A Feminist Dialogic Reading of the New Woman: Marriage, Female Desire and Divorce in the Works of Edith Wharton and Halide Edib Adıvar

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Abstract

A Feminist Dialogic Reading of the New Woman: Marriage, Female Desire and Divorce in the Works of Edith Wharton and Halide Edib Adıvar

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This thesis examines the depiction of female characters as New Women in a comparative analysis of the fiction of two authors from fin-de-siècle United States of America and late Ottoman/early Republican Turkey: Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905), *The Custom of the Country* (1913) and *The Age of Innocence* (1920), and Halide Edib Adıvar's *Raik'in Annesi* (*Raik's Mother*, 1909), *Handan* (*Handan*, 1912) and *Kalp Ağrısı* (*Heartache*, 1924). It argues that these novels can be read as examples of New Woman fiction, with their challenge to conventional fictional treatments of womanhood and their depiction of complex female heroines struggling against restrictive social roles, conventions and moral codes. Examining these texts together opens up a hitherto unexplored area of comparison into how the construct of New Womanhood was perceived and dealt with differently (and similarly) in the American and Turkish societies of the era.

The thesis brings a new approach to the analysis of the novels under question not only by reading Wharton's and Adıvar's fiction in a comparative perspective but also by approaching New Woman fiction by means of Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of dialogism, complemented by the work of feminist critics such as Dale M. Bauer, Gail Cunningham, Luce Irigaray and Lyn Pykett. A feminist dialogic approach informs my reading of the novels as texts that present a pluralistic exchange between multiple discourses and that resist a singular interpretation - instead offering multiple "readings", with a surface narrative and counter narrative: whilst the surface narrative appears as authoritative and seeks to maintain the status quo (through voices that attempt to stabilise the New Woman and assert the authority of conventions and moral codes), this is disrupted and destabilised by the subversive marginal voices of the counter narrative. By attending in this way to the juxtaposition of a multiplicity of conflicting voices on the New Woman question in the texts - particularly as these are expressed in the heroines' inner dilemmas and conflicts and around the issues of marriage, divorce and sexuality - I attempt to go beyond a reading of the texts as reflections of the biography of the authors or their views regarding a certain model of female identity, instead emphasising the problematisation and unfixing of identity in the novels and their depiction of New Women that are complex, fragmented and contradictory.

Furthermore, influenced by the ideas of feminist thinkers such as Judi M. Roller and Elizabeth Bronfen, I propose that the unhappy endings of Wharton's and Adıvar's novels can be read as critiques of the oppressive effects of hegemonic discourses about women and a recognition of female agency and struggle. By examining these aspects of the novels, this comparative thesis aims to contribute to feminist studies focused upon the "woman question" and to the growing body of scholarly work on the New Woman.

Declaration

I declare that no portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Copyright Statement

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Introduction

The New Woman was one of the most dramatic symbols of the crisis of gender relations that occured during the fin-de-siècle period in a number of societies. Her image was first brought to public attention worldwide in the 1890s as she became a subject of discussion and controversy in magazines, periodicals and newspapers, gaining the label "The New Woman" in 1894 in a pair of articles by Sarah Grand and Ouida (pseudonym of Marie Louise de la Ramée), two prominent writers in what would become the New Woman canon.[1] The New Woman fiction, as Ann Heilmann remarks, also formed one of the vital and popular parts of fin-de-siècle literature due to "its challenge to and subversion of the conventional dichotomies between literature and political writing, art and popular culture."[2] It drew widespread attention for addressing the contemporary feminist concerns with matters such as inequality in marriage and professional life, the moral double standard, sexual violence, and the political disenfranchisement of women.

In fin-de-siècle America[3] and late Ottoman/early-Republican Turkey, the New Woman came to occupy an important position in public life and imagination, evoked in visions - both positive and negative - of a new era associated with the emergence of new female roles and greater independence and educational opportunities for women. However, with her multiple identities, changing not only from culture to culture but also within the same society over time, arriving at any universal definition or set of characteristics of the New Woman proves problematic. I would agree with Lyn Pykett who observes that the New Woman, "both in fiction and in fact, [is] a shifting and contested term […] a mobile and contradictory figure or signifier."[4] In her influential analysis of the emergence of this figure in America in this period, Caroll Smith-Rosenberg argues that the New Woman originated as a "literary phrase" during the 1880s and 1890s and frequently figured as a "young, unmarried" character rejecting established gender roles and social conventions.[5] Due to her insistence on her social and sexual independence,

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[1] Sally Ledger points out that "it was Quida who extrapolated the now famous – and then infamous – phrase 'the New Woman' from Sarah Grand's essay '*The New Aspects of the Woman Question.*'" See Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the fin de siècle* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 9; Sarah Grand, "*The New Aspects of the Woman Question*" in the *North American Review*, 158 (1894), 270-276.

[2] Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004), 1.

[3] When I use "America" in this thesis, I refer to the United States of America.

[4] Lyn Pykett, "Foreword" in *The new woman in fiction and in fact: fin-de-siècle feminisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2001), xi.

[5] Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 176. According to Smith-Rosenberg, the New Woman in America as a figure was popularised by Henry James's novels such

Caroll writes, the New American Woman was generally perceived by American society to pose a threat to established gender roles and to represent "the symptom of a diseased society."[6] But the New Woman as she was seen in Turkey was different from her American counterpart: whilst she was associated with moral decadence and sexual independence[7] in America in the fin-de-siècle, in Turkey in the same period she appeared as "the emancipated (but chaste) nationalist",[8] often associated with the image of the "modern but modest" woman. In his *The Early Turkish Novel 1872-1900*, Robert P. Finn examines some of the prominent Turkish novels such as Şemsettin Sami's *Taaşşuk-i Talât ve Fitnat* (1875), Ahmed Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakım Efendi* (1875), Namık Kemal's *İntibah* (1876), to name but a few, and draws attention to the way in which the image of the "moral and asexual" New Turkish Woman was often linked to positive aspects of modernity and socially progressive ideals. As Finn aptly observes, the portrayal of the New Turkish Woman was frequently juxtaposed to "alafranga (over Westernised)" or non-Muslim characters who were often portrayed as sexualised, amoral women with "immoral physical passion"[9] but "free in her manners and her actions"[10] These characteristics, as Finn indicates, played a crucial role in the construction of the New Turkish Woman in society and in the later Turkish novels.

In this thesis, I will examine a selection of the fiction of two writers, Edith Wharton and Halide Edib Adıvar, written after the emergence of the New Woman in America and Turkey respectively, in order to explore their treatment of this new female figure and to bring a more international and comparative approach to the study of the New Woman. In doing so, I also aim to problematise some of the received interpretations of these authors' work. My choice of writers was first inspired by Wharton's and Adıvar's previous critics who have debated the nature of these authors' representations of women and their treatment of questions related to gender. As I will discuss in Chapter 1, scholars often proclaimed them as writers who emphasise the importance of moral values and the domestic roles of women for society in general. Perhaps because both

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as *Daisy Miller* (1879) and *The Portrait of A Lady* (1881). For a good discussion of the depiction of this figure in these novels, see Smith-Rosenberg's *Disorderly Conduct*, 176-177.

[6] Smith-Rosenberg, 245-246.

[7] Elaine Showalter, "New Women" in *Sexual Anarchy, Gender and Culture at the Fin De Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992), 38.

[8] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women as Metaphor: The Turkish Novel From the Tanzimat to the Republic" in *Urban Crises and Social Movement in the Middle East*, Ed. by Kenneth Brown et al., (L'Harmattan: Paris, Proceedings of the C.N.R.A. – E.S.R.C. Symposium, 1989), 142.

[9] Robert P. Finn, *The Early Turkish Novel 1872-1900* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1984), 29.

[10] Ibid., 19.

Wharton and Adıvar in their non-fictional writings and statements emphasised the importance of women's domestic roles for society, Wharton's critics have often viewed her works as anti-feminist or regarded her an anti-modern author who writes of her Old New York with an emphasis on the importance and conservation of its conventions, strictures and norms; for many critics this is reflected in the author's pessimistic attitude toward her characters. Some of Adıvar's critics, in a similar vein, have also suggested that her works are consistent with the patriarchal modes of literary representation and that they promote the conventional roles of women as the guardians of moral values and nurturers of children fit for the modern Turkish nation. Other critics have tended to read her works as ideological statements of her vision of "ideal" womanhood, rooted within the dominant Ottoman/Republican ideologies of fin-de-siècle Turkish society. By reading the themes explored by the characters as direct reflections of Adıvar's convictions, they tend to look for correspondence between Adıvar and her characters and thus restrict their reading of the novels by a focus on authorial intention. Similarly, the lack of personal fulfilment of the heroines in Wharton's and Adıvar's works is often read as a "punishment" of their heroines or as a warning against those whose actions run counter to those prescribed within a male-dominated society.

Some feminist critics, on the other hand, have gone beyond these criticisms and they have written about the tragedy of their female characters. They have argued that Wharton's and Adıvar's preoccupation with the limited roles of women and their portrayals of female characters as "victims of patriarchy" meeting unhappy endings results in wholly pessimistic accounts of society. They have thus argued that these authors are drawing our attention to the heroines' suffering and personal unfulfilment as indications of the restrictions of patriarchal society. However in doing so such critics emphasise the hopelessness and failure faced by their female characters while de-emphasising the role of these characters' agency and struggle. In short, the focus of Wharton's and Adıvar's critics tends to be either on the idea that their novels promote a certain ideology of femininity or that they focus on the limitations and restrictions of womanhood to the exclusion of women's voice and agency.

These contradictory viewpoints lie at the heart of the investigation in this thesis. It is an attempt to explore these conflicting messages in their texts and examine what these points of conflict can reveal about the complex and conflicting depictions of their heroines. At the same time, no literary study has been dedicated to Wharton and Adıvar together within the same framework, and so examining these Turkish and American

novels opens up a hitherto unexplored area of comparison into how the construct of New Womanhood was perceived and dealt with differently and similarly in the American and Turkish societies of the era. I chose three novels by each author in order to explore three main themes that are common to the New Woman fiction: marriage, female desire and divorce. These three themes form important components of the main plots of the selected novels: marriage in *The House of Mirth* (1905) and *Handan* (1912); female desire in *The Custom of the Country* (1923) and *Heartache* (1924); divorce in *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and *Raik's Mother* (1909). By exploring these themes, I aim to provide insight into how these novels, as texts of the American and Turkish societies of the fin-de-siècle, depict the way in which discourses on women worked to construct the figure of the New Woman to promote new forms of female behaviour or to control women. I also want to investigate how the New Woman heroines in these novels respond and react to these discourses and to what extent they internalise, accept or challenge them.

The thesis advances three broad arguments. Firstly, I suggest that the texts display many of the characteristics of New Woman fiction, both thematically and stylistically. Thematically, they deal with the ways in which conventions regarding matters such as marriage, female desire and divorce impede women in achieving their potential, while presenting female characters who challenge such conventions by seeking sexual and marital independence, and personal autonomy. Where they differ is in the emphasis they place on specific aspects of patriarchy: Wharton's criticism emphasises sexual double standards and male hypocrisy whereas Adıvar's texts place more emphasis on marriage and morality to reveal a feminist critique of these discourses as the reproduction of patriarchal gender roles. However, they all depict, as Cunningham defines the New Woman, "intelligent, individualistic, and principled"[11] heroines who refuse to conform to the patterns of traditional gender roles. They are all presented as challenging the conventional expectations and attitudes about their roles that are held by their husbands, parents, lovers, society and most importantly by themselves. They question the accepted ideals of marriage (as in the characters of Lily in *The House of Mirth*, Handan in *Handan*, Ellen in *The Age of Innocence*, Refika in *Raik's Mother*), manipulate marriage (Undine in *The Custom of the Country*), welcome sexuality (Zeyno in *Heartache*), or choose to work for a living (Lily). As consistent with the New

[11] Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978), 3.

Woman fiction, these novels deal with the effects of imposed models of female behaviour, underlining the inequality of gender roles, the sexual double-standard and exploring the destructive consequences of the marriage system.

Alongside such thematic characteristics of New Woman fiction, I suggest that the texts display important stylistic characteristics: as Lyn Pykett suggests, in the New Woman fiction, "in place of the wise and witty sayings, and the moral and social guidance of the omniscient narrator, we find a decentred narrative, and (particularly in marriage-problem novels) a polyphonic form in which a multiplicity of voices and views on current issues are juxtaposed."[12] The texts under question are also presented in such a polyphonic form, juxtaposing a variety of conflicting voices on questions of marriage, divorce and female desire. In this way, instead of reading the texts as reflections of the biography of the authors or statements of their ideology regarding a certain model of female identity (as previous critics have tended to do) we can also find the "problematization and unfixing of identity"[13] that is common to New Woman fiction: like the heroines in the New Woman novels, the depiction of New Women in these texts is complex, fragmented and contradictory. I argue that such complex and fragmented presentations of the heroines emerge through the insights that the selected texts provide into the heroines' inner conflicts between their traditional female roles and their aspirations for a fluid identity outside of these roles required of them by their societies.

To build on such observations I have turned to Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism which helps to elaborate on the polyphonic (multi-voiced) narrative and the fragmented character of the New Women in these texts. This relates to the second broad argument that I advance in this thesis: that critics of Wharton and Adıvar have given little attention to the dialogic properties of their texts and tended to narrow their focus to a monologic reading with an emphasis on authorial biography and/or intention. Drawing on Bakhtin's ideas about the dialogic novel as being "constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses"[14], I approach the texts as made up of dialogues between different points of view on womanhood in a way that

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[12] Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fictions: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 57.
[13] Ibid, 57.
[14] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. & trans. Carly Emerson (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 18.

reveal the presence of marginal, subversive and feminist voices that challenge and disrupt the dominant, monologic and hegemonic discourses in the text.

Bakhtin's concepts of "authoritative" and "internally persuasive" discourses have been particularly useful here. By "authoritative" discourse Bakhtin simply refers to monologic, dominant and centralising voices that assert, as Dale M. Bauer puts it in her feminist literary deployment of Bakhtin, "masculinised or rationalised public language",[15] and by "internally persuasive" discourse he refers to dialogic, marginal and decentralising voices that disrupt the narrative of authoritative discourse. Drawing on these concepts, the central concern of my analysis is to explore the way in which the texts orchestrate a dialogue between these two narratives of dominance and subversion through the multiple voices of their characters and narrators. These concepts greatly aided me in developing the theoretical and methodological framework in which I analyse the texts, referring to authoritative discourse and the voices that represent it as a *surface narrative* that asserts the dominant ideologies of female roles of the age and attempts to define the New Woman within fixed terms (this framework is elaborated in greater detail in Chapter 1). I use the term *counter narrative* in reference to internally persuasive discourse which reveals the explicit or implicit voices of marginal feminist discourses that puncture the surface-narrative and indicate the texts' feminist critiques of hegemonic structures.

Bauer's discussion of feminist dialogics, a conjunction of Bakhtinian reading with feminist vision as developed in her *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic,* also greatly assisted me to structure my feminist argument and analytical framework. Referring to the power relations between authoritative and internally persuasive discourses, Bauer argues that feminist dialogics enables an understanding of critical subjectivity "that shows genders, classes and races in dialogue rather than in opposition."[16] But this dialogue, as Bauer notes, is always in process and in flux, and allows the reader to recognise the way in which authoritative ideologies and the persuasive resistances to it come into conflict. It is, Bauer suggests, through the recognition of this conflict that a feminist critic can approach the dialogic, multi-voiced structure of a text that produces the dominant discourse but at the same time indicates potential resistances to oppressive conventions. As Bauer contends, "by highlighting these contradictions [between

[15] Dale M. Bauer & S. Jaret McKinstry, *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic*, ed. Dale M. Bauer & S. Jaret McKinstry (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 2.
[16] Ibid., 3.

discourses], a feminist dialogics produces occasions for the disruption and critique of dominant and oppressive ideologies."[17] Accordingly, a feminist dialogics draws attention to the power relations between the authoritative and internally persuasive discourses in a text (or, as I will be referring to in my analysis, between the surface and counter narrative) and seeks out the presence of unexplored, marginal and resistant voices. This approach also allows me to explore the shifting subjectivities of the New Woman as we witness her struggling with the voices of others representing discourses on marriage, female discourse and divorce and seeking new forms to achieve happiness and autonomy; and hence indicate the resistance of the texts to the notion of fixed gender roles and to the patriarchal norms in their societies.

Thirdly, I argue that a feminist dialogic approach to these texts opens up different interpretations of their endings than the conservativism or fatalism that critics have generally found in them so far. It is certainly the case that none of the heroines attain the happiness they pursue - Lily and Handan die, Undine and Refika are entrapped in their unhappy marriages; Zeyno and Ellen give up on the men they love - and I suggest that this demonstrates the relevance of Judi M. Roller's observations about the unhappy endings that would come to define feminist novels in the twentieth-century as "cry[ing] out a condemnation of racist, capitalist, sexist societies."[18] However, through the texts' open-ended dialogic narratives on the woman question, and in particular the insights that we gain into the heroines' internal struggles, I also argue that we can end the novels with images of New Women struggling with authority and convention, rather than with images of "failed victims" or the authors' negative judgements on women who have "strayed from the path" of their ideology of womanhood. Reading the endings of the novels in this "double-voiced" way (a term I will return to later) allows me to approach these novels as a dialogue between various ideologies regarding "the woman question" and helps to avoid drawing straightforward and finalised messages from the text regarding the question of "how a woman should be" as it was experienced in this time. The concept of "doubleness" as representation of conflicting perspectives is often applied by feminist critics in their discussions of women's writing.[19] This is because, in

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Judi M. Roller, *The Politics of the Feminist Novel* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 51.

[19] See, for example, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and The Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 85; Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" in *Critical Inquiry*, 2 (1981), 179-205, 204; Carla Kaplan, "Women's Writing and Feminist Strategy" in *American Literary History*, 2, No. 2 (1990). They suggest that women authors of the nineteenth century employed narrative strategies in their

Robyn R. Warhol's words, "to be double is to resist categorisation as one thing or the other […] To invoke doubleness is to address binary oppositions without resting comfortably in either of the two terms being opposed."[20] Therefore, as critics such as Suzan Last have argued, the presence of such multi-vocality and conflicting perspectives in a text opens up such feminist readings as it is a mode of writing which is "inclusive rather than restrictive. It includes marginalised perspectives and allows the reader a range of interpretation rather than one unified, coherent and 'authoritative truth' in the text."[21] In short, a feminist dialogic reading enables an interpretation that is more able to attend to the simultaneous presence of convention and its subversion in the text and it is through the illumination of the conflicts between them, as I will try to show, that we can observe the struggle of the New Woman for agency and hear the suggestion of the texts that the freedom the society in which the heroines live provides them with is restricted.

Although my study focuses on the selected works of Wharton and Adıvar, it addresses the general issue of the fin-de-siècle woman question in America and Turkey and aims to contribute to the existing scholarship on the authors and on the body of New Woman works. It is an attempt to show that these novels help us to explore the complex interactions and conflicts between patriarchal values regarding the construction of the New Woman's identity and a strong concern for the woman question in Wharton's and Adıvar's societies. Written during a time when people wrote and spoke about the New Woman, Wharton's and Adıvar's works offer insights into the inner conflicts of women in the societies of their period and their experiences of patriarchal culture. With such concerns, this thesis aims to open up and extend the insights of the existing critical commentaries on Wharton's and Adıvar's texts and to contribute to the developing field of scholarship that examines the complex construction of the New Woman in America and Turkey during the fin-de-siècle.

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works to express their resistance to patriarchal notions and forms of male narrative. Although these works inspired me further for my feminist argument on the double-voiced (surface and counter narrative) structure of the novels under question, my argument moves beyond their discussion by focusing on the aesthetic quality of the texts rather than on the authors' application of double-voicedness as a narrative strategy.

[20] Robyn R. Warhol, "Double Gender, Double Genre in *Jane Eyre* and *Vilette*" in *Studies in English Literature*, 1500-1900, 4, (1996), 857-875, 857.

[21] Suzan Last, "Hawthorne's Feminine Voices: Reading *The Scarlet Letter* as a Woman" in *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 27 (1997), 349-376, 349.

Overview of Chapters

Following this introduction, the thesis is divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1:
Rereading Wharton and Adıvar: The New Woman and Feminist Dialogics

The chapter is divided into three sections: In section one, I will look at the rise of the New Woman in fin-de-siècle America and late-Ottoman/early-Republican Turkey in order to provide insight into the ways in which the texts under question address, celebrate and complicate the image of the New Woman in their societies. I will briefly explain the change and improvement in the status and life conditions of women in these societies during these periods in order to introduce the main features of the images of the New American and Turkish Women and the specific context in which these images emerged and were transformed. The second section considers Wharton's and Adıvar's stances on the woman question and provides a review of the critical literature on Wharton and Adıvar, respectively. Here, I am concerned especially to explore the extent to which these authors' view of "woman", as critics suggested, was reflected in their work. In order to contextualise my argument that the novels I consider in this thesis can be considered as New Woman novels, the third section of this chapter outlines some of the general characteristics of New Woman fiction. It then goes on to elaborate the theoretical and methodological aspects of this study (in particular, the framework of feminist dialogics) and how it seeks to contribute to the existing scholarship on these authors and the novels under question.

Chapter 2:
Over Our Dead Bodies:
Marriage and Death in the *House of Mirth* (1905) and *Handan* (1912)

This chapter explores the depiction of the New Woman with a particular focus on the theme of marriage in *The House of Mirth* and *Handan*. Drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism, which enables an in-depth exploration of the New Woman's relation to ideologies of marriage, the chapter argues that the novels subvert a certain model of New Womanhood by disputing the notions that the New American Woman rejects marriage as her ultimate option for a fulfilling life whereas the New Turkish Woman

views marriage more as a social duty than as an individual fulfilment. Further, instead of reading the tragic deaths of Lily and Handan as symbols of their punishment for "straying from the path", or as a mere sign of their victimisation by a sexist society, I argue that we can read the heroines' deaths as signifying a condemnation of patriarchal society and an indication of the New Woman's rejection of her "object" position in her society - and of her spiritual victory

Chapter 3:
Transitions and Subversions: Female Desire and (A)sexuality in *The Custom of the Country* (1913) and *Heartache* (1924)

This chapter examines the treatment of female desire and the way in which it is represented in the form of *asexuality* in Wharton's heroine Undine (*The Custom of the Country*) and *sexuality* in Adıvar's heroine Zeyno (*Heartache*). By reading the novels as examples of the New Woman fiction and examining the depiction of female desire and its contradictory versions in each novel, the chapter argues that Undine, in contrast to the image of the New American Woman who seeks sexual emancipation, depicts an asexual New Woman whose desire is diverted into the marriage market whilst Adıvar's Zeyno, unlike the asexual stereotype of the Turkish New Woman, undergoes a transition from "asexual" to "sexual" woman.

Chapter 4:
Breaking the Boundaries of the Authoritative Discourse: Divorce and Love in *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and *Raik's Mother* (1909)

This chapter examines *The Age of Innocence* and *Raik's Mother*, concentrating on their treatment of the struggles of the heroines - Ellen and Refika - in relation to the themes of divorce and free love, and to the image of the New Woman in their societies. By examining the New Women's inner struggles and their shifting subject positions in response to male characters' attempts to define and manage the heroines according to their own expectations, the chapter suggests that both heroines defy the voices that

attempt to maintain them within the boundaries of the authoritative discourse of the marriage system.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The conclusion summarises the main arguments of the thesis and its contribution to the existing scholarship on Edith Wharton and Halide Edib Adıvar, as well as to the growing body of New Woman scholarship. It proposes that while Wharton's and Adıvar's treatments of the New Woman are distinctive and unique to their different social and cultural backgrounds, their novels also reveal the ideological instabilities of this image. By depicting their New Women heroines both reinforcing and disrupting hegemonic representations of female identity in their respective societies and literary traditions, each of these six novels, the conclusion suggests, can be read as problematising received models of New Womanhood.

Chapter 1:
Rereading Wharton and Adıvar: The New Woman and Feminist Dialogics

The images of the New American and Turkish Woman at the fin-de-siècle share similarities and differences. The emphasis on the emancipation, education and career of the New American and Turkish Woman constitute the main similarities between them. However, in American society she was perceived as a radical figure who "challenged existing gender relations and the distribution of power"[1], whereas in Turkish society the New Woman emerged as an integral part of the visions of reformers involved in the modernisation movement as a "social woman" with important duties and functions (in particular, raising the next generation for the advancement of the nation).[2] These characteristics were also reflected in fictional depictions. According to Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, the New Woman in American fiction was brought to popular attention by the American writer, Henry James (1843-1916), who portrayed her as a young, unmarried woman who challenges social conventions and acts independently (such as Daisy, the heroine of *Daisy Miller* (1878) or Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* (1880)).[3] Although it is often noted that Edith Wharton was influenced by Henry James,[4] she is generally viewed as an anti-feminist writer whose female characters suffer from the consequences of their struggle for autonomy or are destroyed by the power of patriarchal society.

In Turkey, the New Woman was perceived as a "modern" figure, but this does not necessarily mean that she presented a radical challenge to established gender roles. The image of the New Turkish Woman, both in fiction and the wider social discourse of politics, newspapers and magazines, was generally associated with a vision of "ideal" - modern but modest - Turkish woman. Deniz Kandiyoti argues that although the image of the "ideal" woman had already appeared in many earlier novels starting with the work of Namık Kemal, *İntibah* (1876), "it finds its full-blown expression in the work of

[1] Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 245.
[2] Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey" in *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 152.
[3] Smith-Rosenberg, 176.
[4] See for example, Q.D. Leavis, "Henry James's Heiress: The Importance of Edith Wharton" in *Scrutiny*, 5 (1938).

Halide Edib Adıvar."[5] Defining this female figure as an attempt to create a new identity for Turkish women during the modernisation period, Kandiyoti contends that Adıvar depicted this female type as a "recurrent" theme in her novels to establish the behaviour and position of the "ideal" woman of her time (I will return to the critical reception of Wharton and Adıvar in the second section of this chapter).

One of the aims of this thesis is to challenge such accounts of the work of Wharton and Adıvar by developing a Bakhtinian reading of a selection of their fiction that allows the critic to read these works as examples of New Woman novels in which we find complex, contradictory New Women heroines. I want to demonstrate that these heroines both conform to and challenge the image of the New Woman as she featured in the public imagination and social discourse of Wharton's and Adıvar's respective societies. Before outlining some of the similarities between New Woman fiction and the novels I consider, I will therefore begin by providing a more detailed picture of the social contexts in which the novels under question were written, reviewing how the image of the New Woman emerged and was defined in America and Turkey. The second section will then focus on the authors' views on the woman question to explore the extent to which their fiction reflects, as their critics have often suggested, their visions of "how a woman should be". The third section of this chapter goes on to discuss the theoretical and methodological framework of this thesis and its contribution to the existing scholarship on Wharton, Adıvar and the New Woman.

[5] Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dünüşümler* (*Concubines, Sisters, Citizens: Identities and Social Transformation*) (İstanbul: Metis Yayın, 2007), 150.

Section 1: Defining the New (American and Turkish) Woman

1.1. Defining the New Woman in American Society at the fin-de-siècle

The New Woman in America emerged as a "literary phrase […] transposed into a social and political phenomenon"[6] in the late nineteenth century, challenging in particular the popular American ideal of the "True Woman". Barbara Welter, in her "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860", describes the True Woman with her four cardinal feminine virtues:

> [P]iety, domesticity, submissiveness and purity. Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife - woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power.[7]

This patriarchal ideology of womanhood formed the cultural norm against which American society judged women. It was formulated within a social framework in which women were expected to adopt the idealised identity of "angels in the home", limited to the domestic sphere. Yet this view of womanhood was impelled to change due to the forces at work in the nineteenth century that stemmed from factors such as industralisation, urbanisation and movements for social reform. Welter therefore notes how the image of the True Woman came to fade towards the end of the nineteenth century:

> Real women often felt they did not live up to the ideal of True Womanhood: some of them blamed themselves, some challenged the standard, some tried to keep the virtues and enlarge the scope of womanhood. Somehow through this mixture of challenge and acceptance, of change and continuity, the True Woman evolved into the New Woman.[8]

During this period of transformation, as Welter suggests, some women accepted the assigned feminine attributes of True Womanhood and at the same time tried to adapt to the changing conditions; some women rejected these attributes and tried to manage their own lives free from male domination. Increasingly American women who found their traditional roles limited and intolerable began to unite and fight for equal rights and opportunities. During the 1840s, American women were becoming more conscious of

[6] Smith-Rosenberg, 176.
[7] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" in *American Quarterly*, 18, (1966), 151-174, 152.
[8] Ibid.,174.

their oppression and disadvantages both in private and public spheres and sought to break the chains that bound them. They started to build organisations and institutions for women's rights and to create networks for mutual support and communication. In 1848, there were two factions within the women's movement: The National Woman Suffrage Association was based in New York and led by two prominent women activists in the American women's movement: Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton; and the American Woman Suffrage Association organisation was in Boston led by Lulia Ward Howe and Lucy Stone. These two organisations united as the National American Woman Suffrage - NAWSA - under the leadership of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.[9] The "declaration" of the women's movement was laid out by Stanton in pointed language: "We declare these rights to be self-evident, that all men *and women* are created equal"[10] (italics in original).

During this period, the demand for women's rights gained momentum from hundreds of women who gave their public energies to women's suffrage. Within the next four decades, there were thousands of separate women's groups holding meetings, collecting funds, discussing public issues and seeking to improve themselves.[11] Such rapid progress in the formation of movements for woman's rights and opportunities, in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's words, "brought her [American woman] out of the sacred selfishness of the home into the broader contact and relationship so essential to social progress."[12] These organisations exerted a considerable impact on the lives of the American women of the late nineteenth-century and provided new fields of action where women, as O'Neill puts it, "could seek shelter and find ways to satisfy their talents and ambitions that domestic life would not contain."[13]

One of the important factors that initiated the rise of the New Woman in America was the foundation of educational institutions. Caroll Smith-Rosenberg notes that the rise of the New American Woman is identified "most directly with the new women's colleges."[14] By the end of the century, women's opportunities expanded through the

[9] See William, L. O'Neill, *Everyone was brave: the rise and fall of feminism in America* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), 58; and Angelique Richardson, "The birth of national hygiene and efficiency: women and eugenics in Britain and America 1865-1915" in *New Woman Hybridities,* ed. Ann Heilmann and Margaret Beetham (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 242.
[10] Jean V. Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman: The Women's Movement in America, 1875-1930* (Ivan R. Dee: Chicago, 2003), 6.
[11] O'Neill, 44.
[12] Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (New York: Ayer Publishing, 1935), 257.
[13] O'Neill, 44.
[14] Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, 247.

foundation of women's colleges giving them opportunities to play a larger role in society. The new women's colleges of Vassar (1865), Wellesley and Smith (1875) and Bryn Mawr (1884) were founded with an ideology of commitment to the higher education of women and played a major role in creating the figure of the New Woman.[15] All of these advancements during the late nineteenth-century in women's life - particularly the formation of women's organisations and the opening of educational opportunities - were perceived as radical departures from the traditional way of domestic life and gave rise to the figure of the New Woman questioning the traditional roles of females both inside and outside the home.

Jean Matthews argues that the most popular image of the New American Woman was the so-called "Gibson Girl", named after her creator, the artist Charles Dana Gibson, who was drawing her for *Life* magazine in the 1890s.[16] Her dark skirt - which was "neither full and beruffled nor so narrow that it was difficult to walk"[17] - made it possible for her to ride a bicycle, hike and go camping and became one of the defining features of the New American Woman, along with her youth, education and independence, and a reputation for being "highly competent and physically strong and fearless."[18] Each edition of *Life* published at least one picture of Gibson Girl, adding new aspects to this image in its attempt "to meet the expectations of its younger female and male readers."[19] The figure of Gibson Girl offered a depiction of a challenging new female model but at the same time with her "pug nose and carefully shaped lips" she also communicated a desire "to be looked at and admired."[20] With her unconventional personality and sensual depiction, the Gibson Girl offered a reference point for the changes in the traditional image of American women in the public imagination. In an attempt to define the Gibson Girls's independent personality, Angelika Köhler writes that if the Gibson Girl had been asked whether contemporary men liked her unconventional manner or not, she could have answered most honestly:

> Whether he *likes* it or not makes little difference; he is no longer the one whose pleasure is to be consulted. The question now is not, 'What does man like?' but 'What does woman prefer?' That is the keynote of modern thought. You see, I've had a liberal education. I can do everything my brothers do; do it rather

[15] Matthews, 12.
[16] Ibid., 13.
[17] Ibid., 14.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Angelika Köhler, "Charged with ambiguity: the image of the New Woman in American cartoons" in *New Woman Hybridities* ed. Ann Heilmann and Margaret Beetham (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 160.
[20] Ibid., 161.

> better, I fancy. I am an athlete and a college graduate, with a wide, universal outlook. My point of view is free from narrow influences, and quite outside of the home boundaries.[21]

However, the task of defining the New American Woman appears more difficult than such accounts of iconic images like the Gibson Girl imply. In her discussion of the American women's movement and the emergence of the New American Woman, Smith-Rosenberg uses the term to refer to a specific "sociological and educational" group of American women born between the late 1850s and 1900 and defines them as women who acted on their own, rejected "conventional female roles and assert[ed] their right to a career, to a public voice, to visible power […]".[22] She considers that "new" American women were associated with "women educational reformers, physicians, and public-health experts, women writers and artists […] [and all those women who] lived economically and socially autonomous lives."[23] Smith-Rosenberg continues her discussion by dividing the first generation of "New Women" - educated in the 1870s and 1880s - from the second generation who were educated in the 1890s.[24] Referring to the differences between these two "New Women" generations, Smith-Rosenberg argues that although the first generation challenged the idea of True Womanhood and questioned the established gender roles, they continued to accept the traditional values such as "honesty, morality, and service to others."[25]

The second generation of "New Women" - 1890s and 1920s - Smith-Rosenberg says, demanded more forcefully the right to vote and participate in public matters, while raising expectations of employment opportunities and increasing aspirations for sexual emancipation. They placed greater emphasis on "self-fulfillment, a bit less on social service, and a great deal more on flamboyant presentation of self" and more forcefully defied "sexual conventions."[26] Therefore, this period came to associate the image of the New Woman with a younger generation of women displaying a more open attitude toward sexuality and a readiness to discuss it. Similarly, reflecting on the difference between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the American women's movement, Matthews also indicates that whilst the first generation of American suffragists had rebelled against "a familial woman's domestic culture that they

[21] Ibid., 166. (Italics in original)
[22] Smith-Rosenberg, 176.
[23] Ibid., 177.
[24] According to Smith-Rosenberg, typical of "the first generation" are: Jane Addams, Vida Scudder, Florence Kelley, to name but a few; typical of the "second generation" are: Gertrude Stein, Willa Carter, Crystal Eastman etc. See Smith-Rosenberg, 327.
[25] Ibid., 177.
[26] Ibid., 176, 177.

perceived as a deadly mixture of drudgery and trivia, the new young feminists were also rebelling against the earnest homosocial and asexual women's culture of their elders in the movement."[27] As Gilenda Riley remarks, "the spirit of the 1920s encouraged women to express themselves as independent, sexual, and political individuals[28] and in 1920, the activities of the suffragists, Christine Bolt notes, had secured the right to vote.[29]

This radical figure of the New Woman, however, increased the anger and fear of conservative Americans: "educated and sexually independent, [she] engendered intense hostility and fear as she seemed to challenge male supremacy in art, the professions, and the home."[30] Being confronted by this image of the New Woman who challenges the principles of the True Woman, magazines and periodicals reiterated the message of female duty in an increasingly sharp manner and tried to restore men's dominance by ridiculing the New Woman as a threat to the future of the American nation. The cartoons published in *Life*, for example, asserted the role of the female explicitly: "there is no place in the world outside the home for a woman to be happy."[31] According to Köhler, whenever a female graduate is depicted in the magazine, she is surrounded by her books, a globe or golf equipment and Cupid is always waiting in the picture, suggesting the lack of love and companionship in the life of the New Woman; one of the cartoons of *Life*, for example, published in 1904 and entitled "Out in the Cold", depicts a sad Cupid waiting to be invited by a young graduate woman who is reading her books in loneliness late at night, the artificial brightness of her lamp suggesting a substitute for the "natural vitality" of domestic life and exaggerating the physical coldness outside.[32] Another cartoon of *Life* in 1915 shows a married couple as professionals. The wife is reading her books and contemplating "some phenomenon" while the husband, a painter, fails to concentrate on his job as he is in charge of rocking the cradle of their crying baby. This humorous interpretation of professional young women and their striving for self-reliance, as Köhler notes, was ironically ridiculing New Women who try to find fulfilment outside the domestic sphere.[33]

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[27] Matthews, 104.
[28] Glenda Gilman, *Inventing the American Woman* (Illinois: Harlan Davidson Inc., 1987), 183.
[29] Christine Bolt, *The Women's Movements in the United States and Britain from the 1790s to the 1920s* (New York: Harvester: 1993), 236.
[30] Elaine Showalter, "New Women" in *Sexual Anarchy, Gender and Culture at the Fin De Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992), 38.
[31] Köhler, 169.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 175.

The emphasis of the New American Woman on her profession, self-reliance and autonomy continued to create a growing anxiety about changes in the Victorian social order of American gender roles. In his "True Americanism" published in 1925, Theodore Roosevelt, with his firm Republican approach to the successful American nation, emphasised the traditional roles of men and women for the betterment of the country:

> [T]he nation's future greatness depended upon upholding two related ideals: the strenuous assertion of American masculinity demonstrated as will, work, and readiness for moral (and mortal) combat; the patriotic support given by the American female who dedicates herself to mothering strong sons.[34]

The notion of traditional gender roles, as Roosevelt suggests, was seen as the source from which "True Americanism" derived its power and it therefore needed to be maintained and protected. A woman's duty to her family and in turn to her nation was seen as the first and foremost virtue of a woman and this could be best achieved by her fulfilling her domestic roles. In short, the New Woman, in Smith-Rosenberg's words, was seen as a "symptom of a diseased society", a threat to established gender roles and to the "naturalness" and vitality of the social order.[35]

In fact, by ridiculing, denouncing and attacking the figure of the New Woman, the periodical press opened a discursive space in which she was debated and discussed and this space was quickly occupied by feminist writings that hailed and praised the New Woman.[36] The supporters of the New Woman occupied the columns in the periodical press and gave voice to this new female identity. This indicated that the traditional Victorian gender patterns were still being challenged "by young American women's exploration of new female roles"[37], as Köhler puts it. Much of the discussion regarding the New American Woman in the periodicals was based on her rejection of the institution of marriage and the suppression of female sexuality. By the turn of the century, many American "new women […] distrusted marriage"[38] and viewed it as a life of imprisonment, invalidism and submission. They resented the idea that marriage was enforced on them as their only option for a fulfilling life. However, their point here was not a full rejection of marriage per se but the way in which marriage suppressed

[34] Theodore Roosevelt, "True Americanism" in *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925). 20, as cited in Köhler, 168.
[35] Smith-Rosenberg, 246.
[36] David Rubinstein, *Before the Suffragettes: Women's Emancipation in the 1890s* (Brighton: Harvester, 1986), 24.
[37] Köhler, 168.
[38] Matthews, 97.

women's individuality and limited them to domestic spheres with narrowly defined roles. As Matthews points out, the dilemma faced by the New Woman was: "how to reconcile these two desires [marriage and career/personal freedom] in real life, that is the question."[39] Alongside this dilemma new American women began to consider marriage not as their ultimate goal in life or for economic security but for "intimacy and companionship",[40] and in their assertion that "a young woman should be trained to be self-supporting and not passively accept marriage as her only option in life" they reiterated a message that the advocates of women's rights had been delivering for years.[41] However, although the new generation of women activists, like their mothers' generation, bitterly attacked the sexual double standards, in their greater willingness to acknowledge and explore questions of sexuality and sexual freedom American women activists took another major step in breaking down the Victorian restrictions created by the so-called sexual innocence and purity of women. The question they increasingly posed therefore was: "women were indeed human beings, but they were also sexual beings, and should not that sexuality be given full recognition and freedom?"[42]

In summary, the popular image of the New American Woman presented a controversial image in late nineteenth century and early twentieth century American society: a figure defined by her challenge to conventions in behaviour and dress; her education and aspirations for greater public and private recognition; independence of spirit; competence; fearlessness; and a thirst for marital and sexual independence: a revolutionary phenomenon who paved the way for American women to seek new female identities.

1.2. Defining the New Woman in Late Ottoman/Early Republican Turkey

Unlike the New American Woman, which was an outcome of a "literary phrase"[43] and popularised by the women's movement in America, the image of the New Woman in the Ottoman Empire emerged as an outcome of the modernisation process that started

[39] Ibid., 98.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 39.
[42] Ibid., 107.
[43] Smith-Rosenberg, 176.

with the Tanzimat reforms (1839).[44] During the modernisation process, the woman question became a subject of much debate and the intellectuals and reformists of the period began to criticise the lower status of women in Ottoman society. Amongst these intellectuals were three prominent names: İbrahim Şinasi (1826-1871), Ziya Paşa (1825-1880) and Namık Kemal (1840-1888). They were also pioneers of the group called the Young Ottomans who were influenced by European liberalism and nationalism.[45] Şinasi's satirical play *Şair Evlenmesi* (*The Poet's Wedding*) is regarded as one of the first major works criticising the inferior situation of women in arranged oppressive marriage systems in the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, in his *İntibah* (*The Awakening*, 1876) and *Zavallı Çocuk* (*Poor Child*, 1873), Namık Kemal attacks the social pressure on women, the unjust and oppressive system of marriage and family life, calling for reforms in women's education and emancipation.

A small circle of educated Ottoman women also joined the battle for women's equality through their writing, such as Fatma Aliye (1862-1936), Emine Semiye (1866-1944), Nigar Hanım (1862-1918), to name just a few. These writers expressed Ottoman women's demands for emancipation, education and career.[46] Fatma Aliye is regarded "the first (that we know) to express her critical opinions on the 'woman question' […] [in Ottoman society]".[47] She attacked polygamy in her *Nisvan-i Islam* (*The Women of Islam*) and *Taaddud-i Zevcat* (*Polygamy*). In her romantic novel, *Muhazarat* (*Stories to Remember*), she presents a new type of heroine who did not fall victim or die tragically due to an unhappy love or marriage but "succeeded in surviving slavery to become a governess in a respectable household [and] was actively involved in making a happy

[44] The Tanzimat (Reorganisation) reforms are regarded as the beginning of the modernisation process in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. These reforms sought some important changes in Ottoman society such as the equality of all persons of all religions, security of the subject's life, honour and property, fair and public trial, and so on. For a succinct discussion of the Tanzimat period and its reforms, see Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 76-128; as well as other contemporary historians such as Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000); Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Washington: University of Washington Press., 2002); Fatma Müge Göçek, *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011).

[45] Young Ottomans as a term came to be used more specifically in reference to the next generation of liberal opponents of Sultan Abdülhamit. Their minds were filled with new western ideas and beliefs and they were regarded as the new administrative and governing elite which had been created by the reforms of Mahmut II and his successors. For further information on the Young Ottomans, see for example, Lewis, 136-174.

[46] Türkan Yeşilyurt Kayhan, *Kadın Şairde Kadın: Şükûfe Nihal'in Şiirleri (Woman in Women's Poem: The Poem's of Şükûfe Nihal*) A Thesis Presented to Bilkent University for the degree of Master of Arts (2005), 13.

[47] Saliha Paker, "Unmuffled voices in the shade and beyond: women's writing in Turkish" in *Textual Liberation*, ed., Helena Forsas-Scott (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 278, 279.

second marriage possible for herself as a sensible and virtuous woman."[48] However, her approach to the woman question was limited in its challenge to convention: although she was critical of polygamy and the lower status of women in society, she was nevertheless "respectful of the fundamental Islamic principles."[49]

Progressive women's journals followed a similar pattern in promoting a new mode of womanhood, advocating education and the equality of women but also emphasising the importance of her domestic roles and duties. They aimed to enlighten women regarding issues such as discrimination, polygamy and oppression in the family to prepare grounds for the future improvement of women's rights.[50] *Kadınlar Dünyası* (*Women's World*), for example, clearly stated its purpose as "promoting women's legal rights"[51] and "paving the way for the women's movement"[52] with the purpose of putting women's conditions and demands on the public agenda. However, as Demirdirek states, these journals often emphasised the goal of educating women in their traditional roles such as mothering and child care, family and society work, housework and health.[53] Similarly, Alexander Safarian notes, the reformist Turkish writers and journalists "could never oppose the fundamental norms and Islamic regulations concerning women."[54] Marriage was still regarded as women's social duty, something which, as Duber and Behar note, "took place more for social and economic reproduction than for individual fulfillment."[55] This suggests that, despite these attempts to create new lifestyles for women, they did little to contribute towards, as Tekeli puts it, "the formation of a new […] self-identity of women"[56] because they maintained a strong emphasis on domestic female duties and roles. In this sense the model of the New Turkish Woman offered little room for women to aspire to the kind of self-fulfilment that was emphasised by

[48] Ibid., 280.
[49] Ibid., 281.
[50] Aynur Demirdirek attempts to recover the writings of Ottoman women and lists important publications oriented towards women. These publications include *Şüküfezar (Bloomed Garden, 1886), Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete (Gazette for Women, 1895), Demet (A Bunch, 1908),* Kadınlar Dünyası (*Women's World*, 1913), *Kadınlık (Womanhood, 1913).* See Aynur Demirdirek, *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi* (*A Story of Ottoman Women's Demands for the Right to Life*) (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 1993).
[51] Aynur Demirdirek, "In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women's Movement", in *Deconstructing Images of the "Turkish Woman"* ed. Zehra F. Arat (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 66.
[52] Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi* (Ottoman Women's Movement) (İstanbul: Metis Yayıncılık, 1993), 86.
[53] Demirdirek, *A Story of Ottoman Women's Demand for the Right to Life*, 8.
[54] Alexander Safarian, "On the History of Turkish Feminism" in *Iran and the Caucasus*, 11 (2007), 141-151, 144.
[55] Alan Duber and Cem Behar, *İstanbul Households: Marriage, family and fertility 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 87.
[56] Şirin Tekeli, "Emergence of the feminist movement in Turkey" in *The New Women's Movement*, ed. Drude Dahlerup (Sage: London, 1986), 183.

those advocates of New Womanhood in America, because at its core it retained a firm belief in upholding traditional family roles and regarded these as more important than women's individual development.

