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GENDER AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AT THE AMERICAN COLLEGE FOR GIRLS IN ISTANBUL IN LATE-OTTOMAN AND EARLY-REPUBLICAN ERA

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Gender and Identity Construction at the American College for Girls in Istanbul in Late-Ottoman and Early-Republican Era

Osmanlı Son Döneminde ve Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında İstanbul Amerikan Kız Koleji'nde Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kimlik İnşası/ Gender and Identity Construction at the American College for Girls in Istanbul in Late-Ottoman and Early-Republican Era

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ABSTRACT

Gender and Identity Construction at the American College for Girls in Istanbul in Late-Ottoman and Early-Republican Era

This thesis examines gender and identity construction at the American College for Girls in Istanbul in late-Ottoman and early-Republican era. The objectives of the institution in educating women in the country as well as the characteristics of the woman envisioned by the college are also handled in this frame. Besides, the analysis sheds a light on the evolving identity and goals of the institution which underwent changes that were in many ways parallel to the historical, political and social changes in the country. It also gives two notable examples of the alumnae; Halide Edib in late-Ottoman era and Yıldız Sertel in early-Republican era. The college's goals to raise women with an independent character, a liberal spirit, a high feminist consciousness, and strong mental power and skills are covered with examples. The college's contributions in the students' academic, social and moral development by offering an education of universal applicability as well as in the formation of a new image of Turkish woman are explored in this study. The frame of education adopted by the college proved to be so influential in shaping the minds of its students that many of them, in return, worked for the emancipation of women and the development of their country and became influential figures at home and abroad.

Key Words: Gender, Identity, Female Education, Women's Emancipation, Feminist Consciousness, Halide Edib

ÖZET

Osmanlı Son Döneminde ve Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarında İstanbul Amerikan Kız Koleji'nde Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kimlik İnşası

Bu tez Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son döneminde ve Cumhuriyet'in ilk yıllarında İstanbul Amerikan Kız Koleji'nde toplumsal cinsiyet ve kimlik inşasını ele almaktadır. Kurumun, ülkenin kızlarını eğitmekteki amaçları ve hedeflenen kadın tipinin özellikleri de bu çerçevede incelenmektedir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda ülkedeki birçok tarihi, siyasi ve toplumsal gelişmeye paralel olarak kurumun değişen kimlik ve amaçlarına da ışık tutmaktadır. Osmanlı sön döneminde Halide Edib ve Cumhuriyet ilk döneminde Yıldız Sertel olmak üzere kolejin tanınmış iki mezunu örnek olarak işlenmektedir. Amerikan Kız Koleji'nin, bağımsız bir karakter, liberal bir bakış açısı, yüksek bir zihinsel kapasite ve zihinsel becerilerin yanı sıra güçlü bir feminist farkındalığa sahip kadın yetiştirme hedefleri örnekleriyle bu tezde yer almaktadır. Okulun, sunduğu uluslararası geçerlilikte eğitimle, hem öğrencilerin akademik, sosyal ve ahlaki gelişimine hem de yeni bir Türk kadını imajının oluşumuna yaptığı katkılar da bu çalışmanın konusudur. Kolejin eğitim programı öğrencilerin düşünce yapılarını şekillendirmede o kadar etkili olmuştur ki, bunun sonucu olarak mezunlardan birçoğu kadınların özgürleşmesi ve ülkenin gelişmesi yolunda çalışmalarda bulunmuş ve yalnızca Türkiye'de değil yurtdışında da etkili isimler olmuşlardır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Toplumsal cinsiyet, Kimlik, Kızların eğitimi, Kadınların özgürleşmesi, Feminist bilinç, Halide Edib

INTRODUCTION

"While basic education begins to unlock potential,

it is secondary education that provides the wings that allow girls to fly."

Malala Yousafzai

Identity can be described as the distinguishing character or personality of an individual. The idiosyncratic qualities, beliefs, thoughts all constitute a person's identity. A group as well as an individual may have an identity, common features shared by the members of the same group. As for gender, it can be described as the socially constructed characteristics of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships of and between groups of women and men, a socially constructed definition of womanhood and manhood in a sense. According to Ann Oakley, who introduced the term "gender" into social science, and subsequently into general use, it is a matter of culture. "It refers to the social classification into 'masculine' and 'feminine.'"[1] "Gender" is different from "sex" in terms of pointing to socially unequal division between femininity and masculinity and is, therefore, used to emphasize the socially constructed aspects of differences between women and men. However, the term gender does not refer only to individual identity and personality but it also points to cultural ideals and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity at the symbolic level as well as to the division of labor in institutions and organizations at the structural level.

As the subject of analysis is a female college and its role in shaping the identity and gender in the past, the relationship between history and gender needs to be mentioned in this frame. There have been various attempts to define the connection between these two. Joan Wallach Scott, known for her contributions in

[1] Ann Oakley, "Introduction" in *Sex, Gender and Society*, (London: M. Temple Smith, 1972), accessed 12 April 2017, http://www.annoakley.co.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=2.

gender history and intellectual history, handles the definition and a different aspect of gender in her article "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." She refers to gender as "a way of denoting 'cultural constructions' – the entirely social creation of ideas about appropriate roles for women and men." According to her, gender is "a way of referring to the exclusively social origins of the subjective identities of men and women." It is, therefore, "a social category imposed on a sexed body." [2] Gender, Scott writes, is "a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes," and "a primary way of signifying relationships of power."[3] Scott argues that the field of history should focus on social and political construction of gender. She believes that gender should not be considered as a biological term but rather an "analytical category for historical inquiry." What she means by "analytical category" is her view that gender studies can be used to "decode meaning and to understand complex connections among various forms of human interaction." She thinks that historians can thus better understand the reciprocal relation between gender and society and why women and men have the roles and connotations they have today. [4] In this way, gender serves as a useful tool that could shed a new light on women's life stories, on their biographies and autobiographies. Using gender in historical studies will "provide new perspectives on old questions (about how, for example, political rule is imposed, or what the impact of war on society is,), redefine the old questions in new terms (introducing considerations of family and sexuality, for example, in the study economics or war), make women visible as active participants, and create analytic distance between the seemingly fixed language of the past and our own terminology."[5] "Since new visions of history depended on the perspectives and questions of the historian, making women visible was not simply a matter of unearthing new facts; it was a matter of advancing new interpretations which not

[2] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5 (Dec., 1986), p. 1056, accessed 12 April 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1864376?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.
[3] Ibid., p. 1067.
[4] Ibid., p. 1070.
[5] Ibid., p. 1075.

only offered new readings of politics, but of the changing significance of families and sexuality," according to Scott.[6]

"When gender is introduced as an analytical tool in the field of history, this shows the fact that women and men experience the same events in different ways, that their social statuses namely their positions and powers in the society are different and that as a result of this, they might have different self-interests," writes Fatmagül Berktay in her book *Tarihin Cinsiyeti-Gender of History.* [7] As the feminist theory pointed to the use of gender as an analytical category together with other categories including class, race, ethnicity and nation, that made it possible for the research findings to be more complete and closer to reality, Berktay argues and adds that it is thus possible to analyze the case not only in the frame of women but also in the frame of men and also in terms of their mutual relationships.[8]

Regarding the relationship between gender and history, Nancy F. Cott argues that gender history is a more concise way of saying "gender-conscious" history, "history that takes gender centrally into account." She thinks that motives and ambitions in women's history at the beginning were to make women visible, to put women on the historical record: to enable women's voices to be heard and to listen to them, to show women's points of view. That was not a simple task to do for it involved changing, broadening, taking one step ahead what had been seen as "history," what had been seen important from a historical point of view. This attempt also necessitated the revising of typical periodization and reassessing assumptions about causation in history. Focusing on women's lives and experiences involved revisualizing what was subject to history, according to Cott. [9]

Making women visible, enabling their voices to be heard, listening to them, and showing their points of view; this was not an easy task in the case of Turkey,

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[6] Joan W. Scott, ed., *Feminism and History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 3 , accessed 12 April 2017 , http://www.history.ubc.ca/sites/default/files/documents/readings/scott_intro.pdf.
[7] Fatmagül Berktay, *Tarihin Cinsiyeti*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2012), p. 30.
[8] Ibid., p. 30.
[9] Nancy Cott, **"**What is Gender History?", accessed 12 April 2017, http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/members/courses/teachers_corner/45821.html.

either. The emancipation of women required years of struggle and activism which mainly started in the 19th century but their efforts and achievements have been the subject of historical studies predominantly in the last few decades. Women's organizations, journals, and publications, such as *Kadınlar Dünyası- Women's World*, which was published in the era between 1913- 1921, generate evidence that a number of Ottoman women were active participants and negotiators of change in the society. "I followed the way paved by feminist historians: reading the history and decoding it in favor of women. Here, in this book of mine, I have undertaken this decoding mission. I wanted to show women who live in Turkey the fact that we have our own struggle of women's emancipation. This was very important for me. In order to look at the future and engage in new struggles, I had to see and set the connection with the past," writes Serpil Çakır in her book *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi- The Ottoman Women's Movement* where she analyzes *Kadınlar Dünyası- Women's World*, the most radical magazine among the women's publications of the time. The magazine was significant in terms of building confidence in solving the problems of female education and continuously reinforcing this confidence with its publications and demands.[10] Successful women working in the field of education were cited as examples.[11] Education meant a lot for Turkish women. They would be able to understand their own power and value thanks to education. It would provide necessary intellectual equipment for the realization of the women's revolution. [12] The institutions that would educate the girls were far from being sufficient and buildings were not suitable in terms of educational environment. These were the issues handled in *Kadınlar Dünyası- Women's World.* The articles in the magazine emphasized the deficiencies of the female schools: "They put the girls within four walls, generally in the dark rooms and call them schools. They have no yard to move, run or play in. No care is given to physical education, the desks make the students have a hunched back. Classrooms smell so badly and students are packed like sardines. Most of the teachers have no idea about sciences

[10] Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2011), p. 24.
[11] Ibid., p. 324.
[12] Ibid., p. 307.

or child education," writes Sacide Cihangir in her article "Kızlarımızın Cihazı Ne Olmalıdır? - How Should Our Daughters Be Equipped? "[13] Çakır's book offers valuable information on the existence of a quite rich women's movement, with its associations and magazines in the Ottoman Empire. Women put forward their demands for freedom and rights. They questioned their place in comparison with that of men, they set new definitions for themselves. They struggled to create a new social structure with its own values and lifestyle. They had the opportunity to know themselves as well as their European counterparts. The aim was to make women realize that there were other worlds and other lifestyles, too.[14] Nationalist views served as a basis for legitimization in voicing their demands for rights in this frame. The women's status needed to be improved due to their role as a mother. Modernizing the society and forming a national family could only be possible by giving women their rights.[15] Girls' schools were regarded as an important means of establishing happiness in the family and the aim in opening secondary schools for girls was to raise "good mothers."[16]

Women's World could be regarded as an expression of a collective feminist platform among cosmopolitan women, and Halide Edib, a leading literary and political figure of the time was at the core of debates with her own agenda of social reform-an agenda which linked women's status to that of the nation's. [17] Pelin Başçı, in her article "Love, Marriage, and Motherhood: Changing Expectations of Women in Late Ottoman Istanbul," examines the early work of Halide Edib, a leading graduate of the American College for Girls, which provides a background of public discussions on women and gender in late-Ottoman society. Başçı finds it enlightening to turn to her early novellas and examine the ways in which issues significant to women at the time were treated. She writes that in the 1900s,

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[13] "Kızlarımızın Cihazı Ne Olmalıdır", *Kadınlar Dünyası,* No. 103 (3 August. 1329/1913), p. 10, quoted by Serpil Çakır, ibid., p. 325.
[14] Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi*, pp. 405-406.
[15] Ibid., p. 409.
[16] Ibid., p. 326.
[17] Pelin Başçı, "Love, Marriage, and Motherhood: Changing Expectations of Women in Late Ottoman Istanbul," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Autumn, 2003), pp. 145-177, accessed 12 April 2017, http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/wll_fac/54.

motherhood and wifehood were critical not only to discussions of marriage and love, but also to women's claims to education and employment. Educated women wishing to have a better future for themselves combined western influences with contesting ideologies such as traditional Islamism and modernity to re-formulate their role in society. *Women's World* gave a combination of pages of translated articles from European sources with essays based on traditional sources, in an effort to justify and show the importance of women as mothers. Başçı defines this as "a new notion of femininity which was based on the convergence of the traditional and the modern, incorporating the gendered vision of Victorian domesticity with the gendered vision of traditional Islamic practices that propagated separate but complementary roles for the sexes."[18] Western influences which came from various European sources gave the Ottoman women new tools to maintain as well as go beyond their traditional roles, and to assert new responsibilities. For elite women, domesticity in the form of actual, symbolic, and potential motherhood became the key to new experiences outside the home.[19]

Elif Ekin Akşit, in her book *Kızların Sessizliği-Kız Enstitülerinin Uzun Tarihi/The Silence of the Girls-The Long History of Girls' Institutes,* deals with these educational institutions that played an important role in the modernization process of the country in early-Republican era. These schools are noteworthy in terms of understanding the ways in which modernization was perceived and implemented by the new Republic as a strategy. Life stories and experiences of the graduates give an account of the women's place in society as well as the part they played in the modernization process. Akşit writes that reading the memoirs of the Ottoman women in early 20th century can only be possible by understanding the relationship between nationalism and women's history. The past of these women, with their family and class background is reflected in these narratives. How these women's class background affects their feminist and nationalist discourses can also be seen in the memoirs. Benefiting not only from official sources but also from these accounts would shed a new light on stories that lie behind the history and

[18] Ibid., p. 34.
[19] Ibid., p. 34.

evolution of female education in Turkey. It would also help to see the connections between the nationalist and feminist movements in the country, according to Akşit.[20] The writer also mentions Sally Mitchell's concept of "new girl" in her book and her consideration of the young girls in late 19th and early 20th centuries as "school girls." Akşit states that there are similarities between the western and Ottoman girls at the turn of the century. Ottoman girls, in this period, students and workers, acquire new identities especially in Istanbul and appear as the readers of the women's magazines. Especially the feminist magazines' connections with Europe and North America and the dynamic characteristics of the readers provide them with a potential to change the ongoing rules and this potential paves the way for the formation of a new republic. These are the girls who assume themselves a mission of spreading the western culture while at the same time preserving a national character.[21]

Yaprak Zihnioğlu, in her book *Kadınsız Inkılap/Revolution Without Women,* handles the struggle of Nezihe Muhiddin, a writer of the early-Republican period, the founder of the first women's political party, the People's Party of Women, and one of the most important activists of the women's movement that emerged in the Ottoman Empire and in the new Turkish Republic. Zihnioğlu cites Halide Edib among the pioneers of the Ottoman (Muslim-Turkish) feminist movement, as one of the representatives of a generation of "great women" together with Nigar Hanım (Poet), Fatma Aliye and Nezihe Muhiddin.[22] Zihnioğlu quotes Tarık Zafer Tunaya's views about the Committee of Union and Progress- the Young Turk Organization- and its approach towards the feminist movement in the Ottoman land. According to Tunaya, "the woman issue was handled as a national case of culture and economics" under the order of the Committee of Union and Progress. "The Committee attached importance to the societies established by women" and "the Women's Branch of the Committee of Union and Progress is the same age as the

[20] Elif Ekin Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği, Kız Enstitülerinin Uzun Tarihi*, (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayınları, 2005), p. 26.
[21] Ibid., p. 29.
[22] Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız Inkılap*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2016), p.35.

Second Constitution."[23] Zihnioğlu states that the Ottoman-Turkish women started to express their demands for freedom starting from the very first days of the declaration of the Second Constitution in 1908. Their demands included a full integration in the category of free individual as promised by the modernity, being regarded as a human being in the society, having a part and position in the social life, joining the politics and public sphere as well as working and earning their life. These women also asked for education and vocational training, reforms in the family concerning the divorce and polygamy, and the abolition of all bans preventing them from having a place in the public life.[24] Halide Edib founded Teali-i Nisvan /Society for the Development of Women, aiming at promoting women's welfare, education and work. Zihnioğlu argues that this association could be regarded as the first formal women's organization founded with a feminist motive. The goal of the association was the elevation of women's intellectual level on condition of preserving national traditions. For this purpose, the association "accepted education in English and opened an English class in its general center." [25] The association was also aiming at translating and publishing historical, literary and social writings to meet women's needs. The conferences were organized and classes were offered for the enlightenment of women by this association.

Yaprak Zihnioğlu's book is significant in terms of offering background information concerning the cultural atmosphere in late-Ottoman era. As we consider the Ottoman society in the last quarter of the 19th century, and Muslim-Turkish women living in Istanbul in particular, we can see that the west, with its culture and way of living, was at their elbow. The west was Pera-Beyoğlu for the majority of these women who, unlike their male peers, were not allowed to go to Europe for educational purposes. The significance of Pera at that time was that it referred to non-Muslims' life style in western standards. The non-Muslims' living in accordance with their customs, the women's free dressing code and participation

[23] Ibid., p. 54.
[24] Ibid., pp. 56-57.
[25] Ibid., p. 58.

in the social life together with men was the very meaning of Pera and a western-type of living was now very close to Ottoman women. [26]

Adil Baktıaya, in his book *Bir Osmanlı Kadınının Feminizm Macerası ve Hamidiye Modernleşmesi/ The Feminism Adventure of an Ottoman Woman and Hamidiye Modernization,* handles the modernization steps under the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid on the basis of the life and struggle of Hayriye bin Ayad, an Ottoman woman. The book offers valuable information regarding the woman's question and agency of Ottoman women in their fight for emancipation and gender equality. Baktıaya writes that the Ottoman women's demands for a modern life and existence in the public sphere can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century which was a period when the Ottoman Empire was no longer isolated from the West. This was an era when the state and the society had turned their face to the west. Foreign governesses and tutors employed for a domestic education, fathers and brothers with experiences in Europe, friends from other countries and foreign schools giving a foreign language education; these were all the factors that gave women of the elite families a familiarity with the western world as well as a command of foreign languages that would pave the way for a continuous cultural relation. The first newspapers and magazines for women, with the initiative of the same elite Ottoman women were giving news about women and their gains all over the world. They were also instrumental in offering Turkish women a perspective about feminist movements in the world.[27] The number of these newspapers and magazines started to increase after 1880. Not all the writers were female in these publications but their target audience was women. The topics were mostly on women, family, home economics and domestic work. However, female education was the most frequently covered news topic in them. The women's magazine that was the most consistently published was *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete-Newspaper for Ladies* with female editor-in-chief and writers in majority. This magazine and other publications were significant in terms of giving women an opportunity to express themselves and their

[26] Ibid., p. 75.
[27] Adil Baktıaya, *Bir Osmanlı Kadınının Feminizm Macerası ve Hamidiye Modernleşmesi*, (Istanbul: h2o Kitap, 2016), p. 128.

demands.[28] The newspapers and magazines showed a flourishing tendency after 1908. The articles written by men on women's emancipation were in this period replaced by those written by women themselves on a developing feminist basis. These essays found themselves a place in the publications of the Second Constitutional era. The writers developed a feminist discourse together with a nationalist one. The new Ottoman woman was now visible not only with her femininity but also as her new role in the society as a producer of goods, ideas, relationships and identities.

As we look at the education in the late-Ottoman era, we see that until the Tanzimat period boys and girls of the Ottoman families could receive an education at religious schools called "sıbyan mektebi" for a period of 3-4 years starting at the age of 5-6. Following this non-compulsory education, boys could continue in various schools with religious or military character. However, girls, not offered the same educational opportunities as boys, were neglected in this frame; female education in the country was more than a century behind that of Europe and the United States. During the Tanzimat period, girls from wealthy families would usually be taught at home by their father or foreign governesses. This was an Ottoman tradition and French, Arabic and Persian were the languages taught to these girls. Later, English and German also became popular in this domestic education. Piano lessons were also given by these governesses who were teaching children and cousins in the same big family. Several female Ottoman writers, poets and intellectuals were raised in this way. Starting from the 1830s, Ottoman statesmen and intellectuals entered into a close relationship with the West in all fields, which resulted in the realization that the Ottoman society was behind the age in regard to education, female education in particular. This was an era when new ideas were put forward and rüşdiyes-secondary schools for girls as well as boys started to open. The first one of these was Cevri Usta Inas Rüşdiyesi established in 1859 in Istanbul. The development of secondary schools for girls showed a slower

[28] Ibid., p. 35.

development than those for boys and articles were published in the press emphasizing the importance of female education. [29]

We see that distinct progress in education was made under Sultan Abdülaziz. New primary schools were added to the mosque schools and an elementary system of public education was established. The crowning achievement in this field was the opening of Galatasaray, a lycée for young men of all nations in Istanbul. Many of the future statesmen of the Turkish Empire received their training there. Within the last half of the 19th century, it had gradually become customary for Turkish women to receive elementary education. During the reign of Abdülaziz, a high school called Darülmuallimat (Home of the Lady Teachers) was opened in 1870 in Sultanahmet, Istanbul. Notices were put in the newspapers stating that the female teacher candidates would be chosen among women aged 13-35 who could read and write in Turkish. [30] The school was based on the principle that girls had to be educated by women and was intended to train female Turkish-Muslim teachers who would be employed in primary and secondary schools for girls. The first students graduated from the institution in 1873. The school then had an average number 17 graduates every year but only six of them would chose to follow a career in teaching. [31] Among the first graduates of the school, the youngest one was 14 years old and the oldest one was 30 years old.[32] The school became more important with a regulation dated 1896 which pointed out that more female teachers needed to be educated in the institution. [33] According to this regulation, schools would be opened for girls and boys in each district of Istanbul and it would be compulsory for boys aged 6-10 and girls aged 7-11 to attend these schools. Moreover, the salary of the teachers in these schools would be paid by the same districts.[34]

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[29] Yahya Akyüz, "Osmanlı Son Döneminde Kızların Eğitimi ve Öğretmen Faika Ünlüer'in Yetişmesi ve Meslek Hayatı", accessed 12 April 2017, http://dhgm.meb.gov.tr/yayimlar/dergiler/Milli_Egitim_Dergisi/143/1.htm.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği*, p. 97.
[32] Akyüz, "Osmanlı Son Döneminde Kızların Eğitimi ve Öğretmen Faika Ünlüer'in Yetişmesi ve Meslek Hayatı".
[33] Cahit Yalçın Bilim, *Tanzimat Devrinde Türk Eğitiminde Çağdaşlaşma (1839-1876)*, (Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1984), p. 41, quoted by ibid, p. 97.
[34] Akşit, *Kızların Sessizliği*, p. 97.

