Bobbed Hair, Fashion, Gender Roles
Late Ottoman Caricatures of Istanbul Women

Veruschka Wagner

Abstract This chapter examines the importance of fashion and appearance in the context of changing gender roles in Istanbul in the late Ottoman period. Through an analysis of satirical magazines published in Istanbul in the 1920s (*Güleryüz* 1921–1923, *Aydede* 1922, *Kelebek* 1923–1924, and *Âyîne* 1921–1922), it examines how caricatures characterized the 'new woman' and her visibility in the public sphere during the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic. Women's modern appearance was characterized by short haircuts, shorter skirts and make-up. In particular, the bobbed hairstyle became a powerful symbol of women's liberation and modernity, provoking both admiration and criticism from different sections of society.

The 'new woman' was seen as a threat to traditional gender roles and social norms, leading to a heated debate about the place of women, but also of men, in society. Caricatures from this period addressed issues such as the division of domestic labour, women's employment and the rise of consumer culture. These depictions also highlighted the tensions between modernity and tradition, new and old, past and present, as women's changing appearances and behaviours were often juxtaposed with conservative or traditional ideas.

The study reveals a striking similarity in the way 'modern women' were depicted beyond individual locations, highlighting the transnational nature of the women's movement and the significant influence of global phenomena on local developments. This topic also shows how closely the history of the Ottoman Empire is linked to that of other regions such as Europe and the USA and how global phenomena can give rise to common ideas and representations.

Finally, this chapter demonstrates the significance of caricatures as a source for understanding cultural and social change in the late Ottoman period. By analysing these visual representations, we gain insight into the ways in which women's outward appearance, shaped by fashion and individual symbols such as the bobbed hair, was used to negotiate and challenge contemporary discourses such as gender roles.

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Introduction

This depiction of a pretty young lady (Fig. 1) appeared on the cover of the ninth issue of the satirical magazine *Güleryüz*[1] ("Laughing Face") in 1921. The depiction shows a lady with bobbed hair and whose face is in profile, a butterfly with a man's head buzzes before her red-painted lips. He is one of her admirers, as can be read from the quatrain below the illustration: "This is the rose of spring, this lovely enchanting creature, whose adorer's soul, is this butterfly that kisses her".[2]

Güleryüz is one of many satirical magazines published in Istanbul in the 1920s.[3] These magazines were full of caricatures dealing with various topics such as domestic and foreign affairs, wars, migrants and minorities, lifestyle, and new fashion. The large number of caricatures depicting women is striking. Fashionable women dressed in modern clothes, with make-up and modern hairstyles, were presented more than any other topic. A closer look reveals that it wasn't so much the topic of fashion itself that was being dealt with in this depictions; rather, women and their fashion were taken as a platform to represent the ongoing societal, cultural, and political changes that the Empire was undergoing.

The increasing presence of women in public life during the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic was the most significant transformation. The visibility of women in the public eye and the changes they underwent, which also became visible through external features, were the reasons for "bringing under close scrutiny almost every aspect of women's lives" and taking them up by the media.[4] Next to women and their changing appearance in public, fundamental social and cultural changes

1 The transliteration of Ottoman-Turkish terms and names in this contribution follows the modern Turkish spelling.

2 *İlk baharın gülü budur/Bu sevimli güzel bebek/Hangi aşığın ruhudur/Onu öpen şu kelebek*.

3 The Ottoman Turkish satirical magazine *Güleryüz* appeared in Istanbul weekly from 1921 to 1923 with a total of 122 editions. Its publisher and founder, Sedat Simavi (1896–1952), was a Turkish journalist, political caricaturist, writer, and film director. During the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1923), *Güleryüz* was Istanbul's most influential humoristic magazine. It supported Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who had led the independence movement. As an opposing voice and supporter of the Turkish government—and this was the opposite side of the independence movement—the politico-humorous journal *Aydede* was founded in 1922.

