

**The Ailing Imperialists: The Ottoman Empire in British Travel Literature
1821-1876**

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ABSTRACT

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This study attempts an analysis of memoirs and travel-literature written about the Ottoman Empire during 1821-1876. They point to the way in which the Ottoman Empire, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, as well as the customs and policies of the times were perceived and evaluated both by the authors themselves and by their reading public. Thus, the foremost aim of this study is to analyze the world created by these traveller-authors, to point to the construction and development of certain ideas and judgements about the Ottoman Empire and the Turks, and simultaneously to draw a parallel between the ways in which the Ottoman Empire and some of the empires and colonies of the time were perceived.

The analysis of the work of more than 40 authors points not only to the presence of a dominant discourse, but also to the increasing importance of imperialist notions within this discourse, especially after the Crimean War of 1853-1856, and to the seemingly contradictory dual tendency to perceive the Turks as the colonizers as well as the colonized. Furthermore, the revelation of the development of some of the illusions about the Ottoman Empire and the Turks gains importance as some of these reign supreme even today.

ÖZET

Hasta Emperyalistler : İngiliz Seyahatnamelerinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu

1821-1876

by

Sema Emel Göksel

Bu çalışma 1821-1876 yıllarındaki Osmanlı İmparatorluğu hakkında yazılmış anı ve seyahatnamelerin analizini amaçlamaktadır. Anı ve seyahatnameler, yazıldıkları dönemde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun, Türkler'in, Rum, Ermeni, ve Museviler'in, ve dönemin gelenek ve politikalarının, bu yazarlarca ve onların okuyucu kitesince nasıl algılandığını ve ne açıdan değerlendirildiğini göstermektedirler. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmanın amacı esas olarak gezgin-yazarların yaratmış olduğu bu dünyayı inceleyerek, özellikle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türklerle ilgili bazı düşünce ve yargıların oluşumuna ve gelişimine dikkat çekmek, aynı zamanda bu açıdan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile dönemin bazı imparatorluk ve sömürgelerinin algılanışı arasındaki paralellliğe işaret etmektir.

40'dan fazla yazarın eserlerinin incelenmesi, hakim bir söylemin varlığının yanısıra, özellikle 1853-1856 Kırım Savaşı sonrasında bu söylemde emperyalist öğelerin arttığını, ve Türkler'in ilk başta çeliskili gibi görünen, hem sömürgeci, hem de sömürülen ikileminde algılandığını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkler hakkındaki bazı yanılsamaların gözler önüne serilmesi, bu yanılsamaların bugün bile büyük ölçüde geçerliliğini koruması karşısında önem kazanmaktadır.

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Introduction

The aim of this study is to analyze the portrayal of the Ottoman Empire and the Turk in travel literature and memoirs written by Britons between 1821-1876¹. My starting point has really been the realization that although for centuries the Turk was seen as the symbol of Islam and of the Muslim Orient, and though his empire was thought to be one of the strongest, the majority of western cultural and critical studies on Islam and the Orient seem to ignore him completely. Contemporary western studies on the Turk make a few comments and generalizations on qualities that pertain to "all" Orientals or Muslims, dwell on exotic aspects such as the harem, slavery, and eunuchs, or merely concentrate on the empire's international importance in the context of the Eastern Question. While a lot of interesting and valuable work has been done on, say, India, or the Arab Middle East, the Ottoman Empire seems to have been left out.

Even if most cultural studies have not focused primarily on the Ottomans, it is quite well known that some different form of representing the Orient; generalizing, otherizing, exoticising, or denigrating, exists. My aim is not merely to show the "Orientalism"² inherent in travel literature about the Ottomans. What I hope to do is a rather detailed analysis of some major

¹ For some of these authors, "Turk" simply seems to mean anyone who is an Ottoman Muslim, with no ethnic differentiations, and I continue this usage for the sake of clarity and simplicity.

² In its sense as "the literary means of creating a stereotypical and mythic East through which European rule could be more readily asserted". For a discussion of the meaning of Orientalism since Said, see John M. Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History Theory and The Arts* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995) p.xii. For the original meaning and developing connotation of the term Orientalist from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, see A. J. Arberry, *British Orientalists* (London: William Collins, MCMXXXIII) p.8.

travel narratives and memoirs written about the Ottoman Empire, concentrating on the presentation of the Turk, Ottoman customs and values, and the major events and themes specific to the era that the authors have dwelled on. The object is therefore to try to show the development of the perception of the Turk by the Briton, not to try to trace Ottoman history or to give information on the Ottomans through these texts.

A selection from the available material and a highlighting of major themes has been necessary due to the limits of time and space, therefore this study in no way claims to include everything that has been written or said about the Turks during the period under consideration, even by the selected authors.

Apart from trying to throw some light on how the Ottomans were perceived and presented, I have two other objectives in carrying out this analysis. The first is to reveal a dominant, specific discourse that these texts form, in which each text is repeated, confirmed, negated, or developed by the following texts³. Sometimes this discourse is dominated by truth, fact, and objectivity, sometimes by hearsay and prejudice. What is clear, however, is the creation of a unique textual world which seemed very interesting to a large number of readers, so much so, that what had been read and imagined beforehand often influenced the traveller and the way he actually saw and experienced. More than the reality or truth of what they wrote, the fact that the authors and their readers believed in this textual world is important. Thus I do not specifically intend to validate or negate the observations and ideas of

³ see Reinhold Schiffer, *Turkey Romanticized Images of the Turks in Early Nineteenth Century English Travel Literature* (Bochum: Studienverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1982) p.24.

these authors, or to correct their assertions, but merely try to show how they saw events and peoples and presented their ideas and perceptions to their audience. It is also important to note that the majority of these authors could not speak or understand any Turkish, nor any of the other languages spoken in the Ottoman Empire

My second objective is based on a subtle transformation within this discourse. Although certain basic qualities attributed to the Turk – especially those connected with his capacity as a Muslim – seem to have lingered on perhaps even until today, there is a transition in the way he is perceived and characterized by British writers especially after mid-century. An original contribution in this area has already been made by Jale Parla, who in her *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik* analyzes the “Turkish myth” constructed by early nineteenth century Romantic writers including Beckford, Byron, Lamartine, and Hugo, as well as a number of travel writers. Parla points to the parallelism between Orientalism and the Turkish myth, as well as to their differences. The gradual politicization of this romantic myth, its integration into imperial discourse, and the final “domestication” and destruction of the Turkish myth after the Crimean War which she analyzes are crucial points which the travel writing of the nineteenth century also emulates⁴. But I believe that the image of the Turk in these works transcends “domestication”. The Turk and his empire come to be perceived and/or presented in a strikingly similar manner to the empires and colonies of the world, specifically British India, and I hope to try to deconstruct this discourse

⁴ see Jale Parla, *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002)pp.22-27.

and to point to its reasons. In this way, I hope to make a tentative attempt at placing the Ottoman Empire within the context of post-colonial studies, by “rereading” the British historical and fictional record and pointing to some parallelisms between the envisioning of the Ottoman and the Indian empires by the British.⁵ The fact that travel accounts and memoirs usually afford both historical and fictional reading makes the task even more interesting.

I hope to show that especially after 1853, the travel literature written about the Ottoman Empire was an imperial discourse in many respects. The Ottoman Empire increasingly came to be viewed as a dependent colonial space, and the Turks as “natives” and fit to be ruled. However, they were also compared to the Anglo-Indians as a ruling-race, though shown to be lacking the intelligence, industry, and morality to fulfill their duties. The presentation of the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, especially the Christians, also underwent certain changes to justify their subjection to the Turk, and they were increasingly presented as “colonized” peoples. This dual image of the Ottoman Empire was strengthened by such factors as the elaboration of the reign of despotism, favour, and corruption, and the increasingly hybrid nature of the empire, which earned less respect as it tried to become more western. In place of the interest in the “otherness” of the empire, after 1853 we have dry repetitions about its “typically Eastern” characteristics, together with an increasing denial of its possession of a history or culture, and an emphasis on its nomadic -rather than Islamic- past.

