

# 1 *Moralizing Productivity in the Age of Reform*

As the *shari'a* kept telling you to work, you did not,  
You made up so many superstitions on [the *shari'a*'s] name,  
Finally, you squeezed *tevekkül* in there somewhere,  
And thus made a fool of this luckless religion.

Mehmet Akif (Ersoy)<sup>1</sup>

The above poem was written by Mehmet Akif, a prominent public figure and one of the editors of *Sırat-ı Müstakim*,<sup>2</sup> considered to be the flagship of pan-Islamist journals during the final decades of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>3</sup> Mehmet Akif penned “*Vaiz Kürsüde*” (The preacher in the pulpit) sometime in 1914 – a fateful year for the Ottomans and the world. A century of internal crises, an arrested economy, incessant reforms, rebellions, separatist movements, weakening sovereignty, and shrinking borders were followed by an intensive series of wars and international crises: the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s annexation of Bosnia Herzegovina and the Italian occupation of Libya and the Aegean Islands are only a few of the events that all happened in a span of a few years. Then, in 1914, the Ottoman Empire was at the cusp of a global war of unforeseen scale, intensity, and bloodshed.

<sup>1</sup> Mehmet Akif Ersoy, *Fatih Kürsüsünde*, ed. Fazıl Gökçek (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2007), 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Sırat-ı Müstakim* started its publication in August 1908, a month after the Young Turk revolution, then continued under the name *Sebilü'r-Reşad* between 1912 and 1925. It was closed when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk declared Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu (Law of maintenance of order, or martial law).

<sup>3</sup> Historiography has long been engaged with pan-Islam as a concept, ideology, and movement. See, for example, Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Hasan Kayali, *Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Cemil Aydın, *The Idea of the Muslim World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017). For a more detailed discussion on political identities, see Chapter 5.

The urgency in this poem is almost tangible. Its provocative and accusative tone is a characteristic feature of the poetry of Mehmet Akif, who, years later, would go on to write the fiery national anthem of the Republic of Turkey. Here, channeled through the persona of an orator-*imam* at the pulpit of a mosque, preaching the “real Islam” to an audience of Muslims, the poet reprimands them for distorting Islam’s command to work. Invoking the term *tevekkül* (Ar. *tawakkul*) nineteen times and *sa’y* (work, effort) more than thirty, the poem can be seen as an extended effort to redefine such Islamic concepts. In the Islamic tradition, *tevekkül* is formulated as reliance on God or placing one’s trust in God’s hands.<sup>4</sup> However, according to Mehmet Akif, it was distorted through centuries to mean resignation from worldly affairs. The distorted meaning of *tevekkül*, to Mehmet Akif, became a symbol of everything that was corrupt and stagnant in Ottoman culture. In *real* Islam, believed Mehmet Akif, *tevekkül* was inseparable from steadfastness and hard work – it was the act of trusting God that hard work always delivers.<sup>5</sup> In the golden times of Islam, he argued, this very concept was the driving force behind the success of Muslim conquerors, who expanded Islam’s rule “to the Pyrenees.”<sup>6</sup> But in time, he believed, the concept was transformed into an overarching excuse for unwavering laziness, passivity, and social lassitude. The sad transformation of *tevekkül* exemplified, Mehmet Akif believed, how people disregarded the Islamic command to work and misconstrued the meaning of religious terms to justify their own unwillingness to work and inability to succeed. Thus, for him, those who misconstrued such concepts damaged Islam, this “luckless religion,” and suffered the consequences of their laziness by living through the reversal of their industrious ancestors’ fortune.

Mehmet Akif’s poem from 1914 was not the first effort to redefine this term, nor was it the first explanation to blame the Ottoman’s loss of power in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on the laziness of its people. The contextual importance of 1914 is defining, but this poem stood on the shoulders of volumes of similar articulations that had been circulating in the Ottoman public realm for more than half a century.<sup>7</sup> Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century,

<sup>4</sup> One interpretation of *tevekkül* is trusting that one will receive sustenance (*rizk*, *rizq*), but that may or may not require earning it.

<sup>5</sup> Ersoy, *Fatih Kürsüsünde*, 71. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> I return to Mehmet Akif Ersoy and 1914 in Chapter 5.

Turkish-writing Muslim-identifying Ottoman moralists engaged in a massive reformulation and reinterpretation of Islamic norms and virtues, which they, like Mehmet Akif, thought were misunderstood and distorted by Muslims through the ages; they attempted to rally Muslims in favor of productivity and eradicate laziness from the personal and social spheres on behalf of the “real” Islam. They accomplished something more than redefining these terms. They Islamicized and popularized a new set terms and notions that previously had little or no religious connotations, and they succeeded in doing this to such an extent that these terms came to be recognized as part of Islamic idiom and practice.

By examining the works of Ottoman moralists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I reveal one of the major articulations of what can be called the moralization of work and the stigmatization of laziness that took place in the last century of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>8</sup> The twin efforts of Ottoman moralists to reformulate existing concepts and articulate new ones brought a new moral language into existence, one that not only moralized productivity but also made it an integral part of individual, social, and national progress, without which the survival of the empire was seen as impossible. For these moralists, productivity was not an instrument of progress. Productivity *was* progress.<sup>9</sup>

As the empire faced more wars, rebellions, separatist movements, and economic subjugation in the nineteenth century, the dosage of morally prescribed solutions increased in the public sphere.<sup>10</sup> In fact,

<sup>8</sup> The closest term to work ethics I encountered in this period would be *üslub-u mesai* and *usul-u mesai*, found in Celal Nuri’s work. Celal Nuri (İleri), *İlel-i Ahlakiyemiz* [Our moral diseases] (Istanbul: Yeni Osmanlı Matbaa ve Kütüphanesi, 1916), 141.

<sup>9</sup> For some iterations of this, see Abdurrahman Şeref, *İlm-i Ahlak* (Istanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1318/1900–1), 75; Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Birinci Kısım* (Istanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1316/1899), 12.

<sup>10</sup> On morality and the Ottoman Empire, see Fortna, *The Imperial Classroom*. Fortna is one of the few historians to have examined the significance of morality education in late Ottoman society. See also Benjamin Fortna, “Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman ‘Secular’ Schools,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000): 369–93. On moral education in Ottoman state schools during the reign of Abdulhamid II, see Kamran I. Karimullah, “Rival Moral Traditions in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2012): 1–30. For ethico-political texts before the *Tanzimat*, see Marinos Sariyannis, *Ottoman Political Thought Up to the Tanzimat, A Concise History* (Rethymno, Greece: Foundation for Research and Technology, Hellas Institute

as Benjamin Fortna states, for nineteenth-century Ottoman society, issues regarding morality became “a burning issue of the day.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, even a quick look at the popular press of the time would reveal the plethora of judgments expressed regarding Ottoman morality – mostly about its weak and degenerating condition, followed by prescriptions for its rectification. The sheer number of morality books produced in this period is sufficient to demonstrate the booming interest. The number of morality texts published in the last century of the Ottoman Empire far surpassed the number published in the previous four centuries: only in Turkish, more than one hundred books on morality were published in the last decades of the nineteenth century alone.<sup>12</sup>

The quantitative change in the number of morality books paled next to the qualitative changes that accompanied them. Nineteenth-century Ottoman moralists articulated, on a normative level, many emergent discourses and anxieties of the Ottoman reform period. Morality gained a new political charge, one that was congruent with new

for Mediterranean Studies, 2015). A cross-confessional examination of Ottoman morality texts is yet to be explored. For an historical analysis of nineteenth-century Ottoman *musar* literature (morality texts in the Jewish tradition), see Matthias B. Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature and Ottoman Sephardic Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). For a discussion on morality and deviance in an Ottoman urban setting, see Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). For a compilation of Muslim moralist biographies, see Mehmet Ali Ayni, *Türk Ahlakçıları* (Istanbul: Marifet Yayınları, 1939). Note that the book’s title refers to the moralists as Turks. One earlier analysis on morality books is written by Agah Sırrı Levend, a literary scholar, who treats all morality books published during the entirety of the Ottoman period as products of the age of *ummah*: “Ümmet Çağında Ahlak Kitaplarımız,” *Türk Dili Araştırmaları Yılığ*, *Belleten* 1963 (1964), 89–115. Other more recent works include Hüsameddin Erdem, *Son Devir Osmanlı Düşüncesinde Ahlak* (Istanbul: Dem Yayınları, 2006), and Gülsüm Pehlivan Ağırakça, *Mekteplerde Ahlak Eğitim ve Öğretimi* (Istanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Fortna, *The Imperial Classroom*, 203.

<sup>12</sup> According to an incomplete bibliography compiled by A. Faruk Öztürk, 49 original works, 54 textbooks, 20 translated works, and 15 morality books (no longer extant) were published during the last decades of the empire. See A. Faruk Öztürk, “Ahlak Kitapları,” *Kebikeç* 6 (1998): 31–9. For a shorter bibliographic work on ahlak books (enumerating 108 books) from the early twentieth century, see Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Ahlak Kitaplarımız* (Istanbul: Necm-i Istikbal Matbaası, 1325/1907). Along with these morality texts, starting in the 1860s, Ottoman publishers selectively republished morality texts from previous centuries as well. See also Howard, “Genre and Myth,” 137–66.

concepts that were circulating in the empire. For these late Ottoman moralists, all members of society were responsible for saving not only themselves but also *their* empire. Their emphasis on work made productivity a central issue not only for the moral development of the individual but also for the advancement of the *nation* in general. They sought to predicate the nation's success on the actions and moral conditions of its citizens. Although each author's primary audience differed, many addressed and imagined the Ottoman nation as a single entity while simultaneously drawing the contours of an ideal individual and ideal nation and identifying those who did not fit in as morally weak, lazy, and unresponsive to the call of duty. Many assigned the blame of laziness on the people as a whole – and proposed to cure it by inviting their readers to become active, economically, and socially conscious citizens. The readers of these texts often found themselves characterized as degenerate and flawed, and always in need of reform. In addressing laziness, their texts forcefully contributed to the development of an exclusionist language, at the most abstract level, by labeling those perceived to be non-productive elements (persons as well as institutions) as lazy and idle, and therefore, as impediments to progress.<sup>13</sup>

In this chapter, I diachronically analyze the transforming notions of productivity and laziness in the works of modern and, at times, modernist Ottoman moralists who published in Turkish, using the Ottoman alphabet, in the late nineteenth century up to the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. My analysis of their normative discourses of work draws attention to, first, how these Muslim-identifying and Turkish-writing Ottoman moralists articulated a novel kind of moral knowledge that voiced the contours of a moral subjectivity in relation to the role of the modern citizen; and second, within the limitations of this normative genre, how they moralized, nationalized, and Islamized productivity while branding laziness as a sin, a disease, a crime, and even a form of treason.

While doing so, these late Ottoman moralists reconstructed a particular field of knowledge. As we observed in Mehmet Akif, some did this by dissociating Islam from a certain set of practices that they

<sup>13</sup> This historically produced language had severe political ramifications, particularly after 1908 and even more so after 1923. I discuss this in detail in Chapter 5 and the Epilogue.

declared not authentically Islamic and by redefining others as Islamic. They believed that Islam ought to be the moral and authentic basis of change and renewal, but, perhaps similar to their contemporary moralists elsewhere, it was not the Islam “as presently understood and as presently practiced.”<sup>14</sup> They often wrestled with what they claimed to be distorted religious formulations that advocated a life based on passivity, contentment, and resignation, which they deemed as thoroughly un-Islamic, and saw a renewed approach to Islam – the true one – as the panacea. In doing this, they articulated a new body of knowledge specific to their experience of the empire’s dire realities.

Starting with the premise that Islam can neither be seen as a historical agent, nor a cause, this chapter focuses on the discursive spaces articulated by moralists that made different kinds of both Islamic and modern knowledge and action possible.<sup>15</sup> These authors’ articulation of religion represented a dual discursive competence – one essentialist and one processual.<sup>16</sup> That is, while these culture producers referred to religion as a separate, abstract, and fixed category, at the same time, they were “aware of remaking, re-shaping, and reforming” it.<sup>17</sup> When examining these works that reconstruct Islamic knowledge, we should avoid assuming that there is a “real” and “fixed” sense of tradition and a less authentic interpretation of it.<sup>18</sup> By examining the period’s morality books and presenting them as cultural factors, I rethink the construction of Islamic knowledge in modern times by focusing on Ottoman moralists and avoid the approaches that define the period’s products merely as either part of “tradition” or of Westernization.

<sup>14</sup> Monica Ringer, “Rethinking Religion: Progress and Morality in the Early Twentieth-Century Iranian Women’s Press,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24, no. 1 (2004): 47–54.

<sup>15</sup> For the differentiation of Islam as a separate category under religion, see Brian Silverstein, “Disciplines of Presence in Modern Turkey,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (2008): 118–53.

<sup>16</sup> Gerd Baumann, *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 91–3.

<sup>17</sup> Malory Nye, “Religion, Post-religionism, and Religioning: Religious Studies and Contemporary Cultural Debates,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 12 (2000): 447–76.

<sup>18</sup> Ahmed Dallal, “Appropriating the Past: Twentieth-Century Reconstruction of Pre-Modern Islamic Thought,” *Islamic Law and Society* 7, no. 3 (2000): 325–58. See also Ahmed Dallal, *Islam Without Europe: Traditions of Reform in Eighteenth-Century Islamic Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2018). Also see Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

## 1.1 The Social Practice of Morality Writing

In the nineteenth century, the Ottomans gave a second life to the old genre of morality books. Transforming this genre, both in form and content, was one way in which the new approach to productivity was established at a discursive level. In fact, the moralization of work cannot be understood without examining this particular genre's larger transformation. Morality books comprise one of the major sources by which we can trace the transformation of morality in the nineteenth century, in connection with the moralization of work and stigmatization of laziness, which this study views as central to the development of the culture of productivity. Around the mid-nineteenth century, morality texts increasingly started to display, at various levels, unparalleled departures from earlier texts in three intertwined ways, all of which contributed to the construction of the moralization of work.

### 1.1.1 *Authorship and Audience*

One of the changes observed in the morality genre concerns the patterns of authorship and the social practice of writing morality texts. Whereas before the nineteenth century, most of these texts were penned by members of the *ulema* and Sufi luminaries, in the nineteenth century, most morality books were written by civil bureaucrats of both high and low ranks, middle school instructors, doctors, and members of the military. As explored in the following section, Ottoman moralists of the early modern era occupied high jurist positions and were scholars of Islamic sciences. Unlike the trendsetter pre-Ottoman moralists, such as Ibn Misqawayh (d. 1030), al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1274), as well as the prominent Ottoman moralists, such as Kinalizade Ali (d. 1572), and Mehmed Birgivi (d. 1573), writing a book on morals in the nineteenth century no longer required expertise on Islamic sciences and/or ethics.

The moralists of the late nineteenth century should be understood in the larger context of the Ottoman reform period, of which they were both subjects and engines. Their writing on morality was an act of reform and a call for renewal, both to individuals and to society as a political unit. At the center of their conceptualizations of reform stood the importance of productivity. Many administrative and bureaucratic reforms starting in the late eighteenth century and advancing in the

nineteenth century reflect this widely shared understanding. The writers of these books, like other urban culture producers, were “subject to and cognizant of the same pressures as the state planners.”<sup>19</sup>

As explored in this chapter and the next, most of the morality authors who wrote on the value of productivity and deemed laziness the gravest sin against the nation were educated in Ottoman institutions, which were either first established or reformed in the nineteenth century. Some even served as educators in these institutions. Many others were employed in Ottoman bureaucratic structures, following their training in Ottoman schools. The valuation of work was crystallized and sustained, on a daily basis, in these state institutions. One of the major arguments of this chapter and the next is that late Ottoman moralists, mostly as members of the Ottoman bureaucratic system and/or educational institutions, were imbued with the modern discourses of productivity not through (merely) reading Western books and/or visiting Western cities, but by taking part in the Ottoman reform processes and institutions. While I explore the relationship between bureaucratic reforms and the development and spread of a culture of productivity in detail in the next chapter, in the next few paragraphs, I focus on how morality books became so widespread in the nineteenth century.

Two factors contributed to the expansion of both authorship and readership of morality books. First, morality became part of the Ottoman school curriculum in the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup> The Ottoman state initiated a reform period in education, starting in the late eighteenth century, when new schools, both military and civilian, were established with a set curricular system.<sup>21</sup> The integration of morality books into the new school curriculum in the *Tanzimat* era was a drastic change in the expansion of the authorship and audience of this genre. Prior to the nineteenth century, while several morality texts were highly popular, as we can observe from the abundance of

<sup>19</sup> James L. Gelvin, “Post Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc? Reassessing the Lineages of Nationalism in Bilad al-Sham,” in *From the Syrian Land to the State of Syria*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Christoph Schumann (Beirut: Orient-institute DMG, 2004), 127–42.

<sup>20</sup> For details about morality education and the curriculum, see Üstel, *Makbul Vatandaşın Peşinde*, 33–55; Fortna, “Islamic Morality”; Ağırakça, *Mekteplerde Ahlak*.

<sup>21</sup> For educational reforms and a brief bibliography, see Introduction.



the manuscripts found in libraries of urban sites, morality as a subject was not part of the *medrese* curriculum.