Although the Ottoman intellectuals came to realise the oppression of the Ottoman family structure within which women had no chance to develop their own independent identity, they would not think about reforming the relations between the sexes in the family, nor could they think of giving them the chance of freeing them from men's control. Within this modernisation controversy, women's education became an issue. The state introduced educational programs and opened new schools for girls. In 1842 a midwifery program and in 1858 secondary schools for girls were established in Istanbul.[57] The most important breakthrough was the opening of a teachers' training college for girls in Istanbul in 1863.[58] In 1911, the first lycée for women was established and, in 1914, Istanbul University opened to women.[59] Although Ottoman women demanded education not only to contribute to their domestic duties but also "to capture the sense of self-confidence that they had been lacking",[60] the education they received was "mainly religious in orientation, with the aim of creating good Muslim wives and mothers."[61] The official view of the teachers' training college was as follows:

> Women should be educated in the same way as men with a view toward enabling them to help and comfort their husbands, on whose shoulders rest the responsibility of earning a living for their families. Moreover, education will greatly help women towards a better understanding of religious and secular considerations and encourage them to obey their husbands, to refrain from going against their wishes, and above all, to protect their honour.[62]

In this way, the implementation of educational reforms reflected the concern of the Ottoman reformists to strike a balance between Islam and modernisation in the creation of the New Turkish Woman.

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[57] Zehra F. Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic" in *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"*, ed. Zehra F. Arat *(*Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998),.7.
[58] Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 28.
[59] Nikki R. Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: past and present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 81.
[60] Demirdirek, "In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women's Movement", *68.*
[61] Jayawardena, 28.
[62] Emel Sönmez, "Turkish women in Turkish literature of the nineteenth century", *Die Welt des Islams* (Leiden), 12, (1969), 25.

During the second phase of Turkish feminism, which started in the era of "Kemalist rule" (1920-1950),[63] the position of women continued to receive increasing attention as part of the nation-building process. The image of the New Woman was considered an integral part of the nationalist ideologies that fostered a new national and cultural identity. This is because, as Ayşe Durakbaşa says, for the new Turkish Republic, "the image of the 'new woman' was a marker not only of cultural authenticity but also of being 'civilized' as a nation."[64] In an attempt to become a "civilised" nation and to improve the status of Turkish women, the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 was followed by several legal and constitutional reforms, including the adoption of the Swiss civil code in 1926 which shook the unquestionable authority of the Islamists, replacing the Shariat. Among other things these reforms abolished polygamy and granted women the right to choose their spouses and to initiate divorce; prevented child marriage by imposing a minimum age for marriage; and led to the enfranchisement of women to municipal elections in 1930 and national elections in 1934.[65] Such reforms were crucial steps in granting women opportunities in social and political life and in the development of Turkish feminism.

However, Turkish feminism during the Republican period was different from that of the late-Ottoman period in its emphasis on "Turkishness" rather than on religion. Mustafa Kemal and the other leaders of the Turkish nationalist struggle emphasised equality between the sexes and women's social responsibilities as important elements of this Turkishness. Within this framework of Turkish nationalism, the image of the New Woman became a marker of a "civilised" Turkish nation whose focus, as Durakbaşa notes, "shifted from Islamic culture to the original culture of the Turks before they accepted Islam."[66] Ziya Gökalp, the country's leading nationalist intellectual whose ideas on Turkish nationalism "provided the starting point for Kemalist ideology,"[67]

[63] Although the Republic of Turkey was officially established on 1923, the leadership and political power founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk started earlier. Atatürk rejected the terms of agreement of the victors of WWI imposed upon the Ottoman Empire and declared the War of Independence against the British, French, Italians and Greeks in 1919. He presented himself and his associates as an Anatolian alternative to the government of the Ottoman dynasty in İstanbul. In 1920, the Grand National Assembly was created as the "legitimate" legislative body and with the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922, Ottoman dynastic rule and the Empire were officially ended. We can extend the Kemalist period to the 1950s as the principles of the Kemalist regime prevailed over these years as well. Thus, the three decades between 1920 and 1950 are commonly referred to as the "Kemalist" era. See Arat, *Deconstructing Images of the "Turkish Woman"*, 13.

[64] Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey" in *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 139.

[65] Arat, 15.

[66] Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 139.

[67] K.E. Fleming, "Women as Preservers of the Past" in *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 127.

played an important role in the construction of this new Turkish feminism and its related model of new Turkish womanhood. His ideas about a new Turkish nation were inspired by the life of the nomadic ancestors of the Turkish nation when "democracy and feminism were the two principal bases of ancient Turkish life."[68] This vision of the Turkish nation as founded on an ancient past also informed his vision of a New Turkish Woman. He places the woman question at the centre of the nationalist discourse by saying that "the ideal of feminism was born simultaneously with the Turkish movement in our country […] [in order to enter modern civilisation] Turks have only to return to our [past]."[69] Thus, democracy and feminism, for Gökalp, should be adopted not because the West advocates them but rather because they were essential elements of an ancient Turkish past. For this reason, Gökalp believes, Turkish women must look to their national history in the search for a model of female identity, not to the West: "Turkish womanhood certainly will better itself by benefiting from the progress of modern civilisation. But the Turkish woman will not be a copy-cat of French or of English or of German womanhood."[70] In other words, for Gökalp, Turkish women must blend modernisation with Turkish culture rather than merely imitating European civilisation.

These nationalist and statist ambitions to reform Turkish womanhood and construct a new female identity have been a subject of debate for many feminist and social critics. The Kemalist ideology in relation to women's emancipation and its failure to radically challenge conventional norms of womanhood have been subject to criticism by some Turkish writers such as Deniz Kandiyoti, Zehra F. Arat, Ayşe Durakbaşa and Şirin Tekeli, to name but a few. They argue that the new Republic emancipated women in Turkey by granting and reforming their legal rights, but without actually promoting their individual liberation in everyday life.[71] For such critics, the modernists and nationalists aimed to maintain a patriarchal ideal of female bodies and sexuality. Discussing the meaning of Republican reforms for women, they often suggested that these reforms did not aim at women's liberation because they essentially reinforced the roles of women as breeders and educators of new generations of workers, soldiers and

[68] Ziya Gökalp, *The Principles of Turkism*, trans. by Robert Devereux (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968),115.
[69] Ibid.
[70] As cited and translated in Niyazi Berkeş, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilisation: Selected Essays of Ziya Gökalp*. trans. and ed. Niyazi Berkes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 254.
[71] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case" in *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Summer, 1987), 317-338, 317; Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 139; Jenny. B. White, "State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman", in *NWSA Journal*, 3 (2003), 145-159, 153.

citizens.[72] For Durakbaşa, for example, although the New Turkish Republic provided Turkish women with some equal rights in the areas of law, education and political life, it "did not alter the patriarchal norms of morality and in fact maintained the basic cultural conservatism about male/female relations", and she was therefore "emancipated but unliberated".[73] For Tekeli, the new "rights" given to Turkish women "carried a symbolic meaning"[74] that sought primarily to strengthen the sense of a new national identity as being based on a break from a "backward" past, in a way that left women's subjugation largely unaffected in practice.

With their criticisms of Kemalism concerning the function and purpose of the "new" reforms in the process of liberating women, these Turkish feminists draw a similar conclusion in that although Kemalist reforms promoted a form of "public egalitarianism" that granted formal rights and allowed women to enter into political and economic arenas, in practice they brought neither equality nor liberation to women and their effects remained largely symbolic (to "show how modern the new Turkey had become", in the words of Zehra Arat).[75] A related point, and one which sets the New Turkish Woman apart from her American counterpart, is that she represents a less "challenging" figure for society in the sense that she forms a part of - rather than a threat to - the governmental projects of national integration and reform and its ideological vision of modernisation. We might add here that the new discourse of nationalism was not so different from the ideology of the Tanzimat period in the sense that the Kemalists continued to impose women's primary contribution as being within the domestic sphere and performing their duties as wives and mothers.

In light of the above points, we can begin to draw out some of the defining characteristics of the New Turkish Woman. First of all, as Durakbaşa observes, she must be a "modern woman…[which] means social woman in the first place. She is the woman of a vigorous society. These vigorous institutions are science and industry. Modern woman is a woman who is cultivated in science and industrial culture."[76]

[72] See, for example, Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case", 317-339; Ayse Durakbaşa, and Aynur İlyasoğlu, "Formation of Gender Identities in Republican Turkey and Women's Narratives as Transmitters of 'Herstory' of Modernization" in *Journal of Social History*, 35 (2001), 195-203; Şirin Tekeli, "Emergence of the feminist movement in Turkey"; Zehra F. Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic".
[73] Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 140, 141.
[74] Tekeli, "Emergence of the Feminist Movement in Turkey", 184.
[75] Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", 15; Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey."
[76] "Kadınlarımız ve Spor" (Our Women and Sports) *Aksam Spor*, 20 (1938), as cited and translated by Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 144.

Referring to the New Turkish Woman's modern outlook and appearance, Ayşe Durakbaşa and Aynur İlyasoğlu observe that "what to wear and how to wear clothing plus the presentation of the body within a new feminine outlook with short style hair, smart suit […] became important to mark the distinction of the new women and transformations within the women's sphere."[77] However, alongside these "modern" characteristics is the emphasis on traditional roles in line with the Kemalist vision, and so the New Turkish Woman is therefore usually associated with the role of a dutiful mother and wife. Mustafa Kemal for example asserted in one of his speeches that "the most important duty of woman is motherhood. The importance of this duty is better understood if one considers that the earliest education takes place on one's mother's lap."[78] By referring to the duty of women as "mother", Mustafa Kemal also drew attention to the importance of marriage and sexual virtue: in sharp contrast to the figure of the New American Woman, the sexual morality of New Turkish Womanhood "was not ever radically questioned within the Kemalist ethic."[79] As Kandiyoti suggests, control over female sexuality was one of the important cultural factors that has influenced and limited Turkish women's roles and therefore legal emancipation should not be confused with social mores and women's liberation.[80] Instead, the virtue of the New Woman was presented as a sign of female modesty. In another of his speeches, Mustafa Kemal emphasises this aspect of the New Turkish Woman:

> The [New] Turkish woman should be the most enlightened, most virtuous, and most reserved woman of the world…The duty of the Turkish woman is to raise generations that are capable of preserving and protecting the Turk with his mentality, strength and determination. The woman who is the source and social foundation of the nation can fulfill her duty only if she is virtuous.[81]

Such an ideology of female modesty as a strategy to control female sexuality is expressed in the "asexual" ideal of the New Turkish Woman. Kandiyoti draws attention to this aspect of the New Woman in Turkey and states that she was defined not only as an "enlightened [wife and mother] in the private sphere" but also as an "asexual" and "masculinised social actor" in public.[82] As Durakbaşa and İlyasoğlu remark, even

[77] Durakbaşa and İlyasoğlu, 199.
[78] From Atatürk's speech in Izmir, 1923, as cited and translated by Zehra F. Arat, "Educating the Daughters of the Republic", 175.
[79] Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey", 150.
[80] Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated?", 317, 318.
[81] *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* (Atatürk's statements and speeches) 2, (1989), 242, as cited and translated by Arat's *Deconstructing Images of "the Turkish Woman"*, 1.
[82] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Ataerkil Örüntüler: Türk Toplumunda Erkek Egemenliğinin Çözümlenmesine Yönelik Notlar" (Patriarchal Patterns: Notes Related to the Analysis of Man's Domination in Turkish Society) in *1980'ler Türkiyesi'nde Kadın Bakıs Acısından Kadınlar* (Women from Women's Perspective in 1980s Turkey) ed. by Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: Iletisim, 1995), 25.

during occasions of social mixing with men, "new women had to preserve basic codes of female virtue and be very cautious of not being seductive."[83]

Jenny B. White uses the term "Republican Woman" in categorising the New Woman of the Republican era in Turkey and argues that Republican Woman's activism focused on two things: "conservative morality and the requirement to remain true to the state's modernisation project and state interests", noting that the Republican Woman dressed to suppress her sexuality and femininity, wearing "severe suits and a no-nonsense demeanor."[84] The idea here is that she must repress her sexuality in her relationships with men in order to be accepted in public and to avoid becoming an object for male gaze. White summarises the general characteristics of the Republican Woman as follows:

> Since the new Republican Woman represented the modern, secular, Westernized state, she was expected to behave and dress in what the state defined as a modern, Western manner […] The ideal Republican woman was a "citizen woman": urban and urbane, socially progressive, but also uncomplaining and dutiful at home. Modernity, as defined by the Turkish state, included marriage and children as a national duty for women […] Thus, the Republican woman was, by definition, a bourgeois urban woman, as well as a symbol of the new state.[85]

All these perspectives on the image of the Republican Woman reveal the parameters of the space created within the project of modernity for Turkish women's emancipation: respect for the community over the individual, faith in education (in order to be a "good" wife-mother) and repression of sexuality. Briefly, in Pinar Ilkkaracan's words, the Republican Woman is identified with an image of an "emancipated and active [woman] in the founding of the new republic as mother, wife, daughter and political activist, yet also modest and chaste."[86]

Although the Kemalist modernization project created a new discursive space that advocated women's emancipation and equality in the name of pre-Islam Turkishness, the image of the New Woman often shared similarities with the image of womanhood that was projected by the reformers of the late-Ottoman period. Durakbaşa explains the similarity between these two images as follow:

[83] Durakbaşa and İlyasoğlu, 199.
[84] White, 153.
[85] Ibid., 146, 147.
[86] Pınar İlkaracan, *Deconstructing sexuality in the Middle East* (Hampshire; Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2008), 44.

> In the modernist views of the late-Ottoman period, the image of "the new woman" was defined as the "social woman"; that is, the contribution of women to the community and to society in general was stressed […] Kemalists also defended the idea that women should participate in social life and take on social responsibilities and roles as professional women alongside their traditional sex roles of mother and wife.[87]

This image has also served as a vocabulary through which the questions of cultural and national integrity had been debated during the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. Although the Turkish Republic placed a new emphasis on feminism that was based on secular Turkish nationalism rather than Islamic modernism, as Kandiyoti perceptively observes, both Islamic and nationalistic discourses aimed at establishing a figure of New Turkish Woman who is "congruent with the 'true' identity of the collectivity and constitutes no threat to it."[88] The defining attributes of the New Woman in both discourses, hence, were compatible: on the one hand she is modern, educated, intellectual and plays a greater role in public life; on the other hand, she remains within socially acceptable and traditional norms as a dutiful wife, good mother and virtuous woman. In this sense, unlike her American sister, the New Turkish Woman was not all that "new": beneath her veneer of modernity, she was still the same old "ideal, moral," woman who was, to a large extent, defined by and in the service of men.

[87] Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey",142-143.
[88] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women as Metaphor: The Turkish Novel From the Tanzimat to the Turkish Republic", 140.

Section 2: Edith Wharton's and Halide Edib Adıvar's Perceptions of the Woman Question and Their Critical Reception

2.1. Edith Wharton (1862-1937): "They'd [women] much better stay at home and mind the baby" [89]

Edith Wharton, as Susan Goodman points out, "never allied herself with the feminist movements of her day."[90] Developments such as the opening of educational opportunities in America did not seem to excite her too much. Ironically, coming from an aristocratic family, the education Wharton received at home shows that she had passion for education and learning: "she learned French, German, and Italian before she was nine. By the time she was in her early teens she was reading Goethe, Balzac, even medieval German and French poets."[91] But despite her desire for reading and learning, Wharton seemed to hold herself aloof on the question of women's education and liberation. Her anti-feminism was articulated explicitly in her personal letters and non-fictional statements. In 1919, for example, Wharton exposed her opinion on women in her *French Ways and Their Meaning* by saying: "Women are generally far more intelligent listeners than talkers […] for intelligent women will never talk together when they can talk to men, or even listen to them […]".[92] In 1923, she wrote an unpleasant letter to her ex-sister-in-law, Minnie Jones, in response to a request to provide a scholarship for women: "I'm not interested in travelling scholarships for women […] they'd much better stay at home and mind the baby."[93] Such statements seem to support Richard Lawson's argument that Wharton believed "women were made for pleasure and procreation."[94] In 1933, writing about her feelings about American women's struggle for emancipation, Wharton confirms this suggestion by indicating her negative view of the American women's movement and expresses the importance of women's domestic roles in her autobiography (*A Backward Glance*) as follows:

[89] Edith Wharton, (A Personal Letter, 1923), as cited in Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Vintage, 2008), 608.
[90] Susan Goodman, *Edith Wharton's Women: Friends, Rivals* (London: University Press of New England, 1990), 35.
[91] Richard H. Lawson, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), 2.
[92] Edith Wharton, *French Ways and Their Meaning* (New York: Appleton, 1919), 25.
[93] As cited in Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Vintage, 2008), 608.
[94] Richard Lawson, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), 39.

> I have lingered over these details [describing the cooking she enjoyed as a child and young woman] because they formed a part - a most important and honourable part - of that ancient curriculum of housekeeping which […] was soon to be swept aside by the monstrous regiment of emancipated: young women taught by their elders to despise the kitchen and the linen room, to substitute the acquiring of University degrees for the more complex art of civilized living […].[95]

Wharton's conservative remarks about the position of women, according to Hermoine Lee, were "commonplace among upper-class Anglo-Americans" in her time and indicate her fear of "social disintegration"[96] for which new ideas on the role of women were held responsible. For Robert Peel, however, Wharton's anti-feminism stems from her desire to secure her position as an artist in a male-dominated literature world and from her fear of being categorised as "emotional and feminine."[97] These features, Peel suggests, implied incompetence and vulnerability and were attributed to the "allegedly soft, second-rate work" of her time.[98] In his collection of essay criticism on Wharton, Irving Howe emphasises Wharton's image as an old-fashioned realist by stating that she "described life as a succession of pitiful compromises with fate, of concessions to old traditions, old beliefs, old tragedies, old failures."[99] In a similar way, regarding Wharton's wish to dissociate herself from other women, E. K. Brown suggests that Wharton was "at ease in a man's world […] she took pleasure in the remark that she was a self-made man […] She was called 'John' by her husband and characterized as an intellectual tomboy."[100] As Amy Kaplan suggests, perhaps it is for this reason - that Wharton felt no connection with feminism[101] - that the studies of women in literature that were written until the 1970s paid very little attention to Wharton. Even if they did, they have often viewed her works as anti-feminist. Wharton's pessimistic themes and unhappy stories about women in her fiction received many complaints from her critics who often accused her of representing her female characters from the perspective of conventional narratives. Referring to her negative attitude towards her heroines, Q.D. Leavis for example underrates Wharton as a writer and remarks that not even Wharton's "greatest admirer" would proclaim her a great novelist because the key to the success of

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[95] Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (New York: Scribner's, 1933), 59-60.
[96] Lee, 607.
[97] Robert Peel, *Apart from Modernism* (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), 145.
[98] Ibid., 146.
[99] Irving Howe, "Introduction: The Achievement of Edith Wharton" in *Edith Wharton: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1962), 16-17.
[100] E. K. Brown, "Edith Wharton: The Art of the Novel" in *The Art of the Novel: From 1700 to the Present Time* Ed. Pelham Edgar (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 196.
[101] Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), 14; see also Shari Benstock, *No Gifts from Chance: A Biography of Edith Wharton* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 265; Katrine Joslin, *Edith Wharton* (New York: St. Martin press, 1991), 203.

a writer, for Leavis, is the question of "what the novelist has to offer us [...] in the way of positives."[102] Lionel Trilling perceives Wharton's treatment of female characters and their unhappiness as an outcome of her cruelty[103] while for Harry Hartwick, the essential motive of Wharton's fiction is the old-fashioned morality of the Old Testament: punishment for every breach of convention.[104] Mary Suzanne Schriber's essay in 1983, "Convention in the Fiction of Edith Wharton" follows a similar line and suggests that her idea of woman is "the complement of the male, as innocent, dependent, intuitive, spiritual."[105] Janet Malcolm echoes these views in her article, "The Woman Who Hated Women" and describes the world of Wharton's novels as a "dark, nightmarish place peopled by […] destructive, pathetic, narcissistic women."[106]

One of the bitterest attacks comes from Ranjit Kaur Kapoor, a professor of English at Punjabi University. He argues that Wharton was a "literary anachronism", a spokeswoman for a dying, old-fashioned aristocracy and tradition. For Kapoor,

> To regard her [Wharton] a feminist just because her fictional world is replete with the female of the species or just because she is preoccupied with women and their problems in relation to their deep aspirations and anguish in an unjust system, amounts to tilting the balance of Wharton's fictional world in their own favor. They seem to be blind to the fact that even though Edith Wharton presents the helpless plight of women effectively, she runs into an impasse when it comes to offering alternate solutions […]she glorifies the role of women as the safe keepers of culture, guardians of moral values and nurturers of children.[107]

Some critics have interpreted Wharton's pessimistic outlook regarding the plight of women in relation to her personal life. Cynthia Griffin Wolff's *A Feast of Words: The Triumph of Edith Wharton*, for example, indicates the impact of Wharton's personal life on her works and points out that Wharton's fear of her mother and her unhappy marriage resulted in the pessimism in her fiction.[108] Marius Bewley also perceived Wharton's fiction to be "projected from some deep center in herself, from some

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[102] Leavis, 261.
[103] Lionel Trilling, "The Morality of Inertia (Edith Wharton: Ethan Frome)" in *Great Moral Dilemmas in Literature, Past and Present*, Ed. Robert M. MacIver (New York: Institute for Religious and Social Sciences, 1956), 37.
[104] Harry Hartwick, *The Foreground of American Fiction* (New York: American Book Co, 1934), 385-387.
[105] Mary Suzanne Schriber, "Convention in the Fiction of Edith Wharton" in *Studies in American Fiction*, 11 (1983), 189-200, 189.
[106] Janet Malcolm, "The Woman Who Hated Women" in *The New York Times*, (November 16, 1986).
[107] Ranjit Kapoor, "Edith Wharton's Feminism: Roving in a Blind Alley" *in SikhSpectrum.com Quarterly*, 16 (2004), 1.
[108] Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *A Feast of Words: The Triumphs of Edith Wharton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 357.

concealed hopelessness, frustration, or private rage that we are never allowed to see except at several removes in the disguising medium of her art."[109]

Wharton's non-fictional statements and the way she has been presented by the critics considered above suggest that Wharton's evaluation of the role of women was in line with traditional gender roles and the customs of her society. However, by reading Wharton's texts with an emphasis on her "anti-modern" views and categorising her as a conservative writer, such critics arguably underplay the significance of the social criticism that is contained in her novels regarding the problems of women in a changing society. They tend to interpret the unhappy endings in her novels as symptoms of her personal bitterness or pessimism, often to suggest that this diminishes the artistic merit of her work or to emphasise that she remains tied to dominant, male literary conventions. The painful stories of Wharton's heroines - who very often end in compromise, violence, torture or death - leads such critics to conclude that Wharton advocates and/or reinforces a patriarchal ideology, that "bad" women deserve punishment.

Despite such negative commentary, some feminist critics have changed the understanding of Wharton's works through their analyses, focusing particularly on Wharton's insights into the social structures and conventions that shaped and limited women's lives in this period. They have interpreted Wharton's pessimism either in terms of the theme of the powerlessness of the individual in the face of society/nature, or as a reflection of her naturalistic depiction of women's life in her society. Margaret McDowell's essay, "Viewing the Custom of her Country: Edith Wharton's Feminism" in 1974 was a breakthrough work that points to some of the feminist implications that can be drawn from Wharton's novels. McDowell emphasises the feminist aspiration of Wharton's fiction, arguing that it calls attention to women's desires and the difficulties and restrictions that they face in patriarchal society.[110] Katherine Joslin similarly,views Wharton's works with an emphasis on the idea that her characters are caught up in what Wharton called "the web of customs, manners, culture"[111], resulting in the "unhappy endings" of her novels as individuals are portrayed as unable to achieve freedom from

[109] Marius Bewley, *Masks and Mirrors* (New York: Atheneum, 1964), 146, as cited in Katherine Joslin, *Edith Wharton* (New York: St. Martin press, 1991), 134.
[110] Margaret McDowell, "Viewing the Custom of her Country: Edith Wharton's Feminism" in *Contemporary Literature*, 15 (1974), 521-538.
[111] Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance*, (New York: Scribner's, 1933), 35.

societal bonds.[112] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's account of Wharton also draws attention to her feminism, arguing that "despite all this evidence that Edith Wharton was neither in theory nor in practice a feminist, her major fictions, taken together, constitute perhaps the most searching - and searing - feminist analysis of the construction of 'femininity' produced by any novelist in this century."[113] Singley Carol's *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton* follows the critics who view Wharton's fiction from a feminist perspective by noting that: "Western culture represses women's powers by dividing them into mutually exclusive categories of good and bad […] Wharton criticizes Western culture's repression of women and shows the need to integrate the multiplicity of feminine energies […]."[114]

Elizabeth Ammon's book *Edith Wharton's Argument with America* is another illuminating work that draws attention to Wharton's feminist vision. She considers Wharton's work alongside the feminist texts of her day and argues that Wharton's unhappy stories in her novels stem from her conviction that "no matter how privileged, nonconformist, or assertive [American women were] [...] [they] were not free to control their lives."[115] Ammons writes that:

> Wharton was never able to write a happy, positive story [because] the culture, in Wharton's opinion, offers them no means of realizing their dreams [...] [Wharton's heroines] all end up in bondage to the past not because Edith Wharton was cruel but because the liberation, the "progress" that America boasted of for women was, in her view, a mirage.[116]

For Ammons, although Wharton agreed that the position of women was the critical issue in American society at that time, she did not share the optimism that positive and progressive changes in women's life were occurring. Therefore, Ammons argues, Wharton's pessimism in her works is not so much an indication of her "cruelty" or will to punish her female characters but more an indication of her portrayal of the tragedy of women's situation as Wharton had come to see it: "the waste, the crippling, the curtailment."[117] This is where, as Ammons puts it, Wharton differed from her

[112] Katherine Joslin, *Edith Wharton* (New York: St. Martin press, 1991), 131,132.
[113] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and The Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980),128.
[114] Carol J. Singley. *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25.
[115] Elizabeth Ammons, *Edith Wharton's Argument with America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 3.
[116] Ammons, 48, 49.
[117] Ibid., 3.

contemporaries. Henry James's *The Portrait of A Lady* (1881), Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), Robert Grant's *Unleavened Bread* (1900), Ellen Glasgow's *The Wheel of Life* (1906), for example, are some of the important novels published at the time Wharton was writing and they also explored the woman question: dealing with the situation of contemporary women and addressing issues such as the victimisation of women by an oppressive masculine society, the patriarchal definition of femininity, and inequality in gender roles. But perhaps because these writers, although in varying degrees of commitment, were supportive of the Women's Movement, they often portrayed bold, admirable versions of New Womanhood such as James's Isabel in *The Portrait of A Lady* (1881) or Chopin's Edna in *The Awakening* (1899). Reflecting on the novels written about women at Wharton's time, Ammons observes that "there was new pride in women and great optimism about the future […] Brave new women were invading fiction in the 1890s, and authors, by and large, had happy tales to tell."[118] Ammons goes on to write:

> But not Edith Wharton. In sharp contrast, most of her work in the 1890s focuses in one way or another on the pain of being a woman. Her governing themes rise from the recurrent situation of a heroine perceiving an enormous and cruel lack of fit between her persona; expectations of life and the social reality. Where there is rebellion it almost always meets with failure.[119]

Through such readings, Wharton has been brought out from her categorisation as the author of the "novel of manners" and into the attention of feminist literary critics. By raising the theme of women's restricted place in society and emphasising how patriarchal society acts as a destructive force for women in her fiction, Wharton has been re-appraised as expressing the cruelty of her society towards women. However, critics discussed above such as Ammons ultimately tend to reinforce the image of Wharton's heroines as victims caught in a hopeless situation, and their criticisms remain within a limited understanding that the unhappy stories about her heroines stemmed from the author's wish to depict with accuracy the lives of women of her time - a theme that I will return to later.

[118] Ibid., 5.
[119] Ibid.

2.2. Halide Edib Adıvar (1884-1964): "No matter how high the knowledge that women possess, this should be in harmony with their womanly responsibilities"[120]

Unlike Wharton, Adıvar - "a writer of fiction and a newspaper columnist, a public speaker, a translator and a soldier, political dissident [...] and a woman of education"[121] - showed much greater concern with women's rights and education. Her life covers the turbulent years leading to the First World War, through the Turkish War of Independence and the period of extraordinary social change in the early twentieth century that would establish the Turkish Republic. She fought for the emancipation of women and for their access to education and paid work, and wrote articles on women's issues propagating emancipation and equal education for women.[122] Her commitment to education for girls led her to establish the woman's club in 1908, Teâli-i Nisvan Cemiyeti (Organisation to Improve Women's Status),[123] which provided classes for women to learn housekeeping, childcare and helped to nurse Turkish soldiers.[124] However Adıvar defines Turkish feminism differently from Western feminism. In her *Conflict of East and West in Turkey*, she refers to this point explicitly by saying that Turkish feminism "differs from Western feminism in its democratic aspect [...] it [Turkish feminism] was not the revolt of one sex against the other's domination. It was a part and an integral part of Turkish reforms [...]".[125] As she wrote:

> I see that those very clever Turkish women advocate the rise of a feminist movement […] Such a movement could be worthy of esteem […] But women should not see men as their enemies! [...] These young men among us are as willing to help women achieve their equality as women. Thus, it would be much better for women to receive help from these men rather than viewing them as their rivals […] Women need to learn about everything as much as men do. In this case, women are no different than men…Yet, these needs should not distract women from their household duties such as mothering. No matter how high the

[120] Halide Edib Adıvar, "Mehasini Okuyan Kardeşlerime" ("To My Sisters Who Read Mehasin"), *Mehasin*, 6 (1908), 418-421, as cited in Aynur Demirdirek's *Osmanlı Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi* (*A Story of Ottoman Women's Demands for the Right to Life*), 39. All translations in this thesis are mine unless otherwise indicated.
[121] Emel Doğramacı, *Türkiye'de Kadının Dünü ve Yarını (Woman in Turkey Yesterday and Today)* (Ankara: Doğuş Matbaacılık ve Ticaret Ltd. Şti, 1992), 53.
[122] See Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış* (*A Critical Review of Turkish Novel*) (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), 155.
[123] Frances Kazan, *Halide Edib ve Amerika (Halide Edib and America)* trans. Bernar Kutluğ (İstanbul, Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1995), 72.
[124] Reina Lewis and Nancy Micklewright, *Gender, Modernity and Liberty* (Lodnon: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2006), 199.
[125] Halide Edib Adıvar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* (Lahore: S. M. Ashraf, 1935), 197.

> knowledge that women possess, this should be in harmony with their womanly responsibilities […][126]

This passage clearly shows that Adıvar's feminism refers to equality between the sexes. But this "equality" is emphasised within the context of political and social rights and more addressed to the ideals and responsibilities that are endorsed by the project of modernisation (such as household chores, mothering, and other "womanly" responsibilities) than to women's individual freedom from conventional societal constraints. In this sense, like Wharton, Adıvar also appears to emphasise women's domestic roles and their contribution to society in general (although in a different manner and for different reasons - Wharton for the preservation of Old New York values, Adıvar for the betterment of the Turkish nation). Adıvar's view of an "ideal" woman and her emphasis on the domestic roles of women to raise the future generation of the Turkish nation are explicitly outlined in her exhortations to Turkish feminists to be mindful of their national duties: "The right of the nation is a thousand times more important and sacred than a woman's right; for that reason, when women raise their voice (for their rights) today, they should remember that this is not for themselves but to be able to raise generations for their nation."[127]

Adıvar also believed in the idea that education for women is essential not only to be able to raise healthy and educated generations for the Turkish nation but also to learn and assimilate some principles of Western modernisation for the betterment of Turkish society. However, as Doğramacı notes, she also criticised those who "blindly imitate the Western people's lifestyle."[128] Similarly, Jayawardena states that for the success of the Turkish Republic, Adıvar believed in the importance of synthesising "the two prevailing ideologies of the time, Turkish nationalism and the Westernisation ideal."[129] Adıvar's "ideal" woman, then, is largely analogous to the New Turkish Woman who is, as discussed earlier, defined as "educated […] dressed in the new styles and attuned to Western ways - […] yet whose role was primarily in the home […] [T]hey still had to act as the guardians of national culture, indigenous religion and family traditions - in other words, ideal woman means to be both 'modern' and 'traditional.'"[130] Similarly, Adıvar's ideal woman is viewed as being educated and engaged in a professional career,

[126] Adıvar, "Mehasini Okuyan Kardeşlerime" ("To My Sisters Who Read Mehasin"), *Mehasin*, 6 (1908), 419, as cited in Aynur Demirdirek, *Osmanli Kadınlarının Hayat Hakkı Arayışının Bir Hikayesi* (*A Story of Ottoman Women's Demand for the Right to Life*), (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi Yayınları, 1993), 39, 40.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Doğramacı, 56.
[129] Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd., 1986), 40.
[130] Ibid., 12-14.

an equal partner of man in the project of reforming society and creating a new way of living. At the same time, she reinforced her vision of the ideal woman as an agent of the creation of harmony in the household and as a mother bearing her responsibilities to her nation. She stresses the importance of "firmer and indissoluble marriage" and urges women to view it not "from a selfish, individualistic point of view, but as the organic bond of society."[131] For these reasons, when I use the term Adıvar's "ideal" woman in this thesis, I shall also be referring to the figure of the New Turkish Woman.

As Robert P. Finn points out, the figure of the "ideal" woman as a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures had already appeared in many earlier novels before and during Adıvar's time such as Semsettin Sami's *Taaşşuk-i Talât ve Fitnat* (*The Romance of Talât and Fitnat*, 1875), Ahmed Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakim Efendi* (*Felatun Bey and Rakim Efendi*, 1875), Namık Kemal's *İntibah* (*Awakening*, 1876), Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil's *Aşk-ı Memnu* (*Forbidden Love*, 1900), Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Kiralık Konak* (*Mansion for Rent* 1922), to name but a few. When we study these novels, we realise that they focus on the elite in Istanbul of that era in which European influence was increasing. Finn summarises this theme in Turkish fiction as follows:

> Traditional manners and mores were disappearing before the inroads of life *alafranga*. A society which had accepted itself with equanimity began to examine every aspect of its own life in comparison with the West [...] Increasing European influence in the [Ottoman] Empire had made even ordinary residents of Istanbul aware of the great variations in social conduct.[132]

The central theme in these novels, as Finn suggest, is the difference between two different types of Westernisation, each representing two opposite ideological positions in the Turkish society of the era: a dandy, alafranga (over-Westernised) character from an upper-class, wealthy, Westernised family and their counter-images who are depicted as "hard-working, conscientious and an exemplification of the ideal synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures".[133] The dandy male figure like Felatun "whose sole aim in life is to obtain a veneer of European culture with which to impress his peers and delude himself"[134] or Mihriban who is the "first instance [in Turkish fiction] of the *alafranga* young girl" in Ahmed Mithat's *Felatun Bey ile Rakim Efendi* appear in later Turkish fiction quite frequently.

[131] Halide Edib Adıvar, *Conflict of East and West in Turkey* (Lahore: S. M. Ashraf, 1935), 197.
[132] Robert P., Finn, *The Early Turkish Novel 1872-1900* (İstanbul: Isis Press, 1984), 10.
[133] Ibid., 17.
[134] Ibid., 16.

Şerif Mardin has also commented upon the portrayal of the over-Westernised figure of the elite class in Istanbul at that time and the place of women in the early Turkish novels. Referring to Bihruz Bey in Recaizade Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* (*The Carriage Affai*r, 1896), for example, Mardin argues that the hero "is the archetypical Westernised fob" that represents the ridiculed "stereotype of over-Westernised Ottoman."[135] Such characters, as Şerif Mardin observes, are treated satirically to draw attention to the "dangers" of excessive Westernisation and to criticise those who were "aping social mannerisms of the West".[136] In his discussion of women's position in society, Mardin also points out the depiction of the "ideal" Turkish woman in early Turkish fiction such as the heroine, Canan in *Felatun Bey ile Rakim Efendi* (*Felatun Bey and Rakim Efendi*, 1875). As Mardin aptly observes, Canan - who learns how to read and write along with French and piano and at the same time still maintains the salient features of her culture - represents the "ideal of womanhood" that was promoted in Turkish society at that time. However, although these novels provide insights into the formation of gendered national identities and contribute significantly to our understanding of the modernisation period as it was experienced in the upper-class of Turkish society at that time, they appear to be deeply connected to the state's ideology rather than questioning its fundamental principles. Furthermore, the characters in these earlier Turkish novels are often restricted to such dichotomies of "ideal" or "dandy/alafranga" characters rather than presented as characters with the kind of complexities and ambiguities in emotions, motivations and status that we find, I argue, in the work of Adıvar.

In making this argument, my reading of Adıvar departs from conventional interpretations which often see her novels as promoting her vision of "ideal" womanhood and articulating the discourse of the New Turkish Woman. A number of literary critics such as Deniz Kandiyoti, İnci Enginün, Berna Moran, Özgün Basmaz, Hülya Adak, Muzaffer Uyguner, Gönül Ağbaba,[137] to name but a few, have approached Adıvar's novels in this way. Deniz Kandiyoti, for example, argues that Adıvar's novels depict nationalist and asexual women who represent the author's "ideal" woman:

[135] Şerif Mardin, "Superwesternization in Urban Life in the Ottoman Empire in the Last Quarter of the Nineteenth Century" in *Turkey: Geographical and Social Perspectives*, ed. by Benedict, P., Tümertekin, E. and Mansur, F. (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 142.
[136] Ibid., 138.
[137] See Hülya Adak, "Otobiyografik Benliğin Çok-Karakterliliği: Halide Edibin ilk Romanlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet" (Multi-Identities of Autobiographic Self: Social Sexuality in Halide Edib's Earlier Novels), 161-178, 162. http://research.sabanciuniv.edu/5302/1/Hulya_Adak.pdf; Muzaffer Uyguner, *Halide Edib Adıvar: Yaşamı, sanatı, yapıtları, seçmeler* (*Halide Edib Adıvar: Her life, art, works, selections*) (Altın Kitaplar Press: İstanbul, 1992), 70; Gönül Ağbaba, *Halide Edib Adıvar* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Press, 1997), 22.

describing the female characters in her novels as "asexual and devoid of their essential femaleness", Kandiyoti suggests that in these novels we see that "the love of heroines transcends individual, sexual love and represents a meeting of minds in the nationalist ideal."[138] Kandiyoti concludes her argument by saying that this is a "recurrent theme throughout [Adıvar's] novels" which suggests that women could be accepted into public life in Turkey only if they are "asexual and devoid of their essential femaleness."[139] With her emphasis on this image, Kandiyoti says, Adıvar played the leading role in Turkish literature for creating the image of "true daughters of the Republic".[140]

Along similar lines, İnci Enginün argues that Adıvar reflects her perceptions on the woman question through her female characters in her novels. Enginün remarks that in her novels, Adıvar generally depicts a female character who is conscious, looking after her home, earning [money] and managing household duties and this, argues Enginün, is the female model that Adıvar respects most.[141] Berna Moran stresses the same point by saying that the heroines in Adıvar's novels - in particular her earlier novels - are loyal to traditional values and follow a path of sexual purity and virtue whilst being independent and self-reliant. He continues his discussion as follows:

> This (ideal) womanhood is one of the new narratives that Adıvar introduced to the Turkish reader. This image was important in terms of combining some values (of the East and West) that were seen as opposite to each other in (Turkish) society […] Because these characters (representing Adıvar's "ideal" woman) are moral women who are Westernised but at the same time loyal to their national values, both educated and independent, but also keen to maintain their sexual purity.[142]

Özgün Basmas concurs with these interpretations and, in reflecting on the similarity between Adıvar's heroines and the New Turkish Woman, maintains that "Halide Edib's model [of "ideal woman"] flawlessly reproduces the Kemalist construction of the ideal Turkish woman as enlightened 'daughters of the republic' and at the same time 'mothers of the nation.'"[143]

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[138] Ibid., 149.
[139] Ibid., 149.
[140] Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dünüşümler [Concubines, Sisters, Citizens: Identities and Social Transformation]* (İstanbul: Metis Press, 2007), 160.
[141] Inci Enginün, *The Conflict between the East and West in the Works of Halide Edib Adıvar,* 372.
[142] Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış* 1 (*A Critical Review of Turkish Novel*), (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 2007), 156.
[143] Özgün Basmaz, *"The Rebellious Daughter of the Republic" or "The mother of the Turks": Re-considering the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic Through the Politics of Halide Edip Adıvar*, A Thesis Presented to the University of Acron for the degree of Master of Arts (2008), 61.

Saliha Paker, on the other hand, provides a different approach to Adıvar's works and draws attention to the inconsistency of viewpoints on "the woman question" in her novels. Paker correctly observes that, in dealing with the contemporary interest in the theme of "Western-in-East" in Turkey, Adıvar "follows the contemporary mainstream of male fiction"[144]; an indication of her search "for a synthesis of Western and traditional values."[145] However, Paker says, Adıvar's feminist perspective and her search for alternative female models change according to the "reactions from the readership or by political/ideological trends."[146] In order to prove her argument, Paker writes that Adıvar received threats on her life because of the "inappropriate" themes in her novel *Seviye Talip*, such as female sexuality or the freedom of women in their choice of marriage. Due to the reactions Adıvar received from her readers, Paker says, she changed her writing strategy in her following years and depicted these unconventional themes through the representation of non-Turkish female characters (as in the case of Dora in *Heartache*). Paker's reading of Adıvar's works challenges those critics mentioned above who generalise the author's female characters. However, by suggesting that Adıvar's contradictory depiction of her heroines is modified according to the reactions from the readership or political/ideological trends, Paker ultimately emphasises, like the critics considered above, authorial intention in her reading of Adıvar's novels.

The discussions of these critics are studded with insights that contribute to our understanding of many important facets of Adıvar's novels - in particular their accounts of the experience of Westernisation in Turkey in this period. However, these studies tend to be preoccupied with a normative ideal of Turkish femininity and to offer readings that approach the works as documents of the author's vision of "ideal" womanhood and normative prescriptions of the period regarding "how a woman should be" - rather than on how they problematise womanhood and open up new perspectives on the question of "what it is to be a woman". Their approach also tends to underemphasise the way in which the heroines react to the limitations that the vision of New Turkish Womanhood places upon them and how they respond to living in a society where women are perceived to be inferior to men. Focusing on the female's morality in these works simply as a sign of the novel's depiction of the author's "ideal" woman, or interpreting the novels' unhappy endings as the author's warning against those who

[144] Saliha Paker, "Unmuffled voices in the shade and beyond: women's writing in Turkish" in *Textual Liberation*, ed., Helena Forsas-Scott (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 282.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid., 282.

challenge or deviate from this female model is, in Bakhtin words, "to reduce [the novel] to a systemically monologic whole, thus ignoring [its] fundamental plurality of unmerged consciousnesses" while emphasising instead "a single and unified authorial consciousness."[147] Furthermore, interpreting these heroines only by means of dress code, the class they belong to, their education level and their domestic life style is to present an over-simplified image of the heroines and neglects, as I aim to demonstrate over the following chapters, the construction of the New Woman as a complex and contradictory phenomenon as revealed through the dialogic narrative of the texts.

[147] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. & trans. Carly Emerson (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 9.

Section 3: Theoretical and Methodological Framework: The New Woman Fiction and Feminist Dialogics

3.1. Wharton's and Adıvar's Novels as examples of New Woman Fiction

I aim to bring a number of contributions to the existing literature on Wharton, Adıvar and the New Woman in this study. In particular, in contrast to the critics considered above I want to argue that, despite Wharton's and Adıvar's non-fictional writings and public statements concerning the importance of the traditional roles of women in the domestic sphere, the novels considered here display significant elements of New Woman fiction. Referring to the multi-voiced narrative of New Woman fiction, Ann Ardis argues that some of the New Woman novels dismantle "the monologic [single-voiced] structuring" of conventional narrative and display what Bakhtin terms "polyphonic form" in their language.[148] Following this idea, rather than reading these texts as statements of authoritative ideologies regarding women or as presenting a certain "type" of feminine identity that reflects the views of their authors (as previous critics have suggested), and against the view that, through their "unhappy endings", these texts are severe in their treatment of those women who "stray from the path", I propose that these novels offer complex images of New Women that challenge conventional fictional frameworks of female representation, and that their unhappy endings can be read both as indictments of the restrictions that their respective societies place on women and a recognition of female voice, agency and struggle.

