

# The Ottoman's Burden: Orientalist Influences on Cenap Şahabettin's Travelogues<sup>(\*)</sup>

## Osmanlı'nın Yükü: Cenap Şahabettin'in Seyahat Mektuplarında Oryantalist Etkiler

Uygar AYDEMİR<sup>(\*\*)</sup>

### Abstract

*This paper is about the depiction of the "East" and the representations of the "Easterners" in the works by Ottoman author Cenap Şahabettin. Cenap was not only an intellectual but also a representative of the state bureaucracy. After finishing his education in Istanbul and Paris, Cenap became a dermatologist, and was appointed public health officer in Egypt, and consequently in Iraq. Cenap's works on the Arab lands were published when the Ottomans were trying to adapt a modernist colonial approach towards their provinces, as opposed to their older governing practice. Paradoxically, although the Ottoman Empire placed itself among European states, it fell into a dichotomy by conceding the prejudices many European intellectuals had towards the "East". The Ottomans overcame the paradox of seeing themselves both as hard-working, powerful, constitutionalist "Westerners", and lazy, weak, despotic "Easterners", by projecting the second set of adjectives onto their provinces. Cenap wrote that people of the "East" deserved despotic rulers, since they lacked the ability to reason freely. Besides using the discussion of Eastern despotism to legitimize the*

Üsküdar  
Üniversitesi  
Sosyal Bilimler  
Dergisi, 2018;  
sayı: 7,  
211-225

### Özgün Araştırma Makalesi (Original Research Article)

Geliş Tarihi: 25.09.2018

Kabul Tarihi: 26.10.2018

(\*) This article is based on the author's Master of Arts thesis' "Cenap Şahabettin'in Seyahat Mektuplarında Oryantalist Etkiler."

(\*\*) Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Üsküdar Üniversitesi, İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Tarih Bölümü, uygar.aydemir@uskudar.edu.tr

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3972-2380>

## Uygar AYDEMİR

*Ottoman presence in the area, he also mentioned the economic backwardness of the Easterners, and concluded that they needed to be modernized, but lacked the means to do so. Cenap asserted that western countries were not good candidates for modernizing the region. He cleverly notes down the developments brought by the Ottomans and emphasizes that Ottomans were not only the sole proper candidate for modernizing them, but also a good one. Nourished by the works of Edward Said, Ussama Makdisi and Jale Parla, the paper takes a semiotic approach in evaluating Cenap's works, and compares Cenap's attitude with that of the western travelers, attempting to provide a broader picture.*

**Keywords:** *Cenap Şahabettin, Orientalism, Ottoman Empire, Travelogues, Literature and society.*

### Özet

*Bu makale, Cenap Şahabettin'in eserlerindeki "Doğu" tasviri ve "Doğulu" temsilleriyle ilgilidir. Cenap yalnızca bir entelektüel değil aynı zamanda Devlet bürokrasisinin bir temsilcisiydi. İstanbul ve Paris'te gerçekleştirdiği tıp eğitimiyle cilt doktoru olan Cenap, önce Mısır'a sonra Irak'a görevli olarak atandı. Cenap'ın Arap toprakları üzerine olan eserlerinin basılması, Osmanlıların asırlardır süren hükümet etme anlayışlarının yerini o bölgede modernist hükümetme yöntemlerine terk ettiği zamana denk geldi. Osmanlılar kendilerini bir Avrupa devleti olarak görürken Avrupalıların onlara yönelttiği iktidar içeren oryantalist bakışı onlar da kendi doğularına yönelttiler. Avrupalı seyyahların eserlerinde sıklıkla görülen Avrupalıların çalışkan, güçlü, anayasal olmalarına karşın "Doğuluların" tembel, zayıf, despotik oldukları yönündeki bakışı içselleştirerek bunun içsel bir paradoksa dönüşmesi tehlikesine karşın ikinci grup sıfatı kendi taşralarına yönelttiler. "Doğuluların" mantıklarını özgürce kullanmadıkları için despotik hâkimleri hak ettikleri ve Doğu despotizmi tartışması Osmanlı'nın bölgedeki hâkimiyetini meşrulaştırmak için kullanılmıştır. Bunların yanı sıra bölgenin iktisadi geri kalmışlığı, Cenap'ın gözlemlediği yer ve insanların modernize edilmesi gerektiği sonucuna varmasını sağlamıştır. Bu modernizasyon projesi için bölgenin yerel insan kaynaklarının yeterli olmadığı, batılıların da bu iş için iyi bir aday olmadıklarını savunan Cenap, Osmanlıların bölgede gerçekleştirdiği gelişmeleri sayarak Osmanlıların bölgeyi*