4 D. Fatma Türe, Facts and Fantasied. Images of Istanbul Women in the 1920s, Newcastle upon Tyne 2015, 81.

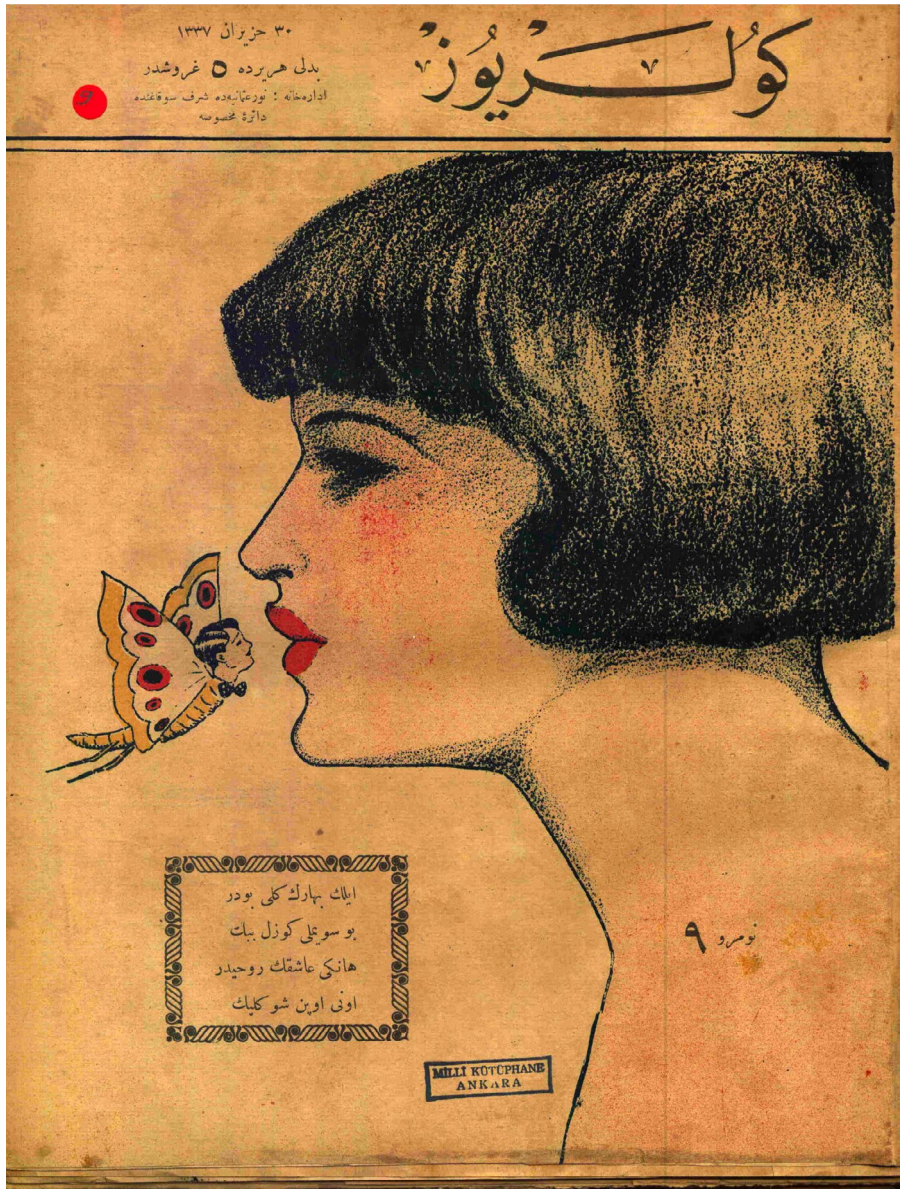

Figure 1. *Güleryüz* 9, 30.6.1921, cover.

"This is the rose of spring, this lovely enchanting creature,
whose adorer's soul, is this butterfly that kisses her."

that were linked to women and had an impact on many areas of life were also picked up as a topic of illustration and depicted in caricatures.

The short haircuts epitomised by the bobbed hairstyle is a symbolic representation of women and their changing appearance in public in the 1920s all over the world. The bob cut itself can be seen as a "cipher of modernity", as Helga Lüdtke puts it.[5] At first glance, it was an external characteristic and a symbol of women's liberation, but it brought with it many other changes. Socially and culturally, it symbolised a period of upheaval, which was taken up and dealt with in countless texts and caricatures in journals and newspapers. We can therefore see similar subjects and debates in newspapers and magazines, similar representations of women and their symbolic characteristics in illustrations from the 1920s in New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Istanbul, and other cities and places around the world. This processing of themes in written and visual form shows us what discourses have preoccupied societies and have, therefore, been taken up and addressed in various media.[6] Furthermore, we can see the interconnectedness of people and media through worldwide phenomena.

This contribution takes people's outward appearance towards the beginning of the 20th century as an opportunity to examine contemporary discourses with a focus on gender roles. We will look at this topic that caricaturists were concerned with through the lens of caricatures featured in various Ottoman satirical magazines printed in Istanbul in the early years of the decade (*Âyîne*, *Aydede*, *Güleryüz*, *Kelebek*). By taking physical appearance and fashion as the starting point for societal and cultural change in Istanbul in the 1920s, this contribution will look at the worldwide transition phenomenon concerning the role of women and men from an Ottoman perspective.

Istanbul and Women in the 1920s

In the history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, the 1920s were a time of transition complete with changes and innovations, which were reflected in economic, social, and political developments. Istanbul had recently endured a turbulent period, with its occupation, Balkan wars, and the First World War. Istanbul also witnessed the War of Independence and underwent the

5 Helga Lüdtke, Der Bubikopf. Männlicher Blick, weiblicher Eigensinn, Göttingen 2021, 21. Lüdtke's study relates to the Weimar Republic but can easily be applied to other regions and cities of that time.

6 A nice comparative study on Berlin and Shanghai is provided by Carol Schmid, The 'New Woman' Gender Roles and Urban Modernism in Interwar Berlin and Shanghai, in*: Journal of International Women's Studies* 15/1 (2014), 1–16.

emergence of a completely new regime and the transformation from empire to nation-state.[7]

In addition to the economic and political unrest, life in Istanbul was also made more difficult by housing and subsistence problems, which were exacerbated by the large number of people moving in, such as Russian refugees and Muslim immigrants.[8]

Istanbul in the 1920s is depicted as a city of many contrasts "where poverty and wealth, ignorance and education, entertainment and grief, prostitution and chastity existed side by side".[9] One can speak of "two Istanbuls": the impoverished part and the part with shops selling European goods and a European lifestyle as the 'modern Istanbul'.[10]

All these circumstances and changes also affected the lives of women. Fatma Türe puts it as follows:

> The decline in the male population, first with the Balkan Wars, then the First World War, forced women to seek jobs and adapt to lives of work. This situation conflicted with the traditional roles of women, who had spent several centuries in the domestic sphere, inside the cage, and made to understand that the women's place was in the home and that a woman's duties were to be a good housewife, a good mother and a wife who pleased her husband. Women were now out in the public sphere, with their work threatening their domestic duties and transforming their priorities.[11]

In Figure 2, we can see one way to illustrate this conflict concerning women, between tradition and modern, past and new, old and young, represented by two sides in a single caricature. A young woman is standing between a young man and an older man. The young man behind her is cutting her dress with scissors to shorten it, while the older man in front of her is holding a needle and closing her dress with stitches. The young man seems to support the modern way of styling with shorter dresses and less covered, whereas the old and traditional man opposes this trend and is trying to retain the old way of styling. The young woman is caught in between, confused by her situation.