What points of connection do Wharton's and Adıvar's novels under study have with the New Woman fiction? Before considering this question, it is important to review the general characteristics of the New Woman fiction. One of its defining features was its challenge to the era's hegemonic definitions of womanhood and related prescriptions on "how a woman should be". In an attempt to reassess the old clichés and moral codes of femininity, feminist writers began to think about the formulation of new codes of female behaviour, a new morality and new sexual ethics. This made the New Woman fiction a source of controversy as it sought to unsettle conventional images and accounts of women and add momentum to the push for political and social change. The close link between literature and social reform, as Heilmann notes, was seen as the backbone

[148] Ann Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 3.

of feminism and this link was essential to the New Woman writers of the fin-de-siècle who considered the novel an important tool for social reform.[149] In the 1890s, a group of popular writers such as Sarah Grand, Mona Caird, George Eagerton and Olive Schreiner took up this cause and began to write about topics associated with New Woman fiction such as unhappy marriage, sexual transgression, divorce, death, "fallen" women, seduction, betrayal and adultery.[150] Sarah Grand wrote for example in 1896 that: "Thanks to our efforts, the 'novel with a purpose' and the 'sex novel' are more powerful at the present time, especially for good, than any other social influence."[151]

Cunningham also points out that, although the authors of New Woman novels were not consciously creating a distinctive category of writing, their work displays some common characteristics. Defining the fictional representation of the New Woman as an "intelligent, individualistic, and principled person", she notes that "heroines who refused to conform to the traditional feminine role, challenged accepted ideals of marriage and maternity, chose to work for a living, or who, in any way argued the feminist course, became the commonplace in the works of […] writers [of New Woman fiction] and were firmly identified by readers and reviewers as New Women."[152] Cunningham continues her discussion by saying that the New Woman in fiction is represented as:

> [A] symbolic figurehead for a type of social rebellion which many women might concede to be generally desirable but personally unattainable; yet since the New Woman rebelled essentially against personal circumstances, the most effective way of portraying her was not in journalistic summaries of her principles, but in novels. It was the novel which could investigate in detail the clash between radical principles and the actualities of contemporary life, which could portray

[149] Ann Heilmann, *The New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2004), 2.
[150] Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978), 21. There are many other cogent studies of the New Woman and New Woman fiction. For example, see Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics" in *The New Feminist Criticism*, ed. by Elaine Showalter (London: Virago, 1989); Ann Ardis, *New Women, New Novels: Feminism and Early Modernism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1990); Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the fin de siècle* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997); Lyn Pykett, ed., *The new woman in fiction and in fact: fin-de-siècle feminisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2001).
[151] Sarah Grand to Professor Viëtor, 15 December 1896, in Ernst Foerster, *Die Frauenfrage in den Romanen Englischer Scriftstellerinnen der Gegenwart* (Marburg: N. G. Elwert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1907), 56, rep. in *LVMQ*, V., as cited in Ann Heilmann, *The New Woman Strategies: Sarah Grand, Olive Schreiner, Mona Caird* (Manchester University Press: Manchester, 2004), 1.
[152] Cunningham, 3.

> most convincingly the stifling social conventions from which the New Woman was trying to break free […][153]

Cunningham lists other important characteristics of New Woman fiction as "the education and reading [of the heroine]", "frankness about sex", "strictures against marriage", "heavy emphasis placed upon nervous disorder", "disease and death."[154] Such features signify a questioning of domestic and social arrangements and their implications for women and indicate some of the ways in which the New Woman fiction addressed issues of marriage, sexuality, female victimisation and women's independence. The kinds of themes addressed in New Woman fiction were already common in novels throughout the nineteenth century; as Cunningham notes, "all the data of the New Woman novel were present in earlier fiction."[155] However, Cunningham adds that it was the treatment and interpretation of such themes which "so radically differed" and set New Woman fiction apart from earlier fiction.[156] For instance, in earlier fiction of the mid nineteenth century, the fallen woman, Cunningham suggests, was read as a "stain" on society and her suffering and death were interpreted as her punishment. The same subject, the fallen woman, was expressed later by some of the New Woman novelists, such as Thomas Hardy, and it was suggested that "women conventionally 'fallen' might actually have chosen their state on moral grounds", indicating that the death or suffering of the heroine does not always refer to her condemnation in the novel.[157] Further, Lyn Pykett has pointed out that many New Woman novels challenge conventional fictional accounts of domestic reality, particularly the marriage plot:

> Marriage, the destination of the plot of the mainstream Victorian novel, and the resolution of all of its (and supposedly the heroine's) problems, became, in the New Woman novel, both the origin of narrative and the source of the heroine's problems.[158]

In such ways, as Heilmann points out, New Woman fiction opened a space for heated discussion between feminists and traditionalists (among others), particularly as it

[153] Ibid., 16, 17.
[154] Ibid., 46-49.
[155] Ibid., 20.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid., 21.
[158] Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fiction: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century*, 57.

touched a social nerve by challenging and subverting conventional narratives about the private and public roles of women.[159]

As I argue over the following chapters, we can observe these general characteristics of New Woman fiction in Wharton's and Adıvar's texts under question. In the following chapters I will draw on some of the above observations about New Woman fiction to explore the way in which the issues of marriage, divorce and female desire (and sexuality, love, death, mental breakdown in relation to these issues) are addressed in the novels, examining the portrayal of their heroines and assessing the extent to which the texts challenge hegemonic definitions of womanhood and related prescriptions on "how a woman should be" in Wharton's and Adıvar's time.

3.2. Feminist Dialogics

I argue that a Bakhtinian reading helps to elucidate the dialogic construction of Wharton's and Adıvar's heroines in these novels as they are depicted as sites of struggle between the conflicting discourses of their time on questions such as marriage, divorce and female desire. Although Bakhtin did not consider gender in his discussions of dialogic analysis, his insights are useful in developing a feminist reading of the texts under question. Judi M. Roller, in her discussion of the theme of "fragmentation" in feminist novels argues that the multiple narrative point of view is a common feature of feminist novels which "are sometimes split into sections focused on different characters or on different parts of the same person or […] on different stories."[160] Roller contends that such fragmented and de-centralised narratives are essential to the feminist novel because they contribute to the evocation of the "floating quality of the female characters' lives [and] elucidate points of view by separating them."[161] Wharton's and Adıvar's selected texts display such "fragmented" narratives, and in order to draw this out I have made use of Bakhtin's dialogism and the concepts related to it - authoritative and internally persuasive discourse, double-voiced discourse, hybridisation, polyphony, interior dialogue (microdialogue) - as analytical tools because they permit a reading that is attentive to the presence of different voices, ideologies and discourses in the text and the exchanges that take place between them.

[159] Heilmann, 1.
[160] Judi M. Roller, *The Politics of the Feminist Novel* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 68.
[161] Ibid.

Given that it is Bakhtin's term of dialogism that is the principal influence on my feminist dialogic reading, it is important to define this term and the other related concepts that I will be using in this study. As Wilfred L. Guering remarks, Bakhtin's dialogism "emphasizes language as an area of social conflict, particularly in the ways the discourse of characters in a literary work may disrupt and subvert the authority of ideology as expressed in a single voice of a narrator."[162] Bakhtin's dialogism however, cannot be reduced simply to the exchanges that we see taking place between different characters; rather it refers to the novel as a complex orchestration of different voices understood as representations of particular subject positions, social "speech types", discourses and ideologies. Such a diversity of speech types creates what Bakhtin calls "heteroglossia" (varied-languagedness):

> [T]he novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organised. The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the socio-political purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases) - this internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre.[163]

One of the benefits of Bakhtin's work on dialogism and the novel is to sensitise the critic to places in the novel where the languages of conflicting discourses do not cohere and to explore what those conflicting voices and the contradictions of discourses can tell about the theme(s) of the novel. In this way, the concept of dialogism also draws attention to marginal female voices and their dialogue with dominant voices as well as with each other in the texts, and helps to provide insight into the way in which these ideologies influence the New Woman's identity in a dialogic way, situating the characters as part of this process of discursive exchange and negotiation, as subjects of context and condition.

Bakhtin's concepts of "authoritative" and "internally persuasive discourse", and his theorisation of the dialogic relationship between them, have further informed my analysis. The texts under question display multi-voiced narrative through the presence of authoritative discourses (canonical knowledge or beliefs on how a woman should be)

[162] Wilfred L. Guerin & et al., *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 350.
[163] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist. trans. Carly Emerson and M. Holquist, (Austin: U of Texas Press, 1981), 263.

and internally persuasive discourses (language that subverts and destabilises authoritative discourse). When referring to authoritative discourse I will study the "surface narratives" of the texts (powerful, commanding, centralising language expressed through the voices of characters and narrators who represent the status quo); when referring to internally persuasive discourse, I will study the "counter narrative" (the marginalised, resistant, decentralising voices of characters and narrators that challenge and subvert authoritative discourse). Bakhtin refers to these two terms and their significance as follows:

> [A]n individual's becoming, an ideological process, is characterised precisely by a sharp gap between these two categories: in one, the authoritative word (religious, political, moral, the word of a father, of adults and of teachers, etc.) that does not know internal persuasiveness, in the other internally persuasive word that is denied all privilege, backed up by no authority at all, and is frequently not even acknowledged in society (not by public opinion, nor by scholarly norms, nor by criticism), not even in the legal code. The struggle and dialogic interrelationship of these categories of ideological discourse are what usually determine the history of an individual ideological consciousness.[164]

Such observations about the dialogic nature of ideological discourse inform my approach to the texts and in particular my analysis of the heroines. In contrast to previous critics who have suggested that Wharton's and Adıvar's fiction advocates a particular, monologic ideology (be it of authors' view or a certain type of womanhood), I emphasise the dialogic nature of their texts and the treatment of their heroines as New Women engaged in ongoing struggles between their aspirations for independence and the dominant ideologies of femininity of the time.

My Bakhtinian feminist analysis in this thesis was also inspired by Dale M. Bauer's discussion of feminist dialogics and the way it draws attention to the dynamics of power relations and the presence of politically subversive marginalised voices within a text. In her *Feminism, Bakhtin and the Dialogic*, Bauer argues that Bakhtin's notion of dialogism opens up an exploration of the relationship between feminism and dominant patriarchal discourse. She continues as follows:

> Feminist dialogics, thus, works to uncover not just masculine bias but a more subtle and seemingly neutral rationality, an impersonality that pervades all social life, depriving both males and females of recognition from each other […] The larger issue is the failure of a masculinised or rationalised public language (what Bakhtin would call the authoritative voice) that is split off in cultural representations from the private voice (Bakhtin's internally persuasive

[164] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 342.

> language). A feminist dialogics would bring these two languages together in dialogue.[165]

Bauer's discussion of feminist dialogics here extends Bakhtin's theory to feminist criticism and explains how it allows the reader to be critically aware of those "seemingly neutral" forces (here it refers to hegemonic forces) that assert a "monological" (single-voiced) rationality and deny recognition to alternative perspectives. In this way, feminist dialogics helps to open up an exploration of the interconnections and tensions between "authoritative" and "internally persuasive" discourses and to approach the encounter between them as an opportunity for the disruption (or, perhaps, reinforcement) of dominant and oppressive patriarchal ideologies. A feminist dialogics approach thus provides a means by which feminist critics might open up new readings of texts with particular attention given to what Bakhtin calls "internally persuasive discourse" - such as the voices of marginal characters or the presence of subtle narrative commentary (in the form of irony, sarcasm, parody and so on) - that respond to and disrupt the monological, dominant, hegemonic voice of "authoritative discourse."

Having laid out the main contours of my methodological framework, I will now explain briefly some of the other Bakhtinian analytical concepts related to dialogism (double-voicedness, hybridisation, polyphony, interior dialogue) and their relevance for the analysis of the texts. Although in the following discussion I will make a broad distinction between the way that I apply these concepts to particular features of the work of Wharton (notably hybridisation and double-voicedness) and Adıvar (polyphony, interior dialogue), it is important to note that, in practice, each of these concepts proves useful for analysing features of the work of both authors.

I draw in particular on Bakhtin's understanding of double-voicedness and hybridisation to examine Wharton's novels as dialogic texts because they are presented by extra-diagetic narrators. This means that, in contrast to the first-person narrators that we find in Adıvar's novels, there is often a more complex polyvocality at work in Wharton's novels as the voices of characters can be entwined with that of the narrator. In addressing this feature of Wharton's novels, double-voicedness and hybridisation draw explicit attention to the ways in which the voice of the omniscient narrator fuses with

[165] Dale M. Bauer, *Feminism, Bakhtin, and the Dialogic* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 2.

the speech of another and places the ideology and languages of different characters, groups, or publics in dialogue.

In his essay "Discourse in the Novel" published in *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin explores the double-voiced discourse which contains two separate voices or consciousnesses (of characters, groups or general opinion) that exist together in one utterance yet remain in tension or conflict. One voice may be stronger and may try to control or overcome the other, yet they are both present and separate, contributing to the presence of diverse voices and ideologies in the text and often allowing for the subtle commentary of one voice upon the other. The interrelationship of different voices and the existence of these voices are made manifest through shifts in tone, punctuation and other linguistic, ideological, or idiolectical markers.[166] As Bakhtin notes:

> Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized. Examples of this would be comic, ironic or parodic discourse, the refracting discourse in the language of a character and finally the discourse of a whole incorporated genre - all these discourses are double-voiced and internally dialogized. A potential dialogue is embedded in them, one as yet unfolded, a concentrated dialogue of two voices, two world views, two languages.[167]

In this way Bakhtin's double-voicing offers a particularly useful way to analyse the interactions and tensions between idioms, languages, or ideologies within novels and, in Jassinski's words, to "help subvert various forms of monologic interpretation by leading the critic and historian to the recovery of the dialogic moments or elements inscribed in the text."[168]

Bakhtin introduces hybrid-construction as a particular form of the double-voiced discourse in a novel. He defines a hybrid construction as "an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two languages, two semantic and axiological belief systems".[169] This concept sensitises the reader to the presence of multiple voices in a passage (and, therefore, different perspectives, ideologies or belief systems), indicated by signals such as exclamation and quotation marks; shifts in idiolect; the choice of particular words that represent a certain social group, a particular character or the voice of "public opinion"; changes in the intonation and tone of the speech or narration (ironic, sarcastic, sympathetic, critical);

[166] Ibid., 447.
[167] Ibid., 324.
[168] James Jasinski, "Heteroglossia, Polyphony, and the Federalist Papers" in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 27, No. 1 (1997), 23-46, 24.
[169] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 305, 306.

and so on. Attention to such hybrid constructions enables me to explore the complex arrangements of characters' and narrators' voices in the novels (particularly in Wharton's texts with their omniscient narrators) and, in particular, the formation of the ideological consciousness of the New Woman heroines as we see them struggling with the conventions and constraints of patriarchal ideologies. When I study Wharton's novels, I will therefore pay close attention to such hybrid constructions: examining the way that characters act as both the narrator and the spectator of the story, and paying close attention to the range of perspectives and opinions that are brought to bear on the New Woman and her struggle for independence.

Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, which relates in many ways to the concepts considered above, is relevant in analysing the novels of both authors in this study - particularly Adıvar. Bakhtin develops this concept in his *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, where he refers to polyphony (multi-voicedness) as a property of a novel that results from the juxtaposition of the voices of different characters: in such a novel, we are led to consider themes in counterpoint to one another and to view characters from the particular viewpoints of other characters or narrators who are given their own relatively autonomous socio-ideological perspectives (as "independent and unmerged voices and consciousness"). The result is that the polyphonic novel allows for a more open-ended, dialogic exploration and juxtaposition of themes and ideas than is possible in a "monologic" novel, where they are generally subordinated to the author's overall ideological vision. As Bakhtin writes in his analysis of polyphony in the novels of Dostoevsky:

> The character is treated as ideologically authoritative and independent [and] he is perceived as the author of a fully weighted ideological conception of his own, and not as the object of Dostoevsky's finalising artistic vision […] as if the character were not an object of authorial discourse, but rather a fully valid, autonomous carrier of his own individual word.[170]

I draw on Bakhtin's concept of polyphony when addressing Adıvar's novels in particular because they are presented by first-person narrators (often through the epistolary form as in the case of *Handan* and *Heartache*) who are given relative autonomy to speak for themselves and to present their particular point of view on the world and others around them.

[170] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 5.

Elizabeth Campbell, in her discussion of women's writing, underlines the significance of the epistolary form as follows: "Women's writing and the epistolary style are generally the responses of those who have been oppressed and silenced. This writing is emotional, angry, radical, and markedly different in style and form from that of the dominant culture."[171] Emphasising its fragmented narrative, with its multiple subjectivities and points of view, and its interior monologues, Campbell suggests that the epistolary style of writing "reaches out as it looks inward, opening up and presenting a consciousness to a specific sympathetic listener."[172] Judi M. Roller also emphasises the significance of the presence of multiple points of view and the theme of fragmentation in women's writing, where we often find "the fragmentation of an individual female character or of woman generally into many characters."[173] Reflecting on the divided sections of novels that focus on different characters or on different parts of the same character, Roller suggests that this division in a novel reflects a "chaotic, complex" world and "the battle in women themselves between the old ways and the revolutionary spirit, between one's ambitions and desires and a restrictive social structure."[174] To extend these observations, the epistolary form allows the reader a more intimate insight into the divided subjective worlds of their female characters and to hear their frustrations and repressed voices and feelings in a society which attempts to limit and silence them. Furthermore, the epistolary narrative, with its fragmentation and multiple perspectives, and its refusal to posit a single dominant and monologic voice that works toward unifying closure, challenges the language and norms of the authoritative dominant culture.

Adıvar's novels *Handan* and *Heartache* display these characteristics of the epistolary novel, with their fragmented narratives and multiple points of view: they are written in the form of letters through which we see the female characters' personal development either by writing to other characters in the novel or writing in the form of diary entries. Reading Adıvar's novels in this way as instances of the epistolary form, with polyphonic narratives, allows me to depart from previous critics of Adıvar by focusing less on the role of characters as reflections of the author's biography or as "mouthpieces" for her "ideal woman" but rather as expressions of particular narrative voices and distinct points of view on the woman question. It also helps me to appreciate

[171] Elizabeth Campbell, "20th Century AD", *Twentieth Century Literature*, (Fall 1995), available at: http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0403/is_n3_v41/ai_18143940/; Accessed: 05/07/2012.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Roller, 68.
[174] Ibid.

that even if the characters may express opinions with which the authors agree, in a polyphonic novel what is important is to explore the textual representation of various ideological stances which interact with and are set against each other dialogically.

The related concept of interior dialogue (or microdialogue, which Bakhtin uses interchangeably) is also useful here for opening the reading to a close exploration of the conversations and struggles that take place between different voices within the heroines' consciousnesses (conflicting thoughts, un-reconciled strivings, competing discourses regarding their roles in a patriarchal society, the heroine's reflections on the judgements of others, and so on). Here, it is important to clarify Bakhtin's use of the word "consciousness" as I will be using this term in the analysis of the novels. In his discussion of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Bakhtin writes of consciousness as "the hero's discourse about himself and his world"; a subjective world where "his [character] consciousness of self lives by its unfinalizability, by its unclosedness and its indeterminacy."[175] Examining interior dialogue in the texts draws attention to the ongoing engagement between different voices that constitute the consciousness of the hero as "everything that [s]he sees and observes […] everything is drawn into dialogue, responds to [her] questions and puts new questions to [her], provokes [her], argues with [her], or reinforces [her] own thoughts."[176] Interior dialogue, then, refers to the structure of the characters' discourse about themselves and their world and is an expression of their subjective formation as this is generated in engagement with different perspectives, opinions and attitudes circulating in their society; as such, it provides a window into the way in which their points of view are formed by these dialogised thoughts and the way they relate to others.

With the above points in mind we are able to gain a close appreciation of how Wharton's and Adıvar's New Women's subjective formation (and their ultimate fates at the ends of the novels) occurs in an ongoing dialogue with the discourses of their societies. To elaborate on this point it is useful to return briefly to Bakhtin and his discussion in "The Hero, and the Position of the Author with Regard to the Hero in Dostoevsky's Art." Here Bakhtin writes of "the relative freedom and independence enjoyed by the hero and his voice under the conditions of polyphonic design", noting

[175] Ibid.,53.
[176] Ibid., 75.

that "we see not who he is but how he is conscious of himself."[177] He continues his discussion as follows:

> The hero interests Dostoevsky not as some manifestation of reality that possesses fixed and specific socially typical or individually characteristic traits, nor as a specific profile assembled out of unambiguous and objective features which, taken together, answer the question 'Who is he?' No, the hero interests Dostoevsky as a particular point of view on the world and on oneself, as the position enabling a person to interpret and evaluate his own self and his surrounding reality. What is important to Dostoevsky is not how his hero appears in the world but first and foremost how the world appears to his hero, and how the hero appears to himself. This is a very important fundamental feature of the way a fictional character is perceived […] because what must be discovered and characterized here is not the specific existence of the hero, not his fixed image, but the sum total of his consciousness and self-consciousness […].[178]

Bakhtin's polyphony and his interpretation of Dostoevsky's hero not as a "fixed image" but "the sum total of his consciousness and self-consciousness" offers a useful framework for my feminist analysis of the novels. This way of reading the novels frees us from the monological finalisation of the heroines as "fixed images" of female identity (as is often suggested by the critics) and encourages us, instead, to focus on the shifting subjectivities and multiple identities of the heroine and her "particular point of view on the world and on herself" - along with interior dialogues and discursive struggles that form her consciousness and through which we see her struggling towards self-awareness and her ultimate fate at the ends of the novels.

A final point to note here however regarding Bakhtin's observations about the polyphonic novel is the open-ended nature of its ending. Since the polyphonic novel presents a "plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world"[179], there is no unambiguous resolution to conflicts between the ideological perspectives presented in the novel and the discourse of characters "cannot be exhausted by the usual functions of characterization and plot development, nor does it serve as a vehicle for the author's own ideological position."[180] Drawing on this idea, I aim to question any definitive interpretation of the endings of the novels under question and suggest that - in particular in reference to Adıvar's novels - their heroines present no "fixed image" of femininity nor assert a clear moral "message". My reading of the

[177] Ibid., 47.
[178] Ibid., 47, 48.
[179] Ibid., 6.
[180] Ibid.,7.

endings of the novels takes cue from Judi M. Roller's observations about the endings of many twentieth century novels which:

> [by ending in] flight and escape or death, literal or symbolic [...] the authors cry out a condemnation of racist, capitalist, sexist societies [...] The flights and deaths reflect the belief evident in most of these novels that a change for the better in modern societies is highly unlikely. They support the observation that at this time mediation between the self and the world is impossible [...] Feminist novels ending with the heroine's flight away from her society usually do not point out weaknesses in the heroine's character. Rather, they condemn the society which forces her to flee.[181]

Drawing on the framework of feminist dialogics that is outlined above, as well as the observations of critics such as Roller, I argue that the endings of Wharton's and Adıvar's novels can be read both as condemnations of patriarchal societies and as testaments to female struggle.

Conclusion

Section 1:

There are several concluding points I would like to draw out from the earlier discussions of the New American and Turkish Women. First of all, although the New Turkish Woman was influenced by the process of Westernisation, she was not a copy of her Western counterpart and displayed distinct characteristics in several aspects. Firstly, the image of the New Woman in Turkey was hardly one that Turkish women had selected for themselves; as Şirin Tekeli states, it was an "ascribed one".[182] While it was the active participation and mobilisation of American women that achieved legal rights in areas such as to vote or to be elected (in 1920), Turkish women were effectively granted these rights by the state (in 1930 and 1934 respectively) in what was a much more "top-down" process. Through the discourse of the New Woman, the Turkish government of this period was effectively able to narrow the boundaries of the debate on the woman question to a debate around the creation of a modern and civilized nation, to the exclusion of questions of women's individual desires and personal fulfilment. As a result, the New Turkish Woman was more in line with patriarchal norms than her American counterpart regarding subjects such as marriage and sexuality: while the New

[181] Judi M. Roller, "The Endings" in *The Politics of the Feminist Novel* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 102.
[182] Tekeli, "Emergence of the feminist movement in Turkey", 185.

Turkish Woman was an "emancipated but unliberated" figure, held up as a model of modern duty, chastity and virtue, the New American Woman stood for everything that was regarded as a threat to the hegemonic social order of the era.

Section 2:

This section noted that Wharton and Adıvar were largely in agreement in their emphasis on the importance of domestic female roles for the betterment of society, and in this sense their views on "woman" remained conservative. Wharton's conventional perception of the role of women is in radical dissonance with the unconventional aspirations of the New American Woman. She did not sympathise with the ideas of independent-minded New Women and believed that, as Peel notes, "the kitchen is women's natural domain."[183] In contrast, the "ideal" woman that we find in the views of Adıvar agrees with the image of the New Turkish Woman that emerged during her time. In harnessing domestic values to civic duty, Adıvar reproduces the concept of New Woman by both politicising and glamorising its new aspects under her "ideal" female identity.

This section also presented an overview of critical commentary on Wharton and Adıvar. It drew attention to two limitations that have characterised the existing scholarship on the fiction of these authors:

a) A tendency to read their novels as reflections of their personal lives, their ideologies on the woman question, and/or the dominant ideologies of their time in their art.
b) Interpreting the novels as pessimistic or conservative accounts of female weakness and "victims of society" - in a way which has tended to underemphasise the critical aspects of the novels and their accounts of female agency and struggle.

Section 3:

The last section of this chapter discussed the theoretical and methodological framework of this thesis. Informed in particular by the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and feminist critics

[183] Peel, 146.

such as Dale M. Bauer and Judi M. Roller, feminist dialogics offers an analytical approach through which, I believe, it is possible to open up new interpretations of Wharton's and Adıvar's novels and in particular to explore their presentation of the image of the New Women. This feminist dialogics approach provides analytical tools relevant to approaching the novels in this study as sites of conflicting ideologies regarding womanhood, opening up an exploration of the tensions within the texts between authoritative discourses - such as marriage, sexuality, divorce - and internally persuasive discourses in a way which provides critical insights into the novels' portrayals of the patriarchal cultures of their time and the diversity of discursive positions that contested the roles and identities of women.

Chapter 2:
Over Our Dead Bodies:
Marriage and Death in *The House of Mirth* (1905) and *Handan* (1912)

This chapter examines the depiction of the New Woman in relation to the themes of marriage and death in *The House of Mirth* and *Handan*. I have chosen these two novels to examine in this chapter because, despite their differences, they present a similar critique of marriage as a source of women's problems - rather than as a resolution of them. As mentioned earlier, Lyn Pykett has pointed out that many New Woman novels challenge conventional fictional accounts of domestic reality, particularly the marriage plot: instead of depicting marriage as the ultimate goal and resolution of their female characters' problems, they emphasise marriage as "both the origin of narrative and the source of the heroine's problems."[1] In her discussion of the anti-marriage sentiments of the New Woman fiction, Sally Ledger also points out that the New Woman at the fin-de-siècle was perceived as a "challenge to traditional marriage"[2] and cites the commentary made by Mona Caird, one of the radical New Woman writers, on the way in which women are depicted as imprisoned within marriage: "[like a] a chained dog who 'has not been used to liberty or happiness, and he cannot stand it.'"[3] These comments regarding the New Woman fiction are in tune with the critical views on marriage that we find in *The House of Mirth* (1905) and *Handan* (1912).

The tragic depiction of the heroines' deaths is another similarity between the New Woman fiction and the novels discussed in this chapter. Gail Cunningham suggests that "the heavy emphasis placed upon nervous disorder […] and death" are common features of the New Woman novels.[4] Similarly, both novels in this chapter explore the consequences of the pressures exerted by the discourse of marriage (on Lily to get married and on Handan to remain within marriage) and that leads the heroines towards their deaths by the end of the

[1] Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fiction: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 57.
[2] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 11.
[3] Ibid, 21.
[4] Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978), 49.

novels. While *The House of Mirth* questions the purpose of marriage and explores the difficulties of not marrying for a single American woman of the early twentieth century, *Handan* explores the prices and pitfalls of marriage for Turkish women of the same period.

This chapter also explores the extent to which the texts' depiction of New Women conform to or challenge the images of the New American and Turkish Women as they were represented in the popular imagination in their societies. As I discussed in Chapter 1, the typical image of the New American Woman was as a non-conformist female who rejects marriage as her only and ultimate option for a fulfilling life: "After all, the New [American] Woman could work outside the home in dignified occupations, she could marry whom she pleased […]."[5] The New Turkish Woman, on the other hand, was portrayed as a "modern but modest" figure for whom marriage was more a social duty than a source of individual fulfilment and her traditional sex roles of mother and wife were important alongside her social responsibilities and education.[6] I will challenge these images in *The House of Mirth* and *Handan* by arguing that the New Woman's identity as portrayed in these novels is multiple and contradictory and that her approach to marriage in fact shifts throughout the novel and is fraught with dilemma.

In exploring these themes, I will draw on Bakhtin's concept of dialogism which highlights the presence of a multiplicity of competing discourses on marriage and the woman question in the text, giving insight into the contested nature of the institution of marriage and the processes of struggle through which the heroine passes in her search for independence. I focus in particular on the unsettled dialogue that takes place in the texts between the surface (authoritative discourse, here marriage) and counter narrative (internally persuasive discourse, here, the heroines' struggle for autonomy). Bakhtin's concepts of double-voicedness and hybridisation are particularly useful in examining *The House of Mirth* as it is presented by an extra-diagetic narrator whose voice is often fused with that of the characters. The Bakhtinian concepts of polyphony and interior dialogue (microdialogue) are useful when examining *Handan* because it is presented by first-person narrators (through the characters' letters) with less direct intrusion by another narrative voice. I will

[5] Elizabeth Ammons, *Edith Wharton's Argument with America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 2, 3.
[6] Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey" in *Deconstructing Images of the 'Turkish Woman*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 142-143.

also make use of the ideas of various feminist critics, such as Elizabeth Bronfen, Judi M. Roller and Luce Irigaray in order to argue that we can read the depictions of the heroines deaths at the end of the novels as condemnations of a sexist society and indications of the New Woman's rejection of her objectification and her spiritual victory.

2.1. Critical Reception of *The House of Mirth* and *Handan* and Finding a New Approach

The critics of *The House of Mirth* have often read the novel either in relation to Wharton's personal life or in terms of its theme of the weakness of the individual against the wider forces of society and nature. David Holbrook's interpretation of Lily's story, for example, concentrates on the similarity between Lily and Wharton and approaches the novel as reflecting the author's personal life. Holbrook argues that Lily represents the author herself and he points out that "'Lily' was a name used by her in her early days […] *The House of Mirth* is […] deeply involved with Edith Wharton's own predicament. She, too, had to endure the triviality and nastiness of the New York rich."[7] Other critics suggested that the novel shows Lily as a powerless individual who is bound to her fate and beyond rescue. Katherine Joslin reads Lily's tragic death as an indication of Wharton's concern for the bond between the individual and the social group, as it appears to demonstrate that when an individual is separated from "the web of customs, manners, culture" Wharton saw no possibility of life as this is to deny the basis of "human nature".[8] Along the same lines, Elizabeth Ammons suggests that Lily "dies totally passive" in a way that shows "the leisure class's complete (and appropriately absentee) victory over her desire for autonomy."[9] Cecelia Tichi reads *The House of Mirth* in relation to theme of Herbert Spencer's "survival of the fittest" and views the novel as suggesting that Lily's death is "preferable to degeneration and that in it Wharton expresses her preference for 'extinction over eugenic degradation.'" [10] Some critics have viewed Lily as an "object" to be purchased in a savage marriage market or as a "victim" of a patriarchal, pitiless society. Judith Fryer, for example,

[7] David Holbrook, *Edith Wharton and the Unsatisfactory Man* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1991), 22.
[8] Katherine Joslin, *Edith Wharton* (New York: St. Martin press, 1991), 29.
[9] Ammons, 42.
[10] Cecelia Tichi, "Emerson, Darwin, and *The Custom of the Country*" in *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton, ed. by Carol J. Singley* (*Oxford:* Oxford University Press, 2003), 25.

claims that Lily has to accept her status as "a piece of property available for purchase by the highest bidder."[11] For Robert Peel, Lily is "the woman as decorative object […] a flower who is ruined by the society that excludes her."[12] Richard H. Lawson reads the novel from a similar perspective and suggests that Lily's story signals the way in which Wharton's society "victimises women far more grievously than it does men"; he concludes his discussion by saying that as a single woman, Lily is "an almost completely helpless ornament. Married, she would be less helpless but hardly less ornamental."[13] A common theme in these interpretations is that Lily is either an individual whose fate is to be destroyed by her society as she rejects being a part of it, or that she represents a powerless, passive, "victimised" woman and her death marks her destruction by society. By indicating the novel's account of men as the source of all power and reading Lily as "a piece of property", these critics in general place their emphasis on the lack of opportunities women were provided with to express themselves.

However, Wharton's critics pay little attention to Lily's personal development and the effect of the plurality of consciousnesses in *The House of Mirth*, through which we can read the presence of a counter narrative in the text and the subjective development of the heroine as she struggles with the authoritative discourses of marriage. In this sense, they follow the path of monologic reading by emphasising the elements of patriarchal themes and holding onto the idea of women as helpless, passive victims and outsiders of the stifling and demeaning conventions of sexist societies. In doing so, they neglect the complexity of the novel in which we can observe the depiction of colliding voices and the way in which these voices reveal the heroine's unfolding awareness of her status as an "object" and her gradual path toward death as accounts of her struggle for agency.

Handan has usually been read as an autobiography of Adıvar. One reviewer said the author depicts herself through the heroine and suggests that the novel is about "unhappiness […] [and] the ultimate fate of a thinking, educated woman [in sexist societies]."[14] Referring to

[11] Judith Fryer, *Felicitous Space: The Imaginative Structures of Edith Wharton and Willa Cather* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Caroline Press, 1986), 125.
[12] Robert Peel, *Apart from Modernism* (Massachusetts: Rosemont Publishing & Printing Cor,, 2005), 288.
[13] Richard Lawson, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), 38, 39.
[14] İnci Enginün, *Yeni Türk Edebiyati: Tanzimattan Cumhuriyet'e (1839-1923) (Modern Turkish Literature: From Tanzimat to Republic)* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2006), 396.

the similarity between Handan and Adıvar, another reviewer wrote, "for me, Handan and Adıvar were like two sisters who lived in the same house […]"[15], others considered her work as the outpouring of her personal marital experiences indicating that writing *Handan* was a means for Adıvar to relieve the tension that arose from her first marriage.[16] Cevdet Kudret, on the other hand, points out the theme of female psychology and morality and states that in *Handan*, the main emphasis is on "the suffering [of Handan] as a result of her love [for Refik Cemal] which has been suppressed due to [her] respect and humanistic responsibilities."[17] Selim İleri concurs with this argument by stating that Handan's ravings and monologues are "apparent signs of a woman's cry for her personal desires."[18]

Several critics interpreted *Handan* as an anti-feminist novel or as an affirmation of the author's "ideal" woman. For one critic, "her [Adıvar's] strategies of constructing femininity and womanhood are in harmony with the patriarchal modes of literary representation"[19]; another suggested that Handan is a traditional character who is "utterly dependent on the acceptance and confirmation [of the men in her life]."[20] Handan's presentation as a devoted wife is interpreted by one critic as an image of a heroine who "prefers domesticity"[21] while for another it is interpreted as "a sign of her placing home-life values above the pursuit of her personal goals.[22] For some critics, the death of the heroine at the end of the novel is variously interpreted as a sign of the author's "re-creation of the phallocratic representation of women"[23]; a warning against the possible consequences of "inappropriate behaviour against the moral values of society"[24]; "the elimination of a threat (the heroine's deviation

[15] Ruşen Eşref Ünaydın, *Türk Yurdu* (*Turkish Homeland*) (İstanbul: Tübitak Yayınları, 1917), 153-54.
[16] See, for example, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Gençlik ve Edebiyat Hatıraları* [*Youth and Literature Memoirs*], (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 1990) 240-247; Ayşe Durakbaşa, *Halide Edib: Türk Modernleşmesi ve Feminizm*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009), 233; İpek Çalışlar, *Halide Edib Adıvar: Biyografisine Sığmayan Kadın (Halide Edib Adıvar: A Woman Who Exceeds Her Biography)*, (İstanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2010), 93.
[17] Cevdet Kudret, *Türk Edebiyatin'nda Hikaye ve Roman* Vol.1 *(Story and Novel in Turkish Literature)* (İstanbul: Varlik Yayınları, 1981), 73.
[18] Selim İleri, *Kamelyasız Kadınlar (Women Without Camellia)* (İstanbul: Yazko Yayın, 1983), 152.
[19] Beyhan Uygun Aytemiz, *Halide Edib-Adıvar ve Feminist Yazın (Halide Edib-Adıvar ve Feminist Yazın),* A Thesis Presented to the University of Bilkent University for the degree of Master of Arts (2001), iv.
[20] Nazan Güntürkün, *Halide Edib ile Adım Adım (Step by Step with Halide Edib)* (İstanbul: Öğretmen Yazarlar Yayınları, 1988), 58.
[21] Muzaffer Uyguner, *Halide Edib Adıvar: Yaşamı, sanatı, yapıtları, seçmeler (Halide Edib Adıvar: Her life, art, works, selections)* (Altın Kitaplar Yayınları: İstanbul, 1992), 113.
[22] İnci Enginün, *Halide Edib Adıvar* (Ankara: Kılıçaslan Matbacılık Sanayi Ltd. Şti., 1989), 54.
[23] Uyguntemiz, iv.
[24] Emel Doğramacı, Türkiye'de Kadının Dünü ve Yarını (Woman in Turkey Yesterday and Today) (Ankara: Doğuş Matbaacılık ve Ticaret Ltd. Şti, 1992), 61.

from the appropriate female behaviour) to society" or the author's message of "how a woman can only preserve her honour through the links of matrimony"[25]; and as Adıvar's vision of the "ideal woman" with whom "the female reader will identify and […] try to change herself in line with this model of the ideal woman."[26]

It is noteworthy that *Handan* clearly gives more weight to the voices that represent patriarchal discourse: as such, it appears to dominate other voices in the novel and this may explain why critics often considered the text as representing the didactic, monologic or phallocratic message of the author in regard to the role of women in society. Yet, similar to the readings of Lily's story seen above, these interpretations of the novel also have the effect of finalising the heroine by disregarding the depiction of Handan's complex character (or paying inadequate attention to) growing self-consciousness; instead they attempt to fit her into restrictive categories (be it either a "conventional" or "ideal" woman type). As a result, although they indicate their acknowledgement of the text's success in its representation of female oppression and drawing attention to the limited roles of women, they all share a similar contention that the novel offers no radical break with patriarchal narration; that is, although Handan fails in her expectation to experience a romantic "fairy-tale marriage", they suggest that she continues to accept the espoused societal code of gender roles in marriage.

My reading of *The House of Mirth* and *Handan* both incorporates and goes beyond the critical receptions considered above. Instead of focusing on the heroines' depictions merely as signs of female objectification or as reflections of the authors' views on the woman question, I will focus on the aesthetic properties of the texts and draw on Bakhtin's theory of dialogism (and the concepts related to it such as polyphony, double-voicedness, hybridisation and interior dialogisation) to attend to the interactions between the voices of the different characters that exist in the texts. My central focus will be on the way the heroines are perceived from diverse perspectives and how their subjectivities are presented as the focus of an ongoing conflict between their aspirations for independence and the

[25] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women as Metaphor: The Turkish Novel From the Tanzimat to the Republic" in *Urban Crises and Social Movement in the Middle East*, Ed. by Kenneth Brown et al.(L'Harmattan: Paris, Proceedings of the C.N.R.A. – E.S.R.C. Symposium, 1989), 146-149.
[26] Özgün Basmaz, *"The Rebellious Daughter of the Republic" or "The mother of the Turks": Re-considering the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic Through the Politics of Halide Edip Adıvar*, A Thesis Presented to the University of Acron for the degree of Master of Arts (2008), 31.

various opinions and discourses that pass judgement on them and seek to define and contain them. To do this I will examine in particular the *surface narratives* (or "authoritative discourse" in Bakhtinan terminology) that assert established gender roles and the importance of marriage (as in the case of Lily) or that dictate the role of "ideal" wifehood (as in the case of Handan); and the *counter narratives* ("internally persuasive discourse") through which we gain insights into the New Woman's experiences and struggles. In these ways we can develop a sense of the polyvocal, dialogic and inconsistent depiction of the New Woman in these texts, while drawing out the texts' critiques of the conventions of marriage and their effects on women.

My reading of the heroines' deaths also goes beyond the interpretations of the critics seen above. The critical voices of Elizabeth Bronfen and Judi M. Roller have informed my argument that their deaths can be read as accounts of their resistance to traditional female roles and their transitions from "victims" - as their critics suggested - to "victors". I was influenced here by Elizabeth Bronfen's *Over Her Dead Body* whose discussion of Lily's story informed my reading of the heroine's death as a representation of her release from the strictures of convention and as a testament to her struggle for an independent identity. Bronfen suggests that Lily's body has no fixed position outside marriage and thus no socially recognised role.[27] This means Lily is in an ambiguous position: on the one hand, she belongs to nobody - nobody's wife, mother, sister or daughter - therefore she is nobody to her society. On the other hand, belonging to nobody (in particular) could mean she belongs to everybody, be anything and anybody. For this reason, Bronfen argues, Lily is indefinable and presents a danger to a culture which is forcing her to be defined within fixed terms. Bronfen concludes her argument by saying that "death is the only viable choice" for Lily who chooses "real death" instead of living "a social death."[28]

I concur with Bronfen's emphasis on the theme of female oppression in the novel and the struggle of a woman to establish herself as an independent "subject" in a society where she is seen as an "object". But such an interpretation, although supportive of my suggestion of the heroine's spiritual victory, can go much further to consider the dialogues between

[27] Elizabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*: *Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 269.
[28] Ibid.

different voices in the text and their role in the development of the heroine's subjectivity. In doing this I aim to provide a deeper understanding of the complex construction of Lily's character and her ambiguous attitudes towards marriage.

Judi M. Roller's discussion of the endings of twentieth century feminist novels in her article "The Endings" also informed my readings of the endings of *The House of Mirth* and *Handan*. In her discussion of twentieth century feminist fiction, Roller states that an ending of "flight, escape or death" in such novels "signifies that dealing with society is impossible. [...] Feminist novels ending with the heroine's flight away from her society usually do not point out weaknesses in the heroine's character. Rather, they condemn the society which forces her to flee."[29] Roller's account here chimes with the argument of this chapter that the death of Lily and Handan can be read as the representation of the texts' feminist critiques of capitalist and sexist societies and of their heroines' strong personalities rather than their weaknesses.

Together with Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, Roller's argument above and Bronfen's theorisation of Lily's death open up a feminist analysis of Wharton's and Adıvar's characterisation of their heroines, Lily and Handan, as accounts of New Women emerging from romantic fantasies of happiness in marriage to a state of conscious struggle with the authoritative discourses of their time on questions of women and marriage.

[29] Judi M. Roller, "The Endings" in *The Politics of the Feminist Novel* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 102.

2.2. *The House of Mirth*

2.2.1. Summary of the Plot

The House of Mirth tells the story of Lily Bart, a woman of high society in early twentieth century New York. When the novel begins Lily is 29 years old, a clever, sensitive and frivolous woman in pursuit of her romantic domestic role in marriage. Because she is still single, and therefore with no clear social position, she is viewed with unease according to the strict norms and conventions of the society she is living in. Born to the upper-class of Old New York, she was raised to behave in accordance with the stereotypes of women acceptable to members of her class. After the death of her parents, her wealthy aunt Mrs. Peniston agrees to look after her. When her aunt hears that Lily is gambling and receiving money from Trenor, a wealthy married man, she cuts her allowance and reduces her share of inheritance. Rejected by her aunt and friends, Lily starts working as a secretary, then as a worker at a millinery shop. Having almost no assets or skills but her beauty, she is eventually laid off. Struggling to survive, she resumes her contact with Simon Rosedale, an opportunistic and wealthy businessman in search of a beautiful wife. He had previously proposed to Lily as part of his plan for acceptance into upper-class society. Although she is in a constant search to find a rich suitor, when it comes to the decisive moment, she hesitates - only to lose her catch. She remains undecided whether she wants a romance with a young lawyer (Lawrence Selden) or a mercantile marriage with Rosedale. At the end of the novel, alone and with little money, she dies from an overdose of chloral, a drug she had been using to help her sleep.

2.2.2. Analysis

The novel opens with an encounter between Selden and Lily at the Grand Station, establishing the surface narrative (authoritative discourse, here male discourse) by presenting Lily the way Selden sees her. With this opening, the narrator alerts the reader to the gender roles of the period: male as an observer, female as a decorative object:

> Selden had never seen her more radiant. Her vivid head, relieved against the dull tints of the crowd […] and under her dark hat and veil she regained the girlish smoothness, the purity of tint, that she was beginning to lose after eleven years of late hours and indefatigable dancing […] *As a spectator, he had always enjoyed Lily Bart*" (my italics, 4).[30]

The hybridisation of this passage - "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance"[31] - sets up a commentary on the male perspective: while Selden's free indirect discourse invites us to observe Lily from the male point of view as if she is an object of aesthetic pleasure, there is also a counter narrative (internally persuasive discourse) which casts a critical light back on the male point of view through the italicised portion at the end of the passage. This portion brings an ironic tone to the passage by referring to Selden's role "as a spectator" enjoying the surface beauty of this "decorative art [Lily]" and through this we sense the narrator's hint of critical judgement of his point of view.

The following episode - a dialogue between Lily and Selden at his lodging - builds a powerful tension around the subject of marriage, presenting the conflicting points of view of male and female and revealing the clash between the authoritative discourse of Old New York, with its exertion of the ideology of the institution of marriage, and the feminist counter narrative of Lily that calls this ideology into question:

> [Lily] "What a miserable thing it is to be a woman!" […] "I've been about too long. People are getting tired of me; they are beginning to say I ought to marry."
> [Selden] "Well, why don't you? […] Isn't marriage your vocation? Isn't it what you're all brought up for?"[Lily] "I suppose so. What else is there?"
> [Selden] "Exactly. And so why not take the plunge and have it over? […]"
> [Lily] "I threw away one or two good chances when I first came out – I suppose every girl does; and you know I am horribly poor – and very expensive. I must have a great deal of money […]" She drew a sympathetic breath. "But do you mind enough—to marry to get out of it?"
> [Selden] "God forbid!" he declared […]

[30] Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (New York: Penguin Group, 1985). All subsequent citations from the novel are to this edition and will be given within brackets.
[31] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist. trans. Carly Emerson and M. Holquist. (Austin: U of Texas Press, 1981), 358.

