

# Traditional Resistance and Narrators' Dialogue in Serial Children's Novels in the Modernising Ottoman Empire

Refika Altıkulaç Demirdağ  
Department of Turkish Language  
Education  
Çukurova University  
Adana (Turkey)  
raltikulac@cu.edu.tr

**ABSTRACT:** The aim of this study was to examine the first serial novels for children, which were published in Ottoman magazines and newspapers between 1894 and 1908, and which are now almost forgotten in the pages of these publications. It is generally accepted that an ambivalent attitude towards modernisation can be felt in novels written during the modernisation period of the Ottoman Empire. However, an examination of the serials published for children reveals that there is no clear concern with modernisation, but rather an attempt to convey traditions to children in the clearest and most didactic way possible. For this reason, series prioritising traditions, like *Hasude* and *Muallime*, and series that encouraged sympathy for technological innovations, like *Mösyö Elektrik*, will be examined. Although it may seem ambivalent or dualistic, it will also be shown that there is a decisive change towards the concept of childhood.

**EET/TEE KEYWORDS:** Ottoman children's literature; Serial novels; Tradition; Türkiye; XIX-XX Centuries.

## 1. *The concept of the changing childhood and the types of narrators*

It is argued that childhood, unlike infancy, is not a biological category but a social construct. It is generally accepted that civilisation has changed the perception of childhood. This change is linked to how childhood is defined by adults. In the twentieth century, it was recognised that the marking out of the world of childhood from that of adulthood was inseparable from «the process

of civilisation»<sup>1</sup>. The negative impact of modernity on childhood has generally been linked by researchers to the impact of the capitalist system on the world of children<sup>2</sup>. One of the consequences of modern civilisation is the differentiation of attitudes towards children. So, children come to be seen as needing to be protected by adults.

The concept of childhood developed as an adjunct to the modern family ... 'childrenese' became fashionable during the seventeenth century. (...) But by the late seventeenth century special artefacts for children were common<sup>3</sup>.

At the end of the eighteenth-century children needed to be taught advice books; the distance between the children and adults was increasing<sup>4</sup>. While the prevalence of the Disneyesque childhood perception of the modern process of civilisation is remarkable, the perspective of this perception on Third World countries is also noteworthy. In this respect, the Disneyesque understanding of the child is a remarkable representation of change, even if it did not become apparent until the twentieth-century. Through comics, Disney tells children about an unreal world, a world where no one works, work has no worth, and relationships between individuals are shaped by utilitarianism<sup>5</sup>. The idealised world is an American utopia; however, hidden in the background of this world is the view of an underdeveloped Third World. The representation of Third World peoples in cultural and racial terms is stereotypical, especially through «infantilisation»<sup>6</sup>. Ironically, however, it has been observed that Third World countries have also become accustomed to this change<sup>7</sup>. It is therefore appropriate to accept that the concept of childhood has changed in different ways in the East and the West. There is also an inevitable, albeit indirect, interaction between the two. In order to link this transformation to this research, the following question must first be answered: what was the situation during the nineteenth-century the period of Ottoman modernisation?

## 2. Ottoman Modernization and the Changing Concept of Childhood

At the heart of the process of Ottoman modernisation lay a problem of military policy: continuous military defeats and territorial losses led the Ot-

<sup>1</sup> H. Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500*, New York, Pearson Education, 1995, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> K. İnal, *Çocukluğun Örselenen Dünyası*, Ankara, Sobil Yayınları, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> J. Holt, *Escape from Childhood*, New York, E.P. Dutton, 1974, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western*, cit., p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> A. Dorfman, A. Mattelart, *How to Read Donald Duck*, New York, I.G. Editions, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

tomans to search for the factors underlying Western military superiority in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries<sup>8</sup>. When it became clear that military reforms alone were insufficient to save the Empire, modernisation prompted reforms in many other areas, including administration, the economy, and education, and these changes were reflected in social life. The Europeanisation of the regime the movement towards a state governed by law was first manifested in institutions and subsequently in education and intellectual life<sup>9</sup>. Tanzimat writers such as Namık Kemal, Ahmet Mithat Efendi, and Şemsettin Sami, who believed that Islam did not preclude modernity, addressed modernisation in their novels, poems, and plays through a number of symbolic themes, including the condition of women, children's education, slavery, and concubinage<sup>10</sup>. Although ambivalent about these issues, they were often critical of practices such as the limited education of women and arranged marriages, which they regarded as necessary to reform in the course of modernisation<sup>11</sup>. The transformation in the concept of childhood likewise brought about a change in attitudes towards children.