Darülmuallimat, in later years, developed rapidly in modern methods of education in line with other forms of progress. It played an important role in increasing female schooling and became a pioneer enabling the girls of the empire to have secondary education and higher education. The education of more and more female teachers made it possible for an increase in the number of schools for girls. Darülmuallimat also played a significant role in the increasing female employment in the country. Starting with the Second Constitutional era, the alumnae of this school were successfully employed in the public sector.[35] However, as the Ottoman Empire lost World War I and the following political and economic developments in the country negatively affected the institution and Darülmuallimat was gradually closed until the year 1924.[36]

The second half of the 19th century was also the time when foreign schools for girls were opened in the Ottoman land. These were mainly secondary schools founded by French, American, Italian, Austrian and German missionaries and were mostly preferred by wealthy and aristocratic families of Turkish origin especially in the subsequent years. The reason for this choice of families was that these schools provided a high-quality education more effective than public schools. The teaching of foreign languages was a plus of them. Several Muslim-Turkish women were educated in these foreign schools and these well-educated women who speak several foreign languages and know the western culture and civilization made considerable contributions in cultural and educational reforms as well in the emerging of an enlightened group of female intellectuals. [37]

A letter written by a female missionary in the Ottoman land gives an idea on educational circumstances in the late 1800s and early 1900s:

> The educational institutions were so lacking that people of the middle and upper class could not look to them for their young children and were obliged to employ

[35] Mustafa Şanal, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Kız Öğretmen Okulunun (Dârülmuallimât), Kuruluşu, Okutulan Dersler ve Kapatılışı (1870–1924)", *OTAM*, No. 26 (Fall, 2009), p. 241, accessed 10 May 2017, http://asosindex.com/cache/articles/article-1423910757.pdf.
[36] Ibid., p. 240.
[37] Akyüz, "Osmanlı Son Döneminde Kızların Eğitimi ve Öğretmen Faika Ünlüer'in Yetişmesi ve Meslek Hayatı".

> tutors and foreign governesses for their instruction in the home. Until very recent years the Turks had not been able to recognize the Americans dwelling among them as other than disguised political emissaries. Consequently, they and their institutions were regarded with keen suspicion; and while there were notable exceptions, -friendly relations, esteem, love and confidence existing between the Americans and a small circle of Turkish friends, -on the part of the majority of the people there was prejudice, and often stern and uncompromising opposition. But gradually this suspicion was allayed. The people came to see that the sphere of influence the Americans sought was not political aggrandizement, but that they were actuated by kindly motives and a friendly spirit, and their institutions were not political centers of disturbance, but actual places of learning.[38]

Before the promulgation of the Second Constitution, Turkish students were found in some of the American schools as well as other foreign schools in the larger cities. These were the children of the country's upper-class families who showed courage in doing so for there was an official ban against Muslim-Turkish children' attending these schools. Parents were happy with the quality of the instruction their children received, and increasing numbers of these desired admittance of their children to these institutions giving a modern education. The promulgation of the constitution ushering in "liberty, justice, equality and fraternity" brought in a change in the official view concerning foreign schools and thus permitted parents to freely choose educational advantages for their children. The schools would henceforth be free in accommodating those who sought its doors.[39]

However, the American schools as well as other foreign schools were not always welcome in the country. These missionary schools were regarded as a source of enmity in terms of their goals and activities. A number of books deal with these educational institutions and give a general outlook of them offering information from archival sources.

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[38] Woman's Board of Missions, *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 40, (1910), pp. 485-486, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[39] Ibid., p. 487.

Selim Deringil, in his book *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909,* states that missionary activity in the Ottoman land was the most dangerous challenge to the legitimacy of the state in the long term and writes that "the threat posed by the soldier, the diplomat, the merchant, all had to do with the here and now; the missionaries, through their schools, constituted a danger for the future."[40] In addition to undermining the efforts of the Ottoman state to legitimize the basis of its rule at home, the missionaries were at the same time influential abroad by feeding the Western press with anti-Turkish sentiment.[41] Deringil gives the official view concerning the political implications of the educational activities led by these missionaries and the anxiety that Muslim children' attending these foreign schools would have their national and religious training damaged.[42] Mentioning the increase in the missionary work during the 1880s and 1890s, Deringil summarizes the situation with a quotation by Jeremy Salt: "The relationship that developed between the missionaries and the Ottoman government was one of mutual suspicion and mutual dislike."[43] Deringil also mentions the educational work of the American missionaries considered by Istanbul as a big threat against the state legitimacy and writes that the Armenian crisis of the 1890s made the relationship even more complicated.[44] Deringil writes that the American missionaries always denied having an aim of converting Muslims into Christianity but that they put forward their goal as an improved system of education for ill-educated Christian people in the Ottoman land.[45]

Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, in his book titled *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu'daki Amerika-19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları/ America in Anatolia Through Its Own Documents- American Missionary Schools in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century,* deals with the American missionary

[40] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909,* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999), p. 112.
[41] Ibid., p. 113.
[42] Ibid., p. 117.
[43] Ibid., p. 114.
[44] Ibid., p. 125.
[45] Ibid., p. 132.

activities in the field of education in the Ottoman land. Kocabaşoğlu handles the missionary schools one by one and gives information based on archives concerning their history, curriculum, student number, etc. Kocabaşoğlu argues that the schools were showcase for the missionary activities and that the colleges were deliberately put in the foreground in that showcase. He also states that these colleges were the symbol of the New World's prestige in education while they on the other hand constituted a fundamental part of the American interests in the Near East. Kocabaşoğlu writes that the American missionaries had to know the Anatolian people very closely in order to realize their goals and they were successful in doing so. Considering that the Ottoman intellectuals started to gain knowledge about people in Anatolia only in the first quarter of the 20th century, Kocabaşoğlu argues that the American missionaries were much more familiar with the values, attitudes, prejudices, expectations and aspirations of the Anatolian people; probably more familiar than an Ottoman statesman was. [46]

Ilknur Haydaroğlu, in her book *Osmanlı Imparatorluğu'nda Yabancı Okullar-Foreign Schools in the Ottoman Empire*, handles the schools opened in the Ottoman Empire by foreign countries including France, USA, UK, Germany and Italy and analyzes them in terms of their political plans and activities against the Ottoman State. The book also gives statistical information about these institutions and focusses mainly on these foreign countries' wish to exert a political influence and their role in "preparing the way and accelerating the collapse of the empire." Haydaroğlu's main argument is that the countries made use of education and religion in reaching their goals. They supported the non-Muslim minorities and thus wanted to have a political influence on the state. Several missionaries from various countries came in great numbers to the Ottoman land during those years and Haydaroğlu states that their original goal in this was to give a religious education and work for the mission. The missionaries could inculcate the doctrines of Christianity to non-Christian children as well as raise new mission workers by

[46] Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu'daki Amerika- 19. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki Amerikan Misyoner Okulları*, (Istanbul: Arba Yayınları, 1989), p. 220.

means of their educational institutions. She argues that their focus on religion was later replaced with a focus on politics and started to work for political aims rather than religious ones.[47] The most important and effective of these activities were those organized by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and they were fruitful in terms of creating enmity in the Armenians against the Turks. The American missionaries' aim was to give the Armenians a national consciousness and a sense of independence, according to Haydaroğlu.[48] "The schools proved to be more effective than all other strategies in gaining the sympathy, admiration and even the loyalty of the young spirits," Haydaroğlu writes.[49] Haydaroğlu also mentions the positive effects of the foreign schools in the field of education. She states that they provided an example with their education and were effective in the country's turning its face to the west especially after the Tanzimat period. [50]

M. Hidayet Vahapoğlu's book *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Azınlık ve Yabancı Okullar- From the Ottoman Era to Today: Minority and Foreign Schools* handles the same issue and offers an analysis similar to that of Haydaroğlu in its scope and approaches. He writes that the locations where these schools were opened were chosen on purpose; these were the places that were previously inhabited by the people of the same nation. These foreign schools were the centers of active political activities and revolts against the state starting in the early 19th century. [51] A sense of nationalism and ideal of establishing a state was inculcated in the minds of the minorities in the Ottoman Empire and schools were a major instrument in this target. Vahapoğlu agrees with Haydaroğlu in these foreign schools' role of conducting detrimental actions against the state.[52]

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[47] Ilknur Polat Haydaroğlu, *Osmanlı Imparatorluğu'nda Yabancı Okullar*, (Ankara: Ocak Yayınları, 1993), p. 184.
[48] Ibid., p. 186.
[49] Ibid., p. 190.
[50] Ibid., p. 209.
[51] M. Hidayet Vahapoğlu, *Osmanlıdan Günümüze Azınlık ve Yabancı Okullar*, (Istanbul: MEB Yayınları, 2005), p. 263.
[52] Ibid., p. 15.

Şamil Mutlu's book *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Misyoner Okulları-Missionary Schools in the Ottoman State* provides information on the purposes and activities of these mission-based schools in the country. Giving a general picture of the schools throughout the Ottoman land, Mutlu argues that these "schools which were one of the most important weapons of the mission work were at the beginning opened with religious purposes but later gained a worldly dimension and became a means for colonial penetration."[53]

Seçil Akgün in her article titled **"**The Turkish Image in the Reports of American Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire**"** writes that the American missionary schools paved the way for a closer contact with Anatolian Muslims and that some Turks who observed the progress made by Armenian children in these schools decided to send their children, even their daughters to these institutions. The increasing number of Turkish students attending American schools made it possible for these missionaries to reach more Turks and their family lives.[54] These educational and medical institutions were used by the American missionaries to spread their beliefs, ideas and lifestyle since this was a way of getting access to children and through them to parents and families, in Akgün's view.[55] Akgün also writes that these missionaries' disseminating the ideas of nationalism, autonomy and independence among Armenians and others damaged the relationship between the missionaries and the Turks as well as the relationship between the Ottoman and American governments. The American institutions' becoming notorious for their Armenian sympathy as well as giving a helping hand to the revolutionists at times was a reason for being harshly criticized and becoming a target for Turks.[56] Akgün, in her article, points to the existence of several volumes of missionary memoirs based on personal experiences in Turkey and states that these missionaries' perceptions of Turks varied dramatically according to the period and location of

[53] Şamil Mutlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Misyoner Okulları*, (Istanbul: Gökkubbe, 2005), p. 373.
[54] Seçil Akgün, "The Turkish Image in the Reports of American Missionaries in the Ottoman Empire", *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (September 1989), pp. 94-95, accessed 19 May 2017, http://www.jstor.org/stable/43385311?seq=8#page_scan_tab_contents.
[55] Ibid., p. 93.
[56] Ibid., p. 99.

their stay as well as to the closeness of the relationships they established with the Turks. Many of them, hearing the complaints of the Armenians against state oppression and embracing the Armenian cause were the ones who viewed and wrote most negatively about Turks. Others, including Cyrus Hamlin, the founder of the Robert College for instance, took a more objective approach and expressed a more positive view of the Turks, according to Akgün.[57]

Secondary sources including these books, other articles and academic research made on foreign schools in the Ottoman land treat the issue on a general basis, in terms of their location, curriculum, student numbers. The schools' missionary and political activities have also been subject of these studies. There is a limited number of books and research handling the issue on a location, school or subject basis. In the case of the American College for Girls, the subject of this thesis, the secondary sources that deal with the institution are not many.

Barbara Reeves-Ellington's article titled "Constantinople Woman's College: Constructing gendered, religious, and political identities in an American institution in the late Ottoman Empire" is another important secondary source which provides valuable information about this subject. Handling the changing identity and objectives of the college throughout time, Reeves-Ellington thinks that this change was a result of the meeting of three major figures of the college and the interaction among them. The president Mary Mills Patrick, the college trustee Caroline Borden, and alumna Halide Edib, whose identities were enmeshed with that of the college, were the architects of this transformation, according to Reeves-Ellington. [58] In addition to these three principal characters who had a shaping role in the character of the college, Reeves-Ellington observes three stages in the history as well as the shifting and contested identity of the college: Transition from a mission school to a mission-supported college and ultimately to an independent college. Reeves-Ellington also finds it significant that Patrick avoids mentioning

[57] Ibid., pp. 97-98.
[58] Barbara Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College: Constructing Gendered, Religious, and Political Identities in an American Institution in the Late Ottoman Empire", *Women's History Review*, 24:1, (2015), pp. 53-71, accessed 12 April 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2014.920674.

her missionary past or the college's nearly forty-year connection with the Woman's Board in her published memoirs and argues that this was intentionally made by her.[59] This article of Reeves-Ellington is noteworthy in that it is the only source that deals with the college on a basis of identity construction and offers a different perspective.

Orlin Sabev, in his book *Spiritus Roberti-Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923)* where he handles the education of Robert College, a male college established by American Missionaries in the same era, offers valuable information that could be considered valid for the American College for Girls in some cases. Considering that Robert College and the American College for Girls were two institutions founded by American missionaries in the same period with common goals, Sabev's book shedding light on the objectives of the college, its educational program, its role in the Ottoman education and its effects on shaping the minds of the new generation could be regarded as an important source for the study of the girl's college with a focus on identity.[60]

As for primary sources, such as memoirs of both the administrators and alumnae of the college, they offer really valuable material and draw a quite rich and detailed picture of the institution in many aspects. In the context of Turkey which underwent a deep process of social and cultural transformation, the analysis of its educational institutions with a focus on identity and gender is significant in terms of history studies. Despite being an essential ingredient of cultural change, the woman's question in the country and the female education in particular has been handled in a relatively small number of studies. Analyzing the education at the American College for Girls in the late-Ottoman era and in early-Republican era with a focus on identity and gender is an important step in understanding this transformation which brought about several dramatic outcomes. It is also

[59] Ibid., p. 66.
[60] Orlin Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti-Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923),* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniverstesi Yayınevi, 2014).

noteworthy in terms of pointing to one of the fruits of several years of labor in the feminist cause: the new Turkish woman.

This thesis which handles the "Gender and Identity Construction at the American College for Girls in late-Ottoman and early-Republican era" aims at answering the following questions:

-What role did the American College for Girls play in shaping the identity and gender of its students in late-Ottoman and early-Republican era?

-What were the objectives of the institution in educating women of the country?

-What were the characteristics of the woman envisioned by the college?

-What role did the college play in women's emancipation in the Ottoman Empire?

Moreover, the analysis sheds a light on the evolving identity and goals of the college throughout time. It also gives two examples from its notable alumnae; Halide Edib in late-Ottoman era and Yıldız Sertel in early-Republican era. The contributions of Halide Edib in the cultural and intellectual life of the country as well as in the emergence and evolution of the feminist movements are also discussed in this frame.

The approach to these questions and issues is mainly through an analysis of primary texts including *the Missionary Herald*, the periodicals of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and *Life and Light for Woman*, the mission periodicals by the Woman's Board of Missions. Other primary texts including *A Bosporus Adventure-Istanbul (Constantinople) Woman's College, 1871-1924* and *Under Five Sultans*, both of which are the memoirs of Mary Mills Patrick, President of the American College for Girls as well as the memoirs of Halide Edib and Yıldız Sertel form the basis of this thesis. The study also makes use of other primary and secondary sources including books and articles that provide background information regarding the female education and emancipation of women in late-Ottoman and early-Republican era. *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East: The Story of Mary Mills Patrick and an American College in the Orient*, a book written by Hester Donaldson Jenkins, professor at the American

College for Girls from 1900-1909, is particularly important in terms of offering valuable information based on direct personal observations or firsthand accounts of events and people. [61] In Jenkins' view, Mary Mills Patrick was a feminist from the very beginning and had high ideals regarding the emancipation of women in the Near East. The college was the outcome of her visions and ideals. "Seldom has an institution so expressed a personality as does Constantinople Woman's College express the personality of President Patrick," Jenkins argues. Admitting that Patrick was helped in this great work by teachers and trustees, Jenkins writes with examples that the Constantinople Woman's College was the very embodiment of the vision and thought of President Patrick.[62]

This thesis is likely to fill a void in the literature on the education of girls in late-Ottoman and early-Republican era and shed a light on the making of a new type of woman in those years. The research previously made on the education of women in the country mostly discuss the issue on a broader basis thus giving a general aspect of the case. What makes this thesis different from previous research is that it offers a more focused point of view on the female education in Turkey with a case study of the American College for Girls in the frame of its role in identity and gender formation. The analysis is expected to make a contribution to historical studies as well as to gender and women's studies in this frame.

CHAPTER ONE

EARLY YEARS OR THE HOME SCHOOL

The Home School, the early form of the American College for Girls, was established by the Boston-based Woman's Board of Missions, an organization

[61] Hester Donaldson Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East: The Story of Mary Mills Patrick and an American College in the Orient*, (New York: F.H. Revell Co., 1925).
[62] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 277.

associated with the male-dominated American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The future president of the college, Mary Mills Patrick calls the first school that was founded in Gedikpaşa in 1871 as an "embryo school of three pupils."[63] George W. Wood, Presbyterian Minister and missionary who later became the secretary of the Congregationalist American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, was assisting and reporting on the Western Turkey mission and the mission in Istanbul in this frame. His reports as well as other missionary reports from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions were published in the *Missionary Herald*, the magazine of the American Board established in 1821. The *Missionary Herald*, for many Christians in America, was their window to the world. Descriptions of native customs, history, economic activities, and geographical features were included in this magazine which offers us valuable information concerning the foundation and early years of the American College for Girls. Dr. Wood was closely connected with the work of establishing the "Home School for Girls", "the American Home School" in its full name which later grew into the American College for Girls. He writes, in his letters, that a step is taken to open an institution that shall be a center of "life and light" to the women of that great empire and that those who may desire might be offered the "advantages of a Christian education" by "the Home."[64] The "life and light" mentioned by Wood forms also part of the name of a similar publication by the Woman's Board of Missions: *Life and Light for Woman*. The Christian and missionary root of this educational enterprise is especially emphasized in these words of Wood.

The idea of inaugurating a woman's college in Istanbul occurred to a number of people almost simultaneously, writes Patrick and adds that Mrs. Albert Bowker, the first president of the Woman's Board of Missions, was one of these.[65] Regarding the cultural aspect of the Ottoman Empire and its capital in this era, Mary

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[63] Mary Mills Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure: Istanbul (Constantinople) Woman's College, 1871-1924*, (California: Stanford University Press, 1934), p. 35, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/001453268.
[64] American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 68, (1872), p. 23, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[65] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 29.

Mills Patrick states that there were as many kinds of schools as there were different nationalities and general education, therefore, resembled a system that might have originated around the tower of Babel.[66] The French embassy was especially important in Istanbul as its language was the language of diplomatic interchange, the principal medium of communication on all occasions. Late in the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz, two international schools for boys were founded in Istanbul. The Lycée Galatasaray, international in character and with French its language of instruction, was operating in the capital city. The school was sometimes called the Oxford of Turkey, as Patrick writes. In the same era, Robert College, an American institution for young men of all nationalities was opened in Rumeli Hisarı, on the European shore of the Bosphorus.[67] Patrick emphasizes in her memoirs, *A Bosporus Adventure-Istanbul (Constantinople) Woman's College, 1871-1924* that the basis of the organization, of the idea of founding a woman's college in Istanbul, was "wholly international in the minds of the founders". [68] The language of instruction was Armenian, the language that was spoken by the largest number of students at the school until 1876 when English was made the language of instruction although circulars announcing the new plans and courses of study were published in several different languages.

Commencement ceremonies held at the end of each year and reports written on these ceremonies give detailed information about the nature and objectives of the education given at the school. Describing the annual examination of the Home School in 1873, Dr. Wood mentions a high number of participants including parents, friends of the pupils, and invited guests, attended in numbers to crowd the apartments and writes that the exercises were in the highest degree satisfactory; the girls being self-possessed, and acquitting themselves well.[69] Concerning the examination of the following year, Dr. Wood would write that the bearing of the girls was modest, yet self-possessed and dignified, and that this was an impression

[66] Ibid., p. 30.
[67] Ibid., p. 30.
[68] Ibid., p. 32.
[69] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 69, (1873), p. 319, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.

they desired.[70] He adds that the school is becoming more widely known, and as its advantages for the formation of character are better known."[71] We also learn that the examinations lasting during the day included the subjects such as Modern and Ancient Grammar, Armenian History, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geography, English Reading, Spelling, Writing and Definitions, Physiology, Natural Philosophy, Recitations of Poetry, Reading of Compositions, playing on the piano and the parlor organ, all testifying to a quite rich curriculum and a high level education at the school.[72] In 1877, a much larger course of study would be possible and the public oral examinations in the commencement program would include geometry, psychology, and general history, the last two having been taught in English. [73] The early history of the school would show an enrolment of a constantly increasing number of nationalities. In 1889, nationalities in the school would include Turks, Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians, Albanians, French, English, and Americans.[74]

As we come to 1875, we see that "the school has a high reputation for the thoroughness of its teaching, its admirable order, and the moral training and intellectual progress of the pupils."[75] The pupils' free, unembarrassed, and prompt manners in giving their answers during the examinations was highly praised by Dr. Wood in his letter to the Woman's Board about the Home in Istanbul.[76] A note from Mr. E.E. Bliss would be particularly addressing Christian women who had aided generously in the establishment of this school and telling them that what particularly interested him was the teachers' putting themselves so completely in contact with the minds of the pupils and the examinations' having the character of familiar, intelligent conversations between teacher and pupil rather than of routine answers to routine questions.[77] What was aimed and for the greatest part realized in

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[70] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 70, (1874), p. 310, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[71] Ibid., p. 310.
[72] Ibid., p. 310.
[73] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, pp. 41, 45.
[74] Ibid., p. 46.
[75] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 71, (1875), p. 235, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[76] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 72, (1876), pp. 320-321, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[77] Ibid., p. 403.

this institution even at this very preliminary stage was an extroverted student model who could freely express herself and show what she knew in a self-confident way. The familiar conversation which was supposed to take place between students and teachers is noteworthy in terms of pointing to a moderate way in discipline and order at the institution, allowing the students to develop a healthy consciousness of individuality.

Life and Light for Woman was a publication of the Woman's Board of Missions aimed at a female audience, this was a gendered network in a sense. "We do not forget, during the busy days of school-life, that the aim of all our efforts should be to inspire a love and respect for higher spiritual life in the hearts of all over whom we have any influence," the teachers write in their letters to the Board, emphasizing that they are well-aware of their mission and the progress they make: "The daily growth is hardly perceptible; but, when comparisons are made between periods of time months remote from each other, the result is often very gratifying. Our first pupil-an awkward, cross-eyed, uninteresting child and even very ill tempered-is now a pet in the school. I saw her mother not long since; and she was filled with wonder at her daughter's improvement, especially in disposition." [78] In establishing this school in "Constantinople, the Paris of the Eastern world", their aim was to "secure a true and symmetrical Christian character in the pupils; well-ordered Christian homes; well-qualified teachers of native female seminaries and higher schools; wives of pastors, and Bible-women."[79] In addition to the development of the students' intellectual ability, the emphasis, in these early years of the school, was on religious values and women's place in the domestic sphere. The homes were to be designed in accordance with Christian values and girls, who were supposed to be extrovert and easy-going at the same time, were expected to be teachers in theological schools or wives to pastors.