> [Lily] "Ah, there's the difference—a girl must, a man may if he chooses […] Your coat's a little shabby—but who cares? It doesn't keep people from asking you to dine. If I were shabby no one would have me: a woman is asked out as much for her clothes as for herself. The clothes are the background, the frame, if you like: they don't make success, but they are a part of it. Who wants a dingy woman? We are expected to be pretty and well-dressed till we drop—and if we can't keep it up alone, we have to go into partnership." (7-12)

Lily's outlook in this passage begins as conventional. In contrast to the figure of the New American Woman, who wants marriage "for real intimacy and companionship"[32] rather than for economic security, Lily perceives marriage as her ultimate purpose and solution for her financial needs. Through Selden's suggestion that marriage is her "vocation" and that women "are all brought up for" this "vocation", The passage exposes the way in which marriage is viewed as the only means through which women can gain an identity and status in the eyes of Old New York. However there are also indications of Lily's unease with this situation ("I suppose so. What else is there?") and her questioning of his assumptions about marriage ("Ah, there's the difference-a girl must, a man may if he chooses"), combined with her wry observations of the imbalance in their status as she subverts the "general opinion" (the incorporation of general opinion of society into narration, in the Bakhtinian sense)[33] of Old New York through ironic comments about its judgments of single women ("Your coat's a little shabby-but who cares?...Who wants a dingy woman?"). Such comments disrupt the surface narrative (the general opinion of Old New York) and challenge its authority, calling the double standards and gendered ideologies of Old New York into question. This way of reading the passage, then, suggests that Lily represents not only a "capitalist commodity" on the market for rich suitors, as the critics that were considered earlier have suggested, but also an emerging feminist consciousness aware and critical of the limitations that her society imposes upon her.

The way that marriage is asserted as a "vocation" for women (authoritative discourse in the text) is illustrated further when we learn that Lily's view of herself as an "ornament" started as a family investment. The double-voiced passage below begins with Lily's mother's free indirect discourse and the italicised portion suggests the narrator's point of view (recognisable by the narrator's formal language style and its ironic tone as it describes

[32] Jean V. Matthew, *The Rise of the New Woman* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), 98.
[33] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 303, 304.

Lily's beauty as a "weapon", "asset", "nucleus") in such a way as to reveal a critique of Lily's mother for seeing her daughter as their only investment after they lost their wealth:

> Only one thought consoled her [Lily's mother] and that was the contemplation of Lily's beauty. She studied it with a kind of passion, *as though it were some weapon she had slowly fashioned for her vengeance. It was the last asset in their fortunes, the nucleus around which their life was to be rebuilt.* (my italics, 34)

Portraying Lily as her family's investment in the marriage market also echoes the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen's observation that a leisure-class wife in American capitalist society in this period was constructed as an ornamental creature who is raised to be a "conspicuous consumer" to indicate her husband's wealth and power. Making an analogy between slaves and wives of the era, Veblen notes that "Women and other slaves are highly valued, both as an evidence of wealth and as means of accumulating wealth […] They are the usual form of investment for a profit."[34] Similarly, we see how Lily has been trained to think of herself in such a way as an investment for profit, a consumer of luxury goods and raised with the skills of her trade - beauty, lady-like manners - in order to fulfil these expectations.

In the passage below, we continue to find the subversion of the authoritative surface narrative of patriarchal ideologies on marriage and the woman question. The presentation of Selden's point of view as a liberal male perspective on "personal freedom", and his encouragement of Lily to question her (lack of) freedom stands at odds with his previous comment suggesting that marriage is a "vocation" for women:

> [Selden] "My idea of success," he said, "is personal freedom."
> [Lily] "Freedom? Freedom from worries?"
> [Selden] "From everything - from money, from poverty, from ease and anxiety, from all the material accidents. To keep a kind of republic of the spirit - that's what I call success."
> [Lily] "I know - I know - it's strange; but that's just what I've been feeling today." He met her eyes with the latent sweetness of his.
> [Selden] "Is the feeling so rare with you?" he said. She blushed a little under his gaze. [Lily] "You think me horribly sordid, don't you? But perhaps it's rather that I never had any choice. There was no one, I mean, to tell me about the republic of the spirit." (68)

[34] Thorstein Veblen in his *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York City: The Modern Library, Inc., 1934), 53.

Through these different points of view, the text continues to highlight the disparities in the situations of male and female. In reply to Selden's account of "personal freedom" and his vision of a "republic of the spirit", Lily replies that she "had never had any choice. There was no one, I mean, to tell me about the republic of the spirit": here the text reveals not only Lily's perception of Selden as a romantic hero who can show her the way to freedom (a perception which, as we will see, will later be shown in the novel to have been misplaced) but also a nascent awareness of her limited situation and her aspiration to achieve such a republic of the spirit.

The depiction of Lily's changing femininities and her persistent questioning of patriarchal traits of her society is another indication of the counter narrative revealing the feminist discourse in the text. With Selden, she is outspoken and feels comfortable as he is not wealthy enough to marry her, so she does not need to pretend the "marriageable girl": "I shouldn't have to pretend with you or be on my guard against you." (9) However when she encounters a wealthy potential suitor, Simon Rosedale, as she is leaving Selden's lodgings, she plays the role of an innocent girl and tells him that she had visited her dress-maker (14). For Percy Gryce, a rich and dull bachelor who is in search of an appropriate wife for himself, she wants to present herself with the virtues of the image of ideal True American Womanhood: "piety, domesticity, submissiveness and purity."[35] When she encounters him on the train, for example, she pretends that she does not smoke (23) and "hinted to Mr. Gryce that […] she regularly [attended] church" (51) in order to present herself to him as a suitably demure marriageable woman living a pious life. She gives a performance of sensual femininity with Guy Trenor, a wealthy businessman and husband of her good friend, Judy, when she asks him to lend her some money for her debts because "It was part of the game to make him feel that her appeal had been an uncalculated impulse, provoked by the liking he inspired […]." (85)

Switching between these multiple female roles, the text suggests both the shifting nature of Lily's persona and the challenge that she poses to patriarchal ideology. Through the counter narrative's persistent destabilisation of the surface narrative, an ongoing conflict is

[35] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" in *American Quarterly*, 18, (1966), 151-174, 152.

created between the heroine's threatening New Woman spirit and her socially-imposed duty to play the role of a "leisure-class wife". Despite her implied criticism towards her society in her dialogue with Selden and her negative observations about women's place in marriage, Lily is still in search of a rich husband. She is constantly put to the test for her independence, constantly at war with herself, reflecting on her obligation to market herself to wealthy suitors as "a hateful fate—but how escape from it?" (25) and facing the reality that life for women of her time is like "an intricate dance, where one misstep would throw [her] hopelessly out of time." (48) There are moments when she wants to break free from the boundaries of social expectation and has "fits of angry rebellion against fate, when she longed to drop out of the race and make an independent life for herself" (39); and there are moments when she is locked into the materialistic values of her society and says, "I want admiration, I want excitement, I want money—yes, MONEY!" (166)

This running tension that we see in Lily's character between accommodation and resistance to the roles and expectations of Old New York (or, between the surface narrative of patriarchy and the counter narrative of the New Woman) is perhaps most overtly exemplified in the following dialogue between Lily and Judy, an upper-class "leisure-wife" who tries to include Lily in their world and fix her in a static position by the only means available to her: marriage to Percy Gryce:

> [Judy] "You know they say Gryce has eight hundred thousand a year - and spends nothing, except on some rubbishy old books. And his mother has heart-disease and will leave him a lot more. OH, LILY, DO GO SLOWLY," her friend adjured her […]
> [Lily] "Why don't you say it, Judy? I have the reputation of being on the hunt for a rich husband?"
> [Judy] "Oh, I don't mean that; he wouldn't believe it of you, at first," said Mrs. Trenor, with candid shrewdness. "But I must give Jack and Gus a hint - and if he thought you were what his mother would call fast - oh, well, you know what I mean." Lily pushed aside her finished work with a dry smile.
> [Lily] "You're very kind, Judy: if you are really interested in my career, perhaps you'll be kind enough not to ask me to play bridge again this evening." (45)

Old New York's point of view and its ideology on the obligation of marriage for women is filtered through Judy's voice, asserting the social code that women are expected to marry. Judy implies that Lily is seen as "fast"; an implication that she has been observed by society and seen as a threat to the social code of women's stabilisation through marriage.

But this is the very reason that those oppressive voices around her are trying to give fixture to her body: because she is unstable. That is, she is nobody's wife, mother, sister, or daughter; therefore she is inconsistent, indeterminate and incalculable and that is why, for Old New York, she is with no identity and "socially nowhere" (as Bronfen puts it).[36] Lily, on the other hand, understands her "socially nowhere" position very well and she knows that in order to gain an "identity", she needs to be recruited in her role as wife and mother in the bedrock of domesticity; an attitude that is not consistent with the New Woman's independent spirit: "she determined to be to him [Gryce] what his Americana had hitherto been: the one possession in which he took sufficient pride to spend money on it." (49) At work in this double-voiced passage is, as Bakhtin would put it, "two speech manners"[37] - Lily's and the narrator's - both incorporated within Lily's indirect discourse. If we recognise the shift from the character-like diction to sarcastic narrator-like diction (that begins after the colon), Lily's determination to replace Gryce's Americana (the book-collection that he is obsessed with) interacts dialogically with the narrator's subtle mockery of Gryce's perception of his future-wife as a "possession" and object of leisure. Lily's allegiance to this ideology (as indicated by "she determined"), however degrading, can also be read as calling attention to the way in which women internalise their need to adopt the status of "commodities" in such a context.

However, alongside such depictions of Lily's internalisation of this "woman as object" ideology, there are also episodes through which we observe her character as subversive: Lily seems to assume her society's view of woman as "object" naturally, but we also see her struggling with this ideology and regretting being in this position. On the one hand, she does not reject the world of luxury that Gryce offers, as we see in a passage where she retreats to her bedroom and reflects on the possibility of life in a "cramped flat, with…cheap conveniences and hideous wall papers. No; she was not made for mean and shabby surroundings, for the squalid compromises of poverty. Her whole being dilated in an atmosphere of luxury; it was the background she required, the only climate she could breathe in" (25, 26). On the other hand, she is tentative and not willing to go ahead with this marriage decision. She recoils at the idea of marriage to Gryce: "She had been bored all the afternoon by Percy Gryce - the mere thought seemed to waken an echo of his droning

[36] Bronfen, 269.
[37] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 358.

voice - but she could not ignore him tomorrow, she must follow up her success, must submit to more boredom, must be ready with fresh compliances and adaptabilities, and all on the bare chance that he might ultimately decide to do her the honor of boring her for life." (25) By showing Lily in such a dilemma, the text demonstrates how marriage is a source of conflict and suffering for the heroine. The irony in Lily's indirect speech - Gryce doing "her the honor of boring her for life" - also has the effect of mocking of the world Gryce represents and Lily's unwillingness to marry him. These contradictions in Lily's mind indicate the text's attempt to call attention to the constant struggle between the discourses of marriage and individual aspiration (or in Bakhtinan terms, authoritative and internally persuasive discourses) that lie at the heart of her dilemma. Lily's discourse also suggests her feelings that, whether she is happy or not, she has to comply with the dictates of her society since "[l]ife was not the mockery […] There was room for her, after all, in this crowded selfish world of pleasure whence, so short a time since, her poverty had seemed to exclude her" (50). Again, we observe the incorporation of two voices: the formal narrator-like diction (as if addressed to the reader) within Lily's indirect discourse unmasks the text's critical glances at a society that exploits women like Lily with no economic independence.

The text's dialogic structure proceeds to present, in Bakhtin's words, a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses"[38] by shifting its focus from the point of view of Lily to other male characters through whose eyes we begin to see the constructions of the New Woman. Simon Rosedale, a wealthy Jewish businessman, represents the "other" in the eyes of Old New York because he was not born into this system. He has already mastered the principles of Wall Street and become wealthy but he is "still at a stage in his social ascent" (6) and he can guarantee his ascent by marrying an upper-class woman who will give him the prestige and power of Fifth Avenue. He perceives marriage to Lily as a business and communicates his perspective to her:

> If I want a thing I'm willing to pay: I don't go up to the counter, and then wonder if the article's worth the price […] I'd want something that would look more easy and natural, more as if I took it in my stride. And it takes just two things to do that, Miss Bart: money, and the right woman to spend it. (175)

[38] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. & trans. Carly Emerson (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 6.

> I want my wife to make all the other women feel small. I'd never grudge a dollar that was spent on that. (176)

Rosedale here clearly characterises marriage as an investment, primarily for his benefit, and he views Lily as a commodity that can demonstrate his financial power and augment his social standing, an instance of the reduction of women to the status of objects of exchange in capitalist society as observed by Luce Irigaray:

> [In the patriarchal social order] women are "products" used and exchanged by men. Their status is that of merchandise, "commodities" […] Commodities, as we all know, do not take themselves to market on their own […] So women have to remain an "infrastructure" unrecognized as such by our society and our culture. The use, consumption, and circulation of their sexualized bodies, underwrite the organisation and the reproduction of the social order, in which they have never taken part as "subjects."[39]

This is the world Rosedale represents and the perspective from which Lily is viewed by others in the novel. In this view, Lily becomes, as Bakhtin would say, a "represented image […] therefore the idea"[40] of male power, which never sees her as "subject". The text does not offer a solution for Lily, however. Rosedale's proposal is tempting for her as she is in need of financial support, especially after she loses the legacy she had expected to inherit from her aunt. But at the same time we see her reflecting on her "repugnance" at Rosedale and his character - that, for example, "Yes, he may be kind…[but] kind in his gross, unscrupulous, rapacious way, the way of the predatory creature with his mate". (249) Lily's rejection of Rosedale is not only her rejection of marriage but also of the male perception of her as a "commodity" to be bought in the marriage market and possessed as an object of male display and leisure.

Another point of view from which we see Lily is Gus Trenor, another representative of patriarchal society in the novel. Through Trenor, the text makes use of its double-voiced structure again by presenting and then subverting the male's tendency to create fantasies around the heroine. Trenor feels he has already purchased Lily because he lends her a large

[39] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 84.
[40] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 22.

amount of money and expects her sexual service in return. He successfully tricks Lily into visiting his house alone at night and tells her: “I’ll tell you what I want: I want to know just where you and I stand. Hang it, the man who pays for the dinner is generally allowed to have a seat at the table […] you've got to pay up […]” (145) Lily, on the other hand, “flames with anger and abasement” and rejects his sexual advancement by saying “I can’t stay here talking to you at this hour […]” (145) This confrontation between these two characters presents the sexual politics in the novel in a very effective and powerful way: women with no social position - with no traditional “wife-mother” role - are easier targets for men’s sexual desire than those who are married. Lily now becomes a sexual object, an easy catch, and her sexual service, for Trenor, is natural because as people have gossiped about her since her visit to Selden’s lodgings in the opening scene, he says she “go[es] to men’s houses fast enough in broad day light”. (145) Here the text provides a critical perspective on the way in which women who are breaking taboo are easily stigmatised and made legitimate targets of male predation: Lily rejects Trenor’s sexual advance and promises that she would pay him back; however it becomes clear that Trenor is not interested in money and attempts to claim his “legitimate entitlement” by trying to rape her. From the perspective of a dialogic reading, this can be read as an example of the assertion of the surface narrative which implies the requirement from a woman to assume a patriarchal position or else she is doomed. We also see the text suggests later again the same issue – single women as being gossiped and perceived as a sexual object for male gaze - through Jack Stepney; another upper-class member, who speaks about Lily: “ When a girl’s as good-looking as that she’d better marry; then no questions asked” (157). However, as a counter narrative, Lily’s rejection of Trenor’s sexual advancement and her willingness to pay back his money, despite her economic dependence, can be read as a feminist rejection of this assertion (or male fantasy) and a challenge to this system. With this episode between Lily and Gus, the novel also signals Lily’s move from her denial of her being perceived as “nobody” to confronting this tragic reality.

The scene where Lily exhibits herself in a tableau vivant as Reynolds’s “Mrs. Lloyd” is a further example of multi-voicedness of the text, alerting the reader to the perception of the female as an object of male gaze. Mr. Ned Van, “experienced connoisseur” reads her as an example of a “deuced bold thing to show herself in that get-up” (135), referring to her

courage to reveal her sexuality, while Jack Stepney, another upper-class member, reads it as a way of selling herself for marriage: “a girl standing there as if she was up at auction.” (157) Rosedale merges the economic with the aesthetic: “if I could get Paul Morpeth to paint her like that, the picture’d appreciate a hundred percent in ten years.” (158) The sight of Lily's presentation provokes him to propose to her as she seems reducible to a token of wealth and would wear the crown he could give her “as if it grew on her”. (176) Gus Trenor believes his gift - the money he lends to her - will guarantee him her body, and he reads Lily’s presentation as an invitation for his call. Selden “was roused by the pressure of ecstatic fingers” (135), reading Lily’s performance as an object of his fantasy. Through this polyphonic narrative, the reader is invited to observe and judge Lily from the various perspectives of other men as they consider her body as an object for exchange, violation and possession. Each voice gives a different form to Lily, suggesting the way in which she, as a commodity, becomes the embodiment of each male’s fantasy and is denied participation in proceedings as a “subject”; after all “this was the world she lived in; these were the standards by which she was fated to be measured.” (135)

After her theatrical performance - and her decline in the marriage market - the text presents Lily’s attempts to develop a new female identity as a working woman. Although her financial outlook deteriorates further after as her aunt cuts her out of her will and she continues to get older, she persists in her refusal of marriage; so the only way for Lily to survive is to work. Her friend, Carry Fisher helps her find employment in the millinery sewing-room. As Lily describes her new position, she has “joined the working classes” (290). Although Lily wants to govern her own course in life without depending on others, she fails to do so. Since she has never worked in her life before, she cannot carry on living in the role of a “working woman” and eventually loses her job. With no immediate family or husband to rely on, Lily moves one step closer to her tragic end. Her descent from aristocracy to loneliness is marked by her movement from house to house, until she moves into a boarding house. This episode is important because we can read the narrative of Lily’s fall from upper-class lady to working-class woman not only as a passage that aims to call attention to Lily’s tragedy - or to emphasise her image, as Robert Peel argues, as a weak and “victimised”[41] woman - but as a covert criticism towards the society where Lily is

[41] Peel, 288.

raised and equipped for no other life except being a "leisure-wife" of a wealthy husband. Therefore it is not surprising that Lily fails in her new "working-woman" role "since she had been brought up to be ornamental, she could hardly blame herself for failing to serve any practical purpose." (295) In such accounts of Lily attempting to take on different roles to that which have been imposed by her society, the text presents a counter narrative of a New Woman engaged in exploding the authoritative patriarchal discourse of the era that requires women to remain within the domestic realm.

The challenge to the patriarchal construction of women is further emphasised when the focus of the narrative shifts toward Selden's point of view, incorporating a feminist voice within his discourse to criticise him for his blindness toward the hypocrisy of his society: "[H]is views of womankind in especial were tinged by the remembrance of the one woman who had given him his sense of '*values*.' It was from her [Selden's mother] that he inherited his detachment from the sumptuary side of life […]" (my italics, 152) Here, we are given the suggestion that, as a product of his upbringing and social discourse, Selden would expect women - thus, Lily - to be like his mother. But reading this passage as a hybrid double-voiced narrative highlights the dialogised tension between two clashing points of view: male and female. Although we are given the free indirect discourse of Selden who inherited his conventional values from his mother, this is revealed to us through the voice of the narrator whose ironic tone is indicated with the use of tags for the word "values", that Selden cherishes so much. The hybridised description of Selden's discourse below continues this theme through the narrator's subtle criticism (counter narrative) of Selden's illusion to view himself as Lily romantic hero:

> On his table lay the note: Lily had sent it to his rooms. He knew what was in it before he broke the seal - a great seal with *beyond!* beneath a flying ship. Ah, he would take her beyond - *beyond the ugliness, the pettiness, the attrition and corrosion of the soul…* (154, the italics are my own, except for the italics in the first "*beyond!*", which are in the original)

There are two voices in this passage: it begins with Selden's free indirect discourse (surface narrative) up to the part I have italicised. The sudden shift in the language from Selden's informal language to a formal diction (such as "the pettiness", "the attrition and corrosion") that are attributable to the narrator rather than the character suggests the counter narrative

which, through its satiric effect, implies the text's subtle critique of Selden's culturally conditioned perception of seeing himself as Lily's saviour because, as we are informed a few pages later, Selden realises that "it was her [Lily's] weakness which had put the strength in him" (159). But, very soon, the text calls the account of him into question, implying his biased perception of her: "How could he lift Lily to a freer vision of life, if his own view of her was to be coloured by any mind in which he saw her reflected?" (159).

By shifting its focus onto Lily's point of view, the text reveals Lily's realisation that Selden has no faith in her (referring to her notorious image in the eyes of Old New York). She also understands that a marriage with Selden will place her back to what she has been avoiding: becoming what others want her to be: "it had taken two to build the nest: the man's faith as well as the woman's courage […] it is so easy for a woman to become what the man she loves believes her to be! […] [but] he [Selden] was incapable […] of an uncritical return to former states of feeling" (320). Here, we gain insight into Lily's understanding that Selden will never be able to see her from outside the conventional framework of Old New York on women. That is why she lets him - and her other suitors - go. The reader is already given signals earlier in the novel that if Lily had wanted, she could have become one of the middle and upper-class "leisure" wives, or "conspicuous consumers", of Old New York:

> She [Lily] would have smarter gowns than Judy Trenor, and far, far more jewels than Bertha Dorset. She would be free forever from the shifts, the expedients, the humiliations of the relatively poor. Instead of having to flatter, she would be flattered; instead of being grateful, she would receive thanks. (49)

But, these material advantages of marriage are not what Lily ultimately desires: she wants to rescue herself from the stifling conventions and expectations of marriage. From a dialogic perspective, we see her discourse as a New Woman continue to defy the attempts of the authoritative discourses of male fantasy (or patriarchy) to stabilise her. Although her circumstances conspire to compel her to return back to the world of convention, she insists on her independence. She could have married wealthy Percy Gryce, who would deliver her a life of "conspicuous consumption"[42], or might have found shelter in the arms of Gus Trenor who would play the stock market for her in exchange for sex; or she could have used her beauty to manipulate and steal George Dorset from Bertha, the woman who

[42] Veblen, 68.

accused her of "trying to marry [her husband] George Dorset" (224) and caused a bad reputation for her. She could have used the love letters written for Selden by Bertha to blackmail her in order to stop her from gossiping about her and to secure her place in society; and finally she could have married Rosedale who was still willing to marry her even after her fall from her "upper-class" position. Any of these men could provide her with the income she needs "to arrange her life as she pleased, to soar into that empyrean of security where creditors cannot penetrate." (49) However she refuses them all because of her refusal to submit to the role of man's possession; as Lily exclaims: "Such a marriage is a desecration […] I can't make that kind of marriage; it's impossible" (83, 84). In contrast to her depiction earlier in the novel as a woman who seeks a wealthy husband to marry for a luxurious life, Lily now tarries and hesitates, trying to escape from the imperative to marry and realises that, like the New American Woman as depicted in the public imagination of the era, she will not be able to marry for economic security because what the New Woman desires is "real intimacy and companionship".[43]

The last chapter is more concerned to show how a New Woman's bid for emancipation is challenged with full force by patriarchal discourse. Being forced to perform the feminine role as entertaining and beautiful for men disgusts her, but what she finds unbearable now is that, as she has ruined all her marriage opportunities, there is no other option for her to validate her existence in her society. Death seems the only option for her escape. The tension between the discourse of patriarchy and the alternative of death as a way of escape is an implicit theme of Lily's internal conflicts from the early scenes in the novel, but it is not until her confrontation with the reality that there is no other option for her but marriage that this is ignited and comes to the fore. We are given a hint of her impasse for example when she reflects on the option of marriage with Gryce that Judy was trying to arrange and says she cannot "go on living as all the women in my set do". (83, 84) However, these hints suggesting Lily's frustration and her lack of will to live do not necessarily depict a "weak" woman or a mere symbol of women's victimisation by society: paying close attention to the language that reveals Lily's growing recognition that she cannot follow the life of traditional women of her time - her counter narrative against male discourse - signals her struggle for independence and the challenge that she poses to convention. We are given the

[43] Matthews, 98.

hints of the consciousness of a determined New Woman who decides to refuse to live in this society because such a life for her is like living in a "rubbish heap". She says to Selden:

I have tried hard - but life is difficult […] I was just a screw or a cog in the great machine I called life, and when I dropped out of it I found I was of no use anywhere else. What can one do when one finds that one only fits into one hole? One must get back to it or be thrown out into the rubbish heap - and you don't know what it's like in the rubbish heap! […] (308). "The one hole" here into which Lily would fit refers to marriage, designed to govern the lives of women, regardless of their marital situation. As a single woman, she finds herself with no place in which to conduct her life and validate her existence. For her, life becomes a dangerous game and circumstances force her to recognise that her position in the symbolic order of society is contingent on male recognition. Her social acceptance is withdrawn once it becomes clear that she will not marry. For her, death seems the solution to her dilemma as it will prevent the shameful deed - selling herself for marriage - required of her.

In this sense, with reference to Bakhtin's dialogism it is helpful to consider the constant battle that takes place in the novel between conflicting discourses to understand the way in which these discourses shape the New Woman. It also enables an interpretation of Lily's death from a positive perspective ("in a polyphonic world the hero must always struggle to destroy that framework of other people's words about him that might finalize and deaden him.")[44] Lily refuses to be "finalised" through marriage and struggles to be the subject of her own discourse. Rather than seeing her as a weak or victimised character, we can read her story as a dialogic narrative which tells of the discourses - the ideas that are represented through the characters about marriage, woman's role and status, and so on - with which she is in constant struggle and that finally lead her to her death. As Cunningham noted, "the New Woman [experienced] the clash between radical principles and the actualities of contemporary life, which could portray most convincingly the stifling social conventions from which the New Woman was trying to break free, and which could present arguments for new standards of morality, new codes of behaviour, in the context of an easily

[44] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 59.

recognisable social world."[45] Further, a feminist dialogic analysis of the novel opens up a critical appreciation of the ongoing dialogues that take place between different ideologies on "woman" and "men" and that create the tension that lies at the heart of how these themes are addressed. In this way we are left with the image of an unstable New Woman; or as Bakhtin might say, a character who represents the "unfinalizability"[46] and inconsistency of her subject position.

The novel ends with Lily's death; but her story, as Showalter maintains, does not end with her death "but with the vision of a new world of female solidarity, a world in which women […] will struggle and hopefully and courageously. Lily dies […] so that these women may live and grow."[47] The representation of Lily's death is only the beginning of her story that creates dialogues about the meaning of her death. In this sense, rather than reading the ending "pessimistic" which, according to Ammons, suggests that "Lily dies totally passive"[48], we can also view it as the text's challenge to her society where Lily is seen as "commodity", a "product", nothing more. It is through this presentation of Lily's counter narrative that she becomes a symbol of women's oppression, drawing attention to the dilemmas of their frustrations and struggles, and the way in which she is transferred from being an object of the male gaze into being the subject of her own story: of a woman who, at the beginning of the novel, is portrayed with a conventional approach to marriage and as a mere product of conventional Old New York and, by the end, presents an image of a conscious New Woman who struggles against the constant attempts of other voices around her to contain her within the limits of the authoritative discourse of Old New York; a New Woman who comes to realise that death for her offers the only dignified route to independence.

[45] Cunningham, 16.
[46] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 63.
[47] Elaine Showalter, "The Death of the Lady (Novelist): Wharton's *House of Mirth*" in *Representations*, 9 (1985), 133-149.
[48] Ammons, 48.

2.3. *Handan*

2.3.1. Summary of the Plot

Handan is Cemal Bey's daughter from his previous marriage. She is an educated, intellectual and modern woman. Refusing the proposal of her teacher, Nazım, she marries Hüsnü Paşa who is a rich man old enough to be her father. Nazım, who is arrested by the government for political reasons, commits suicide in prison. Refik Cemal, married to Neriman, Handan's cousin, goes to London due to political reasons and there he meets Handan and Hüsnü Paşa who have been living in Europe for years. Although he finds Handan very cold and unapproachable at first, Refik Cemal later falls in love with her. He also discovers that Hüsnü is unfaithful to his wife. Hüsnü abandons Handan and lives with one of his mistresses, Maud, an English woman. After being rejected by her husband, Handan falls seriously mentally and physically ill. She gets some respite from her suffering when Refik Cemal, on the advice of a doctor, takes her on a holiday to help her recovery. However, she descends rapidly into madness which leads her ultimately to her death.

2.3.2. Analysis

Like *The House of Mirth*, *Handan* also presents the friction between male and female discourses as orchestrated by its polyphonic structure. The use of multiple points of view in a polyphonic structure in the text contributes to one of the central motifs of the novel: the fragmented character of the New Woman. Whilst the voices of the male characters represent the surface narrative that enforces the ideology of marriage and principles of "how a woman should be", the counter narrative exposes the heroine's inconsistent persona and her struggle for autonomy. My central argument is that the novel presents Handan with the three cardinal features of the New Turkish Woman (or Adıvar's "ideal woman") - an asexual woman, an ideal wife and moral woman - only to deconstruct each in turn and to reveal her challenge to this model of womanhood and to the marriage system that operates to stabilise her.

The novel begins with Refik Cemal's letter, establishing the surface narrative (authoritative discourse) to show the way in which the construction of the New Woman is undertaken by the male voice in the novel. The opening letters written by Refik Cemal also serve to lay down the parameters of "modern but modest" New Womanhood and the way in which she is perceived as an "ideal" woman of the era. Refik Cemal writes to his friend, Server:

> I am getting married […] to one of Cemal Bey's alafranga (westernised) daughters […] But I am still somewhat conventional [so] the one I chose is the calmest, the most quiet of all! (9)[49]

Refik Cemal defines Neriman as an alafranga woman but at the same time he views her as "the most quiet" of her sisters. In other words, she is the "marriageable" one because she seems to fit Refik Cemal's definition of a "modern but modest" female figure. The attempt of the male voice to construct the female continues: in their early months of marriage, Refik Cemal emphasises the image of "ideal woman" by describing Neriman as "an angel in white", with "innocent eyes" and "represent[ing all the features of] womanhood, love and happiness" (11-12). His description of marriage to Neriman - "the most quiet of all" her sisters - seems to portend his vision of the domestic sphere and Neriman's role within it:

> In her [Neriman's] soul, there is something that is devoted to obeying the man she loves. If I become a cruel husband, [I know] I can tyrannise her. She would put up with everything [I do] with [the same look in her] tender, shiny eyes […] I look at my wife as a life partner […] a healthy mother who would raise children in order to make [our generation] continue […] a wife who can be quiet [and] give me peace and comfort. (20-22)

This passage makes the reader conscious of the two obsessions of the period regarding the role of "ideal woman": wife and motherhood. It describes the roles of the era women are expected to play and the way they are defined in relation to marriage. Refik Cemal clearly seeks to confine Neriman within his vision of her as a healthy mother and undemanding wife.

Soon after, as the polyphonic narrative allows, we observe the way in which the text undermines the discourse of the male in his attempt to idealise the female. By having Refik

[49] Halide Edib Adıvar, *Handan* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2007). All subsequent citations from the novel are to this edition and all translations are mine unless otherwise stated and will be given within brackets in the text.

Cemal complaining about his wife's lack of intellectuality several months after his marriage, the text highlights Refik Cemal's contradictory points of view on Neriman to expose the ambiguity in his character, and thus, to alert the reader to the unreliability of the narrator. Eight months after his marriage, Refik Cemal writes to Server:

> I find Neriman indifferent to my interests. She gets bored of sociology, [but] likes history a little bit. She even falls asleep if I read her philosophy. She likes literature more or less, and it is mostly [because of] the influence of Handan Hanim. This woman must have a very strong personality, I think […] Neriman is not one of those souls this country raised, but [like] a plant, a flower! [...] She does not want to know about anything other than her quiet home. She wants to live and die peacefully like her mother, and grandparents, unaware of the shrinking and diminishing of a whole race due to poverty and all kinds of social diseases! (22-23)

This passage can be read as a form of satirical treatment of the male discourse: Neriman, who was earlier praised by Refik Cemal is now criticised because of her lack of interest in social, cultural and political subjects. She is likened to a "plant" and "flower" to indicate her indifference to the social and cultural issues of the country. His complaints about his wife's lack of awareness of "poverty and all kinds of social diseases" convey his disappointment regarding Neriman's ignorance of such important social matters. By depicting Refik Cemal in this way, the text also offers indirect criticism of the expectations of men regarding simple domesticity on the part of women in marriage, while also being suggestive of the significance of education in addressing questions of women and marriage in the period.

The above passage also provides an initial glimpse into the New Woman's "admirable" qualities: here, her education and intellectuality. The alafranga woman's (Neriman) lack of intellectuality and indifference to social and cultural issues (she does not want to know anything other than her quiet home) is set against Handan's knowledge and strong personality. Through Neriman's letter, we learn that Handan has passion for reading and learning: "[F]or her [Handan], learning has been a passion. She has a mind with an endless desire for knowledge [and] to learn things forever, not only about books, but also about nature [and] people" (41). This theme is further accentuated by the other characters' points of view, which pointedly draw attention to Handan's intellectuality.

After these brief glimpses into Handan's character, the text begins to present her in all her ambiguity and thus reveals initial signs of its challenge to the construction of the New Turkish Woman. The first sign of the text's challenge to the New Turkish Woman is revealed when Handan spurns Nazım's proposal. Nazım wants to marry Handan in Deniz Kandiyoti's words, "for his (political) goal, not for love."[50] He tells her: "Perhaps, there will be big changes in this country, perhaps we will make big changes. Perhaps fire, blood, fog and death, many deaths [will occur]. Would you be one of those [with me] who would make these fire, blood, fog and death?" (70). But Handan wants love and romanticism in her marriage. She tells Neriman that "there is no word of tenderness, nor of affection […] I should not be the only one who feels love in this marriage" (71). Her rejection of Nazım's proposal indicates on the one hand that she does not want to be an object or tool for Nazım's socio-political objectives, and on the other reveals her desire for a relationship that recognises and fulfils her at a personal level of love and intimacy. By portraying Handan's perception of marriage as a union that fulfils her personal feelings rather than as a duty toward her family (or nation), the text deconstructs this image of the "ideal" (or New) Turkish woman (and Adıvar's "ideal woman") for whom "love is associated with duty toward family […] [and] nation rather than personal desire. Sacrifice for these values becomes a major moral responsibility […]".[51]

This is also one of the features that typically differentiates the New Turkish Woman from her American contemporary: that is, whilst the phrase "the New Woman" in the West, as Patricia Stubbs notes, was coined "in an effort to describe women who had either won or were fighting for, a degree of equality and personal freedom"[52]; for the New Turkish Woman, personal freedom must be sacrificed for her nation and family. Both Lily and Handan seek romance and mutual understanding in marriage. This means that, while Wharton's representation of Lily later in the novel transforms into an image that fits the image of the New American Woman (Lily first wants marriage for her economic needs, but later she refuses her suitors because she realises that "such a life could never satisfy

[50] Deniz Kandiyoti, *Cariyeler, Bacılar, Yurttaşlar: Kimlikler ve Toplumsal Dünüşümler* (*Concubines, Sisters, Citizens: Identities and Social Transformation*) (İstanbul: Metis Yayın, 2007), 159.
[51] Özgün Basmas,*"The Rebellious Daughter of the Republic" or "The mother of the Turks": Re-considering the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic Through the Politics of Halide Edip Adıvar,* A Thesis Presented to the University of Acron for the degree of Master of Arts (2008), 35.
[52] Patricia Stubbs, *Women and Fiction* (Bristol: J.W. Arrowsmith Ltd, 1979), 54.

[her]"[53]), Adıvar's depiction of Handan with her insistence on her personal feelings is more of a challenge to accounts which attempt to situate the heroine as an instance of Adıvar's "ideal" woman or the model of the New Turkish Woman.

The polyphonic narrative's effect of demonstrating and then subverting the ideologies of the surface narrative (authoritative discourse) continues: from various points of view, the text emphasises Handan's "asexual" image as an illustration of the New Woman who is, in Kandiyoti's words, defined as an "enlightened woman in the private sphere and a 'masculinised' social actor."[54] Similarly, in his letter, Refik Cemal reflects on his first encounter with Handan in France and stresses how he was fascinated by her knowledge rather than her femininity: "We talked about everything […] sociology, economics, philosophy and even politics […] Slowly, the effect of her shining eyes, of her glowing hair [...] have lessened in my eyes; I could no longer notice her white chest […]". (36) Sabire Hanım, Handan's step-mother, also implies Handan's "asexual" character when she complains about her "unwomanly" manners: "I have no doubt that this girl [Handan] has too much intelligence, this is not what is lacking in her […] I am afraid her manners are not like that of other girls […]" (60); and again, a few pages later, we read Neriman's letter: "Nobody thinks about Handan's sexuality much, she is a girl like a man" (65). By presenting these multiple accounts of Handan's "intellectual" and "asexual" character, the text seems to reproduce the construction of the New Turkish Woman that was defined by the discourse of the Turkish modernisation of the era.

However, in contrast to these voices (of the surface narrative), the counter narrative of the text reveals itself, suggesting the seductive and sensual character of the heroine; and therefore exposing the text's challenge to this model of the "asexual" New Woman. As Durakbaşa and İlyasoğlu point out, the New Turkish Woman was expected to preserve "basic codes of female virtue" and be "highly cautious of not being seductive."[55] But reading Refik Cemal's letter further, we observe that Handan's sensual depiction subverts this definition. Refik Cemal reflects on his surprise when Handan presents herself in

[53] Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, 294.
[54] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Ataerkil Örüntüler: Türk Toplumunda Erkek Egemenliğinin Çözümlenmesine Yönelik Notlar" *1980'ler Türkiyesi'nde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar* ("Patriarchal Patterns: Notes Related to the Analysis of Man's Domination in Turkish Society" in *Women from Women's Perspective in 1980s Turkey*) ed. Şirin Tekeli (İstanbul: Iletisim, 1995), 25.
[55] Durakbaşa and İlyasoğlu, 200.

opposition to her previous "asexual" position (here, referring to her suppressed femininity) and instead she assumes a seductive manner. Confused by her contradictory manners, he ponders:

> She stood up coyly […] she was wearing a thin black net. I do not know the colour beneath it [black net] but it goes well with black. I was surprised that she was revealing her arms, her neck completely. But her décolleté was beautiful […] her big eyes with black eyelashes under her two thin eyebrows […] I found her very attractive with her arms and chest that are shown through her black silk [dress] […] [then she] sat with her legs crossed and smoked […] I wonder if Handan is a seductive woman? Is she one of those women who could attract everyone; some with her mind, some with her spirit and education? Or is she a counterfeit creature? (35-37)

The readings which emphasise Handan's "asexual" image, as previous critics have done, is challenged further when her seductive manner is re-illustrated again at the scene where she shows her sexual desire for her husband. Handan is hosting Refik Cemal but at the same time she is stroking "Hüsnü Pasha's lips with the meaty tips of her fingers" (37). Being aroused by her sensual behaviour, Refik Cemal indicates his sexual attraction toward her:

> I think it [her costume] is too revealing, but a rich décolleté, her shiny hair was tied up randomly with a hair-clip with pearl above her naked neck; with her silk-like wavy hair that fell down to her temple, with her eyes that were shining with radiance and her smiling lips, the woman who looked like a deep and quiet shadow for a while changed completely. (97)

Thus far, the text presents a conflicting portrait of the New Woman, which has the effect of problematising her commonly received image. When we reach the parts that narrate Handan's marriage, the text shifts its focus to the tension between the New Woman and marriage. The portrayal of this tension also shows, like her American sister Lily, Handan's intensifying frustration with the restrictive norms of marriage and the way in which the dictates of marriage are depicted in both novels as a source of the New American and Turkish Women's frustration. For example, the exchange below between Handan and Hüsnü presents this tension and raises the issue of power relations in marriage as these are expressed in the dialogue between male and female discourses:

> [Hüsnü] You know what, I am tired of your jealousy, Handan. […] Look at your face now. Your hair is all messed up […] A man would commit to one woman,

> where did you see this, my dear? Sure that man is not me, madame. I am going, yes, but not to Juliette.
> [Handan] Why should I care? [go to] whoever you want. Being jealous after you go? Very strange, even if [you be with] all the women in the world, I would not be jealous […] I am going to the village [to stay with Refik Cemal and Neriman]! Whether you come or stay!
> [Hüsnü] Oh, your voice is shaking, your eyes shed tears, why then?
> [Handan] Because of my anger. You are treating me like a worn-out piece of cloth. Going? Yes, I am going to the village. Come or stay, up to you!
> [Hüsnü][…] I did not tell you that you must go to the village […] You are flirting ostentatiously with Neriman's husband.
> [Handan] Me? This is too much. Please go. I will go to Istanbul tomorrow, to my father.
> [Hüsnü] I am tired of this same old story […] Refik Cemal would see you off!
> [Handan] Stop it! Enough. You are dirtying everything! […]
> [Hüsnü] No Madame, you cannot dirty something that is already dirty. But you, Handan (shouting) are not a Woman! […] May God curse on you. (102)

The male voice here seeks to assert the discourse of the "disobedience" of the female, thus drawing attention to his attempt to reconstruct her as the "ideal" woman in marriage. In other words, by having Hüsnü reminding his wife to look after herself ("look at your face", "your hair is all messed up") and accusing her of "unwomanly" behaviour ("you are not a woman"), the novel shows the discursive strategy of the male in attempting to contain the female within patriarchal expectations regarding the control of her body and behaviour within marriage. However, the passage also has the effect of drawing attention to the male's double-standard of gender roles in marriage: Hüsnü overtly mentions the name of his mistress (Juliette) and we understand that this is not a secret between the married couple. He also ironically tells her that committing himself to a woman is not possible and normal in their society. However he accuses Handan of flirting with another man, insulting her as "something dirty". This passage exposes the nature of gender roles in late nineteenth century Ottoman society, which as Duben and Behar have observed, was marked by an imbalance regarding appropriate sexual behaviour: having an affair "for 'proper women', that was out of the question. For men, love affairs or sexual escapades with non-Muslim women, with *cariyes* (servant-slaves), or prostitutes and other 'loose' women (*aşifte*) were an accepted part of the dual standard."[56] Alerting the reader to this "accepted dual standard" of the period, Handan's challenging language with questions and imperatives ("why should

[56] Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *İstanbul Households: Marriage, family and fertility 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 96.

I care?", "why", "stop") and accusing her husband for treating her like a "worn-out piece of cloth" present the feminist discourse, calling the gender roles in marriage into question and revealing a feminist critique of male hypocrisy. In this respect, the text presents a challenging scenario by depicting the female rejecting the male authority, seeking to escape from the confines of the role that he forces her to play. Further, we are given an early indication of the New Woman's revolt against marriage that will come in full-force later in the novel.

Reading the text as a polyphonic narrative opens the eyes of the reader further to the ways in which the text continuously brings the voices of the male and female into dialogue and reveals conflict over the subject of marriage. *The House of Mirth*, as we have seen earlier, show the relativity of the view on marriage between female and male characters in Wharton's society: whilst marriage is imposed, in Selden's words, as a "vocation" for women, men do not feel the same obligation. This idea is also expressed in *Handan* through the way in which women's view of marriage differs from men's. Consider the following passages. For Handan,

> Marriage is a bond that ties a woman and man in the most sacred and spiritual way and those men and women who betray this bond are damned, let them be damned! There should not be another [lover] in women's or men's, especially in women's, life […]. (136)

And for Hüsnü,

> You think love or marriage is eternal. For me, marriage is the most meaningless word. I assure you that I never felt any strong esteem towards marriage in the way you felt. I lived with Marion for eight years before you. With you, for seven years, and when I married you, I lived with Juliette for two years. [...] They were all just 'a woman' to me! I loved you most [...] Never doubt that! But I loved you not because you represent that thing called family. I believe such a thing does not exist at all […] I don't want you to come to me […] because I live with another woman […] But I know you are mine and will remain so. You will never be another man's woman. (140, 141)

The importance of these passages lie in their use of reversed gender roles to express the conflicting ideologies of patriarchy and feminism in the text: while the female character is depicted with a high esteem and commitment to the institution of marriage, the male

character is used to attack the ideals of this "sacred" union between couples. This can be seen as a narrative strategy indicating the text's attempt to alert the reader to the male hypocrisy: Hüsnü sees no fault in his action of abandonment and betrayal and he thinks marriage is meaningless; and yet he expects Handan to remain loyal to their marriage and wait for him. At the same time, such a depiction draws attention to the conventional male mentality that perceives women as personal objects to be owned, while revealing a feminist perspective in the novel that draws attention to the unequal nature of gender roles in the Turkish society of the period. It shows how the importance of marriage, considered to be a central foundation of the social structure, is dismissed by males while women are expected to remain faithful and virtuous and view marriage as a sacred unquestionable structure. These passages also indicate the similar problems faced by Lily in *The House of Mirth*: in both novels, we observe the way in which marriage operates as a way of controlling women and seeks to confine them within the boundaries of the authoritative - here, male's - discourse.

The force of the authoritative discourse (the male point of view regarding, in particular, marriage), however, is further challenged when we reach Handan's letters written in the form of a diary. They suggest powerful counter narratives and reveal the point of view of the heroine who has hitherto been presented as the object of other characters' commentaries. As such, her voice comes as a powerful disruption to the surface narrative that has predominated in the narrative so far. Her letters reveal her emotional state from her own perspective and allow the reader to gain further insight into Handan's fragmented character and her conflicting viewpoints on marriage. Similar to the depiction of Lily's fragmented character in *The House of Mirth*, Handan also becomes the focus of a conflict between two competing discourses: her domestic duties and roles on the one hand, and her aspirations for personal freedom on the other. As we saw earlier in the analysis of Lily in *The House of Mirth*, Handan also continuously shifts back and forth between these two positions (in Handan's case, from the model of New Turkish Womanhood to that of a challenging New Woman seeking personal independence and fulfilment) and demonstrates further the inconsistent and complex subjectivity of the heroine and her relationship to the idea of marriage. This is illustrated when she writes that: "I have endured such long, miserable and at the same time sublime sacrifices [in this marriage]!" (120); "What a strange man you are Hüsnü! You are cruel and two-faced, you want to keep me as your

possession, but at the same time, you push me away!" (126); and a couple of pages later, she expresses her respect for marriage: "I have such a big respect and affection for what you represent in my eyes [marriage] […]" (136). Such frustration conveys her sense of the way in which her conditioning to play the "wife-woman" role has been enforced by the weight of received morality and social tradition. She is caught between the rival sides in her consciousness (in a Bakhtinian sense, consciousness here refers her discourse about herself and the world around her[57]): her culturally constructed respect for the institution of marriage and her desire for personal freedom. The following is a striking example of her interior dialogue (microdialogue) that makes up her consciousnesss. She writes with reflection that:

> I have been thinking what the reason was that you were not happy in our life together. First of all, it was the ignorance of my seventeen years-old age, and a little bit of vanity, was it not? I confess, [my family] raised me with such extraordinary and abundant love that I used to see myself as somebody who could never make a mistake […] Whatever you do Hüsnü, even if you come back, nothing will erode this deep despair in my heart […] (120).

