhulüne müsait. Odaların içi temizlik ve sadelik içinde boğulmuş. İşte bir hayat ki mesud u merfiye geçiyor, evin her tarafında aşk ve muhabbet hüküm sürüyor. Zevce bütün refahını, eğlencesini, mutluluğunu yalnız evde arıyor. Mezkurat katiyen kahveye hiç çıkmıyor. Kadının, bir erkeğe yan gözle bile baktığı yok.”, ibid. pp. 28-29.

of the mechanism of social behavior. The individual had become responsible for his own social behavior and for maintaining his own social status.<sup>179</sup> In time, social behavior, and also the table manners that we have mentioned in the Ottoman context, had become an automatic action, according to which the individual would behave when he faces newly introduced appliances:

“Forks were undoubtedly a later invention than fingers, but as we are not cannibals I am inclined to think they were a good one.”<sup>180</sup>

Savoir vivre cosmopolite is the name of this very mechanism. And family, for its part, had become an institution, in which the individual become socially adjusted. The emphasis in the Ottoman context on the constitution of the reorganization of the everyday life practices of the family is very much linked to the everyday life of the whole society. Therefore, the education of the members, especially young members of the family, had been proposed as the prominent duty of the family, in which individuals practice social manners. Without being educated in the family or without having a proper family life, the individual cannot be expected to perform well in cosmopolite environments.

#### **4.2. The Mechanism and the Spatial Organization of the European House**

“what a difference between these salons with all these fineries and our rooms, where by way of greeting a visitor receives a chibouk, most often from the hands of a black slave!”

al-Tahtawi, *Takhis al-Ibriz, fi Talkhis Baris*

European house design, per se, had experienced great transformations, which created an intellectual concern trying to explain the principles of the new interior that was functioning in new urban fabric. The impact of the industrial revolution on the interior design and the world of furniture had determined not only the physical environment of the house, but also everyday life practices in the house.<sup>181</sup> In order to make the transformation of the domestic space and life

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<sup>179</sup> Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Vol II: State Formation and Civilization*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982).

<sup>180</sup> Jane Aster, *The Habits of Good Society: A Handbook for Ladies and Gentlemen*, (New York: Carleton Publisher, 1865), p. 291-292.

intelligible, European writers, in this case through advice literature, tried to materialize the new interior. Throughout their interpretations, these writers did not hesitate to configure the new environment according to their own political agendas. Conservative writers of the advice literature, for their part, tried to form that intelligibility by amalgamating the up-to-date concepts with the traditional ones. Louise d'Alq, the lady who was one of the main sources of the book *Alafranga*, draws attention to the transformation of domestic qualities:

“Il y a à Paris des maisons laïques et religieuses réunissant toutes ces diverses qualités.”<sup>182</sup>

Being a conservative himself, Ahmed Midhat had tried to overwhelm objections of those who claim the distinction between two worlds, by elaborating his model of the new interior on traditional everyday life, which also can associate European and Ottoman outside the borders of non-‘laïques qualités’. Under the title ‘*hane tanzimi*’ (house design) in *Alafranga*, Ahmed Midhat claims to describe a model for a ‘modest’ residence:

“Every ordinary man in Europe is not entitled to own an individual house. Although, we cannot devote our imagination to the residence of a man who owns a big mansion or a château, the opinion on house design that we wish our readers to have would be obtained if we would refer to a reasonably designed apartment house or a little house.”<sup>183</sup>

To start with, the very first difference between Ottomans and Europeans or between dwellers in Istanbul and Paris, which he chooses to point out, is the fact that the ordinary man in Europe does not enjoy what his counterpart in Istanbul does regarding dwelling conditions. For Ahmed Midhat, this advantage of the people of Istanbul is derived from the fact that, mostly, people in Istanbul own an individual house. Yet, as we have mentioned in the first section of this chapter, Istanbul was suffering from housing shortage at this time, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> See, John Pile, *A History of Interior Design*, (London: Laurence King, 2005).

<sup>182</sup> “There are houses in Paris bringing together secular and religious all these qualities.” Louise d’Alq, *ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>183</sup> “Avrupa’da müstakilen bir haneye malik olmak her kula müyesser değildir. Büyük konak veyahut şato sahibi bir adamın konağına henüz hayalimizi ithal edemez isek de gerek bir apartmanın ve gerek bir küçük hanenin orta halli denilecek derecede tanziminden bir suret-i mutlakada bahseyilecek olur isek şu hane tanzimi hususunda karilerimizce husulünü arzu eylediğimiz fikr-i icmali yine hasıl olmuş olur”, *Alafranga*, p. 151.

century. The reason behind his manipulation here is clearly to criticize the dwelling conditions in Europe and to remind the Ottomans of the ‘traditional Ottoman house’, a source of ‘real happiness’. Nevertheless, being one of the largest sections in *Alafranga*, ‘*hane tanzimi*’ proposes that the European houses and everyday life there are worth analyzing. Moreover, for Ahmed Midhat, European house design was one of the leading aspects of European life that is not quite known to the Ottoman public and therefore is something that creates wrong applications of *alla Franca*:

“...due to the fact that we suffer from so many mistakes as we design our salons in *alla Franca*, since we do not like our old *alla Turca* salons nowadays anymore, we would be more aware of our house designs, and our mistakes would be lessened, if we acquire some information on how the Europeans reorganize their houses.”<sup>184</sup>

Acquiring that kind of knowledge, per se, has plenty of prerequisites, including the accessibility to private spaces and lives in Europe or into authentic European environments. Ahmed Midhat’s power as author is derived from his position as an occidentalist. Reflecting that exceptional position and the idea of the fact that knowledge involves privilege, his description of the European house is a kind of information that is entitled to social status and test. In that sense, *Alafranga* does not only provide the knowledge of the occident for the Ottomans, but also providing the key for them with which they can penetrate into the ‘real’ life in the occident.