Special products for children began to be imported and sold in a number of areas, from clothing to toys, with the development of social relations with Europe and the emergence of a group that could be called a middle class. Children's fashions began to emerge, especially in centres with strong trade links with the West<sup>12</sup>.

In the mid to late nineteenth century, and especially in the early twentieth century, there were significant changes in the attitudes of many people in Istanbul towards children:

Children were increasingly taken seriously as children, defined as a distinct segment of the population. Society was becoming more child-oriented now, with men taking more of an interest in the upbringing of their children, a trend that began in the late Ottoman period...<sup>13</sup>.

With children being seen as «the guarantee of the future of the state», the education and upbringing of children emerged as an independent field of inter-

<sup>8</sup> Ş. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962.

<sup>9</sup> İ. Ortaylı, *Batılılaşma Sorunu*, in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1983, Vol. 1, pp. 134-139.

<sup>10</sup> A.H. Tanpınar, *19uncu Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, İstanbul, Çağlayan Kitabevi, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> M.A. Kılıçbay, *Osmanlı Batılılaşması*, in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1983, Vol. 1, pp. 147-152.

<sup>12</sup> G.G. Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası*, Doctoral Thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Department of International Relations (Supervisor: Fatmagül Berktaş), İstanbul, İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2008-2009, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> B.C. Fortna, *Bonbons and Bayonets: Mixed Messages of Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic*, in Id. (ed.), *Childhood in the Late Ottoman Empire and After*, Leiden, Brill Academic Publishers, 2016, pp. 173-188.

est. The idea of establishing modern schools as a mechanism of social control, and equipping childhood with “ideal” Western-style roles and behaviours in accordance with the political will and the order it established, was a matter of socio-political vision in the Ottoman-Turkish project of modernity<sup>14</sup>. The transformation in children’s social life has covered a wide range of areas over time, from literature to theatre, from clothes to play spaces and tools<sup>15</sup>. This change was also reflected in poems, stories, and serialised novels for children with an increase in the number of children’s journals and magazines<sup>16</sup>. Fortna claims that a clear pattern emerges from an investigation of the ways childhood was designed and represented by adults<sup>17</sup>.

This heightened atmosphere exaggerated the pre-existing tendency to create two distinct worlds of childhood. The first, referred to here in shorthand as the world of ‘bonbons,’ is a realm of idealized, romanticized and proto-Disneyesque fantasy. In this construction children are protected and isolated from adult concerns. In the literature produced for children that was rapidly creating its own publishing niche from the 1880s onwards children are frequently depicted as being dependent on the wisdom, bounty and prescience of their elders but otherwise isolated from the preoccupations of the grown-up world, quite like their counterparts in the West<sup>18</sup>.

In this world, which Fortna calls the «bonbons», it can be said that the author-narrator began to use a style similar to the way adults talk to children for children’s readers. But it is not such a sharp transformation. It always contains contradictions and ambivalent feelings at the beginning. The works in children’s magazines published before the Second Constitutional Era are particularly important in this respect, as they are instructive in terms of showing the process of change.

Making visible the relationship between literary genres produced in the same period has the potential to make visible some of the cultural ambivalence of that time. At this point, the observation that works written for children and works written for adults in the same period may show different cultural attitudes to the reflection of traditions in the work is a contextual problem. Indeed, while Bakhtin draws attention to the dialogue he claims to exist between genres: «The interplay of genres in a single whole literary period is an extremely interesting and important problem»; «All genres significantly reinforce each other in harmony; all literature, conceived as a collection of genres, exhibits

<sup>14</sup> Öztan, *Türkiye’de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası*, cit., p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> «The latter part of the nineteenth century, especially the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), represents the synthesis of previous structural developments. It was a period of growth and differentiation in the economic and social fields, and of ideological transformation». K.H. Karpas, *The Transformation of the Ottoman State 1789-1908*, «International Journal of Middle East Studies», vol. 3, n. 3, 1972, pp. 243-281.

<sup>17</sup> Fortna, *Bonbons and Bayonets*, cit., p. 174.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

an organic unity of the highest order»<sup>19</sup>. We can use this to understand the traditional transformation to dialogue in the novel, called dialogism, which instantiates Bakhtin's claim that all texts are fundamentally dialogic<sup>20</sup>.