Attribution of increased importance to moral education was not unique to the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century; it was observed in various parts of the world, including France, China, and Japan.<sup>22</sup> As nation-state structures and new politico-economic ideas and ideologies were consolidated in the nineteenth century, the emphasis on morality evolved from morality to morality education – systematic, thematically homogenized, and complementing the concepts of nationhood. Emile Durkheim, for example, gave a series of lectures on moral education in 1898–9. One of his main concerns was about the integration of moral teachings into modern education.<sup>23</sup> Durkheim argued that the sources and objects of morality must be a supra-individual entity. For Durkheim, this entity was society itself, since “the domain of the moral begins where the domain of the social begins.”<sup>24</sup> According to him, although there are various social groups to which an individual belongs, there is a hierarchy. He concluded that because “the family is subordinate to the nation, and humanity has as of yet not organized itself into any one coherent group, the nation has priority in terms of being the ultimate authority and source of morality.”<sup>25</sup> With its unproblematized attribution of cohesion to the concept of society – and acceptance of nations as natural political units – Durkheim subscribed to the ideology of nationalism and articulated a concept of morality in accordance with it. Whether or not Ottoman moralists attended the Durkheim lectures is unknown to us, but what we know is that, surrounded by similar realities and concerns, at roughly the same time, Ottoman authors addressed a similar set of problems in this novel field of morality in the age of nation-states.

The particular urgency of generating loyalty and cohesion among the peoples of the empire intertwined the ideological goals of

<sup>22</sup> Fortna, *The Imperial Classroom*, 26–42. On European morality education, see Phyllis Stock-Morton, *Moral Education for a Secular Society: The Development of Morale Laïque in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988).

<sup>23</sup> Jarret Zigon, *Morality: An Anthropological Perspective* (London: Berg, 2008), 33.

<sup>24</sup> Emile Durkheim, *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1961). Also quoted in Zigon, *Morality*, 35.

<sup>25</sup> Zigon, *Morality*, 33.

Ottomanism with educational reforms. Pedagogical forms embody discursive practices and serve to impose and maintain them.<sup>26</sup> Pedagogical discourses and practices, therefore, present one of the most prolific channels of Ottomanism. While what it meant to be Ottoman remained a fluid concept until the dismemberment of the empire and the content and methods of education differed among the reformists of all ranks, the belief that education as vital to the Ottoman Empire's survival remained a constant. *Tanzimat* era reformists, for example, believed that education not only helped the progress of the empire but also had the power to bring seemingly disparate imperial communities together.<sup>27</sup> This is how Âli Pasha (1815–71), one of the leading figures of the *Tanzimat* reforms, summarized the fear of disintegration and its solution:

Ethnic and interest-driven discord among various subjects will end up in disintegration. The state should work on bringing these differences together by education – this is doable. People seek prosperity and security, and the homeland is where these needs are met.<sup>28</sup>

This goal was a major impetus behind nineteenth-century educational reforms, such as the Educational Reform Bill of 1869 (the Nizamname of 1869). This bill reemphasized the importance of morality education in grade schools and introduced mandatory attendance.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. D.F. Boucard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 200.

<sup>27</sup> For how the role of education was emphasized even further with the reforms of *Islahat* Decree (1856), see the memorandums of Âli and Fuad Pashas, in Engin Deniz Akarlı (ed.), *Belgelerle Tanzimat: Osmanlı Sadrazamlarından Âli ve Fuad Paşaların Siyasi Vasiyetnameleri* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1978), 15–39.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>29</sup> Cahit Yalçın Bilim, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Eğitim Tarihi (1734–1876)* (Eskişehir: TC Anadolu Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002), 170–202. Note that, in its most abstract form, public education was not just a nineteenth-century phenomenon. As early as 1702, we know of royal decrees requiring parents to allow their children to attend local primary schools (*sıbyan mektepleri*), for basic Qur'anic education. These decrees called for parents to put aside their need for the labor of their children for the sake of education. For example, the royal decree of 1702 stated that children needed to learn the basic rules of faith, and discouraged parents from engaging their children in work before they had acquired this basic education (*İtikada müteallik zaruri meseleleri öğreninceye kadar dünya sanayii ile uğraştırmaktan sakınmalıdır*). Nafi Atuf Kansu, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi, Bir Deneme* (Istanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kiraathanesi, 1931), 29. The emphasis

In this context, the first morality book purposed for students attending grade schools (*sıbyan mektepleri*) was written by a leading *Tanzimat* figure, Sadık Rıfat Pasha (1807–1857).<sup>30</sup> Published first in 1847, when the Pasha was the head of the Sublime Council for Judicial Ordinances [*Meclis-i Vala-yi Ahkam-ı Adliye*], the morality book *Risale-i Ahlak* is an early example of the incorporation of morality into the new system of education.<sup>31</sup> Sadık Rıfat Pasha, a key early *Tanzimat* figure, was considered to be an influence on Mustafa Reşit Pasha, one of the authors of the Gülhane Decree of 1839.<sup>32</sup>

The year Sadık Rıfat Pasha's book was published, morality education became part of the curriculum of *sıbyan* schools. His *Risale-i Ahlak* was accepted by the Council of Public Education (*Meclis-i Maarif-i Umumiye*) as a textbook for both Qur'anic schools as well

on breaking away from “worldly production” in order to obtain religious education should be noted here.

- <sup>30</sup> Sadık Rıfat was later involved in the civil code project based on shari'a, the *Mecelle* (Ar. Majalla). For how this ambitious project that shaped how shari'a was conceptualized in the modern period see Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 54–72.
- <sup>31</sup> Sadık Rıfat, *Müntehabat-i Asar* (Istanbul: Tatyos Divitiyan, 1290/ 1873). As we learn from its follow-up book *Zeyl-i Risale-i Ahlak*, this book was initially titled *Mebadi-i Ahlak*. Sadık Rıfat Paşa, *Zeyl-i Risale-i Ahlak* (Istanbul: Darü't-tibaati'l-amire, 1273/1857), 1. Scholars disagreed on the novelty of the content and format of Sadık Rıfat Pasha's *Risale-i Ahlak*, which was reprinted many times in a posthumously compiled collection. While for some it reflected a conservative approach in which the students were “to comply with the existing social traditions” (Somel, *Modernization of Public Education*, 62–4), for others the book placed Islamic principles at the core of ethics, showing how religious requirements were also rational, thus “establishing a connection between social and religious life and intellect.” See Zeki Salih Zengin, *II. Abdülhamit Dönemi Örgün Eğitim Kurumlarında Din Eğitimi ve Öğretimi* (Istanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2009), 76–7. Still others found the novelty of the book in representing a linear transition from “religious to rational,” in which the book's emphasis on the laws of God and reason (*şer'i ve 'akli*) was seen as a sign of a rationalization process that closely followed an “enlightenment-centered trajectory.” Sadık Rıfat Paşa and Yehezkel Gabbay, *From Ottoman Turkish to Ladino: The Case of Mehmet Sadık Rıfat Pasha's Risâle-i Ahlâk and Judge Yehezkel Gabbay's Buen dotrino*, ed. Isaac Jerusalemi (Cincinnati, OH: Ladino Books, 1990). I address the issue of religious vs. secular binary at the end of this chapter.
- <sup>32</sup> Carter Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism and Modernity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 74. On Sadık Rıfat Pasha, see also Şerif Mardin, *Yeni Osmanlı Düşüncesinin Doğuşu*, trans. Mümtazer Türköne (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996), 191–219. Also see Somel, *Modernization of Public Education*, 61–4.

as state primary schools, and between 1847 and 1876, it served as required reading for students who completed the alphabet primer (*Elifba cüzü*).<sup>33</sup> The Pasha designed the book both as a reading exercise in simple Ottoman Turkish and as a basic introduction to moral education. Written in a paternalistic tone and containing references to early modern moralists such as Kınalızade, the book was the first morality book written for mass consumption, targeting a captive audience. It was widely distributed to the Balkan and Anatolian provincial schools during the 1850s and 1860s. Petitions from various parts of the empire were sent to the capital requesting alphabet primers along with similar morality books for small-town schools.<sup>34</sup>

The connection between reforms in education and morality book production strengthened as the decades advanced in the nineteenth century. Motivations for writing morality books varied, but the integration of morality education into the Ottoman educational system played an important role in encouraging the authors of these texts. By the end of the century, many Ottoman writers were motivated by the desire to write a book that would be added to curricula and taught in schools. While Sadık Rifat was a high-ranking bureaucrat, similar to his pre-nineteenth-century predecessors, many who followed him were not. In his *Behcet'ül Ahlak* (published in 1896), Abdullah Behcet (1844/5–1911), a middling bureaucrat from the finance ministry, stated the motive behind penning his text.<sup>35</sup> He wanted it to be chosen as a textbook for the Mülkiye İdadisi (civil high school), which prepared students for the Mekteb-i Mülkiye (civil service academy), after he read in a newspaper that the Maarif Nezareti (ministry of education) was looking for a morality textbook to be added to the academy's curriculum.<sup>36</sup> In 1895, then a young and obscure exile to Aleppo, Ali Kemal (1867–1922), the future polemicist and politician, too, responded to the ministry's call that year.<sup>37</sup> Ali Seydi, a bureaucrat, a teacher, and a graduate of the Mekteb-i Mülkiye, similarly

<sup>33</sup> Somel, *Modernization of Public Education*, 58–62. According to Somel, the possible last date of publication was 1306/1888/9; the original remained unchanged through different editions.

<sup>34</sup> MF.MKT 10/103, 7 Rebiyulahir 1290/June 4, 1873.

<sup>35</sup> DH.SAID, 22/182: 351. For more on Abdullah Behcet, see Chapter 2.

<sup>36</sup> Abdullah Behcet, *Behcet'ül Ahlak* (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1314/1896), 4–5.

<sup>37</sup> Ali Kemal, *İlm-i Ahlak* (Istanbul: Sabah Matbaası, 1330). Ali Kemal published his text years later in 1914. This publication unleashed a fierce polemic between

responded to the same ministry's call for a morality book to be used as a textbook.<sup>38</sup> These books attest to the intertwined relationship between the formation of the modern bureaucratic state and individuals who integrated their knowledge production to its expanding institutions and sought to shape them with their voices.

The second factor contributing to the expansion of authorship and readership of morality books was the availability of a cheap press in the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> In this period, printing technologies were relatively more accessible – to a level that opened up publishing to less experienced authors. This allowed many authors to publish their material even if they were not textbooks. Many morality books came in pocket sizes, adding to their versatility. The pocket-sized morality texts certainly were meant to be integrated into daily life rather than being studied with a dictionary. Their authors made conscious choices to go with their books' physical dimension: these books were almost always directed at ordinary people and not at a scholarly audience. They organized and presented the material in an easily accessible language, in which they could broadcast their ideals and ideas to an ever-widening reading community.<sup>40</sup> In his introduction, Abdullah Behcet presented reasons the ministry should choose his book; foremost among these, he stated that it is accessible to a general audience – in his case, he hoped, a captive one.<sup>41</sup> The classical morality books, he argued, had one major limitation: they were written for experts

the author and Baha Tevfik (1884–1914) on morality and the question of what kind of morality was needed in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>38</sup> In his preface, Ali Seydi provides the information that he applied to the ministry with his work, but he was never contacted. Ali Seydi, *Ahlak-ı Dini* (Istanbul: Kanaat Matbaası, 1329/1913), unnumbered preface.

<sup>39</sup> James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (eds.), *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 1–22.

<sup>40</sup> Saba Mahmood has examined similar effects of popular Islamic texts in twentieth-century Egypt: Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005). Writing on morality for a popular audience was a widespread practice in the nineteenth century, but it should be noted that there were texts written for a general readership in this field in previous centuries, as demonstrated by the popularity of books such as *Muhammediye*, by Yazıcızade Mehmed (d. 1451), which is centered on the self-discipline of followers based on the model of the Prophet Muhammad. See Yazıcızade Mehmed, *Kitab-ı Muhammediye* (Istanbul: Şirket-i Sahafiye-i Osmaniye Matbaası, 1313/1895).

<sup>41</sup> Abdullah Behcet, *Behcet'ul Ablak*, 5.

(*erbab-ı ihtisas*) and could not be used in youth education. The choice of writing for a general (and young) audience was demonstrated in the books: some of them, especially textbooks, included a *lügatçe* – a short dictionary of sorts at the bottom of the pages providing definitions of the difficult words that appeared in the text. One major advantage of the moralists of this period was that the genre was not a new and/or foreign one – its early incarnations had been read and heard by the public for centuries. This familiarity of the concept of *ahlak* books should be recognized as we try to understand how the public accepted this old genre in its new incarnation. We do not know how widespread the readership of these books was in the nineteenth century, but the fact that some of these books were used as textbooks in secondary schools throughout the empire points to their widespread dissemination.

The authorship and readership of morality texts were not limited to the Muslim community of the Ottoman Empire. Yehezkel Gabbay (1825–98), an Ottoman journalist, translated (in the loosest sense of the term) Sadık Rifat Pasha's (1807–56) *Risale-i Ahlak*, into Ladino, a Sephardic language primarily spoken by the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire. Gabbay was well aware of the novelty of the Pasha's book, as he argued that its style should replace the older and, according to him, obscure Judaic morality books.<sup>42</sup> This book, titled *El Buen Dotrino*, was a nineteenth-century reformulation of a long tradition of Jewish ethics books, *sifrut musar*.<sup>43</sup> Similar to its model book, *El Buen Dotrino* became a textbook in the primary education of the Ladino-speaking community. Hence, shifts in discourses of morality were not limited to one community of the empire: they crossed communal lines.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> For literature on *sifrut musar*, see Lehmann, *Ladino Rabbinic Literature*. For a Jewish–Ottoman text from nineteenth-century Salonika that critiqued the obscurantism of the rabbinical establishment of the city, see Sa'adi Besalel A-Levy, *A Jewish Voice from Ottoman Salonica: The Ladino Memoir of Sa'adi Besalel a-Levi*, ed. Aron Rodrigue and Sarah Abrevaya Stein, trans. Isaac Jerusalemi (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> Sadık Rifat Paşa and Yehezkel Gabbay, *From Ottoman Turkish to Ladino*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> For morality education in the Dönme schools of Salonika, see Marc D. Baer, *The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 44–64.

### 1.1.2 *Morally Upright, Hardworking Citizens*

The changes in assumptions about morality account for the second major novelty in the genre of morality books. There are two intertwined aspects of these assumptions: one amounts to what can be called as the politicization of subjective interiority, and the other is the assumption that both individuals and society urgently needed reform and rectification.

Morality books of the mid-to-late nineteenth century addressed a moral community that overlapped with a political community – a community that was imagined to have clear territorial boundaries, a flag, an imperial identity, and a shared role and responsibility in the empire’s future. Morality was integral to the new discourses of subjectivity that flourished during the Ottoman reform period. A major underlying assumption in many of the morality texts is that one’s value as a person is directly proportional to their value to their nation, displayed through acts of hard work and readiness for duty. Moralists addressed their readers not only as morally accountable individuals but also as members of a nation, as responsible citizens of the Ottoman Empire. For example, in the case of nineteenth-century Persia, “the perfect man had changed from a Muslim believer to an Iranian citizen.”<sup>45</sup> The virtuous Muslim, as Talal Asad points out, was never perceived as an autonomous individual, but as a person inhabiting a “moral space shared by all who are together bound to God.”<sup>46</sup> Morality texts of the nineteenth century and later did address a moral community, like their predecessors, but more often than not, this moral community was a national community.

For Ottoman morality discourses, a one-dimensional transition from a perspective centered on religious identity to a national one seems simplistic, however. As it will be explored in the following section, we have to take into account that early-modern Ottoman moralists too addressed an Ottoman-ruled audience as opposed to all Muslims of the world. They, too, addressed mostly urban, Ottoman-specific problems and produced arguments for the legitimacy of the Ottoman dynasty. The nineteenth-century books referenced Islamic norms profusely,

<sup>45</sup> Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 184.

<sup>46</sup> Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 214. He points out that the role of *ulema* is to advise on (*nasihah*), right conduct.

similar to their counterparts in the early modern era. Respectively, in the nineteenth century, a Muslim identity was incorporated into the concept of Ottoman moral citizenship. All of these complicate the presumed linear passage from religious to national.

Morality books in the nineteenth century attest to a new set of assumptions about the self. Self-regulation had long been one of the most recognized religious and moral practices, but in this particular period, the construction of a new subjective interiority reflect the centrality of a reformed self in the overall reform project of the empire, establishing a direct connection between the development of character and unfolding of the future of the empire.<sup>47</sup> Because of this assumed connection, the individual infirmities and immoralities are now seen as social diseases in need of rectification. Productivity is not only a means to achieve this rectification, but also its goal.

In this context, duty became the central concept in the organization of morality books in the nineteenth-century Ottoman morality texts – a common characteristic of morality (and self-help) books in the modern period both in Europe and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>48</sup> Self-improvement through being productive, therefore, became a personal, religious, social, and political duty. As I discuss in the following sections, Ottoman morality books not only transformed traditional elements of the Ottoman morality genre, but also created a new language for the self-help genre. Hence, they are a product of a distinctly nineteenth-century Ottoman literary practice.<sup>49</sup>

### 1.1.3 *Virtue Ethics to Deontological Ethics*

Thus far, I have indicated that the concept of duty gained new importance in the morality texts of the nineteenth century. Without this concept, the idea and ideal of work, beyond hand to mouth, could not be promoted. The third distinctive characteristic that we see in many of late Ottoman morality texts is the organization of the genre around the concept of duty. In the nineteenth century, there is a general

<sup>47</sup> For subjective interiority, see *ibid.*, 222.