That very privilege is meant to reflect not only his power as an occidentalist, but his preponderance over domestic issues regarding cultural change, in this case the change in interior design, considering the fact that his occidentalism was in the service of domestic agendas. As a matter of fact, the transformation of the residential fabric in Istanbul was accompanied by the change in interior plans, and therefore his endeavor to analyze a European interior space must be evaluated as transitions between geographies, cultures and ideologies. Moreover, his elaborated picture of the European interior reflects his

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<sup>184</sup> “...şimdilerde biz dahi eski alaturka salonlarımızı nasılsa beğenmeyerek alafranga usulde salon tanzim edeceğiz diye hayli hatalara düşer olmaktan bulunduğumuzdan Avrupalıların hanelerini nasıl düzelttikleri hakkında velev muhtasaran olsun malumat peyda edecek olur isek kendi Tanzimat-ı beytiyemiz hususunda dahi biraz daha uyanık bulunuruz da hatalarımız dahi azalır.”, *Alafranga*, p. 150.

encounter and uneasiness with the new interior design and changing domestic everyday life in Istanbul, where:

“(the) multi-purpose rooms of the past became single purpose. Separate bedrooms, living rooms, and dining rooms emerged, each filled with specialized furniture that could not be moved about or stored in order to use the room for other purpose.”<sup>185</sup>

According to Ahmed Midhat, the first prerequisite of crossing the threshold of domestic spaces in Europe is invitation. To be invited, the individual in charge, who clearly belongs to a proper social group, is supposed to be among those for whom the host has sympathy or from whom the host has material or moral expectations.<sup>186</sup> To earn that sympathy, the knowledge of etiquette and making use of it skillfully in public spaces would be decisive. Nevertheless, the process of invitation is far from being fully dependent on face to face encounters or personal impressions. The first step to expose one’s intention in any other’s acquaintance is to take recommendation letters from mutual contacts. *Visite* paper, sent to the person addressed, marks the bureaucratic part of the process, during which the process of invitation takes an official form that signifies that the anticipated relationship or acquaintance would not be for the entertainment of parties, but for mutual benefit. The reply letter of the addressee determines the fate of the relationship.

Firstly, this intricate application process exposes the fact that the boundary between public and private spaces signifies more than a physical threshold between spaces; it symbolizes not only an edge and but also a beginning. In that sense, both spaces, and the everyday life in them represent divisions, which are designed according to diverse ideologies and discourses, according to which the individual is expected to perform. These separate performances are restricted to a written or tacit system of checks and balances, where the genre of etiquette

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<sup>185</sup> Quataert, p. 155. For the reflections of newly inherited consumption goods and furnitures on domestic space in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul, see, Dilşad Gözübüyük Melek, *New Interpretations of Domestic Space and Life: The Emergence of Apartment Buildings in Nineteenth Century İstanbul*, Unpublished Master’s Thesis, M.E.T.U., The Graduate School of Social Sciences, 2004, pp. 39-46.

<sup>186</sup> *Alafranga*, p. 162.

corresponds to the written part, according to which the individual or the relations between individuals are controlled and classified.

Secondly, this testing process indicates the fact that the private space in Europe does not lack the symbolic patterns characteristic of its ‘oriental counterpart’ that we have analyzed in the course of previous section of this chapter. The significance of that symbolic likeness between oriental and occidental spatial organizations, regarding both the organization of public and private spaces, is contrary to the general opinion, which separates Ottoman private-public difference from its European counterpart on the grounds of the first lacks history and the second lacks tradition.<sup>187</sup> The formation of the private space represents an ideology, which is not analogous to the one regarding the public space, according to which the rules of hegemony indicate a very different, asymmetrical reality that recreates the relationship between the visitor and the host.

Having acquired the right of entrance through an intricate process, although the space that awaits the penetration of the individual is called consistently a ‘private space’, one should not expect a single unit but a series of diverse spaces and spectacles, each having a different meaning, outlook, order and procedure. Vestibule and vestiary is the first space that Ahmed Midhat warns the reader to pay attention. The significance of vestibule and vestiary is very much linked to the fact that it is the spatial representation of the edge of public and the beginning of private worlds. In that sense, the design of the vestibule should be considered as the first setting of life in the house, symbolizing a display of the regime in the house, which targets the visitor. Samuel Wells, an American etiquette writer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, suggests the host to:

“allow their (visitors’) presence to interfere as little as possible with your (host’s) domestic arrangements; thus letting them to see that their visit does not disturb you, but that they fall, as it were, naturally into a vacant place in your household.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> For example, see, Günkut Akın, *Asya Merkezi Mekan Geleneği*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınevi, 1990).

<sup>188</sup> Samuel Wells, p. 28.

On the visitor's part, these very first spaces in the house provide an opportunity to evaluate the quality of life in the house and judge the personality of the host, regarding the fact that a very popular aspect of that time was

“courtesy (that) is the beautiful part of morality, justice carried to the utmost, rectitude refined, magnanimity in trifles.”<sup>189</sup>

Brilliantly combining these primaries of European manners with spatial organization in the European interior, Ahmed Midhat states that:

“The level of the host regarding the courtesy, cleanliness and the importance given to the visitors immediately becomes clear as one enters their vestiary.”<sup>190</sup>

In Ahmed Midhat's ‘tour guide’, the next place that is waiting for the visitor in European house is the antechamber. This is a little room before the main salon, where the visitor offers his visite paper to the household servant and waits for the permission of the landlord. The waiting period in that simply furnished room is related to importance given to the visitor by the host:

“The duration of the waiting time in that antechamber would indicate the respect given to the visitor, and in case that it is extended would mean disrespect, the house owner is obliged to make excuses in person if the reason behind that delay is an important business appointment with an important visitor.”<sup>191</sup>

These two spaces, organized and decorated in a very deliberate manner, indicate the fact that house life in Europe is hard to understand and penetrate. In the hands of Ahmed Midhat, the spatial organization of the European house becomes a very interesting testimony of occidentalism, which is not seeking the knowledge of the occident, but aiming to expose the complexity of the occidental knowledge to the local audience, especially to the fop characters, who think that they can easily learn about the ways in which Europeans live. Moreover, Ahmed Midhat, while picturing this, can hardly be penetrated, environment and exposing the rationale

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>190</sup> “bir hane ashabının kibarlıkça, temizlikçe, misafirlerine riayetçe derecesi daha vestiyerlerine mezar olduğu anda anlaşılır.”, *Alafranga*, p. 152.

<sup>191</sup> “iş bu antişambrda misafir ne kadar az bekletilir ise hakkında o derecelerde tazim edilmiş ve ziyadece tehir ettirilir ise hakkında o kadar hürmetsizlik gösterilmiş addolunacağından şayet sahibi hane bir mühim misafiri ile bir büyük iş müzakeresinde bulunarak yeni gelen misafiri ziyadesiyle beklettirecek olur ise bizzat gelip ziyadesiyle özürler dilemeye mecburdur.”, *Alafranga*, ibid.

behind its organization, manages to reconstruct his status and legitimacy as an occidentalist, as being the one who have had a chance to penetrate in European house passing through the vestibule and the antechamber.