*modernize etmek için uygun ve iyi bir aday olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Edward Said, Ussama Makdisi, Jale Parla gibi yazarların eserlerini kullanan bu makale, Cenap'ın eserlerine semiyotik bir yaklaşımda bulunarak Cenap'ın tavrını batılı seyyahlarla kıyaslayarak genel bir resim çizmeye çalışmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Cenap Şahabettin, Oryantalizm, Osmanlı Devleti, Seyahatnameler, Edebiyat ve toplum.

## Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth century but particularly towards the period's end, Europeans saw the Ottoman Empire as an increasingly troublesome polity. This was because of the Ottoman Empire's mediate position between colonizing powers and the colonized dominions. On the one hand, the Empire was too large to be swallowed by colonization completely at once, and it was indeed still powerful enough to resist a wholesale colonization. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire's sudden collapse could bring disorder in the Middle East, and particularly the dissolution of Ottoman power and state in the Balkans was dreaded to cause a great war. The definition by the Europeans of the Ottomans as a non-western despotism and that this troublesome despotism was not able to progress, had become an image that the Ottoman intellectuals tried to prove wrong insistently in their writings in a number of ways especially during the nineteenth century. Seeing their own people from the point of view of an orientalist colonizer was one of such ways. This article attempts to make a textual analysis of Cenap Şahabettin's travelogues in order to exemplify one such view.

## Literature Review

The debate on orientalism has been studied and broadened from a wide variety of perspectives in the last half a century. From within these debates, the issue of Ottoman orientalism has been discussed from several viewpoints over the last two decades but can be considered still quite

## Uygar AYDEMİR

novel. Among important articles that have appeared so far in international journals, which choose their topic particularly as Ottoman orientalism, three will be mentioned in order to set the theoretical framework of this paper. The first article, which was published in the year 2000, was written by two German historians of Ottoman studies, Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, named “Orientalism Alla Turca: Late 19<sup>th</sup> / Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim Outback”<sup>1</sup>. Although it was not very detailed from a theoretical perspective, this article was important because it drew the attention to the orientalist discourse used not against but by the Ottomans.

The second article was written by Selim Deringil, bearing the title “They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”<sup>2</sup>. Deringil evaluated in his article the Ottoman government before and after the Tanzimat regulations, which marked the beginning of accelerated Ottoman modernization, from a perspective of Ottoman statesmen’s relation with Ottoman subjects. The article also discussed what kind of rupture was experienced with the centralizing activities after the Tanzimat. Deringil stated that the transition between the two periods could be formulated as the elite’s gradually distinguishing itself from the common people. He wrote that a sign of the broken ties between the state and the people became apparent in especially during Sultan Abdülhamit II’s reign (1876-1908). Deringil also gave an example to this change in attitude towards the people, by asserting that while propagating Islamic solidarity to the citizens of the state against Christian invaders, they did not distinguish their citizens any more as Christians and

---

<sup>1</sup> Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika. “Orientalism ‘alla turca’: Late 19th / Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim ‘Outback’”, *Die Welt des Islams*, 2000, 40 (2), 139-195.

<sup>2</sup> Selim Deringil. “‘They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery’: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2003, 45 (2), 311-342.