<sup>48</sup> For the neologism of deontology, Loudon, *Toward a Genealogy*, 571–92.

<sup>49</sup> Saba Mahmood, looking at religious texts published in Egypt in the second half of the twentieth century, dismisses the similarities between the two genres as superficial, perhaps because she is writing about a period one hundred years later than the period studied here. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 80.



shift from virtue ethics (or golden mean ethics) to deontological ethics.<sup>50</sup> As the next sections explore, until the mid-nineteenth century, morality books usually employed the perspective of Aristotelian virtue ethics, organizing the books mainly around the concepts of virtues and vices. In virtue ethics, the subject seeks a golden mean between two extremes in order to attain good morals. Although the golden mean model continued to be used sporadically, many late nineteenth-century authors structured their morality texts on categories of duty (*taksim-i vezayif*): duties to self, duties to society, and duties to the nation. If there was a new grammar for selfhood and nationhood, it was best expressed within this deontological approach to morality.

There are indicators that the advice literature in the eighteenth century reflected a new emphasis on the usage of the term duty. In this period, the concept known as “circle of justice,” or “circle of equity,”<sup>51</sup> once a central tenet of Ottoman advice treatises, slowly disappeared.<sup>52</sup> In its stead, political advice treatises emphasized the concept of “duty to religion and state” (*din u devlet*). Early modern conceptualizations of duty were limited in scope, and those who were burdened with the duty to the *din u devlet* were usually not the common folk. Still, we can imagine that, in the nineteenth century, those who called for a mobilization for productivity by using the concept of duty benefited from an already existing language. The deontological rhetoric was bidirectional. Saffet Pasha (1814–83), who is known for crafting the *nizamname* of 1869, which introduced expansive reforms in education, said that the “education of the public

<sup>50</sup> On the history of deontological ethics, Kant, Bentham, and others, see Robert B. Loudon, “Toward a Genealogy of ‘Deontology,’” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34, no. 4 (October 1996): 571–92.

<sup>51</sup> For this concept of Ottoman political theory, which is usually presented around the circumference of a circle, see Cornell Fleischer, “Royal Authority, Dynastic Cyclism, and Ibn Khaldunism in Sixteenth Century Ottoman Letters,” in *Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Ideology* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 46–68. Fleischer provides a full translation from the historian Naima, who states that he adapted the scheme from Kinalzade’s *Ahlak-ı Alâi*. Fleischer argues that Kinalzade adapted it from Jalal al-Din Davani’s (d. 1502, who Islamicized the Aristotelian circle [also attributed to Sasanid Anushirvan and Ali bin Abi Talib] by incorporating the term *shari’a*) *Akhlaq-i Jalali*, not from Ibn Khaldun, as Naima believed. Fleischer, *ibid.*, 49.

<sup>52</sup> Aksan, “Ottoman Political Writing 1768–1808,” 53–69. See also Howard, “Genre and Myth,” 137–66.

[is] the duty of any state and government.”<sup>53</sup> It was the duty of the state to educate the people about their social duties (*vezaiif-i cemiiyyet*). This concept, therefore, lay at the core of the languages of reform, be it for state institutions or rebuilding of the self and society.

Ottoman moralists embraced the concept of duty, as the idea of the transformation of each and every member of the imperial peoples gained traction. As Ali Kemal stated, “duty is the soul of the science of morality. Morality is the science of duties.”<sup>54</sup> According to Abdurrahman Şeref (1853–1925), a moralist and a prominent figure in the Ottoman intellectual realm, individuals have a duty to serve not only their families and villages/neighborhoods but also the state. For him, duties to each of these had equal weight.<sup>55</sup> Duty, as a self-reflective notion, circles around to other levels of society and eventually reaches the level of humanity. As part of a person’s duties to self (*vazife-i zatiyye*) and social duties (*vazife-i içtimaiyye*), morality books discussed productivity in a normative language, making it not only an individual path to fulfillment but also a social duty that an individual owed to the state.

These changes in the genre demonstrate that the new approach to morality and new conceptualizations of productivity are historically

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Kansu, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, 130.

<sup>54</sup> Ali Kemal, *İlm-i Ahlak*, 3. In earlier texts, the concept of earning a living (*kesb*, *kasb*) did not refer to the language of duty; instead they used terms such as *haqq*, i.e., having a right.

<sup>55</sup> Abdurrahman Şeref, *İlm-i Ahlak*, 58. Abdurrahman Şeref continues: “Man has duties to the state one belongs to, which are called civic duties (*vezaiif-i medeniye*). If [one’s] country, government, religion, and national differences are put aside, human beings are all brothers. We can categorize them all under the category of humanity (*insaniyet*). One has duties in this category as well: they are called duties to humanity.” Abdurrahman Şeref taught at such institutions as Mahrec-i Aklam, a school that educated future government officials, and Mekteb-i Mülkiye-i Şahane (Imperial civil service academy), where he served as the principal, and then became the principal of the most prominent Ottoman lycee, namely Mekteb-i Sultani (Galatasaray Lycee), his own alma mater, between 1894 and 1908. For more information on Abdurrahman Şeref, especially his role in Galatasaray, see Kansu, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, 116–18; for a general biography, see Musa Duman’s introduction in Abdurrahman Şeref, *Osmanlı Devleti Tarihi*, ed. Musa Duman (Istanbul: Gökkuşbu Yayınları, 2005). Also see Mücellidoğlu Ali Çankaya, *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler (Mülkiye Şeref Kitabı) 1859–1968* (Ankara: Mars Matbaası, 1968–9), 1: 136–9. He was the last state-appointed historian (*vakaniüvis*) of the empire. After a long career in education, he became a statesman after the constitutional revolution in 1908.

intertwined. The moral infirmities and weaknesses of the individual no longer belonged just to the individual. Therefore, the laziness of a political subject was not merely a social and political problem. The language of this new subjectivity was constitutive of the language of citizenship, and both were closely tied to the empire's success or failure.

Before exploring the work of the Ottoman moralists and their articulations of the value of work and denunciation of laziness, I briefly turn to the articulations of laziness in the Ottoman world prior to the nineteenth century.

## 1.2 Before the Nineteenth Century

Prior to the nineteenth century, the notions of work and laziness had cultural meanings that generally differed from those that they acquired during and after it.<sup>56</sup> There is no trans-historical concept of laziness and industriousness. Like any other concept, they are dynamic and historically specific. Despite the apolitical facade of the texts they usually appeared in, these concepts are not devoid of political meanings. In what follows, I provide a sketch of meanings attributed to work and laziness and briefly touch upon the historical contexts in which these meanings are articulated, ranging from concerns of sultan-ic legitimation and orthodoxy to the tensions between authorities and various social groups, including coffeehouse patrons, vagrants, and the urban unemployed.<sup>57</sup> My goal in this preliminary sketch is to show that attitudes toward work and laziness as articulated in the moralistic, political, and poetic traditions were not dominated by a single discourse, nor they had fixed meanings within their respective traditions.

<sup>56</sup> For a discussion on anachronistic approaches to leisure in pre-modern Europe, see Peter Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," *Past & Present* 146 (Feb. 1995): 192–7.

<sup>57</sup> For sunnization and confessionalism in the early modern Ottoman Empire, see Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011). Recent works deepen our understanding of the intellectual currents of the early modern Ottoman era: see, for example, Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*; Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018); Guy Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law: The Hanafi School in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Sariyannis, *Ottoman Political Thought Up to the Tanzimat*.

Early modern Ottoman moralists and jurists discussed laziness and work, similar to their medieval colleagues, with frequent references to a template based on the golden mean (*i'tidal*) in virtue ethics.<sup>58</sup> Starting with the eighth and ninth centuries, a number of currents shaped what is known as the “Islamic” ethics tradition, from Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic influences to Persian statecraft literature, and, later, the political and intellectual formulations of early modern Ottoman statecraft.<sup>59</sup> Virtue ethics was an Aristotelian method, and it was appropriated by early Muslim moralists to become the main approach until the deontological (duty-centered) paradigm came to dominate the field of ethics in the nineteenth century.

Anchored to the views of virtue and the ethical practice of faith, the early modern Ottoman moralists and jurists aimed to assist the perfection of character, assuming an audience of Muslim males, mainly elite.<sup>60</sup> It was within this mixed tradition with a heavy reference to virtue ethics, responding to the particular concerns of their politico-moral worlds, the eminent early modern learned men of the empire, such as Kınalızade Ali (1510–72), Mehmed Birgivi (also known as Muhammad Pir Ali, d. 1573), and Ibn Kemal (also known as Kemalpaşazade, 1468–1534) discussed laziness.<sup>61</sup> Their work, especially the morality books of Kınalızade Ali and Mehmed Birgivi, with

<sup>58</sup> For more on the theory of virtue ethics, see Zigon, *Morality*, 23–5. Zigon argues that, based on the work of scholars such as Alasdair MacIntyre, the virtue theory is making “a comeback.”

<sup>59</sup> The first morality books produced in the Islamic era were translations, such as the Sanskrit work *Kalila wa Dimna* (translated by Ibn Muqaffa, d. 757) and Plato’s works on morality (translated by Ishaq b. Hunayn, d. 910), both of which became foundational texts for later periods. For the history of the genre in Islamicate societies, see Carra de Vaux, “Akhlāk,” *Encyclopedia of Islam, First edition*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, and R. Hartmann. Online: [dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X\\_ei1\\_SIM\\_0520](https://doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_0520). Last accessed Feb. 13, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> For a recent work that rethinks early Islamic moral discourses through the lens of feminist critical perspective and exposes their hierarchical, male-centered narratives in juxtaposition to the notions of equality found in the early Islamic sources, see Zahra Ayubi, *Gendered Morality: Classical Islamic Ethics of the Self, Family, and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019).

<sup>61</sup> Kınalızade Ali, *Ahlak-ı Alâî* (Istanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2007); Mehmed Birgivi, *Tarikatü'l Muhammediyye ve's Siretü'l Ahmediyye* (Istanbul: ElHaj Hüseyin Efendi Matbaası, 1309). While Kınalızade wrote his book in Turkish, Birgivi’s choice of language was Arabic. For more on Kınalızade, see Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*, 74–80; Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 72–5. For more on Birgivi and his age, see Katharina Anna Ivanyi, “Virtue, Piety and the Law:

many commentaries written on them, remained popular and influential for centuries.<sup>62</sup>

In virtue ethics, laziness was presented as a vice, and the language against it was just one facet of the broader discourse against all vices. The virtue ethics paradigm viewed human morality as a constant balance of excesses and deficiencies. Laziness, in this paradigm, was presented as a deficiency of desire (*tefrid-i şehvet*), which needed to be rectified. Desire (*şehvet*) was seen as the basic function of self. Not desire itself, but the lack or excess of desire was presented as a problem. The scholar and moralist Birgivi and his eighteenth-century commentator Kadızade Ahmed discussed laziness in the nexus of extremes and deficiencies of desire. Having excessive desires pushed one toward transgression (*fücur*), while its lack caused many other vices, such as laziness (*betalet*).<sup>63</sup> Laziness was seen as a hindrance to the acts of worship a believer was required to fulfill. In other words, while the excess (*ifraad*) of desire was shown to be a transgression of the boundaries of rightful behavior, its deficiency, that is, the other extreme (*tafreed*), was indicated as an inability to do anything, ranging from religious obligatory rites to deeds permitted by religion, such as working for one's livelihood (*kasb, kesb*).<sup>64</sup> In line with the golden mean approach, moderation of desire (i.e., *iffet*) was a virtue one had to strive to achieve, since "with this trait, one desires and engages with activities that are fit for and allowed by the *shari'a*."<sup>65</sup>

A Study of Birgivi Mehmed Efendi's *al-Tariqa al-Muhammadiyya*," PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2012.

- <sup>62</sup> Kadızade Ahmed, for example, wrote a commentary on the morality teachings outlined in Mehmed Birgivi's *Birgivi Vasiyetnamesi*. See Kadızade Ahmed, *Birgivi Vasiyetnamesi Kadızade Şerhi*, ed. A. Faruk Meyan (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1988). Kadızade Ahmed bin Mehmet Emin (d. 1783) should not be confused with the leader of the Kadızadeli movement, i.e., Kadızade Mehmet (d. 1635), although Mehmed Birgivi had been influential in the Kadızadeli movement.
- <sup>63</sup> In some texts, the word *humud* (weakness, lit., dying light) or *cumud/jumud* (inanimateness or bleariness) is also used. Both conditions are noted to cause laziness (*betalet*). Kadızade Ahmet, *Birgivi Vasiyetnamesi*, 153. For more on these terms, see Yozgadi Keşfi Mustafa Efendi, *Keşifler Risalesi, Risale-i Keşfiyye, Ahlak-ı Adudiye Tercumesi*, ed. İrfan Görkas (Istanbul: Büyüyen Ay Yayınları, 2016), 62.
- <sup>64</sup> Kadızade Ahmet, *Birgivi Vasiyetnamesi*, 177–8. To see how the term *kanaat* is discussed, see *ibid.*, 196. For other related terms, such as *fakirlikten korkma* ("fearing poverty") and *tevekkül* ("resignation"), see *ibid.*, 186–7, 196–9.
- <sup>65</sup> Yozgadi Keşfi Mustafa Efendi, *Risale-i Keşfiyye*, 61.

The concept of *kasb/kesb*, earning one's livelihood, gets a detailed treatment in Kinalızade Ali's seminal work *Ahlak-ı Alâi (The Sublime Ethics)*. Kinalızade Ali was a prominent Ottoman scholar, moralist, and judge, who, through his *Ahlak-ı Alâi*, contributed to the consolidation of sultanic legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>66</sup> For Kinalızade Ali, laziness was divided into two types: laziness in worldly activities and laziness in religious deeds.<sup>67</sup> According to Kinalızade, the goal of worldly activities is earning one's own livelihood, and laziness is a hindrance to this. Being lazy in worldly activities deprives a person of their ability to sustain themselves in this world, making them destitute.

After the opening of the coffeehouses in the Ottoman capital and throughout the empire in the mid-sixteenth century, the social commentary on *kasb* also involved coffeehouses. The history of the coffeehouses and coffeehouse patrons in Ottoman urban centers and their at times tense and adversarial relationship with the authorities is well known.<sup>68</sup> When Katib Çelebi (1609–57), a prominent polymath of the seventeenth century, described coffeehouses, he commented on how people “wasted” their time in these sites. Katib Çelebi emphasized how “[s]tory-tellers and musicians diverted the people from their employments,” making their “livelihood f[a]ll into disfavor.”<sup>69</sup> These arguments against idleness, of course, were one way in which the coffeehouses, disliked by authorities for a wide range of reasons (from being sites of political dissent to causing city fires), were delegitimized. Still, “earning one's own livelihood” (*kasb*) played a major role in the arguments and policies against coffeehouses and their patrons.

<sup>66</sup> Baki Tezcan, “The Definition of Sultanic Legitimacy in the Sixteenth Century Ottoman Empire: The *Ahlak-ı Alâi* of Kinalızade Ali Çelebi (1510–1572),” Unpublished MA thesis, Princeton University (1996).

<sup>67</sup> There are several verses in the Qur'an regarding laziness (*kasal*). Two involve description of hypocrites who attend public prayers (*salat*) in a lazy state, “to be seen by men” (4/142, see also 9/54).

<sup>68</sup> For a brief history of coffee in the Ottoman Empire, see Cemal Kafadar, “A History of Coffee,” *The XIIIth Congress of the International Economic History Association*, Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 22–26, 2002; François Georgeon, *Doğru'da Kahve ve Kahvehaneler*, trans. Meltem Atik-Esra Özdoğan (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1999); Selma Akyazıcı Özkoçak, “Coffeehouses: Rethinking the Public and Private in Early Modern Istanbul,” *Journal of Urban History* 33, no. 6 (2007): 965–86; Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 29–60 and 72–91.

<sup>69</sup> Katip Çelebi (1609–1657), *The Balance of Truth*, trans. G.L. Lewis (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1957), 60–1.

These attitudes, including Birgivi's and Kinalzade Ali's, reflect the earlier debates on the jurisprudence of earning a living, a bone of contention between different schools of thought in Muslim societies since early Islamic times.<sup>70</sup> Michael Bonner's analysis of a ninth-century book attributed to al-Shaybani (d. 805) shows that earning a living was usually formulated not as duty but as a right.<sup>71</sup> In his commentary on al-Shaybani's book, al-Sarakhsi (d. 1096), a medieval jurist, argued that *kasb* is not a duty/obligation (*farida*) in and of itself.<sup>72</sup> His reasoning was simple: if it were a religious duty, then doing as much of it as possible (*al-istikthar fih*) would be recommended, whereas excessive work, when the goal was merely material gain, was condemned. The reason work was not a duty (*farida*) but a right was explained in terms of the redistribution of wealth: unless one worked and earned wealth, he/she could not perform other religious obligations.<sup>73</sup> Later in this chapter, I will turn to the issue of duty and how this notion gained a prominent place in the writings of the moralists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in parallel with the valuation of work.