[78] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 3, (1873), p. 354, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[79] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 6, (1876), p. 290, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

The education given to the girls, in the early years, included English together with religious instruction, singing, and needle-work. Particular attention was paid to giving the pupils correct and lady-like manners; and callisthenic exercises were a new and very attractive feature to those who visited the school, the teachers observe.[80] The intellectual and spiritual progress was important but the school intended to give its students the etiquette rules, too. Considering that the era is the 1870's, the Home assumes a responsibility of giving an education in conformity with the gender roles determined by the culture. The existence of the physical training courses indicates that the school aims at going one step ahead and supporting the students' physical well-being as well.

A letter sent by R. H. Seelye to the Board reveals his impressions of the Home and its prospects: "I could not but feel that these young ladies, drawn as they were from the different nationalities and grades of society, might yet have an important part to perform in the regeneration of Turkey. It is evident that such a training as they are receiving in the truths and duties of religion, in Christian thought, morals, and manners, in Christian ideas of the household, the domestic state and relations, must lead to results both wonderful and blessed in the future of those young women, and in the society of which they are members." [81] The school's ideal was to raise pupils some of whom would be prepared to become wives and teachers, reflecting credit upon their instructors, and aiding in the spread of an enlightened Christian womanhood in Turkey."[82] The girls' future roles in the society were highlighted by this visitor to the school. The religious education they received was supposed to provide them with the necessary qualifications for their prospective engagement but this engagement was bound to remain within a certain frame: Wives and teachers having the mission of spreading the Christian values.

R. H. Seelye speaks about the regeneration of Turkey for which he assigns an important role to the female students of the Home. This regenerating purpose

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[80] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 3, (1873), p. 356, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[81] Ibid., p. 358.
[82] Ibid., p. 357.

and the other missionary work assumed by the Board has the roots in its view of the East, of the Ottoman land in particular. The following lines published in the *Life and Light for Woman* under the title "The Need" and also read at the annual meeting of the Woman's Board dated April 1880, would give an idea about their impressions and views on the position of women in the Ottoman land, in the Muslim world:

> Our Constantinople Home stands, upon its beautiful height, a beacon-light to the thousands of women who sit in darkness, as lofty in its ideal, as beautiful in its promise, as it is in situation. From this vantage ground let us, in imagination, overlook the whole heathen and Mohammedan world, and strive to catch a glimpse of woman's life, from the cradle to the grave. No welcome awaits her entrance into life; she is her father's shame, her mother's grief. 'The threshold weeps forty days when a girl is born,' says an old oriental proverb. By violent hands, often, the frail life is quenched-the disgrace is buried out of sight.[83]

Miss E. C. Parsons, speaking at the annual meeting of the Board, expresses her impressions of Istanbul and compares the Turkish women with the American ones in the following way:

> A contrast was then drawn between the unhappy, aimless-looking women in Constantinople, and the bright, intelligent faces we see in America. No one who has never been in the East, can know what the contrast is-can imagine the vacant faces, the empty talk, the degraded lives of women in Turkey" and then puts forward their mission: "The Home looks forward to its proper work, which is to gather in many Turkish girls through the years to come, and to show them the great salvation, and the better way of living.[84]

In the following years, Hester Donaldson Jenkins, working as a professor at the college between 1900-1909, compares the American and Turkish women and writes that the American environment was more favorable to women's development than the environment in the Near East. She writes that in case of being given near the same chance, the "new woman" of Turkey proves that she and American women

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[83] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 10, (1880), p. 122, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[84] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 11, (1881), p. 99, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

are "sisters under the skin."[85] Well-cultivated minds and noble principles were among the aims of this institution working for the elevation of the women of the Orient. The school, the teachers were saying, "is a beautiful illustration of what Christian education and refinement will do for the daughters of this empire."[86] They were also arguing that "the great hope for the women of Turkey is the education of younger ones in Christian schools. [87]

However, Mary Mills Patrick, writes in *A Bosporus Adventure*, her book based on her memoirs as well as observations in Turkey, that she regards the Turkish regime as a military autocracy, but at the same time adds that Turkey is far ahead of the rest of Europe in one aspect of liberalism. She writes that from the earliest centuries of Turkish rule, Turkish women controlled their own property and were allowed to plead their own cases in courts of law. [88] During the whole extent of Turkish history, the influence of women in the state had consequently been extremely important. As a natural result of this attitude toward women, and the fact that men doctors were not always welcome in harems, Turkish women had long been prominent in the profession of medicine, according to Patrick.[89] It was true that the Turkish women lacked most of the educational opportunities offered to their male counterparts in the country or women in the western world but this was a point that deserved credit. This point, which was not realized or deliberately ignored by other missionaries, was highlighted by Patrick in her memoirs.

The Christian emphasis was obvious among the objectives of the Home's education. However, what was also praised in these girls during the examinations was their order, obedience, modesty and readiness and this fact was one of the factors that increased the number of parents asking admittance for their daughters. The Home School was gaining popularity, the teachers write in their letters, and

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[85] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 12.
[86] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 17, (1887), p. 374, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[87] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 12, (1882), p. 97, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[88] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 10.
[89] Ibid., p. 10.

report that a man who applied to the school for her daughter's admittance was saying that he wanted her to attend the Home to learn solemnity "to counteract the frivolity learned at a French school" for the past five years. They also quote this man saying that he did not like the French bigotry, but wanted her to learn a "religion moderée" like theirs. As an explanation of what the man meant by bigotry, they say it is the bigotry about forms and ceremonies which he thought was not present in this American system.[90]

The school was not only educating the students in terms of academic knowledge or spiritual consciousness but also giving them practical skills a woman might need in her everyday life. For instance, at the school, the girls had each a share in the domestic work. They were supposed to give about half an hour every day to their sweeping or dusting. Their teachers found it that it was a very good thing for them, preparing them for the real life.[91] These practical skills were within the frame of a rather limited vision of womanhood, a vision of woman occupying a place mainly in the domestic sphere. The school was also offering sewing classes to its students. During the sewing hours, two afternoons in the week, the conversation was in English though it was not always very animated, or continued long on one subject. The sewing classes in school time gained a different dimension in the subsequent years; it was henceforth an occasion for socialization and charity work as described by a teacher in the following way:

> We had never satisfied with the instruction in plain sewing; so this year we divided all the boarders among ourselves, and met our classes in our own rooms in the evening after dinner. They made very pretty, cozy-looking groups, gathered around a table, free to talk and laugh, provided they kept their needles going. Each girl was required to make a garment for herself, every stitch to be taken by hand…The girls were very enthusiastic about it, and we all enjoyed those home-like hours with them; sometimes reading them an interesting book, sometimes letting the conversation go as it would. As winter came on our hearts were stirred with pity

[90] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 5, (1875), p. 37, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[91] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 20, (1890), p. 329, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

for the miserable poor around us, and we resolved to try to interest the girls in work for the poor. We took the girls, two or three at a time, with us to distribute these garments and I think the misery and destitution they saw was a revelation to them. My class organized themselves into a little charitable society, electing a treasurer, and agreeing to pay one piaster (five cents) each every week.[92]

CHAPTER TWO

THE COLLEGE YEARS

The year 1874 is an important date in the school's history since it was the date when it moved into a spacious, purpose-built construction in Üsküdar. These were the years when Mary Mills Patrick, the enthusiastic young missionary, joined the teaching staff. She had come to this high school with a big idea; the idea of transforming this modest mission school into a great international college, which would be better observed in the subsequent years of the school's history. [93] In the new location, a multi-ethnic body of students started to receive an advanced level of education with English as the lingua franca. The students who did not speak English were offered a preparatory year of English language instruction. "The language is English, which is greatly needed in Constantinople to supplant infidel French literature," writes Mary Mills Patrick speaking about the Home where there are pupils from ten nationalities in the year 1880.[94] As Ottoman proposals to reform education were in progress, the Ottoman middle classes, of all religions and sects, were increasingly drawn toward the idea of a modern education for their daughters, and faculty at the school kept pace with local demands. [95] The school's name was

[92] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 15, (1885), p. 446, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[93] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 51.
[94] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 10, (1880), p. 33, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[95] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 58.

mentioned as both "the Home" and "the American Female College of Constantinople" in the 1887 records of the school. The year 1890 when the school was given a college charter by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is another important date. Starting from this date on, the former Constantinople Home was officially recognized as a degree-granting institution of four years of study in addition to one year of preparatory class of English for those who needed it.

The school, in the second period of its history in Üsküdar, experienced a great change and fell under "conservative control", in Patrick's own words. She calls this era coinciding with the advent of Sultan Abdülhamid II as "dark ages".[96] These are the years Patrick starts to have disagreements with other administrators in the school as well as some conservative members of the Women's Boar vd. She had a modern and independent vision for the institution emphasizing the educational motives rather than missionary ones. This was in a sense signaling a change of identity and purpose in the history of the college. Patrick states that there was on the part of the new administration of the school an attempt to repudiate the independent character of their organization. Their attempt was opposed with the support of Caroline Borden and Pauline A. Durant, the long-term college trustees in Boston. Borden was called the "good angel" of the college by Patrick. [97] Barbara Reeves-Ellington, in her article titled "Constantinople Woman's College: Constructing Gendered, Religious, and Political Identities in an American Institution in the Late Ottoman Empire" describes Borden as Patrick's "staunch loyal ally, mentor as well as protector."[98] Borden and Durant worked to bring the control of the institution under leadership with vision. Mrs. Smith, in the school administration, asked for Patrick's resignation and this reason for this was Patrick's denying a fundamental connection of the college with the Mission Board in Boston during an addressing in a public meeting. "The fact was that I had declared myself an educator and had said that I did not represent sectarian religion in any form,"

[96] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 89.
[97] John Freely, *A History of Robert College*, Vol. 1, (Istanbul: YKY, 2000), p. 139.
[98] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 55.

Patrick speaks.[99] The independent and nonsectarian stand of Patrick was striking and there was a disagreement in the Board between the conservative and liberal members. However, this disagreement and the opposition to Patrick's stand were cleverly managed by Durant in a board meeting and the subject was dropped contrary to the wish of the conservative president. The issue would never be opened to discussion again. Patrick writes that the principle of great importance in connection with the founding of the college was represented by Borden as a broad vision of the type of education that would meet the needs of all the various religious sects and political views of the different elements in the Ottoman Empire. It involved offering a type of education that would prepare women of the Near East to participate on that basis in the home, in the community, and in national life.[100] Persuading the legislature of Massachusetts to grant a college charter to a small and almost unknown institution in a far-away city like Istanbul had not been an easy matter and "success was almost entirely due to the efforts of our two leading trustees, Caroline Borden and Pauline A. Durant," Patrick writes.[101] "Dominus illuminatio mea" (The Lord is My Light) was the college motto and was over the platform together with the flags of Turkey and the United States on the first commencement day of the new college which was one of the most significant public occasions of the college's history and a thrilling celebration in the country.[102]

Mary Mills Patrick was indeed a leading figure who had a major effect on the history of the college that was going through a transformation in its purpose, ideals and practices in those years. The institution was embracing a broader and pluralistic vision thanks to her. Halide Edib, the most famous alumna of the college, writes in her memoirs of the influence that Patrick had upon the institution in her time, contrasting it with that of Florence A. Fensham, the Dean:

> The college at this time had two distinct tendencies, separately embodied in two distinctive personalities, Miss Fensham and Dr. Patrick. Miss Fensham, with her

[99] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 90.
[100] Ibid., pp. 90-92.
[101] Ibid., p. 94.
[102] Ibid., p. 96.

> marvelous power of speaking and her firm Christianity, stood for the purely Christian side, while Dr. Patrick seemed more universal in spirit; she had wide sympathies and represented altogether a freer line of education based on a human international understanding. Had Miss Fensham prevailed, the college would have been a missionary institution, but particular and limited in its appeal. Dr. Patrick struggled to give a larger scope and significance to all its works. [103]

However, Patrick would also write the following to Samuel Darling in 1909 about the school's Christian religious teaching and express her opinion that a religious education is necessary and should not be given up even in the case of Muslim Turkish students:

> My own opinion is that the College should stand firm on its Christian basis. The Muhammedans are suddenly free and suddenly desirous of education, and they look around to see where they can get it. They turn first of all to the best among the Christian schools, and think how they can arrange to escape the Christian teaching that is repugnant to them. It is a sort of scheme to sequester the mission colleges and to use them simply for educational purposes…The only exception that I would make would be to possibly allow the Moslem girls to stay away, if they wish, from preaching services on Sunday conducted by men, as there is somewhat an excuse for allowing that, but I would require attendance to the Bible classes and to everything else, on the basis of the Charter…If our College should yield at all on this religious question, we should very soon have to yield one thing after another until its control would pass wholly under the Mohammedan system.[104]

In 1887, the institution was witnessing the government's interest in the institution in the way of exercising some oversight of its doings. The school books were "carefully inspected, and some prohibited, lest "wrong ideas of liberty" be instilled into the pupils 'minds. For instance, a reading- book containing a quotation from Pitt's speech as an example of emphasis, the famous 'Never, *never*, NEVER,' was

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[103] Halide Adıvar Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, (New Jersey: Gorgias Press LLC, 2005), p. 193.
[104] John Freely, *A Bridge of Culture: Robert College-Boğaziçi University, How an American College in Istanbul Became a Turkish University*, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2009), p. 190.

prohibited. Hamlet, Macbeth, and Julius Caesar were also forbidden to the classes in English literature, as containing dangerous sentiments."[105]

The school, in the early years of the 20th century, was made up of many elements. The students were coming from families of various backgrounds. These were girls of diverse creeds and ways of thinking. As a method of dealing with this changing situation, the students living in the college were apportioned to the different teachers as wards or daughters. Each teacher was expected to look after personal need of her wards, -physical, mental and moral, - and to be their especial adviser and friend. While narrating this practice of the school, a teacher expresses her low opinion of the newcomer girls and find a reason to boast about the education the college gives:

> The girls' needs are many. Some of them need instruction even in habits of personal neatness. They lack the ability to think clearly and to reason clearly, which comes as a heritage to most children in countries where education is an older institution than it is here. They lack imagination in originating games and amusements, as well as the vigor and energy necessary to carry the games through, so that they have even to be taught to play. The great differences in the abilities of the advanced classes and the younger ones, however, serves to convince a new-comer that this college is doing a very noble and much-needed work. The girls of the higher classes are neat, self-possessed ladies. Religiously, the school stands for the highest ideals, so I am sure that each earnest girl who goes out from this college must carry with her a force that shall act as a leaven of irresistible power in the mass of the people of her own faith.[106]

[105] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 17, (1887), p. 306, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[106] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 31, (1901), p. 299, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

2.1. THE SELF-GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION AT THE AMERICAN COLLEGE FOR GIRLS

The college's identity was changing in time together with the diversity of its student body. A Self-Government Association was established within the institution in 1892. This association had the aim of giving the young girls a responsibility with the idea that this responsibility thrown upon them would mature and develop their character. "The College expects every girl to do her duty," was the motto chosen for the Self-Government Association of the American College for Girls. The subject of discipline in educational institutions had been for years one of serious thought and debate and now it was being questioned under the changing circumstances of their time. "The methods of severe correction and innumerable rules, held to be indispensable by our forefathers, have given way to new and more attractive ways of securing the comfort of a community students who, because of their close relations, must give heed to respect for one another's interests. The object of order in any college is to insure an unselfish thoughtfulness in community life," Florence A. Fensham, known with her firm Christian stance, was saying and signaling a radical change in the administration.[107] Fensham was comparing the relation between teacher and student to the one between a child in the kindergarten and its teacher, stating that they are not much different in principle as long as measures were imposed by those in authority. She argued that something else was needed for men and women who had passed beyond the stage of personal correction, and had yet not reached that of thoughtful consideration of the comfort of others. The self-governing system at the college was a tool in reaching this ideal. The responsibility was laid upon the student body, just where it belonged, to provide for such order in college as the good of all demanded.[108]

Following a period of eight years of trial, the system in the college proved effective in developing womanly dignity and self-control on the part of the students;

[107] Ibid., p. 302.
[108] Ibid., p. 302.

this was an achievement far beyond that was attained under the old system of surveillance. Each student, in this system, was feeling herself personally responsible for the general order of the college, and this consciousness was going far toward making her watchful of her own movements. Another valuable effect of the system was that of establishing a relation between a teacher and student wholly free from the defects of espionage. The students met and formed themselves into an association, framing a constitution and by-laws, which were submitted to the faculty for approval. Every change in the by-laws secured the approval of the faculty before it went into effect. The officers of the society were a president, vice president, secretary, an executive board composed of seven members, and eight proctors in charge of the various dormitories."[109] The election of officers for the following year would take place at the close of each year, and the list of officers would be submitted to the faculty for confirmation. There were by-laws covering such regulations as were needed for orderly conduct in the library, dining hall, dormitories and grounds, as well as promptitude in fulfilling college duties. If a professor or instructor noticed a matter which needed correction, she would report it to the executive committee of the society, and that body would deal with the offender. [110]

The Ottoman Empire during this era was a place where the forces of nationalism were very strong. The student body in the college had a cosmopolitan character, which made the association an especially interesting one. The association included a Bulgarian girl representing the family of an honored ecclesiastic, a Greek girl who had renowned ancestors, an Armenian with the "keen, bright mind of her race", an English girl with "her careful home training", a teacher who had come from one of the schools of the interior to complete her studies, and an Italian girl whose parents had drifted to Russia, but still held to their allegiance to Italy. [111] The diversity of the students' nationalities and backgrounds points to the existence of a perfect harmony at the school. Some kind of nationality jealousies might be

[109] Ibid., p. 303.
[110] Ibid., pp. 303-304.
[111] Ibid., pp. 304-305.

expected to spring up here, but Fensham writes in her letter that there was little of such feeling, as was shown by the fact that the presidents chosen by the students had been in turn Greek, Bulgarian, Armenian, English, etc., regardless of their nationality. Once a month a business meeting was held in the frame of this association, and at this meeting additional matters relative to the general conduct were discussed. Sometimes, great self-control was needed to administer the duties which fell to each office and to deal with problems, and there was possibility of friction and lack of wisdom on the part of each officer. However, from year to year the difficulties were being met and overcome by the members. The society was commanding a deeper respect from the faculty and instructors, and the students were developing into self-controlled women of executive power, who carried into their respective spheres of life the results of this useful practice. This was "one of the most important educating influences of college life," writes F. A. Fensham, the dean of the college, in her letter to the Board.[112]

In addition to English, the common language of the college, the Student Government Association, too, had a positive influence on solidarity within this multinational student body.[113] "There is a beautiful harmony at the college with students of so many different nationalities even when there are sore feelings about political affairs, between Greeks and Bulgarians for instance. The absence of friction at the college is due to the loving Christian atmosphere of the school and not at all to the fact that these girls do not care for the subjects that are agitating their people at home," Isabel F. Dodd writes in her letter in the subsequent years expressing her observations about the college. She thinks there could not be "more eager politicians or patriots in all their home matters than those girls," and quotes the Bulgarian parents' words as a proof of this argument of hers: "Why, when our daughters come home from school they can talk with all the statesmen and all our visitors on national affairs with such knowledge and good sense that everyone is

[112] Ibid., p. 305.
[113] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 200.

astonished."[114] These same girls were also discussing the state of matters in different countries, each expressing eagerly and solemnly their views on reforms, opportunities or hopes in their teacher's room where they paid a visit before going to bed at night.