7 For the history of Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire, see Stanford J. Shaw / Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey. Vol. II, Reform, Revolution, and Republic. The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975, 7th ed., Cambridge 2002.

8 Türe 2015, 52–53.

9 Türe 2015, 79.

10 Türe 2015, 40.

11 Türe 2015, 52–53.

Figure 2. *Aydede* 56, 13.7.1922, 4.
"Struggle
One opens, the other closes,
and I am confused myself!"

At issue is not only whether the woman should wear a longer or shorter dress, but rather society's transformation in those times. At the beginning of the 20th century, the concept of change took women as the image of change.[12] Women's appearance in public spaces and their behaviour were discussed in the daily press, satirical journals, literature, theatre plays, and cinematic films. Women were used as a medium through which the transformation and transition taking place and affecting the life of a specific part of society were addressed and discussed. However, these women did not represent all women of the late Ottoman and early Republican times. Istanbul women of the middle and upper classes could afford and were affected by this new lifestyle, which represented the 'new woman' that was known to the US, Europe, and other places. It is therefore important to emphasise that Istanbul women "represented not the reality of a nation but a small, exclusive segment of society".[13] Even in earlier times, women's magazines were already pointing out that the topics dealt with specific concerns and problems of middle- and upper-class women, implicitly distinguishing them from women of the lower classes.[14] The caricatures presented here are taken from journals printed in Istanbul and refer to this specific urban social class.

12 Türe 2015, 14.
13 Türe 2015, 166.
14 Elife Biçer-Deveci, Der Kampf für die Frauenrechte im Osmanischen Reich. Kadınlar Dünyâsı und die osmanisch-muslimische Frauenbewegung im frühen 20. Jahrhundert, in: Klaus Kreiser et al. (eds.), Junge Perspektiven der Türkeiforschung in Deutschland, Cham 2014, 41–60, here 42.

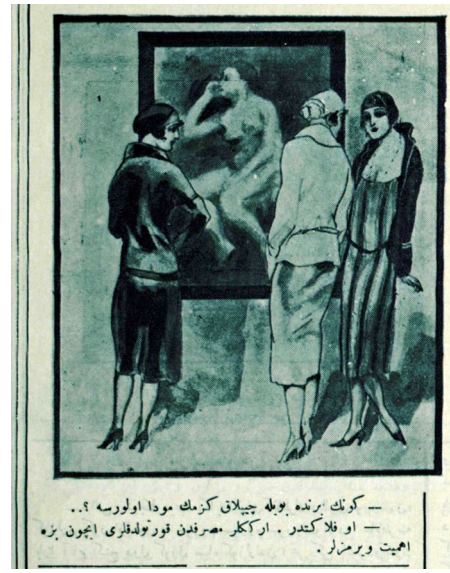

Figure 3. *Kelebek* 70, 7.8.1924, 3.
"What if one day it becomes fashionable to walk around naked like this?
That would be a disaster. Men wouldn't care about us because they would be saved from expenses."

The three fashionably dressed ladies in the caricature in Figure 3 are standing in front of a painting of a nude at an exhibition and discussing their concerns. "What if one day it becomes fashionable to walk around naked like this?" asks one of them. "That would be a disaster. Men wouldn't care about us because they would be saved from expenses," reads the reply.

This caricature brings together various essential aspects of its time. It shows fashionable women outside in public spaces who are visiting an exhibition where there are depictions of naked women. In their short exchange, they address the topics of fashion, consumption, permissiveness, public appearance, the relationship between men and women, and their future concerns. These are all specific aspects that were important in the social debate about the role of women and the changes they were undergoing at the time. Turning away from the traditional role of wife and mother, excessive permissiveness, too much masculinity, and exaggerated consumer behaviour were accusations that women were confronted with. "Women who followed new fashions and wore make-up were often accused of being spendthrift, flighty and imprudent."[15]

As outer appearance made change visible at first sight, clothing and fashion were topics addressed in the media and taken up visually in illustrations. A connection was made between clothing and the character and

15 Türe 2015, 71.

morals of urban women. The way these women dressed was subject of both approval and criticism,[16] and the role of women was the topic of controversial discussion in the daily press and was dealt with in satirical publications as well. Caricatures are the appropriate medium for visually addressing and debating the external features and symbols of the changes of the times.

The Ottoman Satirical Press

While the magazine *Diyojen* ("Diogenes"), published by Teodor Kasap, was long regarded as the first satirical newspaper of the Ottoman Empire, *Meghu* ("Bee") and *Zvarcakhos* ("Joker"), published in Armenian and Armeno-Turkish, are now considered among the first satirical magazines. *Meghu* first appeared in September 1856 and *Zvarcakhos* a few weeks later.[17] They were followed by numerous other publications, particularly in the 1870s, among them *Diyojen* which is particularly well known.[18] *Diyojen* was initially published in Armenian, Greek, French, and later also in Turkish.[19] Other independent satirical magazines published by different editors followed in the second half of the 1870s (e.g., *Laṭîfe*, *Şafaḳ*, *Ḳahḳaha*, *Meddâḥ*, *Geveze*).[20]

Before the Ottoman-Turkish satirical press could even develop in the Ottoman Empire, a law was passed in 1858 that severely restricted the publication of satire and caricatures. It clearly stated that moral offenses in the form of texts or images could result in the perpetrator being fined and imprisoned. However, this regulation must have been aimed at minority-language magazines, given that the first Ottoman-Turkish satirical magazines would only appear later.[21]

Strict controls constantly accompanied the further development of the satirical press. In 1876, it was decreed that caricatures had to undergo

16 Türe 2015, 71.

17 Elif Kıraz, Osmanlı Mizah Basınının Başlangıcı Ermeni Harfli Türkçe Mizah Gazetesi Zvarcakhos "Latifeci" (1856), Istanbul 2024.