On the other hand, that very spatial organization excitedly pictured by Ahmed Midhat, which aims to regulate the different status of the owner of the house and the visitor, regarding the performance of hosting and visiting, represents a family life that is impenetrable, private and secluded from strangers. These two little rooms stand for the fact that the degree of intimacy decides the manner of the experience of visiting and the space. In that sense, if that type of organization is not comparable with the traditional Ottoman house life, it is certainly very much admirable by Ahmed Midhat himself, who is akin to conservatism. He can be expected to support its application, in case of the traditional Ottoman house dies.

Exclusively for intimate visitors and old friends, the next space is more private. The lady or gentleman of the house can accept their visitors in petit salon, or respectively in a boudoir or in a *cabine du travail*. Ahmed Midhat interprets the exclusivity not as a display of discourtesy, but a sign of considerateness:

“...not accepting new friends here is not a sign of discourtesy. On the contrary, due to the fact that it would come to mean that they are accepted to the circle of privacy and intimacy, the new visitor would be sad and embarrassed...if a woman would accept a man, who is still a stranger, she would apologize for that unconventionality, and the man for his part would apologize more for causing her to accept him in her private room.”<sup>192</sup>

The likely embarrassment of the visitor is a very graceful excuse to conceal the fact that privacy is sacred and it was fanatically defended in many of the etiquette manuals of the time. Samuel Wells mentions:

“One of the rights most commonly trespassed upon constituting a violent breach of good manners, is the right of privacy, or of the control of one’s own person and affairs.”<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> “...yeni dostları burada kabul edememek onlar hakkında hürmetsizlik addolunacağı için değildir. Bilakis onları mahremiyet ve hususiyet derecesine kabul etmiş demek olacağı için yeni misafiri mahzuz ve müntedar eder...bir kadın henüz yabancı addolunan bir erkeği budvara kabul edecek olur ise şu teklifsizlikten dolayı özürler diler ise de erkek dahi kadını hususi odasında rahatsız etmeye sebep olduğundan dolayı daha ziyade özürler diler.”, *Alafranga*, p. 153.

<sup>193</sup> Samuel Wells, p. 23.

In that perspective, the boudoir refers to a semi-private space, where the lady of the house can receive her intimate friends and can spend leisure time. Accordingly, Ahmed Midhat informs us that it is decorated in a modest manner:

“In these rooms, there exist a half or, according to its size, a full set of sofa and an armchair and a chair, furnishing-wise. There can even stand a sofa for resting, called a ‘long chair’. A mirror would not be inappropriate in that room, some photographs and especially pictures of the family members can be attached to it, too. However, hanging valuable paintings on the walls would be decreasing their value, unless they are heirloom. A wardrobe fitted with mirror, chifonier and material for facial care do certainly not belong here. If Madame has her own library, she places it here. All material regarding embroidery always would be here...”<sup>194</sup>

The counterpart of Madame’s boudoir is Monsieur’s ‘*cabine du travaille*’, which is special to the man of the house and his male guests. According to Ahmed Midhat, the ‘*cabine du travaille*’ is:

“where the library of the man would be present. His study would definitely be in here. Sofa-like furnishings would be like that in the boudoir, and if the owner of the house would not have a special room for weaponry but having valuable pieces, he would display them in the appropriate places in the *cabine du travaille*. However, it would be more appropriate to place antique *recherché* in salon than placing in here. There can not be placed mirrors in place of work, and valuable pictures, too, unless, they belong to the man of letters and the intellectuals. Especially, the statuettes of these people should not be in anywhere else but in these offices.”<sup>195</sup>

The spatial and material difference between boudoir and *cabine du travaille* not only exposes a physical difference between spaces that belong to different genders, but also provides remarkable information as regards the difference

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<sup>194</sup> “bu odalarda mefruşat olarak yarım veyahut vüs’atına göre bir takım kanepeler ve koltuk ve sandalye bulunur. Hatta ‘uzun iskemle’ denilen ve üzerine uzanıp yatmaya mahsus olan kanepelerden dahi birisi bulunabilir. Ufak bir ayna bu odaya zait görülmeyeceği gibi ayna etrafına her nevi fotografya resimleri ta’lik olunur. Lakin kıymetli tabloları budvarlara asmak kadrlerini tenzil sayılır. Meğer ki, familya yadigarları olalar. Aynalı büyük dolap, lavabo yani yüz takımları gibi şeyleri bu duvarlara koymak katiyyen caiz değildir. Madamın kendine mahsus kütüphanesi var ise onu da buraya koyar. El işleri için kaffe-i lüzum hep budvarlarda bulunur.”, *Alafranga*, pp. 152-153.

<sup>195</sup> “Erkeğin kütüphanesinin asıl vaz’olunacak yeri burasıdır. Yazıhanesi ise bittabi burada bulunur. Kanepeler mefruşatı tıpkı budvar gibi olup eğer sahibi hane başkaca silah salonuna malik olmayıp da teşhire şayan kıymetli silahları var ise onları dahi kabin dü travay derununda münasip yerlere ta’lik ile teşhir eder. Fakat antikaya müteallik tuhf-u tüfar-i bakiyeyi buraya koymaktan ise salona koymak müreccahtır. İş odasına ayna konulamayacağı gibi, kıymetli resimler dahi konulmaz. Meğer ki, meşahir-i ulema ve udebanın resimleri ola. Hele meşahir-i mezkurenin heykelleri var ise bu, iş odalarında başka yerlere koymamalıdır.”, *Alafranga*, p. 153

between the everyday lives of different genders and the idea of leisure in 19<sup>th</sup> century European society. Not to forget as reflected by Ahmed Midhat, an Ottoman intellectual, who endeavors to penetrate those issues without sacrificing his conservative principles. Both spaces belong to secular life, but serve different motivations. ‘Long chair’, which is also called as Josephine’s sofa, clearly symbolizes leisure in boudoir. Ahmed Midhat defines the boudoir as “the most appropriate place for idle talk, chattering and babbling in woman-to-woman visits.”<sup>196</sup> Çan-çanlık (chitchatting) and embroidery characterizes the everyday life of the lady in the boudoir, and so indicates the leisure time of woman in the house. Ahmed Midhat was against the harem life and the strict separation between the domestic lives of the men and the women and had never seen the harem as the space in which women perform hobbies.<sup>197</sup> Accordingly, his language in picturing the boudoir is pejorative; for him, this ‘feminine space’ is dedicated to laziness. Secondly, photographs of the family and heirloom paintings, even if they are precious, do belong to the boudoir. The representation of the family in that case is related to the boudoir as a feminine space and, for sure to the woman, due to the fact that, womanhood is associated with the family, and the woman is assigned to epitomize her family in the spaces that belong to her.