Discussions of literary genres tend to neglect the need to see children's literature as part of the organic system of a particular literary period. However, the dialogical relationship of children's literature to other genres deserves to be noticed. For the inevitable difference in the narrator's attitude towards children and adults suggests a dialogue between the two narrator types. This difference in attitude must have permeated the way the traditions were reflected in the works. The influence of the conventional form in the narrative is related to Bakhtin's dialogue:

In addition to those real meanings and ideas of one's addressee that actually determine the style of the utterances (works), the history of literature also includes conventional or semi-conventional forms of address to readers, listeners, posterity, and so forth, just as, in addition to the actual author, there are also conventional and semi-conventional images of substitute authors, editors, and various kinds of narrators<sup>21</sup>.

This matter of who the speaker or writer perceives as their audience is of immense significance in literary history, according to Bakhtin:

Each epoch, each literary trend and literary-artistic style, each literary genre within an epoch or trend, is typified by its own special concepts of the addressee of the literary work, a special sense and understanding of its reader, listener, public, or people<sup>22</sup>.

It should be noted that the increase in the number of newspapers and magazines published during the reign of Abdülhamid II was due to an increase in the number of readers, and this reading act was linked to the spread of popular adventure and scientific novels. This trend has also led to an increase in publications for children<sup>23</sup>. Among the magazines and journals published between 1890-1908, those for children occupy an important place. These con-

<sup>19</sup> M. Bakhtin, *Éstetika slovesnogo tvorčestva*; Engl. transl. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, (translated by V.W. McGhee), Austin, University of Texas Press, 1986, pp. 98-99, 167.

<sup>20</sup> Id., *Carnival and Other Subjects: Selected Papers from the Fifth International Bakhtin Conference*, University of Manchester, July 1991, Turkish transl. *Karnavaldan Romana: Edebiyat Teorisinden Dil Felsefesine Seçme Yazılar*, (ed. S. Irzık), İstanbul, Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, pp. 98-99.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>23</sup> The oppressive attitude of Sultan Abdulhamid II in the administration known as the Hamidian era, H.H. Duman, C. Pekman, *Türk Basın Tarihi*, Eskişehir, Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2014, pp. 65-66; N. Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, ed. A. Kuyaş, İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2003, p. 368, reading curiosity, which can be seen as an escape from the period of political oppression, the habit of amusing oneself by reading curious and entertaining things, seems to have remained within its limits N. Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma*, ed. A. Kuyaş, İstanbul, Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2003, p. 369. On the other hand, it was in this area of repression that the most intense period of Ottoman modernisation took place.

tain poems, stories, fairy tales, riddles, etc. written for the purpose of educating children. In addition to many literary genres, there is also the genre of serial novels<sup>24</sup>. The fact that this tradition, which provides the best examples of the impact of oral culture on written culture, includes child readers is also an indication of the far-reaching impact of these publications on society. It has been shown that children follow the serials in the newspapers with interest for a long time. Thus, this study examines the relationship between children's serial novels and modernisation from two perspectives: attitude to tradition and attitude to technology as directly related to modernisation. So, it will be shown that dialogue emerges from different types of narrators in the context of a changing concept of childhood and that these types of narrators have attended to the negotiation about modernisation.

### 3. *Traditions in Serial Novels for Children: Hasude and Muallime*

The undeniable dimension of the cultural influence of the Westernisation on the literature of the Modernisation period of Ottoman Empire led to the emergence of a new perception of life in the novel, which entered Turkish literature as a new genre. Although this life is similar to the modern style, it also includes criticism of some traditions or ways of daily life. The Tanzimat writers offer new perspectives on many issues, from arranged marriages to the place of women in social life. In works written for children, however, this tendency is approached more cautiously. In these serial novels, the idea of modernising traditions has been abandoned in favour of messages aimed at cultural transmission.

A total of eighteen serialised children's novels written between 1894 and 1908 have been identified in this study. Since it is not possible to present all of these series within the limits of this article, so the study focuses on prominent works *Hasude*<sup>25</sup> [The Envy] and *Muallime*<sup>26</sup> [The Female Teacher] to illustrate the rigid attitude towards tradition in this part. It will suffice to briefly mention the other series on the subject. The aim is to show that it is possible to evaluate Bakhtin's concept of «dialogue» based on the «narrator», with an attitude similar to that which operates on the ground between genres. On this

M.A. Kılıçbay, *Osmanlı Batılılaşması*, in *Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1983, Vol. 1, p. 152.

<sup>24</sup> Most of these serials, almost forgotten in the pages of old periodicals and not attracting the attention of more than a few scholars, have neither been transferred from the Arabic alphabet to the Latin alphabet nor translated into today's Turkish language.