18 The issues of the journal digitised by the Bonn Translatio Project can be found at https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-74434.

19 *Diyojen* was published intermittently until 1873 and was discontinued after its 183rd edition. Its editor, Teodor Kasap, went on to publish two more satirical magazines (*Çıngıraḳlı Tatar* and *Ḫayâl*).

20 M. Bülent Varlık, Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Mizah, in: Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi 4 (1985), 1094–1096, and Turgut Çeviker, Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türk Karikatürü, in: Tanzimat'tan Cumhuriyet'e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi 4 (1985), 1101.

21 Çeviker 1985, 1101.

censorship before publication and could only be printed with official approval. Finally, a complete ban was imposed on the publication of satirical periodicals.[22]

Satirical magazines were revived in the Ottoman Empire in 1908, when the Second Constitutional Period convened.[23] In 1909, Sultan Abdülhamid II, during whose reign strict sanctions were in place and satirical magazines were banned, was finally deposed.[24] With the lifting of the sanctions, freedom of the press was also granted, which led to a veritable explosion in the development of satirical magazines.

Despite the initial easing of restrictions, the press and, with it, the satirical magazines were still under tremendous pressure in the first quarter of the 20th century. Renewed bans and censorship severely limited the lifespan of individual periodicals. This was one of the reasons why old magazines were published under new names, or new magazines were published by the same editors. However, the constant restrictions point to the power of the press. Erol Baykal identifies its sphere of influence after 1908 at two points: on the one hand, it succeeded in mobilising the masses and exerting pressure on the government by calling for boycotts and rallies. On the other hand, he interprets the efforts of both the authorities and individual actors to control the press as an indication of the power of the Ottoman press during this period.[25]

The number of satirical magazines increased after 1919 as in the years immediately after the Young Turk revolution of 1908.[26] Some existed for only a few years, while others lasted for decades. The two longest-lived magazines were *Karagöz* (1908–1951) and *Akbaba* (1922–1977), which continued to exist long after the founding of the Republic of Turkey.[27]

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22 Varlık 1985, 1095–1096, n. 6.

23 The First Constitutional Period is characterised by the adoption of the first Ottoman constitution (*ḳânûn-ı esâsî*) in 1876. However, Sultan Abdülhamid II repealed it the very next year. The Second Constitutional Period began with its re-enactment in 1908. See also Clément Huart, Ḳānūn-i Esāsī, in: M. Th. Houtsma et al. (eds.), Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913–1936. https://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_3901 (3.9.2021).

24 Cf. İbrahim Selçuk Ardıç, Kalem Dergisi ve Mizah Anlayışı, Marmara University, Unpublished Master's Thesis, İstanbul 2009, 8.

25 Erol A. F. Baykal, The Ottoman Press 1908–1923 (The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage 67), Leiden / Boston 2019, 217.

26 For a study on women's representation between 1919 and 1924, see François Georgeon, Women's Representation in Ottoman Cartoons and the Satirical Press on the Eve of the Kemalist Reforms (1919–1924), in: Duygu Köksal / Anastasia Falierou (eds.), A Social History of Late Ottoman Women, Leiden / Boston 2013, 249–277.

27 Tobias Heinzelmann and İlkim Büke Okyar both make particular use of *Karagöz*, as well as *Akbaba*, in their studies of caricatures. Tobias Heinzelmann, Die Balkankrise

The satirical press addressed everyday topics, social events, and political changes. It reacted to the news in the daily newspapers and "satirised the depiction of the modern in the serious press."[28] Palmira Brummet underlines the significance of caricatures for social history. According to her, caricature "in some way, attempts to reduce society to its symbols", but as she believes, they "demonstrate that those symbols are the result of a complex cultural synthesis; they function as part of an evolutionary process in which the press was participant."[29] This is in line with our view that caricatures both initiate and fuel social discourses.

The caricatures for this study were all taken from magazines published in Istanbul in the first half of the 1920s: *Güleryüz* 1921–1923, *Aydede* 1922, *Kelebek* 1923–1924, and *Âyîne* 1921–1922. In these magazines, the caricaturists only sometimes used their real names; sometimes they employed pseudonyms, and sometimes the drawings remained unsigned. Half of the signatures on the caricatures on which this article is based can be attributed to their artists. This is how we are able to identify Ramiz Gökçe (1900–1953), who was one of the most famous caricaturists of that time. His caricatures were printed in numerous satirical journals, such as *Âyîne*, *Aydede*, and *Kelebek*, three of the four journals from which examples were taken for this contribution. Figures 8 and 9 are by him. Another artist we can point to is Cevad Şakir Kabaağaçlı (1890–1973), who drew for *Güleryüz* and *Âyîne* and many other journals. Figure 10 stems from his pen. Figure 6 was drawn by Münif Fehim Özarman (1899–1983); his caricatures were printed in *Âyîne*, *Aydede* and many other papers. Ratip Tahir Burak (1904–1977), who drew for *Aydede*, *Kelebek*, and many other magazines, should also be mentioned. He produced the caricature shown in Figure 2.[30]

The caricatures reproduced here are all accompanied by captions that convey or underscore the content. In their depictions, the caricaturists use certain symbols that emphasise an individual's classification and position.

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in der osmanischen Karikatur, Stuttgart 1999, and İlkim Büke Okyar, Arab Stereotypes in Political Cartoons, 1876–1950. National Self and Non-National Other, New York 2023.

28 Palmira Brummett, The Yeni and the Eski Cultural Change and Envisioning the 'Modern' in Late Ottoman Cartoons, in: Kemal Çiçek (ed.), The Great Ottoman and Turkish Civilization 3 (2000), 134–140, here 135.