Leisure in *cabine du travaille* is defined in a different way and is assembled with the materials, which belong to a different world. Photographs of famous intellectuals and man of letters replace the family photographs; display of the family replaces the display of a very secular environment from world on the outside. Although, the space is attributed to the time spent inside, it is very much linked to the external environment. Display of the political and secular ideals replaces the display of the family life. In that sense, man and his world becomes organized according to another kind of representation, yet still a representation.

Although, Ahmed Midhat reflected the different representations attributed to different genders without difficulty, he seems unaware of the ideological use of advice literature in constructing everyday lives of different genders. For instance, he does not understand why women should always be righteous in discussions:

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<sup>196</sup> “kadın kadına edilen ziyaretlerde istedikleri kadar boşboğazlık, çan-çanlık, çal çenelik etmek için en müsait yer budvarlardır.”, *Alafranga*, ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Okay, pp. 219-220.

“due to the fact that anywhere in Europe and especially in France, especially in its central prefecture, women are excluded from serious education, the conversation would be more easy in case of talking on insignificant matters. It would be ill-manner of the person, who opens the conversation on the grounds that the lady is European and therefore well informed, in case of the lady is unaware of the subject, which would be ill-manner of the lady, given the fact that her salon is designed as academia. Never will the man be righteous and refute the lady; always the lady will be right and man be false...it would be impossible for an intellectual not to be surprised from the fact that they acknowledge that hypocrisy and adulation as reflecting good manners, and showing courtesy and respect to women.”<sup>198</sup>

In fact, Ahmet Midhat is remarking here on a very significant aspect of the projections of etiquette literature, vis-à-vis the quality of the social performance of married women. As Michele Plott puts it, the general advice literature of the time project a married woman, who is very social (*femme mondaine*), having plenty of visitors in her salon and can easily get into discussions with men. For instance, “writing in *La grande dame*, Marie Valyére even compared the *femme du monde* directing conversation in her salon to an army general.” Nevertheless, this performance is never only attributed to women and her ability; advice literature designs the man as helping *femme du monde* to be comfortable with him.<sup>199</sup>

Interestingly enough, Ahmed Midhat’s criticism of advice literature or critique of social norms, being a Muslim conservative, is not based on that playful interaction among different genders but on the advice literature’s underestimation of and hypocrisy towards woman. He seems very surprised about the prejudices for women in Europe, when he was replied “no one in Paris would presume that

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<sup>198</sup> “elhasıl Avrupa’nın her tarafında bilhassa Fransa’da onun da daha hususiyetle merkez idaresinde kadınlar öyle hariçten tevehhüm onulacağı veçhile maarif-i ciddiyeden mahrum oldukları cihetle onların salonlarında ne kadar ehemmiyetsiz şeylerden bahsedilir ise musahabe o kadar kolaylaşmış olur. Avrupa kadınıdır, ehli marifir diye mühim bir mesele açıp da kadın o meseleden bihaber çıkar ise kendi cehaletine kail olarak mahcup kalacağı yerde bilakis salonu akademya haline konulduğundan ve bu ise usul-ü muaşeretin bilinmemesine delalet edeceğinden bahisle o bahsi açanın terbiyesizliğine kail olur. Hiçbir meselede erkek haklı çıkamayacak, kadını haksız çıkarmayacak, daima kadın haklı çıkıp erkek haksız çıkacak...bu müdahane ve riyayı da hüsn-i terbiye ve kadınlara hürmet ve riayet addediyorlar ki, efkar-ı ciddiye erbabının buna şaşırması kabil olamaz.”, *Alafranga*, p. 167.

<sup>199</sup> Michéle Plott, p. 540.

women can be interested in such top-matters”<sup>200</sup>, as he tried to publish Fatma Aliye’s *Nisvan-ı İslam* in French newspaper called *L’orient*. For him, Fatma ‘Aliye’ represents the interest of Ottoman women in *mebahis-i ‘aliye’* (grand matters). These references assist him to deconstruct the judgment of the inferiority of women in the orient and celebrate the different status of women in the occident and the orient in favor of the latter.

Not-so-intimate visitors are received in the salon, where that distance determines the formation of both social behavior and spatial decoration. Due to the fact that the salon is organized and meant to be the space of gathering with others; and as we can recall the name salon, per se, had represented in time a new type of sociability that is specific to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, salon in a European house is expected to be the space, where the family and its members try to display the high quality of their manners and their domestic life to the visitor. The display of photographs and pictures in the salon is giving us an idea about the order of things in the salon, as it is in the abovementioned boudoir and *cabine du travaille*. As being the most social space in the house, salon is not organized to include direct representations of the family. Ahmed Midhat emphasizes the fact that photos of the family members are not something to be displayed here:

“Photographs and pictures of the family members cannot be hung in the salon, whether petit or grand. It is a reserve that, photographs in the salons must be in organized albums. Nothing can be hanged in the salons but the most exquisite lithographic and charcoal and watercolor and oil paint pictures.”<sup>201</sup>

Like anywhere else in the house, the salon is also organized according to the control of the owner of the house. Ahmed Midhat describes the chair, on the most dominating corner in the room, as one reserved to the landlady, symbolizing the fact that the lady of the house is the ruler of the domestic space. Although, the space is being dominated by the landlady, even she is not entitled to feel

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<sup>200</sup> “kadınların bu gibi mebahis-i aliye ile iştilal edebileceklerine Paris’te hiçbir kimse ihtimal veremez.”, *Alafranga*, p. 166.

<sup>201</sup> “gerek küçük, gerek büyük salona fotoğrafya resimleri ve bahusus familya halkının resimleri ta’lik olunamaz. Salonlarda bulunacak fotoğraf resimleri muntazam albümler derununda bulunmak şarttır. Salonlarda en nefis litoğrafya ve kara kalem ve sulu boya ve yağlı boya resimlerden başkası ta’lik olunamaz.”, *Alafranga*, ibid.

comfortable; the space is not devoted to relaxation but to sociability, which had been accepted as a concept unrelated to comfort, at that time:

“Having a long chair in the salon is not considered to be polite. Because, the right of lying down in the salon, is not awarded to anyone.”<sup>202</sup>

Other than the chair in the corner, there are other chairs, sofas and ‘divan’s and cushions for the visitors in various parts of the room, none of them were meant people’s relaxation.

On the other hand, the salon is organized as a domestic showcase, where the space is utilized in order to represent the family. For instance, the display of the contemporary intellectual products indicates social status. In the middle of the room, there exists a table surrounded by delicate chairs, and some coffee tables in appropriate places in the room. On these tables, there are “latest issues of some magazines on science and literature and newly published books.”<sup>203</sup> The main motivation behind that detail is certainly to expose the intellectual standards of the family members and their interest in intellectual production. Display of published materials, books and magazines as part of a family’s material possessions shows us the fact that intellectual prowess had had a great exchange value in European society at that time.