⁵ see Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989) p.196 : “Thus the rereading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional record is a vital and inescapable task at the heart of the post-colonial enterprise”.

During the nineteenth century, a vast amount of travel literature and memoirs dealing with the Ottoman Empire were written and published. The reason for my emphasis on Britain is the obvious but important one of the particular interest Britain had in the Ottoman Empire during this period. Britain, due to certain international and colonial policies, had a more enduring interest in the state and the future of the Ottoman Empire than other European powers, and the British reading public possessed not only interest, but as was seen during the Crimean War, the power to influence and direct state policies with regard to the Ottomans. Thus in my selection of works and authors, I have for the most part preferred well-known names and titles, which were popular or controversial in their time, as they usually remain today. This, though not in line with the academic fashions of our day, automatically means a greater number of male authors and travellers. I have also referred to a few American authors whom I thought would have had some influence among the British reading public. The availability of these works is itself sufficient proof of the importance accorded to them after more than a century and a half, when other similar works have perished into oblivion. Most of them are off-quoted, and their ideas and observations have sometimes been taken as historical facts, the main reason why I believe they are a suitable selection to analyze. Unfortunately a large number of equally well known and well written works have been left out, for fear that this thesis turn into a repetitious and tedious survey consisting of several volumes.

In addition to the above, these works reflect the opinions of different segments of nineteenth century British society: the cleric, the soldier, the

sailor, the diplomat, the traveller, the novelist, and the lady. Almost all of them, however, belong to the higher-middle and middle classes, but that is about all that unites them, except their interest in the Orient. It is interesting to see that in spite of their different backgrounds, vocations, political views, and of course personal characteristics, their views converge on many points. As my main interest is the effect these narratives may have had on the reading public, I have not found it appropriate to dwell on the biographies of these authors.

For the majority of our authors, Istanbul was only one part –though usually an important part- of their map of travel. Some primarily confined their visit to different establishments in the streets of Istanbul, others did a tour of the Balkans and Roumeli, some sailed the seas, others travelled on horseback. Nevertheless, for the sake of unity and clarity, I have chosen to concentrate on the observations concerning the capital and other major Ottoman cities such as Izmir and Bursa. The fact that I am not concerned with the details of travel and sight-seeing, but with the authors' presentation of Ottoman society, customs, and politics, forms the basis of this choice. Concentrating on cosmopolitan cities where the authors usually resided for lengthier periods seems natural. It goes without saying that none of this applies to my chapter on the Crimean War, as it concentrates on a specific event which provided a turning-point in the perception of the Turks and the Ottoman Empire.

My periodization covers the period from the beginning of the Greek War of Independence to the changes in the Ottoman political system in 1876,

though I follow up some major themes almost till the end of the century to show their continuity and perseverance. My chapter on History and Theory is intended to give a very general historical background and discuss some of the main issues and ideas of the time in order to highlight and complement events and attitudes that have been elaborated in the travel accounts, as well as to take a look at some of the relevant theories and controversies of our day. The other chapters are arranged according to major historical developments within the Ottoman Empire; the period from the Greek War of Independence to the Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane, from the Hatt-ı Şerif to the Crimean War, the Crimean War, and its aftermath.

I have tried my best to prevent this work from being tedious by excluding repetitions and quotations about the same themes, though in certain cases this has proved not an easy task as such a methodology seemed necessary to reveal parallel views and interpretations.

I – History and Theory

History

Between the defeat of Napoleon in 1815 and the Crimean War of 1853-1856, there was no general European conflict. From the European point of view, the years in between were primarily filled with the crisis of what has been termed the Eastern Question. The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the relations between Russia, England and France concerning this, the Greek struggle for independence, and the Egyptian crisis were the main events of the period.

The military weakness of the Ottoman Empire was already an undeniable fact before the close of the eighteenth century. A series of wars with Russia had begun to prove fatal to the Empire. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774 had given Russia key fortresses and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea, and the right to intervene on behalf of the Orthodox subjects of the Porte. This was furthered by Russian annexation of the Crimea in 1783, which also meant Russian access to the Caucasus and the Balkans.¹ The Russo-Turkish war of 1806-12 was followed by the revolt of the Serbs, and then by the Greek rebellion which began in the Morea and the Danubian Principalities in 1821.

The Ottomans were not successful in their attempts at suppressing the rebellion, as they had to fight against the Greek rebels, the forces of Ali Pasha of Janina, and the Persians simultaneously. In 1824, Mehmed Ali

¹ See Fisher, Alan W. *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea 1772-1783* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970) p.156.

Pasha, the ruler of Egypt, was given command against the Greeks. His son Ibrahim Pasha commenced a campaign from the Morea. Following the execution of the Patriarch of Constantinople, Russia despatched an ultimatum to the Porte, "demanding adequate protection for the lives and property of the Sultan's Orthodox subjects, and threatening a withdrawal of ambassadors."² In the meantime, European public opinion supported the Greeks, and committees collected funds, made propaganda, and organized volunteers. Soon, the Greek struggle transcended the level of a mere separatist movement that concerned the Porte, and became a central problem in the relations of Russia, Britain, and the Ottoman Empire, especially when Russia threatened war in March 1826. The Greek Revolution became "the myth and inspiration of nationalists and liberals everywhere"³. In October 1826 Sultan Mahmud signed the convention of Akkerman with Russia, and on 20 October 1827 an allied fleet destroyed the Ottoman and Egyptian fleets at Navarino. In a convention with the allies, Mehmet Ali agreed to evacuate the Morea. Mahmud II declared war against Russia. Russian armies advanced as far as Erzurum and Edirne in 1829. The Treaty of Adrianople, which was signed on 14 September, made provision for the creation of an autonomous Greek state. Stratford Canning was sent on a special mission on behalf of Greece in 1831. In 1832, Crown prince Otto of Bavaria, a Roman Catholic German, was proclaimed the King of Greece. The

² A. L. Macfie, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (London: Longman, 1996) p.16.

³ See E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (London: Abacus, 1995) p.173.

policy of Britain at this stage was “to set Greece on her feet, quickly and generously”, to counter Russian influence.⁴

In the meantime, war with Mehmed Ali began in 1831 in Syria, over the three Syrian provinces of Acre, Damascus, and Aleppo. Mehmed Ali's army came as far as Kütahya, and Russia sent a naval squadron to help defend the capital. The Convention of Kütahya in 1833 gave the Syrian provinces to Mehmed Ali for life.⁵ As no British intervention on behalf of the Ottomans materialized, Russian help was sought, and The Treaty of Hünkâr İskelesi signed in 1833. The Treaty was valuable to Russia by its exclusion of British and French warships from the Straits, and greatly increased the economic and political influence of Russia over the Empire. In this sense, the Anglo-Ottoman convention of navigation and commerce of Balta Liman in 1838 was an initial official British effort of commercial expansion in the Empire “as an answer to Russian political penetration and commercial growth.”⁶ The Egyptian crisis revealed that the Porte was unable to put down a rebellion of a “mere Pasha” on its own, and protect Anatolia and Istanbul. The trend of seeking foreign support and intervention thus begun.⁷

From 1833 on, the popular Russophobia in Britain increased, and Russia was seen as a threat to the independence of the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the Ottoman Empire during this time was considered “to be a mere

⁴ Alan Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1993.) p.34.

⁵ A.L. Macfie, *The Eastern Question*, pp.20,22.

⁶ Vernon John Puryear, *England, Russia, and The Straits Question 1844-1856* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965) p.118.

⁷ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt V, Nizam-ı Cedid ve Tanzimat Devirleri 1789-1856* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995) pp.202,203.