29 Palmira Brummett, Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–1911, New York 2000, 23.

30 For information on these three caricaturists and many others who lived in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, see the website of the Association of Cartoonists (Karikatürcüler Derneği) in Turkey https://www.karikaturculerdernegi.com/karikaturculerimiz/.

They depict women (and men) with specific characteristics representing people who stand for certain ideas, expectations, and perceived realities of their time. They differ from other caricatures in which certain personalities or figures are depicted who are known to the viewer, representing specific countries, nations, and the like. For all caricatures, there is a close connection between the depiction and current social or political events or debates in all their nuances and layers, which are susceptible to change at any time and are also taken up in other press media. The illustrations can refer to different aspects, media, events, and individuals simultaneously, sometimes even specifically to other press releases or depictions, and they can be understood as a reaction or provocation to them. This makes them quite complex and challenging to decipher, especially if the historical context is far back in time and has yet to be explored.

The caricatures presented here mark changes and transformations and are built on contrasts. They are characterised by tensions between male and female roles, tradition and modernity, old and new. The opposite side does not always have to be depicted in the illustration itself; it is enough that it exists in the minds of the caricaturist and the viewer. These opposing forces have supporters and opponents, and how a given caricature will be read and interpreted depends on the reader's own views.

The Bob Cut, Fashion, and Gender Roles

After 1919, women were omnipresent in the Ottoman satirical press.[31] The rapid change in the area of women's fashion and the extreme contrast between the traditional and the modern attracted caricaturists.[32] A characteristic feature of this period was the short haircut. As a representative of many other short hairstyles, the bob cut was a symbol of its time, a striking example of the new fashion, and one of the symbols that signalled modernity. The bob began its triumphal march after it was created in the US during the First World War, publicised by American actresses, and introduced in Europe in the early 1920s. The new hairstyle, like several other symbols, represented women's desire for equality[33] and liberation and was

31 Georgeon 2013, 252.

32 Georgeon 2013, 267.

33 Norbert Grube, Westdeutsche Haarmoden und Haarpflege der 50er und 60er Jahre, in: Christian Janecke (ed.), Haar Tragen. Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung, Köln / Weimar / Wien 2004, 233–250, here 238.

available in a wide variety of looks (see Fig. 4).[34] "Among all the attributes that set women apart from men, hair and hair length became hot topics of discussions, possibly by virtue of its symbolic significance."[35] Women with permed short haircuts also symbolised upheaval, dynamism, a new fashionable self-confidence, and a trend toward emancipation.[36]

In the 1920s, the shift to shorter women's hairstyles, especially in the form of the bob cut, symbolised the breakthrough of female self-determination and the approach to male norms.[37] By radically shortening the representative feature of female gender *par excellence*, the androgynous appearance was reinforced, and the willingness to play with gender characteristics was further highlighted.[38] The bob was, therefore, read as a message and visible sign of the masculinisation of women, whether in their outward appearance, working life, or lifestyle.[39] The symbolic order of the two genders through the division into clear male and female roles, together with their hallmark symbols, was called into question.

The women's movement in Istanbul was intertwined with its Western counterpart, and that feminism in Europe shaped the lines of development of the Ottoman Muslim women's movement.[40] Just as in the Weimar Republic, where the new fashion trend was enthusiastically embraced by some and ridiculed, rejected, and villified by others,[41] the same changes in the Ottoman Empire provoked both admiration and criticism, as well. "Women in Paris fashion could stand for progress and freedom, or for a frivolous and immoral new social order that disrupted households and symbolised

34 Svenja Kornher, Zur Erfindung der ‚typgerechten' Frisur, in: Christian Janecke (ed.), Haar Tragen. Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung, Köln / Weimar / Wien 2004, 61–82, here 77. Figure 4 is from *Haftalık Mecmua* ("Weekly Magazine") which was not a purely satirical magazine, but a newspaper that appeared once a week in 1925 and 1927 and was devoted to various political and social topics.

35 Türe 2015, 75.

36 Grube 2004, 238.

37 Christian Janecke, Einleitung – Haar tragen, in: Christian Janecke (ed.), Haar Tragen. Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung, Köln / Weimar / Wien 2004, 3–48, here 41.

38 Sigried Follmann, Wenn Frauen sich entblößen… Mode als Ausdrucksmittel der Frau der zwanziger Jahre, Marburg 2010, 45. I found the reference to this passage in Sabrina Melchior, Die „Neue(n) Frau(en)" in der Weimarer Republik. Sozialisationskontexte, neue Freiräume, alternative Identitätskonzepte zum traditionellen Geschlechtsrollenmuster und ihre Darstellung in Medien (Hamburger Arbeiten zur Allgemeinen Erziehungswissenschaft 9), Hamburg 2013.

39 Lüdtke 2021, 187.

40 Biçer-Deveci illustrates this interconnectedness using her study of the women's magazine *Ḳadınlar Dünyâsı* as an example. Biçer-Deveci 2014.

41 Lüdtke 2021, 187.

Figure 4. *Haftalık Mecmua* 76, 1926.
"The most famous haircuts".