2.2. THE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE FOR GIRLS

Florence A. Fensham, the dean of the college, writes that the success of an educational institution can be tested in regard of the men or women it fits for the practical duties of life. She also states that the spirit of their day demanded that the intelligence, judgment and discrimination which a high-quality college education was assumed to develop be directed toward some practical needs of society. This was especially the case for Istanbul, where society was passing through a period of rapid transformation, and a mingling of eastern and western culture was producing some kind of confusion. European ideas and practices were quickly adopted and apparent everywhere in those days and Fensham gives her observations in the examples of wine drinking among the Turks, European dances for social gatherings, the disappearing picturesque costumes of the Orient and the houses furnished in European fashion. "As is always the case in such changes, the East is absorbing that which is pernicious first, and in many cases exchanging the bread of a good old social custom for the stone of a European vice," she argues. In such a state of society, the kind of young women which the American College was sending into the homes of Turkey was of great importance, for these women were supposed to be reformers, in the noblest sense. They had to understand their respective circles of society, and carefully discriminate between the foreign influence which would make for the good of society, and that which would do it harm. "A controlled, intelligent judgment is of prime importance in this work. But more than this, a deep

[114] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 35, (1905), p. 300, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

religious devotion, the simple love of Christ, appreciation of his teaching and devotion to his cause, give unerring directions to a purpose which might be lost among the problems of a society just emerging from mediaeval mists," writes Fensham as she summarizes what is expected of the college students in terms of the country's future in a missionary point of view. [115]

The Alumnae Association of the college was formed in 1891, with representatives from fifteen nationalities. The graduates of the college in that year were pursuing different lines of services; studying to become or already working as teachers, in the schools of Turkey as well as of Bulgaria and Greece, nurses, and physicians. One of these graduates had assumed the control of his father's silk factory with special interest in the women employees, another one was doing executive work as head the Armenian Relief Fund in Varna and another one was working as assistant in an industrial work. Ten of the graduates were known to be doing creditable work in the literary field. Halide Edib was one of them with her translation of *Mader*, a book on "Home Influence" into Turkish. This was her first translation from English published in 1897, where she was emphasizing the importance of motherhood: "Children are society's future hope. And those who will give them the first lesson, the first education, are mothers. For this reason, motherhood is a great, a very great duty."[116] In the preface, in which she addressed herself to the mothers of Turkey, she appealed to their sense of responsibility as mothers for the character of the home life and the training of their children. A thousand copies of this work were sent into the interior of the country, and the young woman received a special decoration from Sultan Abdülhamid II, in recognition of her work.[117]

The society was changing, women were aiming at higher ideals and several of them were henceforth entering upon callings that were restricted to men until that time. In this record of the different lines of service which were being pursued by

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[115] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 32, (1902), pp. 12-13, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[116] Başçı," Love, Marriage, and Motherhood", p. 31.
[117] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 32, (1902), pp. 14-15, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

the graduates of the college, there was also a number of young women who got married and, in the quiet of a home life or in some social group, acted as forces for the uplifting of their society. Fensham, with a more conservative point of view in comparison with that of Patrick, complains that there is a tendency to overlook the importance of a woman's influence in the home. She states that the home will always be the unit of society and that the alumnae of the college, therefore, who are living out their lives in quiet and seclusion under the influence of a new consciousness of Christian motherhood are doing no less, perhaps more, for the land than can be done in any other way. She emphasizes that the high ideals of the woman as home-maker, as wife, as mother, as neighbor, as a member of society, cannot fail to be a regenerating force and that the children who come up under that mother's hand have a far better chance of growing into strong manhood and womanhood than those of their less fortunate neighbors. She appreciates the eastern world and states that many of the customs of the Orient, a natural outgrowth of the national life, are good. "Many a lesson has the West to learn from the East in the importance of the sound health, of attention to hospitality and gracious manner. No college graduate honors her education who does not discern the good and hold to it, while she is all the time quietly and steadily aiming to make better that which is injurious," she writes.[118]

2.3. THE EFFECTS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND "THE FRUITS OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION" IN TURKEY

An article in *Life and Light for Woman* titled "The Old and the New in Turkey" tells us about the impressions of Isabel M. Blake, another member of the Board, about women in the Ottoman land, in the village or city as well as a role she deems fit for the graduates of the American College for Girls. She writes that women in rural areas of Turkey live in bad conditions and adds that those in the city

[118] Ibid., p. 15.

are not much better off, stating that generally speaking they are the slaves of their husband and mother-in-law. She describes several cases of maltreatment she thinks were the case for these women on the part of their husbands and summarizes these impressions of hers by arguing that "a woman is entirely under her husband's power." "Her life is like an unsteady ship, on the sea. At any moment, it may go this way or that," she says.[119] After several bad examples she cites as indication of the low position of women in Turkey, Blake adds that this is not a picture of the life of every Turkish woman. She states that that some husbands are truly noble and their wives are highly favored. She makes the following observations about the status of women in the "new Turkey":

> In the leading cities of the empire, however, the 'new woman' has really appeared and she is of two types. There is the ultra-fashionable type, frequently seen in Aleppo or the coast cities. She walks the streets with great freedom; if she wears a veil at all, she throws it back; she paints and powders freely; at home, she smokes innumerable cigarettes; she reads French novels of doubtful character, and I fear, too often, her own character becomes doubtful; her dress is showy and tasteless and sometimes very immodest. She is not a pleasant subject to contemplate. The second type is infinitely higher. She is the educated woman, with eyes open to the general good. She is found in every nationality of Tukey, and she enters every sphere of usefulness. In literature, she has been able to do a very fine work…The Turkish women of this class have had no insignificant part in the bringing about of constitutional government and other reforms. They allowed secret meetings to be held at their houses; they used their pens and all their influence for freedom. They are responsive to high ideals, though not always of sufficient worldly wisdom to put those ideals into practice. Among them are Fatima Hanum, a well-known authoress who has published many strong political articles, and Hallideh Edib, a graduate of the American Girls' College at Scutari, who besides her work in literature, has reorganized the Turkish Normal School for Girls in Constantinople. Women have also entered the ranks of the medical profession, both as nurse and

[119] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 41, (1911), p. 156, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

> doctor. Some are practicing in America, Dr. Zarouhi Kavaldjian is practicing in Adabazar, Turkey. But besides these prominent names, there are thousands of women, mothers of families, who have had their eyes opened to the vision of the common good, who insist that their daughters must reach levels denied to them, who are ready to turn their backs on the showy and the meretricious (truly a temptation to the newly-awakened), and listen to the claims of the higher life; and who withal have shown and are showing great intelligence, energy and executive ability in organizing missionary work, school work, church work, relief work and other charities, musical clubs and other associations, and are always ready to take up and push a new cause, if you can once show them its value.[120]

Isabel M. Blake distinguishes between the two types of the country's "new" women- of various nationalities- she observes and highly praises the one she thinks to be pursuing high ideals and occupy a major place in the public sphere. Regarding women in the east as "weary souls" that need to be freed "from past bondage" and raised "to their true status" is a common view shared and mentioned by many others in the same mission work. In another letter sent to the Board, the most effectual method for the solution of this problem, the issue of freeing the women of the eastern world, is stated to be the distribution of the higher education for women throughout the Orient. Criticizing the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II bitterly, the same letter gives the information that there is a great number of libraries in Istanbul with beautiful books on shelves but that they are out of the reach of the women. The American schools and colleges in Turkey, which are said to have a chief influence on the "enlightenment" of these women, are also boasted in this frame. [121] As Istanbul is the gateway of the Empire, the young women, with high ideals, gathered together in the college halls from diverse nations and religions undertake a very big mission and become the strongest factor in elevating the home life, social life, and even the government of Turkey. The letter appears to have a highly feminist tone by portraying women as "ennobling forces" but then fails to reach its objective by confining the women's issue within narrow boundaries with the descriptions such

[120] Ibid., pp. 158-159.
[121] Ibid., p. 398.

as “the power behind the throne, the right hand of man” in Turkey and everywhere else. As a matter of fact, the same women in the college, in the subsequent years, came to be the power themselves instead of being the power behind the throne or did better jobs than men instead of being their right hand. [122]

The education the girls received at the college played, indeed, a part in preparing them for the circumstances and needs of the time and place they were in. Istanbul was the witness of a very great change in terms of the status of women in the country especially since the Constitution was declared. It was not only among Turkish women that there were movements of freedom but also among all the women of the country. For instance, the Armenian women formed societies for benevolent work and literary clubs in this process; the Turkish women also started a number of clubs and in both nationalities these clubs were largely organized and led by the graduates of the American College. These young women had learned parliamentary procedure and methods of benevolent work in the college. It was marvelous, on the part of their teachers, to see the fruits of their “Christian education” in Turkey, how much these clubs had done for charity and what advanced articles were read before the literary societies, when it had been only two years since there was any opportunity whatever to have such meeting. The achievements of the students of the American College and their efforts were seen as steps taken in the frame of uplifting womanhood in Turkey. Isabel F. Dodd writes in her letter that the girls’ normal school in Istanbul, maintained by the government, was in a miserable, run-down condition when one of the college graduates was asked to be the head of it. This graduate had already been asked to be a member of the Ministry of Education and to be at the head of various other schools. She refused all these, feeling that she had no administrative ability, but consented to give three lectures a week at the normal school. By this means and by her interest in the girls she completely revolutionized the school and given it a new spirit, writes Dodd in a proud manner.”[123]

[122] Ibid., p. 399.
[123] Ibid., pp. 59-60.

The Second Constitutional era had really been auspicious in terms of the advancement of the higher education among the women of Turkey. It was called as the "Honeymoon Period" by the Americans who felt joy and hope regarding the future of the country. [124] Under the new regime, Muslim girls, who had for so many years been held back, were allowed into the American schools and colleges. This, in itself, was a very great step for the women's rights movement in the country. Mothers who themselves had lacked the opportunities in their youth and fathers who wanted their daughters to receive a proper education, sought and secured better things, a higher education for their daughters, sometimes by displaying heroic ambition and efforts. [125] The fathers in particular showed real courage in sending their daughters to these colleges with great hopes. A Turkish father would take his daughter to the American College for Girls in Istanbul saying "Please give her special training in public speaking, for I wish her after she graduates to go into the interior and give addresses to Mohammedan women!" [126] The new Ottoman woman thus started to have a place in the public sphere and enter into hitherto untried fields of usefulness with great zest. An article which appeared in a 1918-volume of *Life and Light for Woman* mentions a book written by Margaret E. Burton, a member of the Young Women's Christian Association. In her book titled *Women Workers of the Orient* where she speaks about the situation of women in Turkey, India, China and Japan, Burton handles the female education in these countries and mentions Halide Edib, she cites among women who "are reaching for wider education and for a chance to serve their race". She calls these women "the Trail Makers" who work together, "in love of country, love of humanity and love of God." Burton, then, points out the role played by American missionary schools and colleges in these countries and states that these "interdenominational and international" institutions are places where these leaders are trained.[127]

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[124] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 153.
[125] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 41, (1911), p. 399, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[126] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 48, (1918), p. 204, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[127] Ibid., p. 204.

The college was also the beneficiary of change after 1908. Following the revolution of the Young Turks, there was a dramatic change in the relation of the college to the Government. Jenkins writes that they were very courteous towards the college, removing old restrictions and allowing supplies easily pass through the customs. [128] "The fear of former years was replaced by confidence and loyalty," writes Mary Mills Patrick in her memoirs. The new government had sent friendly messages and even established several scholarships in the college in order to enable Muslim girls to attend, and Halide Edib was charged with selecting the girls to receive them. "She was, in Patrick's view the finest example of what liberated women could accomplish in a new Turkey."[129] The reforms advocated by the Young Turks included extensive plans for improvement in methods of education. A new impetus was felt throughout their whole system. [130] The demand for the school was increasing day by day in early 20th century. There was an influx of Turkish students, who were a little hesitant at first and then in a rush. [131] "Students from all over these regions are begging to be allowed to come to this American college. Every Tuesday and Friday morning one can see the steady stream of girls, accompanied very often by an anxious father or brother, climbing the hill to put in their applications. More and more the women of the Near East are clamoring for an education; less and less are women being suppressed and pushed into the background. A new era is dawning," writes Eveline Thomson, a faculty member and also a graduate of the Class of 1909.[132]

Patrick writes the following about their Muslim students at the college as well as about the dramatically changed atmosphere at the beginning of the new regime after she returns from the U.S. following a two-year period:

> During my whole experience in Turkey, we had not been able to receive Mohammedan students. Now they were coming up the college walk in large

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[128] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 154.
[129] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 63.
[130] Mary Mills Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, (London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd, 1930), p. 227, accessed 12 April 2017, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.$b70454;view=1up;seq=11.
[131] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 154
[132] Freely, *A Bridge of Culture: Robert College-Boğaziçi University*, p. 218

> numbers. When the veils were thrown back, happy and eager faces were revealed; freedom and education were now possibilities for Mohammedan women. The attitude of the Government toward the college was of a sort hitherto unknown. For the first time in our history we received all kinds of encouragement from high officials. Representatives were sent to inquire regarding our needs; and what seemed most wonderful of all to me were the scholarships founded by the Government, the candidates for which were very carefully selected and sent to us. Such students were expected after graduation to teach in government schools, thus increasing our opportunities for friendly with the other schools of the country.[133]

Echoes of the New Ottoman Constitution, a 24-page booklet published by the college, includes the essays of its students from various nationalities about their views and rejoice over the restoration of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908. The anthology, published and circulated as Christmas gifts, includes an article by Nazlı Halid, a Turkish-Muslim student and Halide Edib, a Turkish-Muslim college graduate.[134] Halide Edib's relatively long article appeared under the pseudonym of Halide Salih, which she preferred in her early writings. [135] The collection is noteworthy in terms of including three articles expressing their writer's views on women's issues. These three articles written by Stefka Obreshkova, a Bulgarian student, Nazlı Halid and Halide Edib point to the relationship between the new Constitution and the status of women in the country. Nazlı Halid writes that the new Constitution brings great changes in the issue of the situation of women. She complains that women, who were supposed to stay at home, deprived of every advantage in life, while their fathers, brothers, and husbands enjoyed themselves in every way, were considered to be much lower than men in everything. She argues that women played a great part in the revolution; being the most active members of the Committee of Union and Progress and carrying the news and letters, something which threw their lives into great danger. Nazlı Halid becomes a voice crying for freedom as well as for education for the women of her country. Halide Edib, in her

[133] Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 224.
[134] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 61.
[135] American College for Girls, *Echoes of the New Ottoman Constitution*, (New Haven: Yale Divinity Library, 1908), p. 23.

article, compares before and after the Constitution in terms of the women's status, speaks about the importance of freedom for them and the necessity of their standing up for their rights. She points to the hatred of tyranny and the love of liberty and emphasizes that "the salvation of a nation lies in the proper education of high-minded and patriotic women." [136] Halide Edib's admiration for the Anglo-Saxon culture whose education she received can be seen in her attributing it a "a lofty moral position in the world's civilization" which she thinks is "due their sacred ideas of womanhood and home."[137] The climax of this admiration is expressed in the following words of hers: "More than for bread and water, more than any other want, we cry for knowledge and healthy Anglo-Saxon influence." [138] On the other hand, Halide Edib also shows her loyalty to religious principles stating that what the Turkish women ask is not unveiling but only a liberal education, a right to accompany their husbands and to become fit educators of the future generation."[139]

Considering that these articles, except for the one written by Halide Edib, were written in the English classes of the American College for Girls, and published without correction, it can be said that they are quite revolutionary and progressive for their era and context.[140] The college was a place that gave the students a feminist consciousness, an awareness of womanhood aiming at the highest ideals. The collection comes to an end with an address of Halide Edib to her alma mater, to her teachers, a piece which also appeared in the Turkish press. The writing titled "To our college", is about Halide Edib's deep and sincere love, admiration and gratitude towards her school:

> In the dark days when our country was covered by a dense cloud, in the midst of disaster and despair, to you I lifted my eyes. With the finest subtleties and the broadest realities of civilization and humanity, you extended knowledge to the darkest horizon of Turkey, O Institution. And you, honored women, yea, you teachers, who left your own land and your own people to elevate and enlighten the

[136] Ibid., p. 21.
[137] Ibid., p. 21.
[138] Ibid., p. 23.
[139] Ibid., p. 22.
[140] Ibid., p. 2.

dark corner of this freedomless, portionless land, sacrificing your finest years in your piety; you have struggled to bring light to Ottoman soil, to Ottoman civilization, fighting for learning and culture. This first opportunity to speak through the Ottoman press this day I consecrate to a greeting to you! The large ideas from which Turkey was shut out, the great feelings which were opened up to me in your classrooms, the ideas to which I was led in your libraries, showing me that there was no difference in men for race, class, sect, or religion, -these ideas that made me live like a person, a civilized person, a humanity loving person, that enabled me to live larger thoughts, generous thoughts, thoughts such as you were living; these ideals I owe to you, O women, and, to each and all of you I essay to express my gratitude and to live according to the principles which I owe to your teaching alone. I love, love, love everything about the college![141]

2.4. THE STUDENT CONFERENCE IN ISTANBUL

A student conference organized by the World's Student Christian Federation was held in Istanbul in 1911. The event was described as the first modern religious conference in the city and its aim was said to be "not doctrinal but spiritual" by Mary Mills Patrick, head of the college. According to her, the significance of the conference was that it characterized a new era in the Near East in the general public recognition and it was also significant in its international aspect for being held in Istanbul which was always a meeting place of the nations. She argues that the strongest service of the American colleges in the Ottoman land was in developing the spirit of brotherly love among opposing nationalities. Delegates from many nations and distinguished speakers had been invited to attend the conference from some of the leading universities and colleges in the world, and the result was a series of scholarly addresses that gained the respect of all for their intellectual power. This conference made it possible for the members of different nationalities to gain a friendly knowledge of each other. The addresses were

[141] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

repeated in various parts of the city and aroused the enthusiasm of many different classes of people. Scholars, leaders of European society in Pera, students of Muslim schools in Istanbul, and many people of various ranks expressed their appreciation of the lectures that they were able to hear. Patrick expresses her hope that the results of the conference would be widespread in influence over women students of the east.

In some respects, however, the problems of the work of the Federation among women are not separate ones, Patrick states adding that the countries of the Near East are as ready as those of many other parts of the world to grant to women their share in the development of national life. She gives examples of educational institutions in different areas which offer the same curricula for girls and boys, and of the universities of Greece and other countries of the Balkan Peninsula which are open to women. Nevertheless, Patrick argues that the work among Muslim women presents unique problems, for their position is different from any other phase of social development in the world and that it cannot be easily comprehended by those unfamiliar with the sociological conditions of the Muslim life. She gives credit for the rights given to women in Islam and says that some rights of these Muslim women have always been regarded. She gives the examples that a Muslim woman's property belongs to her and is wholly under her own control and that she can buy, sell or alienate it without consulting anyone. In politics, too, the women's power was not wanting, Patrick argues. Women were very active in promoting the recent revolution in Turkey which brought about the establishment of the Constitution. The readiness of Muslim women to respond to the advantages that the new freedom offers them is shown by the fact that they attended in large numbers the lectures offered in Turkish on Municipal Hygiene by the American College for Girls during the past two years and "such a Conference in any part of the world is an inspiration and this was the case in Constantinople," the president of the college writes. [142]

[142] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 41, (1911), pp. 421-423, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

2.5. THE COLLEGE DURING THE BALKAN WARS AND WORLD WAR I

With a cosmopolitan student body, containing representatives of all the nations that were then fighting in the Balkan Wars, the American College for Girls was rather in a difficult position. The college, "an oasis of harmony", was a place where the Bulgarian and Turkish students slept side by side in the dormitories. President Mary Mills Patrick tells about those days in the following way:

> Among the students was a very lively and mischievous Bulgarian girl, whose bed was near that of a Turkish student. One morning the Turkish girl, Bekiré, went to the dean and said that all through the night her Bulgarian neighbor had repeated the words: "I am going to kill Bekiré. I am going to kill Bekiré." The Bulgarian girl, on being questioned, looked perfectly innocent and replied, "It must have been in my sleep that I said it." What could be done in such a case? For the most part the students of the warring nations tried their best to get along together, but presently the Turkish girls sent me word that they would like to speak to me in a body. I went to the drawing-room, and there they were all assembled, wearing their black gowns and veils, the street costume of the time. They were a solemn group. "We are leaving," they said: "we cannot stand it any longer. But when things are quiet, we shall return." Which they did after a few weeks.[143]

Patrick writes that there was panic in the city but that they were in Üsküdar, far away from other Europeans and were not afraid for this reason. She also adds that they had previously experienced several other panics and "had always emerged triumphant." One other reason was that the warring nations were their friends according to Patrick. However, the American ambassador in the city was not so comfortable and ordered the college staff and students to leave Üsküdar for Arnavutköy, where the Introductory Department of the college was established. They later returned to Üsküdar when the city was no longer under threat.[144]

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[143] Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 245.
[144] Ibid., pp. 245, 247.

The year 1914, the beginning of World War I, was also the year when the college moved to its new campus in Arnavutköy. The institution was open during the war years. On the part of the parents, there was so much distress and suffering everywhere that parents were glad to have their daughters in a comparatively safe place. However, the conditions under which the college carried on its work were getting more and more difficult. When the US declared war against Germany and the break with Austria followed, Turkey severed official relations with the US within a month, which led to the closing of the American Embassy and consular service. All Americans in business were obliged to leave the country and the two colleges were the only American centers carrying on as usual. Members of the faculty were free to decide to leave or stay in the country. Nine American members of the faculty of the girls' college stayed. However, those who stayed at the college, the faculty, students and servants, they were not feeling comfortable. They were rather feeling suspense and anxiety upon warnings that the days of the Constantinople Woman's College were possibly numbered.[145]

However, it was a reality that the American colleges presented a problem to the Turkish authorities under such serious circumstances. In addition, Patrick states that their spacious buildings were needed as hospitals and residence for thousands of disabled Turkish and German soldiers. It would seem that the first decision of the Turkish government was to close the colleges but the college made vigorous efforts to save itself, in Patrick's own words. Many of the Turkish students of the girls' college phoned their relatives and the faculty made an appeal to friendly Turkish officials, to the Bulgarian minister and various friends. Patrick states that it was reassuring for them to remember that Talat Pasha and other members of the cabinet had been friendly towards the college from the beginning of the war. The efforts had proven to be helpful and the soldiers who had come to the college to seize it withdrew and never returned. Patrick thinks that the influence of loyal students of the college was an extremely strong factor in the decision of the cabinet in deciding against the closure of the college. She writes that both Turkish and

[145] Ibid., pp. 311-312.

Bulgarian students did their best to prevent it. "Some of the loyal Mohammedan students said that they would not leave the buildings even if they were taken over by the soldiers. Mr. Koloucheff, the Bulgarian minister, came out to the college, himself, to give the protection of his presence," writes President Patrick to emphasize how much these people tried to protect the college.[146] The carrying on of the college until 1918, the signing of the armistice, became increasingly difficult but never impossible, Patrick writes and adds "There were wretchedness and despair, but within the college walls, even when things were most strenuous, our academic life was full of cheer."[147]

2.6. TURKISH-MUSLIM STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE

The college was exclusively Armenian until 1879, when the two first Bulgarian students enrolled. By 1889, the nationalities in the institution included Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Turks, English and Americans.[148] Mary Mills Patrick, quite happy and proud of the multinational and cultural identity of the institution, writes as follows: "The principle of great importance in connection with the founding of our college as characterized by Miss Borden was a broad vision of the type of education that would meet the needs of all the various religious sects and political views of the different elements in the Turkish Empire. It involved offering a type of education that would prepare women of the Near East to participate on that basis in the home, in the community, and in the national life."[149] As for Borden, she expresses her observations about the Muslim girls in the college in the following way: "Mohammedan girls in the school…are received much younger, and remain a much shorter time, than other girls. Still, they have shown a change in character and progress in every way very marked…One girl said, 'We

[146] Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 314.
[147] Ibid., p. 320.
[148] Freely, *A Bridge of Culture: Robert College-Boğaziçi University*, pp. 137-138.
[149] Ibid., p. 137.

believe in Mohammed; but Christ was a great man too, and we try to please him'…One Turkish father, with fez and sword, said to me: 'Give my regard to the ladies in America who made this school, and my thanks for it. I mean to send my daughter, now in this school at nine years of age, to America, to study medicine.'"[150] The Turkish girls in the college were from families of high class and they braved all dangers to attend the school then in Üsküdar. The first of these was the daughter of a Circassian woman in the harem of Sultan Abdülaziz who after the death of the sultan married a colonel in the army. The girl's name was Gülistan Ismet.[151] She was secretly attending the school at that time. As it was against the law for either girls or boys to attend foreign schools, governesses were employed-French, English, German, Swiss- to teach them. Mary Mills Patrick, in *Bosporus Adventure*, speaks about Gülistan Ismet, the first Turkish graduate of the institution, in the following way:

> There was great excitement in palace circles when Gulistan's father, General Tevfik Bey, decided to send his daughter to an American school. The education of women was still a moot question, and his decision met with much opposition. Some said, 'What's the use of teaching a girl to read and write? Will she be a secretary at the Sublime Porte?' And still others advised, 'Teaching as far as the recitation of prayer verses is quite enough.' And some gibed, 'Yes, teach her to write that she may use it for mischievous purposes such as writing love letters!' General Tevfik Bey was once heard to say to a Pasha who had two daughters whom he did not even think of educating, 'If you send those girls of yours to school, you will do greater service to your country than conquering the whole world!' In 1890, when Gulistan was graduated, customs in Istanbul were still tightly bound by tradition. Gulistan, closely veiled, sat with her mother in the audience and did not go to the platform even to receive her diploma, which was passed to her over the heads of the people. Gulistan was a member of the last class graduated from the high school before the institution received its charter as a college. [152]

[150] Ibid., p. 139.
[151] Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 165.
[152] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 228.