While Kinalzade Ali viewed the goal of work as earning one's own living and deemed laziness that affected one's livelihood as a vice, he considered laziness in religious matters to be a more deeply concerning problem. Indeed, although these two forms of laziness bore similarities, he viewed them as fundamentally different. In the moral world of Kinalzade, laziness in religious matters, one of the worst vices, is an abhorrent trait that costs a believer his/her eternal happiness. Kinalzade quotes a Persian poem in *Ahlak-ı Alâi*, which sets the tone of the urgency of doing godly deeds, pointing out that after one dies, there would be no opportunity to achieve good deeds and no obligations to fulfill:

Get work done today because today will not exist anymore  
Time will be in abundance, but there will not be any work tomorrow (in the hereafter).<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> For this term in the Qur'an, see Qur'an 2/267; 4/32; 111/2.

<sup>71</sup> Michael Bonner suggests the term *baqq* in his analysis of *Kitab al-Kasb*. See Michael Bonner, "The *Kitab al-Kasb* Attributed to al-Shaybani: Poverty, Surplus, and the Circulation of Wealth," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001): 410–27.

<sup>72</sup> For more on al-Sarakhsi, see N. Calder, "al-Sarakhsī," *Encyclopedia of Islam, Second edition*, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W.P. Heinrichs. Online: [dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_6620](https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6620).

<sup>73</sup> Bonner, "The *Kitab al-Kasb*," 410–27.

<sup>74</sup> Kinalzade Ali, *Ahlak-ı Alâi*, 220.

Compared to being deprived of a good life in the hereafter, laziness in worldly matters was presented as rather inconsequential. In Kinalzade's view, worldly laziness does not necessarily correspond to the overall laziness of character that affected one's faith and good deeds (*amel-i salih*). One could be a hardworking person in worship and rituals while not being a major achiever of worldly gains. Even further, Kinalzade states that being too involved or invested in worldly work can cause laziness in religious matters because any work that keeps one from his/her religious duties is an abuse of the limited time one has in this temporary world.<sup>75</sup>

One of the operating concerns of Kinalzade's *Ahlak-ı Alâi* was about the protection of social cohesion and the dangers of the common folk's entry to the ranks of the ruling elite.<sup>76</sup> A common conviction among the early modern treatise writers, Kinalzade's views on the permeability of social classes as a cause for instability might be important in understanding his measured stance on worldly work and the accumulation of wealth, which was a major pathway for many who had gained the privileges of the ruling class in the early modern period. Given his concerns about the common folk's unchecked demands on the imperial structures, Kinalzade's emphasis on the dangers of worldly work is not surprising.<sup>77</sup>

While early modern Ottomans borrowed from their medieval counterparts, it can be clearly seen that their particular concerns and discussions reflect the specific and novel problems they faced. Both Kinalzade and Birgivi's articulation of what was considered acceptable contributed greatly to the Ottoman formulations of orthodoxy and Ottoman ruling elites' concerns in the sixteenth century.

Both Kinalzade's and Birgivi's discussions on laziness and work were brief, an indication that these issues were not regarded as central for them and for their audiences. This is definitely not true for Ibn Kemal's treatise titled *Risale fi medhi's-sa'y ve'z zemm al-el bitale* (*Treatise on Praising Work and Condemning Laziness*). This treatise is one of the rare works that addressed the issue of laziness as its main theme. Both Kinalzade and Birgivi regarded Ibn Kemal as an

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 223–6. Some contemporary accounts read these examples as an indicator of “Ottoman attitudes” against worldly work. See Ayşe Sıdıka Oktay, *Kinalzade Ali Efendi ve Ahlak-ı Alâi* (Istanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 2005), 262–4.

<sup>76</sup> Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire*, 51–2. <sup>77</sup> Ibid.



influential figure in their intellectual developments.<sup>78</sup> In this treatise, Ibn Kemal evaluated the importance of working for one's own livelihood through the prism of Ottoman orthodoxy.<sup>79</sup> Starting his work with the Qur'anic verse, "that man will only have what he has worked toward" (53:39), Ibn Kemal's treatise is a diatribe against laziness and begging.<sup>80</sup> For him, begging is a result of laziness. Basing his arguments on this verse and the concept of *kasb*, he condemns begging in unequivocal terms and adamantly argues that one should earn his own living.

Ibn Kemal's work attests to the fact that at particular historical moments, some (perhaps dormant) religious discourses against laziness rose to prominence and were employed in an overtly political manner. As in the case with this treatise, Ottoman Sunni imperial narratives, especially during perceived times of crises, appropriated medieval arguments, such as against begging, to target oppositional political movements. This particular historical moment occurred during the era of heightened clashes between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires; these clashes took place not only on the battlefields but also in intellectual and commercial arenas. The elites of these two expanding empires engaged in a struggle for legitimacy that engulfed communities perceived to be at the margins of their respective orthodoxies.<sup>81</sup> Some Sufi

<sup>78</sup> Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*, 74–5.

<sup>79</sup> İbn Kemal Şemseddin Ahmed b. Süleyman (Ibn Kemal), "Risale fi medhi's-sa'y ve'z Zemm alel Bitale," in *Resail-i İbn Kemal*, ed. Ahmed Cevdet (Istanbul/Dârülhilâfetilaliyye: İkdâm Matbaası, 1316). As can be seen from the publication date, this treatise was revived during the reform period, being published in 1898/9 (1316) by Ahmed Cevdet, the editor of *İkdâm* newspaper. A Turkish translation by Edhem Pertev Pasha (1824–73) appeared in *Mecmu'ayi Fünun*. Edhem Pertev, "Meth-i Sa'y ve Zemm-i bitail hakkında Meşahir-i Ulema-yı İslamiyeden Kemal Paşazade'nin Arabi Risalesi Tercümesi," *Mecmu'ayi Fünun* (1281): 281–9. For more on Ibn Kemal's influential work on the Hanafi school of jurisprudence and its prominent jurists, see Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*, 71–4.

<sup>80</sup> Qur'an 53:39.

<sup>81</sup> For battles of legitimacy between these empires, see Giancarlo Casale, "Imperial Smackdown: The Portuguese between Imamate and Caliphate in the Persian Gulf," in *Portugal, the Persian Gulf, and Safavid Persia*, ed. Rudi Matthee and Jorge Flores (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 177–90; through stories of conversion, see Krstić, *Contested Conversions*, 75–97. See also Markus Dressler, "Inventing Orthodoxy: Competing Claims of Authority and Legitimacy in the Ottoman–Safavid Conflict," in *Legitimizing Order, The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 151–73.

orders employed begging as a communal practice and were deemed as a threat to the established order.<sup>82</sup> Ibn Kemal's discourse against begging (presented as stemming from laziness) should be read in the context of such a moment of crisis.

Ibn Kemal was a towering figure in his period. After quitting his military career to become a scholar, he rose to the highest offices of the empire and partook in imperial politics. During the reign of Selim II, he served for eight years as the chief jurist (Sheikh al-Islam/Şeyhulislam), the highest *ulema* post in the empire. He was part of the military campaign against the Safavids and (in)famously legitimized the war against the Safavid Empire on the basis of their heresy.<sup>83</sup> A staunch critic (and persecutor) of what he perceived as heterodox movements in the empire, he formulated the imperial Sunni ideology against both external enemies (such as the Safavids) and internal communities that the state perceived as natural allies of their enemies.<sup>84</sup>

Ibn Kemal's treatise on laziness was part of a larger battle he and his patrons were waging against what they considered a politically threatening heterodox movements in the empire. As the work of Ahmet Karamustafa and others show, in the context of the great struggle between the Safavid and Ottoman Empires, antinomian Sufi traditions posed a political threat to the Ottoman ruling elite. Most of the heterodox/antinomian Sufi groups of this time, such as the Kalenderis, practiced communal forms of begging.<sup>85</sup> Begging, as a

<sup>82</sup> For begging in the Ottoman Empire, see Zeki Tekin, "Beggars in the Ottoman Empire," in *The Great Ottoman-Turkish Civilization*, vol. 2: *Economy and Society*, ed. Kemal Çiçek, et al. (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2000), 669–73.

<sup>83</sup> Ertuğrul Ökten, "Ottoman Society and State in the Light of the Fatwas of Ibn Kemal," Master's thesis (Ankara: Bilkent University, 1996).

<sup>84</sup> Lest the reader think that *divan* poetry was devoid of politicized Sunni ideology, note the usage of *qizilbash* (followers of Shah Ismail, who were deemed as heretics by the Sunni Ottoman elite). Me'ali (d. 1535–6), a poet and a contemporary of Kinalizade and Ibn Kemal, likened his love rival to a *qizilbash* and his beloved to Sultan Selim. In these verses, he reveals that he expects his beloved to crush his rival just as Selim crushed the *qizilbash*:

Sanma öldürmez rakibi yar ey dil k'ola mı  
Hiç kızılbaş pençe-i Sultan Selim Han'dan halas.

See Ahmet Atilla Şentürk, *Klasik Osmanlı Edebiyatı Tiplerinden Rakib'e Dair* (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1995), 72.

<sup>85</sup> On the Kalenderi movement, see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200–1550* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006); Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı*

means of humility, has long been a practice of some Sufis and ascetics (*zahids*), not unlike mendicants in medieval and early modern Europe. The act of begging involved many levels of meaning. For Kalenderis, begging was a public act that displayed their opposition to the highly ritualized norms of Sufi and *ulema* establishments. They denounced the worldly pomp of the *ulema* and the ceremoniousness of mainstream Sufi orders by ridding themselves of the customary Sufi insignia (for example, cloaks and felt caps) and ridiculing Sufis in public. Kalenderis had high recognizability as well, having shaved their hair, beard, mustache, and eyebrows, a practice called *chahar darb* (four blows), adding a visual element to the performative aspect of their challenge.<sup>86</sup> It is not surprising that their begging, sometimes in large groups and accompanied by loud chanting in the streets, was perceived as a subversive act.<sup>87</sup>

Ibn Kemal's critique of begging, then, was targeting these subversive acts and their actors. He supported his position by basing his arguments on God's laws, which, as he argued, required that all labor needed to be compensated. The underlying problem of begging is that a beggar receives the fruits of someone else's labor without any compensation (materially or otherwise).<sup>88</sup> Here, Ibn Kemal extensively quoted medieval scholars on *kasb*. He also argued that these beggars pose as Sufis, but, in reality, are not; thus, he denied them any socially accepted status. He opined that these so-called Sufis depended on others for their livelihood and did not deserve the good treatment of decent people. Lest his own social group was misunderstood, he highlighted the contrast between these Sufi groups and the *ulema*, another social group who did not perform labor, as it is commonly understood, and depended on patrons for their livelihood. For Ibn Kemal, the *ulema* were distinguished not only for having knowledge but also for

*İmparatorluğunda Marjinal Sufilik, Kalenderiler XV–XVII Yüzyıllar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 118–32.

<sup>86</sup> Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, 19.

<sup>87</sup> There is a long tradition of denouncing work as an act of disobedience. For example, the Karramiyya declared earning a living forbidden (*tahrim al-makasib*). See also Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda*, 168.

<sup>88</sup> Begging has been an issue of contention for centuries. For a well-known account in which begging is seen as permissible under certain circumstances and the etiquette of begging is discussed, see Ghazzali's *The Revival of the Religious Sciences (Iḥyā' ulūm al-dīn)*. Imam Gazali, *Ihya-i Ulum'id Din*, trans. Ali Arslan, vol. 5 (Istanbul: Arslan Yayınları, 1993), 654–62.

sharing it – they gave back to others, unlike the begging Sufis who had neither scholarly pursuits nor any intention to give back to those from whom they took. They did not have the capacity to teach people in return for their alms. Ibn Kemal proceeded with the argument that the act of taking something and not paying it back was against the will of God, and therefore was an injustice (*zulm*).

Ibn Kemal's treatise should be understood as the stance of a member of high-ranking *ulema* in the sixteenth century against the heterodox practices of a particular group of Sufis that were becoming increasingly visible and threatening to the imperial center. Unlike the nineteenth-century moralists, his discussions on laziness did not possess a heightened sense of urgency. Similarly, unlike the nineteenth-century writers, his concern with laziness was not directed at the population at large, nor was it a "national" character problem that needed to be rectified – it was just another front in which he delegitimized the perceived enemies of the Ottoman dynasty. The fact that he wrote his treatise in Arabic is further evidence that his audience was not the general public. In that matter, too, he differed from his counterparts in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

What intensified the discourses against laziness, particularly in the eighteenth century, was the rising concern among statesmen regarding vagrancy in Istanbul and the other urban centers of the Ottoman Empire. These miscreant groups were usually seen as a threat to urban security, and they were periodically rounded up and sent outside of city centers.<sup>89</sup> Particularly following the two major rebellions that shook the capital city Istanbul in 1703 and 1730, the unemployed youth, associated with the unruly classes, such as Janissaries and street gangs, became the target of the authorities and were gathered from coffee-houses.<sup>90</sup> As the century advanced, the perceived threat of vagrants and the unemployed increased on the radar of the authorities. As Fariba Zarinabaf notes, while the Ottoman state did not pass vagrancy acts until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it saw vagrants as a threat and referred to them as "idle and disorderly,"<sup>91</sup> revealing the assumed connection between perceived idleness of

<sup>89</sup> For the intensification of security concerns in the eighteenth century, see Fariba Zarinabaf, *Crime and Punishment in Istanbul 1700–1800* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 126–7. <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

persons and their potential criminality.<sup>92</sup> The discourses against idleness and vagrancy legitimized the suppression of dissent – even if only limited to the urban centers and done in a sporadic fashion rather than in a systematic and sustained manner as we encounter in the nineteenth century and later.

While jurists and moralists attacked laziness for a gamut of reasons (and placing moral limitations on excessive work), Ottoman poetry reflected a different value world.<sup>93</sup> The poetic tradition presents us with a distinct take on work and laziness. In the literary tradition of *divan* poetry, which amalgamated tropes from the Persianate and Hellenistic poetic traditions, the concept of work is often mentioned pejoratively. Whereas morality treatises praised worldly work in moderation, Ottoman poets despised it and depicted it as a burden. Cinani (d. 1595), a poet and contemporary of Kınalızade and Birgivi, sheds a different light on work in these verses:

Neither humans nor angels could reach  
 their desired destination by working  
 Fate corrupts your entire endeavor  
 In short, if you have intellect, do not labor (*emek*).<sup>94</sup>

Similar to English, the Turkish word for labor, *emek*, meant suffering, and torment. In harmony with the association of heaven with idle pleasures and work as the curse of the postlapsarian human experience, Cinani depicts work as a lost struggle against fate. A similar

<sup>92</sup> I turn to the coffeehouses of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the reformist wrath against them in Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>93</sup> For a discussion of pre-modern conceptualizations and a partly romanticized narrative, see Baumann, *Work, Consumerism, and the New Poor*, 5–22. For a historical analysis of this issue, see Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 19–35.

<sup>94</sup> *Bulmadı menzil-i maksuda vusul*  
*Sa'y edüp nev'i beşer cins-i melek*  
*Akibet sa'yini berbad eyler*  
*Hasılı akıl isen çekme emek.*

From Cihan Okuyucu, *Cinani, Hayatı, Eserleri, Divanının Tenkidli Metni* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1994), 210. Ironically, this stanza appears as evidence in an academic article supporting the idea that Ottoman society was becoming increasingly lazy and fatalistic. Emine Yeniterzi, “Divan Şiirinde Osmanlı Devletindeki Sosyal, Ahlakî, ve İktisadî Çözülmenin Akisleri” (The social, moral and economic degeneration of the Ottoman state in divan poetry), in *SU Uluslararası Kuruluşunun 700.Yıl Dönümünde bütün Yönleriyle Osmanlı Devleti Kongresi*, 7–9 Nisan 1999, *Bildiriler* (Konya, 2000), 361–77.

poem connects worldly work with suffering, praises poverty, and advocates a life of contentment:

Those who obtained peace and quiet obtained them by poverty  
Content yourself with less and do not labor for worldly trouble.<sup>95</sup>

These poems may reflect the perspective of the poets about the changing conditions of the world around them, witnessing some members of their communities striving – from their viewpoint, perhaps, too hard – to take part in economic activities and power struggles.<sup>96</sup> The poetic social commentaries perhaps expressed the poets' frustration and critique of the troubles their contemporaries went through for job security and material gains.

As we now turn to the moralistic writings produced in the late Ottoman period, the above brief discussion illustrates the variation in formulations of work and laziness and how these concepts were embedded in narratives that reflected the various knowledge/power configurations and social realities of their times. More relatedly to the following one, the moralistic narratives explored in this section also show how the values Ottoman elites wrote upon were not replicas of earlier periods, indicating the dynamic nature of what seems to be static and timeless. Therefore, intertwining multiple sources, and/or responding to the immediacy of contemporary matters using established norms were not unique to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Given these characteristics, the genre is valuable to our understanding of how various pressing new currents entered – not just in a merely intellectual sense – it, and how they transformed and were transformed by the genre. The moral values and discursive traditions are embodied in the practices and institutions and “hence deeply

<sup>95</sup> *Her bulan fakr ile buldı rahatı  
Kıl kanaat görme dünya zahmeti.*

See Diyarbekirli Ahmed Mürşidi, *Pendname*, ed. M. Said Mermutlu (Istanbul: Büyüyen Ay Yayınları, 2012), 22.

<sup>96</sup> For an example of making money in the Middle East, see Nelly Hanna, *Making Big Money in 1600: The Life and Times of Ismail Abu Taqiyya, Egyptian Merchant* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998); Nelly Hanna, *Artisan Entrepreneurs in Cairo and Early-Modern Capitalism (1600–1800)* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011). For a brief economic history, see Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

imbricated in the material life of those inhabiting them.”<sup>97</sup> In this respect, we cannot draw a distinction between pre-nineteenth-century morality texts and those that came later and claim that the former was static and devoid of politics or more authentic than its nineteenth-century counterparts. The difference lay elsewhere, as I discuss in the coming sections of this chapter.