<sup>25</sup> Üsküdar Kız Sanattan İhsan, *Hasude*, «Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete», 1899.

<sup>26</sup> Emine Semiye, *Muallime*, «Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete», 1898.

basis, noting the differences or similarities in the narrators' styles and perspectives can reveal society's commitment to deeply held value judgments.

The *Hasude* series written by İhsan of Üsküdar Kız Sanat (Girl's art School) in «Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete» [Newspaper for Ladies] in 1899. The hero of the work, Adil Bey, has a sister Bedia, who is a main character of novel, enters into an unhappy marriage. Adil Bey, who is fooled by his friends into thinking that she is a good-natured girl, is initially unaware of his wife Binnaz's bad habits. As time goes by, it becomes impossible to continue the marriage when it is revealed that Binnaz has bad habits such as not wearing what she wears a second time, not liking every dish with an excuse and gossiping. In particular, her jealousy of her husband's sister Bedia, leads her to make mistakes out of greed. At the end of the story, Adil Bey finds happiness by marrying a suitable person whom his sister finds for him after he leaves Binnaz. When Adil Bey decided to marry for the first time, he disregarded the advice of his sister and the trusted «guide» women around him and made the decision himself. The fact that Adil Bey's first marriage was, according to tradition, a wrong decision is implied at the beginning of the story:

Adil Bey wanted to get married. They looked at so many girls. They found Raif Efendi's daughter suitable. It would be a wedding. Bedia Hanım did not want this girl because she had heard from her friends that her morals were unpleasant and even bad. But Adil Bey's friends deceived him, and Adil Bey did not listen to his sister and insisted that he would definitely marry this girl<sup>27</sup>.

Bedia tells her brother that she had heard negative things about Binnaz. For example, «When she wore a dress, she would not wear it again, she would tear it up and say that it would be a dress like this»<sup>28</sup>. Adil Bey does not heed his sister's advice, and Bedia is forced to accept the marriage.

For men who have reached marriageable age, the tradition of the women of the family or the intermediary women who are engaged in this business to quest to find suitable girls is affirmed in the story. In this tradition, the custom of investigating whether the character of the physically liked girl is good is also reflected positively. The tradition of the groom seeing the girl on the wedding day is not criticized in this novel. The first pioneer play was Şair Evlenmesi [The Wedding of a Poet], written by İbrahim Şinasi, which used satire to criticise the tradition of arranged marriages. The play argues that men and women should meet and talk before getting married. Many later novels and plays were based on this play and criticised arranged marriages, such as *Taaşuk-ı Tal'at*

<sup>27</sup> «Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete», n. 212, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

*ve Fitnat* [Talat and Fitnat's love]<sup>29</sup>, *İntibah*<sup>30</sup> [Awakening], *Yeryüzünde Bir Melek*<sup>31</sup> [An Angel on the World], *Turfanda mı yoksa Turfa mı*<sup>32</sup> [Is it new or rotten], *Muhadarat*<sup>33</sup> and plays such as *Zavallı Çocuk*<sup>34</sup> [The Poor Child], *Sabr u Sebat*<sup>35</sup> [Patience and Perseverance], *İçli Kız*<sup>36</sup> [Sweet Girl], *Çok Bilen Çok Yanılır*<sup>37</sup> [Those Who Know Much, Make Many Mistakes].

There is also some advice on marriage, such as that a woman should dress beautifully for her husband<sup>38</sup>. It is recommended that if a woman changes her clothes when she comes home from outside, she should dress nicely beautifully the house. Considering that the journal, which is an extension of «Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete», contains publications aimed at girls, it seems that girls in particular are being prepared for marriage in the traditional way, and that the novel is being used as a tool.

The main purpose of the *Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete* is to prepare young girls for family life so that the order and development of society can be realised through the family, the smallest building block. This magazine tells young girls in various ways how they should act in order to be good bride candidates. Girls should not be 'too eager to get married'. In preparing young girls for marriage, the magazine tries to raise modest brides-to-be and ensure that they seek happiness not in possessions but in getting on well with their spouses, because 'happiness is not in wealth but in the sincerity between husband and wife'<sup>39</sup>.