Mary Mills Patrick also describes Gülistan Ismet as a young lady calculated by her character and attainments to bring honor to her Alma Mater and his father as a colonel in the Turkish army who showed great courage and independence of thought in continuing to send his daughter to the school, "notwithstanding the pressure brought to bear upon him in consequence of the bitter animosity of the Turkish government to Christian education."[153] Gülistan Ismet gave private lessons following her graduation from the school. She also did translations of literary works for a woman's magazine. She later married Asım Bey who became the first secretary of the Turkish Parliament.

Another distinguished Turkish graduate of the early days was Nazlı Halid (1910). Her father had a hard time under Sultan Abdülhamid II in consequence of sending his daughter to a progressive college. Patrick writes that the father would sometimes feel obliged to remove her but when both his wife and daughter wept together, he would say "What is my life worth to me with my wife and daughter both weeping? If you are determined to ruin me, so be it," and send her back to the college.[154] In her senior year, the Young Turks came into power and she graduated in freedom and with honor. She married Yusuf Kemal, who was at various times prominent in the new government of Turkey. During her whole life, Gülistan Ismet was a promoter of progress and education among her people.[155] As for the other Turkish graduates of the school, Hatice Zakir Refik (1916), was a laboratory assistant in the biology department for two years and taught for a time in a vocational school. In 1928, she took up banking. Her rise to the position of manager of a branch bank was "meteoric". She was later appointed manager of the Pera Branch of the Banque d'Affaires. Hatice Zakir, to Patrick's opinion, was indeed one of the foremost examples of the Turkish woman's ability to combine successfully a home and a career. In addition to her being appointed as the manager of a branch of the largest bank in Turkey, she was also the mother of six children. Furthermore, she was helping her husband to run a farm by taking care of all the

[153] Freely, *A Bridge of Culture: Robert College-Boğaziçi University*, p. 141.
[154] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 230.
[155] Ibid., pp. 230-31.

business details and also, she was teaching English in a Girls' high school. In 1933, she was invited to visit the United States as the official representative of the bankers of Turkey to the conference of bankers which took place in connection with the Chicago Exposition.[156] Safiye Ali (1916) studied medicine in Germany, received her M.D. from the University of Würzburg and became a successful practicing physician. Bedriye Veysi Necmeddin (1917) studied medicine in Munich and practiced her profession with distinction in Turkey. Dr. Sahire Muhtar (1923) continued her studies at the college, receiving her Master's degree in 1924. Subsequently, she studied at Cornell University, being the first Turkish woman to take a Ph.D. from an American university. She worked as professor of sociology in Istanbul Woman's College. She was then the only Turkish member of the Society of Women Geographers. Fazile Şevket (1922) received the degree of Master of Arts from Mount Holyoke College and served for some years as professor of biology at Istanbul Woman's College. Mebruke Ahsen (1919) took her Master's degree in 1924. She held an administrative position of value in several departments of the college. Selma Ekrem (1922) lectured widely in the United States, and was the author of the stimulating book, *Unveiled*. [157] The college had notable graduates among its Armenian, Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian alumnae as well. Graduates of the college were prominent in many forms of public activities. "Modern Turkish women are ready for leadership in all lines of progress," writes Patrick and adds that their unusual inheritance from ancient times rendered them especially responsive in their reactions to modern life. Patrick summarizes the goal of these graduates as "scholarship, efficiency, and devotion to high national ideals."[158]

[156] Ibid., p. 231.
[157] Ibid., p. 232.
[158] Ibid., p. 248.

2.7. HALIDE EDIB

As we come to the year 1902, we see that one of the graduates of the college was a Muslim-Turkish girl. This girl was Halide Edib, the first in the Ottoman Empire to receive the degree of Bachelor of Arts. At that time, she was already recognized as a writer, as she had been writing for some time for the Turkish press of the city. [159] Halide Edib would also be the most famous ever to graduate from the American College for Girls. She would have a significant place in the Turkish history both with her identity of novelist and the role she played in the Turkish modernization.[160]

Halide Edib, the daughter of Mehmet Edib who was First Secretary to Sultan Abdülhamid's Privy Purse, was the second Turkish girl to attend the college, after Gülistan Ismet, and the first to receive the degree of Bachelor of Arts. His father held an important position in the Cabinet of Sultan Abdülhamid II and was said to have sacrificed his political promotion to his daughter's education. [161] Halide Edib came from an aristocratic family. Following the death of her mother, she lived between her maternal grandmother's and her father's houses. Her grandmother's house was in the Muslim quarter of the city; her father's was in Ihlamur, an Armenian and Greek neighborhood. Halide Edib's multicultural education began in these years. Her grandmother taught Halide Edib the principles of Islam, while her father enforced a British diet, dressed her in British clothes, and sent her to a kindergarten attended only by Christians. The Bible Studies courses she had at the college had a profound impact on her literary work.[162] She would read novels translated from the Western literature at home, a place where she was raised by a grandmother who had adopted the Sufi tradition of Islam. Her grandfather was, too,

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[159] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 32, (1902), p. 12, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

[160] Nazan Aksoy, *Kurgulanmış Benlikler-Otobiyografi, Kadın, Cumhuriyet*, (Istanbul: Iletişim Yayınları, 2009), p. 82.

[161] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 229.

[162] Hülya Adak, Introduction to *Memoirs of Halide Edib* by Halide Adıvar Edib, (New Jersey: Gorgias Press LLC, 2005), p. vi.

a man of tradition, very keen on politics. The grandfather's world was a place where Halide Edib loved even as a child. In those early years of her life, she had already started enjoying the political as well as literary discussions of his grandfather and other male adults around her.[163]

Halide Edib first enrolled at the college at the age of eleven but remained for only a year. She re-entered as a boarder in 1899, when she was the only Turkish pupil, and continued through her graduation in 1901. That same year she married her former mathematics tutor, Salih Zeki Bey. In July 1908, when the Ottoman Constitution was restored, she began to write articles for the daily *Tanin*, which urged social and educational reforms, and found an immediate favorable response. Her first important novel which was also a feminist one, *Seviyye Talib*, was published in 1910. While continuing to write articles on educational reforms, she joined the staff of the Women Teachers' Training College, where she reformed its syllabus and administration. Meanwhile, she was divorced from Salih Zeki Bey after finding out that he had married a second wife. Halide Edib was later appointed Inspector General of the Evkaf Schools. At the same time, she joined the Women's Club and became active in social relief work and nursing. Then, she married Dr. Adnan Adıvar, a leading member of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). She took part in the Turkish War of Independence, becoming the symbol of the Turkish women who participated in the struggle. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic, Halide Edib broke with Atatürk, after which she and her husband lived in self-imposed exile for fourteen years. During this period, they lived in Paris and London and went on a lecture tour of universities in the U.S. as well as in other places. After she returned to Turkey in 1939, Halide Edib was appointed chairwoman of the newly-founded Department of English at Istanbul University. Elected as an independent member of Parliament for Izmir in 1950, she served until her retirement from political life in 1964. Her literary output was prodigious, including twenty novels, four collections of short stories, three works on history and politics, a three-volume history of English literature, translations of

[163] Aksoy, *Kurgulanmış Benlikler,* p. 86.

Shakespeare and George Orwell, innumerable articles, and her two-volume autobiography: *The Memoirs of Halide Edib* (1926) and *the Turkish Ordeal* (1928) both published in New York. Today, she is revered as the great heroine of the early Turkish Republic, and her many books still continue to be widely read.[164]

Halide Edib attended the American College for Girls upon the will of his father, who called her as "Halid"- a Turkish boy name- from the very first day she was born and who always wanted his daughter to be raised in European-Western standards. Her college years was a period when her respect for other faiths was rooted. She was once harshly criticized at home for reading the Bible as a literary text; the household members even tried to tear it to pieces but Halide managed to keep it untouched.[165] During her years at the college, there were two literary societies in the institution and Halide Edib was the president of one of these titled "Theta Alpha". The college also had a "Century Club", which was gathering on Friday evenings to discuss current news and current events. Debates were also being organized for this kind of discussions. The prizes were being given to the students for the best work done in essay-writing in English and the subjects written on were Edgar Poe, Abraham Lincoln and Longfellow. [166] At the college, Halide Edib had read a very old book in the library, called *Mader -The Mother in the Home* which had deeply impressed her youthful mind. While at home, she translated this book into Turkish. Her father was so much pleased that he had a thousand copies printed and distributed among the views of the soldiers. Even Sultan Abdülhamid II, the ruler of the time, approved and decorated the young girl for her work.[167] Since that time, Halide Edib had a very distinguished career, became a woman statesman of world reputation, a well-known author, teacher, and lecturer.

1908 was the year of the Young Turk revolution which opened up many possibilities, particularly for women. Halide Edib describes the revolution as one of general enthusiasm and rebirth, in the midst of which she says "I became a

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[164] Freely, *A Bridge of Culture: Robert College-Boğaziçi University*, pp. 181-182.
[165] Aksoy, *Kurgulanmış Benlikler,* p. 87.
[166] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 32, (1902), p. 11, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[167] Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 192.

writer."[168] The same year was also the time when she entered into public life as a social activist, journalist, and public speaker. In her twenties, she wrote on women's issues and nationalism without visiting the newspaper offices of *Tanin*. Halide Edib obeyed the practice of gender segregation and found it acceptable only to appear in front of intimate friends of her father and her husband, Salih Zeki.[169] Her articles in *Tanin* propagated the emancipation of women and asked for equal educational opportunities for women, which provoked harsh criticism from the opposition to the Unionists.[170] She also published articles in various journals, such as *Aşiyan, Resimli Kitap/The book with Illustrations, Demet/Bouquet and Musavver Muhit /The Illustrated Milieu.* After 1908, Halide Edib founded several women's associations such as Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti/Society for the Development of Women, which had the aim of promoting the "cultivation of its members" through lessons in French, English and Turkish, domestic science, and child rearing. [171] Nicole van Os mentions Halide Edib and Teali-i Nisvan in her Leiden University doctoral dissertation titled *Feminism, Philanthropy and Patriotism: Female Associational Life in the Ottoman Empire*. Stating that Halide Edib, the founder of the association, graduated from a college founded by the American Women's Board of Missions, van Os writes that three other women closely affiliated with the Board also participated in this organization. She cites the names of Mrs. Bowen, Mary Mills Patrick who was the director of the college and Mrs. Etta Marden and states that these women became active members of the organization. She also gives the information that the first conferences for women organized by the Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti were given at the Mission House in Gedikpaşa, the place where Halide Edib also taught. Van Os also writes that "Halide Edib and her friends probably had the American reading and study clubs in mind when they founded the Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti," which could also be interpreted as one of the influences of the American College for Girls over Halide Edib's identity. Van Os bases this guess on the fact that the name of the organization founded by Halide Edib and her friends, Teali-i

[168] Adıvar Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, p. 260.
[169] Ibid., p. 263.
[170] Ibid., p. 267.
[171] Ibid., pp. 334-335.

Nisvan, is the literal translation of the name for the umbrella organization for women's study clubs in the United States, "Association for the Advancement of Women," which was founded in 1873 and which van Os says had a similar goal as stated in the first article of the organization's statutes: "To serve the elevation of the level of knowledge of our women, under the condition that our national characteristics and habits will be preserved without being harmed."[172] Van Os thinks that this association and other charitable organizations founded by Halide Edib and her friends are significant in terms of giving women an understanding of the power they could have by organizing themselves and writes as follows: "They realized that once they were fulfilling their civil duties during these troublesome times, even if they did so in a counter-public sphere separated from the male public, they could and would make themselves indispensable in creating a new identity for the community or collectivity which was being formed."[173]

In 1912, during the Balkan War, Halide Edib worked as a nurse in the small hospital that Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti opened up in Istanbul. She was also highly active and played a major role in the progress of the Turkish nationalist movement after 1908. She was highly influenced by the philosophy of Ziya Gökalp, based on a synthesis of the Muslim and Turkish ethnicity with European-style modernization. She was also involved in the pan-Turanistic organization Türk Ocakları/Turkish Hearths, founded in 1911, which were the first national clubs that aimed to raise Turkish educational standards and encourage social and economic progress. The public lectures at Türk Ocakları were attended jointly by men and women, which was a great social innovation for the time. One of Halide Edib's early novels, the utopia *Yeni Turan/New Turan* (1913), written during her stay in London, explicitly depicts her Turanist ideology. A liberal and democratic Turkey giving political suffrage and employment opportunities to women was envisioned in her utopia. "The book is a political and national Utopia, but not so far away from possibilities

[172] N.A.N.M. van Os, *Feminism, Philanthropy and Patriotism: Female Associational Life in the Ottoman Empire*, Doctoral Thesis, Leiden University, 2013, p. 91, accessed 11 May 2017, https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/22075.
[173] Ibid., p. 64, accessed 19 May 2017.

as one may suppose a Utopia to be. It looks forward to a New Turkey where a chastised and matured Union and Progress has taken the reins of power, where women have the vote, and where women work with the qualities of head and heart which characterize the best Turkish women," Halide Edib describes her book. [174] *Yeni Turan* gained wide acclaim not only locally but also internationally and it became so famous in the Ottoman Empire that many cafés and shops began naming themselves "Yeni Turan". Her novels such as *Raik'in Annesi/Raik's Mother*, (1909), *Seviyye Talib* (1912), *Handan* (1912), *Son Eseri/Her Last Work* (1913) and *Mev'ut Hüküm/Decree* (1917-8) deal with different aspects of women's issues in the Ottoman society, such as the role of women in relationships and marriage. The suffering of women who had to confront their husband's disloyalty is a recurrent theme in these works of Halide Edib. Promoting women's freedom to choose their own spouse, most of her early novels criticize arranged marriages. As a matter of fact, Halide Edib's early novels were autobiographical, written during her experience of "domestic trouble" when his husband, Salih Zeki decided to marry a second wife. [175] Halide Edib took part in the Independence Struggle of Turkey (1919-1922) as a public speaker, journalist, translator, writer, editor, nurse, and soldier. She established *Anadolu Ajansı/The Anatolian News Agency* during the struggle. Edib's childhood during the last years of the Ottoman Empire is narrated in her *Memoirs*. Her *Memoirs* also include reminiscences of the multi-ethnic, multi-religious character of the empire as well as the different phases of the Turkish nationalism.[176] Halide Edib rightly acquired her place in the history as a pivotal figure of Turkish nationalism and feminism.

Ulviye Bint-i Asım, among women writers of the time, dedicated a poem to Halide Edib and it was published in the third issue of the Ottoman women's magazine *Demet*. This dedication was intended to show that they shared a common understanding of "progress":

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[174] Adıvar Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, p. 332.
[175] Adak, Introduction to *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, p. ix.
[176] Ibid., p. xiii.

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Ascends and exalts humans with women

Why should we stand without doing anything?

While our country is in need of us

Strive to awake Womanhood's world

Is not Progress Our means, sister?

Inspire this right to every thought that

'The hands swinging the cradle govern the world'[177]

The following words of Halide Edib, who constitutes a role model for the new "Turkish Woman", show her approach to women's rights in a feminist/nationalist discourse:

> When we are talking about woman, she is embellished with flowers underneath her, with sunny, blue skies over head; her environment is decorated with wealth and her heart with poetics far away from reality… For the elevation of women, the subjects do not necessarily have to do deal with womanhood only. Women are in need of learning everything that men learn. In this regard, the subjects of men cannot be any different from the subjects of women… Among the most intelligent classes of our women, I see an inclination towards feminism. This is a natural phase that women of every nation have to go through. But this is a step at a high level of development. Yet, we have not even made the first step. Nonetheless, this move might deserve some appreciation. But only if they [feminists] would not look so hostile to men! In our society reasonable young [men] are as feminist as women, and one sees a favorable basis in their minds for the progress of women. So, women would be more successful if they utilized their [the men's] good intentions instead of viewing them [the men] as an obstacle to everything they [the women] want to do. My final word to my sisters is this: A woman is first of all an Ottoman, a patriot:

[177] Ulviye Bint-i Asım, *Demet*, No. 3 (1 October 1324/1908), pp. 33-34, quoted by Tülay Keskin in "Feminist/ Nationalist Discourse in the First Year of the Ottoman Revolutionary Press (1908-1909): Readings from the Magazines of *Demet, Mehasin* and *Kadın* (Salonica)", MA thesis, Bilkent University, 2003, p. 51, accessed 12 April 2017, http://www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr/0002419.pdf.

> the motherland is the most distinguished direction of worship. The rights of the motherland are a thousand times more important and venerable than the rights of womanhood. That is why, while crying "our rights", women have to remember that they do not want this for themselves but for ability to raise children for the motherland. Besides the knowledge of a household economy and the upbringing children it would be beneficial to gain knowledge of history, hygiene, social and applied sciences even mathematics but this should not overcome their real duties. Nothing can be difficult and annoyance for women. Turkey's future will be in their hands.[178]

In the preface, he wrote for Halide Edib's *Turkey Faces West- A Turkish View of Recent Changes and Their Origin*, published series of her lectures in the United States, Edward Mead Earle, Professor of History at Columbia University presents Halide Edib as a "reliable reporter." Arguing that the record of the Ottoman Turks during the past century is "unpleasantly stained with tyranny, stupidity, and innocent blood," Earle admits, at the same time, that the picture of the Ottoman Empire presented to the American reader was almost invariably incomplete and hence misleading. "Prejudice, unenlightenment, and malevolence have been conspicuous characteristics of much that has passed as authoritative writing on the Near East during the past century in the United States," he writes.[179] Claiming that the time, the American press, the American pulpit, and American historians indicted the Turks, Earle praises Halide Edib for her attempts in her book to tell the truth. The first Muslim-Turkish graduate of the Constantinople Woman's College, Halide Edib is honored by Earle for being "a just cause for pride on the part of that outpost of American education." Being a leader in the movement for the emancipation of Turkish womanhood, she is said to deserve a high rank among the distinguished women of the world. Earle describes Halide Edib as a liberal in the politics of her own country and an internationalist in her outlook upon world affairs. Earle also states that what she tells can be listened by the Americans with sympathy and

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[178] Halide Salih, "Mehâsin'i Okuyan Kardeşlerime", *Mehâsin*, No. 6 (February 1324/1908), pp. 418-421, quoted by Tülay Keskin, ibid., pp. 72-73.

[179] Edward Mead Earle, Preface to *Turkey Faces West- A Turkish View of Recent Changes and Their Origin* by Halide Edib, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), p. X, accessed 12 April 2017, https://archive.org/details/turkeyfaceswesta010382mbp.

confidence. He does not neglect mentioning the nationalist character of this Turkish heroine but at the same time quotes her opinion that "political nationalism is as ugly as any other creed which tends to make men exterminate each other."[180] Earle thinks that Halide Edib was basically interested in the cultural heritage of the Turkish nation, her focus was not on politics. Her sympathies were not with the army or the bureaucracy or even with the middle class but rather with the Anatolian peasantry, and what she admired was these Anatolian peasants' qualities of forbearance, courage, determination, and industry in his view. Earle expresses his opinion that the American readers will find in Halide Edib's book points that would challenge their prejudices, arguments that would shed new light in dark corners and offer new perspectives.[181]

Barbara Reeves-Ellington thinks that Earle connected Halide Edib's reputation as a credible witness to history to her education at the American College for Girls. She mentions Earle's view that readers would find an "honest statement of a point of view all too seldom heard in the Anglo-Saxon world", comparing her view with the usual "incomplete and misleading picture of Turkey" that Americans received via various agencies and missionaries among them. By comparing Halide Edib's credibility with the lack of integrity he assigned to missionaries, and connecting her life so closely with the college founded by missionaries, Reeves-Ellington argues that Earle crafted a charming irony that indicates the extent to which Patrick and Borden had succeeded in burying the college's missionary past.[182]

2.8. THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the college needs special attention in terms of understanding the quality of the education offered to the students and the role it

[180] Edward Mead Earle, ibid., p. XI.
[181] Edward Mead Earle, ibid., pp. IX-XIV.
[182] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 67.

played in shaping the minds of the students. Regarding the program of the college, Mary Mills Patrick writes that the complex social organization of the Turkish Empire created unusual demands in terms of teaching of languages. Considering that all educated people in Turkey were expected to have studied the ancient form of the language used at home, Patrick states that teaching of ancient languages was especially important in the case of a cosmopolitan college like theirs. Therefore, starting from the early days, it was a priority in the educational program to teach the students the ancient form of their native tongue and the college included the study of Turkish, Armenian, Bulgarian, Persian, Arabic, Greek, Slavic, English and French. German was later added to the program and Hebrew was taught for a certain period of time. English became the lingua franca of the college in 1876. The students who did not speak English were offered a preparatory year of English language instruction. [183] These languages were being taught in their classical forms and the classical literature had a major place in the curriculum.[184]

When the institution was a high school opened in Gedikpaşa with only three students and its language of instruction was Armenian, its curriculum consisted of Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Chemistry, Botany, Physiology, Geography, Health Sciences, Philosophy, Bible Studies, Vocal Music, Drawing, Sewing, Needle Work and Instrumental Music. French was an elective course in the program. [185] In addition to religious instruction, singing and physical training courses were also part of the program as early as 1873.[186] As we look at the curriculum in 1874, we see that it included subjects such as Modern and Ancient Grammar, Armenian History, English Reading, Spelling, Writing and Definitions, Natural Philosophy, Recitations of Poetry, Reading of Compositions, playing on

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[183] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 67.
[184] Zafer Toprak, "Arnavutkoy Amerikan Kız Koleji", *Tombak*, No. 29 (Dec., 1999), p. 50, accessed 10 May 2017, https://www.academia.edu/22462457/Osmanl%C4%B1dan_G%C3%BCn%C3%BCm%C3%BCze_E%C4%9Fitim_Tarihinden_%C3%96rnekler_Arnavutk%C3%B6y_Amerikan_K%C4%B1z_Koleji.
[185] Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu'daki Amerika,* pp. 167-168.
[186] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 3, (1873), p. 356, accessed 10 May 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

the piano and the parlor organ. [187] The school was also offering sewing classes to its students. During the sewing hours, the conversation was being held in English so it was intended both as an occasion for socialization, practice of English as well as charity work.[188] After the school adopted English as the language of instruction in 1876, the curriculum was as follows in 1882:

Preparatory Class (one year)

-English, Arithmetic, Geography

Other Classes (three years)

-English, Geography, Ancient and Modern History

-Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Astronomy

-Physiology, Zoology, Botany

-Physical Geography, Geology

-Natural Philosophy, Moral Philosophy

-General Literature and Bible Studies[189]

In addition to these compulsory courses, Vocal Music, Rhetoric, Composition, Art, Gymnastics, Sewing and Needle-work were electives offered to the students. The language courses included Turkish, Bulgarian, Armenian, Ancient Greek and French in those years.[190]

After the school became a college and a degree-granting institution, the curriculum also changed in the same frame and included courses such as Mathematics, Physics, Biology, as well as Sociology, Psychology, Political Economy, and Archaeology.[191] The educational program of the college also

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[187] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 70, (1874), p. 310, accessed 10 May 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[188] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 15, (1885), p. 446, accessed 10 May 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[189] Kocabaşoğlu, *Kendi Belgeleriyle Anadolu'daki Amerika,* p. 168.
[190] Ibid., p. 168.
[191] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 215.

included practical courses such as nursing, medicine, business, agriculture and home economics which would enable its graduates to easily take part in the economic field.[192] The importance given to physical training continued in the same era and the athletic department of the college always held a prominent place in the curriculum.[193]

Following the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the economical-social transformation in Turkey, courses for commercial education, home economics and physical training started to hold an important place in the college's curriculum. Science classes became more and more popular as the college graduates had a tendency to study medicine after high school. The Ankara government laid down learning Turkish as a condition for all citizens with no exception and the courses of Armenian and Greek were removed from the school curriculum. The number of Turkish language classes rose from two hours to five hours per week. Two hours of geography and history classes in Turkish were also added to the new program. [194] During the new era, students continued to enjoy physical training courses including volleyball, basketball, baseball. They could even have military courses and do shooting drills with guns as well as practice archery in the college's big school yard.[195] The *Bulletin* of the college dated 1928-1929 gives detailed information regarding the program of the Department of Health and Physical Education at the college. We see that a variety of courses were offered including Danish, Natural, and Individual Gymnastics, Seasonal Sports, Folk, Clog and Rhythmic Dancing. Students could also play games and participate on teams in inter-class competitions in soccer, ring tennis, and paddle tennis.[196]

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[192] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 299.
[193] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 103.
[194] Toprak, "Arnavutkoy Amerikan Kız Koleji", pp. 49-50.
[195] Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar,* pp. 42-43.
[196] Constantinople Woman's College, *Bulletin*, (1929), p. 54.