Ottoman economic subordination to Europe."[42] Because of the contradictory evaluations, the bob cut was made a subject of discussion—or not so much the radical haircut itself, but rather what was generally associated with short women's hair and was seen or feared as the ultimate in new femininity: androgyny and the dissolution of gender boundaries.[43]

For some, the hairstyle was regarded as a threat to social order, as women who sported it were positioning themselves against the existing dominant religious and moral norms.[44] In conservative circles, both men and women were critical of the new developments and spoke out against women working and their 'masculinisation'.[45] The changes that women and society were undergoing were the subject of lively discussions in newspapers and other periodicals. While some criticised women's new-found independence, which went hand in hand with fashion and make-up, others saw it as a "social necessity".[46]

"The victims of the new fashion: Farewell, hair!" is the caption of the cover picture of the 39th issue of *Güleryüz*, which shows the sad face of a young lady who has just said goodbye to her long hair (see Fig. 5). At that time, being fashionable evidently meant saying goodbye to one's long hair. The lady is holding a pair of scissors and the hair she has cut off, and she now sports a short haircut. What this caricature and the drawing shown earlier in Figure 3 have in common is that they both convey the impression that following fashion trends was not a woman's voluntary decision but something that was forced upon her and that she had no choice but to go along with. These caricatures point the finger at a time in which the idea of the new woman was developing in Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire, illustrating the process it went through with all its controversies.

The bob and other short haircuts were not just trivial hairstyles but also had a communicative function.[47] The short hairstyle could be used to say something about the women who chose to adopt them, their attitude and stance towards political, social, and cultural developments, their role as women, their ideas about the future. The topic was so current that hairstyling was extensively covered in the fashion pages of many magazines and newspapers published in Istanbul. In these magazines and newspapers, the

42 Brummett 2000, 134.
43 Lüdtke 2021, 187.
44 Türe 2015, 64.
45 Türe 2015, 60.
46 Türe 2015, 73.
47 Tilman Allert, Transitorische Prominenz – Gestaltungsoptionen und Gestaltungsrestriktionen in der Haarpflege, in: Christian Janecke (ed.), Haar Tragen. Eine kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherung, Köln / Weimar / Wien 2004, 99–108, here 100.

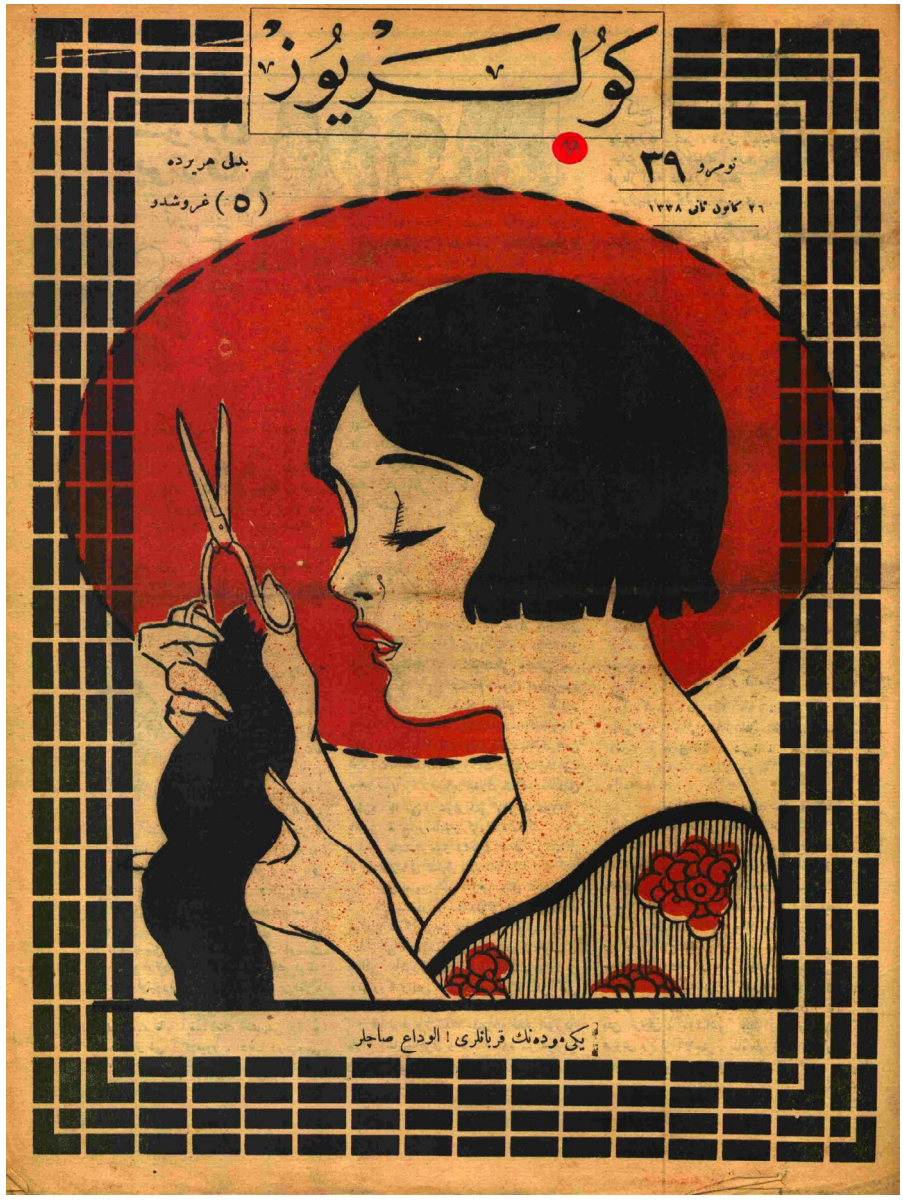

Figure 5. *Güleryüz* 39, 26.1.1922.
"The victims of the new fashion: Farewell, hair!"

Figure 6. *Aydede* 36, 4.5.1922.
"Old and new fashions
Women used to do needlework...
Now they do paintwork!"

question as to whether hair should be worn long or short was a frequent subject of debate.[48]

"There are apparently men," begins an article in the women's magazine *Süs* ("Ornament") from June 1924, "who threaten their wives with divorce if they get their hair cut."[49] The article is titled "For ladies who do not want to cut their hair" and gives women tips on how to style one's hair like a short hairstyle without actually cutting it. The debate about the short haircut seems to be of great relevance and was discussed both in private and in public.