At the same time, however, works written for adults were redefining the role of women in society. There was an attempt to highlight not only a woman's domestic life as a mother or wife, but also those aspects that would be beneficial to society. Fatma Aliye's novels are an example of this issue. The first strong female characters appear in her novels, *Muhadarat*, *Udi*. Her young sister, Emine Semiye, is one of the most important writers of the «Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete». Her novel *Muallime*<sup>40</sup>, which «is almost identified with the

<sup>29</sup> Ş. Sami, *Taaşuk-ı Tal'at ve Fitnat*, Eskişehir, Anadolu Üniversitesi Açıköğretim Fakültesi Yayını, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> N. Kemal, *İntibah*, İstanbul, Panama Yayıncılık, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> A. Mithat Efendi, *Yeryüzünde Bir Melek*, Ankara, Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2000.

<sup>32</sup> M. Murad, *Turfanda mı Yoksa Turfa mı*, İstanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> F. Aliye Hanım, *Muhadarat*, İstanbul, Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2022.

<sup>34</sup> N. Kemal, *Zavallı Çocuk*, İstanbul, Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2017.

<sup>35</sup> A.H. Tarhan, *Sabr u Sebat*, İstanbul, Dergah Yayınları, 2000.

<sup>36</sup> İd., *İçli Kız*, İstanbul, Dergah Yayınları, 2000.

<sup>37</sup> R.M. Ekrem, *Çok Bilen Çok Yanılır*, İstanbul, Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2024.

<sup>38</sup> «Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete», n. 213, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> S.H. Dinçyürek, *II. Abdülhamid Dönemi'nde Bir Genç Kız Dergisi: Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete'nin Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Kısmı*, in H. Çolak, Z. Kocabıyıkoglu Çeçen, N.I. Demirakın (edd.), *Ayşegül Keskin Çolak'a Armağan: Tarih ve Edebiyat Yazıları*, İstanbul, Ke-bikeç Yayınları, 2016, p. 149.

<sup>40</sup> Emine Semiyye, *Muallime*, İstanbul, IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2020.

*Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete* [Newspaper for Ladies] in the history of Turkish literature»<sup>41</sup> is an important example in this respect.

*Muallime (The Teacher)*,<sup>42</sup> the main heroine of the novel, is hired to educate an eleven-year-old girl, Refah, privately. She also tries to educate the other members of the family when she lives with them. Although Refah's parents want her to be educated according to modern methods, Muallime refuses and teaches Refah according to religious requirements. Muallime is particularly disturbed by the fact that the requirements of Islam, such as praying, fasting and reading the Holy Quran, are not observed at home. She was not educated in a teacher training college, but was traditionally educated by her father. Over time, she motivates the other members of the house, even Refah's very young and beautiful mother, Saadet, who is flirtatious, to live according to Islam and teaches them the rules. Muallime has lived with the family for years. But she has been unable to prevent the family's downfall.

Refah's mother, Saadet, who is portrayed as an ignorant and naive woman, falls in love with her daughter's fiancé. When this situation arises, Saadet and those who led her astray are killed. The novel has a very active and intriguing plot. However, at a time when perceptions of childhood are still changing, this novel does not use a narrator who addresses the child from a new child's perspective, nor does it differ in style from works written for adults. The artistic, meaningful and indirect style of expression and the difficult to understand combinations of Arabic and Persian words give the impression that it was not written for children. The fact that it was published in «*Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete*» gives the impression that this newspaper was written for teenage girls. It aims to educate them through literary works and, above all, requires them to adhere to Islamic tradition.

Reading the story of three generations of fictional heroines in an allegorical style can reflect modernisation and changing attitudes to education. Firstly, Saadet was brought up by her stepmother, who was criticised for being a very pious woman whose oppressive attitude was reflected in a negative situation. Saadet is a female type created by the harmful effects of modernisation. The character of this woman, who likes to dress well, travel and buy expensive things, is portrayed with a pathetic weakness. Although Refah is in danger of becoming like her mother, Muallime eliminates this risk. She gives her a traditional upbringing. Although Muallime and Refah are described as happy at the end of the novel, this is not complete happiness, because they suffered a lot. It can be concluded that the most ideal type of woman in these three generations is Refah, who was educated by a female teacher as a child. This can be thought of as reflecting the reason for the emergence of modernization and the need for girls to be raised according to traditions to improve its possible

<sup>41</sup> Dinçyürek, II. *Abdülhamid Dönemi'nde*, cit., p. 154.

<sup>42</sup> «*Muallime*» means female teacher.

negative consequences like Saadet who dies at the end of the story with shame and asking for forgiveness.

