

Fatma Aliye



Fatma Aliye Topuz (1862 - 1936) is known as the first female novelist in Turkish literature. She was the daughter of a historian and was educated informally at home. Although she was not given a special education, she improved herself due to her brother's, listening to the lessons he took from private teachers at home. Through her intellectual curiosity she acquired a high level of proficiency in Arabic and French. Fatma Aliye Hanım got married when she was 17 years old and had four daughters. Her husband was intellectually less endowed and did initially not allow her to read novels in foreign languages. Fatma Aliye Hanım eventually started to make translations. Her literary life began in 1889 when she translated Georges Ohnet's novel *Volonté*. She published this novel under the signature of "Bir Hanım".



Fatma Aliye attracted her father's attention so that he lectured her and exchanged ideas with her. Fatma Aliye Hanım used the pseudonym "Mütercime-i Meram" in her translations after this first translation. She published her first novel ("Useful Information") in 1892 under her real name, in which she tried to disprove the belief that a woman can not forget her first love. It was the first novel in the entire Ottoman Empire written by a woman. Her second novel ("The Lute Player"), published in 1899, depicts a female oud player, whom Fatma Aliye met in Aleppo.

She thematized in her works marriage, harmony between the spouses, love and affection, and the importance of curtailing contrary to arranged marriage. Further, she picked individualism out as a central theme by creating independent and self-reliant heroines, who work and earn own money without the need of a man. Beside her literary works, she wrote for thirteen years between 1895 and 1908 columns in the magazine *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* ("Ladies' Own Gazette") about women's rights without giving up her conservative views. In her 1896 published book *Nisvan-ı İslam* ("Women of Islam"), Fatma Aliye explained the situation of Muslim women to the western world.



She was the first Turkish female novelist who was translated into different languages.