It is not possible to tell whether the woman depicted in the caricature in Figure 6 is wearing a short hairstyle or just has her hair pinned up, in the way suggested in the newspaper article just mentioned. In any case, she is wearing a fashionable hairstyle to match her outfit. She is about to finish her make-up, which is also part of the modern woman's look. The man standing behind her is also dressed in the latest fashion and comments on her dressing up with a remark about women who used to do needlework. The woman responds, "And today they do paintwork." The play on words with *oya* ("lace / needlework") and *boya* ("colour, paint") is lost in translation, but the gist of the joke can still be understood. What is at issue again

48 Türe 2015, 194.

49 *Süs* 53, 6.1924, 4. I found the reference to this article from Türe 2015, 194; *Süs* is not a satirical journal, but nevertheless contains numerous photos and drawings as well as caricatures.

is comparing the past, present, and visible changes. A particular criticism of modernity could be discerned, which is countered by the woman's statement. However, it is difficult to claim that a caricature like this one is advocating for a particular position. Instead, it is raising issues that were controversial. As the developments had both their supporters and detractors, the two sides could interpret the caricature in a way that best aligned with their own views. Similarly, the caricature in Figure 7 can also be interpreted as a positive assessment of the achievements of the emancipated woman, but at the same time it could alternatively been seen as a ridiculing her styling.

Other magazines and newspapers have shown that from the Great War onwards, articles criticising Istanbul women's lifestyles began to appear frequently.

Figure 7. *Kelebek* 67, 17.7.1924.

"Woman: Be honest, what do you think of the way I've dressed up today?
Man: As a matter of fact, no painter is as artistically gifted as you."

> Contemporary women were intensely scrutinised in their domestic roles and working life and in their dress and public manners. As the exponents of many innovations, the middle and upper class women of Istanbul could not avoid becoming targets of social criticism.[50]

However, women also had their supporters, and in the 1920s "women's magazines were established as the main sources to keep up with the latest trends and fashions."[51]

The first quarter of the 20th century also saw increased magazines and newspapers dedicated to women's issues. In 1913, the magazine *Ḳadınlar Dünyâsı* ("World of Women"), which campaigned for women's rights, was founded by the *ʿOsmânlı Müdâfaʿa-i Ḥuḳûḳ-i Nisvân Cemʿiyyeti* ("Ottoman Association for the Defense of Women's Rights"). According to Elife Biçer-Deveci, the magazine shows how the women's movement in the late Ottoman Empire was intertwined with its international counterpart. It regularly reported on the Western women's movement and its successes. The French supplement of the journal played a special role in this interdependence by facilitating an exchange with European feminists.[52]

Some of the magazines and newspapers existed for only a few months, while others lasted for years. They were devoted to various topics such as art, literature, theatre, morals, work and family life, the ideal image of women, socialisation, education, and fashion, including hairstyles, clothing, and make-up.

> While women's clothing and make-up became matters of debate in the pages of magazines, some such as *Süs* and *Resimli Ay* began to dedicate some of their pages to fashion and beauty in order to inform women readers about the latest trends in Europe. In these pages, women could find out about all kinds of novelties in daywear and nightwear, accessories, hairstyles and make-up. This indicates that despite all the criticism women continued to be closely involved with fashion and demanded the latest trends.[53]

However, fashion not only influenced women's clothing, hairstyles, and cosmetics, but also had an impact on other areas of daily life, so that everything

50 Türe 2015, 70.
51 Türe 2015, 31.
52 Biçer-Deveci 2014, 42.
53 Türe 2015, 74.

came under the influence of fashion: from furniture and decoration to political ideas, behaviour, and social roles.[54]

Women's changing social and domestic roles also affected the role of men, a topic taken up in caricatures quite often. While during the 1870s, as François Georgeon explains, caricaturists acted as if they believed "that gender equality meant that men would be condemned to helping with household tasks," the caricaturists of the 1920s "amuse themselves with visions in which the sex roles are completely reversed, women taking the men's place and vice-versa."[55]

The woman in Figure 8 has made herself up, has dressed stylishly in modern fashion, and sets off to go out. The man, broom in hand, is left at home by her and receives instructions to change the child's diaper after lighting the fire. The tasks traditionally performed by the woman are thus transferred to the husband. The man looks on at his wife, somewhat crestfallen. In her chic outfit, the woman stands in complete contrast to the man, who is wearing the traditional fez, trousers held up by braces, a shirt, and slippers.

Figure 8. *Aydede* 6, 14.1.1922.

"Women's privileges

Bey! I'm going to the movies. After you light the fire, you can change the kid's diaper, can't you?"

The contrast is strongly linked to caricatures as it can be used as a stylistic device in the depiction itself or on a meta-level to contrast what is depicted concerning an idea, expectation, or perceived reality with its opposite. In

54 Türe 2015, 30.
55 Georgeon 2013, 264.

this context, it can be the contrast between traditional and modern women, urban and rural women, or, as tackled here, between women and men and their domestic roles.[56]

The caricature shown in Figure 9 is divided into two images, with a woman on the right and a man on the left (and here, we must remember that Arabic script, including Ottoman Turkish, is read from right to left, so the image on the right should be considered before the one on the left). The lady in the right-hand picture is wearing a short dress, with a pinned-up hairstyle and high heels. She is sitting at a round table and talking on the phone. In the speech bubble coming out of her mouth, she says: "Yes, yes, at two o'clock." The furniture, a round glass table, the stool on which she is sitting, the telephone, and her dress all point to a modern household and lifestyle. So, while the woman is sitting there on the phone, presumably making appointments for her leisure time, the man on the left is standing with a baby in his arms.