The idea that children's attitudes to social life should also be based on tradition is prominent in almost all of the series. For example, in Halil Rüşdü's work entitled *İbtîlâ-yı Masumâne* [Innocent Addiction], the hero named Mini Mini is interested in going to the theatre and in the meantime falls in love with an actress. In fact, it is difficult to say that this is love. Because the little boy in the story wants to be a poet, and he believes that to be a good poet one has to fall in love. So, Mini Mini often goes to the theatre to see the actress and tries to show himself to her by taking long walks in the street. Finally, when the school authorities discover that he often goes to the theatre, he is forbidden to take the weekend off. Feeling insulted by this punishment, Mini Mini realises his mistake and gives up bad habits like going to the theatre. The most interesting difference between this series and the others is that it was the subject of a complaint in another magazine on the days it was published. When the article in question is published, the editors of the journal do not suspend the series but publish an explanation. An article signed «Nihat» was published in the magazine «Mecmua-i Lisan», claiming that the main child character named Mini Mini was inappropriate for child readers because he falls in love with a theatre actress. In response, an article entitled *İbtîlâ-yı Masumâne Nam Eser-i İbret-amize Hitâmı* published in the 158<sup>th</sup> issue of the magazine announced that the series had been criticised because it was not known how the story would end and claimed that the author had written this series to serve as a lesson for the children of the homeland<sup>43</sup>.

The important point in this issue is that a work written for children is the subject of an article in the journal about whether or not it is suitable for children. In addition, issues such as the inconvenience of a young child falling in love and the fact that going to the theatre is considered inappropriate behaviour were clearly expressed. The impact of traditions on children is also significant in that the story was the subject of complaints when it was published. Although the magazine's management did not stop the publication of the series because of the complaint, it is important that the protagonist adopts the behaviour expected of a child at the end of the story, such as working hard, obeying what parents say, staying away from foreigners and the theatre. In this way, direct messages are conveyed to the readers. In this novel, narratives about traditions such as prayer, rituals, and also entertainment during the holy month of Ramadan, going to prayer on Eid morning at the end of the holy month, kissing parents' hands, and holiday visits are highlighted and care is taken to present these traditions in a positive way to the children.

In contrast to *Muallime*, in *Hasude* and *İbtîlâ-i Masumâne*<sup>44</sup> the narrator

<sup>43</sup> «Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete», vol. 4, p. 158, p. 1, 18 Şubat 1314.

<sup>44</sup> Halil Rüşdü, *İbtîlâ-yı Masumâne*, «Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete», 1899.

clearly characterizes which type of reader is being addressed. In *Hasude* it is girls of marriageable age, and in *İbtıla-i Masumane* it is adolescent boys. Although the first part of *İbtıla-i Masumane* does not explicitly reveal its concern for children's education, this becomes clear by the end. This Disneyesque approach marks the transition to the "bonbons" world created by adults to protect children from evils of the real world. However, emphasizing tradition's importance in this world is incompatible with Disney's global utopia. This is because, although the advice is given to children by an adult, the attitude is no different from that of works written for adults. It is therefore useful to mention Bakhtin's mirror metaphor and the Disneyesque narrator. For at this point, it is important how those who write for children and those who write for adults wish to see themselves in the mirror:

Indeed, our position before a mirror is always some-what spurious, for since we lack any approach to ourselves from outside, in this case, as in the other, we project ourselves into a peculiarly indeterminate possible other, with whose help we then try to find an axiological position in relation to ourselves; in this case, too, we try to vivify ourselves and give form to ourselves-out of the other<sup>45</sup>.

The narrator's attitude to modernisation can be seen as an attempt to see their self through the idea of modernity and the characteristics they try to correct through the eyes of others, based on the appearance they see. As Bakhtin points out, narrators see only their external reflection in the mirror and cannot really see their selves. The narrator is trying to find an axiological position in relation to themselves; in this case too, they are trying to animate themselves and give themselves form – out of the other. In this case, in this unnatural reflection, different narrators (those who write for adults and those who write for children) do not share the same meaning. The narrator feels the need to give form to science and technology by anticipating the observer's possible evaluation, as if looking at its exterior is like looking at oneself in a mirror. In order to clarify this issue, it should be also deal with the impact of science and technology on children's creation of the ideal type of child, which is portrayed through certain tasks and actions in children's serial novels. In addition, the effort to raise a generation that can easily adopt the developments of science and technology, despite the rigid attitude towards the continuation of traditions, can be made visible the negotiation and dialogue between the narrators towards modernisation.

<sup>45</sup> M. Bakhtin, *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, in Id., *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*, (M. Holquist, V. Liapunov (edd.); Engl. trans. By V. Liapunov), Austin, University of Texas Press, 1990, pp. 32-33.