Muslims. They only viewed them as resources on material basis, such as taxpayers, farm owners, merchants, etc.<sup>3</sup>

Deringil ends his article by claiming that the Ottomans, who felt the threat of being colonized by France and England, used their enemies' weapons against them in order to prevent being colonized.<sup>4</sup> They tried to demonstrate that they were not powerless, that they were actually sufficiently civilized, and that they were able to modernize the communities who were in the periphery of Ottoman lands; and thus orientalized Ottoman subjects in this way.

Ottoman Empire's position vis a vis European powers is discussed in Ussama Makdisi's article "Ottoman Orientalism" in a more detailed manner.<sup>5</sup> When Makdisi approached the condition of the Ottomans in the second half of the nineteenth century, he evaluated the state's relation with Europe in the context of colonialism. Makdisi drew the following conclusion in regard to Ottoman orientalism: "It discredited Western representations of Ottoman indolence by contrasting Ottoman modernity with the unreformed and stagnant landscape of the empire. In effect, it de-Orientalized the empire by Orientalizing it".<sup>6</sup> Makdisi stated that the situation, in which the West saw itself as not synchronous with the East, was also valid for the Ottomans in the same manner.<sup>7</sup>

Makdisi underlines that the notion of time remained at the heart of Ottoman modernization.<sup>8</sup> Before, Istanbul saw itself as the center of the

<sup>3</sup> Deringil, *ibid*, p.338.

<sup>4</sup> Deringil, *ibid*, p.341.

<sup>5</sup> Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism", *The American Historical Review*, (2002), 107 (3), pp.768-796.

<sup>6</sup> Makdisi, *ibid*, p.773.

<sup>7</sup> Makdisi, *ibid*, pp.771-72. Makdisi borrows the anthropologist Johannes Fabian's notion of "denial of co-evalness" concerning the dimension of time in the power relation established between colonizer Europe and the colonized.

<sup>8</sup> Makdisi, *ibid*, p.771.

caliphate, which was regarded as an *upper* level than the rest of the Empire. However, now, being imagined as the most modernized city, it saw itself *ahead* and *forward* of the rest of the Empire. This way, while becoming moderns, Ottomans, actually, became orientalists. This last statement can be proven true in Cenap Şahabettin's travelogues, which will be examined in the following section.

### Cenap Şahabettin's Travelogues

Cenap Şahabettin was an Ottoman poet who used new forms in poetry inspired by contemporary French literature. He had been educated as a dermatologist, and he was not a prominent figure in politics, but as an Ottoman health officer, he went to Egypt, Iraq and Syria, which were parts of the Ottoman Empire at the time.<sup>9</sup> Since he was an officer in these countries appointed by Istanbul, he saw himself, and also was regarded by local people as someone that represented the state. Therefore, his observations are important in illuminating the late Ottoman elite's points of view about its Arab lands and people.

Cenap Şahabettin's travelogues match this idea of Ottoman orientalism advocated by Herzog & Motika, Deringil and Makdisi at various levels. First of all, they are clearly orientalist from a semiotic perspective, which was based on binary oppositions, a concept Edward Said defined and described.<sup>10</sup> When the orientalists draw an east/west sketch, the east part has such features as timelessness/inertia, nature/natural, childishness, lust for pleasure, etc, while the west is associated with timeliness/progress, culture/cultural, maturity, reason, etc. Many times, Cenap Şahabettin follows this diagram and what he does can be described as 'manifest orientalism'.

---

<sup>9</sup> For biographical information on Cenap Şahabettin, see İnci Enginün, *Cenap Şahabettin*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları 1989); Saadetin Nüzhet Ergun, *Cenap Şahabettin: Hayatı ve Seçme Şiirler*. (İstanbul: Yeni Şark Kütüphanesi 1934).

<sup>10</sup> The concept is present throughout Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books 1979). See, for instance, Said, *ibid*, pp.234-239.

