

*Mobilizing Subjectivity in the Practice of the Nation: Tagheadeants' Case for Women's Education*

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Discussions of feminism in nineteenth-century societies hold at their core a complex relationship between the movement for women's emancipation and the movement for women's education. In Victorian England, transformations in the social meaning of womanhood were often linked to educational reforms, echoing similar debates taking place in the empire's colonies and within emergent nationalist discourses. For instance, in the same year that the first free public school for girls was established in Barasat, West Bengal, the Armenian intellectual and educator, Mesrob Tagheadeants' published a treatise in Calcutta called "The Discourse on the Education of Women" (1847). In it, making a case for the importance of "the educated mother" in the raising of "saviors of the nation," he called for the establishment of a national school that would cater to both boys and girls. Tagheadeants' framing of women's education as the foundation of church and nation at times borders on exploitative in what Silvia Walby would call the perpetuation of "private patriarchy" and at times expresses sentiments that sound liberating within a utopian socialist framework. Through an examination of Tagheadeants' treatise, this paper reveals early efforts of assigning political significance to female subjects within the modern conception of the Armenian nation.

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