#### 4. *Inspired by Modern science and adventure*

Ten serial novels were published in «Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete» [The Special Children's Magazine] between 1897 and 1904. It is the longest-running children's magazine, with 627 issues, and was first published in 1896<sup>46</sup>. During its twelve years of publication, it was published in parallel with the passive press regime of the time<sup>47</sup>. The first article of each issue was called Selamlık Resm-i Âlîsi, which explained the Sultan's «Cuma selamlığı»<sup>48</sup> [Friday greetings] for the week in a fancy language. It is important to remember that the works published in the magazine are subject to censorship and cannot contain any dissenting opinions to the sultanate. For this reason, the works published are usually simple adventure stories. Ahmet Faik's works called *Küçük Seyyah* [The Little traveller], *Mösyö Elektrik*, *Bahr-i Sefid'de Bir Cevelan* [A Journey in the Archipelago], *Tahtü'l-Arz Bir Cevelan* [A Travel Underground], *Bir Haftada Devr-i Alem* [Around the World in a Week] are adventure books with the influence of Jules Verne in their names. It is possible to say that translation works play a role in the writing of these stories<sup>49</sup>. However, the originality of the components and the style, which is in keeping with the traditions of the society of the time, are remarkable.

Writers' attitudes to modernisation in travel and adventure novels are limited to emphasising the importance of science and technology. However, in the novels of this period, technological inventions were rarely emphasised in works written for adults. Ahmed Mithat, Hüseyin Rahmi, Halit Ziya, Refik Halit and Mehmet Rauf are among the writers who have used the tools of technological inventions in their works, sometimes as surprising, sometimes as modern magic: «Ahmet Mithat Efendi, in his novel *Hayret* (1885), includes in particular the telegraph, the telephone and the phonograph»<sup>50</sup>. However, as with works written for children, the primary purpose of the adult novels was not to promote these discoveries or to popularise science. Although in adult novels the dandy characters created by misguided modernisation attract attention, in children's novels the desired modernised model child type comes to the fore. This type is especially portrayed as being curious about science and technology and praised for his devotion to tradition. One of the best examples of this is the series *Mösyö Elektrik*. The author of the novel Fâik Sabri (Duran)

<sup>46</sup> S. Küçük, *İlk Türkçe Çocuk Dergileri ve Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete*, «Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi», 2010, p. 715.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 718.

<sup>48</sup> It is an event held when the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire arrive and leave for Friday prayers.

<sup>49</sup> S. Paker, *Tanzimat Döneminde Avrupa Edebiyatından Çeviriler, Çoğul-dizge Kuramı Açısından Bir Değerlendirme*, (transl. by A. Tükel), «Metis Çeviri», n. 1, 1987, pp. 31-32.

<sup>50</sup> S. Küçük, *Osmanlı Algısında Garb Teknolojisi: Mösyö Elektrik'in Sergüzeşti*, «Belleten», vol. 77, 2013, pp. 713-740.

(1882-1943), is a geographer. The series begins with a conversation between a young man called Behçet and his friends. While Behçet is discussing the benefits of electricity with his friends, a visitor arrives at the house and introduces himself as Monsieur Elektrik. At the man's urging, Behçet follows him and they go on a journey. On this journey, Behçet saw extraordinary machines that worked with electricity. The journey begins with the great express train, coloured by inventions that were ahead of their time.

Fâik Sabri, in his book named *Jül Vern'in Hayatı ve Eserleri* [Jules Verne's Life and Works], states that he wrote the novels *Mösyö Elektrik* [Monsieur Electric] in 1903 and *Bir Haftada Devr-i Alem* [Around the World in a Week] in 1906, under the influence of the novels he read from Jules Verne in his youth<sup>51</sup>. He also expresses that he is a foresighted person who imagines the innovations that are not available for that day and writes in his novels<sup>52</sup>.

In Fâik Sabri's series *Mösyö Elektrik*, in which the author states to have been influenced by Jules Verne, the theme of the adventure of travel emphasises the scientific and technological learning of the protagonists as a process. The aim is for children to both enjoy and learn from reading adventure stories. However, the author sometimes cannot resist adopting a very didactic attitude. For example, when one of his friends asks Behçet to teach them about electricity, Behçet accepts the request like a scientist, acting as an educator and teaching his friends about electricity:

Behçet – All right. Let me tell you what electricity is: until recently, nobody knew what electricity was. The first person to explain it was an English scientist called Maxwell. He realised that light and electricity are naturally the same and proved it with mathematic. But he died before he could experience it. This success was later given to Hertz from Germany. Looking at the movement of electrical vibrations, he tried to convert the vibrations into a measurable state and succeeded. Later he proved that vibrations have the ability to propagate like light, in a straight line like light vibrations and at a speed of 300,000 kilometres per second<sup>53</sup>.