Furthermore, the salon is where the visitor is shown the wealth of the household and the family. Ahmed Midhat points out to the penchant for antiquarianism:

“All kinds of statues and exotic pieces of arts are put in the salons, which is similar to an antique shop. Rugs, which we lay on the ground here, and old metal plates, if delicate and rare, can be hanged on the walls of the salon.”<sup>204</sup>

The illumination of the salon decides the final judgment about the status of the life in the house:

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<sup>202</sup> “Salona uzun sandalye koymak kibarlık addolunmaz. Zira salonda uzanıp yatmak hakkı hiç kimseye verilmemiştir.”, *Alafranga*, p. 154.

<sup>203</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> “Her nevi statüler ve sanayi nefiseye ait tuhf-u tefarik hep salonlara konuluporası adeta bir antikace mağazasına benzetilir. Bizim buralarda yerlere serdiğimiz halı seccadeler duvarlara çakılıp eski maden tabaklardan gayet nadir ve nefisleri var ise onlar dahi salon duvarlarına ta’lik olunabilir.”, *Alafranga*, p. 155

“When decoration of a salon would be praised, they would especially say ‘(...) newly illuminated’, which means illuminated as the day.”<sup>205</sup>

Remembering Ahmed Midhat’s interest in industrial progress, which has been claimed to be the very source of his interest in Europe, illumination, as a clear symbol of the material progress, simply attracted his attention. Nevertheless, his definition of ‘tenvirat’ (illumination) does not only consist of the symbolic relationship between illumination and industrial progress. He also notices the ornamental use of illumination and its objects, indicating the endeavor of Europeans to display social status by exhibiting the industrial products that they possess. The role of the etiquette manuals is to describe the most elegant and effective ways of performing that exhibition.

The last resorts in a ‘modest’ European house are the bedrooms, which are not for visitors, and therefore do not involve a design based on representation. In that sense, picturing the bedrooms, Ahmed Midhat focuses not on the complex relationship between the visitor and the host, but on the design, decoration and life in these spaces that are dedicated to full privacy. Therefore, the most appropriate places for the private possessions of the family are the bedrooms; family photos and heirloom do exist here. Obviously, regarding his ideological mission, the private spaces in a European house give him a chance to express his idea of the ‘real’, elegant Europe that embraces morality, chastity, manners and decency:

“Bedrooms are the places that are owned by the family members in a perfect private manner. For, in a somewhat large house, petit and grand salons and dining room are considered as belonging to public and Madame’s boudoir and Monsieur’s *cabine du travaille* are meant for the common use of the family and some intimate friends. However, one’s bedroom is one’s own private home.”<sup>206</sup>

Ahmed Midhat draws special attention to the daughter’s room. He pictures the design and decoration in the room according to the conservative pedagogical

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<sup>205</sup> “Bir salonun tezyinatı medh olunacağı zaman bilhassa ‘...nev tenvir olmuş idi.’ derler ki, gündüz gibi tenvir edilmiş olduğunu beyan demektir.”, *ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> “Yatak odaları ise familya halkı meyanında herkesin bir hususiyet-i tamme ile malik olduğu yerlerdir. Zira büyücek bir hanede büyük, küçük salonlar ve yemek salonu umuma ait sayılan yerler olup madamın budvarı ile mösyönün yazıhanesi bazı havass-ı ehibba ile bir de familya halkının müşterek oldukları kısımlar demektir. Ama herkesin yatak odası kendine mahsus yuvasıdır.”, *Alafranga*, p. 156.

outlook, reflecting both of his own and of the etiquette genre in general. As a matter of fact the daughter's bedroom has to be organized according to the manner, which is expected to reflect the personality of the young girl:

“it is required that the bedroom of the young girls should be unadorned and exempt from anything that can oppose the social manners, like nude statues and pictures; and her library, which does not include novels but only books on religion and morality and literature, must be placed here. That simplicity in their bedrooms, as it is in their dressing, is assumed as their most important jewellery. Besides it is not even appropriate to wear diamonds for the young girls, clothes made of valuable fabric, like velvet, for wearing outside is also not convenient. Likewise, something special to madams, like using bedclothes ornamented with embroideries, should not be allowed.”<sup>207</sup>

Louise d'Alq, from whom Ahmed Midhat mostly received the information on European etiquette, explains the appropriate interior design in the girl's room in a detailed manner; and advises the girl's room to be under constant surveillance like many of the other contemporary etiquette manual writers.<sup>208</sup>

Ahmed Midhat's tour guide for a European house reflects many of his ideas about the cultural life in Istanbul that he projected for the future, and also reflects the fact that his endeavor not consists of a yearning for the past. The European house, family and cultural life are very important concepts, which are very multifaceted to penetrate. European house is an organization and certainly does not reflect traditional occidental prejudices, which picture it as the house of sin.

On the other hand, his sketch of the European house that is organized from less private to most private spaces is to expose the fact that the arrangement of life in the European house is not very different from that in the Ottoman-Muslim house. Visitor is, from the very beginning, controlled by the owner of the house,

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<sup>207</sup> “Genç kızların yatak odaları gayet sade olmak ve adab-ı umumiye zerre kadar taalluku olacak şeyler ve mesela çıplak resimler ve statüler (heykeller) konulmayıp, kendilerine mahsus gayet sade tuvalet takımlarıyla, romandan filandan ari yalnız din ve ahlak ve edebiyat kitaplarını havi kütüphaneci dahi burada bulunmak lazım gelir. Kızlar giyinmelerinde kuşanmalarında ne kadar sade olacaklar ise yatak odalarında dahi bu sadelik onların birinci süsü, birinci ziyneti addolunur. Düşünelim ki, kızlara elmas takmak bile şık olmayıp hatta palto ve manto gibi dışarıda giyinecekleri şeylerin kadife gibi ağır kumaşlardan olması da caiz değildir. Kezalik karyolarının dahi mükellef dantelalarla müzeyyen olunmak gibi madamlara mahsus olan şeyleri genç kızlar için tecviz etmemelidir.”, *Alafranga*, p. 159.

<sup>208</sup> Louise d'Alq, *Notes d'une Mère*, pp. 97-98 ; Robert Kerr, *The Gentleman's House*, (London: 1865), p. 147.

and there are specific places in the house that are open for him. Privacy of the family members is very important and is very clear in the plan, and the spaces are gendered.