Russian protectorate"⁸. Palmerston pronounced British inactivity to have been "a tremendous blunder". Suspicion of Russia increasingly shaped British policies in the East, right up to the Crimean War:

...the argument that Russia would obstruct Ottoman 'progress' because of her preference for a weak and incompetent neighbour shaped the thinking of a generation and helped to provide the shouting majorities of the Crimean War.⁹

In 1839, another Turco-Egyptian war began, as Mahmud II sent an army under the command of Hafiz Pasha to regain the Syrian provinces. On the death of Mahmud II, the European powers intervened on the Porte's behalf, and in 1841, after being defeated by British, Austrian, and Turkish fleets, Mehmed Ali agreed to evacuate all his territories including Syria, in return for a *hatt-ı şerif* which made the government of Egypt hereditary in his family.¹⁰ A Straits Convention was signed in 1841 by the powers of Europe, by which foreign warships were forbidden to pass the Straits in peace time, putting a temporary end to Russian privilege.

The efforts of Russia and England to secure an alliance for the Porte for their own economic and political advantages culminated in an agreement in 1844. The two powers secretly agreed on the conservation of the Ottoman Empire as long as possible, and when the time came to partition the Empire, to cooperate with the other powers of Europe.¹¹

The increasing tension resulting from the revolutions of 1848, the revival of French Bonapartism, and the growing divergence between western

⁸ Alan Cunningham, p.67.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.44,45.

¹⁰ See M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question 1774-1923* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966) Chapter 4, A.L. Macfie, *The Eastern Question*, pp.23,25.

¹¹ V.J. Puryear, p.4.

Europe and Russia due to the developments in industrial capitalism, nationalism and imperialism, brought this agreement to naught, leading to the Crimean War.¹² Britain's fear of Russian designs to partition 'the sick man of Europe' reemerged with the events beginning in 1853.

Official relations between Britain and the Ottoman Empire had begun in the 1580s, with the establishment of the English Levant Company, and the following organization of consulates at Istanbul, Aleppo, Tripoli, and Alexandria. "By the 1620s, the three cities of Istanbul, Izmir, and Aleppo had emerged as the principal 'factories' of the English 'nation' in the Levantine world,"¹³ the effects of which were to be felt well into the nineteenth century.

Britain had economic and political dominance over parts of India since the mid eighteenth century, and long before India became the official colony of Britain in 1858, Britain's international policies centered on protecting the routes to India from French and Russian claims. In the following years, the Sultan's status of Caliph also "made it worthwhile in Muslim India to give publicity to Britain's protection of Turkey."¹⁴ Britain's efforts to keep France away from Egypt and the Southern routes to India, and Russia out of the Mediterranean resulted in the Great Game between the powers. Increasingly the Ottoman Empire became the barrier to Russian or French advance.

Russia had already gained certain rights to protect members of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774. In 1853, rival claims between the powers concerning

¹² See David M. Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War* (London: Longman, 1994) p.4.

¹³ Daniel Goffman, *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660* (London: University of Washington Press, 1998.) p.29.

¹⁴ Victor Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind: European Attitudes to Other Cultures in The Imperial Age* (London: Serif, 1995) p.115.

rights over the Holy Places in Bethlehem for Orthodox and Catholic Christians resulted in a serious conflict. Tsar Nicholas I sent Prince Menshikov as a special envoy to Constantinople with a proposal to protect the Greek Orthodox Church. Menshikov was refused, and in May, Russia delivered an ultimatum to the Porte, stating that Russian troops would invade its territories if an agreement was not reached. Russia invaded Moldavia and Wallachia on July 2, 1853.¹⁵

The Porte declared war on Russia on October 5, 1853. England remained neutral until a Russian fleet from Sebastopol destroyed a Turkish fleet anchored at Sinop on 30 November, where only 400 men out of 4000 survived.¹⁶ After this event, the press and public opinion turned in favour of war. According to a historian writing in the twentieth century:

A cry of 'massacre' went up. The maintenance of Turkish independence was exalted into a sacred mission. The fact that the Turks were a vicious and degenerate race was conveniently set aside, at least for the time being.¹⁷

As Russia did not agree to evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia, on March 28, 1854, France and Great Britain declared war and signed a Treaty of Alliance on April 11. In spite of Russia's efforts, Austria preferred to maintain the status quo, and Austria and Prussia declared their neutrality.¹⁸

During these events, there was a great deal of diplomatic effort and manouvering going on. Some historians thus attribute the outbreak of war to

¹⁵ Philip Warner, *The Crimean War A Reappraisal* (London: Barker, 1972.) pp.7-10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12, see also Cecil Blanche Woodham Smith, *The Reason Why* (London: Constable, 1953.) pp.134,135.

¹⁷ Piers Compton, *Colonel's Lady and Camp-Follower The Story of Women in the Crimean War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970.) p.17.

¹⁸ Vernon John Puryear, *England, Russia, and the Straits Question*, pp.324-327.

the personality and policies of Tsar Nicholas I¹⁹, or the character of Napoleon III,²⁰ and to the diplomacy of Stratford Canning²¹. Others claim that the war was "a renewal agent" which provided an opportunity for individuals living in a commercial society to "become heroes or to purge their lives as needed",²² or that it was "almost a war of religion strayed out of its proper century" between Tsar and Sultan.²³

What seems certain is that the Crimean War had a lingering image in the minds of generations. For instance, according to one historian, the sick man was "unwieldy, corrupt, and decaying".²⁴ His fate was thus only important with respect to the economic, political, and imperial concerns which reigned supreme in the minds of statesmen as they were drawn towards war. According to another historian, soldiers and men who had nothing to do with politics or diplomacy felt that they were going to war "on behalf of some half-civilized bunch of Levantines who hitherto had been noted only for their gift of atrocities".²⁵

As a result, the Crimean War was extremely costly in human terms, the greater number of deaths resulting from disease, though the figures vary.²⁶ It has also come to be regarded by some as the most unnecessary

¹⁹ David M. Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War* (London: Longman, 1994) p.271.

²⁰ R.L.V. French Blake, *The Crimean War* (London: Sphere Books, 1973.) p.5.

²¹ V.J. Puryear, p. xiii.

²² Mary Ruth Miller, *The Crimean War in British Periodical Literature 1854-1859* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1969.) p.248.

²³ Victor Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*, p.115.

²⁴ C.B. Woodham Smith, *The Reason Why*, p.134.

²⁵ J. Harris *The Gallant Six Hundred A Tragedy of Obsessions* (New York: Mason and Lipscomb, c1973.) p.18.

²⁶ See P. Warner, *The Crimean War* pp.212, 213: "the total number of British deaths in the Crimea was 18,058, of these 1761 died from enemy action, the remaining 16,297 from disease." Also see Seton-Watson, R.W. *Britain in Europe 1789-1914* (Cambridge, 1955) p.359 "The war cost France close upon 100,000 lives, Britain 22,737, Turkey 30,000 and Russia 110,000."

war in the history of modern Europe, and the “classical proof that in foreign policy the voice of the people is not necessarily the voice of God” and that “an ill-informed and excitable public opinion can plunge a country into war no less effectually than a dictator or a crowned autocrat.”²⁷

The Paris Peace Conference following the war resulted in the demilitarization and neutrality of the Black Sea. The Danube was opened to all countries. Russia was forced to give up her protectorate over members of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ottoman Empire, and also to hand over a piece of territory in South Bessarabia to the Ottomans, which was later annexed to Moldavia. The general rights of Ottoman Christians, and the autonomy of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Serbia were placed under the protection of the five Great Powers. The Ottoman Empire itself was admitted as a member into the European state system.²⁸ But the provisions of the Treaty were short lived. According to many, “the Ottoman Empire teetered on as unreformed as ever, and ill-treating Christian subjects”. In 1862, Wallachia and Moldavia united to become independent Rumania. In 1870, Russia renounced the clauses on the Black Sea, and eventually another Russo-Ottoman war materialized.²⁹

An era of reform began in Russia, leading to the abolition of serfdom in 1861. Changes in the international power system facilitated the emergence of the united Kingdom of Italy, united Germany , and the Paris Commune of 1871.