Other times, Cenap Şahabettin seems to be objective but his statements result in discriminating the oriental people from the western (and Istanbulite) ones. Such occasions can be described rather as 'latent orientalism'. Lastly, there are those occasions in which he undoubtedly transcends the discourse of orientalism. However, even there, his comments may be interpreted as part of an Ottoman imperialist discourse.

In fact, it may be considered inconvenient to seek for malevolence in his travelogues when Cenap Şahabettin explicitly expresses his benevolence and sympathizes with local people. Yet the crucial point here, and also in the discourse of orientalism in general, is not what oriental travelers say they are trying to do but what their text serves on a wider political framework albeit unintentionally. Well-intentioned texts may end up with reproducing binary oppositions, and serving the agenda of the colonizers. In Cenap's case, orientalist discourse is so embedded in his writings that even his literary definitions turn out to be discriminative and essentialist.

The first orientalist characteristic marked by Cenap Şahabettin is the orient's timelessness. While describing an event in the time he lives in, he constantly establishes links to the past and early Islamic Ages as if he can explain today's events via distant past.<sup>11</sup> Otherwise, he describes Arab lands as if nothing changed for centuries.<sup>12</sup> Cenap Şahabettin obviously has an eastern image in his mind and do not refrain using it frequently regardless of its accordance with reality. He also relates this timelessness to Arabs' love of the past, passivity and stagnancy. Although he does not necessarily use such expressions in order to defame the lands he visits and the people he meets, his intention does not stop his expressions forming an orientalist image of the Arab people.

<sup>11</sup> Anouar Abdel Malek discusses what kind of problems taking a golden age in the history of the colonized people by colonizer orientalists might bring in Anouar Abdel Malek, "L'Orientalisme en crise", *Diogenes*, 1963, 44 (4), 109-142.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, see Cenap Şahabettin. *Âfâk-ı Irak: Kızıldeniz'den Bağdat'a Hatıralar*, (İstanbul: Dergâh 2002), pp.66-67, 73.

## Uygar AYDEMİR

In addition to timelessness, for Cenap, the East is a place that exists in the books. He gathered his knowledge about Egypt through French travelers. While approaching Alexandria on the ship and seeing the local porters climbing up the ship in order to carry the passenger's luggage, he identifies himself with Christopher Columbus approaching the new continent and the locals with American Indians attacking his ship.<sup>13</sup> When he looks at the city of Baghdad, he does not see a landscape but a poem, and states, "Baghdad is not dead. In order it to be dead, it should get overdosed by poetry and love. This is the only way of killing Baghdad".<sup>14</sup> For him, Egypt is the country of Alexander the Great, Amr ibn al-As, Sultan Selim I, and Cleopatra.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, there are some passages, in which he seems to be questioning this position. One such passage appears when he asks the lady in the hotel lobby in Alexandria about the touristic sites in the city. Although the lady's answer is thought-provoking, he does not make a comment afterwards, so the reader cannot be sure of what he is thinking about the lady's remark. The dialogue is as follows:

*"Madame, what historical sites are there to visit here?" Women's thick lips drew a smile of contempt: "Maybe a hundred thousandth time, I heard this question ... but I always give the same answer. This is not a dead city, but a flourishing and powerful city. Here, one should not look for architectural ruins, and abandoned stones. Those old buildings are not on the streets and squares, but in the pages of books."*<sup>16</sup>

The other feature mentioned about what orientalists assume the orient has is the oriental people's being close to nature as opposed to culture. In this sense, western travelers noted that the relationship of the Easterners

---

<sup>13</sup> Cenap Şahabettin. *ibid*, p.56.

<sup>14</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *ibid*, p.91.

<sup>15</sup> Cenap Şahabettin. *Hac Yolunda*. (Ankara: Ecdad Yayınları 1995), pp.61-62.