Figure 9. *Aydede* 50, 20.6.1922.
"(yes, yes, at two o'clock)
In times when their wives
are busy... poor men!"

These changes in women's lives, which became so visible in the 1920s, can be interpreted as a result of the atmosphere of relative freedom brought about by the Second Constitutional Era. According to Fatma Türe,

> The rights won, especially in the fields of education and civil law after the revolution of 1908, again though limited, can nevertheless be claimed to have provided the urban women with a freer, more visible life compared to that of their mothers.[57]

56 You can also find an analysis of this caricature in Georgeon 2013, 264.
57 Türe 2015, 53.

Women had gained the "possibility of a life outside the domestic sphere" and entered "male domains of occupation", which caused various reactions in society.[58] The idea of 'new woman' or 'modern woman' that spread in the US and Europe had also reached Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire. This idea "came to define any woman displaying the slightest deviation from the roles of mother and wife."[59]

The caricature shown in Figure 10 plays on the issue of the division of gender roles and presents a reversal of them. The woman is ready to divorce her husband but wants to keep the car and the house and leave the kids to him. This contrasts with the woman's traditional role as mother, wife, and housewife. Stylistically, she is also depicted as quite masculine, standing upright and thus towering over the seated man. She is wearing boots and a trench coat, usually men's attire. She seems to have the superior position in this relationship. This depiction tackles the masculinisation of women, which was debated extensively in journals and newspapers.

Figure 10. *Âyîne* 19, 29.12.1921, 3.
"Wife: I will get a divorce, but the children are yours, the car and the houses are mine."

Furthermore, four years before this caricature was published, family law underwent far-reaching changes. Circumstances such as transformations in the socio-cultural and economic landscape, upheavals, and wars had forced less wealthy and uneducated Muslim women who had lost their husbands into poverty, and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) led

58 Türe 2015, 56–58.
59 Türe 2015, 31.

the Ottoman state to seek new family and gender arrangements.[60] Widows depended on male relatives to provide for them as they themselves lacked education and job opportunities. Theoretically, one possible solution was to remarry, but in practice that was impossible due to the fact they were unable to divorce their missing and lost husbands; only men had the legal right to initiate a divorce. In addition, as thousands of men had died, the social distribution of tasks between men and women had become unbalanced. Finally, Islamic family law was revised, codified, and promulgated in 1917 as the Ottoman Law on Family Rights.[61] With the revision of the family law, in particular, women were now also allowed to divorce.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with a statement by Palmira Brummett, who explains the following: "I cannot, for the most part, state what the Ottoman editor's intent was or what the Ottoman viewer's interpretation was. I cannot measure the effect of cartoons on the Ottoman public."[62] With many Ottoman caricatures, it is close to impossible from today's perspective to ascertain the caricaturist's precise standpoint or message. How a given caricature would be interpreted by the viewers of the time, who were involved in the developments and were directly aware of what was going on, would surely have differed from how a modern viewer would read them. The drawings document societal, cultural, and political processes and take up themes and discourses that were of particular relevance at the time when they were produced. It is often small details addressed in other media to which caricaturists refer to in their depictions, thereby generating meaning, but these references and connections are only preserved if one knows the whole context in which the caricature was created. Sometimes, from today's perspective, gathering all the essential information referred to is difficult if even possible, which can result in lost references and meanings. So, the time difference and the relevance of the context can lead to a caricature being interpreted differently from how it was originally intended. Another issue is that a caricature can even be interpreted differently due to the fact that it was intentionally ambiguous and that its interpretation depended

60 Nihan Altınbaş, Marriage and Divorce in the Late Ottoman Empire. Social Upheaval, Women's Rights, and the Need for New Family Law, in: Journal of Family History 39/2 (2014), 114–125, here 115–116.

61 Altınbaş 2014, 116.

62 Brummett 2000, 22.

on the standpoints of the viewers of their own time. A clear example of this can be found in caricatures depicting women in 'new fashion' in the 1920s, a phenomenon that could have been viewed either positively or negatively, depending on the reader's opinion. Because of this multi-interpretability, it is difficult for a historian or researcher of any discipline today to grasp the whole message with all its hints and references.

However, although sometimes the caricatures are not easily decodable from today's perspective, they still show us which topics were being dealt with specifically. They give us ideas about what topics were relevant for the producer of the caricature and the addressee. Fashion, women, and changing gender roles seemed important in the 1920s, given that so many caricatures from various satirical journals took up this topic. The outer appearances, such as hairstyles and clothing, are particularly suitable symbols in caricatures based on pictorial representations to address certain issues. The bob cut and other fashion markers transmitted a new style and symbolised a new attitude that profoundly affected the social and cultural composition and brought about major changes. One part of society supported these changes, another part rejected them. The same symbols, such as short skirts, make-up, and presence in public spaces, could be interpreted in various ways. While some appreciated the appearance and changing behaviour of 'modern women', others opposed it. Still, caricatures have the ability to leave room for interpretation.

The topic of 'modern women' shows how closely the history of the Ottoman Empire is connected to that of Europe and the US and how global phenomena can link common ideas and their representation in media and illustrations. The women's movement in the Ottoman Empire developed in parallel with that in other parts of the world, and the press was a suitable medium for playing on this topic. Depictions of the 'modern women' in American, French, English, German, and Ottoman satirical magazines of that time hardly differ from each other. They bear witness to a mutual influence and worldwide connection, not only to the images and depictions but also with regard to the phenomena and changes they convey. It is therefore hardly possible to research the events and thus the history of the Ottoman Empire and the history of Ottoman caricature independently of those in other regions.

ORCID®

Veruschka Wagner https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0905-3486

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