In this passage, the transition in Handan's character is telling. The questions addressed to Hüsnü suggest her interior dialogue (thus her struggle between the female and male discourse) and her use of "I used to see myself" indicates her awakening to a "new" image of herself. Reading the passage in this dialogic way highlights the heroine's awareness to her objectification and how she is moving from the position of the woman who believed in the culturally conditioned view of marriage as a blissful domestic sphere to the position of a woman who can now see the stifling nature of marriage. The commentary in the below passage on the way in which marriage functions as a means to oppress women echoes Wharton's *The House of Mirth* in moments such as when Lily likens marriage to living in a "rubbish heap" (284). It demonstrates further Handan's changing thoughts on marriage: through her interior dialogue below, we can see how she is becoming critical of all those notions that her society and her husband indoctrinated her regarding how to be an "ideal" woman:

> During our early years of marriage, you implied […] that a woman's soul, like her body, must be her husband's area […] And I, who had known many things that were too much for my age, did not know life then, so I was fooled by you. This [was] my

[57] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 53.

> first belief [in you] and had so much influence on me that I [continued to] believe it for years. Still I, as a woman who is 24 years old, feel that influence, that obligation […] You convinced me that if a man looks at me, or courts me […] [or] if I feel something for any man, even a little bit, I must tell you. And if I hide […] small things from you, you told me that this would be a step onto a slippery slope and [that] I would slowly go towards my fall. My soul, which was shaken by the word "fall" more than others, accepted this as a duty […] (132-133).

Reflecting on the role of the interior dialogue in the novel as a window into the character's growing self-consciousness, Bakhtin suggests that we observe "a battle and the interruption of one voice by another […] all possible evaluations and point of view on [her] personality, [her] character […] are extended to [her] own consciousness and addressed to [her] in dialogues […]."[58] Similarly, in Handan's discourse above, we observe a battle between her and another's voice (here, Hüsnü's: "a woman's soul, like her body, must be her husband's area"; "this would be a step onto a slippery slope") which creates a powerful tension between the male and female discourses that divide her consciousness and through which we are provided insight into her growing challenge to the idea of the "ideal" woman that has been enforced on her. Her use of past tense in her statements - "I was fooled by you", "I [continued to] believe it for years" - illustrate further the impact of the discourse of patriarchy on the construction of her domestic identity and her challenge to this discourse: one which has been imposing the enslaving ideology of her culture, that it is women's "duty" to be "chaste" and "loyal"; a discourse that tells women they "would slowly go towards [their] fall" if they do not follow established patterns.

The polyphonic narrative of the novel also reveals a conflict between the discourses of free love and morality of the era. Reflecting on how romantic love was seen "as a threat to family stability by modernist thinkers"[59], Duben and Behar argue that,

> The corruption of the female in the novels of the early twentieth century [such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Kiralık Konak* (*A Mansion for Rent*) and *Sodom ve Gomore* (*Sodom and Gomorrah*)] symbolises the moral degradation which it was felt penetrated into Turkish society […] Women uncontrolled and uncontrollable by their families and the moral community have always been the nightmare of Turkish society, and those who advocate such libertinism are portrayed as morally corrupt, even traitorous.[60]

[58] Ibid., 75.
[59] Duben and Behar, 103.
[60] Ibid., 103.

Such observations concerning the enforced ideology of women's morality in Turkish society perhaps explain why previous critics have often read Handan's internal conflict and ultimate death as signalling the author's assertion of the morality and honour of the "ideal" New Turkish Woman.[61] These interpretations are apt and provide insight into women's position in the Turkish society of the era. However, reading the novel's emphasis on Handan's inner conflict simply as a sign of the vindication of social morality is to miss the complex characterisation of the heroine and the possibility of reading the way in which her self-consciousness, to quote Bakhtin, is "represented and not merely expressed, that is, […] does not become the mouthpiece for [the author's] voice."[62] Reading Handan's narrations in light of Bakhtin allows the reader to observe the way in which the heroine's suffering, along with her confusions and contradictions, reveal her "represented" discourse, with the conflicting voices that make it up (rather than with one voice that asserts her "morality"). For example, consider Handan's interior dialogue below that narrates her inner conflict as it approaches climax towards the end of the novel:

> But this is not right, is it? One isn't supposed to be in love with her sister's husband, just like one cannot fall in love with one's brother or son […] Go away Handan, I cannot bear you […] Refik Cemal, you [must] go too […] You two take your love to hell […] Dear Neriman […] I must die, right? […] Ha, Hüsnü […] why did I suffer on the edge of your heart for years? I became a sinner […] Now all of them […] are standing in front of me […] Refik Cemal, please look at me with all the affection and love you've got. No I do not regret darling […] You must die Neriman, Go away [and] leave us alone! […] Father, take me to your arms […] What are you saying? Is there a stain of my sin [on my face] […] I will pray for Neriman, for father, for Refik Cemal […] (204-210).

Handan's discovery of her feelings for Refik Cemal and her intimacy with him triggers a release of her suppressed emotions and raise tension with her status as a "moral" woman. Such a depiction also marks a further instance of a feminist discourse (counter narrative) in the text in its attempt to disrupt the image of the "moral" New Turkish Woman (surface narrative). Handan's hysteric state here can arguably be read as an indication of a discourse of femininity addressed to domestic oppression, signifying, through her voice, the protest that her society made unspeakable in words with others. Hence, she transfers these

[61] See, for example, Moran, 155; Basmaz, 31.
[62] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 51.

"unspeakable" words through her hysteria into her internal speech which has echoes of the "extreme internal dialogisation"[63] that Bakhtin identifies in his reading of Dostoevsky's tormented hero of *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov, where "each individual […] enters Raskolnikov's inner speech not as a character or a type […] but as a symbol of […] an ideological position."[64] Similarly, we observe in Handas's discourse each character entering with their clashing "ideological positions" that constitute her consciousness and provide insight into her struggles against these voices that seek to tell her what is right or wrong. Handan's dialogue with these voices in her mind is full of conflicting and passionate confessions prompted by her feelings and thoughts that she had been forced to suppress; but perhaps more importantly it also reflects her multiple, competing, shifting self-perceptions: moral, immoral, sinful, passionate, childish, suffering etc.

Towards the end of the novel, we see Handan's suffering intensify and she conveys her deepest feelings - passions, yearnings, desires, frustrations, confusions, anger - through a series of angry, almost rambling passages of the kind that we have seen above. Her dilemma between love and morality begins to lead her into a state of deep turmoil and she feels that she is "going crazy" (201). Handan's suffering is even more acute towards the end of her diary. Having descended into a realm where she consciously perceives herself as potentially "crazy", her feelings of desperation and frustration reach new heights and we see her displaying signs of hysteria and nervous disorder ("a feature common to New Women novels",[65] as Gail Cunningham has pointed out). In her discussion of madness in New Women novels, Ann Heilmann argues that the representation of hysteria in feminist writing was often a way of drawing attention to the repression of women's desires as it offered an outlet and form of protest in contexts where the roles and conventions available to them deprived them of expressive possibilities.[66] As Heilman writes:

> A synonym for femininity in nineteenth-century medical textbooks, hysteria was frequently associated with women's transgressive or rebellious desires in Victorian literature […] [hysteric heroines] draw their energy from their rage, the hysterical *mise-en-scene* of which enables them to invert patriarchal power structures, albeit within tightly regulated parameters and for limited periods of time only.[67]

[63] Ibid., 237.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Cunningham, 49.
[66] Heilmann, 66.
[67] Ibid. (Italics in original)

These observations about the role of hysteria in literature and its relationship to repressive patriarchal culture can be drawn on here to throw more light on Handan's nervous breakdown as she struggles towards subjective transformation and attempts to realise her "rebellious desires". In this sense we can read her inner turmoil, mental breakdown and ultimate death as expressions of her desire to transgress the conventions of her society. Subsumed by the love she holds for Refik Cemal and the guilt it elicits, Handan, just like her American sister, Lily, realises that her society offers her no means of realising her dreams. Towards the end, when she is contemplating death and says "I will not be able to bear [my sin] and I will go [to death], leaving [everything] behind" (205) (echoing Lily who says she cannot "go on living" any more; *The House of Mirth*, 83), she indicates the devastating weight of social pressure upon her and her wish for a cathartic release: in this sense death appears as the only escape for her, as it was for Lily. Handan's death does not come as a surprise for the reader as the text already foreshadows this ending earlier in the text through Server who suggests that "Handan's death is the best solution", not only for others in the novel but also "for herself" (161).

The last chapter presents a series of different points of view on Handan's death as different characters scrutinise the heroine and offer their judgements of her, creating a polyphonic effect that ends the novel with a sense of moral ambiguity. Hacı Murat, one of Handan's neighbours in Istanbul, feels sorry for her and says: "May Allah forgive her sins" (212); in response, his twenty-three year old son, Haşim says, "I believe Allah has already forgiven her. Poor woman!" (212). These voices draw sympathy from the reader before we hear Hacı Murat's wife, Lütfiye, burst out: "Is she not the eldest of Cemal Bey's alafranga daughters? This is the end of being immoral, sir. I am surprised that you feel sorry for her. Do you think Allah will provide a place in heaven for her?" (215). We are also given the voices of other characters such as Hüsnü, who insists on carrying Handan's coffin alone, and says to other people "Leave it! I can carry the coffin alone. Who carried her as much as I did when she was alive?" (214), indicating the pain that Handan's "unwifely" attitudes caused him. In this way the novel ends with no single authoritative narrative voice and leaves it to the reader to choose which voice to identify with. In reflecting on this conclusion to the novel here I would like to refer briefly to Roller's discussion of the twentieth century novel,

where she argues that the theme of ending with the heroine's death serves as the novels' critique of patriarchal societies: she observes that the deaths reflect what is evident in most of these novels in that a change for the better in sexist societies "is highly unlikely."[68] Drawing on Roller's observations, I suggest that, rather than reading the depiction of Handan's death as a sign of conservatism on the part of the author or an assertion of the morality of the "ideal" New Turkish Woman who regrets deeply for falling in love with a married man, Refik Cemal (as some of the critics considered earlier have suggested), it can also be read as offering a feminist criticism of the patriarchal Turkish society of the era in which women are offered no means of realising their personal desires. In this sense, the text's portrayal of Handan's death, like that of her American counterpart Lily, can be viewed as a challenging gesture of New Woman fiction that condemns the objectification of women and the restrictions that they face in their society, while portraying the heroine's struggle for independence and her refusal to be contained by restrictive roles and conventions.

Conclusion

This chapter analysed *The House of Mirth* and *Handan* as dialogic texts containing two competing narratives: that of the marriage plot (surface narrative representing authoritative discourse) and the subplot, the heroines' struggle for personal freedom (counter narrative representing internally persuasive discourse). I have argued that the counter narrative provides a feminist point of view in the text's explorations of the theme of marriage and death and this allows the critic to observe the development of the heroines as challenging figures of New Woman fiction. I have attempted to demonstrate that both Wharton's and Adıvar's novels offer similar criticisms of sexist society and provide powerful indictments of the marriage system. I have argued that they provide accounts of a tragic demise of heroines that begin their narrative existence by trying to establish themselves in patriarchal subject positions until they realise that none of these positions provide the happiness that they pursue. Lily in *The House of Mirth* merely wants an independent life for herself yet finds that she is labelled as a "nobody" as society fears her ambiguous status and condemns

[68] Roller, 102.

her. Similarly, Handan in *Handan* does not want to be bound by the conventions of marriage that society foists upon her in order to keep her in an oppressive marriage in which she is, like her American sister, seen as nobody but a mere "object". Read in this light, the portrayals of both Lily and Handan offer a challenge to the traditional discourses on femininity and the ideology of marriage.

I have also argued that the novels, through their dialogic structure, present ambiguous and contradictory versions of the New Woman and thus expose their feminist critiques of the ways in which imposed gender roles and double sexual morality have the effect of positioning women as objects defined in relation to men. In this sense, it can be argued that both Lily's and Handan's stories can be viewed as condemnations of the victimisation of women by society, and the hypocrisy of patriarchal society in its insistence on creating categories and assigning fixed gender roles.

The novels also differ in the emphasis they place on the tragedy of their heroines. Compared with Wharton's more sardonic - at times bitter - account of the position of women in Old New York, Adıvar's text is more concerned to emphasise the depth and seriousness of the suffering and tragedy of her heroine in the face of the particularly stifling restrictions of marriage in the Turkey of this period. *Handan* creates a marital prison for the heroine and puts her to test in order to explore how her New Turkish Woman behaves when she faces oppression that is enforced upon her by her marriage and society. Like Lily, Handan too gains awareness of her restricted position in the patriarchal social code. It would perhaps have been too radical a gesture in Adıvar's Turkey to allow her heroine to reject married life altogether like her American sister and as a result Adıvar's text seems to hold less hope than Wharton's. However, by refusing to act the way her husband wants - and, like her American sister, by insisting on her individuality - Handan's character breaks the mold of the New Turkish Woman (Adıvar's "ideal" woman) for whom marriage was imposed as a social duty for social and economic reproduction rather than for individual fulfilment.[69]

[69] Duben and Behar, 87.

The House of Mirth, on the other hand, is more concerned to show the difficulties faced by the heroine as Lily insists on her independent life, and to demonstrate how a single woman's bid for dignity and emancipation finally destroys her in a society where there is little room for such women. Although Lily, unlike Handan, insists on her freedom from marriage to die as a single woman, the two heroines together nevertheless demonstrate a resistance to their subjection to the ideology of marriage and in this sense both texts offer images of challenging female heroines in the style of New Woman fiction. In this respect another important similarity between these novels lies in their dialogic structure (in particular double-voicedness and hybridisation in *The House of Mirth*; polyphony and interior dialogue in *Handan*) which is able to convey the tensions and contradictions at the heart of the woman question - and at the hearts of their heroines - by giving voice to conventional ideologies on "woman" and "marriage" while simultaneously giving voice to experiences of the restrictions that are placed upon "woman" through the marriage institution.

Chapter 3

Transitions and Subversions:

Female Desire and (A)sexuality in *The Custom of the Country* (1913) and *Heartache* (1924)[1]

Female desire and sexuality are common themes in the New Woman fiction and they represented new ground for New Woman writers. As Lyn Pykett points out, the New Woman writers "were seeking to tell a new story about women, and they sought new forms in which to do it."[2] In her *The Daughters of Decadence*, a collection of short stories by the writers of New Women novels, Elaine Showalter concentrates on one version of New Woman (a sexual, sensual being) and explains that the New Woman writers sought to "rescue female sexuality from the male decadents, images of romantically doomed prostitutes or devouring Venus flytraps, and represents female desire instead as a creative force in artistic imagination as well as in biological reproduction."[3] However, the New Woman is not always necessarily depicted as a sexualised character.

In referring to the contradictory depictions of the New Women's desire in fiction, Sally Ledger argues that "whilst moral decadence and sexual licence were supposed by some critics to be her [New Woman] hallmarks, elsewhere she figured in discourse as a 'mannish,' asexual biological 'type'".[4] The figure of the New American and Turkish Woman as constructed in the public imagination of the early twentieth century is indicative of Ledger's observation: as discussed in Chapter 1, the New American Woman perceives sexual autonomy "as the right to sexual experimentation and self-expression".[5] Elaine Showalter remarks that at the turn of the century, in the United States, the figure of the "sexually independent" New Woman "engendered intense hostility and fear as she seemed to challenge male supremacy […] Politically, the New Woman was an anarchic figured who

[1] The writer of this thesis is aware that Adıvar wrote another novel, *Zeyno'nun Oğlu* (*Zeyno's Son) in 1927* as a sequel to *Heartache* (1924).However, for the purpose of this thesis, this chapter has focused only on *Heartache*.

[2] Lyn Pykett, *Engendering Fiction: The English Novel in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 56.

[3] Elaine Showalter, "New Women" in *Sexual Anarchy, Gender and Culture at the Fin De Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992), xi.

[4] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the fin de siècle* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 16.

[5] Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 284.

threatened to turn the world upside down and to be on top in a wild carnival of social and sexual misrule […].”[6] The New Turkish Woman however was defined as a modest, asexual figure devoid of any hint of femininity that would express her sexuality or create, explicitly or implicitly, sexual excitement.[7] As Jenny B. White notes, “conservative morality” was one of the essential features of the image of the New Woman in Turkey who was expected to wear “severe suits and a no-nonsense demeanour”[8] in order to repress her sexuality, especially in her relationships with men. In this chapter I want to problematise these accounts of the New American and Turkish Woman’s (a)sexuality, exploring the extent to which *The Custom of the Country* (1913) and *Heartache* (1924) conform to or challenge these notions about the New Woman in their respective societies.

Lyn Pykett points out that “the New Woman fiction […] constructed a new version of reality shaped to a woman’s desires […] The New Woman writing consistently problematised, deconstructed […] or rethought womanliness.”[9] *The Custom of the Country* and *Heartache* illustrate the relevance of these observations about New Woman fiction. These novels, I argue, can be read as New Woman novels not only because the depiction of their heroines upsets conventional gender roles and received notions of womanliness but also because they invite a problematisation, deconstruction and rethinking of the place of female desire in the depiction of New Womanhood. Female desire is presented as taking different forms in these novels, and on this point I was inspired further by Ariel Balter’s discussion of the theme of desire in *The Custom of the Country*. Referring to the presentation of Undine’s female desire in the novel as being “inseparable from the fervor for consumer goods” and created by “a capitalist, commodity culture”, Balter argues that the novel shows that “there is no hierarchy or differentiation among various types of desire because, finally, all desire stems from the subject but is mediated by another person, material goal or object.”[10] My argument builds on these observations. By relating Balter’s discussion to my argument of New Woman’s different versions of female desire, I want to

[6] Showalter, 38.
[7] Deniz Kandiyoti, “Women as Metaphor: The Turkish Novel From the Tanzimat to the Republic” in *Urban Crises and Social Movement in the Middle East*, Ed. by Kenneth Brown et al. (L’Harmattan: Paris, Proceedings of the C.N.R.A. – E.S.R.C. Symposium, 1989), 149.
[8] Jenny B. White, “State Feminism, Modernization, and the Turkish Republican Woman” in *NWSA Journal*, 3 (2003), 145-159, 153.
[9] Pykett, 57.
[10] Ariel Balter, “What Does XXX Want? Desire and Consumerism in Edith Wharton’s *The Custom of the Country*” in *American Literary Realism*, 1870-1910, 3 (1995), 19-36, 19.

suggest that by depicting Undine's desire as mediated by sexist and capitalist Old New York and directed towards the "marriage" market, while presenting her as a fierce, ambitious New Woman who exploits the marriage system for her personal goals, *The Custom of the Country* reveals its critique of the discourse of marriage in Wharton's time and its related objectification and commodification of women. Similarly, in *Heartache*, Zeyno is portrayed as a New Woman with contradictory attitudes towards sexuality. By showing the way in which her sexual desire is mediated by a male character, Hasan, the novel challenges the received notions of New Womanhood in Adıvar's society.

In light of the above points, and in contrast to existing critical accounts of these novels that have tended to view the heroine of *The Custom of the Country* (Undine) as a "cocktail bitch"[11] or a "one-sided, defective"[12] character, and the heroine of *Heartache* (Zeyno) as the prototype of asexual New Turkish Womanhood (or as Adıvar's "ideal" woman),[13] I argue that we can disrupt such readings of the heroines by approaching both New Women characters in the novels as representations of complex, shifting subjectivities. (I will return to the discussion of the critical reception of these novels in more detail later in this chapter) I suggest that these novels portray their heroines in transition out of a state of inexperience to one of awareness: for Undine, this refers to her initial ignorance of the marriage "market" in Old New York to an adept marriage careerist and an awareness of the exploitative nature of marriage; and for Zeyno, it refers to her awakening to her sexual desire.

Cora Kaplan's discussion of subjectivity as being "always in process and contradiction" assisted me further in developing my argument in this chapter. Kaplan argues that subjectivity is:

> [A]lways in process and contradiction, even female subjectivity, structured, divided and denigrated through the matrices of sexual difference. I see this understanding as part of a more optimistic political scenario than the ones I have been part of, one

[11] Edmund Wilson, *The Wound and the Bows: Seven Studies in Literature* (Cambridge: Houghton Miffin, 1929), 202.
[12] Richard H. Lawson, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), 48.
[13] See for example, İnci Enginün, *Halide Edib Adıvar'ın Eserlerinde Doğu ve Batı Meselesi* (*The Issue of East and West in the Works of Halide Edib Adıvar*) (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2007), 203. It should be noted that my use of the term, the New Woman, also refers to Adıvar's "ideal" woman as outlined by the scholars in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

> that can and ought to lead to a politics which will no longer overvalue control, rationality and individual power, and which, instead, tries to understand human desire, struggle and agency as they are mobilized through a more complicated, less finished and less heroic schema.[14]

Dale M. Bauer's discussion of feminist dialogics informed my methodological framework of these novels. Bauer points out that a feminist dialogics enables an understanding of multi-voicedness in a text in such a way as to uncover "potential resistance to oppressive conventions."[15] Drawing on this, along with Bakhtin's dialogism, the overarching argument of this chapter is that both novels under study can be read as dialogic texts presenting multiple points of view on the woman question, alerting the reader to the tension between the surface narrative (the authoritative discourse - here, referring to morality, marriage and their prescriptions on "how a woman should be") and the counter narrative (the internally persuasive discourse - here, those aspects of the narrative that indicate the heroine's struggle for personal freedom and her attempts to fulfil her personal desire). I suggest that, through their depictions of New Women riddled with contradictions, these texts can be read, to use Bauer's words, as offering "potential resistance to oppressive conventions" of authoritative discourses and a challenge to the expected patterns of behaviour of the (a)sexual New Woman as she is defined in American and Turkey. These are the main aspects of the novels that constitute the focus of this chapter.

[14] Cora Kaplan, "Speaking/Writing/Feminism" in *On Gender and Writing*, ed. Michelene Wandor (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 181.
[15] Dale M. Bauer and Susan Jaret McKinstry, *Feminism, Bakhtin and the Dialogic* (New York: State University of New York, 1991), 4.

3.1. *The Custom of the Country*

3.1.1. Critical Reception of *The Custom of the Country* and Finding a New Approach

The most common criticisms of *The Custom of the Country* regard Wharton's hostility towards her heroine and the extreme nature of Undine's selfishness and destructiveness. R.W.B. Lewis argues that:

> Wharton introduces the most restless and devastating of her heroines […] a crude, unlettered, humourless, artificial, but exceedingly beautiful creature, with the most minimal moral intuitions and virtually no talent whatever for normal human affection. Undine did, undoubtedly, stand for everything in the new American female that Edith despised and recoiled from […].[16]

In the same line, other critics viewed Undine as a character "Wharton hates too much;"[17] "a monster-heroine" and "symbol of dehumanization;"[18] "the prototype in fiction of the 'gold-digger,' of the international cocktail bitch;"[19] "a soulless woman with no substance;"[20] a "serpent-woman [with] no self […]"[21], "the spirit of competition imbued with a voracious appetite;"[22] "ignorant and insensitive, devoid of […] maternal instinct […]"[23] Blake Nevius summarises effectively all these negative responses to Undine:

> [Wharton] clearly despises her protagonist […] As the story unfolds, Undine Spragg becomes more visibly an inhuman abstraction […] One can watch the novelist's prejudices defeat her judgement and trace the slow withdrawal of sympathy which, even at first, seemed tentative and forced.[24]

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[16] R.W.B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 37.
[17] Louis Auchincloss, *Edith Wharton* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers, 1961), 24.
[18] Christof Wegelin, "Edith Wharton and the Twilight of the International Novel," in *The Southern Review*, 5 (1969), 403.
[19] Wilson, 202.
[20] Carol J. Single, *Edith Wharton's The Age of Innocence*, 37.
[21] Helen Killoran, *Edith Wharton: Art and Allusion* (Tuscaloosa and London: The University of Alabama Press, 1996), 53.
[22] Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *A Feast of Words: The Triumph of Edith Wharton* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 253.
[23] Lous Auchincloss, *Edith Wharton: A Woman in Her Time* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd., 1971), 101, 102.
[24] Blake Nevius, *Edith Wharton* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953), 152.

John Jay Chapman reads the novel as an account of "New York society and its manners",[25] focusing on the subject of a society in transition and "the impact of new money on old values."[26] However, he arrives at the same conclusion as the above critics by arguing that "Undine is one of the terrible engines of destruction that horrified Wharton […]."[27] Although such descriptions of Undine are apt, they neglect the way that Undine's character and her actions are presented as outcomes of and reactions to the capitalist and sexist society in which she finds herself. By focussing on Undine as a selfish and insensitive *femme fatale*, these reviewers develop monologic accounts of the novel, judging and marking the heroine, and paying little attention to the complexity of the heroine and the novel's critique of the institution of marriage and the effects that it has on women in Old New York.

Other critics, however, have sought to look beyond the novel's negative portrayal of Undine and have emphasised the author's satire on the institution of marriage. Katherine Joslin, in her *Edith Wharton*, emphasises that "Wharton offers a bitingly satirical 'portrait of a lady' whose success serves to reveal to the reader a portrait of a corrupt social and economic system."[28] Likewise, Elizabeth Ammons points out that Undine's destructive and cruel depiction "reflect the author's criticism […] of the cultural attitudes implicit in leisure-class marriage."[29] Although these critics' studies of the novel differ from the other readings seen above, they too overlook the dialogic properties of the novel in which, to use Bakhtin's words, "the author speaks not about a character, but with him" and the way in which Undine can be read as "a carrier of a fully valid word and not the mute, voiceless object of the author's words."[30] In doing so, such critics give less attention to the role of other voices in the novel and their effects on the ways in which Undine is presented as the active product of her upbringing and culture. And finally, none of these critics have considered in depth Undine's asexual characterisation and how this relates to the image of the New American Woman who is generally depicted with a questioning attitude towards the

[25] John Jay Chapman, "'Social order and Restraints': *The Custom of the Country* (1913)", 197.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 203.
[28] Katherine Joslin, *Edith Wharton* (New York: St. Martin press, 1991), 74.
[29] Elizabeth Ammons, "The Business of Marriage in Edith Wharton's 'The Custom of the Country'", *Criticism*, 16:4 (1974) 326-338, 326.
[30] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. & trans. Carly Emerson (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 63.

restrictions that marriage can place on her desire for sexual pleasure and sexual self-expression. By exploring these aspects, I will also demonstrate that Undine's character challenges the notion that the New American Woman advocates female sexual emancipation and seeks individual fulfilment outside marriage.

Against those critics who view Undine as the author's negative portrayal of a destructive female identity, I would like to suggest another way of reading the novel. I argue instead that Undine offers a site for the critical exploration of a number of themes relating to the position of women in Old New York: by depicting the transition that Undine undergoes in the novel, the text urges the reader to observe her struggling and taking on different identities and roles in order to survive within a capitalist and sexist society; through the depiction of her character's absence of sexual desire - her desire is channelled into the pursuit of gain within the marriage market - and by showing her attempts to exploit the marriage system, the text can also be read as offering a powerful indictment of the marriage institution that is designed to exploit her.

Bakhtin's dialogism provides the analytical tools for my analysis. Attention is given to passages that present the surface narrative (authoritative discourse) and counter narrative (internally persuasive discourse) reflecting opposing points of view on the subjects of woman and marriage, particularly where these come into conflict in the New Woman's consciousness as the novel follows her encounter with the structures and forces of an exploitative social system.[31]

Before proceeding with the analysis of the text, it is worth commenting briefly on Undine's name, which serves as an allusion to an aspect of the novel that will be highlighted in the analysis, namely the shifting female identities of the heroine. Wharton's use of the German/English form of *Undine* to name her heroine has been a subject of debate among Wharton's scholars. In the novel, Undine's mother, Mrs. Spragg tells Ralph that "we called her after a hair-waver father [Mrs. Spragg's father] put on the market the week she was

[31] Bakhtin's use of "consciousness" refers to the character's discourse about herself and the world around her. For a discussion of Bakhtin's understanding of consciousness in the novel, see section 3 of Chapter 1 of this thesis.

born" and then she says: "It's from undoolay, you know, the French for crimping".[32] (57). However, for Richard Lawson, Wharton was actually inspired by German Friedrich de La Motte-Fouque's romantic fairy-tale novella of *Undine,* a water-nymph who assumes human form and soul after marrying a human.[33] Lawson's account of the Undine water-nymph's story is as follows:

> The water-nymph, after assuming human soul, falls in love with and married the knight Huldbrand […] In her human role Undine is concerned to forestall the malevolent designs of her uncle, the water spirit Kuhleborn ("the spirit of coolness") on human beings, especially on those she loves - including her human rival for her husband's love, the lady Bertalda. When the three take an ill-advised boat trip […], Undine impresses on Huldbrand that he must not express the slightest displeasure against her here on the water, where her kindred spirits are most powerful. At his failure to heed her warning, Undine returns to her native element, her human role no longer bearable. Shortly afterward, Huldbrand, at the point of marrying Bertalda, dies.[34]

Unlike the water-nymph, the story of Wharton's Undine is neither emotional nor romantic, but as Lawson suggests, Fauque's Undine with her watery nature and her adoption into the human world provides important insight into our reading of Wharton's Undine regarding her fluid nature and crafty ability to fit herself into different social groups and adopt a new identity each time she marries. Irigaray's notion of mimicry is utilised to explore Undine's fluid nature and shifting femininities in the novel. In *This Sex Which is Not One*, Irigaray writes: "There is, in an initial phase, perhaps only one 'path,' the one historically assigned to the feminine: that of *mimicry*. One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus begin to thwart it."[35] Irigaray continues by stating that:

> To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try and recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself … to "ideas," in particular to ideas about herself that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make "visible," by an effect of

[32] Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country* (London: David Campbell Publishers Ltd., 1994). All subsequent citations are to this edition and will be given in parenthesis in the text.
[33] Richard H. Lawson, "Undine" in *Edith Wharton / edited and with an introduction by Harold Bloom,* ed. Harold Bloom (New York : Chelsea House 1986), 30.
[34] Lawson, *"Undine",* 30.
[35] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One,* trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 76.

> playful repetition what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language.[36]

Irigaray here refers to mimicry as a strategy available for a woman to subvert exploitative gender roles through the deliberate acting out of prescribed patriarchal femininity. I draw on Irigaray's observations here to develop my feminist dialogic framework, reading Undine as a female "mimic" caught in a dialogue between two seemingly opposing discourses and calling attention to the complex construction of Undine's character as she appears to be both exploiting and exploited by the status quo. While Irigaray and Bakhtin may seem to share little else in common, they are nevertheless most directly connected through the pre-eminence they grant to difference, which, in my case, refers to the differences of New Woman's identities. As a result, mimicry and dialogism together offer fertile ways of examining the novel's challenge to the essential notion of fixed femininity and the diversity of meanings that are ascribed to the New Woman.

3.1.2. Summary of the Plot

The Custom of the Country is about an ambitious and determined young American woman who advances through and derives her power from the institution of marriage in Old New York. She moves from Apex - where she was married to Elmer Mofatt, an ambitious but unsuccessful businessman, but had divorced him after two weeks due to pressure from her parents - to New York with a hope of reaching the high echelons of society through a wealthy husband. In New York, she marries first Ralph Marwell, a descendant of one the aristocratic families, and has a child by him, Paul. Frustrated with the difference between what she thinks marriage ought to be and what it turns out to be, she abandons him and threatens Ralph that she would take custody of their son unless he pays her a sum of money. In his agony, Ralph falls seriously ill and finally commits suicide. Undine's next marriage is with Raymond de Chelles, an aristocratic Frenchman, but she divorces him too because, just like Ralph, he also fails to provide her with a luxurious life. She finally re-marries Mofatt, now a millionaire.

[36] Ibid.

3.1.3. Analysis

The opening of *The Custom of the Country* has the echoes of traditional Old New York's gender roles (surface narrative) and alerts the reader to the way in which female desire is channelled towards the marriage market. The opening scene also functions as the first indications of Undine as an outsider who is learning the conventions of gender relations in Old New York. We begin with a dialogue between Undine and Mrs. Heeny, the manicurist and masseuse of the society, and they converse about the letter written by Mrs. Fairford, Ralph Marwell's sister. She invites Undine to dine with the Marwells, one of the high ranking families of Old New York society, to introduce Undine to her brother, Ralph Marwell. Mrs. Heeny teaches Undine the rules of the "marriage market" in Old New York:

> When a young man in society wants to meet a girl again, he gets his sister to ask her […] Don't you know it's the thing in the best society to pretend that girls can't do anything without their mothers' permission? You just remember that, Undine. You mustn't accept invitations from gentlemen without you say you've got to ask your mother first" (8, 9).

Soon, the narration shifts to Mrs. Heeny's free indirect discourse and presents its counter narrative by exposing a satire of the rules and customs of Old New York imposed upon women. "Mrs. Heeny looked at her hostess [Mrs. Spragg] with friendly compassion. She was well aware that she was *the only bright spot* on Mrs. Spragg's horizon. Since the Spraggs, some two years previously, had moved from Apex City to New York, *they had made little progress* in establishing relations with their new environment […]" (my italics, 10, 11). What begins as the character's free indirect discourse is interrupted by the narrator's ironic definition of Mrs. Heeny as "the only bright spot" (not quite character-like diction) implying a critique of the way she assigns such high importance to herself as the only link between upper-class of Old New York and the Spraggs. While the last sentence can be wholly attributable to the narrator, through its ironic tone that describes the Spragg's failure of establishing their link with upper-class people as "little progress", it also seems to

suggest an indictment of the Spraggs who expect Mrs. Heeny to undertake the task of introducing Undine, the Spragg's product, to be invested in the "marriage market".

The channelling of female desire towards the marriage market is illustrated further through the life of the Spraggs who represent the "nouveaux-riches", the newly rich classes of Wharton's time. The Spraggs have moved from Apex to New York but "without any social benefit to their daughter, and it was of course for that purpose that they had come" (11). Mrs. Spragg has "transferred her whole personality to her child" wishing that Undine can "have what she wanted" (11). Similarly, Undine's father, Abner Spragg also agrees with his wife when he says: "I am bound to have her [Undine] go round with these people she knows. I want her to be with them all she can" (43). Undine's mother hopes that "Mrs. Heeny, *who crossed those sacred thresholds so familiarly*, might some day gain admission for Undine" (my italics, 11). The account of Mrs. Spragg's indirect discourse (surface narrative) is given a hint of the narrator's usual sarcastic style (italicised part, the counter narrative) in a hybrid construction that has the effect of mocking the role of Mrs. Heeny and Mrs. Spragg's ambition for her daughter to enter into the "sacred thresholds" of Old New York. This effect is reinforced in the following passage:

> It was Mrs. Heeny who peopled the solitude of the long ghostly days with lively anecdotes of the Van Degens, the Driscolls, the Chauncey Ellings and the other *social potentates whose least doings Mrs. Spragg and Undine had followed from a afar in the Apex papers*, and who had come to seem so much more remote since only the width of the Central Park divided mother and daughter from their *Olympian portals*. (my italics, 10-11)

The italicised portions of the passage have the tone of irony toward the Spraggs. The passage first alerts the reader to the authoritative aura of Old New York's upper class by defining them as the rulers (potentates) of the society and then mocking the reverent vision that they have of Old New York's "Olympian portals". In so doing, the text reveals its subtle critique of the mother and the daughter who have been trying to learn and adapt to the Old New York's values so that Undine can achieve her social advancement. These depictions of Mrs. Spraggs' thoughts reveal the way in which Undine's voracious appetite

for luxury begins as a family investment and provide insight into her upbringing as a girl in a culture that is fixated on marriage as a business and route to social status.

It is after this point that the narrator shifts its focus to Undine's point of view and we begin to gain insight into the way in which the New Woman is presented as coming to pose a threat to the marriage market in Old New York. With her growing sense of the game called "how a woman should act" in Old New York, we learn that Undine: "was going to know the right people at last - she was going to get what she wanted!" (23). Despite her "desire to appear informed and competent" (65), Undine does not know how to play the "female role" that is required by Old New York. But it does not take long for her to understand that in order to be successful in her career, she has to imitate them. Before she attends the dinner at the Marvells, she practices her new role in front of the mirror: "For a while she carried on her chat with an imaginary circle of admirers, twisting this way and that […] She […] watched herself approvingly […] as she passed from one attitude to another" (18). Practicing her role many times, Undine acts it out with facility when she joins the Marvells for dinner:

> *Her quickness in noting external differences had already taught her to modulate and lower her voice, and to replace "The I-dea!" and "I wouldn't wonder" by more polished locutions;* and she had not been ten minutes at table before she found that to seem very much in love, and a little confused and subdued by the newness and intensity of the sentiment, was […] the becoming attitude for a young lady in her situation. The part was not hard to play […]. (my italics, 65)

The passage presents Undine's free indirect discourse suggesting her growing awareness of, and desire to play, the "becoming attitude for a young lady" that Old New York expects from her. The language in the first italicised section sets up a satirical account of this encounter between Undine and Old New York, setting Undine's comically naïve idiom ("*The I-dea!*" and "*I wouldn't wonder*") against the more formal idiom ("polished locutions") of Old New York. While we are invited initially to participate in a mocking of Undine's attempts to mimic the manners of Old New York, towards the end of the passage it is hinted that Undine's growing desire to learn the "attitude for a young lady" in Old New York will lead her to become, as we will see later, what her society has been trying to avoid: a woman with the potential to upset their conventions, skilled at mimicking their

mannerisms and "playing the part" in order to be able to exploit the social system that is designed to exploit her.

Thus far, the text illustrates the way in which the system of marriage and courtship in Old New York works and shows how Undine's desire is channelled towards this system. In the process of learning the role of the "ornamental creature" in marriage, Undine illustrates the relevance of Thorstein Veblen's observations regarding "conspicuous consumption": in his discussion of the middle and upper-class American marriage in the late nineteenth-century, Veblen argues that women were constructed to "become the ceremonial consumer of goods […]"[37]because their "conspicuous consumption" was an expression of men's wealth and power. Knowing that marriage is her only vehicle and her beauty is her only "asset", she begins to define her desire by watching Old New Yorkers to learn how to become a "conspicuous consumer" for a wealthy husband. Figuring out how to capture the upper-class men in Old New York, Undine comes to realise that she should present herself as a valuable prize and desirable "object" for the male gaze to become, to use Irigaray's words, a woman that offers a "use-value for man, an exchange value among men: in other words, a commodity."[38] This is also what the depicted Old New York desires as Mr. Dagonet from the upper-class says to Undine: "My child, if you look like that you'll get it" (68), indicating that as long as she looks desirable she can achieve her goal: a wealthy husband. As she is learning the customs of Old New York "unknown to her girlish categories" (136), Undine becomes more compulsive in using her female attractiveness to her advantage. Her success at playing her role is illustrated well at the Driscoll ball which helps her carve her way through the Old New York ranks of the Marvells and Dagonets, two powerful New York families. The passage voices the difference between the way women and men perceive Undine and reveal her desire to be eyed and admired by her society:

> The ball was as brilliant as she had hoped, and her own part in it as thrilling as a page from one of the "*society novels*" […] What could be more delightful than to feel that, while all the women envied her dress, the men did not so much as look at it? Their admiration was all for herself […] (my italics, 160).

[37] Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions* (New York city: The Modern Library, Inc., 1934), 83.
[38] Irigaray, 31.

With this passage, we are provided a glimpse into the role of men and women of Old New York: women's jealousy focuses on Undine's dress as an object of desire whereas for men, she herself becomes an object of desire. There is also a subtle mocking of Undine's thrill at being part of a scene "from one of the 'society novels'" (a type of novel that Undine loves reading) - the quotation marks create a parody of the character's language and heighten a sense of her naivety. However, part of the point of this parody is also to dramatise how perfectly - and perhaps dangerously - the New Woman is adapting to her new society only to triumph by means of it:

> Undine had been perfectly sincere in telling Indiana Rolliver [her friend from Apex] that she was not an *"immoral woman"*. The pleasures for which her sex took such risks had never attracted her, and she did not even crave the excitement of having it thought that they did. She wanted, *passionately and persistently*, two things which she believed should subsist together in any well-ordered life: amusement and respectability […] She must make the best of what she could get and wait her chance of getting something better […] (my italics, 246-247).

Undine's insistence that she is not an "immoral woman" hints at a tension here between the discourse of female sexuality (counter narrative) and the moral codes of Old New York (surface narrative): it indicates the way in which American women of the era who follow their desire and enjoy the pleasures [of sex or love] are stigmatised as "immoral women". What Undine desires "passionately and persistently" is, however, not the pleasures of sex, romance or love but the "amusement and respectability" which can be gained through wealth and power in Old New York. If we read the italicised words as Undine's language rather than the narrator's - as suggested through Undine's typically "ambitious" tone ("passionately and persistently") - we can see that her understanding of the importance of the "sense of reviving popularity" (279) grows intensely. But this is not only because she seeks a luxurious life but also because, as the narrator suggests later, it is "her [Undine's] only notion of self-seeing" (279). In a deeper sense, she realises that she has no self and no identity without the admiration of her society which "was necessary to her personal enjoyment" (382). By making Undine withdrawn from her sexual desires and simultaneously emphasising "her violent desires and her cold tenacity" (301), the novel shows, as Cynthia Griffin Wolff notes, how Undine is led to view "sexuality in cold-

blooded capacity for calculating."[39] Given the fact that marriage is her only option to achieve recognition and a sense of identity in the eyes of her society, it is not surprising that the New Woman is led to the direction of becoming such a "cold-blooded" female who is learning how to play according to this capitalist nature of upper-class marriage in Old New York where women "sold themselves to the Invaders; […] [and] bought their husbands as they bought an opera-box" (56).

The dialogic structure of presenting and then subverting traditional ideologies (or authoritative discourse in Bakhtinian terms), within the novel is illustrated more explicitly when we begin to see Undine from multiple points of view. The text shifts its focus to Undine's marriages and to her husbands through whose eyes we begin to see her. First we see her from the angle of Ralph for whom Undine "was still at the age when the flexible soul offers itself to the first grasp" (59); exposing his intention to construct this raw material – to define Undine - according to his own artistic creativity. With all his intellectual capacity and vitality (he had studied at Harvard and Oxford), Ralph might be above his group but just like other male characters considered in this thesis (Selden in *The House of Mirth*, Newland in *The Age of Innocence*, Hüsnü in *Handan*, Siren in *Raik's Mother*, Hasan in *Heartache*) he is shown to be still very much part of his conservative character with a romantic idealisation of women. Ralph's romantic fantasy is illustrated again when we are given his perception of Undine as "a lovely rock-bound Andromeda with the devouring monster Society careering up to make a mouthful of her; and himself whirling down on his winged horse […] to cut her bonds, snatch her up, and whirl her back into the blue" (60). By imitating the diction of well-educated Ralph, we sense here the narrator's mockery of the male's feelings of heroism and superiority towards the female and his romantic fantasy of rescuing of her from her state of ignorance and vulnerability to Old New York.

What follows is the counter narrative that reveals an indictment of this male vision of femininity - Undine as the fantasy of the "lovely rock-bound Andromeda" and water nymph (as her name ironically suggests) - as Undine's marriage to Ralph comically subverts all his preconceptions about her. Paradoxically, while Undine is going to build her new female

[39] Cynthia Griffin, *A Feast of Words: The Triumphs of Edith Wharton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 253.

identity on being a consumer of an appropriate wealthy husband, her marriage to Ralph Marwell repositions her within the conventions of Old New York and she is depicted as a "selfish, indifferent" wife who begins "to resent in Ralph the slightest sign of resistance to her pleasure" (71). Feeling frustrated with her limited social and financial opportunities, she thinks to herself: "Always the same monotonous refrain! […] Ralph seemed to have money on the brain: his business life had certainly deteriorated him. And […] he hadn't made a success of it after all […]" (198). Clearly, Undine feels cheated of her marriage prospects, namely power and luxury. Not only does Ralph lack the cash, he also has such a strong sense of proprietorship towards his wife. She begins to see his attempts to adapt her to his values and his imposed belief in the essential vision of "vulnerable" female who needs to be rescued from the "monster Society" (60).

As the dialogic structure allows, the text shifts its focus back to the surface narrative (male point of view) and we are presented with Ralph's failure to grasp the elusive nature of the heroine (a quality that is suggested in her name and invites us to think about her fluid, and thus dangerous, New Woman character as a challenge to male discourse). Ralph eventually comes to a painful realisation: "it was admiration, not love, that she [Undine] wanted" (157). In other words, Undine does not desire romance but, as Ralph realises, "wants to enjoy herself" and her vision of enjoyment is "publicity" (157). Undine's lack of desire for her husband, for example, is illustrated when we read Ralph's following free indirect discourse: "he [Ralph] knelt beside her and laid his cheek against hers. She seemed hardly aware of the gesture; but to that he was also used. […] he felt her resign herself like a tired child" (107-108). In such moments Undine is presented as an asexual woman, indifferent to her husband's sexual advances. Irigaray, in her *This Sex Which is Not One*, claims that:

> Woman […] is only a more or less obliging prop for the enactment of man's fantasies. That she may find pleasure there in that role, by proxy, is possible […] But such pleasure is above all a masochistic prostitution of her body to a desire that is not her own […][40]

Irigaray's suggestion of woman as an object for male fantasy is relevant to Undine's depiction in the above scene where Undine appears to be detached and cold to her husband's desire "that is not her own". On the contrary, her desire for "publicity" rather

[40] Irigaray, 25.

than “romance” suggests that her sexual life is only an element in her desire to be admired by others (here, referring to Ralph), and relates little to her sexual passion. Undine’s asexuality, in this sense, can be read as a depiction of a particular American view of sex that is voiced by Charles Bowen, an upper-class New York character: “in the effete societies [referring to Europe] it’s love [which is the emotional center of gravity] while in our new one it’s business. In America the real *crime passionnel* is a ‘big steal’ – there’s more excitement in wrecking railways than homes” (146, italics in original). With such indications of the way in which business is valued more by Old New York (and by Undine as a product of this society) than love or romance, Ralph’s insistence on forcing his wife into the role of “romantic” wife of his male fantasy comes to appear as out of place. During her marriage, we are not given any hint regarding her passion, love or sexual desire; as Ralph ponders, “a stranger - that was what she had always been to him. So malleable outwardly, she had remained insensible to the touch of the heart” (157). Undine’s elusive - and thus dangerous - nature is emphasised once more as the passage indicates Ralph’s understanding that she changes her external presentation in accordance to the desires of the male gaze but lacks any sense of the “touch of the heart”. Ralph is finally awakened from his dream-like trance: “At last the bandage was off and he could see. And what did he see? Only the uselessness of driving his wife to subterfuges that were no longer necessary” (157). Thus Ralph, partly because of his conservative upbringing and partly because of seeing himself as the romantic hero of Undine, falls prey to and becomes a victim of a “devious society” from which he wanted to rescue her; finally, he commits suicide and the attempt of the male (Ralph) to construct the female (Undine) through myth ends in failure.