<sup>16</sup> Cenap Şahabettin. *ibid*, p.89. All translations from Cenap Şahabettin's works are mine.



to the animals is different than that of their own. During his visit to the Ottoman Empire in 1850, Flaubert wrote that "Istanbul harbor is full of birds. You know that Muslims never kill them".<sup>17</sup> In 1855, Gautier wrote that "animals in the land of Islam and people live in a friendly familiarity".<sup>18</sup> At first glance, these kinds of observations appear positive. However, Christine Peltre, the author of *Orientalism in Art*, draws the attention to the fact that the Easterners' depiction with animals side by side is a common practice at that time. This way, they are seen in a state of nature that is closer to animals than to humans.<sup>19</sup>

These depictions in literature found almost equivalent representations in the art of painting. Harem women were accompanied by birds, gazelles, or leopards in the depictions. These depictions caused a perception of Easterners as lacking freedom, like animals in a zoo, thus strengthened the stereotypes about the Easterners. These descriptions were so widespread that prominent artists such as Édouard Manet and Alphonse Daudet parodied them. In addition, Peltre makes the point that European horses were usually portrayed plain but there emerged a tradition of painting Arabian horses with henna or a variety of bead-like "Eastern" ornaments, so even the animals were orientalized.<sup>20</sup>

In a similar manner, Empire's Arab subjects are represented along with animals in Cenap Şahabettin's travelogues. In this regard, nature and naturalness are used in antagonism with culture and rationality. Cenap Şahabettin does not have to make this comparison and reach the conclusion of being natural means being irrational. It is enough to see him describing orient close to nature for awakening orientalist fantasies of his predecessors.

<sup>17</sup> Gustave Flaubert, *Lettres d'Orient: De Mémoire*, (Bordeaux: L'Horizon chimérique 1990), p.257.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Christine Peltre, *Orientalism in Art*, (Paris: Editions Terrail/Edigroup, 2004), p.98.

<sup>19</sup> Peltre, *ibid*, p.99.

<sup>20</sup> Peltre, *ibid*, pp.100-101.

## Uygar AYDEMİR

In a passage in his book, *Âfâk-ı Irak* [*Horizons of Iraq*] (1914), Şahabettin depicts the animals in harmony with nature. He describes the region in its entirety with its animal and human residents, thus strengthens the sense that they are all products of the same place and the same natural environment. He starts recounting animals from camels and goats, to dogs, chickens and pigeons, but then without distinction, he continues describing the landscape as filled with women, and dark and sick Arab children. Their houses are likened to beavers' dens, their smiles to cliffs, faces to a mask of leather.<sup>21</sup> But still, they deserve pity out of their poverty, which is another common characteristic of orientalist discourse, paving the way to invoke mercy and desire to help them. A passage from his book "Letters from Europe" (1915) would illustrate the sharp contrast:

*"I like to navigate freely on the streets of Europe. One breaths in ideas out there on the boulevards of Europe. There, effort and money are spent on intelligence more than on anything else. While passing through a major boulevard, one will receive immense knowledge and wisdom without ever entering a classroom. The ideas and hidden feelings flow from the center towards the margins of a street, from the eyes to the shops; intelligence is exchanged even between the eyes of the Europeans. Your soul takes a bath of humanity there."*<sup>22</sup>

Once this state of naturalness in the East is established, Cenap criticizes when he sees a contrasting image. When he went to a garden near Alexandria, which was architecturally designed, he found it unnatural, something that did not fit in his understanding of the East.

*"In the garden existed the entire science and the entire ornaments. There was nothing natural and real. There, they cut trees to make a line, broke them, colored them as they wished. They gave a geometric shape to the*

---

<sup>21</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *Âfâk-ı Irak*, pp.72-73.

<sup>22</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *Avrupa Mektupları*, p.107.