### 1.3 The Transformation of Work and Laziness

#### 1.3.1 Work as a Civilizational Duty: Going Beyond Bare Necessities

In the nineteenth century, the measure of productivity went beyond the bounds of *kasb/kesb* debates of the early modern period. If in the sixteenth century, Ibn Kemal found begging despicable and impermissible on the basis of one needing to earn their own livelihood, the nineteenth-century reformists went further and condemned working only for the minimum necessary to meet essential needs.

As the nineteenth-century reformists conceived it, productivity was elevated to a civilizational marker, as civilization became an aspirational concept. In 1863, Mehmed Şerif, who wrote on the economy politic, published an article titled “Lüzum-u sa’y u amel” (The necessity of work); in it, he argued that one ought to work to earn more than what is enough since working hard is a civilizational duty – one that the individual owes to their society.<sup>98</sup> Replete with new terms, such as progress and civilization, Mehmed Şerif’s argument was built on the idea that it was necessary to work hard for one reason, if not any other: it is an individual’s duty to society to maintain a livelihood to enjoy more than the barest essentials. Only by “working and going through the trouble of earning,” can one consume non-essential goods. For Mehmed Şerif, obtaining non-essentials (and having buying power) is not a self-serving act, but helps the “expansion of civilization” and contributes to the “progress of civilization and prosperity.” Therefore,

<sup>97</sup> Asad, “The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam.”

<sup>98</sup> Mehmet Şerif Efendi, “Lüzum-u Say u Amel,” *Mecmua-yi Fünun* no. 8 (Şa’ban 1279/Jan.–Feb. 1863), 333–7. *Mecmua-yi Fünun* was a publication of Cemiyet-i İlmîye-i Osmaniye (Ottoman Science Society), which operated between 1862 and 1883.

Mehmed Şerif stated, work should be considered a necessary duty to humanity (*mukteza-yi vezaif-i insaniyet*), because the individual was a member of a society, the members of which must work hard to produce and maintain that society's level of civilization.<sup>99</sup>

Particularly following the Crimean War (1853–6), during and after which the Ottoman state borrowed heavily from the international debtors, urgent discussions on economic assessment and the salvation of the empire's economy intensified. The old ideals of self-sustainability were now accompanied by far more aggressive ideas of wealth and profit that were needed to sustain an Ottoman entrepreneurial class, which was seen as necessary for advancing the Ottoman economy. The new economic man was central in this vision: he needed to reform his old ways of conducting business, go beyond the basic necessities, and be aware of new discoveries. As in the writings of Mehmed Şerif, everyone was charged with “increasing the quality of their work, and strive to reform their trade.”<sup>100</sup> This duty required an overhaul of the methods used by previous generations. Mehmed Şerif argued that, if people did not change “what [they] have seen from their fathers and masters and strive harder to invent [new ways], they will never reach a better position than their predecessors.”<sup>101</sup> This was not merely a question of working harder. Intellectuals like Mehmed Şerif advocated a new mentality about work, one that, they argued, would enable the Ottomans to achieve civilizational progress.

The same decade Mehmed Şerif penned this piece saw the emergence of the Young Ottomans, a generation of oppositional intellectuals and public figures, educated and trained in the new bureaucratic institutions of the empire. Tired of what they saw as the top-down and half-complete reforms imposed by the Ottoman high bureaucracy, and the international crises in which the Ottoman state frequently found itself, the Young Ottomans voiced their dissatisfaction with the rule of the *Tanzimat* cadres while formulating their vision of social change based on meaningful reforms and more extensive participation. Leading figures such as Ibrahim Şinasi (1826–71) and Namık Kemal (1840–88) popularized such novel concepts as constitutionalism, nation, liberty, and homeland. Successful in translating their visions

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 336.      <sup>100</sup> Ibid., 335.      <sup>101</sup> Ibid.



and anxieties of reform to popular discourses through various media, they remained influential for the coming generations.<sup>102</sup>

Notions of productivity played a significant role in the reform visions of prominent Young Ottomans. As one of the articulators of discourses of productivity, the concepts of *sa'y u gayret* (“effort and ardour”) played a crucial role in Namık Kemal’s writings. As a child and critic of the *Tanzimat* reforms, Namık Kemal was also critical of the Ottoman body politic, which he believed suffered from symptoms of deep-seated laziness:

Everyone is wasting half of their life in inertia and seclusion (*atalet ve inziva*). How can we reach the [level of] modern nations in the path of progress, [nations] that spend their days and nights for work and order, found ways to educate the mind and protect the health (*terbiye-i akl ve hıfz-ı sıhhat*), and are flawless in body and behavior; while our body politic . . . hides at night and spends its life in the condition of a half-unconscious epileptic?<sup>103</sup>

As someone who spent his life criticizing the Ottoman governments and consequently in exile, here, Namık Kemal directs his harshest critiques to the perceived problems of the Ottoman commoners. His concerns regarding the people’s purported inertia are closely tied with his vision of converting the *millet-i tabia* (a nation of followers, i.e., subjects) to *millet-i metbua* (a nation to be followed [by its rulers]).<sup>104</sup> For that end, the individual citizen has the responsibility to progress on every level, entirely based on his/her own effort. He accuses the Ottomans of a particular type of laziness that leads people to expect everything to be done by those in power.<sup>105</sup> Namık Kemal invites his readers to be conscious of their duties and take their fates in their own hands. From consuming sufficient amounts of nutritious food (basically, for Namık Kemal, meat), keeping one’s home and street clean, to

<sup>102</sup> For the Young Ottomans, see Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962).

<sup>103</sup> Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri I*, 248.

<sup>104</sup> These concepts appeared in an essay by Ahmed Midhat in *İbret* newspaper, where Namık Kemal was the editorial writer. Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri*, 19.

<sup>105</sup> “Should the state clean everyone’s homes too? (*Herkesin evini de mi devlet tathir etsin?*)” Ibid., 74. Regarding eating fewer vegetables and more meat (for the purposes of strengthening the body), “should there be laws for such issues as well?” Ibid., 77. The notion of “expecting the state to solve all the problems” (*herşeyi devletten beklemek*) is still a common trope used defensively by state officials and neo-liberal/anti-welfare state ideologues.

dressing properly in the winter, he presents many major and minor issues as tied to the overall salvation of the empire and its peoples.<sup>106</sup> In all these, he calls his readers to be proactive and productive, and take responsibility for their own fate and not expect the state to save them.

The importance of productivity in the civic-duty centered reform visions of Namık Kemal is exemplified in his take on the introduction of street lighting (*tenvir-i esvak*) in Istanbul, as part of the extensive urban reforms that took place starting in the mid-nineteenth century, when the Ottoman economy's integration into Europe intensified. Historians draw parallels with the contemporaneous urban reforms of Baron Haussmann in Paris.<sup>107</sup> As T.J. Clark points out for Paris, the city was seen as "the emblem and agent of a wider economic transformation."<sup>108</sup> Along the same lines, in an 1871 article titled "Civilization," Namık Kemal strongly supported the street lighting reform, mainly because an illuminated city would allow the "people of work" (*ashab-ı sa'y*) to engage in "six or seven hours of extra work and commercial activity, adding one more life to their lives."<sup>109</sup> Such a change in the urban realities was welcomed not only because it would turn nights into days, ending the concept of the sunset as the end of the day, but also because it would support the efforts of making the entire city a worksite, and city dwellers industrious and productive.

For Namık Kemal, reaching Europe's level of civilization required two elements: hard work and time to accumulate the fruits of that hard work. In his well-known essay on progress, he argued that if the work was properly done, there is no doubt that the Ottomans would catch up with the level of progress observed in Europe in two centuries.<sup>110</sup> Both hard work and time were, for Namık Kemal, obtainable, if not

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 76–77.

<sup>107</sup> For the urban reforms in Istanbul, see Zeynep Çelik, *Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986); Stefan Yerasimos, "Tanzimat'ın Kent Reformları Üstüne," in *Modernleşme Sürecinde Osmanlı Kentleri*, ed. Paul Dumont and François Georgeon (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999).

<sup>108</sup> T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 54.

<sup>109</sup> Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri*, 359–60.

<sup>110</sup> Namık Kemal, "Terakki," *İbret* 45 (Istanbul, 1872). Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri*, 219. For a translation, see Charles Wells, *The Literature of the Turks: A Turkish Chrestomathy* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1891), 156–61. Quoted in *The Modern Middle East: A Sourcebook for*

for a misunderstanding of the term *kanaat* (contentment) that equated it with lazy hedonism.<sup>111</sup> In an effort to reverse that, Namık Kemal ends his essay with a call to his countrymen to wake up from their hedonistic sleep and be productive, for as the Qur'an says, "that man will only have what he has worked toward" (53:39).<sup>112</sup> The term *kanaat*, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter in the example of Mehmet Akif's poem in 1914, would continue to be a term with which many generations of Ottoman reformists would wrestle.

As enamored as they were with the industriousness of the Europeans, a substantial amount of the Ottoman reformists of the period believed that the culture of productivity needed to be founded on Islamic principles. They were quick in pointing out the native roots of this culture while also referencing its universal nature.<sup>113</sup> In 1878, Ahmed Midhat (1844–1912), one of the most popular authors of the late Ottoman period, published his *Sevda-yı Sa'y u Amel* (*L'Amour du travail*).<sup>114</sup> Ahmed Midhat's book not only articulated the vital necessity of developing a great love for industriousness but also offered a unique summary of the history of *l'amour du travail* in the Ottoman world.<sup>115</sup> For him, "the love for work" was not an inherently

*History*, ed. Camron Michael Amin, Benjamin C. Fortna, and Elizabeth Frierson (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 410.

<sup>111</sup> "... sa'yde olan noksanımızın islahına bir çare bulmak her işe mukkamdemdir." Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri*, 219.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>113</sup> For a similar discussion on claiming the roots of European science in Islamic history, see Yalçinkaya, *Learned Patriots*.

<sup>114</sup> For more information on Ahmed Midhat, see Chapter 4. Ahmed Midhat was widely read by different denominational communities in the empire. See Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire," *Arabic Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, no. 1 (2003): 39–76. Also see Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmet Midhat* (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2008).

<sup>115</sup> Şerif Mardin argues that Ahmet Midhat's *Sevda-yı Sa'y u Amel* was a reflection of the ideas of Samuel Smiles. Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları 1991), 4:47. The Scottish writer Samuel Smiles (1812–1904) popularized the concept of self-help, and advocated the improvement of the individual in order to bring about the improvement of the nation. In *Self-Help*, Smiles argued that the overall strength of a state depended "far less on the form of its institutions than on the character of its men." He viewed individuals as a source of national power, since a "nation is only an aggregate of individual conditions and civilization is but a question of . . . personal improvement." Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (London, 1859), 36. Ahmed Midhat may well have read and been inspired by Smiles's books, but this does not diminish the originality of *Sevda-yı Sa'y u Amel* (which does not reference Smiles's work

European characteristic. This love was a universal one – it had simply gone dormant in the Ottoman world. Ahmed Midhat believed that “if ‘*sevda-yı sa’y u amel*’ does not fully flourish in our society, it is because our national progress has not reached the level of maturity, while its occurrence in Europe can be explained by the fact that their people were more educated than we [are].”<sup>116</sup> If Europeans were able to awaken this love from its dormant state by establishing strong educational practices, so could the Ottomans.

These remarks reveal several issues. First of all, Ahmed Midhat believed that the ideal of industriousness is best exemplified in Europe. Certainly, Ahmed Midhat subscribed to the progressive view of history and painted a homogenized view of Europe. He also believed that the Ottoman people had lagged in this historical development – not sharing the same temporal plane with Europe, as Namık Kemal believed.<sup>117</sup> However, Ahmed Midhat, like Namık Kemal, held that the Ottomans – like any other nation – were in the process of catching up. Just as sufficient levels of education had awakened the dormant industrious character among the Europeans, so education was expected to produce the same result in the Ottoman Empire.

In Ahmed Midhat’s narrative, the universal value of industriousness was not only de-Europeanized in its essence, but also it was presented as an Islamic duty.<sup>118</sup> Ahmed Midhat believed that if Ottomans took Islam’s orders to heart, they would awaken their love for industriousness. Islamic notions “are given to us [by God] to bring out this sublime love from its potentiality.”<sup>119</sup> To do that, he proposed that all the Qur’anic verses, sayings of the Prophet, and the sayings of influential scholars (*kelam-ı kibar*) that praised hard work should be displayed in public in “golden letters, in beautiful calligraphy.” These

openly), nor occlude the fact that his book reflected the urgent need many contemporary Ottoman authors felt regarding productivity and social reform. Samuel Smiles’s books were translated into Arabic (Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 108–10), and Armenian in 1880 (Samuel Smiles, *Inknoknutyun*, trans.

S. Etmekçiyân (Istanbul: S.G. Bardızbanyan ve Ortakları, 1880).

<sup>116</sup> Ahmed Midhat, *Sevda-yı Sa’y u Amel* (Istanbul: Kırk Anbar Matbaası, 1878), 7–9.

<sup>117</sup> For the evaluation of assumed temporal difference in thinking about progress and civilization, see Makdisi, “Ottoman Orientalism,” 771–2.

<sup>118</sup> Universal and Islamic are not concepts in conflict, as shown in Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–9.

sayings should be inscribed on buildings, as part of the Ottoman architectural tradition. Nonetheless, he admitted, for these to have an effect, the meanings of these maxims needed to be “engrave[d] on our hearts.”

Others must have shared Ahmed Midhat’s wishes, given how they were, in part, fulfilled. The saying “*al-kāsibu habibullah*” (he who earns is God’s beloved), attributed to Prophet Muhammad, became a widespread inscription on new or renovated buildings of the nineteenth century, advancing a world view in which “earning” is propagated not only through books and treatises, but also through public structures frequented by people. One of the most notable examples of these structures is the Ottoman Bank headquarters in Bankalar Caddesi (inaugurated in 1892), the old banking district of Istanbul.<sup>120</sup> A beautiful inscription of “*al-kāsibu habibullah*,” crafted by the famous calligrapher Sami Effendi (1837–1912),<sup>121</sup> decorates the interior gate of this institution that, contrary to its name, was mostly owned and operated by foreign powers, to which the Ottoman state was indebted, highlighting the colonial context of the struggle of productivity.<sup>122</sup> Another inscription of the saying by the same calligrapher can be seen on the Feşçiler entrance of the Grand Bazaar in historic Istanbul. This inscription, like the one in the Ottoman Bank, is of recent making. It was placed on the gate during the renovation that took place following the 1894 earthquake.

The word *el-kāsib* is an ambiguous term with a spectrum of meanings. It literally means the one who earns, yet its translation usually contains a reference to the concept of *kesb/kasb*, rendering its translation as “he who earns his living is God’s beloved.”<sup>123</sup> It can also be translated as “the one who earns God’s approval (*rıza*),” deemphasizing its material meaning and emphasizing its spiritual aspects. But Edhem Eldem, in his history of the Ottoman Bank, translates it rather

<sup>120</sup> See Figure 1.1. This saying appears in some places of commerce in today’s Turkey.

<sup>121</sup> For more on Hattat Sami Effendi, a famous calligrapher of the late Ottoman period and a state employee, see M. Uğur Derman, “Sâmi Efendi, İsmâil Hakkı,” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2009), 36, 72–4.

<sup>122</sup> For more on the Ottoman Bank, see Edhem Eldem, *Osmanlı Bankası Tarihi* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000).

<sup>123</sup> Şemseddin Sami [Fraşeri], *Kamus-i Türki* (Istanbul: Der-i Saadet, İkdâm Matbaası, 1317/1899), 1164.



Figure 1.1 *el-Kāsibu Habibullah*, inscription at the interior of the Ottoman Bank Head Office (currently SALT Galata). SALT Research, Ottoman Bank Archives. Photo: A. Nafiz Topçuoğlu

boldly as “he who earns money,” rendering the translations of the saying as “he who earns money is God’s beloved.”<sup>124</sup> Eldem’s translation reflects a narrowed meaning, with an emphasis on the monetary (not merely material) connotation of the word “earning” to the disadvantage of its spectrum of other meanings. It may perfectly be the view of those who placed these inscriptions on structures (and desired that

<sup>124</sup> Edhem Eldem, *135 Yıllık Bir Hazine: Osmanlı Bankası Arşivinde Tarihten İzler* (Istanbul: Osmanlı Bankası, 1997), 139. Interestingly, the Ottoman Bank Archives translated this hadith first as Edhem Eldem did, while attaching another translation as a note: “Those who earn the knowledge and approval of God is a beloved of God.” Osmanlı Bankası Genel Müdürlük binası iç mekânı, Karaköy, İstanbul (An interior of Ottoman Bank Head Office, Karaköy, İstanbul), SALT Research, Ottoman Bank Archives Online. Last accessed August 2019: [archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/3227](https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/3227). I was not able to find out the identity of the translator of the latter version.

they gain high visibility in the public sphere, as Ahmed Midhat did) that the term's material and even monetary meanings are not exclusive of the meaning that referenced the earning of God's approval.