²⁷ R.W. Seton-Watson, *Britain in Europe 1789-1914* , see pp.159,160.

²⁸ D.M. Goldfrank, *The Origins of the Crimean War*, pp.289-292.

²⁹ Stuart T. Miller, *Mastering Modern European History* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988) p.172.

Britain's gain was the temporary one of a weaker Russia in Europe, and a few years without the fear of hostile Russian presence in the Black Sea. Simultaneously, Britain and France were able to promote policies that resulted in further economic and cultural penetration into the Ottoman Empire.³⁰ After the war, a new age of army reform began in Britain, together with changes in medical services, the establishment of the Army Medical Board and the Nightingale School for Nurses (1860), and also the establishment of the International Red Cross in 1864. Not least, the attitude towards officers, a subject of much controversy during the war, changed.

Another result of the Crimean War was Tatar emigration to the Ottoman Empire, partly due to "conscious government policy to encourage their exit." The Tatars were mostly used in the Russian forces or were unarmed to prevent any possible collaboration with the enemy, but Russia used the war as a pretext to force their departure. Nevertheless, Russia did not issue any passports to the Tartars after 1860 to prevent further exit, as their population had dropped from 275,000 in 1850 to 194,000 in 1860.³¹

Throughout this era, as we have seen, British foreign policy was concerned with defending the routes to India and preventing Russian expansion.³² This was the guiding policy of Britain for most of the nineteenth century, and continued after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. After the 1870s, Britain tried to defend India through the creation of Cyprus as a new

³⁰ Ibid., p.293.

³¹ Alan W. Fisher, *The Crimean Tartars* (California, Hoover Institution Press, 1987.) pp.88,89.

³² David Thomson, *England in the Nineteenth Century 1815-1914* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971.) p.27.

base. On the other hand, the decline of British influence at the Porte gained momentum especially after the Congress of Berlin in 1878, due to increasing German influence and the improvement in relations with Russia.

Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire, in a favourite expression of the time, was "crumbling". After the effects of the Industrial Revolution began to be felt, the "underdevelopment" of the Ottoman Empire led to "a clear pattern of domination" which gradually turned into "a quasi-colonial situation of almost total dependence on western trade, industry, finance, and capital". Western economic domination, did not, however, put an end to growth, nor did it "preclude the survival of certain market production structures", which in fact led to "dependent growth".³³ Even before the close of the eighteenth century, the empire was seen as a declining power. There seemed to be a general agreement among the European states of the time that the army and the navy were backward, the administrative system was insufficient, the Sultans were inadequate, and the *ulema* and janissaries had become too powerful. Obviously, the glorious days of the Empire were over.

Ottoman statesmen were quite aware that they were falling behind the industrial, economic, and hence military developments of Europe, and especially from the reign of Selim III (1789-1807), the Empire had experienced serious attempts at reform and recentralization. This trend continued during the reign of Mahmud II (1809-1839). The most remarkable and controversial reform of the period was his abolition of the Janissaries and the creation of a new army in 1826. There were ensuing military, educational,

³³see Edhem Eldem, *A History of the Ottoman Bank* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Historical Research Center, 1999.) pp.14-18.

and administrative reforms, such as the abolition of the timar and the appearance of the first official newspaper in 1831, the establishment of the medical and military schools *Mekteb-i Tıbbiye* and *Mekteb-i Harbiye* in 1834, census and survey, and the adoption of the *fez*, trousers and jackets as the official dress in 1832.

The reforms culminated in the *Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane* in 1839, beginning an era of reform and reorganization on an unprecedented scale, known as the *Tanzimat*. It was the first major attempt to bring the Empire on a par with the western powers by centralizing and rationalizing the state and system, so that it could compete with, or at least resist, European pressure. The *Hat* was revolutionary in that it declared its principal object to be the right of all subjects, regardless of their religion, to equality, and the protection of their life, property, and honour. Echoing the French revolutionary ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, the decree had as its main aim the creation of a more rational and legal order, which would in turn bound its diverse ethnic and religious population closely to the Empire, and prevent separatist and nationalist movements. It aimed at centralization through the reduction and reorganization of military service, the abolition of tax-farming, and a centralizing and modernizing bureaucracy³⁴. In short:

The ultimate implication was that millet barriers would be broken down, that the creation of a multinational brotherhood of all Ottoman subjects was the official aim, and therefore that the concepts of state and citizenship would become increasingly western and secularized.³⁵

³⁴ See Carter Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in The Ottoman Empire The Sublime Porte 1789-1922* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) Chapters 4 and 5.

³⁵ Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963) pp.40,41.

Thus, whether it was successfully carried out or not, the intention behind this decree, and the object of following a modernization based on the western example, makes it a major landmark in Ottoman history. It led to a lot of controversy and discussion. There was the view that the reforms gave too many concessions to Europeans. The European powers, on the other hand, claimed that it was not progressive enough, or that it was not applied as rigorously as it should be, and interfered on behalf of the minorities. So a movement which had begun with the initiation of the Porte assumed the appearance of a movement begun and continued with European pressure.³⁶ These contrary views as to whether it was begun and developed under European pressure or not still remain.³⁷

The next major step towards reform was the *Hatt-ı Humayun* of 1856. *Islahat Fermanı* was a direct precondition of the Treaty of Paris, with which the Ottoman Empire officially entered the Concert of Europe after the Crimean War. Thus, it was viewed as the return for the protection of the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire by its allies during the Crimean War, and seen as the result of European pressure for a more effective application of the doctrines of 1839.³⁸

The *Hatt-ı Humayun* reaffirmed and clarified the terms of 1839, especially the full equality of all Ottoman subjects irrespective of religion, among other clauses. But its perception by the Ottomans was at variance. Because by redefining the rights of its non-Muslim subjects and placing them

³⁶ Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt V*, pp.186-191.

³⁷ Resad Kaynar, *Mustafa Resid Pasa ve Tanzimat* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 1954.) pp.166-171.

³⁸ İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000.) p.116.

under the protection of the European powers, the Porte gave these subjects the chance to complain to Europe that the promises were not being carried out, thus also giving the powers the right to interfere in its affairs. The privileges accorded to non-Muslims were taken by some Muslims not as bringing equality, but inequality for themselves, and thus caused resentment.³⁹ Furthermore, because the *ferman* was seen not as the result of an internal decision, but of external pressure, it was interpreted as the attempts of the Porte to satisfy Europe, on paper, more than anything else. As a result, the *Hatt-ı Humayun* was —and still is— interpreted by some as proof that with the conclusion of the Crimean War, the Ottoman Empire turned into a semi-colony of the European powers⁴⁰, no matter how sincere the efforts at reform and regeneration might have been.

In fact, what the Porte had attempted with increasing rigour from 1839 on was the construction of a new imperial identity; Ottomanism or *Osmanlılık*, which would surpass the limits of ethnic identity or religion and create a unified population of loyal subjects, simultaneously ending European meddling and pressure. Continuing reforms and measures such as the abolition of the poll-tax which had created inequality between Muslims and non-Muslims, the opening of military service to non-Muslims unless they preferred to pay an exemption tax, the *bedel*⁴¹, and the creation of *millet*

39 E. Z. Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt VI, Islahat Fermanı Devri 1856-1861* (Turk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 1988) pp.6,7,27, E.Z. Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi Cilt V*, p.250.

⁴⁰ see Sina Akşin, ed., *Türkiye Tarihi III Osmanlı Devleti 1600-1908* (Istanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1995) pp.132,133, Taner Timur, *Osmanlı Türk Romanında Tarih, Toplum, ve Kimlik* (Istanbul: Afa Yayıncılık,1991) p.16, Roderic H. Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History 1774-1923 The Impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) p.126.