Moreover, the visitor is exhibited the wealth and ideological stance of the family, and modern consumer goods, industrial or intellectual, are in the service of this very purpose, as regards the relationship between modern consumer goods and social values.<sup>209</sup> Only one year after *Alafranga*, in *Taaffüf* (1895), Ahmed Midhat elaborately pictures and appreciates the interior design of an Ottoman family's house, which does not reflect a confused mix of the occidental and the oriental, but represents harmony and taste:

“alla Franca spatulas, bouoir paper platens, erasers, wooden or bone knives for cutting papers or books. But every one of them is a piece of art. An envelope that holds other envelopes in every length and in good brand marks...calendars that show the month and the day...silk embroidered, taffeta lampshades.”<sup>210</sup>

Understanding that newly introduced expositional performance; his concern is to educate Ottomans about the good manners, according to which this modern decorum can be obtained successfully. Considering the fact that the Ottoman house has always been employed by the Ottoman intellectuals to point out social or cultural problems, harmony and taste in the spatial organization and decoration of the Ottoman house, which was proposed in the book *Alafranga*, stand for the principles, according to which those problems would be solved.

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<sup>209</sup> Asa Briggs, *Victorian Things*, (London: B.T. Batsford, 1988). Briggs tries to represent the relationship between some eccentric artifacts and goods from the Victorian period and the worldview of Victorians.

<sup>210</sup> “Alafranga gratuvarlar, papye buvar merdaneleri, kalem silgileri, kağıt ve kitap kesmek için kemik ve ağaç bıçaklar. Ama bunların da her biri bir eser-i enfes. Her boyda güzel markalı zarfları havi bir zarfdan...hangi ayda hangi günde bulunulduğunu gösterir kalenderyalar...ipek dantelalı, canfes abajurlu lambalar.”, *Taaffüf*, p. 117; quoted in Orhan Okay, p. 90.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Regarding the concepts that we use when we try to identify with the transformation in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, we always need to be very suspicious. Various models that have been proposed in postcolonial researches remained impotent when studying an empire, which consisted of different nations, communities, religions, cultures etc. I still remember that one of the prominent professors, when lecturing about the comparative cultural change between Russian and Turkish modernizations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, made fun of Tanzimat literature comparing its value to the contemporary Russian literature. The reason behind this, was our belief that while Russian modernization is more understandable thanks to the Russian literature, we do not receive any information of the same kind from the Ottoman intellectuals, and in case they try, they are far from being successful. Moreover, for us, the failure of the Ottoman writers was understandable since they had left the classical Ottoman literary form and had started to write in an alien style. After we invented the reason behind their failure, we had left questioning these intellectuals or literati.

Nevertheless, recently, maybe due to the solicitude that we feel about the sources of the nineteenth-century Ottoman transformation, some interesting points have caught our attention. We have seen that we can find some answers, which address the very concepts that we have recently become familiar with, while we practice textual analysis. Now many texts and figures have been studied; and a certain, but not large enough, study area has been established. In sum, now we can claim that we are more unconfused, due to the fact that we have found that there are some mainstreams in Tanzimat intellectual production, and there is a certain pattern in multiplicity.<sup>211</sup>

Many Tanzimat intellectuals are now for us people who had been occupied with the hegemony of the western thinking, social change, redefinition of the

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<sup>211</sup> As an example, see, Christoph Neumann, *Araç Tarih Amaç Tanzimat: Tarih-i Cevdet'in Siyasi Anlamı*, (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000.

empire, daily politics, clash of generations; had no choice but to try to understand these concepts; had felt obliged to write on everything they had faced; or at the same time, had been commissioned by the government to defend or criticize some notions of these concepts.<sup>212</sup>

One of the most successful of these people is Ahmed Midhat. He had an idea on everything, and moreover, he had written on everything. In that sense, he can not be mentioned the only one, since there are many contemporary examples in the west, who are called encyclopedists (*honnête homme*).<sup>213</sup> In fact, the reason behind his significance and many recent studies on his works is not only his role in the introduction of Europe to the Ottomans, but also his processing of this knowledge of the ‘other’. His role also had produced the most genuine sources on the Ottoman perception of Europe and Europeans. Remembering his critique of the occidentalists (*müstagrîbs*), Ahmed Midhat is also very important due to the fact that he had also criticized the Ottoman intellectuals’ perception of the ‘other’ and his position facing the knowledge that is produced by the ‘other’. On the other hand, a voice from nineteenth century, which criticizes Orientalism and the Orientalists, surprises us, considering the fact that criticizing the Orientalist genre through Orientalism’s discursive practice on the basis of its manipulation of the knowledge of the orient is not a very old argument and in fact a by-product of the Post-structuralism.<sup>214</sup>

Within that perspective, as an intellectual who is against the direct translation of the knowledge of the occident by *müstagrîbs*, his book on European etiquette is not only a book that is meant to represent the etiquette rules and good manners in European society. Its general framework is based on an Ottoman-male’s conformity into the European cosmopolite environment and impressing Europeans as an Ottoman-male. Crucially enough is this Ottoman’s success in protecting his authentic culture in this cosmopolite environment. The key of his

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<sup>212</sup> İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı*, (İstanbul: 1983), p. 11.

<sup>213</sup> Emel Kefeli, “Ahmed Midhat Efendi’nin Romanlarında Edebiyat Coğrafyası: Acaib-i Alem”, in *Merhaba Ey Muharrir! Ahmed Midhat Üzerine Eleştirel Yazılar*, p. 217.

<sup>214</sup> Zeynep Çelik, “Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse”, *Orientalism’s Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture and Photography*, Jill Beaulieu and Mary Roberts (eds.), (Durham: Duke U.P., 2002), p. 20.

success is this Ottoman authentic culture. In that sense, we are not mentioning about a full conformity into cosmopolitanism. According to Ahmed Midhat., the meaning of *savoir vivre cosmopolite* for a European is very different from the sense it should make for an Ottoman.

There is another point with that *savoir* that Ahmed Midhat tries to mention, which is the fact that it is very complex and relentless. He is aware of the fact that Europeans are under so many burdens in social life, dominated by many rules. Therefore, modern life in Europe is not a *dolce vita*, as were mentioned by many *müstagrîbs*. At that point, the contemporary political milieu in the empire needs to be mentioned. The Hamidian regime was processing a modernization project, the prerequisites of which are hardwork, social order, religious austerity, self-governing individuals, who live according to the authentic Ottoman culture. Ahmed Midhat, as a “collaborator and publicist of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909)”<sup>215</sup>, had promoted these notions in every book that he deals with Europe or in every favorable character that he created. Characters such as *Rakım* and *Nasuh* do not only criticize *alafranga* or the direct translation of the knowledge of the west. They also have an ability to govern *savoir vivre cosmopolite*. They owe their victory not to their perfect knowledge of the west, but to their perfect knowledge of the rules of being decent Ottomans and to their characters that have abovementioned qualities: hardwork, religious austerity, self-control. As a member of that literature, the book of *Alafranga* defends and promotes the ideal Ottoman individual.