Perhaps, the larger question was how would the meaning of these inscriptions be inscribed in the hearts of people? In the next section, I explore how Ottoman moralists of the late nineteenth century engaged in a concerted effort to moralize, nationalize, and Islamize productivity.

#### 1.4 Moralization, Nationalization, and the Islamization of Productivity

By conceptualizing a new subjectivity and attributing a central role to social duties (*vazife-i ictimaiyye*), moralists were able to construct work and industriousness in a moralizing language. They presented productivity not only as an individual path to happiness and fulfillment but also as a social duty that would elevate the level of the civilization and progress of the empire. Work was a central aspect of building a new individual and a new society. The belief in work was presented as rectifying all infirmities, creating social cohesion, and building the basis of shared aspirations.

In the morality books of the late nineteenth century, work was a very modern calling: it was given a central role at the individual level and at the civilizational level. For individuals, work had to be done conscientiously, in a disciplined way, and not merely as a means of subsistence but as an end in itself. Individual happiness and existential fulfillment were inseparable from the social order. Work was presented as central to corporeal, spiritual, and national development. The call to work was no less than a social law and was something everyone needed to heed in order to acquire a high level of civilization. By the end of the century, a modernist truism had emerged: work not only opened the path to progress but comprehending the importance of work was a sign of the nation's advanced status.<sup>125</sup> In morality books, we see these modernist truisms in their most abstract and normative forms.

Though Ottoman moralists often claimed an unbroken connection to the past and earlier texts, those claims are belied by frequent and

<sup>125</sup> Abdurrahman Şeref, *İlm-i Ahlak*, 75.

stunning examples of novel formulations. These revolutionary transformations “were accomplished (and concealed) through new uses of old forms and tracing of a thousand lineages from the past.”<sup>126</sup> New meanings of terms such as *sa’y u gayret* (effort and ardor), *kanaat* (contentment), reliance on God (Tk. *tevekkül*; Ar. *tawakkul*) *meskenet/miskinlik* (tranquility/indolence), *dünya işi* (worldly work), laziness (Tk. *atalet*; Ar. *’aṭāla*) and others point to the emergence and proliferation of a novel usage of Islamic terminology. The goal was to purge the ‘irreligious attachments’ these terms had acquired over the centuries. These books made work the ultimate national and religious act. Moreover, authors adamantly opposed beliefs and practices that they identified as handicaps to productivity and efficiency by declaring them un-Islamic and anti-progress, and thus anti-modern. We cannot overstate the strong contribution Ottoman moralists made to the moralization and even *Islamization* of work.

Yağlıkçızade Ahmed Rıfat’s (1842–95) morality text, *Tasvir-i Ahlak* (Depiction of morality), published in 1887/8, presents these new formulations.<sup>127</sup> Yağlıkçızade Ahmed Rıfat (from now on Ahmed Rıfat) was born and educated in Istanbul and later went to al-Azhar in Cairo to further his studies while learning French from private tutors. There is no indication that he visited Europe. Based on the archival documents, Ahmed Rıfat seems to have spent most of his life serving the empire as a bureaucrat, specifically as an accountant at the ministry of finance, and later as a member of the *Islahat Komisyonu* (Reform Commission).<sup>128</sup> At the beginning of his book, Ahmed Rıfat explains that what sets his book apart from the traditional morality texts is his use of simple Turkish. In a humble tone, Ahmed Rıfat noted that previous scholars had left nothing new to add; therefore, he could only reiterate earlier works in simple language, “so that even children can understand.”<sup>129</sup> The format displays this concept of accessibility:

<sup>126</sup> Phillip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as a Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 92.

<sup>127</sup> Yağlıkçızade Ahmed Rıfat, *Tasvir-i Ahlak* (Istanbul: Mahmut Bey Matbaası, 1305/1887–8).

<sup>128</sup> Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Sicill-i Osmani Zeyli, Son Devir Osmanlı Meşhurları Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2008), 105. For more information, see Abdülkadir Özcan, “Ahmed Rıfat Efendi, Yağlıkçızâde,” *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1989), 2:130–1.

<sup>129</sup> Yağlıkçızade Ahmed Rıfat, *Tasvir-i Ahlak*, 2.



his book is designed as an alphabetically organized list of moral terms and concepts. In this sense, it is more like a dictionary of terms related to ethics.

Of course, the author's protestations that he is not adding anything new to the heritage are an established trope and should not be taken at face value.<sup>130</sup> There are numerous issues in Ahmed Rifat's book that demonstrate the new role morality books took on in the last half of the nineteenth century; these range from his reasons for writing the book to his articulations of novel concepts of homeland, society, and in the context of those two, the problem of laziness. Ahmed Rifat's reasons for writing the text far surpassed his initial stated goal of presenting morality in a simple language. He wrote this morality book because "[r]eaching spiritual and material progress that we all desire for the Muslim society can only be attained through the virtues of morality."<sup>131</sup> This sentence contains many of the novel ideas of the nineteenth century, but the connection between progress and morality is especially noteworthy. The ideas of the Young Ottomans and the ideals of the *Tanzimat* era, in general, loom large in Ahmed Rifat's discussions of love for the homeland as well. Whereas in the earlier sense of the term, *vatan* meant one's own town, Ahmed Rifat used it to support an abstract notion that encompassed the lands in which Ottoman populations lived. For him, "[t]he love [for *vatan*] . . . cannot be limited to where one lives, it extends to one's society (*içinde bulunulan hey'et-i ictimaiyyeye dahi şumulu vardır*)."<sup>132</sup> Despite his claim to follow the footsteps of classic morality books, by interlocking the novel notion of *vatan* with another recent term, society (*hey'et-i ictimaiyye*), the author establishes the grounds on which a person *should* and *can* be moral.

In connection with his conceptualization of homeland, for Ahmed Rifat, laziness is something much more significant than a personality defect. Arguing that it can be gradually abated or reduced, he refused to excuse laziness as a difficult-to-change character trait. Indeed, change required a process. First, he didactically corrects his readers' presumed assumption that being lazy has some value because it reflects one's renunciation of worldly ambition. Then, he breaks the link

<sup>130</sup> Unfortunately, even academic works on morality books take these declarations at face value and repeat them as historical facts. See, for example, Ağırakça, *Mekteplerde Ahlak*, 368, 375.

<sup>131</sup> Yağlıkçızade Ahmed Rifat, *Tasvir-i Ahlak*, 4. <sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

between religious ideas and laziness (*betaet – betalet*). He warns his readers that abandoning all worldly activities is not an act of worship at all. Ahmed Rifat takes great care not to dismiss the old dictums that one should not engage in worldly affairs. In fact, he accepts it, but then he goes on to define what “world” means. Referencing a Sufi saying, he defines the world as “as something that makes one ignorant of God.” Therefore, as long as one does not become “ignorant of God,” involving oneself in the activities of this world is permissible and even encouraged.<sup>133</sup>

By redefining “world” as anything that leads one to neglect God (*gaflet*), Ahmed Rifat separates the term from its previous meanings. With this twist, the world and worldly activities need not be abandoned if they do not estrange one from God. Whichever way one interprets them, states Ahmed Rifat, “laziness and idleness cannot escape denigration.”<sup>134</sup> For him, it was important to show his readers that one can engage in worldly activities, as long as they do not lead one to neglect God’s will. Here, the author provides an anecdote that is narrated in the biographies of the Prophet Muhammed (*siyer/siyar*). When people praised a man who devoted all his time to praying, the Prophet asked: “who serves him while he is engaged in prayers?” Some responded that people volunteered to provide for him. The Prophet did not like what he heard and warned them that those people were causing him to be lazy.<sup>135</sup> Narrating this *hadith*, Ahmed Rifat challenges the argument that Islam promotes laziness, and goes further to show that, based on Islamic principles, lazy behavior, even from those that would seem to be the most pious, cannot be tolerated.

Ahmed Rifat even takes this a step further and causally connects laziness to poverty, thereby tying laziness to the fate of the empire. He argues that it is not poverty that causes one to be lazy; on the contrary, laziness causes poverty.<sup>136</sup> In a manner that critiques “tradition,” he notes that doing things in the “old ways” should no longer be considered valuable in and of itself:

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 84.   <sup>134</sup> Ibid., 83–4.   <sup>135</sup> Ibid., 84–5.

<sup>136</sup> Ahmed Rifat’s contemporary, Rifa’ah Rafi’ al-Tahtawi, takes a more nuanced approach, wherein he differentiates between the working poor and the idle poor. Juan R.I. Cole, “Al-Tahtawi on Poverty and Welfare,” in *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, ed. Michael David Bonner, Mine Ener, and Amy Singer (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 223–38.

Everyone ought to find effort and ardor (*sa'y u gayret*) necessary and take heed to increase the outcomes of work and then leave the rest to God almighty. The times have changed, and there is no value anymore in saying, "We saw our fathers doing it this way; we found it this way."<sup>137</sup>

In this regard, Ahmed Rifat subscribes to the dominant liberal economic understanding of the period that poverty is a result of not working properly and sufficiently. From this issue, he continues to discuss the rich in relation to laziness. He criticizes rich and lazy people, who have a fortune without having labored for it (*emeksiz servete malik olanlar*). He mockingly adds that the pomp and gravity of being wealthy makes it harder to identify them as lazy. Thus, we see that the accusation of laziness cuts across class boundaries.

Many Ottoman moralists contributed to the redefinition and transformation of the term *kanaat* (contentment), as part of reinforcing a language that prioritized work and industriousness.<sup>138</sup> Part of this effort involved dissociating the virtue of *kanaat* from the vice of *meskenet* (apathy).<sup>139</sup> Many Ottoman moralists believed that the core of the problem of laziness was the popular belief that contentment was a religious act. For Ahmed Rifat, contentment meant the absence of unsatiated greed. After narrating a *hadith* (saying) of the Prophet praising *kanaat*, he carefully warned his readers:

It should not be gathered [from what has been said] that poverty and *meskenet* are preferred. *Kanaat* cannot be practiced with these. Abandoning . . . work and leaving things to fate is not *kanaat*. These are the misperceptions of those who confuse laziness with trusting God (*tevekkül*) and deficient work with *kanaat*.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Yağlıkcızade Ahmed Rifat, *Tasvir-i Ahlak*, 190. This is a reference to the Qur'anic verses on thoughtlessly repeating the previous generation's traditions (2:170).

<sup>138</sup> For earlier definitions of *kanaat*, see Abdülkerim Kuşeyri, *Kuşeyri Risalesi, Tasavvuf İlmîne Dair*, ed. Süleyman Uludağ (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1991), 299–301. For Namık Kemal's take on the term, see Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri*, 219.

<sup>139</sup> While I translate *meskenet* in the nineteenth-century texts as apathy and lethargy, note that the term did not always have these negative connotations. See, for example, Nabi's *Hayriyye*. "Meskenet hasletin eyle i'dad" (Develop your trait of *meskenet* [calmness]), Mahmut Kaplan, *Hayriyye – Nabi*, 313.

<sup>140</sup> Yağlıkcızade Ahmed Rifat, *Tasvir-i Ahlak*, 298.

Ahmed Rifat's separation of laziness from trust in God (*tevekkül*) is an excellent example of the sustained effort to transform the meanings of certain concepts while still upholding and cherishing them. This painstaking task would be abandoned by some members of the following generation. Take, for instance, Mehmed Tayyib's approach. A member of the *ulema* and a public instructor at the Fatih Mosque in Istanbul, Mehmed Tayyib published an article in 1908 titled "The Legitimacy of Work." In it, he acknowledged *kanaat* as a virtue.<sup>141</sup> He then invited his readers to refrain from it because he believed it was a major hindrance to progress. He argued that *kanaat* "can only be [practiced] after Muslim society attains a secure economy and future."<sup>142</sup> In comparison to Ahmed Rifat's efforts of rebranding the concept, Mehmet Tayyib's position reflects a much different perspective – a radical admission that not all religious values are equal, and some virtues are a hindrance to progress, with Muslim society's economic security having priority over them. From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, a jurist, remaining in the confines of Islamic norms, can choose one act/practice over the other when one is more beneficial for the public interests given in a specific context (*maslaha*). Mehmed Tayyib's choice here is telling in that it results in a choice that overlaps with the values of the market economy and the political goals of nation-states. This, in turn, may mean that not all religious values can be upheld in the modern period. Pointing out that other nations advanced "by the hour," Mehmed Tayyib stated that "retreating to a corner and secluding [oneself] in the name of *kanaat* and not benefiting your fellow Muslims; behaving [with] indolence [and thinking it] is in accord with God's will, and waiting for divine help . . . is nothing but an abhorrent thing to do." For Mehmed Tayyib, it was clear that the "sacred direction" (*kible/qibla*, the direction of the Kaba) of Ottoman actions had to be "the salvation of the state and the community of Islam."<sup>143</sup> Here was a member of the *ulema*, in a journal issued by the *ulema*, writing in the restless days following the Young Turk revolution in 1908, highlighting, in a forceful way, that what he deemed as traditional may no longer be viable in modern circumstances. Perhaps, Mehmed Tayyib, given his *ulema* status, was more at ease with

<sup>141</sup> Mehmed Tayyib (Fatih dersiamlarından), "Sa'yin meşruiyeti," *Beyan'ul Hakk* 1, no. 13 (4 Zilhicce 1326/Dec. 28, 1908), 283.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. <sup>143</sup> Ibid.

expressing his opinion legitimized by the practice of *maslaha*. The differences of positions on *kanaat* in Ahmed Rifat's and Mehmed Tayyib's writings reflect the historical contexts they were written in, as well as the variety of ways in which Muslim Ottomans engaged with religious terminology in order to promote productivity. We turn to the period following the 1908 revolution in detail in the final chapter.

Published a few years after Yağlıkçızade Ahmed Rifat's book, Hüseyin Remzi's (1839–96) morality book, *Ahlak-ı Hamidi* presents a series of novel approaches on work and laziness.<sup>144</sup> Hüseyin Remzi was one of the most prolific authors of the second half of the nineteenth century. He was a distinguished military doctor who taught at various Ottoman schools, such as the Mekteb-i Mülkiye (Imperial civil service academy) and the Baytar Mektebi (Veterinary academy), and was a founding member of the Society of Ottoman Medicine. Mehmet Akif, the future national poet that we met at the beginning of this chapter, was possibly his student at the Veterinary Academy. In 1886, a year after Louis Pasteur's discovery of the rabies vaccine, Hüseyin Remzi was sent by the Ottoman government to Paris to learn about the application of the vaccine and recent developments in microbiology from Pasteur himself.<sup>145</sup> He published many books for broad audiences on medicine, health, hygiene, zoology, gynecology, family life, and morality.

*Ahlak-ı Hamidi* presents a deontological explication of morality and clearly departs from an approach that discusses the balance of virtues and vices.<sup>146</sup> Unlike Ahmed Rifat, Hüseyin Remzi does not declare his debt to classical books at the beginning of his book, although he freely references Kınalızade as well as Plato, an indication of their continued influence.<sup>147</sup> In a chapter devoted to the importance of work, he

<sup>144</sup> Hüseyin Remzi, *Ahlak-ı Hamidi* (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1310/1892). The title is a double take on the word *hamid* (the praised) and the contemporary sultan's name, Abdulhamid. These sorts of Sultanic references, unfortunately, led to historians emphasizing the inculcation of loyalty in morality texts while disregarding their novel content.

<sup>145</sup> Doğan Ceylan, "A Military Doctor Pioneer of Preventive Medicine in Turkey: Colonel Dr. Hüseyin Remzi Bey," *TAF Preventive Medicine Bulletin* (2008): 347–50 quotes Ekrem Kadri Unat, "Muallim Miralay Dr. Hüseyin Remzi Bey ve Türkçe Tıp Dilimiz," in *IV. Tıp Tarihi Kongresi Kitabı, İstanbul, 1996* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003), 239–52.

<sup>146</sup> Hüseyin Remzi, *Ahlak-ı Hamidi*, 27–9, and passim.

<sup>147</sup> For references to Plato, see *ibid.*, 35; for Kınalızade, *ibid.*, 40.

discusses the value of work from various perspectives. He starts with an ontological remark, making work an essential aspect of human existence: “just as birds are created to fly, human beings are created to work.”<sup>148</sup> Hüseyin Remzi presented work as something that needed to make a person whole. This emphasis on the ontological necessity of work is similar to the remarks of Abdullah Behcet, who published his book *Behcet’ul Ahlak* four years after Hüseyin Remzi published his own. Abdullah Behcet, too, viewed laziness as “the cancellation of creation’s purpose (*hikmet-i bilkatin ibtali*),” in diametrical opposition to the essence of human existence.<sup>149</sup>

Two discussions of Hüseyin Remzi’s are essential for our purposes. First, he offers one of the early examples of a metaphor that many other morality texts would bring forth in different forms. This is a metaphor involving machines and factories, in which he likens the individual body to a machine and human society to a factory.<sup>150</sup> Later, he revisits this metaphor in his second and final morality text, *Hocahanım, Hanım kızlara Dürus-u Ahlak* (1897), which is discussed in the following section.<sup>151</sup> The factory metaphor, as explained by Hüseyin Remzi, depicts the importance of an individual’s role in the functioning of society. According to him, in this factory, all work is crucial and of equal importance –there are no differences between minor and major tasks. Therefore, he encourages his readers to complete any task at hand dutifully and with utmost care.