Ralph’s suffering and tragic death are narrated in such a sentimental way that we may find ourselves condemning Undine’s cruelty or selfishness. And yet, reading further, we are presented a dialogue, between Charles Bowen and Ralph’s sister, which contains different points of view on American marriage. By giving more space to Bowen’s narrative, the novel also brings in a feminist critique of American marriage, and hence, of “*the custom of the country*”:

> [Bowen]: “The fact that the average American looks down on his wife […] It’s normal for a man to work hard for a woman—what’s abnormal is his not caring

> to tell her anything about it […] Because it's against *the custom of the country*. And whose fault is that? The man's again […]"
> [Mrs. Fairford] sinking back into her chair, sat gazing at the vertiginous depths above which his thought [Charles Bowen] seemed to dangle her. "YOU don't [think that] […] The American man [is] the most slaving, self-effacing, self-sacrificing—?"
> [Bowen] "Yes; and the most indifferent […] The real paradox is the fact that the men who make, materially, the biggest sacrifices for their women, should do least for them ideally and romantically. And what's the result—how do the women avenge themselves? All my sympathy's with them, poor deluded dears, when I see their fallacious little attempt to trick out the leavings tossed them by the preoccupied male—the money and the motors and the clothes—and pretend to themselves and each other that THAT'S what really constitutes life […] [and] she's [Undine] a monstrously perfect result of the system." (my italics, 145-147)

The importance of this dialogue between Bowen and Mrs. Fairford lies in the fact that "*the custom of the country*" is presented from two conflicting perspectives. The play of different subject positions in this dialogue, however, is not merely a reproduction of gendered binaries, but rather presents a conflict between discourses of feminism and patriarchy. While the female perceives American men as "self-sacrificing" in marriage, ironically, it is a male character who argues against the system of marriage in which women are suppressed. Although the focus in this paragraph seems to be on the hypocrisy of Old New York's perspective of marriage, it also indicates the construction of female identity and her sexuality - as Bowen says, Undine is "a monstrously perfect result of the system."

The novel continues to present shifting narrative points of view on the role of wife and husband, particularly as we see Undine perceived from another perspective: her third husband, Raymond de Chelles. Raymond embodies the idealised "charming specimen" of the Frenchman with "discriminating taste and transient ardour […] [and] intelligence of which no other race has […] but […] one felt the tight hold of two or three inherited notions, religious, political, and domestic, in total contradiction to his surface attitude" (193). The account of Raymond contains a tension between the discourses of the character (surface narrative) and the narrator (counter narrative): we first gain an impression of his "taste" and "intelligence", but this is then undercut with a hint of sarcasm from the narrator that has the effect of satirising his "civilized" attitude and his attachment to religion, politics and domestic life. Raymond's hypocrisy is soon revealed as we see him changing after he marries Undine. At first Undine is happy to be Raymond's wife: "After her bitter

two years of [marriage to Ralph and] loneliness and humiliation it was delicious to find herself once more adored and protected" (335). However, her view of "happy" marriage does not last long because what she desires from marriage (financial gain and social approval) does not match with what Raymond wants: "Raymond seemed to attach more importance to love, in all its manifestations, than was usual or convenient in a husband; and she gradually began to be aware that her domination over him involved a corresponding loss of independence" (335). Undine's view of marriage as a means for social approval rather than romance does not change with Raymond either. Her satisfaction with Raymond comes to an end for the same reasons she ended her marriage with Ralph: Raymond too fails to pay her shopping expenses or provide her with a luxurious life. As if this is not enough, he turns out to be a possessive husband and wants to control her rigorously: he requires her "to give a circumstantial report of every hour she spent away from him" (335-336) and attempts to enforce upon her the strict rules and norms of the upper-class French society which dictate that "a woman must adopt her husband's nationality whether she wants to or not. It's the law, and it's the custom […]" (338). A feminist counter narrative reveals itself again as Undine is shown to find herself trapped by "extreme domesticity" (338) and feels "the impossibility of breaking through the mysterious web of traditions, conventions, prohibitions that enclosed her in their impenetrable network" just as strongly in French culture as she did in the culture of Old New York (359). Finally, refusing to be the woman Raymond wants her to be, she seeks divorce and solace in the company of a more profitable choice: Elmer Moffatt

Undine finally remarries her first husband from her time in Apex, Elmer Moffatt, now a successful and wealthy businessman and "the greatest collector in America" (405) (as one of the newspapers in the novel refers to him), whose wealth has carried him to the heights of New York society and who has transformed himself, just like Undine, from a pitiable outsider to an ambitious insider. He seems the only compatible match for Undine not out of love or passionate desire but because he "used life exactly as she would have used it in his place" (392). For Undine, Mofatt embodies the customs of Undine's culture: "Here was someone who spoke her language, who knew her meanings, who understood instinctively all the deep-seated wants […] It seemed to her that the great moment of her life had come

at last" (373). But, as the below passage suggests, Undine is attracted to her husband only because he can provide her with wealth, jewels, palaces, "everything she wanted":

> Even now, however, she was not always happy. She had everything she wanted, *but she still felt, at times, that there were other things she might want if she knew about them.* […] At first she had been dazzled by his success and subdued by his authority. He had given her all she had ever wished for, and more than she had ever dreamed of having […] *But there were other [moments] when she saw his defects and was irritated by them* […]. (my italics, 411)

The clash between the surface and counter narrative is exposed through the way in which two voices (the narrator's and Undine's) are juxtaposed to each other, presenting contradictory points of view on Undine's marriage with Mofatt: despite the narrator's critical commentary on Undine's fickle and greedy behaviour, the presence of Undine's voice also conveys her point of view (as revealed through the italicised portion in the passage) and this ending, with its clashing points of view, leaves the novel open to various interpretations: one may think she may abandon Mofatt too if she finds a better opportunity; for another reader, she may appear as a strong, ambitious young woman or perhaps, in Edmund Wilson's words, as an "international cocktail bitch" or, as Christof Wegelin suggests, "a monster-heroine."[41] But our orientation as reader is limited to Undine's self-portrayal unless we listen more attentively to the multiple and contradictory voices that make up the heroine's shifting subjectivity. It is this ambiguity - the heroines' shifting subjectivity and her mixing of diverse female roles - that creates the New Woman's "unfinalisability" and her challenge to hegemonic perceptions of "what a woman should be".

To conclude, dialogism enables the reader to observe the way in which Undine is presented in a process of transformation from a naïve "inexperienced" woman to an ambitious marriage careerist. She is a complex, contradictory portrayal of a challenging female mimicry who, as Irigaray would say, "still subsists, otherwise and elsewhere than there where she mimes so well what is asked of her."[42] Capable of adapting to and mimicking the roles required of her, her character shifts through various female identities. Reading the novel through Bakhtin's eyes also opens our eyes to the dialogic construction of Undine's

[41] Edmund Wilson, 202; Christof Wegelin, 403.
[42] Irigaray, 152.

femininities in relation to her desire to achieve “amusement and respectability”: things she can achieve only through publicity and power by means of marriage. And finally, by portraying Undine as devoid of her sexual desire and demonstrating, instead, the way in which her desire is channelled into the pursuit of publicity and power through marriage, the novel offers an image of the New Woman as a product of discourse with multiple subjectivities rather than a certain model of New American Woman who seeks sexual emancipation and rejects marriage for economic independence.

3.2. *Heartache*

3.2.1. Critical Reception of *Heartache* and Finding a New Approach

Thus far, *Heartache*'s unique qualities as a feminist text have not been examined in significant depth. Adıvar's critics occupied themselves either with Zeyno's portrayal as the representation of the New Turkish Woman or Adıvar's "ideal" woman, or with the theme of the clash between East and West. The novel has not received the attention it deserves with the exception of two reviews: İnci Enginün's *The Issue of East and West in the Works of Halide Edib Adıvar*,[43] and Bahriye Çeri's *Woman in the Turkish Novel*.[44] Referring to Zeyno's asexual image and her depiction as Adıvar's ideal woman, Enginün argues that the novel is about "a sportive, intellectual, [and] natural [woman who] received Western education, but is still loyal to her traditional roots […]."[45] Although Bahriye Çeri's account of *Heartache* is much broader than Enginün's, Çeri too reads Zeyno as the representation of the author's "ideal-asexual" woman who shows "the extent to which the West should be taken as an example […]"[46], a "sportive, strong [woman] not a mere symbol of fancy and beauty",[47] an example of "the New Woman that is created by the Republic."[48] Çeri roots her discussion of the novel mainly in the problem of (mis)interpretation of Westernisation represented through Adıvar's depiction of female characters in the novel. She divides her writing into three sections, each dedicated to three female characters in the novel: Zeyno, Azize and Dora. Her review concludes with this observation:

> […] Zeyno utilises Westernisation in the right way; she is the epitome of a woman who, with her freedom to choose, can see what is best for her [in regard to marriage]. Azize, on the other hand, interprets her freedom by imitating Westernisation only in her dress code, manners and behaviour. Dora represents the Western woman whose opinions and behaviours regarding the role of woman are presented by the author as inappropriate in Turkish society.[49]

[43] Enginün, 203-208.
[44] Bahriye Çeri, *Türk Romanında Kadın (Woman in the Turkish Novel)* (İstanbul: Simurg Yayınları, 1996), 42-60.
[45] Enginün, 203.
[46] Çeri, 67.
[47] Ibid., 47.
[48] Ibid., 67.
[49] Ibid., 43.

Muzaffer Uyguner, the writer of *Halide Edib Adıvar: Her Life, Art, Works, Selections* also approaches the novel, although briefly, and shares a similar reading to Enginün and Çeri, suggesting that the text promotes the author's ideology on the "ideal woman".[50]

These critics, by categorising Zeyno as the author's "ideal" woman, overlook the significance of the heroine's sexual awakening in the novel and the way in which her subjectivity is presented as shifting and changing as a site of conflicting discourses - in particular the clash between female sexuality and the norms of New Womanhood imposed by the modernisation of the period in Turkey. Further, arguing that the author creates the heroine to stress her ideology on the New Woman leads towards a monologic reading of the text, finalises and, as Bakhtin would say, "closes down the represented world and represented persons."[51] Their analyses tend towards a one-dimensional reading and deny those aspects of the text which invite us to enter, to use Bakhtin's words, "into the great dialogue of the novel as a whole"[52] by overlooking the way that the novel opens up an exploration of contending ideologies and points of view within and between different characters.

It is true that Zeyno's character as an "ideal" woman and her asexuality are often emphasised in the early chapters of the novel through her athletic body, boyish voice, short hair and habit of smoking. I also agree that in terms of the novel's emphasis on the heroine's moral values, it appears to promote the attributes of the author's "ideal" woman in her approach to marriage and sexuality. But even so, Zeyno as a fictional character stands alone and the representations of her changing identity, her conflicting approach to marriage and in particular her growing sexual awareness throughout the novel must be explained in terms of her own growing subjectivity which is revealed through her dialogised consciousness rather than defining her within a certain type of "womanhood". My aim, however, is not to demonstrate that the novel simply ignores or disapproves of the ideologies of New Turkish Womanhood completely but to argue that although it explicitly emphasises these themes throughout the novel, the novel also places emphasis on Zeyno's sexual feelings and her agency as a self-conscious heroine. Therefore, where these critics

[50] Muzaffer Uyguner, *Halide Edib Adıvar: Yaşamı, sanatı, yapıtları, seçmeler* (*Halide Edib Adıvar: Her life, art, works, selections*) (Altın Kitaplar Yayınları: İstanbul, 1992), 113, 114.
[51] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 293.
[52] Ibid.

and I differ is that, rather than viewing Zeyno as a mere reflection of Adıvar's "ideal" woman or of the asexual New Woman, I argue that she can be read as a complex female character whose identity is presented in transition: a transition from an "ideal-asexual" woman to "sexually-aware" woman.

My methodology derives from Bakhtin's concept of polyphony which informs my reading of the epistolary structure of *Heartache* as it alternates between omniscient and first person narration and presents the voices of its different characters across its sixteen chapters, detailing the diary of the heroine and letters of the characters to each other. Attending to this polyphonic structure allows us to appreciate the multiplicity of "points of view on the world and others" that are presented in the words of the various characters and the way they are brought into dialogue with one another. It is through this multi-voiced narration that we can observe shifts in narrative authority as characters' voices compete for influence and justification. In these ways the narration provides insights into the diverse experiences of and perceptions of women, sexuality and marriage and the ways in which the various points of view influence and are influenced by each other. With this in mind, the focus of my analysis will be on the tension that exists in the novel between the surface narrative (the dictates of the New Woman and her morality) and the counter narrative (female desire for sexuality) and how this generates the heroine's shifting view of sexuality and her transition from an "ideal-asexual" woman to a "sexually-aware woman". By analysing these aspects of the novel, I will attempt to show the way in which the text reveals its challenge to, and feminist critique of, the norms of the New Turkish Woman.

3.2.2. Summary of the Plot

The central narrative of *Heartache* (1924) focuses on a triangular love relationship between two girls (the intellectual and smart Zeyno, who is Saffet's fiancé and independent daughter of a doctor; and Azize, the daughter of a wealthy family) and a handsome soldier (Hasan, Azize's cousin). Zeyno and Hasan fall in love with each other and Zeyno breaks her engagement with Saffet. Azize, on the other hand, attempts to attract and lure Hasan into marriage with her. However, his love for Zeyno causes him to avoid getting closer to Azize

and he finally proposes to Zeyno. Although Hasan tries to hide his feelings for Zeyno, Azize finally becomes aware of this and attempts to commit suicide by drowning herself at sea. However she is rescued and falls ill for months. Zeyno rejects Hasan who finally agrees to marry Azize. Zeyno, on the other hand, chooses to marry Muhsin Bey, a well-respected, wealthy general and a friend of her father, as her husband. At the end of the novel, Azize dies whilst she gives birth to her son.

3.2.3. Analysis

Like *The Custom of the Country*, *Heartache* begins with the surface narrative which draws attention to the authoritative discourse on how a woman (here, the New Turkish Woman) should be. We begin to read the novel from Zeyno's point of view, defining the alafranga woman (Azize) whose "blind westernization" Zeyno is clearly mocking: Azize has "short blonde [hair] blue eyes, childish face, […] with exaggerated fashion [in her dress] […] [and] ridiculously beautified […] with golden hair, baby face […]" (21). In the following sections, the text stresses the main features of the New Woman - here, referring to her asexual and intelligent character - through Zeyno's description of herself as "sarcastic, cold, and proud with her intelligence in a way that men would not like at all […]" (14); "[with a] voice which is not clear whether it is she or he" (16); "plain [face with no make-up]" (22); "looking a little like a man" (44). With these definitions, the text depicts Azize as the representation of the "excessively" westernised alafranga woman, with her "ridiculous" exaggeration in her mode of dress, make-up and hair-style and her emphasised sexuality. By having Zeyno, on the other hand, show a strong aversion to Azize's sexualised and excessive appearance through her disapproving tone, the text lays the foundations of the surface narrative (Bakhtinian authoritative discourse) and establishes the main normative categories of the New Woman.

Zeyno's depiction above, however, refers not only to the New Woman's education and change in her style of dress "to suppress her sexuality and femininity"[53] as Jenny White notes in her discussion of the New Turkish Woman, but also draws attention to the idea that this asexuality is the condition "under which women could be accepted into public life

[53] White, 153.

[…]"[54] during the era of modernisation. Referring to her "un-feminine" outlook, for example, Zeyno indicates how she felt comfortable in public, both "in Germany and in Istanbul, when I was going to school, I never separated my male friends from my female ones […] we raced in plays and games many times, and hung around together, but we never felt that it was unnatural" (30). Although Zeyno's speech here only reflects on her student years, it has the echoes of Mustafa Kemal's promotion of the "asexual" image of the New Turkish Woman during the modernisation period, as in the following example from one of his speeches:

> If our women present themselves with a proper dress […] and comportment required by moral prudence and participate in scientific and artistic activities of the nation […], I assure you that even the most conservative member of our nation will hardly keep himself from appreciating this situation.[55]

The first signals of female desire and the presence of the counter narrative are revealed when we observe the early stirrings of the New Woman's sexual desire during the days that Zeyno and Hasan spend in Ayastefanos. We observe Zeyno's sexual awakening through her recognition of her erotic feelings and this recognition also reveals a different aspect of her character that is generally overlooked in the critical commentary that was considered earlier. She writes in her diary after the day she spends with Hasan:

> He [Hasan] has such a rudimentary but natural power that if he proposes to me next morning, I have decided that I will accept [Hasan's offer] and leave everything [Saffet, Azize] behind, […] I went to sleep [in order to] forget the power of his fingers when he held my fingers, the warm and passionate cruelty in his voice, the painful memory of his desire in his burning eyes […]. (43)

Zeyno's interior dialogue (microdialogue) above offers the first insights into her struggle with her desire for Hasan and signals the beginning of the New Woman's inner fragmentation and the growing tension in the text between female emotion and morality. Although, only a few pages later, Zeyno asserts that "in all my life, I made my decisions based on logic instead of emotion" (47), her internal speech above hints at the strength of her female desire in overcoming the social duties and expectations that are required of her

[54] Kandiyoti, "Women as Metaphor: The Turkish Novel From the Tanzimat to the Republic", 149.
[55] A speech made by M. Kemal in Kastamonu, in 1926. (As cited in Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey" in *Deconstructing Images of the 'Turkish Woman*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 149.

(particularly as a woman engaged to be married). In this sense, the text begins to develop its counter narrative to the authoritative discourse of the New Woman's dutiful denial of sexuality and desire that has been asserted from the onset of the novel.

The more we observe Zeyno's growing awareness of her sexuality, the more our attention is drawn towards the clash between female desires and moral decisions and the emotional havoc that this can cause. The implication is that the heroine's shifting point of view on her desire and her despair over a possible future marriage to Saffet is exposed effectively when Zeyno begins to question the lack of excitement in her relationship with her fiancée. She comes to realise that she is driven to Saffet not by love or passion but by her conventional perception of man as woman's protector:

> He [Saffet] is a young father, a doctor, a brother, a friend; in short, his personality consists of all that is necessary to support one in life […] I am attached to Saffet, not because of his craving for love that sometimes appears in his eyes, but because the feeling of bondage and loyalty, which is temporary and ephemeral for everyone, seems unceasing in him. Nobody seemed to me as reliable and unchangeable as he did […] For this reason, perhaps, the feeling of excitement toward him was lacking in my heart. I was still attached to him with a feeling of devotion and need that was above the sense of excitement. However, despite all of this, I was feeling empty, very distressed, and unhappy […] I was on the edge of a nervous breakdown […] (53).

Zeyno's inner turmoil above illustrates further the indications of the female dilemma between "desire" and "morality". However, her decision to leave Saffet is less an indication of the victory of love over logic than of the text's feminist critique of the male ideology that men are the protector of women and they continue to maintain the importance of morality in marriage over woman's individual fulfilment. This aspiration is also articulated by Ayse Durakbaşa who perceptively contends that, during the Kemalist era of Turkey:

> Progressive men […] offered paternal protection to the new women and established a supposedly egalitarian […] environment. However the main normative categories of traditional patriarchy such as *şeref* (family reputation) and *namus* (honor) were perceived without much individual reformulation of morality for these men, while women were required to internalise strict self-discipline and adaptive strategies to cope with modernity and tradition at the same time (italics in original).[56]

[56]Ayşe Durakbaşa, "Kemalism as Identity Politics in Turkey" in *Deconstructing Images of the Turkish Woman*, ed. Zehra F. Arat (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 149-150.

In a similar context, we see Zeyno's realisation that her feelings for Saffet, far from representing love and excitement, were initially shaped by his intense sense of care and "paternal" protection for her (as Zeyno's choice of words - "young father", "brother" - clearly suggest) and were guided by her culturally-conditioned "need" to take refuge in his protection and longing for an attachment to a male. This assumption, however, is disrupted when the heroine is forced to confront her desire which leads her to "the edge of a nervous breakdown" (a state which, for Cunningham, is a "feature common to all New Woman novels", as considered earlier).[57] Zeyno now sees the limitations that force her to repress her sexual desire, and it is through this struggle that she realises that her marriage to Saffet would be "without excitement […] [and] nights will be boring […]" (58). This tension between female desire and morality accentuates the New Woman's dilemma and brings a realisation that her role as Saffet's wife would not readily accommodate her emerging sense of self. Zeyno as the narrator here thus constructs marriage as a practice that excludes her freedom and sexual satisfaction, the forms of expressions which she desires to identify herself with.

However the text's dialogic structure also begins to chart Zeyno's ambivalent approach to her desire and emotions when she becomes concerned about her future with Hasan, who now seems to represent an untrustworthy and essentially conservative figure. Yet there is more to it: deep down, her suffering from the dilemma between her desire and New Womanly "virtue" begin to intensify. Like her American counterpart Undine, who insists that she is not an "immoral woman" (246), Zeyno also resists being defined as an "immoral woman", and it is suggested that those women who follow their desire are, like in the American society that is depicted in *The Custom of the Country*, frowned upon by the Turkish society of the era. Consider the following passage:

> I was a happy and a calm girl who had a direction in life […] If Hasan Bey and I had met without Azize and Saffet being in our lives, and [if we had] married, despite a very strong and substantial enticement, I would [still] have been very unhappy. Perhaps, he would have chased every fancy woman who gives him excitement and desire. After a while, I would have found him boring and simple. He would have got

[57] Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978), 49.

> tired of me perhaps because I am simple and look too much like a man. We would have been heading towards a disaster. If I was a woman who would refuse moral values, Hasan Bey could have been my lover for a short time. But I am not like that. (48)

Such passages draw our attention once more to the New Woman's struggles between emotion and morality that have been generated by her relationship with Hasan. In this interior dialogue we gain insight into Zeyno's emerging doubts over the relationship until she ends her narration with a reaffirmation of the morality of the New Woman. Towards the end of the passage, we sense the tension in the dialogue between Zeyno and - to paraphrase Bakhtin - "the reflected discourse of another" (here, referring to "immoral" women who refuse moral values) as expressed in the negative image of her self as "*a woman who* would refuse moral values" (to which she responds "I am not like that"). In evoking such an image we see her attempting to lessen the significance of her desire (what she refers to as her "very strong and substantial enticement") and subject herself to the authoritative discourse of the "moral" woman (an effect which is heightened by her contrasting herself to an image of Hasan "chasing every fancy woman who gives him excitement and desire"). In such ways therefore, we are alerted to the dilemma at the heart of the heroine's shifting subjectivity (as she notes to herself referring to the time before she met Hasan, "I was a happy and a calm girl who had a direction in life") and the destructive impact of her ongoing struggle with desire and morality.

The episode considered above raises a further point about the novel's account of early twentieth century New Turkish Womanhood through the commentary on the internalisation of the discourse of marriage. As Zehra F. Arat puts it, after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, "[Turkish] women's primary contribution continued to be seen as being in the domestic sphere"[58], and nowhere in the text does Zeyno's view of marriage as an obligation come into focus more explicitly than in her dialogue with Hasan when they go for a walk in Ayastefanos:

> [Zeyno] Hasan Bey, why don't you announce your engagement with Azize?
> [Hasan] I am not engaged to Azize, Zeyno Hanım!

[58] Zehra F. Arat, ed. *Deconstructing Images of "The Turkish Woman"* (Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1998), 175.

> [Zeyno] The whole world thinks you are; and if two young people, like you and Azize, get very close and attached but do not get engaged, everybody would think that one of you is immoral […].
> [Hasan] Do you believe that every couple who fancy each other should marry?
> [Zeyno] If it is more than fancying, of course […].
> [Hasan] I am against marriage Zeyno Hanım […].
> [Zeyno] Sooner or later, you will marry Azize, just like I will marry Saffet… Let us not be busy talking about such predetermined things.
> [Hasan] I will not marry, Zeyno Hanım. Marriage is a disaster for everybody. (65-66)

As in the episode in *The Custom of the Country* where the male character Charles Bowen gives voice to a feminist critique of women's objectification in marriage, *Heartache* uses a similar strategy through Hasan's critical perception of marriage as a "disaster" while the female's point of view asserts a naturalised account of marriage reflected in her comments about the sanctity of engagement and its "predetermined" outcome. This dialogue is important also because we learn that although Zeyno defies male ideals of feminine beauty and charm in terms of her appearance, she conforms to the image of the New Woman with her view of marriage that is ideologically consistent with the voice of, in a Bakhtinian sense, "general opinion" (as she says, every couple whose feelings are "more than fancying" should "of course" marry).

However, as we see Zeyno's beliefs about the "predetermined" nature of her marriage changing during her romantic excursions with Hasan in Ayastefanos, the text signals its counter narrative and insight into the heroine's ambiguous character and her growing critical awareness. Zeyno's assumptions about morality change over these days as she begins to question herself: "Why have I put myself in a grave, [and] closed it with a marble box [so far]? Life is very nice, very enticing […]; his eyes, his lips, his arms were creating sinful fire in my heart […] from all his existence a life force that was elevating the pleasure of living to the level of exuberance was coming out" (65). Zeyno feels "an ecstasy that would not fit into deserts, constantly boiling and overflowing hot and spiritual, and in a state of happiness that was a complete trance in a dream" (68). On their last couple of days in Ayastefenos, Hasan stirs in Zeyno even deeper romantic and erotic feelings when he tells her "You should marry me, you should be mine!" (80); and attempts to kiss her. Reflecting on these romantic moments, Zeyno writes: "our lips suddenly approached each other with [a sense of] fire […] We were in a daze for a moment" (83). Diverting from her principle of

sexual virtue, Zeyno now becomes acutely conscious of the split in her identity. As such, the text presents the heroine becoming more complex and hesitant with indecision by flitting unpredictably between the discourses of her desire and her culturally conditioned morality. The following passage is one of Zeyno's important interior dialogues in which we see her reflecting on what Saffet and Hasan mean for her and it is through the Saffet/Hasan pairing in her interior dialogue that we are provided more insight into her ongoing inner turmoil. The importance of this passage lies in its attempt to show the heroine's subjective development in all its complexity as it fluctuates between the internal world of the heroine and the external world she observes, conveying the tension between the surface narrative (authoritative discourse of morality) and the counter narrative (internally persuasive discourse of female desire):

> Now I know that it was not possible for me to be happy whether I married Saffet or Hasan; I would always desire for the other [one] that is missing in my life. One of them [Saffet] is my heart, my head in my life, the other [Hasan] is my nervous system, weakness and guilt […] the only fire of all youth, passion and perhaps sin. So, that means, it is not love that makes me miserable, my heart is aching not because the one I love [Hasan] is not mine; my misery […] was because of my heart's hypocrisy. If I was one of those women who could accept the existence of two men in their lives, there would be no problem. I would be as complex, strange and vulnerable to committing sin as they are. But […] my heart and my head always have a direction, a principle which [would not let me be one of them] [and if I do, this principle] would make my heart suffer for its hypocrisy. (88)

In a comparable way, Zeyno's realisation here (that neither Saffet nor Hasan would fulfil her expectations and that she should reject them for her personal freedom) also suggest a similarity with her American sister Undine: in both novels, the men who attempt to control and construct the female ultimately discover themselves to be redundant and challenged by the counter narrative of female consciousness. In this sense, both Undine and Zeyno as radical females invade the male space and remove their masculine authority. However, through the dialogic narrative of the text the reader is, once again, alerted to the contradictory depiction of the heroine. Zeyno, a few pages later, reflects once more on her passion for Hasan when she thinks about their "kiss without touching the lips [which penetrated] so powerfully our lips melted and were drawn to each other like a steel and magnet." (91) Her sexual desire reaches a peak in the fantasy that she reveals about Hasan in her diary:

> My heart beats with such an excessive and strange rumble, is this joy? In Hasan Bey's heart, being the dominant one, the one he wants most forever gave me such an indescribable enthusiasm! (90)
> […]
> He is waiting for me, I am removing my clothes; he is pulling the duvet over me, I am spreading my arms and pulling his head towards me, he is bending, but is it possible to let him kiss [only] my forehead? What a touch that creates both heaven and hell in one's soul, what a flame, what a fire, and what a sweet torture! (91)

Such descriptions about the way Zeyno feels for Hasan give us insights into the ecstasy of female passion harboured by the New Woman who has been forced to repress her sexual desire. Ultimately she decides to be with Hasan and to tell him this before he leaves Ayastefanos. By tracing Zeyno's recognition of her sexual desire and her decision to follow it, the text thus diverges from the model of the New Woman and presents instead Zeyno's process of becoming a sexually-awake woman. Recalling her dull and routine days as a girl engaged to Saffet, Zeyno finally confesses her desire to be with Hasan and vows never to return to her previous life ("No, I will not throw myself again into the hopeless and empty days that I endured [...] if the storm and pain in my heart won't go away [...] I will definitely go to those quiet and remote places with Hasan Bey" (95). Such a statement appears to indicate that Zeyno has decided to choose her personal romantic and sexual fulfilment over her commitment to conventional morality. At this crucial moment however, when the reader expects Zeyno to break the restrictions placed upon her by morality and follow her heart. Hasan receives news of Azize's unexpected attempt to commit suicide and leaves Ayastefanos immediately to be by her side, without leaving any note for Zeyno. We see Zeyno enter another period of subjective turmoil and transformation as she re-evaluates her commitment to morality once more, resigning herself to a life without Hasan and committing in her diary "never to go after a feeling like this again" (145).

The novel then picks up the plot one month later with a letter written by Azize to Zeyno, and from this point on we gain a series of perspectives on the woman question from other characters, further contributing to the polyphonic effect of the novel. Azize is now married to Hasan and they live together in Vienna. Through Azize's letter to Zeyno, the text creates a polyphonic effect in its account of the characters - the alafranga woman (Azize) and the Western woman (Dora: Hasan's secret lover and the daughter of Azize's father's friend,

Goldsmith) - and their worldviews on "how a woman should behave". Azize's point of view is as follows:

> What a strange girl she [Dora] is […] If she was beautiful, she would remind me of you, she has strange ideas. She is this so-called modern woman of Europe! She avoids first-class places, entertainments, always goes to second-class places, does not sit in a box in theatres, does not use make-up; despite her father's immense wealth, she earns her own money. Apparently, modern women [in Europe] are like her. However, in our society, the modern woman is not like this, [a modern woman] is the one who beautifies herself with make-up the most, always goes to the entertainment places, throws tea parties, welcome parties, [organizes] dancing nights and has the ambition to wear the best costume at these parties, is that not correct? […] There is no pleasure in making one's face like an Arab [here, referring to suntan, dark skin], looking like a man, wearing weird clothes […] But I am not jealous, my dear Zeyno, no matter how much [Turkish] men are influenced by such new women, they would never give up on beautiful and smartly-dressed women like us. (147)

Dora's point of view is then given by Azize in the same letter:

> Only those people who became rich during the war, foreigners and silly people hire a box [in theatres] […] I spend the money my father gives me for poor people in Vienna, but I earn my own money […] I used to think that Turkish women who have contributed to the revolution (in Turkey), mixed with the public, are more democratic than us. But you want to use make-up and spend money in vain. Okay, so far the ones [Turkish women] I met are rich and capitalist. You are the wife of a soldier who joined the revolution, why are you so keen on wasting money in vain? (149)

The first passage reflects the discourse of the alafranga woman of early twentieth century Turkish society through Azize who expresses her view of the Western "modern woman" and how the modern Turkish woman should be (using make-up, throwing extravagant parties or wearing the best costumes). In contrast, through Dora's speech, we observe the way in which modern Turkish women of the era are perceived from a Western woman's point of view. The conflict between these voices provokes the reader into assessing the points of view on modern womanhood that they represent: by having Azize suggesting that women are the symbol of beauty and ornament, we sense the text's satire of alafranga Turkish woman. Dora's depiction, on the other hand, as an asexual and working woman, conveys the text's attempt to evoke the reader's admiration for the Western woman. However, the perspectives of the two characters above are presented in a polyphonic way,

as conceptualised by Bakhtin: the juxtaposition of two entirely different but equally coherent points of view on the world are presented in a dialogic way with the result that the reader is allowed to perceive the discourse of the characters without the interruption or mediation of the author. In this way, the points of view of the characters are presented rather than expressed and, to draw on Bakhtin, the author's "surplus" of vision (the author's monologic evaluation of the characters) does not interfere in the speech between the characters.[59]

In Azize's letter, we are also made aware that Dora and Zeyno are similar in their character, but in contrast to Dora, Zeyno's beauty is emphasised. Azize says, "If she was beautiful, she would remind me of you "; and she ends her letter by saying "you [Zeyno] are the most beautiful, most smartly-dressed of all new women" (148). According to Bahriye Çeri's analysis of the novel, the reference to Zeyno's beauty indicates Adıvar's view that the New Turkish Woman should take example from Western women in terms of studying, working and contributing to society in general; however, Çeri adds, the New Turkish Woman should also maintain her beauty and womanliness because although men may admire her, they will still desire "attractive and decorative women".[60] We might develop a different reading from Çeri here by attending once more to the polyphonic nature of the text and the inconsistency that this creates in its depiction of the New Turkish Woman. Considering the text's earlier accounts of Zeyno as "sarcastic, cold, and proud with her intelligence in a way that men would not like at all […]" (14); with a boyish voice" (16); and "looking a little like a man" (44), the text reveals the contradictory ways in which the heroine is perceived from different points of view (in the above passage, for example, Azize emphasises Zeyno's femininity) and how multiple, often conflicting, conceptions of New Womanhood are held together in the identity of the same character.

The text continues to present different narratives on the New Turkish Woman but this time with a focus on gender roles in the Turkish society of the era through the male point of view, in such a way as to draw attention to male hypocrisy. Hasan was presented earlier in the novel as a type of progressive Turkish man (as we saw him suggest for example, "marriage is a disaster"); however this image is now brought into conflict with an image of

[59] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevksy's Poetics*, 70.
[60] Çeri, 59.

him as adhering to a conventional morality regarding marriage, as we see in his narrative when he says to Dora (with whom we are made aware, in Azize's correspondence with Zeyno, that he is having an affair):

> I cannot bear [even] the idea that my wife, or the woman I love, has the shadow of a man in her mind, let alone in her life (154); […] if my wife cheats on me […] how can I bear that? […] Okay, we [men] are more stupid, more egoistic, more malicious [than women],but of course we are stronger. Thus, we will make the rules and will make them for us. (223)

In this way, by portraying Hasan to be deeply compromised by the hypocrisy of the society in which he lives, the novel draws attention to the double standard of gender roles of the era in which women's subjugation is the norm. The once daring hero, who had previously believed that "marriage is a disaster for everyone", is now portrayed as a conventional figure who speaks for the "general opinion" of Turkish society of the period which insists that "men make the rules" for women in order that they fit the image of the virtuous New Woman of reformist ideology. In this sense, Hasan the character represents the point of view of an old morality; a morality which, as Ayşe Durakbaşa states, was "preserved by Kemalist reformers, the 'emancipators' of Turkish women, because they felt that they might lose control of their women if the women discovered their own potential of emancipation."[61] Further to that, by having him reveal his inability to extricate himself from conventions and his failure to pursue his love for Zeyno, the text's resistance to male discourse is indicated further through a counter narrative that comically mocks his "soldier-like" pride and exposes the ambivalence of man's attitude to morality:

> Zeyno's pain, with all its tragedy, suddenly entered into Hasan's heart […] Whilst he was thinking about their love [Zeyno and Hasan's] he was feeling *the shame of a soldier* who leaves his friend [Zeyno] at a crucial moment of the danger they entered together […] He is definitely going to write a letter to Zeyno this night. He is going to confess how cowardly and how worthless a man he is, [and] ask for her forgiveness for leaving her alone with her pain. (162, my italics)

Here, the narrator shifts from the first-person to an omniscient narrator with an internal focalisation on Hasan's discourse. In doing so, the text effectively incorporates its feminist voice within the male voice, creating a tension between the male and female points of view. Hasan's free indirect discourse (beginning after "whilst he was thinking") here not only

[61] Durakbaşa, 151.

reveals his increasing despair and guilt at leaving Zeyno with her heartache but also exposes the text's feminist critique of his hypocrisy and unreliability: Hasan implies that, by asking for Zeyno's forgiveness, he can leave his wife and his marriage behind, but at the same time he continues to seek compensation in the arms of Dora. From this perspective, by depicting Hasan cheating on his wife and committing sexual misdemeanours but at the same time voicing his conventional morality, the text reflects a clash between patriarchal and feminist points of view and offers a criticism of the old morality and commonly accepted norms and prejudices that reinforce the inequality of gender roles in society and marriage.

Following this discourse of the old morality that is considered above, the text in the same episode then presents a contrasting female point of view on the (a)sexuality of the Turkish woman, this time articulated the voice of Western modern woman (Dora). Through her speech below the text again provides a counter narrative, pointing to how this old morality and double-standard in marriage might lead women to commit "sins" due to the pressure that they were, to use Durakbaşa's words, expected "to be extremely careful in their interactions with men and strictly repress their sexuality […]"[62] in order to maintain their "*namus*" (honour). With a similar effect, Dora says,

> [The Turkish] woman […] conforms to the norms of the world [and] plays the role all women play: [that is] if she cannot deal with friendship or love affairs she has [outside her marriage, then] she covers her sins with contrivance [and] trick; or if she wants an honest life, she marries a man [...] on the condition that they have both equal freedom and control over their personality [and] desires. (154)

Of course, the kind of freedom Dora suggests in her second option (equality in marriage) for women could not possibly have been achieved in the patriarchal Turkish society of the era that is depicted in the novel. But that is not the point here. The point is that, by juxtaposing these male and female points of view, the characters Hasan and Dora, as Bakhtin notes in his account of the characters in a polyphonic novel, become "'person[s] of the idea' […]"[63] and set up a tension between two conflicting discursive positions (conventional sexual morality and its resistant discourse, respectively). At the same time, this decentralised narrative has the effect of relativising the authoritative discourse (in this

[62] Durakbaşa, 153.
[63] Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 22.

case, the old morality that Hasan represents) and opening up possibilities for a feminist critique of it.

After this point, the text shifts its focus to Zeyno's diary, and we are presented with insights into the heroine's ambivalent attitude to marriage. The text build its narrative with great care in order to depict the ongoing and shifting struggle between the discourse of "reason" and the female's acute "yearning" for sex. Zeyno first perceives Muhsin as a "life buoy" (210) that she desperately needs to hold onto, reflecting that "Lately, perhaps because I have been alone for a long time, I see Muhsin Bey as somebody fallen from the sky" (187-188); then, she successfully transforms herself first into a victim, "I was a victim of an ordinary man [Hasan], of an ordinary game that he keeps playing with every woman" (197); later, in odd contrast, she desires a love marriage and fantasises about sex, undermining the image of the New Turkish Woman's "sexual virtue": "I still feel Hasan's burning breath in my soul. Many times I regret escaping from [his] delicious and killing lips that would make me tremble […] I asked myself why I didn't elope with Hasan! […] (205)"; then again she tries to align herself with the received model of womanhood seeking happiness in the arms of her "ideal" match: "Can he [Muhsin Bey] not take me in his palms completely? Can I not, in a secluded life with him [Muhsin Bey] forget Hasan completely? […]" (205-206). Here, the discourse of the New Woman calls for companionate marriage based on logic and reason, conforming to the model of Adıvar's "ideal woman". This idea - Adıvar's message regarding the question of companionate marriage - is also indicated by Emel Doğramacı who points out that "Halide Edip repeats her message [in her fiction] that happiness can be achieved in marriage only if couples have similar worldviews […]".[64] Zeyno's decision to marry Muhsin Bey - despite his old age - in this sense, illustrates Doğramacı's observation in terms of her reasonable approach to a life with Muhsin Bey which, for Zeyno, will be "a never-ending happiness that has got […] a dim light that dazzles [but] does not tire eyes" (201). Within this dilemma we observe the way in which the construction of the New Woman's identity is subject to the collision of different ideologies on womanhood. In this context, Adıvar's New Woman is similar to Wharton's Undine because, with her shifting and contradictory selves Zeyno, like Undine,

[64] Emel Doğramacı, *Türkiye'de Kadının Dünü ve Yarını (Woman in Turkey Yesterday and Today)* (Ankara: Doğuş Matbaacılık ve Ticaret Ltd. Şti, 1992), 61.

demonstrates her challenge to men's attempts to contain her within certain definitions and thus undermines their narratives.

However, like Undine, Zeyno's radicalism as a New Woman is not limited to this representation of her multiple selves. Her challenge to the received image of the New Turkish Woman resides also in her undermining masculine certainties by treating the male body as an object. Similar to the depiction of Undine who we see observing and evaluating her suitors for the most part of the novel, Zeyno is also presented as an observer of males. This is where the text reaches the heart of its radicalism, and perhaps the peak of its counter narrative. The episodes where we see Zeyno scrutinising Muhsin Bey for his potential sexuality not only invert conventional gendered points of view (the female as an object of male gaze) but also challenge conventional narratives of female characters' attraction to men: Zeyno is attracted to Muhsin not only because he is an ideal match for her but also because of what she has projected upon him, her erotic desire. This manifests itself when Zeyno describes his "vigorous, thin […] very strong body in a tidy and tight uniform", his "wide shoulders […] seductive [look]" (210) and "very manly face" (210), and then goes on to fantasise "a passionate love story" (207) with him after he kisses her hand in the garden, reflecting on "the touch of his lips with a strange trembling in bed" (210). It becomes clear that Zeyno's infatuation with Muhsin does not have a basis solely in seeing him as her "rescuer" from her heartache when he finally kisses her, passionately and "with such a heat […] our lips united [and] I did not escape from his arms" (208). The once "ideal" woman who was against kissing her fiancé ("I do not kiss Saffet", (62) as she says earlier in the novel) is now revealing her female sexuality and enjoying her erotic fantasies with a man who is not even her fiancé; an indication of the text's challenge to the conventions of male responses to women of the era.

Towards the end of the novel, this New Woman with erotic feelings is presented more explicitly than before. Zeyno gets married to Muhsin Bey and we see her fully flowered with her husband, an indication of her emergence from a place of darkness to a life of growth, and in particular of her sexual fulfilment. Zeyno's sexual maturation is brilliantly conveyed in the following narrative through imagery such as "the white and purple grapes […] the flowers with the color of flame [in Muhsin's garden] […] the passion of summer which embraced the newly married couple just like the way it embraces the garden and

nature" (261). These images not only symbolise Zeyno's growing sexuality but also place *Heartache* firmly within the narrative trend of New Women novels (where such "passages of sexual analysis […] abound […]"[65]). The passage below incorporates Zeyno's free indirect discourse, giving insights into how she views her new identity and experiences her blossomed sexuality:

> The girl whose passionate desires have been delayed until the age of twenty-five, believed that her body, like her heart, would never feel excitement with the touch of another person after Hasan. But even in those golden days, a primitive fear that was mixed with morality and loyalty protected her from the fire of life whose full force she was not yet aware. Now they [Muhsin and Zeyno] fell for each other […] Fifteen days had passed since the moment Muhsin Bey lifted her white bridal veil and kissed her lips that were apart like a scarlet camellia, and the excitement and shivering [of their bodies] […] had continued since then […] *Zeyno was fantasising about the man in white who was writing at the table. Looking at him in his shirt with open collars, his strong neck tanned under the sun, his iron muscles and thinking about how, when he holds her, these muscles create an effect in her body similar to an electric device with one hundred volts, she felt such a strong shivering in her body […] Her lips were smiling at this strong passion which she could feel from head to toe.* (263, my italics)

This double-voiced passage begins with the voice of the narrator, describing not only the way Zeyno perceives her new life after her marriage but also her journey from a woman who suppressed her sexuality to a "sexually-aware" woman. When we reach the phrase "Zeyno was fantasising", the diction of the passage becomes more personal and candid in a way which suggests that we are witnessing Zeyno's free indirect discourse as she casts her eyes over Muhsin. This technique of stepping outside the narrator's discourse and providing glimpses into the heroine's consciousness helps to bring Zeyno's experience of sexuality into the foreground, and this is given an almost orgasmic element through the comparison of the effect of Muhsin's body to "an electric device with one hundred volts, she felt such a strong shivering in her body."