CHAPTER THREE

IDENTITY AND GENDER AT THE COLLEGE

Mary Mills Patrick's book *Under Five Sultans* dedicated "to the Alumnae of Constantinople Woman's College", has in the frontispiece a photo of Halide Edib and below it reads "Bachelor of Arts, Constantinople Woman's College, Author, Educator, Statesman." [197] Patrick's choice of using this photo displaying Halide Edib as a "new woman", a woman who sports a short, modern haircut, presents an open face to the camera and wears a dress with an open neckline revealing her shoulders was a deliberate one, according to Barbara Reeves-Ellington. She had selected her to serve not only as a representation of the recently founded Republic of Turkey but also as the face of the college from the Ottoman era into the new age of postcolonial Turkey. [198] The former principal of the high school and long-term president of the college, in this autobiography of hers, describes the fifty-year period of work with the institution. Their idea was to open a "girls' school which was to be based on advanced standards of scholarship, and to be open to all nationalities of the Near East, without distinction of race or creed."[199] Patrick, with a feminist point of view, describes their cause as follows: "To Florence Nightingale, we owe the beginnings of our modern methods of nursing and a new conception of the educated woman's place in the world. Her life was one of the influences that led later to John Stuart Mill's movement for woman's suffrage, to the founding of women's colleges, and to higher education in general for the then neglected half of the human race."[200] Hester Donaldson Jenkins, writes that Patrick was always a feminist in the very best sense of the word, trusting in the ability and character of women. She was a suffragist long before it was popular in America or heard of in the East and lived to see women ready to claims their rights to vote in most of the

[197] Patrick, *Under Five Sultans,* frontispiece.
[198] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 54.
[199] Patrick, *Under Five Sultans*, p. 56.
[200] Ibid., p. 136.

Balkan states, Turkey and Greece.[201] The American College for Girls was a missionary institution in its essence. However, the above words of Patrick are noteworthy in terms of emphasizing the gender aspect of their cause and at the same time ignoring the religious basis of the initiative. It is significant that Patrick, nowhere in her published memoirs, mentions her missionary past or the college's nearly forty-year connection with the Woman's Board. In *A Bosporus Adventure*, where Patrick gives a more detailed history of the college and which is the place where her views on religion and international understanding are aired, she acknowledges by name some of the original, progressive managers of the Board which she refers to as "the society in Boston", which is a "vague term" according to Reeves-Ellington.[202] She mentions the loss of these early supporters when the Woman's Board entered a more conservative era, after the school became a college. These years, "the dark ages in college history" were the years in which Patrick and Borden worked together under difficult circumstances to realize their vision for the college and their views for posterity. [203] Their vision was to create the first American College for Girls in the Near East, the only seat of higher learning for the Eastern women for some years thereafter.

The social life in the Ottoman land in this period was of a cosmopolitan structure which provided great intellectual enjoyment in the matter of language. In all public gatherings, social, religious, and political, one would hear many tongues. Turkish and French were used most commonly. In later history, there was frequent use of English and German on social occasions. In all forms of society, however, Turkish was fundamental, but each different group spoke its own mother tongue according to need. Patrick writes that "practically all the languages of Europe were heard in Constantinople," and adds that the porter at the gate of the school in Üsküdar could speak six or seven languages though his vocabulary in some of these languages was limited to a small number of words. "The thrilling experience of

[201] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 303.
[202] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 66.
[203] Ibid., p. 66.

speaking several languages at an afternoon reception is at present less frequently enjoyed," she writes in the 1930s. [204]

The same diversity of language was seen at the college, too. During the late-Ottoman period, the languages including Latin, Armenian, Bulgarian, Turkish, English, French and Italian were being instructed at the American College for Girls. These languages were being taught in their classical forms and the classical literature had a major place in the curriculum.[205] The diversity of the languages instructed was a natural outcome of the multinational and multicultural identity of the empire as well as of the school. It was also a result of the modernization attempts and reforms in the country. Europe had a major and obvious effect on these movements in the Ottoman land. The European culture which was most influential in Turkey was decidedly French, "the poete philosophes."[206] "Even in early years, when our published program was apparently elementary, a surprisingly high standard was required in several departments. This was especially the case in the language courses…These courses included comprehensive work in Turkish, English, French, German, ancient and modern Greek, ancient and modern Armenian, Bulgarian, and Slavic, some study of Arabic and Persian, and at one time a course in Hebrew as it is spoken in Palestine," writes Patrick in her memoirs.[207] The language of the college was English from the time of its founding in 1876. "The advantages are evident. English and French are vying with each other for diplomatic usage, with English apparently in the ascendancy. The knowledge of English opens the way to world libraries and to study of international progress. The use by young students of some other language than their own increases facility of expression and knowledge of world ideas and opportunities of educational advancement," Patrick writes about the instruction of English.[208] Learning several languages including

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[204] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 48.
[205] Zafer Toprak, "Arnavutkoy Amerikan Kız Koleji", *Tombak*, No. 29 (Dec., 1999), p. 50, accessed 12 April 2017, https://www.academia.edu/22462457/Osmanl%C4%B1dan_G%C3%BCn%C3%BCm%C3%BCze_E%C4%9Fitim_Tarihinden_%C3%96rnekler_Arnavutk%C3%B6y_Amerikan_K%C4%B1z_Koleji.
[206] Adıvar Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, p. 243.
[207] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 100.
[208] Ibid., p. 102.

English would open new horizons for the female students in their future life. Offering students courses in various languages also meant opening them the doors to different worlds and cultures. The college, with its multilanguage and multicultural character, was successful in giving the students a broad vision of the world and an internationalist point of view.

The participation of the Turkish-Muslim girls to the student body in the subsequent years would contribute to the international and intersectional identity of the college. "For thirty-two years we had been forbidden to admit Turkish students. The three distinguished Turkish women who had studied with us during that period had suffered many things from attending an institution under the ban of their government. Now overnight the bars were removed. Turkish officials called to congratulate us on our progressive college", writes Patrick about the dramatic transformation following the Young Turk movement. [209] "They (Turkish students) were officially entrusted to us by the government with the words 'We commit them to you, their intellectual training, their morals and their health.'"[210] In the latter months of 1908, there was a rush of Turkish students, among them daughters of the Chief Justice, of the Governor of Beirut, Syria, and of a number of deputies in the Parliament. An atmosphere of harmony was prevailing in the college though the student body was made up of a multitude of nations. Patrick gives an example to this harmony with an anecdote: "During the Turco-Bulgarian War, two preparatory students were talking together. The Turkish girl said 'My father is a general in the army.' The Bulgarian girl replied, 'My father is a general, too. That makes us sisters, doesn't it?' If the fathers themselves could have had the same spirit, the war would never have been." [211] A policy of respect for all religions and a recognition of the historical and ethical roots was developed in this institution and Patrick's role as a "religious and educational pioneer" was obvious in this frame.[212] One of the great problems within the college was to keep harmony among young women of

[209] Ibid., p. 135.
[210] Ibid., p. 136.
[211] Ibid., p. 151.
[212] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 52.

eighteen different nationalities, of three great religions and of all classes. This was marvelously accomplished and lovely friendships sprang up between girls of enemy nations and a general spirit of love and understanding was exhibited, Hester Donaldson Jenkins, professor of the college, writes. [213]

The students, themselves, were quite aware of the changes in their character and identity that came up as a result of the opportunities the college was offering them.

> Before I went to college I was almost unaware of having physical powers, nor did I dream that the free development and movement of a young body is one of the important elements of happiness. College, with its healthy young people, its sober and tasteful environment, immediately acted on me. My simpler self, the self that had been smothered after the first years of my childhood, reawakened. I experienced as it were a leveling both up and down of my under-developed faculties respectively. I was astonished to find myself playing and enjoying play like a child of eight. This part of me, which had hitherto been dormant, now had full scope, and I passed my playtime among the little ones of the preparatory department with complete satisfaction. I was feeling like a numbed limb which has recovered its normal movement in life.[214]

This is how Halide Edib, the most famous graduate of the American College for Girls, speaks about her school. The college was a place where she discovered her true self and freedom as well as became cognizant of her inherent abilities. "As a whole, college had a liberating effect upon me, giving me a much greater balance and opening up to me the possibility of a personal life with enjoyments of a much more varied kind," she said concerning the broad vision of the institution.[215] Halide Edib would also say that she was later obliged to leave the college for Abdülhamid II, the ruler of the time, did not want the Turks to send their children to foreign schools. The reason for this ban was the fact that they could somehow learn some liberal ideas there, according to her. The sultan's alternative solution for the

[213] Ibid., p. 120.
[214] Adıvar Edib, *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, p. 195.
[215] Ibid., p. 190.

education was to have governesses at home, which was already a widespread practice among wealthy families of Istanbul in that era[216] Halide Edib, even in her young age, was aware of the pressure and regarded the college as a place where she could breathe freely: "College had not only taken me away from home and family worries; its free atmosphere, with normal and intellectual people around me, had put out of my thoughts the suspicious, smothering, and over-oppressive machinery of absolutism to which my home life was constantly exposed."[217] The college takes up only a small part of the first volume of Halide Edib's memoirs, where she devoted a chapter to her experiences there. She remarks that the influence of the college on her life was very strong, in these memoirs written in English, the language of her education. Reeves-Ellington thinks this was a conscious choice on the part of Halide Edib to reach a wider audience than she would have in Turkish, her native tongue.[218]

The Student Government Association established by Professor Isabel F. Dodd played an important role in the identity construction at the American College for Girls. It was a very new thing for girls of the east, whose life "tended to teach them great dependence" but it was highly welcome among them.[219] "Ever since that period (1892), independence of action by the students has been an important element in preparing our graduates for women suffrage in Turkey and in many countries of the Balkan Peninsula. Our students have always shown the power of judicial action in a high degree, often under very unusual circumstances," Mary Mills Patrick writes. [220] Patrick exemplifies the good functioning of the association with an anecdote. She writes that a critical case of discipline involving national feelings arose shortly after the association was founded and that she began investigating it according to her custom. Yova Milosheff, the then president of the Student Government came to Patrick's office with an "air of dignity" and reminding her that she was in charge of the internal discipline of the college. Patrick writes in

[216] Ibid., p. 153.
[217] Ibid., p. 198.
[218] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 67.
[219] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East,* p. 200.
[220] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 98.

her memoirs that she forthwith apologized and left the matter to her and that it was arranged with a surprising degree of harmony.[221] A remarkable power of practical statesmanship was often developed in this way. Such training in tolerance and justice was a good preparation for the political careers open to women from this time on.[222]

Students of the college from various ethnic origins also gained a national awareness during their education. The study of political economy and sociology in the college had roused the interest in many students to do something for the welfare of their own towns in Bulgaria and Greece as well as in Turkey. One of the graduates was at the head of a children's hospital in Athens; another was a doctor in Adapazarı, working especially for Turkish women.[223] Orlin Sabev, in his book where he handles the education of Robert College, a male college established by American Missionaries in the same era, writes that the founders and administrators of the college sought to develop a certain frame of mind which extended the framework of the concept of Ottomanism and was envisioned as a universal strong self-controlling and self-developing character regardless of nationality and denomination.[224] This was the case for the American College for Girls, too. Sabev writes that this educational ideal of Robert College paradoxically turned many Turks into cosmopolitans instead of faithful Ottoman citizens, on the one hand and helped inspire national consciousness and separatist inclinations in the minds of minorities, on the other. He quotes Fatma Müge Göçek's remarks that the western-style educational institutions in the 19th century-Ottoman Empire provided a new context that encouraged ethnic segmentation. Ottoman minorities, who were educated in foreign and minority schools, launched political movement for independence, while those Turks/Muslims who graduated from the western-style

[221] Ibid., pp. 98-99.
[222] Ibid., p. 99.
[223] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 41, (1911), p. 60, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[224] Orlin Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti-Shaping New Minds and Robert College in Late Ottoman Society (1863-1923)*, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniverstesi Yayınevi, 2014), p. 199.

state schools challenged Ottoman political rule by deposing the sultan.[225] In the 19th century, European states were competing for economic and political control in the Middle East and schools were being established throughout the Ottoman Empire. This was an era when the Western powers were in a competition with one another over educating their coreligionists in the country. [226] Göçek writes that the minorities acquired new insights into their social position within the empire through the emergent system of western-style education, and soon started to make demands for autonomy. [227] Against this role of the foreign schools in giving the students a national consciousness and encouraging national/nationalist feelings in them, what the Ottoman state did was seeking imposition of Ottomanism as a common collective identity, in Sabev's view.[277] Benjamin C. Fortna, in his book *Imperial Classroom*: *Islam, the State and, Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* writes that the foreign schools operating in the Ottoman land were seen as "potential objects of emulation." He mentions the minister of education Zühdü Pasha's writing to the palace and "begrudgingly holding up" the educational program followed by these schools. Fortna speaks of Zühdü Pasha's view that these Protestant schools successfully made use of the teaching of three subjects for the realization of their political, religious and cultural aims. These three subjects were religious principles, history and English. The teaching of religious principles was regarded as a means of spreading the Protestantism, history was used to put some political sentiments in the minds of the public and thirdly teaching English was considered to be a way of competing with France according to the minister. Fortna also mentions Zühdü Pasha's view that "these methods were responsible for the fact that young Ottoman subjects have become accustomed to Frankish habits and customs due to the

[225] Fatma Müge Göçek, "Ethnic Segmentation, Western Education, and Political Outcomes: Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Society", *Politics Today*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1993), pp. 507-538, accessed 12 April 2017 http://www-personal.umich.edu/~gocek/Work/ja_old/Gocek.Muge.ja.ethnsegment.westerneducn.pdf.
[226] Ibid., p. 523.
[227] Ibid., pp. 531-532.

influence of their teachers, and they remain subjects in name only, their minds having been changed."[228]

Selçuk Akşin Somel, in his article "Christian Community Schools During the Ottoman Reform Period" handles foreign missionary schools in the frame of a comparison with traditional community schools and in terms of their effects on non-Muslims. Somel considers their expansion as one of the factors that paved the way to the penetration of western enlightenment ideas in the Balkans, Anatolia and in the Arabic speaking provinces. Somel writes that these schools which were primarily aimed at spreading Christianity among local communities eventually resulted in the growing influence of ideas of progress and individualism among these people due to the characteristics of the education they offered. Somel also states that students of the missionary schools had the opportunity of receiving instruction in their native tongue and of acquiring access to western culture and modernity through a foreign language such as English French or German. This different educational environment which gave rise to a "new generation of non-Muslims still members of their communities but imbued with enlightenment values" enabled them to acquire a more critical eye in evaluating their community administrations, in Somel's view. Another important point Somel emphasizes is the fact that these missionary institutions' offering instruction in native tongue caused an ethnic consciousness based on language to emerge and this awareness might be assumed to have brought about a favorable milieu for the flourishing of nationalist sentiments among students of these schools.[229]

However, Hester Donaldson Jenkins, a voice from the era and from inside, points to the necessity of considering American schools in the same period apart from their European counterparts and argues that when all European schools in the country were centers of political intrigue and propaganda, it was hard for a

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[228] Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*: *Islam, the State and, Education in the Late Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 216-217.
[229] Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Christian Community Schools During the Ottoman Reform Period" in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, Elisabeth Özdalga (ed.), (London: Routledge Press, 2005), pp. 255-256.

European or oriental to appreciate "the absolute selflessness and disinterestedness of the American schools and missions." She also writes that this fact was finally appreciated by the Ottoman government and Turkish friendliness was shown to the college by freeing it from taxation and giving it many privileges. [230] In the case of Robert College, Sabev states that there are diametrically opposing views in western and Turkish scholarship about its place in the country. The western scholars emphasize its civilizing role, which set new academic standards in the education of the country and these scholars focus on works of the college officials. Sabev argues that many of the Turkish scholars considered Robert College to be a secret tool of the western American colonialism. According to these scholars, the college encouraged the national emancipation of the non-Muslim population especially that of Bulgarians and Armenians. Sabev adds that the Turkish scholars also blamed the college for denationalizing Turkish youth. The reason for these opposing views lies in the very identity of the college which adapted to the conditions and needs of the place where it was established, according to Sabev. In his view, Robert College has never been fully American although founded by Americans, although being run by missionaries, it has never been a missionary tool, although at certain points of its history it attracted students predominantly from minority groups, it has never been distinctly a minority school, and although located in Turkish environment it has never been a genuine Ottoman or Turkish school. [231] These remarks were largely valid for the American College for Girls, especially during the years when Mary Mills Patrick was the head and the school and gave it a broader vision and a more international dimension. It was true that the college had turned its Muslim-Turkish students into cosmopolitans but it cannot be said it had a denationalizing effect on them. Halide Edib, an epic hero of the national struggle, and the other Turkish alumnae who worked for the good of their nation and land were the greatest examples of the fact that an independent character, liberal spirit and critical thinking could co-exist with a national consciousness. Despite being a nationalist, Halide Edib, in her autobiography, also expressed her love and longing for the Ottoman

[230] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, pp. 116-117.
[231] Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti*, pp. 274-275.

culture while there were attempts to purge its existence during the nation-state formation of the new Republic, as Nazan Aksoy writes in her book *Kurgulanmış Benlikler-Otobiyografi, Kadın, Cumhuriyet.* "She was not just a 'Frankish' girl educated at the American College," adds Aksoy. She also gives the information that Halide Edib was tutored by Riza Tevfik in the French and Persian literatures, she would read about the leading Turkish and Muslim figures and she was an admirer of Ali, the fourth caliph of the Muslims. Halide Edib was an intellectual who researched religious knowledge thoroughly on one hand and considered them with a critical eye when necessary on the other hand.[232]

The rising tendency of self-awareness of the students in terms of their national identity and belonging was regarded as a problem and not approved by the government in early years of the new Turkish Republic as well. American schools in the country were considered to be giving a cultural identity to various ethnic groups and inspiring nationalism even if it was at a cultural level. Zafer Toprak states that the American College for Girls and the other American schools in the country did not directly inspire a nationalist feeling but that the curricula including the teaching of local languages, literatures and cultures and the covering of the West European political thought in the same curricula had a considerable contribution in the formation of the national consciousness.[233] The intellectual circles within these colleges created a favorable milieu for the flourishing of the nationalist feelings. The American education was giving the students an identity in this frame, a sense of independence which could be followed by nationalist movements of a political nature. For this reason, some of these American schools were closed and the others started to be strictly controlled following the Turkish War of Independence. [234]

In addition to intellectual progress of the students, the college had assumed a mission of contributing in forming a cultural awareness in them. Extra-curricular activities including musical recitals, concerts and dramatic entertainments displayed by different literary clubs were also part of the college's program. The

[232] *Kurgulanmış Benlikler,* p. 87.
[233] Toprak, "Arnavutkoy Amerikan Kız Koleji", p. 50.
[234] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

intellectual and cultural activities at the college did not even stop during the war years; public lectures by distinguished foreigners who were in the city for political reasons as well as musical and dramatic entertainments given by the students had a role of lightning the oppressive war atmosphere.[235] During the same years, Isabel Frances Dodd, Professor of the History of Art at the college, gradually established an archaeological museum, which would be an honor on the part of the college, with a unique collection of archaeological remains from a mound in Cappadocia and several Hittite objects which were described in archaeological journals. [236] Patrick, in her memoirs, writes that she conducted practical courses based on study in the Istanbul Museum of Archaeology and her extensive research in Asia Minor, and adds that her department was especially fortunate in enjoying frequent lectures by distinguished visiting archaeologists.[237] The war years were also important in regard of female employment in the country. Little by little women, including the graduates of the college, began to occupy important positions in official life, such as those of clerks in public offices of the government. During the World War I, many places were left vacant and would be filled by women. Gradually they began to appear in offices, stores, and other public places. The war apparently played a role in hastening the emancipation of women in all lines of activity and the graduates of the American College for Girls, who received courses including nursing, medicine, business, agriculture and home economics were ready to enter into the economic field.[238]

A language school in Turkey had for years been the dream and hope of the missionaries and in November, 1920, just a century after they came to Turkey, their dream came true with "Constantinople's Language School." It was planned that all the new workers for Turkey would attend this school, for a year of uninterrupted preparation in the language and history of the people with whom they were to work. Naciye Hanım was the conversation teacher in this school and was representing a

[235] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 183.
[236] Ibid., p. 184.
[237] Ibid., p. 185.
[238] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 299.

new type of Turkish womanhood in the eyes of those engaged in the mission work. She was the daughter of a former governor of Izmir. She was one of the graduates of the Constantinople College for Women where she had "got some of their ideals". She married the man of her choosing instead of the one that her people had arranged for her to marry. Her honeymoon was a trip to Italy and France. While there, she discarded the "sacred charshaf" and wore suits and hats as any European. She took good care to return to her Turkish dress before she arrived in Constantinople, though she always wore her veil pinned back from her face.[239] Naciye Hanım was one of the examples of the change intended by the American College of Girls.