⁴¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961) p.114.

constitutions in the 1860s all had this aim. These and the improvement of communications with the establishment of a postal service, the telegraph, and the railway, were not only efforts to satisfy Europe, but also attempts to transform the Empire to be able to resist Europe. These efforts reached a peak with the Constitution of 1876, and continued during the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909). Though he is usually perceived as the prototype of the despotic ruler, efforts to centralize and Ottomanize the Empire continued under him, albeit in an Islamic rather than secular context.⁴²

In the end, as we know, the Ottoman desire to be an equal participant of the international arena as a unified multi-national empire with a modern bureaucracy, army, and economy was frustrated, and proved to be anachronistic, as was the case with the Romanovs and Habsburgs. Continuous loss of land and thus loss of revenues through military defeats and treaties, the inability to pay the foreign loans begun during the Crimean War, the ensuing bankruptcy in 1876⁴³, increasing disaffection of the population, and social and cultural turmoil characterized the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as one of clashing interests and ideologies, contributing to the end of the *Ancien Regime* in the Ottoman context.

⁴² See Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdülhamid II", and "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire 1808 to 1908" in *The Ottomans, Turks, and World Power Politics: Collected Studies* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000).

⁴³ See D.C. Blaisdell, *European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929) Chapters 2 and 3, and Olive Anderson, *A Liberal State at War - English Politics and Economics During the Crimean War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967) p.226: "Urgent military necessity was throughout 1855 the yardstick of judgement, and not the canons of political economy nor the lessons of history, and still less any dreams of imperialist penetration or the regeneration of Turkey".

Especially from the mid nineteenth century, the Turks, as other Muslims, were obsessed with the denial that Islam and the East are inferior to Christianity and the West, and resorted to different means and different formulations to prove this.⁴⁴ I think the 1820s can be taken to inaugurate this era for the Ottoman Empire, as with the outbreak of the Greek struggle for independence, the eyes of Europe and especially Britain turned to the Empire in an effort to induce it to modernize and westernize. From this time on, the affairs of the Empire were of even greater interest to Europe. Each succeeding rebellion, discontent, or development concerned one or the other of the European powers, either due to religious ties, or due to political, economical, and increasingly colonial and imperial reasons. The Crimean War is the best instance of this new state of affairs.

I believe that efforts to deal with or counteract the increasing predominance of the Christian West in the nineteenth century followed a parallel if not identical development in the Ottoman Empire and the colonized parts of the world, in the form of efforts at westernisation, reaction to westernisation, or more often, in the form of attempts at constructing a unique cultural existence by taking what was thought to be appropriate and leaving the rest aside. Usually all these forms were tried in time by different segments of the population. In this sense, there definitely existed an

⁴⁴ C. Ernest Dawn "From Ottomanism to Arabism: The Origin of an Ideology" in *The Modern Middle East*, ed. By A. Hourani, P.S. Khoury, and M.C. Wilson (London: Tauris, 1993), p.390.

“interactive, improvisational” dimension usually attributed only to colonial encounters⁴⁵ within the Ottoman Empire as well.

In all this, Britain had a special relationship with the Ottoman Empire, which was necessary for its supremacy in the East. Thus, especially from the middle of the nineteenth century, there were increasing references in British parliamentary debates to the “integrity” and the “independence” of the Empire, and after the Crimean War, to the “sick man”⁴⁶, despite the existence of opinions to the contrary within the British camp.

During these years, from the Greek revolution to the post Crimean War period, there was an evolving image of the Ottoman Empire and the Turk in British minds, which was much more central to its being than has been realized. The Ottoman Empire was not “the jewel in the crown”, but it played an equally vital role not only in British foreign policy, but also in the construction of British identity. The Turks were not “Queen Victoria’s dear Indians”⁴⁷, neither were they civilized Christians. It was difficult to place them in any category. Nevertheless, I believe that the Ottoman Empire did help to “define Europe”, like the rest of the Orient, “as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience”, in short as the image of the “Other”⁴⁸, in a variety of

⁴⁵ See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) pp.6,7. Some late nineteenth and early twentieth century Turkish novels dealing with westernization in society and portraying the westernized elite, as well as the conflict between the old and new lifestyles and values, offer a good example of this process. For a discussion of these themes see Berna Moran, *Türk Romanına Eleştirel Bir Bakış I*, (Istanbul: İletişim, 1995) Chapter XIV, pp. 147-150, 202, and Jale Parla, *Babalar ve Oğullar Tanzimat Romanının Epistemolojik Temelleri* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1993), pp.100,101.

⁴⁶ Allan Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century Collected Essays* (London: Frank Cass, 1993) p.74.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.98,99.

⁴⁸ E. W. Said, *Orientalism Western Conceptions of The Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) pp.1,2.

ways, even if it never became colonized, and even though the Turks were increasingly seen as belonging to the class of imperialists first with respect to the non-Muslim minorities, and then with respect to the Arab provinces.⁴⁹ Thus, a sick man on the one hand, and an imperialist on the other, the Turk and his empire were a constant source of confusion for the majority of Victorians, as they had been for their predecessors. This is what we will explore in the narratives of the period.

Theory

During the Middle Ages, the Christian West formed its own views of Islam. The years between 650-1570 were “the Golden Age of the Islamic problem”.⁵⁰ In this era, the major concern of the Christian West was theological; to refute Islam’s claim to being a Revealed religion equal to, and even superior to, Christianity. Among the many themes and arguments three were most distinct: the life of the Prophet Muhammed, Islamic sexual ethics, and the Islamic Paradise. These themes were elaborated to disprove Islam’s claim to Revelation, by showing that Islam was built upon “a foundation of sexual licence which was plainly contrary to the natural and the divine law.”⁵¹

Together with the increasing power of the Ottoman Empire, the Turk began to be identified with Islam, and gradually the word “Turk” became a

⁴⁹ See Selim Deringil’s forthcoming essay “They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post Colonial Debate” for a detailed analysis of the “borrowed colonialism” of the nineteenth century Ottomans.

⁵⁰ R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.) p.13.

⁵¹ Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960) pp.79,152.

synonym for "Muslim".⁵² In the eyes of sixteenth and seventeenth century France, for instance, the Turk was the "chief symbol" of the Orient.⁵³ In early modern Britain, dramatists, travellers, and theologians created the stereotype of the Muslim which proved rather permanent; the "cruel, tyrannical, deviant, and deceiving" Turk, and the "sexually overdriven and emotionally uncontrollable, vengeful and religiously superstitious" Moor.⁵⁴

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Islam did not present the same challenge to the West as it had seemed to do in the Middle Ages. The divisions within Christendom, the growing wealth of Europe, the discovery of the New World, and a more secular perspective were some factors which contributed to this new state of things⁵⁵. Accounts written by travellers also played a role. Theological and theoretical arguments were gradually replaced by everyday facts and exotic interests. Such plays as *Othello*, *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, and *Bajazet* tried to portray Oriental manners for their audiences.⁵⁶ No doubt this growing interest climaxed in Galland's translation of the *Thousand And One Nights* in 1704, which went through different editions for more than two centuries and had a never-ending impact. "In the highest degree exotic, this work has been in the minds of almost every European visitor to the Muslim world from that date until this."⁵⁷ Beckford's *History of the Caliph Vathek* and Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and

⁵² Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (London: IB Tauris and Co, 1988, trans. Roger Veinus) p. 36.

⁵³ Clarence Dana Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature 1520-1660* (Paris, Bolvin & Cie, Editeurs, 1938) p.645.

⁵⁴ Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.) pp.12,13.

⁵⁵ R.W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, p.12.

⁵⁶ see M. Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*, pp.38,39.

⁵⁷ Norman Daniel, *Islam, Europe, and Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966.) p.20.