In this long monologue, Behçet explains the scientists' electrical studies like a scientist. After meeting Monsieur Electric, they embark on a journey by electrical train, which has extraordinary speed. This journey shows him how electricity makes life easier and how it makes the villagers happy. Thus, the positive effects that technological developments will have on production are shown. When Behçet wakes up at the end of the journey, he realises that it was all a dream. In this way, the author shows to children the need for the fantasy world of science. This is an attempt to educate children by presenting them as an idealised type, hardworking, dreamer, and faithful.

<sup>51</sup> F.S. Duran, *Jül Vern: Hayatı ve Eserleri*, İstanbul, Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1932, p. 83.

<sup>52</sup> Duran, *Jül Vern: Hayatı ve Eserleri*, cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>53</sup> Id., *Mösyö Elektrik*, «Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete», 1900, p. 18.

Although travel, seeing new places and people and learning new things are encouraged in children's novels, the weight of tradition is also felt. For example, İbrahim Ethem's *Seyyie-i Safalet* [Indulge in Debauchery] has the task of warning children about foreigners. The author tells the story of children who indulge in debauchery with his wicked friends. In this series, the traditional themes of family relations, respect and loving distance between children and adults are emphasised.

Other topics that were written about directly concerned social life, such as arranged marriages, the comparison of village and city life, the education of girls, the participation of women in social life, slavery and concubinage, the lifestyle of Levantines, the entry of governesses into the family and the problems that this caused in Tanzimat literature<sup>54</sup>. While these issues are often treated along the wrong axis of modernisation, the message is conveyed, either indirectly or directly, that modernisation is only possible through a correct perception of the West. However, there was no such message in the serials written for children. The issue of captivity and concubinage was also raised and in some ways criticised by artists such as Ahmet Mithat Efendi, Samipaşazade Sezai and Abdülhak Hâmid. However, these issues were not encountered in these serials written for children.

### *Conclusions*

It can be said that the ambivalence between modernity and tradition is made visible in Ottoman literature influenced by Western literature. In serial novels for children, on the other hand, the clarity of this ambivalence diminishes, and the narrator's attitude becomes more traditional. This difference makes us think that it is possible to apply Bakhtin's concept of "dialogue" between genres to the diversity of narratives depending on the reader. The period covered in this article is one in which intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire were discussing how modernisation should take place, and there was concern about cultural change. However, in works written for children, the existence of this anxiety is not clear.

This duality of attitudes towards tradition in children's and adult novels must be seen in the context of the desire to use the transmission of tradition in children's literature as a tool for revealing the deeply internalised value judgements of societies as the perception of childhood began to change under the influence of the West. For this reason, reading novels or other genres written for adults and children together, and looking at the dialogical relationship be-

<sup>54</sup> R. Korkmaz, Z. Güneş, *Tanzimat Dönemi Türk Edebiyatı I*, Eskişehir, Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011, pp. 76-88.

tween them, allows for a deeper understanding of society's attitude to changing traditions. This is related to appearance, just as Bakhtin emphasises about one's situation in front of the mirror. This external view will include three different views of the same mirror and more. As in Muallime and Hasude, published in «Hanım Kızlara Mahsus Gazete», the appearance is viewed from the Eastern side, which associates strict adherence to religion and tradition with education. Another external view in the same mirror is the traditional form of the relationship between science and technology and the adventure novels published in the «Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete». From the perspective of works written for adults, these three different narrative attitudes reveal a dialogue. This dialogue is remarkable in that it reflects the negotiations of the transitional period of society. Based on Western instruments, they look at modernisation, not themselves, in a Western mirror, and prefer to create idealised types of children engaged in a series of activities by conveying to the reader the scientific and technological aspects they see in them. The reason for this, of course, has to do with the historical period in which they find themselves. Loyalty to the Sultanate and the desire to be a good Muslim still form the basis of child education, although it is felt that adult literature is beginning to move beyond these main themes.

Seeing the dialogical relationship between different types of narrators who depending on the nature of the reader will also help to see the organic structure of the whole. As a result, making comparisons in order to see the disagreements between different parts of society in the deeper meanings reflected in the dialogues within the text, and the dialogues between genres, will help to evaluate many issues that are not much emphasised today from different perspectives.