3.1. THE EVOLVING IDENTITY OF THE COLLEGE

The American College for Girls founded by female missionaries with religious motives was predominantly based on Christian principles and purposes at the beginning. This emphasis on Christianity was quite obvious in early sources about the institution. The college, however, went through a transformation through the years in terms of its identity, objectives and practices. Barbara Reeves-Ellington, in her article titled "Constantinople Woman's College: Constructing gendered, religious, and political identities in an American institution in the Late Ottoman Empire" which appeared in *Women's History Review*, handles the ways in which the identity of Constantinople Woman's College was shaped by the president Mary Mills Patrick, the college trustee Caroline Borden, and alumna Halide Edib, whom she calls as key players who had their own motives in this role of identity construction. The article is noteworthy in terms of pointing to the evolving identity of the college followed by evolving objectives and functions in the same line. Reeves-Ellington writes that this educational institution was grounded in protestant culture, American values, Ottoman cosmopolitanism and a feminist international spirit. Constantinople Woman's College was one of the American educational

[239] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 117, (1921), p. 128, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.

institutions for women which were founded abroad and which had their origins in schools established by women missionaries. Reeves-Ellington mentions the significance of these mission schools and colleges in promoting Protestantism, American cultural ideals, and the very idea of education for women adding that historians debate whether the work of missionaries constituted cultural imperialism or not.[240] The writer states that Mary Mills Patrick, a member of the Woman's Board for thirty-seven years, nowhere in her memoirs mentions her missionary career. Reeves-Ellington argues that Patrick's silences were a consequence of her experiences in Constantinople-Istanbul. This was a process that made her see the narrow limitations of her missionary organization and finally she decided to break up with it. "The missionary in her was converted and her religious convictions reframed through her relationships with students of other faiths, not least Halide´ Edib," notes Reeves-Ellington adding that Patrick was not alone in doing so and that she had received the unconditional support of Caroline Borden, the long-term college trustee in Boston. Patrick mentions Borden's support in her memoirs and calls her as 'the power behind the throne'. [241]

Reeves-Ellington argues that this was a change in the identity of Mary Mills Patrick in the first place. What was the reason for this transformation? This educational institution intended for women was a project that was "imbued with American values but had grown up on Ottoman soil." [242] The Ottoman land and culture was a good example of multiculturalism and multinationalism in this era. Patrick's views regarding the purposes of a school for girls had changed face to face with this milieu and gained a more universal dimension. She had a broader vision than what she had before coming to the Ottoman land. The college, originally planned as a mission center to convert Ottoman women to Protestantism, the college, was henceforth an American–Ottoman institution rooted in an ecumenical spirit of religious tolerance, feminine consciousness, and international cooperation under the broad vision of Patrick and her supporter Borden. A third person, Halide

[240] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 54.
[241] Ibid., pp. 54-55.
[242] Ibid., p. 55.

Edib, also played a major role in this change of vision. A successful Turkish-Muslim woman, Halide Edib was an exemplary alumna of the college as well as the embodiment of Patrick's ideals. Three female figures, Patrick, Borden and Halide Edib, whose identities were enmeshed with that of the college, were the architects of this transformation, according to Reeves-Ellington. Halide Edib, a prominent writer and leader in Turkey's national independence struggle as well as in the country's first women's rights movement, was heavily influential in the politics of the era. The roads of Borden, a supporter of missions from an elite family member of the American Board and women's mission society, of Patrick who had set off as a missionary but later grew up into a scholar, educationalist, administrator, internationalist, and feminist and of Halide Edib, a successful Turkish-Muslim woman, a meritorious representative of the college had intersected in this very institution, according to Reeves-Ellington. However, Hester Donaldson Jenkins, professor of the same college referring to Patrick as "an educational ambassador to the Near East" in the very title of her book, writes that Patrick was a feminist from the very beginning and had ideals regarding the emancipation of women in the Near East. The college was the outcome of her visions and ideals. "Seldom has an institution so expressed a personality as does Constantinople Woman's College express the personality of President Patrick," Jenkins argues. [243] She admits that Patrick was helped in this great work by teachers and trustees but writes that "in the last analysis, Mary Mills Patrick has been the college, and Constantinople Woman's College is the manifestation of the vision and thought of Mary Mills Patrick."[244]

In addition to these three principal characters who had a shaping role in the character of the college, Reeves-Ellington observes three stages in the history as well as the shifting and contested identity of the college: Transition from a mission school to a mission-supported college and ultimately to an independent college. This transformation was taking place in parallel with social and political upheavals both in the United States and Turkey. The shifting identity of the school, namely its objectives and development, were a matter of conflict between the different parties

[243] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East,* p. 277.
[244] Ibid., p. 277.

who were active in establishing the college. Would it continue its way as a tool for conversion of the Eastern women or evolve into a means that would provide the highest level of education for women? Even the three names of the institution were the witnesses of the evolution, according to Reeves-Ellington. The Home, the name at the very beginning, was pointing to a place that was supposed to be the center of women's missionary operations in Istanbul as well as in its hinterland. It was at the same time a home for the single women missionaries who worked there far from their families. It was "a nineteenth-century language of domesticity" that was speaking in a sense. [245] What the male missionaries in Istanbul intended with this home was the teaching of basic skills in the vernacular to prepare local Armenian mission workers as wives and teachers, a restrictive view of female education and action, limited with rather the domestic sphere. However, female missionaries were more broad-minded than their male counterparts in their vision and were aiming for female action in the public sphere, too. Despite male resistance, the Woman's Board went ahead with plans to provide advanced education and in 1890 obtained from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts a charter that recognized the former Constantinople Home as a degree-granting institution named the American College for Girls, governed by an all-female board, or corporation. According to Borden, the Home had been an international high school where Christianity was taught, tolerance practiced, and preparation for mission offered to those who sought it; but it was not a mission school.[246] Borden's view of history was shared by Patrick, too. What Borden had told concerning the past of the institution would be completed by Patrick's vision of the future. The institution would be a liberal arts college run by women: "American yet international, Christian but non- sectarian, open to women of all nationalities and faiths in the Near East who wished to pursue an education and a profession." [247] Patrick was in alliance with liberal Christian movements in the United States and progressive Muslims in the Near East. A spirit of what might be termed "American internationalism" and a discourse in this frame were obvious

[245] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 57.
[246] Ibid., p. 58.
[247] Ibid., p. 58.

in her reports even as the nationality of the college's founders and supporters dominated its name, writes Reeves-Ellington in her article. [248] Having adopted this internationalist point of view, Borden and Patrick were quick to realize that their aim could only be achieved by splitting from the Woman's Board and they started to seek independent funding for the college. In an effort to support this cause, Emma Telford wrote promotional articles in the widely read and influential *New England Magazine* in 1898. Her writings portrayed the college as a site of consciously female, Christian culture, where women professionals worked in an American–Ottoman environment to foster tolerance, promote freedom of religion and sharpen intellectual ambition of women. The institution was aiming at raising capable professional women who would contribute to the intellectual and moral development of the Ottoman Empire in addition to the post-Ottoman nations of the Balkans. The emphasis on Christianity was there but the concept of religious conversion was entirely absent. Graduates of the college could assume a part in the mission work or become wives and home-makers but they could likewise aspire to other professions; they could become teachers, writers, translators, doctors, and entrepreneurs. The college gave women a choice. Telford highlighted the professional achievements of the faculty and students, emphasizing the qualifications of the professors, all of whom had attained degrees from several major American colleges and universities, including Cornell, Radcliffe, Columbia, and Wellesley. Her articles also acclaimed the intellectual ability and competence of the local girls, unlike the mission reports and letters that tended to highlight their ignorance and destitution.[249] Telford's articles described the college as a site of international cooperation where there was no friction despite its multinational character. Various nationalities in the Ottoman Empire and its successor states might be at odds outside the walls of the college but there was no friction inside the college: Armenian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish girls of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faith all got along well as "members of one united family."[250] Telford went

[248] Ibid., p. 58.
[249] Ibid., pp. 59-60.
[250] Ibid., p. 60.

one step ahead and claimed that the vast potential of the college could influence political balances of power in the Near East. She wrote that Americans had contributed to practices of nation-building in former Ottoman colonies that now enjoyed political independence. She suggested that the inculcation of New England values in young women attending the college could be used as a means on the part of the United States in having indirect political influence in a post-Ottoman world. This was an attractive proposition for American philanthropists wishing to promote American influence in the world in the late 19th century. As for Patrick's stance regarding this claim put forward by Telford, she supported soft power on behalf of her college, and her students. In her view, the American college could help solve the political and social problems of the Ottoman Empire and she emphasized the "great unifying influence" of the college, as well as the vital role that education of women played in national development.[251]

In 1912, the name of the institution became "Constantinople College." This change of name first appeared in Patrick's 1911–12 report, where she listed the three historical names of the college and was in a sense to highlighting its affinity with its environment. Reeves-Ellington states that the report, however, listed the first name as the "American High School, Constantinople," instead of the "Constantinople Home" and adds that this was a "blatant disregard of history" on the part of Patrick. Annual reports that were previously sent had referred to the historical founding of a high school, and thus "muddied the waters about the status and contested purpose of the original school", but none of those previous reports had intentionally misnamed the institution, in Reeves-Ellington's view. The original school had never been named the "American High School."[252] Another conflict regarding the purpose of the college emerged during the war years. In their fundraising appeals, some college trustees were using a discourse alluding to the expansion of the US power around the world, praising the nursing work of the college's faculty and students and emphasizing the college's role in humanitarian work. "The appeal represented the Near East as a land of misery, the United States

[251] Ibid., p. 61.
[252] Ibid., p. 63.

as a benevolent savior, the college as a place of refuge, and American women as self-sacrificing mediators of reconstruction among local Christian women."[253] Although the college undertook a relief mission in addition to its educational objective during the war years, there was a disagreement among the trustees concerning the discourse to be used in fundraising and in promoting the college. Some college trustees would favor the promotion of education rather than rescue and wanted to stress leadership role played by the college in meeting the educational needs of women in the region. Patrick's argument was that the college was non-sectarian but emphasized at the same time "the importance of the spiritual side of life". The article "An Oasis of Peace" Patrick wrote for *Our World*, which was a publication reporting on issues in the Near East for the American public, depicted the college as an "oasis of harmony." Patrick wrote that the college enjoyed a racially diverse body of students who nonetheless provided an example of peaceful existence. The reason for this harmony was chiefly a common language among them and the understanding they could develop by means of this language shared by all. The college was a "miniature republic ", in a sense, where general education was based on American principles of "democracy and freedom of thought", and students were prepared for citizenship.[254]

According to Reeves-Ellington, Patrick earned her internationalist credentials in Istanbul. The institution that went through a change of name three times and finally became "Constantinople College" in Patrick's time enjoyed a shifting identity at the same time. The school that started its way as the "Constantinople Home" or the "Home School" became a college titled the "American College for Girls", and then was named as "Constantinople College", or "Constantinople Woman's College" with the insisting of Patrick. The institution was grounded in American values and shaped by the multinational and multicultural Ottoman environment in which it flourished. It earned the respect of the elites, from all nations and denominations. The changing public persona of the institution

[253] Ibid., p. 64.
[254] Ibid., p. 65.

depended very much on the vision of the individuals connected with it.[255] They believed in and set off with the goal of promoting American Protestant ideals, but their experiences working on behalf of the college brought them to the point of supporting women's rights of access to education and the professions rather than rescue and self-sacrifice, in Reeves-Ellington's view. The religious motive at the beginning was in the course of time replaced by a feminist motive, she writes. Although they eventually rejected the college's missionary connections, the college never operated as a secular college in their lifetime. Though they always had an awareness in terms of humanitarian agency, their poster child was Halide Edib, Turkish-Muslim graduate, not destitute Christian women. Reeves-Ellington summarizes the evolution of the college as "an American–Ottoman institution that was grounded in Christian Protestant culture, practiced freedom of religion, and celebrated their particular brand of feminism and international understanding."[256] The writer praises Patrick for shaping a personal legacy as a leader in the field of international education and a lasting legacy for the college as an institution where female authority was exercised in an atmosphere of international cooperation and a spirit of religious freedom. However, she also criticizes her for the omissions in her history-writing which she thinks undermine the very ground on which she built her own success. [257]

The case of the American College of Girls and its shifting of identity is striking in several aspects. It points to a reciprocal interaction, a process at the end of which not only local women but also American women were affected. Mary Mills Patrick was the one who was supposed to go to the Ottoman land to have an influence on women of the country in terms of morality training, intellectual progress and feminist awareness. However, what eventually happened was a bilateral influence in a sense. The identity of the school, of Patrick and of the female students remained no longer the same following this historical encounter. Orlin Sabev mentions about a similar transformation of identity in the case of Robert

[255] Ibid., p. 67.
[256] Ibid., p. 68.
[257] Ibid., p. 68.

College, too. However, he speaks of a change in the opposite direction during the last years of the Ottoman Empire and early years of the new Republic. What he speaks about is a process where Robert college steadily evolved from a place of multiculturalism and ethnic diversity to a place of relative national homogeneity. Robert College was established in the Ottoman era as a foreign educational institution by American protestant missionaries. They had a concept of liberal education aiming at developing characters with firm Christian but nonsectarian moral values as well as strong practical knowledge in a wide range of fields without distinction of nationality and religion. In this period, it was more or less a replica of the Ottoman society reflecting its cultural and ethnic diversity as well as social stratification. Following the declaration of the Republic, the college became a replica of the desired national unification of Turkish society, though still remained fateful to educational aims, Sabev argues.[258]

CHAPTER FOUR

AMERICAN COLLEGE FOR GIRLS IN EARLY-REPUBLICAN ERA AND YILDIZ SERTEL

The American College for Girls, in the different phases of its development, contributed to the cause of an international education for women and was generally met with cordial response from Turkish authorities. With the declaration of the Republic, the goal of the college students would from that time on be "scholarship, efficiency, and devotion to high national ideals." The College graduates were doing graduate work in famous universities in Europe and America. They were also holding prominent positions in various walks of life all over the Near East and the Balkans. They had become statesmen, soldiers even, aviators, engineers,

[258] Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti*, pp. 275-276.

physicians, authors and teachers.[259] "Women and even young girls are being given much more freedom than heretofore, but there are still many parents who desire the type of surveillance provided by French convent schools; whereas the students are eager for much more freedom than even the College will permit. The adjustment of parents' wishes for restrictions to the students' desire for greater freedom is one of the Dean's principal problems," the Dean was writing and signaling a new problem at the college because of the emancipation of women in the Turkish Republic.[260]

The institution went through other changes following the country's War of Independence and the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The Ankara government laid down learning Turkish as a condition for all citizens with no exception and the courses of Armenian and Greek were removed from the school curriculum. The number of Muslim-Turkish students increased during the Republican era: The number of Muslim students was 50 out of 266 students in 1912-1913 and this was 156 out of 434 students in 1925-1926. [261] The Ministry of Education asked the school to reorganize within the frame of the Turkish national education just like the other foreign schools in the country had to do. The college was no longer authorized to give an MA degree; it was again a high school for girls. The instruction, curriculum, course books and teachers needed the ministry's authorization. After the change of the political regime and the economical-social transformation in Turkey, courses for commercial education, home economics and physical training started to hold an important place in the college's curriculum. Science classes became more and more popular as the college graduates had a tendency to study medicine after high school. The number of Turkish language classes rose from two hours to five hours per week. Two hours of geography and history classes in Turkish were also added to the new curriculum.[262]

The above remark made by Sabev about Robert College and its change of identity can be said to be valid for the American College for Girls, too. The school

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[259] Freely, *A Bridge of Culture: Robert College-Boğaziçi University*, p. 235.
[260] Ibid., p. 240.
[261] Toprak, "Arnavutkoy Amerikan Kız Koleji", p. 50.
[262] Ibid., pp. 49-50.

which had a more homogenous identity in terms of ethnicity and religion in its foundation and later gained a multicultural and multinational aspect in the following years, regained its national aspect during the Republican era. Barbara Reeves-Ellington writes that donor fatigue and Turkish nationalism combined against an American institution of feminist internationalism and that the Ottoman world of multi-faith and multiethnic cooperation was gone in the new era. Following the declaration of the Republic, the college also had to comply with stricter governmental control from the new Turkish government, including inspections. In addition to changes in the language courses, the school was obliged to suspend classes on Fridays. Patrick's concept of feminist internationalism would struggle to survive as the Republic of Turkey exercised stronger control of educational institutions in the 1920s and a new administration for a consortium of American colleges in the region imposed a male leader, co-president of American College for Girls and Robert College (its counterpart for men), in the 1930s.[263]

At the beginning of the academic year 1920-21, the medical classes in the college were opened. A School of Medicine, as a distinct element in the program offered by Constantinople Woman's College, had been outlined from the beginning of the enterprise. It was a part of the original project even before the early development in Üsküdar. The idea of medical work was emphasized distinctly by Mrs. Albert Bowker in her plans for the future of the institution. However, following the declaration of the new Republic, the government, in 1924, announced that medical education in the country would be carried on in government institutions alone, for which advanced facilities were provided, offered equally to men and women students. This was the end of the college's medical experiment which did not last for a long time.[264]

The college continued to be influential during the Republican era, too, in terms of creating modern women who are equipped with highest intellectual skills as well as possess a high sense of self-esteem. Zafer Toprak writes that the

[263] Reeves-Ellington, "Constantinople Woman's College", p. 66.
[264] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 221.

American College for Girls is noteworthy in terms of women's studies in Turkey for it was an institution where feminism started to flourish and the first female intellectuals of the country were educated. Equality between women and men on social, economic and political terms were emphasized within the frame of a standard high school education. The idea that women's focusing on household chores had stunting effects on their mind and soul was often discussed in the students' homework. The desire of travelling and studying abroad gave these girls a freedom of thought as well as of movement. The college graduates, many of them doctors, pharmacists, teachers and members of other professional groups, had an active role in the society following the foundation of the Republic. A wide spectrum political consciousness came into being among the graduates. Female pioneers from Halide Edib, the nationalist, to Behice Boran, the socialist, were among these graduates. Esteemed artists of the Turkish theater as well as prominent figures of the Turkish literature were raised in this American College for Girls.[265]

A Turkish female intellectual and writer of the early-Republican period, Yıldız Sertel was one of the graduates of American College for Girls. She was born in New York in 1923 to parents Sabiha Sertel who was one of Turkey's pioneering female journalists and father Zekeriya Sertel, a leading Turkish journalist and publisher of various newspapers and magazines. Yıldız Sertel completed her secondary education at the American College for Girls and for higher education went to London during World War II to study at the London School of Economics. She then continued at Columbia University in the USA where she obtained an MA degree in Sociology. She published many books and articles in the genre of memoir in France and Turkey, as well as on social and economic issues. Her parents, an intellectual couple of the time, was publishing the *Tan* newspaper with articles in which domestic and international developments were being discussed. The famous Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet, who died in Soviet Russia in exile, was a very close friend of the family. In her memoirs titled *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, Yıldız Sertel tells about her life including her secondary education years at the college, one of the factors

[265] Toprak, "Arnavutkoy Amerikan Kız Koleji", p. 50.

that shaped her identity. The memoirs are important in terms of offering valuable sources regarding the character of the institution in early-Republican era.

Having completed her primary education at Şişli Terakki, one of the leading private schools of the time, Sertel was sent by her parents to the American College for Girls. Sertel's having trouble in the Maths class at Şişli Terakki as well as the ideas of Turhan Tan, a historian and a friend of Zekeriya Sertel, had been effective on this decision of sending her to the college. The following words of Tan, known for his nationalist views, are noteworthy in terms of understanding the view regarding foreign schools at the time:

> The Turkish language is no longer what it used to be. They keep inventing new words. One generation does not understand what the other generation says. The language is being weakened by the words they fabricate in order to make a pure language. It is not clear what will happen to it in the future. It will no longer be a language with proper roots and rules; it will end up in a mess. I do not want my son to learn such a language; I want him to learn a proper Western language. French will open him new horizons, he will not lose time with a continuously changing language with no clear destination.[266]

This was the reason he set forward for sending his son to Saint Joseph French High School, one of the famous foreign schools in Istanbul. These words of Turhan Tan had influenced the Sertel family. Yıldız Sertel expresses her own approval of Tan's ideas and states that this was an important decision in terms of indicating a major change in her parents' mentality. Until that time, the Sertels had been considering foreign schools in the country as institutions established by imperialists and missionaries in order to realize their colonial aspirations. As a matter of fact, this drawback had been overcome by the measures taken following the declaration of the Republic. The foreign schools were operating under the supervision of the Turkish ministry of education and several courses including Turkish literature, Turkish history, geography were being taught in Turkish. Religious education was banned in these schools. "All of these were very important for my parents.

[266] Yıldız Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1990), p. 40.

According to them, a Turkish girl was supposed to have an education in Turkish and possess a very good knowledge of Turkish language and literature. Religious indoctrination by Christians was unacceptable for them. When these drawbacks had been overcome, there was no obstacle before my attending the college.," writes Sertel. [267] This boarding school located over the hills of Arnavutköy had several surprising aspects for Sertel. She describes this new school of hers as a "palace" in comparison with Şişli Terakki, her previous school which was also a private institution:

> The Americans had built four big buildings, all of which were modern, comfortable and elegant. One of them was a building of dormitory for secondary school students and double rooms for high school (college) students. The teachers' accommodation was single rooms. The college had a wonderful landscape of Bosphorus, a gorgeous view of Kandilli and the hills on the Asian side of the city. There was lots of faucets and showers with instant hot water on every floor. There was central heating system in the campus whereas almost all of the schools I had attended and all the houses were being heated with stoves, various kinds of stoves. The college was something else. It was built according to American standards.[268]

Speaking about the college's physical properties in admiration, Sertel states that the tables in the dining hall were covered with clean table cloths and that the food was being served by waiters with white jackets. The food was not some chickpea meals as it was the case at Şişli Terakki, her previous school. They used to eat delicious European-style meals and also had cakes at times. There was a big marble hall at the entrance where ceremonies and dancing parties were sometimes being held. The hall was surrounded by teachers' room and music room. The library, which was quite rich, and the study halls were located on the upper floors of that building. The school yard was a big wood starting from the hills reaching down the Arnavutköy Street. The college was a "beautiful" place. As Sertel describes her classroom, she

[267] Ibid., p. 40.
[268] Ibid., p. 40-41.

states that there were not desks but instead chairs with desk arms that provided writing space, which was a novelty for her and for the country at the time. [269]

The college was really modern and one step ahead in comparison with the country's schools in the same years. Sertel mentions the party hall which she says was quite different from the recreation room at Şişli Terakki. There were tables and chairs by the walls and the girls were dancing in the middle with the waltzes of Franz Lehar playing on a gramophone. This is significant in that there were not any gramophones at schools in this period. The western music was something new and centers offering special courses for dances such as waltz, foxtrot and tango were recently opened in the country. Though Sertel's parents attended such courses, dance at the school was something she was not used to seeing. The college was certainly an institution attended by the children of the grandees, according to Sertel. She states that she does not use the word "bourgeoisie" in purpose for the bourgeoisie in Turkey was at a crawling stage in the 1920s and that there was quite a limited commercial and industrial bourgeois class in the 1930s. She also adds that the privileged high society of her time consisted of landowners, notables, high officials, statesmen and distinguished intellectuals. Sertel states that some of the girls studying at the college in the same years with her came from the notable families of the country such as Filmer, Sabuncu, Uncu, Sümer, Koraltan, Daver, Yalman, Üstündağ, Çambel and Istvan.[270]

Yıldız Sertel, in her memoirs, expresses her love for the school because she could play volleyball, basketball, baseball and even practice archery in the big school yard. She even had military courses and shooting drills with guns at the high school. These were novelties for even Sertel's time and were not seen in other private institutions of the country in the same period.[271] It was among the aims of the college to raise students with a healthy mind and body starting from its early years and continued in early-Republican era, too. The institution, in this frame, was offering diverse sports activities and courses of physical education for them. The

[269] Ibid., pp. 41-42.
[270] Ibid., p. 42.
[271] Ibid., pp. 42-43.