Turkish Tales had a similar effect and were highly influential in shaping the popular imagination of the nineteenth century about the Orient and the Ottoman Empire.⁵⁸

The new secular and exotic image did not mean the end of the religious one, however. Although the need and the vogue for theological argument had subsided, the medieval image of Islam created by it persisted, and although travellers counted on the authority of experience, they often "repeated statements which had been, or might have been, lifted straight out of medieval accounts."⁵⁹

Nevertheless, the more positive qualities of the Turks were also narrated. Sobriety, moderation, endurance, simplicity of life, and honesty were the positive traits of the Turk, especially of the "Turc naturel" portrayed in French writing as early as in 1520-1660. The impartiality of the Turkish courts, and advancement based on merit were practices which gained praise. The use of the word "barbarian" for Turk receded, though the word "infidel" remained. And in imaginative literature, the "cruel Turk" and the "amorous Turk" reigned supreme.⁶⁰

Thus, as Norman Daniel points out:

To the European store of ideas about Islam much that was new was added in the period of Ottoman greatness. The tyranny of the ruling establishment, of the private slave-owner, and of the eunuchs in the harem, was asserted in a complex literature, some of it frankly fictional; but much, however fictional or exaggerated, claimed the authority of direct experience. ... The old theological view of Christians was little changed, but a new secular image overlaid it at every point. The old attack on Islam as violent was paralled by the image of cruelty

⁵⁸ See Jale Parla, *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik*, pp.36-56.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp.23,24.

⁶⁰ C.D.Rouillard, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature*, pp.298,308,309,321,333,644.

and tyranny and corruption. The old attack on Islam as lascivious was paralleled by the image of romantic eroticism. Not only was the material new, but it was seen in a new way.⁶¹

By the 1800s, the increasing prosperity and power of the West seemed to be turning the scales. The “deep and ever present fear of the Turk as an intruder in Europe and a menace to Christendom” began to give way to a new image of the Turk as “weak, decadent, an invitation to foreign domination”.⁶² The addition of the nineteenth century to the western view of Islam was “imperialism”. The Turks were no longer feared. This also meant “liberation from respect”.⁶³ Thus,

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, three major trends stood out: a sense of Western superiority marked by pragmatism, imperialism, and utter contempt for other civilizations; a romantic exoticism mesmerised by a magical East whose growing poverty seemed only to add to its charm, and a specialized erudition focused on the great ages of the past.⁶⁴

Though it has been asserted that an “Oriental Renaissance” took place in nineteenth century Europe with the arrival of Sanskrit texts that led to a “multiplication of points of comparison”⁶⁵, this does not seem to have prevented the simultaneous development of an increasingly imperial attitude. According to Norman Daniel, the imperial attitude developed most rapidly and assumed its definite form –not in India, but – in Turkey, between 1790 and 1830, due to the French Revolution.⁶⁶ I believe that this process was not

⁶¹ N. Daniel, *Islam, Europe, and Empire*, pp.22,23.

⁶² Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp.79,84.

⁶³ N. Daniel, *Islam, Europe, and Empire*, p.65.

⁶⁴ M. Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam*, p.52.

⁶⁵ Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance Europe's Rediscovery of India and The East 1680-1880*, trans. By Gene Patterson- Black and Victor Reinking, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984) pp.11, 476.

⁶⁶ N. Daniel, *Islam, Europe, and Empire*, p.71.

definitive by 1830 with respect to the Turks, but only developing. It finalized after 1856. I believe that the Crimean War was a breaking point for the relations of Europe and the Ottoman Empire, especially for those of Britain and the Ottoman Empire. Not only for the politicians, officers, nurses and various travellers to the Empire, but for the majority of the reading public in Britain, 1856 meant a severe blow to the image of the courageous and cruel, lascivious and proud Turk who had confused Britons for the last two centuries, a process which Jale Parla calls the "domestication" of the image of the Turk⁶⁷. He was joined – and even pushed into the background - by an image developing since the early nineteenth century, an image interestingly akin to the image of the subjects of the British colonies, though towards the end of the century he also began to resemble, at least in outward form, the rulers of these colonies.

Nabil Matar claims that Britons superimposed their constructions of "alterity and demonization" about American Indians on Muslims during the Renaissance.⁶⁸ Matar is right in pointing out that Britons were unable to defeat and hence unable to situate Muslims in a convenient world view. But as opposed to the period with which he is concerned, especially after Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt in 1798, the West did have a great impact on the Muslim East⁶⁹. Even if the Ottoman Empire was never completely invaded or colonized, it was clear that in military and economic terms, this was becoming a possibility. The Empire could not function healthily in the new world order without support. The Crimean War was the best proof, and

⁶⁷ See Jale Parla, *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik*, p.27.

⁶⁸ N. Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in The Age of Discovery*, pp.15-17.

⁶⁹ See Bernard Lewis, *The Middle East and The West*, p.34.

after it, this view gained strength. Especially in the three spheres of religious minorities, economic debt, and internal reform, the empire was bound to Europe and especially to Britain for protection and survival. This ailing disposition, I believe, led to a different perception of the Turks. There was also a contradiction between the characteristics of the Turk and the fact of his being the ruling-race. Increasingly from the late nineteenth century, Europeans saw the Ottoman "as an anomaly, a master who should really be a servant, a ruler who should really be a subject."⁷⁰ This growing inclination to see them as "subjects" would in itself provide legitimation for interference and domination. The Turk began to be perceived in a similar light with the subjects of the British colonies, and specifically the members of the oldest and most valuable colony; India. Even if this did not go as far as "superimposition", clearly many traits of the Turks that the British had constructed were identical with those of the colonised "Orientals". But because the Empire could still stumble along, this somehow had to be accounted for. Thus,

"Englishmen were forever vexing the dull ear of the drowsy Turk with admonitions of the need for reform and progress; admonitions that after 1857 their Indian princes were usually spared... About what kind of reform was called for there was not much clarity".⁷¹

Travel literature and memoirs are the best sources from which to analyze and follow these perceptions. For whether in epistolary form, in the form of a narrative, or a diary, they were a major genre in nineteenth-century Britain. They offered, or at least could offer, the factual information and

⁷⁰ Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876-1909*. (London: IB Tauris and Co, 1998) p.172.

⁷¹ Victor Kiernan, *The Lords of Human Kind*, p.118.

analysis inherent in historical scholarship, as well as the personal element and the spirit of adventure usually found in a novel. Especially after mid century, the marked increase in the number of accounts written by women, by middle-class travellers, and during the Crimean War, by ordinary soldiers and sailors⁷², attest to its widening appeal for the public at large.

Travel literature and memoirs were not perceived as a mixture of fact and fiction, reality and fantasy, by all. In their day, they were mostly taken as genuine scholarship, as objective works displaying reality, as they still are sometimes today. The subjective, personal element of selection and interpretation was deemphasized, or undervalued. Thus, writers could refer to these works as reliable sources of scientific information. An instance of this is the work of E. S. Creasy, who was Professor of History at University College, London, at the date of the publication of his *History of the Ottoman Turks: From the Beginning of their Empire to the Present Time, in Two Volumes*, in 1854-1856. Professor Creasy's work is founded on the work of Von Hammer, whose long residence in the East and familiarity with the institutions, habits, and literature of Orientals is one of the reasons for Creasy's choice. But Von Hammer's history ends in 1774, with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, whereas Creasy ends his in 1856. Thus he also uses the works of Roe, Thornton, Ubicini, Porter, Marmoni, Sir F. Smith, Chesney, Urquhart, Möltke, Hamel, Ranke, and others as sources. More importantly, in Chapter XII, which is mostly concerned with the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II and Sultan Abdülmecid, Creasy cites Ubicini's *Lettres sur la Turquie*,

⁷² see Reinhold Schiffer, *Turkey Romanticized Images of the Turks in Early Nineteenth Century English Travel Literature* (Pöschorn: Studienverlag Dr. N. Brockmeyer, 1982) p.10.