The factory metaphor perfectly complemented the developing deontological approach to morality. Complementing the vague language of many moralists about what they mean by work, it provided authors with an explanatory power for describing the new society they envisioned, with the aid of a readily available and captivating visual image of machinery. In this society, every individual was likened to a cog, shouldering a duty. Subsequently, the image supported the belief that an individual’s failure meant the entire population’s failure – one

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 51. Also see Ali Rıza’s work, where a similar bird example is given. Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Üçüncü Kısım* (Istanbul: Karabet Matbaası, 1316/1899), 69.

<sup>149</sup> Abdullah Behcet, *Behcet’ul Ahlak*, 143.

<sup>150</sup> Hüseyin Remzi, *Ahlak-ı Hamidi*, 52–3.

<sup>151</sup> Hüseyin Remzi, *Hocahanım, Hanım kızlara Dürus-u Ahlak* (Istanbul: Artin Asaduryan Şirket-Mürettibiye Matbaası, 1315/1897).

of the core assumptions of the culture of productivity.<sup>152</sup> Anson Rabinbach argues that the machine metaphor was one of the most prevalent in the nineteenth century; it “fused the diverse forms of labor in nature, technology, and society into a single image of mechanical work.”<sup>153</sup> Machines captivated the imagination of many nineteenth-century Ottomans, not merely as metaphors of the ideal society that worked in harmony, but also because of their inexhaustible production power. In its similarity to the human body, a machine was the ultimate hard worker, devoid of fatigue and laziness. The images of machines frequently arose in discussions about mobilizing the population for progress and setting the bar for the level of civilization.<sup>154</sup>

The second discussion that deserves our attention in *Ahlak-ı Hamidi* is the author’s equation of law and order with industriousness and lawlessness with laziness. According to Hüseyin Remzi, having high morals is what makes someone comply with law and order. Having high morals, on the other hand, can be attained via being industrious. For him, being lazy leads one to be a criminal. If a person does not work, they would “sink in laziness” to the effect that they follow their own desires and illusions and thus evolve into criminals.<sup>155</sup> Similar remarks, as well as the factory machine metaphor, were to appear in the writings of other moralists. While not present in Hüseyin Remzi’s narrative, it would be employed to validate more intense exclusionary narratives developed in moral discourses explored in the following sections.

Here, it should be noted that not all moralists of the last quarter of the nineteenth century articulated the new tensions over the moralization of work consistently in similar manners. While Hüseyin Remzi effortlessly connects laziness with criminality and work with the integrated work of factories, he does not engage with the term *kanaat* as pointedly as Ahmed Rifat did in his work. Hüseyin Remzi does not (re) define *kanaat* as a concept that propels one to work harder, as Ahmed

<sup>152</sup> Namık Kemal uses the machine metaphor when describing his vision of an alliance of Muslims (and Muslim-ruled states), particularly the Ottoman Empire and the Iranian state. Namık Kemal, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Meseleleri*, ed. İsmail Kara and N.Y. Aydoğdu (Istanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2005), 84–5.

<sup>153</sup> Rabinbach, *The Human Motor*, 25.

<sup>154</sup> For how machines and mastery over nature became a marker of civilization, see Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*.

<sup>155</sup> Hüseyin Remzi, *Ahlak-ı Hamidi*, 54–5.

Rıfat does. In a short discussion on *kanaat*, he defines it as a state of contentment a person should have over eating, drinking, and dressing – excessive amounts of which, according to him, are frowned upon.<sup>156</sup> This definition is much more in line with the earlier formulations of the term and does not reflect the new tensions articulated by some of his contemporaries, nor does it challenge or undermine his call for more productivity.

As in the example of Hüseyin Remzi's discussion on *kanaat*, we can argue that the genre displayed a certain level of instability. The terms that frequently appeared in morality texts reflect a mixed practice. While some articulated new approaches to work and laziness, voicing contemporary anxieties about Ottoman productivity, others followed their precedents more closely. Certainly, shedding "attitudes, sensibilities and memories as though they were so many garments inappropriate to a singular historical movement" was not easy.<sup>157</sup> When explaining why laziness is a vice, Abdullah Behcet, for example, points out how it causes one to postpone otherworldly activities (*umur-u uhreviye*), as far worse than laziness for worldly activities.<sup>158</sup> Similarly, Mehmed Said's (d. 1921) morality book, *Ahlak-ı Hamide* (1317/1879–80) reiterates arguments from earlier texts; he heavily borrows from al-Ghazali, Kınalızade, and Kemalpaşazade.<sup>159</sup> Mehmed Said states that laziness is a vice because it prevents one from "earning money in order to supply oneself the necessities to protect one's health," "to protect oneself from their enemies," and "gain knowledge that will lead someone to the right path."<sup>160</sup> As vague as

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>157</sup> Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 222.

<sup>158</sup> Abdullah Behcet references Kınalızade's *Ahlak-ı Alâi* as well as others, such as *Akhlak-e Celali*, *Akhlak-e Muhsini* (in Persian), and *Risale-i akhlak* (in Arabic). Abdullah Behcet, *Behcet'ul Ahlak*, 144.

<sup>159</sup> Although not much is known about Mehmed Said, he is well regarded for his knowledge of classical texts, expertise in the grammar of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, and as a translator of Arabic texts. According to the *Sicill-i Osmani* records, Mehmed Said learned Arabic from Ahmed Fahir Effendi, one of the authors of *al-Jawâib*, an Arabic newspaper published in Istanbul. Pakalın, *Sicill-i Osmani Zeyli*, 55. Taking Mehmed Said as exemplary of his period, Somel bases his analysis of morality education on his work. Somel, *Modernization of Public Education*, 191–2.

<sup>160</sup> Mehmed Said, *Ahlak-ı Hamide* (Istanbul: Elcevaib, 1297/1879–80), 43. In his discussion of the term *tevekkül* (resignation), he argues that it cannot be practiced if one's life, property, or chastity is in danger. In such conditions, he



they sound, these are the reasons that frequently appeared in pre-nineteenth-century texts as well.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, the term *kanaat* appears in some morality texts with its earlier connotations while employing new terminology in other matters. In sum, even the authors of books that reformulated terms and concepts did not always disregard classical templates in their works. Old meanings remained, and at times they were intertwined with new ones.

Such categorical instability, in which categories defied strict definitions, often became more visible during periods of great social transformation.<sup>162</sup> The immediate reasons for the said instability may be numerous. Do these repetitions of earlier formulations reflect the insistence of earlier meanings, or a simple act of copying from earlier sources, that is, of residual nature, or caution against the political restraints of the Hamidian period?<sup>163</sup> Perhaps not true for the term *kanaat*, but clearly, some of these choices were political. Publishing under the heavy hand of the Hamidian regime, some authors played down the new meanings of some critical terms. For example, Abdullah Behcet defined *müsavat* by its classical meaning (i.e., as “sharing and having partners at a beneficial event”), though in the nineteenth century, it came to mean equality and gained a political charge.<sup>164</sup> Nevertheless, the observed inconsistency diminished significantly by

argues, resignation is even considered a sin. The omission of the already established term *vatan* (homeland) in this list is particularly interesting.

Mehmed Said, *Ablak-ı Hamide*, 17.

- <sup>161</sup> When denouncing laziness, Mehmed Said quotes Kemalpaşazade’s sixteenth-century treatise and indicates that work should be considered a religious obligation (*farz*). To strengthen his point, Mehmed Said advances evidence from a twelfth-century imam (Imam Ragib [d. 1108], the author of *Ez-Zeri’a*) who argued that one can only accomplish the necessary religious duties after first providing the necessities of life; therefore, earning a living is obligatory (*vacib*).
- <sup>162</sup> Michael McKeon, “Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel,” in *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 383.
- <sup>163</sup> For terms such as ‘residual,’ ‘emergent,’ and ‘dominant,’ see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).
- <sup>164</sup> *Behcet’ul Ablak*, 72. Compare Behcet’s definition of *müsavat* with that of Şemseddin Sami. Published three years after *Behcet’ul Ablak*, Şemseddin Sami’s seminal dictionary refers to *müsavat* as being equal in rank and condition, one not having privilege over the other. Şemseddin Sami [Fraşeri], *Kamus-i Türki*, 1334.

the first decade of the twentieth century, and by 1908 it was nearly extinct. Although some authors continued to refer to longstanding morality maxims, the majority engaged in new meaning universes in discussing morality and its vital concepts.

#### 1.4.1 Gendering the Discourses of Work

From the onset, the debates about a productive nation took place in gendered narratives. Many morality authors placed both men and women of various classes at the center of productivity debates, but in a differentiated way. The established dichotomy of productivity versus laziness seemed to require that both men and women be categorized into one group or the other. What qualified them to be placed in either category differed, while the stated value and goals of work for both genders did not.<sup>165</sup> The appeal to the emotions when addressing female audiences, as well as their classist assumptions and gender-specific expectations, reveals how the male moralist authors imagined their audiences.

For most of the late nineteenth-century Ottoman moralists, as far as the responsibility of productivity is concerned, both men and women received equal treatment. A few years after he published his first morality book, *Ahlak-ı Hamidi*, Hüseyin Remzi wrote another one designated for female students. It is clear from its title, *Hocahanım, hanım kızlara dürüs-u ahlak* (Miss teacher, morality lectures for young girls) that the book was aimed at future female teachers. It was first published in the periodical *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete*,<sup>166</sup> which specifically addressed women and was the longest-lasting, and relatively widely circulated, periodical for women in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>167</sup> We find arguments similar to his earlier text when discussing the value and importance of work. As in his earlier book, Hüseyin Remzi attributes work a central role in the development of personality, morality, and

<sup>165</sup> A few works focused on the debates on women and work, especially from the perspective of labor history. Karakışla, *Women, War, and Work in the Ottoman Empire*, 49–52, 91.

<sup>166</sup> For this journal, see Elizabeth Frierson, “Unimagined Communities: State, Press, and Gender in the Hamidian Era,” unpublished dissertation (Princeton University, 1996).

<sup>167</sup> Despite its title, the fact that there is only one edition might indicate that it was not used as a textbook. Öztürk may have categorized it as a textbook because of its title. Öztürk, “Ahlak kitapları,” 31–9.

society. *Hocahanım*, similar to the author's earlier work, presents a deontological explication of morality. In several aspects, however, Hüseyin Remzi's discussion on work and productivity in this book differed from his earlier general audience book.

The originality of Hüseyin Remzi's second book lay not in the fact that it was written for female audiences – there were other morality texts written for women. Rather, its uniqueness was in how the author envisioned his readers and how that shaped the book's format, content, and style of address in comparison with the same author's earlier morality book. *Hocahanım* was written for an imaginary group of female students training to become teachers by a female morality instructor. Teaching, then, is a vocation, we can assume, Hüseyin Remzi espoused as fit for women to hold.<sup>168</sup> The book is organized accordingly, in a classroom setting; it presented dialogues between students and their instructor, and each chapter was titled "lecture." Each lecture began with a question posed by the instructor about a range of moral and national concepts such as family, cleanliness, and honesty, as well as public spirit, flag, and banner, and military service<sup>169</sup> – a mixture of old concepts of morality and socially and politically charged ones.

In *Hocahanım*, Hüseyin Remzi introduces an image to aid in the visualization of laziness for the teachers-to-be. The female instructor in the book describes a tableau she saw in Europe – a European tableau, mediated by an imagined female Ottoman instructor to her students, in a book by a male moralist. In it, laziness was portrayed as a woman walking very slowly while leaning over the "arm of hunger." She was depicted as a woman "whose coat was covered with spiders" and "who spent her springtime in bed, and her autumn in hospitals." After capturing his audience's attention with this strange tableau, Hüseyin Remzi warns of the destructive powers of laziness: laziness brings poverty and obliterates talent and knowledge. He adds that a lazy person would not only cause his/her own destruction. Because laziness is a disease, it "destroys not only the individual but even the entire population."<sup>170</sup>

<sup>168</sup> The first Darulmuallimat, Ottoman women's teaching training school, was opened in 1870.

<sup>169</sup> An analysis of Hüseyin Remzi's remarks on the military can be found in Chapter 4 of this book.

<sup>170</sup> Hüseyin Remzi, *Hocahanım*, *Hanım kızlara*, 92.

We cannot know whether Hüseyin Remzi had seen such a tableau in his visits to Europe, but his depiction is clear: laziness is a woman. Her age is not given, but from the description, we understand that she is old, and she wears a coat covered with spiders – a person belonging to a bygone age. She is unable to move forward because of her past mistakes, such as spending her youthful years in inactivity. This portrayal presents a direct connection to be assumed between laziness and poverty, between old and undesired, between women and social diseases, and between a wrongly spent youth and eventual doom. The woman in the tableau is more than an individual. As Hüseyin Remzi warns, laziness destroys humanity.<sup>171</sup>

When explaining the importance of work, Hüseyin Remzi does not refrain from emphasizing the same concepts and metaphors he used for the general (male?) audience. If laziness brought destruction, then work was the utmost social duty. In late Ottoman texts, the term *hamiyet* (patriotism) is used to describe love for one's homeland (*vatan*).<sup>172</sup> When defining *hamiyet*, Hüseyin Remzi references the role of the individual in a society by employing the factory metaphor he had used in his earlier book. "Society is like a factory. . . . Machines work in an interconnected way, and it is impossible to separate machines apart. [What makes] the continuation of society [possible] is *hamiyet*."<sup>173</sup> With the comprehension of the love of *vatan*, a person conceives her role in social life and the duty of being productive. For Hüseyin Remzi, the connection between *hamiyet* and the imagery of machinery is important in educating his audience on productivity, regardless of the gender of his readership.

A couple of years after Hüseyin Remzi's *Hocahanım*, Ali Rıza, a governmental translator (*mabeyn-i hümayun cenab-ı mülukane mütercimi*), published his *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak* (Knowledge of morality for girls).<sup>174</sup> In the same way, Ali Rıza defined work for his

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 93–4.

<sup>172</sup> *Kamus-i Türki* defines *hamiyet* as patriotism: "the effort one shows to protect their homeland (*memleketini*), family and relatives from transgressions and assaults." Şemseddin Sami [Fraşeri], *Kamus-i Türki*, 559.

<sup>173</sup> Hüseyin Remzi, *Hocahanım, Hanım kızlara*, 123–4.

<sup>174</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Birinci Kısım*; Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Üçüncü Kısım*. Based on the fact that it was published in four editions between 1316 and 1323, we can assume that this was a commonly used textbook. Ali Rıza was one of the few moralists that published at the turn of the century and also after the 1908 revolution. For more, see Chapter 5.

female audience as an obligation. Like Hüseyin Remzi, Ali Rıza emphasized the essential role of work by pointing out that working “to human beings is just as flying is to birds.”<sup>175</sup> For Ali Rıza, those who did not work fought against their own nature, and these people harmed their own nation. Lest his readers would not know how important the nation is he explained it by relating it to the value of belonging to a religious community: being citizens of the same country is like being a member of the same religious community.<sup>176</sup> He extended the analogy further: the abstract notion of soil is a similitude of a particular faith that connects a religious community. In this nation, the individual played a crucial role – a role that affects the fate of the entire nation. In a chapter titled “Islamic morality” (*Adab-ı İslamiye*), Ali Rıza, similar to Hüseyin Remzi, argued that “laziness is an infectious disease, and a single lazy [person] in a society will make all the members of that society refrain from work.”<sup>177</sup> Within just a few pages, Ali Rıza successfully presents the morality of work to his female readers, clarifying what nation and nationhood means as well as using an exclusionary language that would increasingly operate in productivity discourses, to which we turn in the coming section.

One distinguishing characteristic of these male texts written for women is that they frequently engaged with issues on an emotional level. In these texts, happiness, love, joy, sadness, pain, and boredom are the emotional states that frequently feature in moral discussions of the value of work. In a similar vein to the representation of laziness as an old and depressed woman in Hüseyin Remzi’s *Hocahanım*, in Ali Rıza’s book, disciplined work is presented as a source of happiness and even the elixir of life.<sup>178</sup> A person who did not work was necessarily unhappy and unable to have any pleasure from leisure.<sup>179</sup> Women are assumed to have more spare time, which, almost always, is associated with boredom – presented as a very feminine problem. While morality literature prior to the nineteenth century addressed sorrow (*hüzün*) frequently, in the nineteenth century this was largely replaced by

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 69. I could not trace the origins of this repeated metaphor.

<sup>176</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Birinci Kısım*, 6–7.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 30–2.

<sup>178</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Üçüncü Kısım*, 69.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 67.

ennui.<sup>180</sup> Boredom, or ennui, was the foil of the new work ethos. Ali Rıza, for example, pointed out that “the soul suffers an eternal pain (*azab-ı daimî*) because of boredom in one’s spare time.”<sup>181</sup> The emphasis on emotions reveals how male moralists believed they should appeal to their female readers in convincing them of the value of work and the vice of laziness.