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<sup>215</sup> Carter Findley, *An Ottoman Occidental in Europe*, p. 21.

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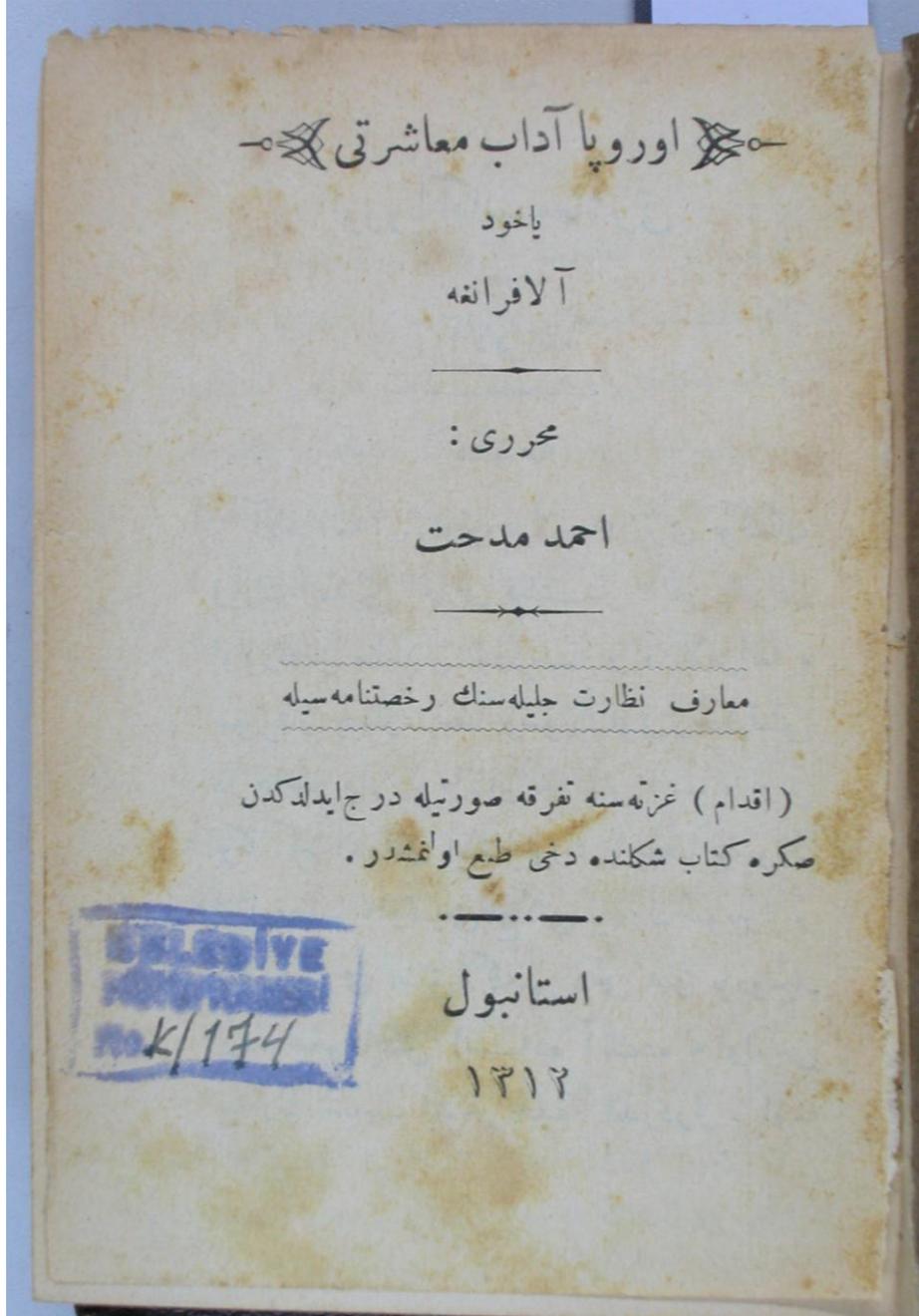
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Title Page of Ahmed Midhat Efendi's *Avrupa Adab-ı Muşerret-i yahud Alafranga*



## APPENDIX 2

### Table of Contents of Ahmed Midhat Efendi's *Avrupa Adab-ı Muâşeret-i yahud Alafranga*

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APPENDIX 3

A Sample Page from Bertall's *La Comédie de Notre Temps*

UN SOUPER A LA MAISON D'OR.

535



ENTREMENTS.



HOÛS-D'ORVILLE.



VINS ET LIQUEURS.  
Ah! versez encore!



— Tu sais que ton comle est un comle à dormir debout.  
— Heureusement on peut s'asseoir.



ATTACHÉES D'AMBASSADE.

— Il y a ce petit Russe qui est bien gentil, savez-vous? il m'a dit qu'il m'adorait, et qu'on ne pourrait adorer qu'une Parisienne.  
Pourvu que Boule-de-Gomme ne lui dise pas que je suis de Bruges!

## APPENDIX 4

### A Contemporary Representation of the Vestibule (After Havard)

LES ACCÈS

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#### LES ACCÈS

##### I. LE VESTIBULE

Parmi les accès, le premier qui s'offre à nous, si nous ha-

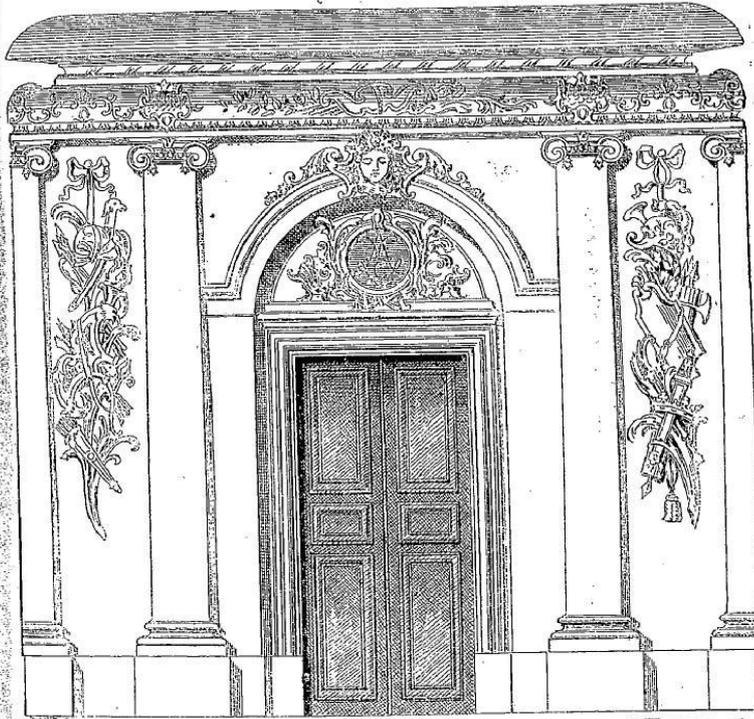


Fig. 39. — Vestibule de l'ancien hôtel de Roquelaure, construit par Le Roux.