White's *Three Years in Constantinople*, Urquhart's *Turkey and Her Resources*, Sir Porter and Larpent's *Turkey: Its History and Progress*, and the recent work of the Earl of Carlisle, among a few others, as his sources, all travel-literature which will be analyzed in the coming pages.⁷³

Whatever their reason for travel, travellers usually judged the Orient on the basis of its similarity to or difference from the West. The Ottoman Empire, completely unlike the West in religion, political system, culture and social customs, became the extreme "other". This "other" could be exotic and interesting, if the travellers put their fantasies on display⁷⁴, or if they followed the pattern of the heroic voyage⁷⁵, or it could be presented as inferior but also threatening, due to the asserted innate connection between Islam and despotic regimes⁷⁶. According to Billie Melman, the narratives written by women demonstrate that "there was not one totalizing view of the West's cultural other", that "western notions of and knowledge about the Orient was not monolithic or systematically constructed."⁷⁷ Melman claims that the women's discourse was not political and hence should not be reduced to "a reflection of contemporary imperialist discourse on the Eastern Question."⁷⁸

Women writers, on the whole, do seem to be more tolerant and objective, and emphasize similarities rather than differences. As Melman

⁷³ see E. S. Creasy, *History of the Ottoman Turks: From The Beginning of Their Empire To The Present Time in Two Volumes* (London: Richard Bentley, vol. 1-1854, vol.2-1856) vol.1 p.iv, vol.2 p.447.

⁷⁴ see Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991.) p.13.

⁷⁵ See Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient : Devise and Rule* (Lodon: Macmillan, 1986) p.87.

⁷⁶ see Alan Grossrichard, *The Sultan's Court: European Fantasies of the East*, trans. By Liz Heron (Verso, 1998) pp.88,89.

⁷⁷ Billie Melman, *Woman's Orients: English Women and the Middle East 1718-1918 Sexuality, Religion, and Work* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995) p.xxiii.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p.312.

asserts, they usually did write less on politics and more on the material conditions of private life, what she calls "harem literature". Because they drew on experience, could feel sympathy for the other, and compare cultures, Melman claims, harem literature is "a critique on western patriarchy and the position of women in the west"⁷⁹. Even if so, this does not automatically exclude them from the contemporary discourse on the East. For even as women they were a part of this culture, and their narratives do reflect certain dominant Orientalist or imperialist views, and they do draw on "external textual authority", even if on a subconscious level. Thus I do not agree that their writings refute the presence of a "dominant" and "systematically constructed view" on the Orient, and in our case, on the Ottoman Empire. It would be naive to claim that *all* discourse on the Orient is identical and intent on imperial domination. Of course there were diverse points of view and methodologies. Nevertheless, if we look at the written work on the Ottoman Empire, a systematically constructed view does seem to be predominant, whether it was subconsciously systematic or not is open to debate.

This kind of a view, which opposes the "Orientalism" theory of Said, seems to be the dominant view held by historians, cultural critics, and post-colonial theorists lately. They, perhaps rightly, point to the theoretical weakness, eclecticism, and ahistoricism of both Said's *Orientalism*, and his *Culture and Imperialism*.⁸⁰ There is no doubt that there are oversimplifications and deficiencies in both, such as Said's inability or hesitation to place the Ottoman Empire within the context of his study on

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.17.

⁸⁰ See John M. Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and The Arts*, pp.xvi, 3,4,21,33.

Orientalism and his inclination to treat it almost as nonexistent. In this highly influential and controversial work, Said looks at the British, French, and American "experience of the Orient taken as a unit". He limits the Orient to "the Arabs and Islam", perhaps a legitimate choice when one considers that all theories have to have certain limits. What is disturbing in Said's work, however, is that in order to justify the universality of his theory, he claims that the Arabs and Islam "for almost a thousand years together stood for the Orient". According to Said, one can discuss "Europe's experience of the Near Orient, or of Islam, apart from its experience of the Far Orient", except for "certain moments of that general European history of interest in the East", when India and Persia play an important part in this interest, especially where Egypt, Syria, Arabia are concerned. In this manner, Said explains and defends the limitation of his theory to the Near East. But for him the Near East and Islam means the Arabs. He prefers to treat the Ottoman Empire as nonexistent, and does not acknowledge, let alone mention, the role it played in this "interest".⁸¹

In the beginning of *Orientalism*, Said draws attention to the role of the Ottomans in the confrontation of Islam and Europe:

Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma. Until the end of the seventeenth century the "Ottoman peril" lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger,...⁸²

But then, throughout his work, he seems to draw a picture in which after the seventeenth century the Ottomans disappeared off the face of the

⁸¹ E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, pp.16,17.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p.59, see also p.74.

earth, and the Arabs, consisting of several free nations, led their independent existence until the Europeans came to colonize and/or to dominate them. No mention is made of the Ottoman role, positive or negative, within the following two centuries. Rather, Said usually makes generalizations about an abstract entity, "Islam", which seems to be used synonymously with "Arabs" for the whole of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with which he is concerned, as in "The most interesting problems about Islamic or Arabic Orientalism are..."⁸³

Likewise, in *Culture and Imperialism* in which he tries to "describe a more general pattern of relationships between the modern metropolitan West and its overseas territories",⁸⁴ he does not discuss the Ottoman Empire, nor the Austro-Hungarian, Russian, Spanish, or Portuguese empires:

These omissions, however, are not at all meant to suggest that Russia's domination of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, Istanbul's rule over the Arab world, Portugal's over what are today's Angola and Mozambique, and Spain's domination in both the Pacific and Latin America have been either benign (and hence approved of) or any less imperialist. What I am saying about the British, French, and American imperial experience is that it has a unique coherence and a special cultural centrality.⁸⁵

It is clear that Said could not fit the Ottoman Empire within his theory about culture and imperialism. However, he acknowledges the Ottoman Empire's "rule over the Arab world", a fact which he constantly seems to have ignored in *Orientalism*. Though the imperial experience and its cultural consequences are central to both works, the Ottoman-Arab shared past and

⁸³ Ibid., p.344.

⁸⁴ E.W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London: Vintage, 1994) p.xi.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.xxv.

its cultural reflections –at least as important as the European-Arab imperial experience - is ignored in both works.

This elimination of the Ottoman Empire is one of the major points on which Said's *Orientalism* has been criticized by Bernard Lewis, who draws attention to the fact that:

“Turk”, the name of by far the most powerful and important of the Muslim states, even became a synonym for Muslim, and a convert to Islam was said to have “turned Turk” wherever the conversion took place.⁸⁶

This is a point Said prefers to ignore in *Orientalism*, where he continuously equates Islam with the Arabs, and does not make the slightest allusion to the existence of the Turks as an important Islamic power and culture.

Lewis also rightly touches upon the “arbitrary decisions” of Said:

His Orient is reduced to the Middle East and his Middle East to a part of the Arab world. By eliminating Turkish and Persian studies on the one hand and Semitic studies on the other, he isolates Arabic studies from both their historical and philological contexts. The dimensions of *Orientalism* in time and space are similarly restricted.⁸⁷

Lewis attacks Said on a number of other issues, such as not dealing with facts but with “fantasy or invention”, the relegation of German Oriental scholarship to a secondary role, his “transmutation of events to fit his thesis”, “the arbitrary rearrangement of the historical background and the capricious choice of countries, persons, and writings...”, and even claims that his attitude to the Orient is “far more negative than that of the most arrogant

⁸⁶ Bernard Lewis, *Islam and The West*, p.7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.107,108.

European imperialist writers”⁸⁸. Though these may be partially true, Said acknowledges the weaknesses of his theory, and gives several reasons for some of his choices, pointing out that his book is “far from a complete history or general account of Orientalism”⁸⁹. However, he provides no answer to Lewis’s criticism of his claim that “Britain and France dominated the Eastern Mediterranean from about the end of the seventeenth century on”. Lewis points out that “British and French merchants and travelers could visit the Arab lands only by permission of the Sultan”, and that Ottoman Turkish, not Arabic, was “the language of government in all Arab countries east of Morocco” from the sixteenth century onward.⁹⁰

According to Lewis, the success of *Orientalism*, “and the ideas, or to be more precise, the attitudes that it expresses, in spite of its science fiction history and its lexical Humpty-Dumptyism” depends firstly on its anti-westernism, especially its hostility to “the liberal and democratic west”, secondly on its use of fashionable literary, philosophical and political ideas and language, and thirdly on its meeting “the world’s growing need for simplification”.⁹¹

No doubt Bernard Lewis and Edward Said represent the two extreme ends of the Orientalist controversy. Said in turn claims that Lewis is a member of the “Orientalists breed” who does not have the courage to acknowledge his “active denigration of Islamic, as well as other non-European peoples”. According to Said, Lewis delivers “ahistorical and wilful

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.109, 112, 113.