Another distinguishing characteristic of these texts is that they exposed assumptions regarding class and class distinctions. As duty-centered discourses advanced, home, seen as the private domain of women, emerged as the place where women were told to work with discipline.<sup>182</sup> The readers were usually assumed to be well-to-do urbanite women. Upper-class women, in particular, and upper-class people in general, were strongly criticized by moralists for their dependency on servants and their unwillingness to engage with their own work.<sup>183</sup> While some morality texts have subsections about how to treat one’s servants, young girls were encouraged to do their own work. Ali Rıza urged his female students, whom he imagined as well-to-do enough to have servants, not to leave the housework to them. The author advised future homemakers to do their own homemaking activities, revealing the type of work the author had in mind as fit for women. Young women (with wealth and status) were told that servant-dependency would cripple their abilities, and “in the future, they would not be able to be [good] housewives.”<sup>184</sup>

What if these women became bored with the housework? Again, an emotive relationship with work was necessary. Ali Rıza wrote: “To avoid becoming bored when attending to housework, one should love effort and work (*say u amel*). Working brings joy and prosperity to the

<sup>180</sup> For how *hüzün* (sadness) is conceptualized in an early modern text, see Kınalızade, *Ahlak-ı Alâî*, 155. For an earlier description, see Kuşeyri, *Kuşeyri Risalesi*, 277–9.

<sup>181</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Birinci Kısım*, 31. Ennui also appears in Ali İrfan’s *Rehber-i Ahlak*, in which he argued that laziness kept one in constant ennui (*sıkıntı*). Ali İrfan (Eğribozi), *Rehber-i Ahlak*, 14.

<sup>182</sup> See Yael Navaro-Yaşın, “Evde Taylorizm: Cumhuriyet’in ilk Yıllarında Evişinin Rasyonelleşmesi” (“Taylorism at Home: The Rationalization of Housewifery in the Early Republic”), *Toplum ve Bilim* 84 (2000): 51–74. Also see Pınar Dandiboz, *The Construction of Female Citizenship through Etiquette Books: Turkey, 1930–1943* (Istanbul: Libra Kitap, 2015).

<sup>183</sup> Yağlıkçızade Ahmed Rıfat, *Tasvir-i Ahlak*, 85.

<sup>184</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Birinci Kısım*, 12.

spirit because there cannot be a more satisfactory thing than seeing the progress of a task.”<sup>185</sup> Most importantly, housework was identified as social work. The female students were told to imagine that, as they do housework, they were really engaged in social work: “Every individual in this world is obliged to work [not only] for themselves, [but also] for others; therefore, you should not leave work and waste your time in vain.”<sup>186</sup> Appealing to their economic consciousness, Ali Rıza reminded them about the modern maxim “time is money,”<sup>187</sup> and claimed that it was an “Islamic saying” (*kelam-ı kibar-ı İslamiyedendir*).<sup>188</sup> In fact, the saying is attributed to Benjamin Franklin.<sup>189</sup>

Other than housework, or as part of housework, the work designated for women was tailoring, and this was to be done primarily for the members of her household, not for the general public, both for economic and self-fulfillment purposes. All girls, even those from wealthy families, were advised to learn to sew because there was “a special pleasure in producing things.”<sup>190</sup> According to Ali Rıza, having these kinds of skills should not be reduced to their material benefits. He noted that work is both materially beneficial and spiritually satisfying, so he encouraged girls to learn these skills, which would be their companion in times of distress and loneliness. Resting (*istirahat*), then, was presented as a time for recuperating in anticipation of the next cycle of work; and rest should not be overdone.<sup>191</sup> For him, the idea of rest without work was an illusion.<sup>192</sup>

Such was the range of work envisioned by the moralists, but not everyone agreed that women’s work needed to take place exclusively in the privacy of the home. Nigar Hanım, a famed poet and writer, in her piece titled “Sa’y u Amel,” first acknowledged the maxim, using duty-centered language: “the most sacred of all duties for women are household duties.”<sup>193</sup> However, she advanced her argument in a different manner than her male counterparts; she argued that if a woman

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.      <sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ali Rıza particularly used the Arabic version of this proverb, “al-waqudu naqdu,” perhaps to strengthen his claim of its Islamic origins. Ibid., 32.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Benjamin Franklin, “Advice to a Young Tradesman,” in George Fisher, *The American Instructor: or Young Man’s Best Companion* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin and D. Hall, 1748), 375–7.

<sup>190</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Birinci Kısım*, 32.      <sup>191</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>192</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Üçüncü Kısım*, 68.

<sup>193</sup> Nigar b. Osman, “Sa’y u Amel,” *Hammlara Mahsus Gazete* 61 (1896): 1–2.

has servants, this duty will not take most of her time and that it would be done by noon. She asked her readers, rhetorically: what would a lady be expected to do in the hours after the housework is done? She stated that activities such as visits and invitations among friends are good, but how frequently can/should one do these activities? She proclaimed that taking leisurely excursions is good for one's health, but again, she questioned how often these activities could fill a woman's time and also fulfill her spirit. Then, in accordance with the moralists of her time, she declared: "The most unhappy on this earth are those who waste their life killing time." In this regard, work was a necessity for happiness. "But it is known among researchers that . . . every individual in their own capacity should work for the benefit of humanity."<sup>194</sup> Clearly, for Nigar Hanım, the universal duty of work encompassed both genders; and the connection between happiness and work required women to get out of the house and contribute directly and openly as their male counterparts.

In congruence with the overarching argument of the period about not being a burden on the state and society, the gender-specific warnings cautioned women to actively work for their own (and the nation's) success – at home, as many male moralists envisioned. Other than the appeal to the emotions and calls for restrictions on servant use, the universalized male-centered language of productivity, which tied the activeness of the citizen with the advancement of the nation, dominated these texts written for women.

#### ***1.4.2 Exclusionary Language: "Useless Cogs in a Magnificent Machine"***

The assertive use of medical language when discussing laziness as a disease revealed yet another facet of the productivity discourses – their exclusionary properties. The moralization and nationalization of work were accompanied by an equally strong language that demonized, socially excluded, and marginalized a vague group of people deemed lazy and useless. The Ottoman moralists targeted laziness in social terms and regarded it as a hindrance to Ottoman progress. We can see a progression in how moralists dealt with the concept of laziness, from an act that individuals committed (*tembellik etmek*), to a

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.



discussion of individuals who *are* lazy (*tembel insanlar*), and finally to an abstraction that defined a social group, *ashab-ı atalet* (people of laziness). The latter concept fully reflected a characterization of lazy people not as separate individuals but as a socially cohesive group that shared not only a trait but also a mentality, undermining the empire's path to glory. As I explore in detail in the coming chapters, the label of "people of laziness" was in fact attached to socially and politically diverse groups, who were openly held responsible for many of the maladies of the imagined nation. Moralists, particularly those published in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, used it in its most abstract and vague sense, developing a distinctly exclusionist language, but not identifying who these people were. In light of the development of this exclusionist language, I argue that while offering multilayered formulations about notions of productivity, morality texts, as an arena in which the characteristics of the ideal citizen and its foils were debated, reveal the deep current of otherization and exclusion that operate in the discussions on citizenry in the Ottoman Empire.

Moralists, especially in the tense and crises-laden context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, articulated an exclusionist language that operated on individual and social levels. At the individual level, Ottoman moralists presented the intelligence of lazy people "as weak, their comprehension inadequate" and dehumanized them by viewing them as "no different than animals among people."<sup>195</sup> However, the exclusionist language went beyond the level of individuals. Building on the factory/machine metaphor that we have discussed earlier, Ali Rıza claimed that a lazy person "is like an unnecessary cog in a magnificent machine."<sup>196</sup> In Ali Rıza's depiction of this magnificent machine, it is obvious that those who did not produce had no role in society. Ali Rıza, after citing the Qur'anic verse "that man will only have what he has worked toward," declared that "[l]azy people do not deserve to be alive" (*tembellerin yaşamaya istihkakları yoktur*). In this bold statement, Ali Rıza was questioning lazy people's right to exist, or more generously, to be a part of the national community.<sup>197</sup>

These exclusionary remarks were empowered by the assumed connection between laziness and crime. When discussing the necessity of

<sup>195</sup> Ali İrfan (Eğribozi), *Rehber-i Ahlak*, 16–17.

<sup>196</sup> Ali Rıza, *Kızlara Mahsus İlm-i Ahlak, Üçüncü Kısım*, 68. <sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

effort and work (*sa'y u amel*) in his morality text, Abdurrahman Şeref posits that work is a universal law, without exception. After narrating the benefits of work, which range from happiness to strengthening of the human body, he arrives at the issue of law and order: “Working has an influence on law and order of the country: those who work . . . are always busy with their own business, [and] never desire to disturb law and order. With their success, they serve their state.”<sup>198</sup> At this point in his discussion of the necessity of work, Abdurrahman Şeref not only conflates lazy people with criminals but openly declares laziness a crime:

... those despicable people who do not work . . . want to make a living in a parasitical way, by eyeing the properties of [other] people. The weak ones become a burden to their state, and the more artful ones [of the weak] involve themselves in . . . fraudulent acts. [They] disturb the people, transgress law and order, and interrupt business, and the general economy. The state must occupy itself with [exposing and] terminating their crimes and spend great amounts [of wealth] and sacrifice a great deal [to do this]. From these explanations, it should be understood that people of work (*erbab-i mesai*) assist our country's order and progress while people of laziness (*ashab-ı atalet*) destroy this perfection and happiness.<sup>199</sup>

The assumed criminality of laziness is obvious in these remarks, which identify lazy people as criminals even if they do not get involved in criminal activities: their mere being is a burden on the state, seen as crime. Abdurrahman Şeref's terminology here is laden with Islamic eschatological concepts. The categorization of people as “people of laziness” and “people of work” is a clear reference to the Qur'anic verses that identify people as either *ashab'al yamin* and *ashab'al mai-manah* or *ashab'al shimal* and *ashab'al mash'amah*, that is, those who are on the right (and deserving paradise) and those who are not (deserving of hellfire, Qur'an 56: 1–56). For Abdurrahman Şeref, laziness is not only a crime. It is also a defining characteristic of a group of people – as “*ashab-ı atalet*” they are followers of laziness. They were deemed a threat to the country's perfection and happiness, and there needs to be a constant fight against them.

<sup>198</sup> Abdurrahman Şeref, *İlm-i Ahlak*, 78–9.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid. For a short enumeration of who is considered to be “people of work,” see Hüseyin Remzi, *Ahlak-ı Hamidi*, 32. According to him, doctors, judges, and soldiers are *ashab-ı sa'y*.

Given the almost always the vague language of the morality texts, these examples are rather drastic formulations nearing demonization. Through the moralization of productivity and valuation of hard work, what is revealed are the exclusionary visions of the late imperial reformists that deny decency and humanity to those who are deemed lazy. This deep current is accompanied by other processes, such as what I call the criminalization of laziness in the Ottoman bureaucracy, and the marginalization and criminalization of those who are deemed useless for society in various works of fiction. The exclusionary mechanisms at work became even clearer after the Young Turk revolution, a period during which polemicists of various ideologically motivated groups labeled their adversaries as lazy, and therefore, as people who should be eliminated. I explore these themes and the ramifications of exclusionary mechanisms further in the coming chapters.

### 1.4.3 *A New Work Ethic?*

With their attempt to separate Islam from a specific set of practices that they perceived to be the causes of laziness and redefine others as Islamic, we have seen in this chapter how the Muslim authors of morality texts established a strong connection between new concepts of work and Islam. As both the products and the producers of change, Ottoman moralists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century constructed a new knowledge while also referencing the rich symbolic universe of Islamic norms. When doing so, they were responding to the possible objections to modern notions and practices, as well as refuting the Orientalist claims that portrayed Islam as the cause of laziness, and therefore, of the backwardness of Muslim societies. Central to their knowledge production was their formulation of productivity as vital both for the individual and the nation, Islamizing it on both levels.

I argue that morality texts, when discussing the importance of productivity, employed the term 'Islamic' interchangeably with the term 'modern.' By advancing arguments fortified with verses from the Qur'an and sayings of Muhammed (*ahadith*), they made religion integral to modern practices. Ottoman moralists presented certain practices and notions as un-Islamic and others as Islamic, drawing boundaries and defining the norms; thus, they were involved in producing knowledge unique to this period. If laziness was un-Islamic, it was also antithetical to progress, and vice versa. Although the concept was

coined in a later period, Ottoman moralists laid the groundwork for an “Islamic work ethic” – now a widely used concept, both in popular parlance and in academic writing.<sup>200</sup>

In the historiography, some perceived morality books of this period as “religious texts,” following the tracks of a supposedly unchanging genre since medieval times.<sup>201</sup> Even if they are to be conceived as religious texts, religious texts (and religious ideas and practices) are neither static nor monolithic. Moreover, considering Islam, or any religion, as a fixed category neglects the fact that this category was a historically formulated and produced classification.<sup>202</sup> At times, morality books were examined with an instrumentalist approach, disregarding their dynamism and novel content. Some argued that the increasing dominance of morality in the Ottoman public discourse of

<sup>200</sup> The concept ‘Islamic work ethic’ is invoked in diverse contexts in the second half of the twentieth century. It served at least two purposes. It was used to presumably counter the communist “propaganda” regarding the rights of workers (that one did not need to go to *foreign* ideologies for such language of rights), and it connoted an indigenous critique/alternative to the conditions/norms brought by the capitalist system. The concept received scholarly attention, especially after the 1980s, perhaps in conjunction with the structural changes many developing countries, including predominantly Muslim ones, went through in adjusting to the neo-liberal economy that became increasingly dominant after the Washington Consensus. See, for example, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1995). For a few examples of the concept ‘Islamic work ethic’ in scholarly writings, see Selçuk Uygur, “The Islamic Work Ethic and the Emergence of Turkish SME Owner-Managers,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 88, no. 1, Professional Ethics in Business and Social Life: The Eben 21st Annual Conference in Antalya (Aug. 2009): 211–25; Abbas J. Ali and Abdullah Al-Owaidan, “Islamic Work Ethic: A Critical Review,” *Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal* 15, no. 1 (Feb. 2008): 5–19.

<sup>201</sup> See Kemal Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, 77–9. Karpat believes only a very few of morality books reflected a Kantian “ethics of duties,” while the rest resembled books on religion, with an assumption that duty ethics is exclusively secular and could not be mixed with religious content. *Ibid.*, 77. Similarly, see how Somel in his history of the modernization of education conflated the concepts of morality and religious education. Somel viewed morality as a form of education of religiosity. Somel, *Modernization of Public Education*, 190. For Somel, it seems, by relating verses or hadith, moralists reveal their non-modern, even anti-modern attitudes.

<sup>202</sup> The issue of religion as a category is addressed in the recent scholarship of Alasdair MacIntyre, Talal Asad, and Saba Mahmoud. See Asad, *Formations of the Secular*; Mahmoud, *Politics of Piety*; Alasdair MacIntyre, “Is Understanding Religion Compatible with Believing?,” in *Rationality*, ed. Bryan R. Wilson (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991), 62–77.

the nineteenth century was a response to the perceived dangers posed by “Western” practices and modes of thinking.<sup>203</sup> Presented as a state-supported project of Abdulhamid II to induce loyalty to the palace and morality envisioned by it, the emphasis on morality education was viewed as a project that aimed to provide “Islamic content” to an adopted Western educational system in an attempt to make it authentic.<sup>204</sup>

Viewing morality books of the nineteenth century as the latest incarnation of an unchanging genre or as texts written to introduce Islamic content filling in Western forms of education betrays the reality of morality texts of this period. The idea that morality books were defensive in nature and were written to maintain and amplify the influence of Islam in “Westernized” schools overlooks several issues. These approaches assume a static binary, set in two differentiated fields, as form (modern) and content (Islamic), as if never the twain shall meet. Moreover, the moralization of the new self and society passed far beyond the Hamidian “corrective measures” for “combating negative effects of Western penetration into the Ottoman Empire.”<sup>205</sup> Even if the Hamidian government’s intention was to induce loyalty through Islamic moral narratives added to the school curriculum, this was only one aspect of the morality of the period, an aspect that privileges the state as the only agent and creator of intentions. Trying to explain social changes “in terms of motives is always a doubtful business.”<sup>206</sup> Rather than seeing these public debates merely as a product of the “Hamidian reaction . . . derived from the desire to ward off foreign encroachment,”<sup>207</sup> they should be addressed as part of the larger transformations surrounding the moralization of the

<sup>203</sup> Fortna, “Islamic Morality,” 369–93. For a parallel historical process and approach similar to that of Fortna, see Klaus Luhmer, “Moral Education in Japan,” *Journal of Moral Education* 19, no. 3 (Oct. 1990): 172–82. Brian Silverstein presents a similar argument: Brian Silverstein, *Islam and Modernity in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 35. Colonel Pertev, an Ottoman military man who joined the Japanese forces as an observer during the Russo-Japanese war, perceived the Kanun-ı Ahlak (laws of morality) issued by the emperor in 1890 as a protection against the spread of Western values. Miralay Pertev, *Rus-Japon Harbinden Alman Maddi ve Manevi Dersler* (Istanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi ve Matbaası, 1329/1913).

<sup>204</sup> Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 206. <sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>206</sup> Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 215.

<sup>207</sup> Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 203–5.

subject-citizen and the nation, with the Hamidian project being a part of this phenomenon.<sup>208</sup>

Writing is a technology of power. Moralists were powerful in the manner in which they articulated the norms and identified the beneficial and the useless, developing exclusionary narratives in texts that seemingly appeared as apolitical and timeless. Moralists made their texts the strongest channel in which to discuss work, laziness, and industriousness in a highly moralized way; thus, they crowned work ethos as the central issue of the new political self and society. They popularized new terms and new meanings of already established concepts, through which they contributed to the normative basis of an emergent culture of productivity.

<sup>208</sup> Loyalty to the caliph and obedience to the *ululemr* (state authorities) are issues that were certainly highlighted in morality textbooks of the late Ottoman, and specifically the Hamidian, period.