bitons une maison isolée, est le vestibule. Nous franchirons rapidement le vestibule. C'est un lieu de passage et non de séjour. Les anciens, si nous en croyons Aulu-Gelle, le considéraient un peu comme l'équivalent de la rue, et ils n'avaient

## APPENDIX 5

### A Contemporary Representation of the Antechamber (After Havard)

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QUATRIÈME PARTIE

III.

#### L'ANTICHAMBRE ET LE PARLOIR

Après Pescalier, c'est de l'antichambre qu'il faut nous occuper. — Nous avons dit qu'en maintes circonstances, et surtout dans les hôtels particuliers, le vestibule se confondait parfois avec l'antichambre. A bien prendre, cette confusion devrait être encore plus intime, et l'antichambre ne devrait être qu'un lieu de passage. On

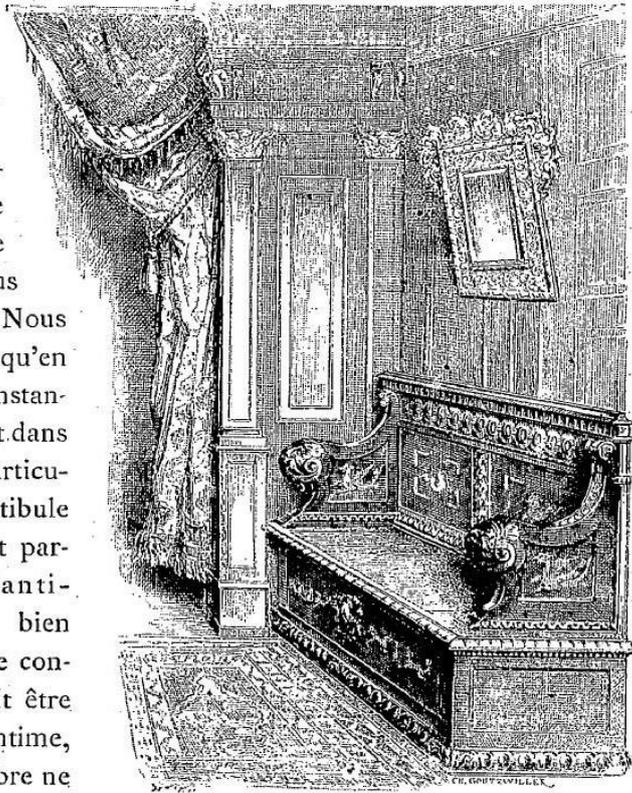


Fig. 49. — Coin d'antichambre chez M. Leclanché.

sait quelle signification peu aimable a conservé la locution « faire antichambre », et l'on a présente à l'esprit la bruyante exclamation de don Juan : « Parbleu, coquins, je vous apprendrai à laisser M. Dimanche dans une antichambre! » En ces temps déjà lointains, l'antichambre était, sauf dans les demeures royales<sup>1</sup>, exclusivement réservé à la domesticité, et « propos

1. Nous voyons à plusieurs reprises Louis XV et la reine Marie Leczinska dîner soit aux Tuileries, soit à Versailles ou à Choisy, dans leurs antichambres. Dans ces palais, on désignait, sous ce nom, les salles d'attente qui précédaient la cham-

## APPENDIX 6

### A Contemporary Representation of the Boudoir (After Havard)

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QUATRIÈME PARTIE

ce qu'ils appelaient leurs « petites maisons », on n'en trouve presque point d'application dans l'agencement des boudoirs. Peut-être les mondaines d'alors savaient-elles que le jour venant d'en haut, en accentuant les traits, donne à la figure une dureté peu compatible avec le destination de ce lieu tout affable.

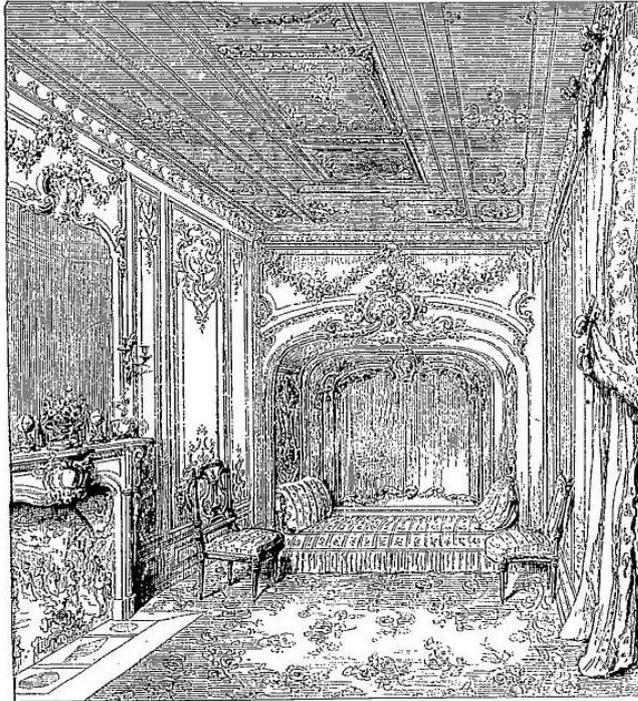


Fig. 82. — Petit boudoir de Mme de Pompadour, tel qu'il avait été restitué par M. L. Double.

Du reste, aujourd'hui, un pareil éclairage serait absolument hors de saison. Le boudoir est, en effet, devenu de nos jours une manière de petit salon. Les grâces voluptueuses et les amours ont déserté ce sanctuaire. Ils se sont enfuis pour faire place à des divinités plus raisonnables. Toutefois, le nom pèse encore sur la réputation du lieu. Le