The final chapters of the novel have the unfinalisable quality of the polyphonic novel. The depiction of the main characters in the last chapters creates an ambiguous ending, firstly by conflicting with their images as they are presented earlier in the novel, and secondly through the presentation of their different perspectives in such a way that the novel ends with no single authoritative voice but rather a variety of different perspectives, inviting a

[65] Cunningham, 48.

problematisation of received accounts of the (alafranga and New) Turkish Woman. For example, one may view Azize's death, like Bahriye Çeri, as a negative commentary on the alafranga woman. According to Çeri, through Azize's death the text shows the "death of an understanding that woman is only a symbol of ornament and beauty" and suggests that such women are not welcome, "neither in our society nor in the world."[66] Reading the text as polyphonic, however, invites a greater degree of ambiguity in interpreting aspects such as the presentation of Azize's character towards the end of the novel. The earlier image we have of Azize's alafranga, selfish and childish character is disrupted in the final chapters as we gain insight into her strong attachment to motherhood: the reader is made aware of how Azize senses that delivering her baby might cause her death, and a glimpse into her heroism is given when she addresses Zeyno in her letter: "No matter what happens, I will deliver my baby […] You would come immediately if you could see how weak [referring to her illness] I am […] [But] I am very happy […]" (257). Hasan's characterisation is also depicted in ambiguity: his situation by the end of the novel suggests the voice of a male who falls victim to his own conventionality. The thwarted male regrets losing his wife and this, as suggested through the voice of Dora, "was a punishment […] that he deserved" (278), invoking a criticism of sexual immorality. At the same time, he suffers from his lack of hope of being with Zeyno after observing her happiness with Muhsin Bey. His indirect discourse reveals this hopelessness: "Marriage, love […] all of them hid a hope in the corner of Hasan's heart, a hope that he could not analyse […] and now he was leaving that hope to his commander [Muhsin Bey]" (273) - a suggestion that the male is left with a sense of loss in the face of a heroine that refuses to be the construction of male discourse. Then, a few pages later, we hear the voice of reason, Saffet, who asks Hasan an ironic question: "Why, Hasan, do you feel a little guilty now?" (277). The knowing, penetrating tone of his question here indicates not only Saffet's awareness of Hasan's sexual immorality but also his implicit criticism towards his earlier neglect and mistreatment of Azize. By referring to Hasan's uncontrollable passion for other women, Saffet seems to suggest that Azize's death is a destructive consequence of the male's hypocrisy. Saffet's sentiments can also be read as voicing the opinion of the era on the harmful implications of uncontrolled love, which were, as Duben and Behar put it, seen as "a force that might get

[66] Çeri, 57.

out of hand […] as immoralistic behaviour could be very destructive […]."[67] As for Zeyno, in marked contrast to her "asexual" image and conventional approach to sexuality that is presented at the beginning of the novel, the text conveys her awakening to her sexuality and her erotic feelings. She is depicted both as a character who embodies the accepted social role for women in her society and a heroine with a growing sense of independent womanhood. As a result, she leaves an image of a challenging, contradictory heroine of New Woman fiction that disrupts the received models of "ideal" and asexual New Turkish Womanhood that have been seen by the novel's previous critics.

In light of the above points, dialogism enables an understanding of *Heartache* as a radical novel in its presentation of the heroine's recognition and expression of her sexuality by the end of the novel; a superb novel which abounds with feminist insights and in-depth explorations into a heroine on a journey of self affirmation through sexual awareness. It explicitly focuses on the restrictive choice faced by women between sexual and social roles, and its exploration of the heroine's attempts to overcome the limitations placed upon her offer a feminist questioning of ideal woman ideology. Drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism, I argued that Zeyno is neither the victim of the love plot nor the virtuous moral guardian of society; nor is she simply a prototype of New Woman: by examining the way in which various voices compete to form and alter the identity of Zeyno, we observe her rejection of a certain established female identity and gain a richer and more complex appreciation of her story. We see more clearly not only the heroine's journey - from being restricted by the limitations of her modesty and sexual "purity" to a woman with a desire to achieve her sexual freedom, welcoming her desires and celebrating her sexual fulfilment - but we also gain insight into the contingent and unstable construction of the New Woman's identities and the complexities of the heroine's experience and struggles as a woman in this period.

[67] Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *İstanbul Households: Marriage, family and fertility 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 94.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate how both Undine and Zeyno are presented as complex female characters affected by their situations rather than demonstrations of a certain model of femininity. Bakhtin's dialogism and Kaplan's discussion of "subjectivity in process" assisted me in exploring the tensions between the surface and counter narratives as these are expressed in the characterisations of Undine and Zeyno and the plurality of voices in the texts that bring different ideological positions into dialogue. I argued that these aspects of the novels are indicative of the on-going dialogue between unifying and disunifying tendencies within the texts, deploying a feminist dialogic method, which, as Kay Halasek notes, "provides a means by which feminist critics might pursue their work […] in response to the dominant […] male posture."[68] From this perspective, I argued that feminist dialogics and the view of "subjectivity in process" helped me to observe the feminist insights of these novels and enabled it to move these novels from male ventriloquism to feminist subversion.

I have argued that in their transitions from "inexperienced" women - Undine as ignorant of New York's marriage rules, Zeyno as unaware of sexuality - to "experienced" women, we are shown their ongoing dilemmas and struggles against the norms of "how a woman should be" and we observe the way in which their struggles for personal freedom generate and shape their female desires, although in different forms. However, there is a fundamental difference between the types of female desire they represent. Undine desires respectability and recognition but the only way she can achieve this is through publicity and power by means of marriage: her desire is channelled into the pursuit of gain within the marriage market and towards the pursuit of publicity and power. Consequently, we see the way in which her view of marriage (as a business contract) and (lack of) sexual desire (in the sense that she understands the uses of sex but has no emotional interest in the practice of sex) is generated as a result of the experience she undergoes. In this sense, the novel challenges the common notions that the image of the New American Woman, as Showalter points out, seeks sexual emancipation and "sought opportunities for self-development outside of

[68] Kay Halasek, "Feminism and Bakhtin: Dialogic Reading in the Academy" in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 1 (1992), 63-73, 67.

marriage."[69] *Heartache*, on the other hand, defies the figure of the asexual New Turkish Woman by revealing Zeyno's sexual feelings. Unlike her American sister, Zeyno wants a romantic marital union and her desire is influenced by her sexual feelings and personal expectations from marriage. In this respect, the novel challenges the hegemonic account of the New Turkish Woman's approach to marriage as a social duty rather than a source of individual fulfilment. In this sense, Adıvar's Zeyno depicts a heroine of New Woman fiction who appears more radical than her American counterpart. However, the depiction of these differences in the characterisation of the heroines creates a point of similarity between *The Custom of the Country* and *Heartache* in that both characters prove to be inconsistent with the images of the New Woman of their societies, offering instead images of diverse female subjectivities that are, in Kaplan's words, "always in process and contradiction."[70]

[69] Showalter, "New Women", 39.
[70] Kaplan, 181.

Chapter 4:
Breaking the Boundaries of the Authoritative Discourse: Divorce and Love in *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and *Raik's Mother* (1909)

Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and Halide Edib Adıvar's *Raik's Mother* (1909) are further tales of female oppression and the restrictions that New Women face in their respective societies. Like the other novels studied in this thesis, these novels present both a surface narrative (here, the reflection of the texts through the prism of male eyes) and a counter narrative (the subversive language of the novel, resisting the attempt of masculine monologic voice to define the New Woman and revealing the feminist critique of the text). The central focus of this chapter will be on the novels' treatment of the struggles of the heroines - Ellen and Refika - in relation to the themes of divorce and free love, and to the image of the New Woman in their societies. I have chosen to examine these two novels together in this chapter for two main reasons: first, because both texts present their New Women predominantly through male eyes whose reliability readers are implicitly invited to question; thus New Women's shifting subject positions reflect their rejection of male attempts to construct the heroines according to their own expectations. Second, because there are striking resonances between these two novels in subject matter: both Ellen and Refika are unhappily married and both challenge social norms by leaving their husbands and seeking divorce. Finally, they both fall in love only to give up on their lovers by the end of the novels.

4.1. Critical Reception of the *Age of Innocence* and *Raik's Mother* and Finding a New Approach

Critical debate on *The Age of Innocence* has changed over the years. When the novel first came out, Newland's decision to give up on his desire for exotic Ellen and to honour his married life was supported by the reading public. This was demonstrated when the novel was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for literature in 1920 by the Colombia Board of Trustees because they found the novel's message "sanguineous and pronounced the novel morally uplifting."[1] For the committee, the novel best presented "the wholesome atmosphere of American life and the highest standard of American

[1] Richard H. Lawson, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1977), 35.

manners and manhood."[2] Wharton, however, was surprised that reviewers failed to see the irony of the novel and her social criticism of 1870s New York society. She wrote: "When I discovered that I was being rewarded - by one of our leading universities - for uplifting American morals, I confess I did despair."[3] For Cynthia Griffin Wolff, the novel presents a "Portrait of a Gentleman", emphasising Newland's conflict between his desire and the constraints of society.[4] R.B. Lewis, on the other hand, points to the parallelism between Ellen and Wharton: "In the epilogue, via Ellen Olenska's later life, Edith Wharton described what had in fact become of herself: permanently expatriated and living in […] Paris; separated once and for all from her husband […]"[5] James W. Tuttleton brings a different insight into the novel. For him, the novel emphasises the matriarchal nature of Old New York society: "It is not the men who dictate the constraining forms and terms and conditions of social propriety in New York society; it is the women."[6]

Feminist critics, however, offered a new way of reading *The Age of Innocence*, focusing on the way Wharton constructed a feminist social realism in its narrative. With the developing critical interest in Wharton during the 1970s and 80s, feminist scholars consistently addressed the representations of her female characters and the ways in which these figures revealed an oppressive social order for women. However, it is ironic that perhaps because she was often perceived as an "innate conservative", feminist critics often overlooked the celebratory and hopeful note in the novel's conclusion. According to Hermione Lee, for example, Ellen is cast away from New York society and this is seen as reflecting a typically gloomy prognosis regarding the fate of women in Wharton's work: "it is the women in Wharton who have to suffer betrayal and social punishment […]"[7] For Elizabeth Ammons, the novel is a tale of the victory of the "angel" over the "dark lady": one in which the opposing qualities of Ellen and May serve to reinforce patriarchal representations of "angel" and "monster" female identities. She further argues that the novel is about the male who prefers the innocent "fair-haired child woman" (May) to the experienced, dark-haired, "sexually vibrant, passionate" one

[2] Ibid., 90.
[3] Edith Wharton, *The Letters of Edith Wharton,* ed. R.W.B. Lewis & Nancy Lewis (New York: Scribner's, 1988), 445.
[4] Cynthia Griffin Wolff, *A Feast of Words: The Triumphs of Edith Wharton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997),147.
[5] R.W.B. Lewis, *Edith Wharton: A Biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 432.
[6] James W. Tuttleton, "The Feminist Takeover of Edith Wharton" in *The New Criterion* (1989), 6-14, 6.
[7] Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Vintage, 2008), 186.

(Ellen), suggesting the theme of "male fear of mature women."[8] For David Holbrook, Ellen is "a guileless temptress."[9] She has to leave because for Newland, she "belongs to a fantasy world."[10] Each of these critics demonstrates their disappointment at how Wharton appears to begin the novel in a feminist vein only to revert to a more conventional (patriarchal) account of the position of women at the conclusion of the novel. Thus, their conclusion is similar: the restrictive effects of society upon its members, and the sacrifice of the individual for the sake of society.

Raik's Mother, on the other hand, has not received adequate attention from literary critics except for İnci Enginün's *Halide Edib Adıvar,* which argues that through the medium of *Raik's Mother*, Adıvar expresses "the tension and suffering that arose from her first marriage and declared a war against Salih Zeki's [Adıvar's first husband] affairs and his relations with other women."[11] In her another work, *The Issue of East and West in the Works of Halide Edib Adıvar*, Enginün highlights the theme of Adıvar's "ideal" woman in *Raik's Mother* and argues that the novel is a tale of a mother who raises "a well-mannered and healthy child" and provides her child with the education of national culture.[12] Through this novel, Enginün suggests, Adıvar conveys the importance of women as transmitters of national culture to their children. Enginün's reading of the novel, however, is restricted by its emphasis on how "motherhood" showcases the "ideal" woman and the theme of marriage as a sacred institution. Mehmet Rauf's "Raik's Mother" in *Servet-i Fünün* is another brief review of the novel worthy of mention; however he focuses more on what he refers to as the novel's "very new, very delightful" language[13] rather than developing any character or theme analysis.

Although the above critics contribute to our understanding of these two novels, they have little or nothing to say regarding the dialogic features of the works, and in particular the conflict that takes place between different discourses - above all the patriarchal, counter-patriarchal and feminist. These aspects, and their implications for

[8] Elizabeth Ammons, *Edith Wharton's Argument with America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 143.
[9] David Holbrook, *Edith Wharton and the Unsatisfactory Man* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1991),13.
[10] Ibid.
[11] İnci Enginūn, *Halide Edib Adıvar*, (Ankara: Kılıçaslan Matbacılık Sanayi Ltd. Şti., 1989), 65.
[12] Enginün, The Issue of East and West in the Works of Halide Edib Adivar (Istanbul: Dergah Press, 2007), *417.*
[13] Mehmet Rauf, "Raik'in Annesi" in *Servet-i Fünün*, 936, (13 May 1909), 405-406. As cited in Enginün, 83.
[13] Lee, 580.

our reading of the works as New Women texts, will lie at the heart of the analysis presented in this chapter.

The following questions still need further elaboration: for *The Age of Innocence*, what does Ellen's flight, away from conventional New York - to which she once referred to fondly by stating "this dear old place is heaven"(14)[14] - to a life in Paris, convey? Is it, as Lee maintains, an unhappy ending that shows "there is no escape"?[15] or, as Elizabeth Ammons suggests, the "failing" of the heroine?[16] Can we go beyond these pessimistic interpretations and read the endings as an indication of the heroine's struggle for independence? Similarly, for *Raik's Mother*, what does Refika's fragmented self, caught in particular in the dilemma between (and her ambivalent approach to) divorce and love suggest? Is it merely out of her duty as a mother that Refika returns to her unhappy marriage and to what extent does this return signify a reinforcement or a challenge to the ideology of the marriage institution?

Bearing these questions in mind and in contrast to those critics considered above, this chapter argues that *The Age of Innocence* and *Raik's Mother* are examples of New Woman novels, notably in their examinations of the pressures and prejudices of patriarchal society against those women who seek divorce; one of the key themes that is central to the New Woman novels. Referring to the New Woman writers, Cunningham argues that:

> [T]he New Woman's ideals were far too advanced for their environment. These novelists were trying to […] show how firmly entrenched were the creeds and conventions which oppressed women. In the first instance they were putting forward high-minded principles, in the second describing the stark reality of practice. Since the system is so pernicious, the odds so heavily weighted, it would be absurdly utopian, the argument goes, to portray a New Woman succeeding in her aims. Thus the common pattern of the New Woman novels is to show the heroine arriving at her ideal of freedom and equality from observation of her society, but then being brought through the miserable experience of trying to put them into practice to a position of weary disillusion.[17]

[14] Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence* (Berkshire: Penguin, 1996), 14. The subsequent references of the novel will be to this edition and indicated within brackets within the text.
[15] Lee, 580.
[16] Ammons, 127.
[17] Gail Cunningham, *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978), 49, 50.

The composition of *The Age of Innocence* and *Raik's Mother* is consistent with this account of New Woman fiction: they present their heroines as entrapped within the conventions of their society and follow their attempts to achieve their "ideal of freedom and equality", as Cunningham would put it. By the end of the novels, both New Women, after going through "miserable experiences," sacrifice their love, although for different reasons: Ellen for her freedom, Refika for her son. By exploring these aspects of the novels, this chapter aims to contribute to our understanding of these New Woman novels and of Ellen's and Refika's complex characterisation as New Women.

To do this I examine the dialogic structure of the novels through which they present multiple narratives and points of view pertaining to the role of woman within and outside marriage. I focus on how the narrator's authority in the novel is complicated by this presentation and how this creates greater opportunity for dialogues to take place between the voices of the different subject positions that are contained in the novel. For my feminist dialogic reading I draw on Dale M. Bauer who suggests that "the novel's polyvocality can indicate potential resistance to oppressive conventions in interpretive or discourse communities - such as an individual character's response to that social dictate, or a disapproving narrative tone." [18] In light of this, I argue that these novels can be read as feminist texts that critically interrogate the variety of ideologies of the time on the New Woman question and that challenge conventional accounts that attempt to define and fix female identities.

Because both novels present their stories mainly from the perspective of male characters as surface narrative (or authoritative discourse, in Bakhtinian sense) a particular emphasis will be given to the double perceptions of Wharton's and Adıvar's male narrators - Newland and Siren - regarding woman and divorce because their narrations reveal the male tendencies as depicted in the novels to create fantasies about the heroines and control them at the same time. Newland for example, an ostensibly caring and responsive man supportive of the New Woman, turns out to be as ambivalent and unstable a character as Ellen herself due to his contradictory views on women's freedom and divorce. Likewise, Siren's attitude toward Refika - especially when he realises that he is in love with her - changes and becomes ambivalent as he both emphasises her "morality" and at the same time desires reciprocation for his love. The purpose of

[18] Dale M. Bauer and Susan Jaret McKinstry, *Feminism, Bakhtin and the Dialogic* (New York: State U of New York, 1991), 5.

examining their conflicting perceptions of the heroines is to demonstrate how these male characters - Newland, as a member of Old New York society, and Siren, as a member of late-Ottoman society - perceive the New Woman and how biases and pressures against divorce serve to reproduce patriarchal gender relations. In addition, I will demonstrate how the counter narrative, through the presentation of the heroines' multiple female selves, acts as a counterpart to this male tendency by allowing New Women characters to act within and outside patriarchal boundaries. In other words, Ellen's and Refika's performances of inconsistent selves - the rebel who is seeking a divorce, the unfortunate victim of an unfaithful husband, the lover who desires a new life - suggest the subversive counter narrative of the texts (internally persuasive discourse) that resist the attempt of masculine monologic language of surface narrative (authoritative discourse) to restrict New Women within fixed frameworks.

Through close attention to the novels' dialogic narration, it also becomes possible to recognise the voices of Ellen and Refika not only when they are directly articulated but also when they are placed in the position of the "other" within the naratives of the novel. With its repeated references to these heroines and their stories through the voices of other characters, the novels represent what they seem to repress: the female voice. The heroines' voices prevail in the narration as speakers who both interrupt and are interrupted, and through whom the voice of the "other" (here, the female voice) is heard. Added to this narrative mode are also Ellen's and Refika's direct reporting (and in Ellen's case, also her indirect free discourse). By presenting the contradictory discourses that are in a constant attempt to define the New Woman, the novels invite the reader to observe Ellen and Refika's conflicting perceptions of divorce, marriage, love; gain insight into their struggle for personal freedom, and into how, in the end, they are led to their ultimate decisions to sacrifice love for different reasons: Ellen for her freedom, Refika not only for her son's well-being but also for her recognition that there is no freedom in her society for her to fulfil her desire for love.

4.2. *The Age of Innocence*

4.2.1. Summary of the Plot

In *The Age of Innocence* (1920) Wharton takes the reader back to 1870s New York, full of lies, intrigues and conspiracies and the effects, mostly negative, that they have on the lives of individuals. In reference to the "vanished New York society of Wharton's adolescence", this novel, as Richard H. Lawson contends, is a "palpable reaching back, a bridge" to the conventions of the New York society of the 1870s.[19] The novel begins with Ellen Olenska's return from Europe to America, at about age thirty, to live with her aunt, Mrs. Mingott, after scandalously separating herself from her marriage to a wealthy but unfaithful Polish Count. She falls in love with Newland Archer, a young lawyer from one of New York City's best families. However, he is engaged to her cousin, a typical product of Old New York society, May Welland. Eventually Newland falls in love with Ellen whose presence makes him wonder if he should go through with his marriage to May. As his admiration for Ellen grows, so does his doubt about marrying May. Viewing Ellen as a threat to this marriage, the Mingotts and Archers try to prevent them from consummating their love and try to send her away from Old New York. Finally Newland marries May and becomes unhappy until she dies whilst Ellen leaves for Paris to live on her own.

4.2.2. Analysis

The novel begins with the surface narrative (authoritative discourse) introducing the conventions of Old New York and the social order, code of conduct and superficial values of the "conservative" strata of American society:

> [T]he world of fashion was still content to reassemble every winter in the shabby red and gold boxes of the sociable old Academy. Conservatives cherished it for being small and inconvenient and thus keeping out the "new people" whom New York was beginning to dread and yet be drawn to […] [The people that] the daily press had already learned to describe as "an exceptionally brilliant audience" had [arrived] through the slippery, snowy streets in private broughams, in the spacious family landau, or in the humbler but more convenient "Brown coupe" (1).

[19] Lawson, 35.

With this introduction the novel sets the social background of Old New York society, drawing attention quickly and effectively to "the world of fashion" with details of the place and its customs. The narrator's remote yet humorous voice strikes a satirical tone and creating the effect of double-voiced discourse when it switches to imitating the speech of the era through the quotation marks around the references to "new people", "exceptionally brilliant audience" or "Brown coupe"; giving the reader a first hint at the hypocrisy of this social milieu.

The text soon reveals its counter narrative (the depiction of unconventional female) that disrupts the surface narrative (the voice of Old New York) as revealed through the narrator's discourse in the previous passage. Ellen appears at this old Academy in May's opera box wearing a dress more daring than the dictates of New York fashion in that year. Upon seeing this, the people at the Academy have a troubled reaction. She is introduced to us first, as the "wearer of unusual dress" (7) through the direct reporting of Sillerton Jackson (a descendant from old wealth) and then from the angle of a biased conventional male observer through whose eyes we begin to see the novel, Newland Archer (a member of one of the big families in Old New York):

> It was annoying […] [that Ellen was sitting in the same box with his fiancée] that the box *which was thus attracting the undivided attention of masculine New York* should be that in which his betrothed was seated between her mother and aunt; and for a moment he could not identify the lady in the Empire dress, nor imagine why her presence created such excitement […] No, indeed; no one would have thought the Mingotts would have tried it on! (9, my italics)

This hybrid construction, as Bakhtin would describe it, begins with Newland's free indirect discourse (surface narrative): it expresses his irritated intonation - "it was annoying" - suggesting his conventional perception of women. The italicised portion that is incorporated within Newland's discourse and begins with the linking words "which", "thus" (as Bakhtin says, offering indications of the subordinate conjunction and linking words that signal "someone else's language in hybrid constructions"[20]) reveals a counter narrative through the narrator's sarcastic tone by referring to people at the Academy as "masculine New York" while indicating the patriarchal perception of Newland and mocking his fear that his society will look down on his bride-to-be in the same way as they do on Ellen. What follows is Newland's indirect discourse again,

[20] Michael M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist. trans. Carly Emerson and M. Holquist. (Austin: U of Texas Press, 1981), 305.

exposing his disapproval of this "lady in the Empire dress" in an ironic tone. The last sentence in the passage continues to reveal Newland's thought which is signalled through its character-like diction - "No, indeed" - in order to emphasise a biased male perception of women. This is complicated further by another emphasis through the exclamation mark at the end of the passage, which conveys not only Newland's shock at seeing this apparently "improper" lady but also the narrator's subtle mocking of Newland's response. From this opening scene at the opera, the novel also places the conflict between "pure", "proper" May who represents the values of Old New York and "sensual", "unconventional" female, Ellen, who is, as David Holbrook puts it, seen as an "intruder"[21] to the conventions of Old New York.

In order to develop Ellen's "unconventional" characterisation, the novel shifts its focus to her counter-image, May, a representation of a figure whom we might describe, following Barbara Welter's "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860", as a "True Woman" with four cardinal feminine virtues: "piety, domesticity, submissiveness and purity. Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife - woman."[22] May's depiction evokes this traditional American womanhood as she is referred to as an "angel in the home", with "this whiteness [in dress] radiance, goodness" (21), the daughter of the Mingotts and Newland's wife-to-be. However we hear the text's subtle indictment of this womanhood and the enforced values on her when we read, for example, the ironic tone in the language that describes her marriage to Newland. Their marriage seems to suggest the uniting of "the two great fundamental groups of the Mingotts and Mansons and all their clan, who cared about eating and clothes and money […]" (25). The sarcastic tone in this passage indicates the narrator's criticism toward the material values of these two "great", "fundamental" families which are then referred to with the belittling "and all their clan." This marriage also aims to emphasise that the union of a couple in the Old New York society always relies on the suitability of the match: "Mrs. Archer felt […] [she] had been altogether glad of her son's engagement […] There was no better match in New York than May Welland […] young men are so foolish and incalculable - and some women so ensnaring and unscrupulous - that it was nothing short of a miracle to see one's only son safe […] *in the haven of a blameless domesticity*" (7). The introductory words - *Mrs. Archer felt* - clearly indicate that we are given the indirect discourse of Newland's mother whose words the narrator imitates

[21] Holbrook, 13.
[22] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860", *American Quarterly* (1966), 18, 151-174, 152.

humorously and who is criticised for her double-standard view of gender roles: the references "foolish men" and "ensnaring women" indicate that Mrs. Archer perceives men as prey to the trap of "ensnaring" women. The italicised portion is the one that ultimately predominates, unmasking the narrator's criticism by emphasising the way in which May, the representation of "blameless" domestic life, is seen by Mrs. Archer and Old New York as the "angel in the house" who will save Newland from the entrapment of "ensnaring women."

In contrast to May's angelic depiction, Ellen is presented as a nonconformist, re-emphasising the text's depiction of the tension between the discourses of "True Woman" and "New Woman". The references in the novel to Ellen's defiant characteristics (her New Woman attributes) are numerous: she is modern, creative and interested in literature, painting, dance and music. She criticises Old New York society for its "blind conformity to tradition" (242). She is seen "parading up […] at the crowded hour with Julius Beaufort" (29), a married man, in an act described as "a mistake" for Old New York (29). All these features, her education and experience in Europe, her challenge to social norms of her society, have made her a different woman than American society has produced. But in the eyes of Old New York, she is the "black sheep that their blameless stock had produced" (10), a woman with an "unscrupulous" life (25); in short, a threat to the hegemonic social system of Old New York. For example, when she asks Newland to "come and see [her] some day" (29), Newland, a product of Old New York, finds this irritating because "she ought to know that a man who's just engaged doesn't spend his time calling on married women" and he thinks to himself how glad he is to be a New Yorker and that his bride-to-be, May is "one of his own kind" (29), indicating his view of Ellen as "other" and "improper." Ellen's departure from convention is re-emphasised when, during a party, she leaves her company, the Duke of St. Austrey and sits next to Newland, talking to the young man. Ellen's depiction in this episode echoes Sally Ledger's observations on the New Woman in that "the putting-on 'masculine' attributes (having 'straight talks to young men') was thoroughly characteristic of the textual New Woman."[23] But this action creates further tension between the discourse of the New Woman and authoritative discourse of Old New York: Ellen receives comments of disapproval because "it was not the custom in New York drawing-rooms for a lady to get up and walk away from one gentleman in order to seek the company of another"

[23] Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the fin de siècle* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 13.

(60). These scenes portray Ellen as the New Woman who makes her own decisions and repeatedly defies Old New York's rules.

The New Woman's defiance of the authoritative discourse of Old New York (or the challenge of the counter narrative against the surface narrative) through which we have seen her as an "improper" female earlier in the opening scenes of the novel is demonstrated further through the impact she has made on the male view of her. Ellen's rejection of convention and her question to him had made an impression on him as she "had stirred up old settled convictions and set them drifting dangerously through his mind" (40). He begins to question his perception of society after he had met Ellen. He thinks she brings rich European culture to the "damnably dull" Old New York society which has "no character, no colour, no variety" (242). He believes "women should be free - as free as we are" (39). His feelings about May (the True Woman) also begin to change as he "felt himself oppressed by this creation of factitious purity [May] so cunningly manufactured by a conspiracy of mothers and aunts and grandmothers and long-dead ancestress […]" (34); a woman of "the sameness, like one of those dolls cut out of the same folded paper" (59). These ideas are flowing through Newland's mind and create a constant tension between his way of thinking of old and new society and women. The conflict between these discourses is illustrated in the passage below, this time by referring to the gender roles in marriage, revealing the dilemma and contradictions in Newland's mind further:

> What could he and she [May] really know of each other, since it was his duty, as a "*decent*" fellow, to conceal his past from her, and hers, as a marriageable girl, to have no past to conceal? […] He perceived that such a picture presupposed, on her part, the experience, the versatility, the freedom of judgment, *which she had been carefully trained not to possess*; and with a shiver of foreboding he saw his marriage becoming […] a dull association of material and social interests held together by ignorance on the one side and hypocrisy on the other. (41, my italics)

Thus far, it seems that we are witnessing Newland's perception of women being released from convention. However, through its double-voiced narrative, the novel repeatedly presents counter-discourses that expose Newland's contradictory positions - and his hypocrisy. The italicised portion of the above passage, for example, with the use of quotation marks and through its ironic tone - "decent fellow", and with the use of "which" as a linking word, which, for Bakhtin, in this case, indicates "someone else's

language"[24] suggests the narrator's (and the counter narrative's) subtle criticism toward Newland and Old New York society (here, authoritative discourse) concerning the double-standard of sexual morality and of the role of men and women in marriage. The following hybrid passage exposes these ideas further in Newland's mind. When Sillerton Jackson, a conventional, gossiping man of the upper-class, accuses Ellen of living with M. Riviere, her former lover, Newland says:

> Living together? Well, why not? Who had the right to make her life over if she hadn't? I'm sick of the hypocrisy that would bury alive a woman of her age if her husband prefers to live with *harlots* […] Madame Olenska has had an unhappy life: that doesn't make her an outcast. (39, my italics)

Although on the surface Newland appears to support Ellen's freedom to live her life as she wishes, on closer examination he is again shown to hold conventional views when he refers to other women who live with Ellen's husband as "harlots." Newland's assumption that he has come to represent a liberator to Ellen is then undercut in the following sentence: "'Women ought to be free - as free as we are,' he declared, making a discovery of *which he was too irritated to measure the terrific consequences*" (39). The italicised commentary of the narrator here offers an insight into Newland's internal conflict: he adopts Ellen's claim that women should be free, but with irritation and a sense of its "terrific consequences". By revealing this tension between the surface and counter narrative (Newland's specious attitude toward women's freedom and then his fear of the consequences of this freedom), the text exposes his ambiguity, and its feminist critique of male hypocrisy.

The novel further unmasks male hypocrisy regarding his approach to women through Newland's reflecting on his past sexual experience and his pride to be marrying a "pure" and "innocent" girl. Although he seems to be proud of marrying May, he also takes pride in his own sexual experience in a lengthy and "agitated two-year relationship" with a married woman, Mrs. Rushworth. This is referred to earlier in the text when he contemplates May and wishes that "his wife should be as worldly-wise and as eager to please as the married lady [Mrs. Rushworth] […] which had so nearly marred that unhappy being's life […]" (5), an implication that Newland gained experience from this relationship whereas Mrs. Rushworth was left with a notorious reputation. But for Newland, this is not a big deal because:

[24] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 305.

> [T]he affair, in short, had been of the kind that most of the young men of his age had been through, and emerged from […] an undisturbed belief in the abysmal distinction between the women one loved and respected and those one enjoyed - and pitied […] when "such things happened" it was undoubtedly foolish of the man, but somehow always criminal of the woman […] The only thing to do was to […] to marry a nice girl, and then trust to her to look after him. (69)

In this hybrid passage we see incorporated, in the Bakhtinian sense, the "general opinion" [25] of Old New York: attitudes derived from the general opinion of Old New York society and expressed through Newland's discourse ("good" women to love and "bad" women to enjoy; cheating makes man "foolish" and women "criminal"; marrying a nice girl to look after him). The narrator's use of words here - "undisturbed belief in the abysmal distinction", "'such things happened'", "[bad women are] pitied" - casts a sarcastic, critical glance at this general opinion and throws its hypocrisy into relief. In the following passage, we observe a similar, double-voiced account of Newland's pride in his "masculine initiation" and mastery over his bride:

> He contemplated her [May's] absorbed young face with a thrill of possession in which pride in his own masculine initiation was mingled with a tender reverence for her abysmal purity. "We'll read Faust together… by the Italian lakes […]" he thought, somewhat hazily confusing the scene of his projected honey-moon with the masterpieces of literature which it would be his manly privilege to reveal to his bride […] (57).

With the use of "he contemplated", the narrator signals that we are given Newland's mode of thought. However, the passage also inserts the narrator's voice which adds a sarcastic tone with words such as "thrill of possession", "masculine initiation" and "manly privilege", subtly mocking Newland's pride in his "masculinity" and his view of May as a symbol of "abysmal purity". We then hear Newland's direct speech, indicated by the speech tags, expressing his sense of superiority and duty to enlighten his "ignorant" bride-to-be with "the masterpieces of literature." Such double-voiced passages draw attention to Newland's ambiguity and hypocrisy regarding the role of women and introduce a counter narrative that disturbs the male accounts of women in the novel.

In what follows is a polyphonic structure that focuses on two conflicting discourses: the New Woman as the "other" and as the "victimised" woman. Discussing the perceived challenge of the New Woman to the status quo at the fin-de-siècle, Sally Ledger explains that the view of New Woman as "a threat to the institution of marriage" was

[25] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* 304.

one of the defining features of the dominant discourse on the New Woman.[26] This view is also reflected in the passage below: by associating Ellen the character as the "other" for Old New York, the novel depicts her as a threat to society, invoking a patriarchal discourse. But Newland does not see her in this way: his initial view of her as the "improper" woman turns into pity and he begins to regard her in the light of a "victim" of a cruel husband that treats a wife as one of his possessions. His perception of Ellen here suggests a feminist consciousness, inviting the reader's sympathy for the "victimised" female:

> For the New York society, the subject of Ellen Olenska was too fresh and too absorbing […]
> [Janey] "It's odd," Janey remarked, "that she should have kept such an ugly name as Ellen. I should have changed it to Elaine."
> [Newland] Her brother laughed. "Why Elaine?"
> [Janey] "I don't know; it sounds more—more Polish," said Janey, blushing.
> [Mrs. Archer] "It sounds more conspicuous; and that can hardly be what she wishes," said Mrs. Archer distantly.
> [Newland] "Why not?" broke her son, growing suddenly argumentative. "Why shouldn't she become conspicuous if she chooses? Why should she slink about as if it were she who had disgraced herself? She's 'poor Ellen' certainly, because she had the bad luck to make a wretched marriage; but I don't see that that's a reason for hiding her head as if she were the culprit."
> [Mr. Jackson] "That, I suppose," said Mr. Jackson, speculatively, "is the line the Mingotts mean to take."
> [Newland] The young man reddened. "I didn't have to wait for their cue, if that's what you mean, sir. Madame Olenska has had an unhappy life: that doesn't make her an outcast."
> [Mr.Jackson] "There are rumours," began Mr. Jackson, glancing at Janey.
> [Newland] "Oh, I know: the secretary […] They say, don't they," he went on, "that the secretary helped her to get away from her brute of a husband, who kept her practically a prisoner? Well, what if he did? I hope there isn't a man among us who wouldn't have done the same in such a case." […]
> [Janey] "I hear she means to get a divorce," said Janey boldly.
> [Newland] "I hope she will!" Archer exclaimed. The word had fallen like a bombshell in the pure and tranquil atmosphere of the Archer dining-room […] (37-38).

These various points of view identified above reveal Old New York's contrasting views of Ellen in a polyphonic fashion, with the narrator appearing as the conductor of the different voices. The passage begins with the narrator's emphasis that Ellen is the subject of gossip in New York society and then moves to a direct presentation of societal perspectives and judgements on her. This allows us to listen to different points

[26] Ledger, 11.

of view and observe how Old New York, excluding Newland here, disapproves of Ellen's "improper" behaviour and her desire to divorce her husband. The way in which Ellen is represented from the characters' points of view above also echoes Elaine Showalter's account of the New Woman as a disruption to the social order, a female type against whom, the voices of Old New York (or the authoritative discourse as Bakhtin would define), "united in condemnation of the New Woman and in celebration of the traditional female role."[27] Despite all the negative perceptions of her, though, Newland supports Ellen's desire to divorce her husband. His voice offers the only hope for Ellen in a society where even the mention of "divorce" creates the effect of a "bombshell" and where change, or more precisely women's freedom, is beyond question. With this dialogue, the text appears to offer Ellen's side of the story, implicitly inviting us to question and interpret the views on Ellen and evoking her voice as if *in absentia*.

As the New Woman who repeatedly defies the boundaries of the authoritative discourse (here, social norms of her society), Old New York begins to see her as a "rebel" whose desire to divorce her husband must be stopped. This is revealed through the dialogue below between Newland and his sister, Janey:

> [Janey] "Mother's very angry […] Your friend Madame Olenska […] went there (Mrs. Sturthers's party) with the Duke and Mr. Beaufort." […]
> [Newland] "Well, what of it? I knew she meant to." […]
> [Janey] "You knew she meant to - and you didn't try to stop her? To warn her?"
> [Newland] "Stop her? Warn her?" […]
> [Janey] "You are marrying into her family."
> [Newland] "Oh, family!" he jeered.
> [Janey] "Newland - don't you care about family?"
> [Newland] "Not a brass farthing." […]
> [Janey] "You don't seem to understand how mother feels" (84).

This passage provides insight into Old New York's anxiety regarding the status of the New Woman. For Old New York, Ellen is still a "threat" to the social order and she must be "stopped" as Janey, representative of old values, asserts. Newland's view of Ellen, though, is still wavering. In the above passage, by suggesting that he does not care "about family," Newland seems to be stating his feelings for Ellen and his support of her in her decision to divorce her husband. But as the novel proceeds, we realise that Newland's attachment to her remains only at the level of fantasy because he is a conventional man at heart. This is revealed when Ellen's family enlists his service as a

[27] Elaine Showalter, "New Women" in *Sexual Anarchy, Gender and Culture at the Fin De Siècle* (London: Virago, 1992), 40.

lawyer in an attempt to persuade her to remain married; this that is, to keep her within the order of social norms, or to use a more Bakhtinian phrase, within the limits of authoritative discourse. Despite his feelings for Ellen, he yields to his clan: he may have "read more, thought more, and even seen a good deal more of the world" (6) than the men in his society, but, "grouped together they represented 'New York'", and as part of this "New York", the narrator reveals to the reader that, "the habit of masculine solidarity made him [Newland] accept their doctrine on all the issues called moral". Here, the use of "masculine solidarity", "doctrine", and "issues called moral" suggest the sarcastic tone of the narrator and of text's subtle indictment of the way in which people in Old New York are led to believe all its norms and rules in the name of "morality". Newland, in this case, is no exception.

It is after this point that Ellen's position becomes more elusive than before as she begins to oscillate between rebellious female and submission to social convention. Newland warns her about the negative consequences that she would face if she divorces her husband. When she asks "what harm could [her husband's] accusations […] do me here?" he answers:

> My poor child - far more harm than anywhere else! […] New York society is a very small world compared to the one you lived in. And it's ruled, in spite of appearances, by a few people with - well, rather old-fashioned ideas […] Our ideas about marriage and divorce are partially old-fashioned. Our legislation favors divorce - our social customs don't (108-109).

Feeling as if she has been "dead and buried […] [for] centuries and centuries" (14) in her marriage, Ellen bursts out with fear and frustration: "But my freedom - is that nothing" (110). She questions the prevalent double-standard in gender relations whereas Newland can only resort to traditional doctrines, as in the following words to her:

> Think of the newspapers – their vileness! […] One can't make over society […] The individual, in such cases, is nearly always sacrificed to what is supposed to be the collective interest: people cling to any convention that keeps the family together - protects the children, if there are any […] (110)

Newland's assertion on the "convention that keeps the family together" indicates a final blow that breaks Ellen's spirit and she finally yields to this doctrine with her "so faint and desolate" tone (110). This dialogue between Newland and Ellen draws attention to the mechanism of a patriarchal ideology that silences women's threat to the institution of marriage by seeking to assert the unchangeability of convention and "collective

interest". It appears here that Old New York has silenced the New Woman. Ellen changes her mind to pursue divorce against her husband as the double strain of struggling to achieve her freedom while at the same time bearing the full force of family and society disapproval weakens her challenge to society. In other words, she dutifully obliges what is expected of her, transforming herself from the "victimised" female to the "self-sacrificing" female. It is also after this point that Ellen's depiction as a "self-sacrificing" female for the sake of collective contentment, yielding to the pressure of her society - the voice of authoritative discourse - becomes inconsistent with the self-reliant and independent image of the American New Woman.

However the irony here is that, although it is Newland who persuades Ellen to remain married to her husband, he still wants to be with her; another indication of male hypocrisy depicted in the text. Both Ellen and Newland know that he cannot go beyond the constraints of his community that forces him to marry May; that is, forces him to remain with the boundaries of Old New York social customs by choosing the True Woman, representation of the values of Old New York. We observe Newland oscillating between these old and new ideologies (May and Ellen). He is to marry May, a suitable bride for his class, a woman who will allow him to fulfil the social expectations that he was trained to respect; yet, he is attracted to Ellen's free spirit; that is, to the New Woman, to a new community, one which lives on ideas and art, not on money and fine clothes, a community into which Newland cannot fit. Finally coming to a realisation that release from the "web of customs", the words Wharton uses to refer to social customs,[28] seems impossible, he tries to push Ellen to the position of another female role, one that suits his interest: "mistress." He even asks Ellen to run away with him. But Ellen has come to realise his hypocrisy, and a sense of indignation towards the constraints that Old New York places upon women is evoked when she reflects to Newland: "Isn't it you who made me give up divorcing - give it up because you showed me how selfish and wicked it was, how one must sacrifice one's self to preserve the dignity of marriage […]" (122). This tension continues in the following dialogue between Ellen and Newland, inviting us to observe the differences between their contrasting perceptions and demonstrating Ellen's rejection of his offer to be his "mistress", an instance of the female's rejection of her construction by patriarchal-myth:

[28] Edith Wharton, *A Backward Glance* (New York: Scribner's, 1933), 35.

> [Ellen] “We’ll look, not at visions, but at realities.”
> [Newland] “I don’t know what you mean by realities. The only reality to me is this.”
> [Ellen] “Is it your idea, then, that I should live with you as your mistress - since I can’t be your wife?” she asked.
> [Newland] “I want - I want somehow to get away with you into a world where words like that - categories like that - won’t exist. Where we shall be simply two human beings who love each other, who are the whole of life to each other; and nothing else on earth will matter.”
> […]
> [Ellen] “Oh, my dear - where is that country? Have you ever been there?” she asked; […] “I know so many who’ve tried to find it; and, believe me, they all got out by mistake at wayside stations: - and it wasn’t at all different from the old world they’d left […].” (293)

The passage articulates a feminist critique of the male point of view’s tendency to weave fantasies around the New Woman. Newland still insists on making Ellen his mistress: he appears willing to challenge those patriarchal myths and “categories” that confine their identities within the authoritative discourse and suggests running away with Ellen to escape them, yet at the same time he gives no indication that he is ready to depart his position as May’s future-husband. As the narrator informs the reader at earlier points in the novel, he is still “at heart a dilettante” (5); still the “terrifying product of the social system” (36); incapable of making the sacrifices necessary for their freedom. Ellen, on the other hand, is realistic: she becomes aware of Newland’s position as a “product of his society” (she tells him for example that: “You’ve never been beyond. And I have” (294)) and understands that there is no such place free from those “categories”. This implies that she rejects living as Newland’s mistress, or in other words becoming the object of male fantasy.

All the female roles that have been presented to Ellen in the novel she has rejected; in doing so, she seems to persistently defy convention, a New Woman who refuses to conform to the categories that are prepared for her by Old New York. Her rebellion against conventional obligation reaches its climax when she finally begins to search for new ways to live her life, a life that will allow her to escape from the restrictions and conventions of Old New York. She is aware of the fact that she is seen as a threat to Newland/May’s marriage and she uses this situation to her advantage to convince her wealthy grandmother Catherine Mingott to provide her with money to live an independent life in Paris. She convinces her grandmother to see that “if I return to Europe I must live by myself” (234). The voice behind this sentence is adamant, suggesting her choice to rely on herself, not on the others around her; suggesting that

she has chosen, not Newland, not her husband, Count Olenska, who has been waiting for her to return to him, but a life in Paris, as she describes, with "its splendour and its history […] the riches of Paris" (363); a life which means she will have the chance to meet artists, musicians, writers, philosophers; a life which, for her, means "freedom".

In the following chapters, the focus shifts to the friction between marriage (represented by Newland's discourse) and feminist discourse (represented by the narrator). Newland yields to his New York clan and finally is married to May. He easily adapts to the requirement of his conventional marriage. This is indicated through the following hybrid-construction in which we can explore the complex arrangements of the narrator's and the character's voices: "Archer had reverted to all his old inherited ideas about marriage. It was less trouble to conform to the tradition and treat May exactly as all his friends treated their wives than to try to put into practice *theories with which his untrammelled bachelorhood had dallied*" (196; my italics). This hybrid-construction (a particular form of double-voicing referring to the incorporation of two different voices in the same syntactical unit[29]), starts with Newland's free indirect discourse, as the passage indicates by using his name ("Archer"), and gives insight into his conversion back to his "old" and "traditional" ideas about marriage. His viewpoint here echoes the authoritative discourse of marriage suggesting that conforming to the norms of marriage for Newland is a better option not only for himself but also for the sake of others (May, Ellen, and perhaps for all his family). The italicised part, through its ironic tone ("theories with which his untrammelled bachelorhood had dallied"), reveals a counter narrative against the male discourse by implying that he has forsaken the progressive ideas of his youth and reverted, out of expediency, to a conventional approach in his treatment of May. Through this conflict between two clashing points of view, the text alerts the reader to the male's hypocrisy.

In odd contrast to the image of Newland that we are presented in the above episode as a conventional husband reverting to the "old inherited ideas about marriage", the following episode goes on to reveal his awareness that his life is shaped and controlled by the force of his community. This he finally sees and understands:

> "I AM dead - I've been dead for months and months" […] *What if it were SHE who was dead! If she were going to die - to die soon - and leave him free! Yes,*

[29] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 305, 306.

> *May might die - people did: young people, healthy people like herself: she might die, and set him suddenly free. (298)*

This paragraph begins with Newland's direct reporting within quotation marks, suggesting how Newland feels entrapped in his marriage. What follows is a hybrid-passage that reveals Newland's indirect discourse through the narrator's voice as it is signalled through the use of Newland's idiolect, capital letters and the exclamation marks; exposing the narrator's emphasis on the destructive effects of marriage on Newland. The narrator's voice however does not judge Newland but provides more insights into his mind, revealing his understanding that he is entrapped within his conventional marriage. Rather, the attack to conventional marriage comes from another point of view, Newland's son Dallas, the product of a newly evolved generation of American youth. During a discussion of his parent's marriage, he blurts out to Newland, revealing the text's feminist critique of gender roles in conventional marriage: "You never did ask each other anything, did you? And you never told each other anything. You just sat and watched each other, and guessed at what was going on underneath. A deaf-and dumb asylum in fact!" (255). Following these passages that reveal a feminist consciousness, the novel presents the voice of marriage as a counter-discourse through Newland's indirect discourse, promoting "the dignity of a duty" - that is, one's social duty toward society - over romantic love in marriage:

> Their long years together had shown him that it did not so much matter if marriage was a dull duty, as long as it kept the dignity of a duty […] Looking about him, he honoured his own past, and mourned for it. After all, there was good in the old ways (350).