*branches. They contorted and distorted the nature. [...] Fortunately, the engineers of this insane garden did not try to change the smell of flowers. Here, it was the only natural thing.*"<sup>23</sup>

A common trend in the oriental travelogues is that the East appears as a land of oppositions.<sup>24</sup> This point emphasizes East's position as being beyond common reason and experience (common, being western, of course). Cenap also sees Cairo as such:

*"On the one hand, there are the most ostentatious ornaments and extravagance; on the other hand, there are poverty and misery in the most heart-rending scene. Now you see a naked beggar to be felt mercy, but he shows in his attitude and gestures such a solemnity that you think he is dressed up as a beggar just for a change in fashion. [...] This town that is formed by a large collection of opposites today, was it not the most beautiful city of old times in various stories?"*<sup>25</sup>

Representing people as if they are childish would surely imply that they needed to be protected, and this representation is frequently done by Cenap Şahabettin. According to Cenap, Arab people are childish in the sense that they are always in a playful mood, and are always in the realms of imagination and dreams, rather than living in the actual life. He strengthens this image by defining the oriental people as addicted to their pleasures.<sup>26</sup> Indolence, comfort, scent, inebriation are the common words he uses. He does not use these words alone but with the words 'oriental'.

On the other hand, Cenap Şahabettin sometimes appears to transcend the orientalist discourse. For example, he writes that the Arabs have very good characteristics and a sharp intelligence. They have also preserved

<sup>23</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *Hac Yolunda*, p.94.

<sup>24</sup> Jale Parla, *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik*, (İstanbul: İletişim 2005), p.25.

<sup>25</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *Hac Yolunda*, pp.81-83.

<sup>26</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *Âfâk-ı Irak*, p.72.

## Uygar AYDEMİR

their innocence and stayed pure from the undesired effects of modernity and technology.<sup>27</sup>

This statement looks like an objection to orientalist discourse because it seems positive. However, such interpretations bear the danger of latent orientalism. Cenap Şahabettin in this statement still makes a distinction between the Arabs and civilized people. He may be labeling all eastern people innocent and this may seem positive, but positive discriminations are still discriminations. Being pure from modernity and technology basically means that they are distant from the positive sciences. This distance gives them a childish cuteness but also defines them as people that need to be helped and taught. This is why such argumentations are frequently accompanied by the statement of a modernizing mission. Edward Said asserts that many writers “saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption”.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, Cenap Şahabettin thinks that Arab people are not dealing with politics and do not care for their land’s future. This statement becomes another touch on the timeless description of the oriental world.

Now, in this background of an East where its people need to be helped but cannot help themselves, Cenap introduces his solution. In his *Suriye Mektupları* [*Letters from Syria*] (1918), he talks about what the governor of Syria, Cemal Pasha, brought to the country. Cemal Pasha makes boulevards and brings teachers from Istanbul, and opens schools, etc. When he compares Cemal Pasha’s modernization to English modernization in Egypt, he finds the Ottoman version more humane and closer to local people and local culture.<sup>29</sup> This comparison makes it easier to understand his frame of mind. It is like how Alphonse de Lamartine, a 19<sup>th</sup> century French man of literature and a representative in the French Parliament,

---

<sup>27</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *Âfâk-ı Irak*, pp.81-83.

<sup>28</sup> Said, *ibid*, p.206.

<sup>29</sup> Bâki Asiltürk, “Cenap Şahabettin’in Suriye Mektupları”, Unpublished MA thesis. (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü 1991), p.46.