Bulletin of the college dated 1928-1929 gives detailed information about the physical activities students could enjoy at that time. The program of the Department of Health and Physical Education at the college included Danish, Natural, and Individual Gymnastics, Seasonal Sports, Folk, Clog and Rhythmic Dancing. Girls could play games and participate on teams in inter-class competitions in soccer, ring tennis, and paddle tennis. The same *Bulletin* also gives the information that the students were also graded on health improvement basis and the college aimed at given them a consciousness in keeping their weight within standard range for health. The girls were even given a posture test, showing the school's efforts in providing optimal health conditions for students.[272]

Sertel also gives the information that the classes offered by the college were serious and interesting. Biology, mathematics and geometry were taught in English and the course books were high quality books printed in the USA. The first year was devoted to the teaching of English, which would later open new horizons for the students. Thus, they were able to read the English literature and classics in the original language. Sertel writes that she had become an avid reader of romance novels in a few years' time. Her parents did not want their daughter's mother tongue, Turkish, to weaken for studying at the college and encouraged her to read Turkish novels from prominent writers such as Yakup Kadri and Reşat Güntekin. Sertel, however, states the Turkish literature classes were not at all weak at school and that Faruk Nafiz, a leading Turkish poet and author, was teaching them Turkish literature at the high school level. He was a good teacher who attached importance to poetry and cultivated in his students a love of reading the poems of the Turkish poets such as Yahya Kemal, Ahmet Haşim and Rıza Tevfik. In the classes of English Literature, the students were reading the classics, analyzing novels and learning essay-writing techniques. Sertel states that there was a teacher expert in Shakespeare in the boys' section of the school known as Robert College and that this expert used to invite the female students to listen to records of Shakespeare's plays at times. Sertel adds that this was how she acquired a real knowledge of

[272] Constantinople Woman's College, *Bulletin*, (1929), p. 54.

literature. The curriculum was quite loaded and heavy, it was probably more demanding than the one in Turkish schools. There was a very strict discipline at the college. The secondary school's principal was Miss Summers, an English lady well-known with her strictness and rigidness. She was shouting in a voice like thunder, the students would tremble in front of her, in Sertel's words. With this hard work and discipline, Sertel expresses they sometimes needed a break and played pranks just to have some fun.[273] Sertel also writes that she was fond of classical Western music and that she would often listen to concerts on the Bucharest Radio Station. She would also read the books on Beethoven's and Verdi's life she borrowed from the college library. [274]

The house of the Sertel family in Moda would then host prominent writers, intellectuals, journalists, artists and politicians of the time. Yıldız Sertel states that, as a young girl, she attached great importance to fashion partly as a requirement of being a college student and partly for living in Moda, a popular and elite location at the time. She narrates in her memoirs that she used to read the *Vogue* magazines at the college library very carefully, paying very close attention to each and every detail with the aim of working out some sewing patterns from them. She also narrates that she liked wearing shorts by the sea, which was something avant-garde for the time. "We, the young girls of Moda at that time, would like to destroy old traditions in dressing and ignore disapproving looks from people around. We would consider that as a mission for us," adds Sertel. [275] The daughters of two big rich families of Moda were pioneers in this mission. They were regarded by Sertel and her friends as fashion icons but as snobs by others. "I was trying to spread the fashion for shorts," speaks Sertel assuming a trendsetting role for herself and her friends in Moda.

Halide Edib was an old friend of Sertel's parents. Their studying in the US had been possible by a recommendation of hers. The parents had also helped Halide Edib in her resistance movement during the Turkish national struggle. Halide Edib,

[273] Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, pp. 43-44.
[274] Ibid., p. 60.
[275] Ibid., p. 48.

a graduate of the American College for Girls, had to defend for some time the idea of an American mandate for Turkey as a possible solution as "she had seen no other way out in those disastrous days."[276] Speaking about her college days, Sertel states that some of her school mates were the daughters of the intellectuals just like her. Though they were not speaking of politics among them, Sertel states that some of her notebook entries were on world affairs. As her English teacher had asked them to prepare an assignment on any topic, Sertel states that she had decided to make a presentation on the Majinot Line, a political issue. She had chosen this topic because some of her father's friends, the leading journalists and intellectuals of the era, had given information about this issue during a dinner in their home. Their house was hosting such leading figures and such political debates and Sertel's identity was developing in this culturally rich milieu.[277]

Sertel narrates that she had a group of friends in Moda consisting of boys and girls from the American College and that they used to go on trips and picnics where they were dancing and having fun. When it was winter time, they used to gather at homes, mostly in the Sertels' house where they were playing games and having debates. This group included the head of the school's debate team as well as other young boys who were experts in Shakespeare or fond of engineering and philosophy. Most of these young people belonged to cultivated families. Therefore, their gatherings included discussions on quite serious subjects in addition to the fun and the games they were playing. Sertel states that they were members of Turkish families who had very strict rules in boy-girl relationships. Sex was certainly a taboo for them and this was something unacceptable for a young girl. However, the college was well-known with its liberal views about sex. Nevertheless, Sertel states that the majority of the college students respected the Turkish-Muslim traditions in this issue and only a few of them had shown the courage to break this taboo. Sertel narrates that her parents had liberal views for the period but that they allowed only a friendship relation with boys whom she could invite home and introduce to them. Sertel states that she always respected her parents' views and strictly followed their

[276] Ibid., p. 54.
[277] Ibid., p. 57.

cautions. They had only friendship relations within their group and this was more or less the case at school. Sertel states that there were some examples of same-sex relationships- though not many- at the college and that the administration would encourage relationships between boys and girls in order to prevent them. These relationships would sometimes exceed the limits of friendship and develop with letters exchanged. However, all these were within certain borders, adds Sertel.[278]

Growing up in a home where everybody is writing, Yıldız Sertel, too, aspires to write and decides to make interviews for the *Tan* newspaper. She goes to the Edirnekapı district of Istanbul, a poor and shabby part of the town she did not hear about until that time. The extremely hard and poor living conditions of the area surprises Sertel greatly while conducting the interview with the residents. This interview plays a role of raising awareness in Sertel who until then grew up in an elite world and mostly saw the rich and prosperous aspects of the city. Following this interview, she makes a presentation about what she sees in Edirnekapı in the weekly meeting of the college and suggests raising money in order to buy soap for these poor people. This proposal finds an immediate response in this institution with philanthropic background. The necessary amount is raised with the support of her teacher, Miss Burns and soap is bought for the poor.[279]

We see Yıldız Sertel as the daughter of a cultivated upper-middle class family known with their leftist/Kemalist views. The daughter of a strong mother, Sertel can be considered among the pioneering female figures of the early-Republican era. Studying in the US, the Sertels had followed a liberal approach in raising their two daughters. Sezin Aydemir, in her article published in the monthly journal *Virgül*, writes that she observes an elitist character in Sertel, which started to increase especially in her college years. Aydemir argues that this can even lead to a powerful elitist "disdain for other social classes" and can be read all over her memoirs. She writes that the words Sertel uses for the students of Haydarpaşa High

[278] Ibid., p. 59.
[279] Ibid., p. 63.

School, a public institution, on the day Mustafa Kemal Atatürk died set a good example for her elitist approach[280]:

> That day was a very sad day for us, the college girls. As a matter of fact, everybody was grieving for this loss. As we arrived at the palace, we found its big iron doors closed. We waited for a while for them to open. It was inevitable for the other schools' students to crowd together behind us. However, the school that was right behind us was Haydarpaşa High School. I knew these people's character very well. One of my friends in Kadıköy had a brother attending that school. The school was full of vagabonds lacking good manners. [281]

Sertel continues by saying that these boys were, in a sense, hungry for girls since their school was a single-sex school and ran at the girls with cheers. She also adds that this day ended up with a stampede and the death of one of their friends, calling her a "martyr". [282]

Concerning Sertel's school, Aydemir states that the curriculum in American colleges was intended to raise girls who speak English well, have a knowledge of the English literature and thus become future spouses for bureaucrats of the Republican administration (especially in foreign affairs department) as well as members of the bourgeoning bourgeoisie in the country. Aydemir, here, also adds that these institutions could be seen as a replacement for the "harem" institution in terms of its functions in a sense. Aydemir states that she finds it interesting that the Sertel family decide to send their daughter to the American college. Citing the mother's, Sabiha Sertel's, words from her memoirs titled *Roman Gibi-Like a Novel*, Aydemir writes that Sertel speaks of their campaign against missionaries in *Resimli Ay-Illustrated Monthly*, the monthly magazine she and her husband published together. Sertel's view concerning these colleges was that they were opened in Istanbul and other cities by missionaries funded by American capitalists and their primary function was to incite the minorities in the Ottoman land against the Turks

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[280] Sezin Aydemir, "Anneler ve Kızları: Sertel ve Benderli", *Virgül Dergisi*, No. 87 (2005), http://bianet.org/bianet/kultur/66792-anneler-ve-kizlari-sertel-ve-benderli.
[281] Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, p. 50.
[282] Ibid., p. 50.

as well as to inculcate religious and nationalist feelings of grudge in these people. Quoting Sertel's words "They propagandize that the US is the home of a high civilization. They indoctrinate the students that Turkey is an undeveloped country and thus develop a sense of inferiority in them," Aydemir states that the Sertels' decision to send their daughter to one of these schools is either a paradox or the indication that the intellectuals of the time, conservative or progressivist, they all had a very strong "elitist-westernist" mentality."[283]

CONCLUSION

The American College for Girls, founded in 1871 by the Boston-based Woman's Board of Missions, had a deep impact on Turkey's history and intellectual progress by shaping the identity of its students. The college has rightly acquired a reputation in terms of its contributions in education of women and their emancipation. Its area of influence has not certainly been limited to the educational area; politics, religion, culture were among the fields affected by the education given at this institution. The Turkish-Muslim girls in the college were from families of high class and they braved all dangers to attend the school even in early years when they were not allowed to do so due to political circumstances of the time. The college shortly earned the respect of Christian and Muslim elites in the Ottoman land due to the exclusive education it offered.

The college played an active role in constructing the identity and gender in several ways. One of the first and foremost ways of doing this was giving the students a religious and moral consciousness. Offering a religious education was a core value of the American College for Girls. The school, founded by American missionaries, was based on the teaching of spiritual and moral values. The Home School was intended to be a place where pupils "received what is of infinitely more

[283] Aydemir, "Anneler ve Kızları: Sertel ve Benderli".

worth than mere intellectual training, -heart culture."[284] It was planned to be a center of "life and light" to the women of the Orient, and those who desired might be offered the "advantages of a Christian education."[285] The Ottoman land, its women in particular, needed a regeneration and young women from different nationalities and faiths educated at this school could play an important role in the country's future in this sense. The training they received in the truths and duties of religion, in Christian thought, morals, and manners, in Christian ideas of the household, the domestic state and relations would thus have positive effects on the future of those young women, and in the society of which they were members.[286] The college attached great importance to religious and moral development of the students. The president, in her end-of-year report, was stating that "it was through personal effort, however, that the most notable results of influence on the character of the students were attained and that there was great improvement during the year in habits of self-control and standards of uprightness, and, in general, in those qualities which it is the purpose of the college to develop."[287] Giving the students a sense of altruism was another aim of the college. This aim was in full harmony with the Christian ideals of the missionaries. Instilling a sense of giving, encouraging charity work had an important place in the school's program. This particular stress on religious education, which was the raison d'être of the institution and quite obvious in the first years of the college, however, became less apparent in the subsequent years. The significance of morality training became more emphasized in terms of the education of these girls in their most formative years. Religion served as a moral corrective in this training and religious ethics were seen as an effective tool to develop a strong character who would in the future work for personal as well as common profit. Orlin Sabev, in the frame of religious education given at Robert

[284] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 79, (1883), p. 126, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[285] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 68, (1872), p. 23, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[286] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 3, (1873), p. 358, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[287] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 32, (1902), p. 11, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

College during the same years, mentions the role of the Protestant religious philosophy according to which the fate of human beings is dependent not only on providential power but also on their personal efforts to make their lives better.[288] The American College for Girls, the inheritor of the same puritan culture and believing in the same puritan value of rigorous work, attached utmost importance to hard work in its program.[289]

The college, starting from its very first days, aimed at giving a high-quality education in world standards and raising knowledgeable women. The instruction of several languages was an indispensable part of the program. English, which would open its graduates the doors to the outer world, was the lingua franca as early as 1876. As we look at the final examinations in 1874 for instance, we see the subjects such as Modern and Ancient Grammar, Armenian History, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geography, English Reading, Spelling, Writing and Definitions, Physiology, Natural Philosophy, Recitations of Poetry, Reading of Compositions, playing on the piano and the parlor organ, all testifying to a quite rich curriculum and an excellent program of study provided at the school.[290] The curriculum would later develop to include courses such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geology, Astronomy as well as Sociology Psychology, Philosophy, Political Economy, Art and Archaeology.[291] Order and discipline were two important components of the education of the college, especially in early years when the society was a more conservative one and the expectations on the parts of the parents were in this frame. "By the close of the second year, very satisfactory results had been attained. The most perfect order and discipline had been established. Untamed Armenian girls, used to no restraint in their homes, had become accustomed to go through the routine of school-life, with the regularity and punctuality seen in our best American schools. The awkward shyness of girls hitherto secluded from society had given way to a quiet repose of manner, and lady-like demeanor," the

[288] Sabev, *Spiritus Roberti*, p. 131.
[289] Ibid., p. 135.
[290] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 70, (1874), p. 310, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[291] Jenkins, *An Educational Ambassador to the Near East*, p. 215.

teachers write in their letters to the Board in Boston.[292] They appreciate the changes in the girls and express their happiness in observing that girls who were at the beginning disobedient and deceitful, were now docile and frank, and those who were indifferent and worldly became more conscious in spiritual matters."[293] However, what the college aimed by order and discipline was not to create a suppressed character who would show obedience under all circumstances. The college also intended to raise female students with a sense of individuality, students who were outgoing but at the same time modest and who could express themselves freely. Even in early years of the school, when it was only the Home, that was among the objectives of the education given at the institution. Speaking about the end-of-year annual examination of the Home School, George W. Wood describes the girls as being self-possessed, and acquitting themselves well.[294] Concerning the examination of the following year, Dr. Wood would write that the bearing of the girls was modest, yet self-possessed and dignified, and that this was an impression they desired.[295] A moderate way in discipline and order, allowing the students to develop a healthy consciousness of individuality was particularly emphasized. The students could, in this way, establish a friendly but balanced rapport with the teachers. A well-balanced combination of authority, respect and friendship was aimed as the basis of the school's education.

Raising girls with a healthy body as well as mind was also among the objectives of the college. Even in early days, callisthenic exercises at the Home School were a new and very attractive feature to those who visited the school, the teachers observed.[296] This was a common feature shared by all the American schools in this era; sports and physical education played an important part in the

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[292] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 6, (1876), p. 293, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[293] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 19, (1889), p. 388, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[294] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 69, (1873), p. 319, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[295] *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 70, (1874), p. 310, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005909183.
[296] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 3, (1873), p. 356, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

school's program. [297] President of the college, Mary Mills Patrick writes, in her memoirs, that the athletic department of the college always held a prominent place in the curriculum. This department was always ready to act in time of fire, to protect in time of danger, to amuse in hours of recreation, and in general to inspire health and confidence in the college.[298] This was the case even in the Republican era when the country was in a relatively more developed stage in terms of offering favorable physical circumstances; the American college for Girls was a pioneer in this frame in those years' Turkey. Yıldız Sertel, in her memoirs, expresses her love for the school because she could play volleyball, basketball, baseball and even practice archery in the big school yard. She even had military courses and shooting drills with guns at the high school. These were novelties for even Sertel's time and were not seen in other private institutions of the country in the same period.[299]

The greatest influence of the college can be said to be in its constructing gender though it went through a change in this regard within the course of time. When it was the Home, it was rather under the influence of male missionaries though it was founded by female members of the Board in Boston. A limited perspective of femininity was envisioned in terms of the education of the girls in early years and this vision was reflected in the discourse of the administrators and teachers as well. The aim was to "secure a true and symmetrical Christian character in the pupils; well-ordered Christian homes; well-qualified teachers of native female seminaries and higher schools; wives of pastors, and Bible-women."[300] Particular attention was at the same time paid to giving the pupils "correct and lady-like manners."[301] They had to learn how to behave like a woman and the standards were naturally set according to the religious, cultural and social norms. The school was not only educating the students in terms of academic knowledge but also giving

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[297] Maurice Pernot, *Rapport Sur un Voyage d'Étude a Constantinople*, (Paris: Typographie Firmin-didot et Cie, 1912), p. 25, accessed 12 April 2017, https://archive.org/details/rapportsurunvoya00pernuoft.
[298] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 103.
[299] Sertel, *Ardımdaki Yıllar*, pp. 42-43.
[300] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 6, (1876), p. 290, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[301] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 3, (1873), p. 356, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

them practical skills a woman might need in her everyday life. For instance, at the school, the girls had each a share in the domestic work. They were supposed to give about half an hour every day to their sweeping or dusting. Their teachers were thinking that this was a very good thing for them, preparing them for the real life.[302] The medical lady, responsible from the medical department of the Home, would, by "instructing the pupils of the school in physiology and the laws of health, prepare them to impart their knowledge to others, and make their own future homes far different from the present homes of that land."[303] The ultimate target set for girls was to be a teacher for a religious school or a wife to a pastor. The order of the house was important and the girls needed to be trained in this frame. They had to learn how to establish their order at home in a Christian way. However, this point of view changed within the course of time together with the changing circumstances of the era as well as the evolving identity of the college. Female students of the college, in the following years, could aspire and were encouraged to having a job other than teaching and occupy a place in the public sphere. They were given a chance to be visible with their character as well deeds. They could show that their intellectual ability and competence was no less than that of men. *Life and Light for Woman*, the voice of American female missionaries, would proudly report about a ceremony held at the college upon observing "a striking contrast when a group of Moslem women, each shrouded in her depressing black robe, only the eyes being visible, stood opposite a graduating class from the American College of Girls in Constantinople. The diploma in their hands was a symbol of emancipated womanhood."[304]

The college's ideal was to raise female students who would, in the future, take part in the elevation of the women of the Orient, whom they saw in a miserable situation. Women in the country, deprived of proper educational opportunities and

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[302] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 20, (1890), p. 329, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[303] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 6, (1876), p. 291, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[304] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 40, (1910), p. 390, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.

left behind for this reason and others, needed "salvation" according to the missionaries. The students and graduates of the American College for Girls would be the ones to fulfill this heroic mission. A controlled, intelligent judgment was of prime importance in this work. But more than this, what these students needed was a deep religious devotion, the simple love of Christ, appreciation of his teaching and devotion to his cause. They could in this way solve the problems of a society "just emerging from mediaeval mists."[305] These young women also learned methods of benevolent work and parliamentary procedure in the college, which was chiefly a result of the Self-Government Association. This system in the college was important in terms of developing self-control. Each student, in this system, was feeling herself personally responsible for the general order of the college, and this consciousness was going far toward making her watchful of her own movements. Independence of action by the students was seen as an important element in preparing the graduates for women suffrage in Turkey. The students would have the opportunity to show the power of judicial action during their college years. A remarkable power of practical statesmanship would often develop in this way. Such training in tolerance and justice was a good preparation for the political careers which would open to women in the following years.[306] These same girls were also given the necessary academic training that would enable them to discuss matters of state in different countries, and expressing solemnly their views on reforms. These women with independent thought were supposed to be reformers and take part in the development of their countries, in the noblest sense.

The college underwent changes that were in many ways parallel to the historical, political and social changes in the country, to the process of transformation from the Empire to the Republic of Turkey. This missionary college which later evolved into an internationalist one was an attempt to overcome the boundaries between nations and religions. Mary Mills Patrick, the head of the college, had a major role in this shift of identity. The school, in its character, was

[305] *Life and Light for Woman*, Vol. 32, (1902), pp. 12-13, accessed 12 April 2017, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000050000.
[306] Patrick, *A Bosporus Adventure*, p. 99.

not a multinational and multicultural one at the very beginning. The student body was Armenian in its foundation years. However, as the years passed by, female students from other races, religions and denominations joined the school, which thus gained an international dimension and became a “miniature republic”. Yet, it was not only an international dimension which was added to the changing identity of the institution. It had become a college which at first broke up the connection with the Women’s Board and then totally became an independent institution in all aspects. It was not a mission school anymore. It had become a degree-granting institution with an international identity and universalist goals. Its emphasis was on American principles of “democracy and freedom of thought” as well as equality between women and men on social, economic and political terms. Common schooling of girls regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliation, an education based on a western pattern was considered instrumental in the realization of these objectives. The girls who until then were deprived of educational opportunities offered to their male counterparts would be given an education of universal applicability. They would be equipped with a true love of research, a sense of rigorous inquiry and personal initiative, which would help them become self-confident and open-minded women. This education would be possible by developing a strong character which was at the beginning possible by the influential power and discipline of religion and the emphasis in morality in subsequent years. This frame of education adopted by the college became so influential in shaping the minds of its students that so many of them became women possessing a strong and independent character, liberal spirit and mental power. They, in return, contributed to the emancipation of women and the development of their country and became influential figures at home and abroad. This institution, where female authority was exercised in an atmosphere of international cooperation and a spirit of religious freedom, became a place where feminism started to flourish and the first female intellectuals of the country were educated.

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