With this passage, which reveals Newland's shifting perception of marriage again, we are given a summary of the decency of his life as he sees it from within the moral frameworks of Old New York, whose conventions have gained authority in his mind again, suggesting to the reader that even if his marriage was "a dull duty", at least he kept his "honour" and respect for "his own past" and finally asserting the superiority of "the old ways" (May and convention) over new community (Ellen and freedom from the constraints of convention).

Near the end of the novel, we learn that Ellen has been single and living in Paris for years. Newland's wife has been dead for several years and Newland, who kept Ellen's memory like "a relic in a small dim chapel" (365) is now fifty-seven years old. On

discovering his father's passion for Ellen, Dallas arranges a meeting between the two of them in Paris. Dallas tries to encourage his father to go upstairs and meet Ellen but Newland refuses and sits on a bench instead. He says, "It's more real to me here than if I went up" (259); in other words, he finally understands that he has never been able to put his so-called liberal ideas into action; instead he has lived a "shy, old-fashioned, inadequate life" (365). When Dallas asks "But what on earth shall I say?" Newland smiles: "Say I'm old-fashioned" (365); an acknowledgment of his conventional character and a sharp contrast to Ellen's new independent feminist role, a woman of her own, one that breaks the limits of the authoritative discourse.

One wonders at the end of the novel what promise Ellen's story holds. For Hermione Lee, it is "extremely hard to read *The Age of Innocence* as a novel with a happy ending," because it shows "there is no escape, in place or time, for the person (especially the woman) who has been stigmatised."[30] In one sense, Lee is right: the novel speaks of women who are stigmatised and seek a place to escape. But it is misleading to view the novel's ending as necessarily a pessimistic one. By placing Ellen in such a rigid society and showing the heroine's struggle to survive, first in an oppressive marriage, then in an oppressive and restrictive society, and finally leading her to her freedom in Paris, the novel not only foregrounds Ellen's determination to achieve her freedom, but also heightens its power as a feminist criticism of the society that has driven her away. The Bakhtinian concept of dialogism helps us to elucidate the way in which the subversive language (counter narrative) of the text is revealed through the multiple points of view and the generation of the heroine's multiple selves which underline the conflicting ideological positions and enable the reader to observe Ellen as a New Woman to be rewarded with her freedom at the end of the novel. By reading the novel as a dialogic narrative, we are given various perspectives through which we observe the New Woman's movement in the guise of Ellen Olenska, repositioning herself in relation to the voices around her, and presenting this figure in multiple guises such as the rebel who is seeking divorce, the unfortunate victim of a brutal husband, the sensual lover, only to challenge each in turn.

[30] Lee, 580.

4.3. *Raik's Mother*

4.3.1. Summary of the Plot

Raik's Mother (1909) is the story of Refika, an unhappily married woman, presented through the narration of Siren, one of the male characters in the novel. He begins his story by explaining that upon hearing the news from his cousin Mihri that his uncle is planning to marry him off to their wealthy neighbour (Necibe) who is no more than fifteen years old, he decides to leave Istanbul and spend the autumn on holiday in Heybeliada.[31] This is where he meets Refika, a young married woman who abandons her philanderer husband and begins to live with her father and her son, Raik. Eventually, after Siren's influence on her and for the well-being of her son, she agrees to return to her husband.

4.3.2. Analysis

Like *The Age of Innocence,* which begins with the surface narrative revealing Old New York's perspectives on the True Woman and New Woman, *Raik's Mother* opens with the voice of the surface narrative exposing the "current opinion", as Bakhtin would say, of the Turkish era about the "alafranga" and "ideal" woman. The opening episodes demonstrate "how a woman should *not* be" (my italics), referring to alafranga woman and presented from the perspective of its male narrator (surface narrative). Siren begins his story by recounting why he left Istanbul and came to Halki Palas Hotel in Heybeliada. He explains that he escaped from "the danger" in Istanbul, referring to Necibe whom his uncle has chosen for him to marry. He describes her with a reflection that:

> Her [Necibe] morality is as ugly as her [ready-made expensive clothes] […] This harmless little girl is becoming a very boring young woman. After the foundation of shops that sell ready-made clothes, release of gramophones, our society began to lose its modest [clothing], national customs […] Perhaps in terms of her age and wealth, she [Necibe] is a desirable friend […] she has been learning French for one year […] and so and so. May Allah protect humble and modest men like us from such women who welcome their husbands with

[31] An island off the coast of Istanbul, Turkey.

> "bonjour", bargain in French while shopping in Beyoğlu, teach their child to call them "mama" rather than "anne" in Turkish […] (133). [32]

This disapproving presentation of Necibe serves as a reflection of the ideology of the "ideal woman": for Siren, Necibe typifies the superficiality of a new generation cut off from Turkish traditional values, with their dress codes and pretensions for speaking French. Here we have an illustration of the alafranga character who, as Kandiyoti notes, is viewed as a negative type and provokes the concern about extreme westernisation. Kandiyoti argues that these characters are depicted "in the guise of foolish and feckless young men and 'fashionable' loose women [who] enter the home corroding the moral fabric of the family and by extension of society as a whole."[33] Although Necibe is only a minor character in the novel, she marks an important reference point in Siren's narration as a representation of this alafranga woman. In this respect, the novel continues to present the voice of dominant ideology in the novel that prescribes how a Turkish woman should not be, revealing the tension between the discourses of alafranga and ideal woman:

> Before me a barrel [referring to a woman] who murmurs [something] in French, [with] corset […] big hat […] is walking, a barrel that is made of a meat pile that my eyes [look at] in disgust. There are two children next to her, two beautiful puppets! [They are wearing] white pongee clothes, between four and six years old. The barrel [the woman] is perhaps their governess. They speak in French, but I cannot tell the nationality of the children. A bit further a car stopped. A woman in yellow cloak was leaning out of the car. The children ran towards the car […]
>
> -Mama, mama …
>
> The woman in yellow had a long conversation with the governess in French. She pampered her children in French. I felt anger […] Is the word "mamma" more lovely, more sincere than "anne"? Here she is, a Turkish woman I always want to avoid! I was walking in rage […] Let me tell you what kind of woman I want. If she wants to learn [another] langue, let her learn, even two, three [languages]; but she should never bargain in French while shopping in Beyoğlu. In an attempt to imitate French women, she should not fake smiles, rub her hands and nod her head in such a strange weird manner, show her hysterical sounds of amazement in French, or say "oh, mon pere" when she sees her father to show that she is a Westernized woman, [a Turkish woman should] believe in God, should sometimes go to the mosque […] a woman who could teach all these things to her children […] (138-139).

[32] Halide Edib Adıvar, *Raik'in Annesi (Raik's Mother)* (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 1973). The subsequent references of the novel will be to this edition and indicated within brackets within the text.

[33] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Women as Metaphor: The Turkish Novel From the Tanzimat to the Republic" in *Urban Crises and Social Movements in the Middle East*, Ed. by Kenneth Brown et al., (L'Harmattan:Paris, Proceedings of the C.N.R.A. – E.S.R.C. Symposium, 1989), 143.

By using Siren's voice as a surface narrative as in the case of the above passage, the novel constantly draws attention to society's judgemental attitude and approach to those women who do not fit the image of "ideal" woman. Siren's disdain towards the woman in the yellow cloak, for example, is expressed in his comments about her appearance and mannerisms that mark her out as "westernised". By generalising his comments about this lady to other women in Turkey, his discourse also incorporates the voices of the era regarding alafranga women as symbols of the moral decadence threatening Turkish society: their habits in wearing make-up, in dress, in their demands for equality with men, in sexuality and in love. They are women who fall into traps of modernisation and acquire undesired characteristics such as materialism and a neglect of their role in society's well-being. His mockery of the (mis)westernised woman as an example of "false" modernisation, and his didactic tone which is indicated with the frequent use of auxiliary modal verbs ("should"), embody the authoritative voice of his society which seems to warn women against transgressing from the vision of the "ideal" womanhood.

Our first impression of Refika as an "ideal" woman is given in Siren's interior dialogue below in which we observe the conflict between the discourses of "alafranga" and "ideal" woman. The passage displays what Bakhtin refers to as heteroglossia ("the internal stratification of any national language into social dialects, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups […] languages of authorities, of various circles, and of passing fashions […]").[34] This is evident in Siren's dialogised discourse below is indicated in particular through the text's use of "ideal" woman's language - "neneciğim" and "anne" - in juxtaposition to the language of alafranga woman - "mama". The authoritative discourse here is that of the views of Siren's society which emphasise the role of "motherhood" as one of the important features of an "ideal" woman; also a characteristic of the image of the New Turkish Woman. When Siren sees Refika in the groves of Çamlimani, he says:

> I heard a cheerful, excited, sweet voice of a child saying: "Neneciğim" [a traditional way of saying "mother" in Turkish], do not look for [me] any more, look Raik is right here […] I felt gratitude towards this mother […] who makes her child say "anne" instead of "mama" […] Is this slim young woman in blue *yeldirme* his mother? […] She has no ornament [on her] apart from a small collar of her large *yeldirme* […] What a lovely sight that is surrounded by endless blue! […] What a lovely woman who pushes her child to her heart! (140).

[34] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 262-263.

Siren's use of "what a lovely sight" for Refika's *yeldirme*[35] in this passage suggests another feature of the "ideal" woman's image: her chastity and modesty. Through Refik's approval of Refika's "modest" clothing with "no ornament", the novel appears to be praising her for maintaining the conservative character of her clothing. In this context, the first impression of Refika through her "good mother" and "modest" clothing sharply contrasts with Ellen's sensual characterisation and her "unusual dress" at the opening of *Age of Innocence*. This may suggest that, by depicting Refika as the representation of an "ideal" woman for popular fiction, Adıvar's fiction seems more concerned with employing the forms of dominant narrative structures in order to gain access to credibility in a patriarchal society. However, by reading the various points of view below on Refika we can problematise such a characterisation and gain more of an appreciation of the complexity of her representation. The following exchange between three male characters, who are discussing their views on "good" and "bad" women, portrays a direct presentation of societal perspectives and judgements on Refika, the so-called "ideal" woman, transforming her from the "ideal" woman to the "victimised" woman, and then to the "defiant" woman:

> [Salim] - This lucky dog [Rauf] lives with such a beautiful woman.
> [Siren] - Well, so his mistress is very beautiful.
> [Ihsan] - Yes, a fair beauty.
> [Siren] - Do you know Rauf's wife?
> [Ihsan] - People say she is not beautiful.
> [Salim] - Women always find their neighbours ugly.
> [Ihsan] - I saw her once when she got out of a car.
> [Siren] - What was she like?
> [Salim] - Is she more beautiful than Rauf's mistress?
> [Ihsan] - She is no longer a big catch.
> [Siren] - This is not an answer to Salim's question.
> [Ihsan] - My dear friend, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. I was not even thinking about her beauty. I have a friend who knows her very well, according to him, the more Rauf becomes rude and inconsiderate, the more she becomes emotional, sweet [and] clever. The most strange thing is, she is not upset because of her husband['s adultery]. They have a child like an angel. She went to her father's at the end of last winter after she got tired of Rauf's long-lasting disappearances, unfaithfulness (146-147).

[35] Nora Seni describes *yeldirme* as "a kind of coat worn during summer holidays in the country [and it] confirm[s] the new look of Turkish women."; see Nora Seni, "Fashion and Women's Clothing in the Satirical Press of Istanbul at the end of the 19th Century" in *Women in Modern Turkish Society* ed. by Sirin Tekeli (London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd), 30.

While these male characters consider Rauf "lucky" for living with a beautiful woman, they degrade his mistress, Ogistin, by viewing her as a sexual object which manifests itself in their description of her as "fair beauty". Refika, on the other hand, is seen as a victim of a "rude and inconsiderate" husband. However, there is another point to notice in this passage: that Refika has abandoned her husband because he is having an affair with Ogistintin and refuses to be in the position of a mistreated and betrayed wife (as Ihsan notes, "she got tired of Rauf's long-lasting disappearances, unfaithfulness"). It is after this point that we begin to see Refika in a different role: a defiant woman whose challenge of her husband, thus her marriage, illustrates her strong personality and demonstrates her resistance to the social norms that treats a wife as the property of her husband with no rights of her own.

Refika's experience in some measure reflects what happens to Ellen. She too destabilises her image in the eyes of others by defying the norms of the marriage institution. However, given her role not only as a wife but also as a mother, in a more conservative society, Adıvar's New Woman seems to be defying the conventional norms more so in fact than Wharton's New Woman, Ellen. Taken in this light, Refika's attempt to free herself from the control of her husband who so openly flaunts his adultery can be read as a sign of her strong and rebellious character. Yet, in the following pages of the novel we are reminded of the voice of authoritative discourse again and made aware of the fact that, however much Refika defies her role as a "wife", she cannot avoid being defined in relation to her domestic roles. Consider for example Siren's account of her below, even after he finds out that she left her husband, and thus her role as a wife:

> Refika is a perfect representation of a respectable woman, of an ideal wife and mother […] an affectionate friend, a woman with a faithful and soft heart, loyal to her marriage vow *despite her unfaithful husband who has forgotten his promise*, a woman who waits for her family […] A woman who turns a blind eye to the cruelty of men […] She is a woman who deserves to be loved by a sister, friend, lover, child, mother, and father (my italics, 159).

By establishing a surface perspective through male eyes which refers to Refika as "a perfect representation of a respectable and faithful woman", and then by incorporating a counter narrative with a female point of view which reminds the reader of Raik as Refika's "unfaithful husband", the text creates a double-voiced discourse, revealing its critique of the double-standard in gender roles as well as of male hypocrisy. For Siren, Refika is "perfect" not only because she appears to play the role of "ideal" woman well

but also because she “turns a blind eye to the cruelty of men”; a further reference to double standard in gender relations. Consequently, we are told that in Refika’s society where woman’s existence is restricted to the position of “wife-mother”, women are defined as “good” or “bad” according to how well they play these roles.

This idea - that women are judged according to how well they fit the role of “ideal” woman - is demonstrated in a more explicit way when Siren juxtaposes Refika to Ogistin in the following episode. Siren observes Refika accidentally encounter her husband and his mistress while they are alighting from the same boat. He first defines Ogistin as a sensual woman: “a tall, chubby, beautiful and blonde woman, a bit grumpy, with heavy make-up on her face and in a purple dress […] she attracts too much attention while she walks in a seductive manner” (149); then defines Refika by emphasising her “modesty” and maternal instincts: “a woman in black walking with her head held high, as if she has gathered the pride of all women in the world in her elegant and young body […] holding tight her son’s hands” (149). By demonstrating Siren’s perception of two different types of woman, the text portrays a tension between the discourse of a fashionable European womanhood who is viewed as a sensuous and sexualised object and the discourse of “ideal” woman as a dignified and respectable mother which stems from the dominant ideology of womanhood of the era.

In such ways, the text invites us to begin to question the authority with which Refika has been depicted thus far from the perspective of the male characters in the novel. This invitation becomes stronger when we read of Siren’s sexual attraction to Refika. He is simply afraid of her refusal and is quite willing to tell all: “Refika is the type of woman that I can love dearly. […] But how can I know that she will welcome my approach?” (159): an indication that he can break the rules for Refika. His desire to be with her is an ironic inversion of his previous narrations that constantly remind the reader of Refika’s “loyalty” and “chastity”. His comments on her “slim and graceful body” (140); “so attractive that [no one] has ever seen” (144), indicate that his chivalric intention to help her, and his commitment to a stable world of manners, have now been displaced. But the voice of the male point of view cannot let the New Woman ruin her “ideal” female depiction, or she might pose a threat to her society. Realising that Refika “would not reciprocate his approach,” Siren assumes his previous role as a spokesman for his society and “swore to make peace between [Rauf and Refika] and bring them together” (159).

After this point, the polyphonic mode of the novel brings another voice to the story and draws our attention to Refika's husband, Rauf, another patriarchal perspective through which we see Refika. When Siren, after assuming his new "peacemaker" role, meets Rauf and confronts him, the following dialogue happens between them:

> [Rauf] - "I have such an angel-like wife, young and wonderful who is better than women like Ogistin […] But still, I could not help falling into her trap."
> [Siren] - "If so, then why are you wasting your time in hotels with this creature [Ogistin]? […] Why then don't you finish with your mistress and go back to your wife?"
> [Rauf] - "No, no, you are a man, don't you understand my weakness?" (165).

The surface impression given by the characters here is that Rauf is not to blame because he is a "man"; it is the woman, Ogistin, the *femme-fatale*, who lures men into her trap. Even Refika's father supports Rauf on this matter: "I do not blame Rauf. He cannot resist his natural needs as a man" (165). Yet, on closer examination, between these lines lurks a subtle criticism towards the patriarchal myth-making of female sexual morality (the view that, while men's disloyalty can be justified because of the "weakness" of their nature, there can be no excuse for women's immoral behaviour). All these voices, in other words, attempt to stabilise Refika in her position of "wife-mother" role; an implication that it is inappropriate and even surprising for a married woman, regardless how much she is hurt or humiliated by her husband's mistreatment, to accuse her husband for his adultery and refuse to return to her marriage.

However, these attempts are in vain because Refika repeatedly defeats these voices' attempts at positioning her. Her father reflects that "Rauf has sent letters to make peace. I thought […] she would forgive him [Rauf]. But she does not even bother to read his one or two letters […]. This girl is like a puzzle not only to her husband but to all of us" (169); for Siren, she plays like "an actress" (165); Rauf, on the other hand, "never expected such resistance, tenacity from Refika." (176) This section of the novel not only illustrates Refika's challenging characterisation but also, as Cunningham would say, her "high-minded principles."[36] By standing up against the pressure of her family and society to make her go back to her husband, Refika appears, in this context, more rebellious than her American sister, Ellen, who agrees to give up on divorcing her husband when she faces a similar pressure that is enforced on her by her family. In addition, by presenting these various perspectives, the novel draws attention to those

[36] Cunningham, 50.

voices who constantly try to define and categorise Refika as a "good wife" or a "good daughter", relativising their perspectives and leading us to question the taken-for-granted frameworks in which the narrator has presented the heroine so far. In this respect, Refika's "wife-mother" identity emerges not as a social fact but a social construct, imposed, enforced, and sustained by these voices who tell her stories to the reader.

Toward the end of the novel, the novel makes a further radical move in its representation of Refika and presents her as a New Woman in love. When Siren accidentally sees her with her lover, Mansur, on a boat, we are presented with a different, perhaps more fulfilled, image of Refika who, with "a slightly sarcastic […] smile" (177), tells Siren: "Do not forget to give Mansur's and my regards to Rauf" (178). Her wry statement here gives a glimpse not only of the heroine's challenge to the authority of her husband but also to the narration of Siren, the vehicle of the patriarchal discourse in the novel. He is irritated and shocked because of seeing this so-called "ideal", "loyal" woman in a threatening, adulterous female position: "I am losing my mind […] if she [disgraces herself by] destroying the ["ideal"] womanhood that I saw […] in her, [then] I will lose all respect [and] belief that I have been feeding inside me for all humanity, all goodness […] There is still time to stop her fall from the position of the most respectable womanhood" (180-181). This suggests that the voice of the male point of view (or authoritative discourse) will again attempt to maintain Refika, the so-called "ideal" woman, within the prescriptions of this womanhood.

This is also where the novel begins to portray Refika as a female seeking for her independence and free love. She is now seen as too threatening to the patriarchal norms of her society and this portrayal contradicts the devotion and loyalty to home that late-nineteenth century Ottoman society associated with the image of the "ideal" New Woman. Of this free love during the late Ottoman period, Alan Duben and Cem Behar comment, "[free] love was a dangerous business […] because […] it […] undermines the moral foundations of society. Clearly it was a threat to authority, but it also jeopardized family honour, family boundaries and personal identity, hence social order."[37] Viewed in this light, and given the vehement pressures that we see brought to bear on Refika regarding her "loyalty" and "chastity" in the novel, we can understand that her desire to establish a new identity for herself represents a radical step. Yet,

[37] Alan Duben and Cem Behar, *Istanbul Households: Marriage, family and fertility 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 92.

however much she may struggle to establish a new identity for herself, she is still torn between her domesticity (in her case particularly her "motherhood") and her desire for love. The following dialogue between Mansur and Refika effectively reveals her anger and frustration and the suffering that her society thrusts upon her:

> [Mansur] - You give up on all your individual pleasures for such a man like Rauf. I would not call it self-sacrificing, but your weakness! I would not have bothered you had I not believed that I can love you as much as you deserve, my heart can answer your heart […] Why do you sacrifice yourself for a selfish man with a stone heart, a man who ignored your tears and crushed your most respectable rights? Why should he come and go as he likes and have such a beautiful rare woman like you without [showing any] respect and admiration [towards you]? […]
> [Refika] - Why do you tell me all these things? Don't you see I am torn between that child and you? […] As you know very well, Rauf would never accept divorce! Are not all our attempts turned out to be in vain? How can I love you then, as Raik's mother? (188-189).

In this passage, we see Refika struggling with two contrasting aspirations - motherhood and love - and the dilemma that she faces as a result. Here the novel casts a critical glance at the rigid patterns into which Refika's society tries to fit her by depicting her torn between her domestic identity and desire for personal freedom: the implication is that release from the structure of patriarchy seems almost impossible. This idea anticipates what a later critic, Sirin Tekeli has said in referring to the life of Turkish women in late-Ottoman society: "Their [women's] only responsibility was housework and child-rearing […] Giving the chance of developing their own independent identity and freeing them from men's control was never dreamed of."[38] Living in a similar society depicted in the novel, Refika's question - "how can I love you then, as Raik's mother?" - demonstrates her awareness that she will always be seen as a "mother" rather than as an individual. Her depiction as a female trapped within the marital snare suggests that society would not allow her to develop her own independent identity, let alone experience free love, because that society has already confined her, as the title of the novel suggests, into the role of "Raik's mother".

In the following section of the novel, attention shifts to the tension between Refika and Siren, demonstrating the clash between female desire for love and the male's attempt to re-construct her as an "ideal" woman. After she walks away from Mansur, she comes

[38] Sirin Tekeli, "Emergence of the feminist movement in Turkey" in *The New Women's Movement* ed. Drude Dahlerup (Sage: London, 1986), 182, 183.

across Siren who has been watching her with Mansur and finally gives vent to her anger:

> Go and tell your friend [Rauf] to let me be free and be with the man I want […] I met him [Rauf] during the best years of [my] life, a time when my heart believed the most in happiness, goodness […] people. He dirtied my most clean ideas, turned my most sincere beliefs into disbeliefs. I lost my trust in my friends and began to consider everyone as degraded creatures who are the slaves of their own weaknesses. To love [Rauf] killed my desire to enjoy life, to have pleasure. Like a trouble thunder that appears suddenly and passes through the most productive place, he ruined, destroyed all my good feelings; now here he is, after all those years of disloyalty, humiliation, arrogance, as if my existence, my happiness and my peace is not important, he is asking for my forgiveness and loyalty…Is that so? I think it is too late [now]. Since the day I met him, he [always] fancied immoral, cheap women […] now it is time for me to accept that [a person's] honour is only based on "a word" (189).

With this account of Refika's story through her own voice, the novel presents perhaps the most explicit and powerful feminist discourse in the novel. It is here that we see the extent of her frustration with her entrapment in the marital snare - something of course which we never fully see through Siren's narration. Refika's hurt and indignation come to the surface in these verbal snapshots, as when she says, "he [Rauf] dirtied my most clean ideas, turned my most sincere beliefs into disbeliefs." With her demand to "let me be free and be with the man I want" we see her striking back at Rauf and articulating her refusal to remain in her marriage and be expected to feel shame and regret.

But in the eyes of her society, she remains a challenge to the hegemonic structure. Therefore, Siren makes his final attempt to shape her back into her "respectable" position by reminding her of the importance of motherhood and chastity:

> You are the most respectable of all women […] There is a small child who is not even able to ask you; "What are you doing to me?", a child who cannot understand the cruelty and weakness of people […] I believe it is not worth destroying the life of this delicate, not grown-up existence [of Rauf] yet. Raik, this speechless, poor pitiful child, is not strong enough to understand his pain. But you are, because you raised him as an emotional, sensitive child with your own soul. Are you parenting him so that you will slap him like this? (191).

The import of Siren's message here is clear: that Refika must sacrifice her happiness for her son. He warns her that she cannot be happy if she divorces her husband because "as long as you stay away from your house and husband, you will always be exposed to this threat. Even a slightest idea that might be crossing your mind [about divorce] is more

shameful than Rauf's unfaithfulness" (189). Again, we hear from Siren the doctrine that women in her society cannot exist outside of the roles that society expects them to play - and that they are expected to remain loyal while men can get away with their unfaithfulness. When she finally loses control and asks "Why, why, why?", Siren, with his didactic voice, answers:

> Because, he [Rauf] cannot fight against his needs and such serious pleasure [here, referring to his sexual pleasure] as this weakness is in his nature. He is at least unpretentious! But you surrender to your pride and arrogance […] You cannot be happy with something wrong. Eventually, the remorse and misery in your heart and conscience will be more painful than living with Rauf. Think, you cannot be happy even in heaven if you make a minor mistake that will shame Raik! […]Let the woman whom I believe is the purest, the most respectable of all women not fall. Let that little boy be happy." (194)

Similar to the episode in *The Age of Innocence* where Newland, just like Siren, acts as the spokesman of his society and tells Ellen that "one can't make over society" (110), we are presented with an episode which exposes the conflict between the aspiration of the individual and the claims of tradition, family and community. We see how Siren attempts to contain Refika within these claims: first, by speaking with the voice of society so as to belittle and suppress her voice, and then by asserting her maternal duty to her son which is, he reminds her, more important than her personal freedom. Aware of the implications of this - that if she leaves her husband to be with her lover, she will not be able to her enjoy her freedom and her son will also suffer from social pressures and stigma - Refika finally yields: "Send me Rauf" (194), implying that she agrees to unite with her husband.

When we finish reading the novel, the reader may be tempted to ask: how could the novel, after presenting all the suffering and mistreatment that Refika undergoes, still create a marital prison for her? What will happen next when she returns to her marriage? Should we pity her or condemn her? Answers for these questions may vary. However, to read the ending as the defeat or surrender of the heroine is to impose too definite a conclusion onto all the conflicts that take place throughout the novel between the various discourses that are represented and the dynamic changes through which the heroine undergoes. In this sense the novel offers neither a straightforward message that tells of how a "good wife" must behave nor a tale of the tragic fate of a victim who fails to pursue her personal desire. It is a representation of a heroine's trial of different female

roles until she realises that each role either fails to provide her with fulfilment or is ultimately impossible to bear beneath the pressures of patriarchal society.

In addition, reading Refika's return to her home as a conventional theme that tells of how women ought to act is also a limited perspective. As Cunningham notes in her reflections on New Women literature, "the fact that [New] women […] are forced back into humiliating surrender is presented as yet further proof that the social fabric is rotten."[39] In this sense, we can argue that it is a novel that forces us to re-evaluate the social norms that seek to place a woman in the limited role of "wife-mother" regardless of her individual desire; a novel that details what it would be like to be the women in a society where they are objectified and how a woman suffers when she accepts the status of idealised object. As a result, even if the heroine may not have achieved the freedom she aspired to and is ultimately pushed back to the flow of convention, we observed her struggling to challenge the ideal of the feminine roles in her society; and to some degree, she has succeeded. Although she never reaches an external place for her individual adventure, she has preserved a space within herself; a space of independence and defiance. Reading *Raik's Mother* in the light of feminist dialogics thus opens our eyes to the continuous conflict between the surface narrative (male voice that constantly attempts to define and stabilise Refika) and counter narrative (the depiction of her resistance to these attempts) and draws attention to the text's critical interrogations of the ideology of "ideal" womanhood.

[39] Cunningham, 50.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the New Woman in relation to the theme of divorce and free love in *The Age of Innocence* and *Raik's Mother.* I have attempted to show that these novels are penetrating studies of New Women who, instead of putting up with their repressive marriages, decide to risk social ostracism by leaving their husbands and attempting to establish new identities for themselves. My feminist dialogic analysis of the texts showed that each novel presents both a surface narrative (authoritative discourse that is represented through the eyes of male characters) and a counter narrative (the subversive language of the text that resists male attempts to restrict, define and stabilise the New Woman). By exploring the multiple subjectivities of Ellen and Refika and their shifting and contrasting attitudes toward divorce and love, this chapter attempted to highlight the ambiguities of the novels regarding the image of the New Woman in their respective societies.

This chapter also explored the question of what the ending of the novels (Ellen's flight from Old New York to Paris, Refika's return to her unhappy marriage) suggest. In contrast to those critics considered in the introduction of this chapter who suggested that *The Age of Innocence*'s ending suggests "there is no escape"[40] or the "failing" of the heroine,[41] and those who argued that *Raik's Mother* is a statement of the importance of motherhood and the "ideal" woman,[42] I have argued that the endings can also be read as indications of the heroines' realisation of the social norms that try to restrict and define them: this realisation, I suggested, can be interpreted as an account of the fraught struggle for female independence rather than a simple message of the "failure" of the heroine (Ellen) or of submission to the role of "motherhood" (Refika).

The similarities and differences of the novels in terms of their accounts of divorce, love and the New Woman "question" in their respective American and Turkish contexts, can be summarised as follows: In both novels, we see a society where women are expected to be passive and dependent on their husbands and we observe the hostility that the heroines receive for attempting to live outside of marriage, seeking love and equality. In both novels, each time the heroines want to put one foot forward for their freedom, they

[40] Lee, 580.
[41] Ammons, 127.
[42] Enginün, *The Issue of East and West in the Works of Halide Edib Adivar* (İstanbul: Dergah Press, 2007), 417.

are hampered by men. While the novels recognise Ellen's and Refika's idealism in cherishing a love that supersedes legal marriage, they also address the problems which befell them when others condemn them for their attempt to live outside marriage and convention.

Where these novels differ is their commentary on their heroines' approach to divorce. Ellen and Refika interpret differently their situation and the options that are available to them at the end of the novels: while Ellen is allowed to free herself by sacrificing her love for Newland, Refika by contrast is led to sacrifice her love for her son and return to her marriage. Viewed in this way, *The Age of Innocence* holds out the possibility of a more positive, flexible social order in which New American Women can be active agents, while *Raik's Mother* presents a New Turkish Woman who can envision no alternative to her lot (or else the alternative - of living with her lover - is too costly for herself and her son). In other words, whilst Wharton's novel is more suggestive and hopeful by letting her New Woman achieve her personal freedom, Adıvar's has a less hopeful tone toward her heroine's individual freedom.

However, if *The Age of Innocence* seems more optimistic, *Raik's Mother* is more realistic in representing the situation of an unhappily married woman of the period who would be stigmatised as a divorcee and probably feel more oppression than she would feel in her marriage. Nevertheless, the ending of *Raik's Mother*, with its apparent return of the heroine to a domestic femininity, does not lessen or dissipate the power and energy of the parts that reveal the heroine's feminist aspirations: her challenge to her husband (which at some points is even more radical than Ellen's, such as her resilience in bearing the pressure of her father and husband to return to her marriage), her desire for a new life and for her freedom in love all stand as testament to her inner determination and her challenge to the ideology of "ideal" womanhood.

Chapter 5:
Conclusion

This thesis has examined the dialogic depiction of the New Woman in a comparative analysis of the work of Edith Wharton (*The House of Mirth*, (1905), *The Custom of the Country* (1913) and *The Age of Innocence* (1920) and Halide Edip Adıvar (*Raik's Mother* (1909), *Handan* (1912) and *Heartache* (1924). Instead of reading these novels as endorsing authoritative discourses regarding "how a woman should be", or as expressions of the authors' views on femininity (as previous critics have suggested), this thesis has approached the novels as examples of New Woman fiction. I have attempted to demonstrate that, by portraying complex, inconsistent and fragmentary New Women characters and by presenting a diversity of discursive positions contesting the roles and identities of women, these novels offer polyphonic accounts of experiences of womanhood in their respective societies that reveal a feminist resistance to the monological definition of femininity enforced by patriarchal discursive structures. The diverse depiction of the New Woman was the main focus of my reading of the novels and this depiction, I argued, alerts the critic, to borrow Jean V. Matthews' words, to the idea that "the more thoroughly a woman is classified the more easily is she controlled."[1] Further, in contrast to critics who have suggested that through their "unhappy endings", these texts are asserting the importance of preserving the moral and social values of the era, I proposed that the endings of the novels can be read both as critiques of hegemonic discourses (here, marriage, divorce, female desire) and a recognition of female voice, agency and struggle.

Previous analyses by Wharton's and Adıvar's critics have generally focused either on the relationship between their biography and their art or on the authors' views on the woman question (their emphasis on the importance of women's domestic roles for the sake of society). Although such readings do important work in tracing the dominant cultural discourses of Wharton's and Adıvar's era on domestic femininity, they remain limited by their tendency to approach the novels as reflections of the author's personal lives and/or views on the woman question, or as pessimistic or conservative accounts of female

[1] Jean V. Matthews, *The Rise of the New Woman: The Women's Movement in America, 1875-1930* (Ivan R. Dee: Chicago, 2003), 106.

weakness and "victims of society". Through a feminist dialogic framework I have attempted to move beyond such readings and demonstrate how conflicts between competing and contrasting discourses generate the New Woman's identities in the texts, while approaching the novels less as records of the authors' attempts to assert certain codes of female behaviour but as polyphonic texts that give insight into the New Woman's potential for diverse constructions and deconstructions. With this in mind, I have analysed the texts through close study of their dialogic narratives and brought a new methodological approach to the novels by privileging textual analysis over questions of authorial intention and/or ideology.

The main arguments of this thesis and its main contributions to the existing literature on Wharton, Adıvar and the New Woman can be summarised as follows:

1. Wharton's and Adıvar's Texts as New Woman Novels

One of my central aims in this comparative study was to demonstrate that both Wharton's and Adıvar's novels under question display features of New Woman fiction. I have argued that, in all these novels, the discourses of marriage, divorce and sexuality are presented as imposing certain female models on the heroines, bringing them psychological turmoil and threatening them with individual suffocation. The investigation of the selected novels, which has provided interesting material for comparative study of Western and Eastern culture, has drawn out parallels and similarities as well as differences in the way in which female characters responded to authoritative discourses and the strategies that they developed in dealing with the tensions they created. One of the most striking similarities between each of the novels examined in this thesis is that, by casting this figure in various guises through their fragmented, decentralised narratives, their New Woman heroines challenge existing structures of femininity. Within this struggle, each of the New Women transform themselves into new roles, trying on one self after another, only to reject each in turn. As Judi M. Roller perceptively observes, "what is most central to the feminist novel […] is that the fragmented point of view delineates the splitting of the modern female personality."[2] Examining the texts under question as New Woman novels has therefore

[2] Judi M. Roller, *The Politics of the Feminist Novel* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 69.

allowed me to explore the image of the New Woman that they present as a diverse phenomenon with multiple and fragmented subjectivities, constantly in flux and engaged in ongoing dialogue with the different discourses that seek to fix and define her identity.

2. New Approach to Wharton's and Adıvar's Texts: Feminist Dialogics

Second, in order to explore the New Woman's shifting subjectivities and the texts' fragmented narrative structures, I linked the New Woman fiction to the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism and Dale M. Bauer's discussion of feminist dialogics.

Dialogism sensitised my reading to the polyphonic properties of the texts and the often subtle presence of voices within voices, as expressed in forms such as double-voicedness, hybridisation and interior dialogue, and through which we can identify the subversive language, or counter narrative, of the texts (in the form, for instance, of humorous, ironic or satirical undertones). Bauer's discussion of feminist dialogics enabled me to develop my feminist argument in that we can read the subversive language of Wharton's and Adıvar's selected texts as signals of feminist critique of the oppressive institutions that limit women and that seek to contain the heroines within fixed categories. I have sought to demonstrate that all six heroines - Wharton's Lily, Undine and Ellen; Adıvar's Refika, Handan and Zeyno - are represented as New Women engaged in a dialogue with authoritative discourses (here, regarding marriage, sexuality, divorce) and struggling with the roles enforced by these discourses.

Methodologically, I have analysed the novels as dialogic texts with two colliding narratives: the surface narrative which presents, in Bakhtinian terms, the "authoritative discourse" of patriarchy and its prescriptions to women regarding marriage, divorce, sexual purity; and the counter narrative ("internally persuasive discourse", in Bakhtinian terms) which challenges these prescriptions and decentralises the surface narrative, revealing feminist challenges to the ideologies of marriage, divorce and sexual purity. Within this context, I have tried to show that the polyphonic structure of the novels alerts us to the dialogues and tensions that take place between the surface and counter narratives. The narrators of the novels - either omniscient, as in Wharton's texts, or first-person in Adıvar's - maintain a push-pull relationship with the dominant ideologies of their time in the texts on

the questions of "womanhood" (one moment they align themselves with their patriarchal society, the next they condemn it). These are also the narrative features of these novels through which, as I have sought to demonstrate, we see a variety of points of view on the New Woman. It is through this attention to the presence of multiple and contradictory ideologies and perceptions of (New) Womanhood, marriage, divorce and sexuality in the texts that a dialogic analysis derives its greatest appeal, opening the reading to an appreciation of the ambiguity of the moral "messages" in the texts, their unresolved conflicts and the constructions of their heroines' identities.

Further, a feminist dialogics proved helpful and relevant for an analysis of the multiple voices that inhabit the consciousness of New Women characters: they are depicted as part of a restrictive social structure whose voice enforces its values and norms while at the same time they are voices of opposion that reveal women's ambitions and desires. The contradictory positions of the New Woman and the dialogic narrative features of the texts thus allowed an interpretation that focused on how the subversive language that enters the characters' and narrators' discourses exposes the texts' critique of hegemonic structures that victimise women.

3. Unhappy endings of Wharton's and Adıvar's Texts as New Woman's struggle for agency

In contrast to previous feminist critics who have often tended to interpret the unhappy endings of Wharton's and Adıvar's texts as advocacy of the preservation of the status quo or indications of female weakness and victimisation, this thesis has attempted to show that these texts, through their ambiguous and open endings, can be read as feminist critiques of a unified definition of the New Woman. I have drawn on the accounts of some feminist critics who have allowed me to argue that although the novels have unhappy endings, they can nevertheless be read as texts that contain positive traces of feminist hope and aspiration: in particular, Judi M. Roller's argument that the theme of flight or death in feminist novels are indications of a criticism of "sexist, racist, capitalist societies"[3] informed my interpretation of the endings of the novels as condemnations of their societies, rather than castigations of females who "deviate" from the path. Roller's observations,

[3] Roller, 102.

along with Elizabeth Bronfen's theorisation of Lily's death as the female character's rejection of objectification in her society,[4] influenced my analysis of the deaths of Lily (*The House of Mirth*) and Handan (*Handan*) as indications of New Women's desire for self-preservation rather than as indications of weakness. I have argued that Undine (*The Custom of Country*) and Zeyno (*Heartache*) are portrayed as females whose desire leads them towards their own personal expectations, although in different forms: Undine's desire is led towards success in the marriage market while Zeyno's desire is channelled towards her sexuality which seems to blossom more with her marriage to intelligent, educated and affectionate Muhsin Bey. I have also suggested that the representation of the sacrifice of love through Refika (*Raik's Mother*) and Ellen (*The Age of Innocence*) reflects the New Women heroines' sexual withdrawal more for the sake of what they believe is important (Ellen for personal freedom, Refika for her son) than out of any submissiveness or frigidity in their nature. Of all these novels, *The Age of Innocence* seems to have the most positive ending as I argued that, by depicting the novel ending with the New Woman's flight from traditional Old New York society, the text appears to realise the hope of the female's individual fulfilment. Thus, I have argued, all six novels end with their heroines having reached a critical awareness of their situation and society and in the way I suggest that they can be read as indicating the possibility of the female's awakening to her problems that stem from their lives in capitalist and sexist societies. In this sense we can read these texts as New Woman novels and their female characters as New Woman heroines who are struggling for personal development against the oppression of their socially assigned roles.

My feminist dialogic approach to the endings of the novels also demonstrated that the process by which the heroines in the examined texts achieve their awareness is strikingly similar. They endure difficult personal journeys and each heroine begins her journey in the darkness of her conventional perceptions before suffering from some traumatic realisation that she has no identity outside the norms of convention: she is either "wife", "mother", "daughter" in a family, all defined by and in relation to men. In this sense, the heroines all seem to either conform or fall victim to the hegemonic structures of their societies. For example, Refika's return to her husband, Handan's meek submission to her husband's unfaithfulness, Lily's "feminine" efforts to find a rich husband and Ellen's giving up on her

[4] Elizabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body*: *Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 269.

lover may suggest that they all act in a conventional "feminine" way. Nevertheless, despite their differences in tone, they all demonstrate a shared rejection of conventional female identities. The heroines contradict most of the notions of traditional femininity fostered by their society. In this way, borrowing Diaz-Diocaret's words, "the monologic, self-proclaimed authoritative word of patriarchy is not and can never be the last word."[5] They all assert their resistance either by leaving their lover when required to compromise their individual principles (as in the cases of Lily, Ellen, Refika, Handan or Zeyno) or by manipulating man-made female roles to serve their own purposes (Undine). By depicting their heroines in this complex and ambiguous way, these texts offer no typical representation of the New Woman, and are suggestive of Wharton's and Adıvar's refusal to allow their heroines to settle into stable female roles defined according to patriarchal conventions; an indication of the novels' resistances to traditional female categorisation. Reading these ambiguous endings as a double-voiced strategy demonstrates the complexity of the image of the New Woman in the fin-de-siècle in their societies and helps us to appreciate their critiques of female oppression and their accounts of the construction of feminine identity.

4. Differences between Wharton's and Adıvar's New Woman Novels

The comparison between Wharton's and Adıvar's texts enabled an understanding of the particular features, and therefore differences, of the image of the New American and Turkish Woman of the era and its diverse manifestations in the novels. The image of the New American Woman during the era was identified with disruption and rebellion, and with ideas that women "should be trained to be self-supporting and not passively accept marriage as her only option in life"[6]. Due to her struggle for independence and sexual emancipation, and her questioning of marriage as the ultimate goal for women, the New American Woman was seen as a threat to the status quo.

With her "modern but modest" portrait, the New Turkish Woman was more in line with patriarchal norms of femininity beneath her veneer of modernity. Unlike her American sister who emerged as a result of the women's struggle in America, the model of the New

[5] Myriam Diaz-Diocaret, "Bakhtin, Discourse, and Feminist Theories" in *Critical Studies*, 2 (1989), 121-139,131.
[6] Matthews, 39.

Turkish Woman was presented to Turkish women by the government and associated with the modernisation movement which imposed the belief that "the best interest of society came prior to the best interest of the individual or any groups of individuals […]."[7] Although she superseded the old generation in her ability to educate her children and serve as her husband's partner in life, the New Turkish Woman, unlike her American sister, was represented with an emphasis on the importance of her domestic responsibilities in marriage and motherhood for the creation of a "civilised" and modern Turkish nation.

Based on these observations, this thesis has demonstrated that Wharton's and Adıvar's texts differ from each other in their emphasis of their critiques of specific aspects of patriarchy in the societies they were written: Wharton's novels place more emphasis on the sexual double-standard and male hypocrisy (in particular, through the portrayal of the male characters such as Selden in *The House of Mirth*, and Newland in *The Age of Innocence*) to undermine the authoritative discourse that attempts to define the New Woman within fixed terms and limit her struggle for independence. Written during the modernisation period in Turkey, the novels of Adıvar that have been studied here however seem less individualistic by appearing to privilege those qualities of New Turkish Womanhood - such as morality, motherhood, an educated wife - that it was suggested would benefit society overall. Nevertheless, although Adıvar's novels seem to place more emphasis on the domestic and maternal responsibilities of women than Wharton's, they also expose, as feminist dialogics allows, a feminist critique of these discourses and a call for personal development.

Perhaps the most striking difference between Wharton's and Adıvar's depiction of New Women is that Adıvar's New Women at times appear more rebellious and radical than Wharton's. Given that Adıvar's novels were written in a more conservative society compared to Wharton's and that her texts, when viewed through the eyes of a feminist dialogics, offer a challenge to a model of New Womanhood that is more in line with patriarchal norms than modernisation, Adıvar's novels perhaps stand out from Wharton's as more radical responses to the position of women in her society. For instance, her depiction of the New Woman's questioning of marriage, as in the case of Handan (who is depicted in

[7] Yesim Arat, "The Project of Modernity and Women in Turkey" in Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey ed. Sibel Bozdoĝan and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), 104.

an unhappy marriage with an oppressive husband, and thus, receives double pressure - both from society and her husband - unlike Wharton's Lily) and of divorce as in the case of Refika (who is denied the right of divorcing her husband by the end of the novel, unlike Wharton's Ellen) or Adıvar's portrayal of sensual Zeyno (who questions and asserts her erotic female desires in a more radical way, unlike her asexual American sister Undine) all seem at odds with the image of the New Turkish Woman as an asexual "ideal" wife-mother. By paying close attention to these aspects of Adıvar's novels, this thesis has also aimed to provide new insights into Adıvar's work and to demonstrate that her novels subvert received notions of femininity as powerfully as Wharton's and, at times, offer a more challenging account than her American counterpart.

Despite their differing modes of writing addressed to different target audiences, the attempt to put the images of Wharton's and Adıvar's New Women into comparative perspective, I believe, provides more insight into the contingency and fluidity of the discursive strategies and performative acts of New Womanhood across cultures and how women have been contested as symbols of identity and visions of society. In these ways this thesis attempted to contribute to the developing field of New Woman scholarship and to provide a new analytical and comparative perspective in the continuing debates over her significance.

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