uses the same discourse. Lamartine shows the Easterners as backward and powerless in order to incite and justify an action towards them, but also high in spiritual values in order to show an invasion favorable and desirable.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, Cenap Şahabettin distances the Arabs from Ottomans, rather from the Istanbul elite, and then reminds the responsibility of the Ottomans towards them, not forgetting to state that the English are not successful in bringing civilization to Arabs in Egypt or Iraq.<sup>31</sup> There emerges the Ottoman burden. Cenap, in "Letters from Syria", praises Cemal Pasha in length on his achievements in Syria, and implies that the orient does not need the West, but it needs the Ottomans. While the Western intervention to the East could endanger's the end of the orient, Ottomans could provide a peaceful transition.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, in Cenap Şahabettin's books we see an author that is highly influenced by western orientalist ideas. He never became a representative in the Ottoman or in the Turkish Parliament. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that his ideas represented the official Ottoman discourse. However, once the classical Ottoman society is taken into account, all the government employees, from the smallest office holder to the grand vizier, the highest counsellor of the Sultan, they were all identified with the state. Besides, Cenap was an important intellectual figure especially in the topics concerning literature, which was the main field of expression for new ideas at the time that would become the drive behind the social change. Therefore, it would not be far-fetched to see his travelogues representing a state of mind that was present in the late years of the Empire.

<sup>30</sup> Parla, *ibid*, p.25, p.68.

<sup>31</sup> Cenap Şahabettin, *Âfâk-ı Irak*, p.44.

<sup>32</sup> Asiltürk, *ibid*, pp.46-50.

## Uygar AYDEMİR

When this state of mind is analyzed, it can be deduced that Ottomans gradually adapted themselves to western colonial mind and saw the peripheries of the Empire as their colonies. Before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they never called these lands as colonies or tried to apply homogenizing regulations, such as schooling. However, as they grew into seeing themselves as the representative of modernity in the East and Islam in the West, they tried to show that they were capable of modernizing the East and capable of showing the power and authenticity of Islam in the West. They hoped these two actions would provide them with the legitimacy to rule.

As the Ottoman Empire left its place in history to the Republic of Turkey, we see that the Republic inherited this understanding of modernism as orientalism. They dropped their claim in being an Islamic state, so they had to base their legitimacy only on being modernizers of the society. On the other hand, there was not a major Arab population in Turkey, or Arab lands to protect, also they had nationalist claims, and so they claimed to be modernizers of the Turkish society. Therefore, in the early Turkish Republic, we encounter observations on how backwards the Turkish society was and how wrecked Anatolia was, etc. In those years, being a ruler seemed to require being a colonizer of one's own people. This was what they understood of ruling, and it was what they inherited from the last decade of the Ottoman Empire.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anouar Abdel Malek, "L'Orientalisme en crise", *Diogenes*, 1963, 44 (4), 109-142.

Bâki Asiltürk, "Cenap Şahabettin'in Suriye Mektupları" ["Cenap Şahabettin's Letters from Syria"], Unpublished MA thesis, (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü 1991).

Cenap Şahabettin, *Âfâk-ı Irak: Kızıldeniz'den Bağdat'a Hatıralar* [*The Horizons of Iraq: Memories from the Red Sea to Baghdad*], Ed. Bülent Yorulmaz, (İstanbul: Dergah 2002).

-----, *Avrupa Mektupları* [*Letters from Europe*], Ed. Sabri Özcan San, (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları 1996).

-----, *Hac Yolunda* [*On the Road to Hadj*], Ed. Belkıs Gürsoy, (Ankara: Ecdad Yayınları 1995).

Christine Peltre, *Orientalism in Art*, (Paris: Editions Terrail/Edigroup 2004).

Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, "Orientalism "alla turca": Late 19th / Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim 'Outback' ", *Die Welt des Islams*, 2000, 40 (2): 139-195.

Edward W Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage Books 1979).

Gustave Flaubert, *Lettres d'Orient: De Mémoire*, (Bordeaux: L'Horizon chimérique 1990).

İnci Enginün, *Cenap Şahabettin*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları 1989).

Jale Parla, *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik*. (İstanbul: İletişim 2005).

Saadettin Nüzhet Ergun, *Cenap Şahabettin: Hayatı ve Seçme Şiirler*, (İstanbul: Yeni Şark Kütüphanesi 1934).

Selim Deringil, "They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2003, 45 (2), 311-342.

Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism", *The American Historical Review*, 2002, 107 (3): 768-796.