⁸⁹ E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, pp.16,17,18,24.

⁹⁰ *Orientalism*, p.17, *Islam and the West*, pp.109, 111.

⁹¹ B. Lewis, *Islam and the West*, p.114.

political assertions in the form of scholarly argument, a practice thoroughly in keeping with the least creditable aspects of old-fashioned colonialist Orientalism”, and blames him with being a political partisan against Arab causes.⁹²

Nevertheless, these observations should not diminish the great depth of Said’s observations about the discourse on the Orient and his conclusions. It has been asserted that the Orientalist interpretation “misses the complexities and dualities of the western representations of the East and adaptations of eastern forms”, negates “the essential characteristics of the critical faculty”, and divides historical ages into “goodies” and “baddies”, and is even reduced “to the level of the grotesquerie”⁹³. Of course this is an over-generalization in itself. While trying to prove that there could have been no unified discourse on the Orient, and that western writing and art on the Orient was diverse, respectful, and appreciative, the same theorists totalize *all* Orientalist interpretations as one voice.

Melman points to the fact that in most works “the Orient is depicted as a man’s place, and the empire as a male space”, and claims that gender and class are written out even by critics of Orientalism and ethnocentric scholarship. As a result, discourse on the Orient is conventionally presented as “unified, authoritative, and to use Bakhtin’s term, monoglot.”⁹⁴ I believe that I too hold this rather conventional and unfashionable position. Women brought a fresh dimension to the discourse in terms of subject-matter and treatment, but not on such a radical scale as to modify it. Even the celebrated

⁹² E.W. Said, *Orientalism*, pp.343, 346.

⁹³ J. Mackenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and The Arts*, p.xvii.

⁹⁴ B. Melman. *Woman’s Orients*, p.5.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who accompanied her ambassador husband and stayed in the empire during 1717-1718, and whom Melman honours with setting the terms of “an alternative, gender-specific discourse on the Middle East”⁹⁵, though quite objective and good at demolishing common misconceptions and myths, fits into the “dominant discourse” with her exoticizing descriptions of Turkish beauties with black hair and large eyes walking around naked in the *bagnio*, and wearing the veil to disguise themselves on their escapades⁹⁶. Her discourse is witty, and gives information about realms male travellers could only fantasize about, but it fills a few gaps and destroys a few clichés, it does not provide an “alternative” discourse, if only because it functions within the limits set by an already existing discourse, arguing with, defying, or agreeing with already formed notions.

In fact, this is the main reason why I believe that there was a dominant discourse that altered in some respects from one individual to the other, but could be called a “unified” discourse because writers always functioned within set boundaries and forms, dealt with the same topics, and generally exhibited similar –even identical– points of view. I agree with Chaudhuri and Strobel that there was both “complicity and resistance to the cultural values dominant during an imperialist era”⁹⁷, and not only by western women, but also by men. But I also hold that the majority of these writers

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁹⁶ see letters of Lady Mary in Christopher, Rick, ed., *Embassy to Constantinople, The Travels of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1988) pp.97,109, 111.

⁹⁷ See N. Chaudhuri and M. Strobel, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) pp.5,6.

tended to look through used spectacles and to see, most of the time, however liberal they wanted to be, or however much they wanted to resist, what had been seen before in the way it had been seen before. In travel literature on the Ottoman Empire, the mid nineteenth century and especially the end of the Crimean War is the point in which imperial ideas begin to penetrate and influence the writing to a noteworthy degree. This also seems to prove Said's point that Orientalism and imperialism marched hand in hand, or at least that one followed the other. But I believe that the similarity of themes and perceptions and interpretations existed before this date and before the introduction of imperialist notions.

In this respect, I believe that the discourse on the Orient, if not strictly monoglot, was never polyphonic, to use Bakhtin's term. Still, it developed in time, with additions and subtractions, which is the subject-matter of this thesis. Plus, the Orient was a male space until the late nineteenth century, in that even the increasing numbers of women visiting the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and writing about it were less than the number of men, thus their influence on public opinion was weaker, as was their role in determining the realities and policies of the discourse in question.

If there had been no dominant, unified, and systematic discourse on the Orient or empire, we would not have the familiar stereotypes of the Turk, Indian, or Jew, nor would we still encounter reductive generalizations made by historians like Bernard Lewis, employing striking and contrasting terminology for East and West, and using "we" and "they" in a supposedly objective academic work that should address more than a western audience.

The attitudes of the peoples of the Middle East toward the West has gone through several phases. For many centuries, while Europe was rising to greater and greater heights of achievement, the East sank in the comfortable torpor of decay, unwilling and unable to perceive or to understand the vast changes that were taking place. In the nineteenth century their illusions were finally shattered, and they awoke to a disagreeable reality in which their countries, their resources, their civilizations, their very souls were menaced by a Europe which was rich and powerful beyond belief, and which, in its limitless self-confidence, aggressiveness, and acquisitiveness, seemed to be bringing the whole world within its grasp.

In this situation, the mood of the Easterner began to change from ignorant complacency to anxious emulation. The West was great and strong; by study and imitation it might be possible to discover and apply the elusive secret of its greatness and strength, and generations of eager students and reformers toiled in the search. They may not have loved us, or even understood us, but they did admire and respect us. Today they usually do neither.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ B. Lewis, *The Middle East and The West*, p.45.

II - The Turban and The Fez

It is no doubt true that the "Victorian passion for improvement –of oneself and others --" found an outlet in travel¹, as it is true that foreign lands sometimes offered a chance for the fulfillment of individual fantasies and desires². In this chapter, we will mainly concentrate on the work of eight authors who travelled to the Ottoman Empire and wrote their memoirs between 1821-1839.

Our first author, Reverend R. Walsh, embarked on a journey to Istanbul on November 9, 1820, as Chaplain to the British Embassy then proceeding to the Porte. He stayed until 1824. He returned to Istanbul in 1830, resuming his station, but this time for his Majesty's Government, due to the abolition of the Levant Company. On his return to England, he revised the letters he had written home, turned them into a narrative, and published them in 1836. Charles MacFarlane, on the other hand, arrived in Izmir in August 1827, and proceeded to Istanbul in May 1828. He returned to his country in October 1828, and published his book in 1829. Major George Keppel, who was in India until 1824, journeyed across the Balkans in the years 1829-1830. Lieutenant Adolphus Slade, like Walsh, came to the empire twice. His first visit was in 1829, when he stayed at Büyükdere, but he also sailed to Sevastopol, Odessa, Varna, Edirne, Salonica, and so on, with "Achmet Papuchi the Capitan Pasha"(Pabuçcu Ahmet Paşa), on the Selimiye, with a crew of 1400. He left in January 1831. This period forms the subject matter of

¹ Dorothy Middleton, *Victorian Lady Travellers*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1965) p.6.

² Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991) p.13.

his *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, and c., and of a Cruise in the Black Sea with The Capitan Pasha in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831*, published in 1833. During his second visit, covering the years 1834-1836, he was attached to the squadron under the command of Sir Josias Rowley. He wrote his observations in *Turkey, Greece, and Malta*, published in 1837. Both are a mixture of travel and political observations, and have been treated together.

Alexander Kinglake came to the Empire when he was a young student. His narrative, published in 1834, as he himself observes, lacks geographical details, statistical, religious, political, or moral observations, which abound in the other accounts, and emphasizes the personal impressions of the author, seemingly written more with the aim to amuse than to inform, unlike his massive work on the Crimean War.

Julia Sophia Pardoe, our only woman traveller, accompanied her father to Istanbul and arrived in 30 December 1835. Her work, which appeared in 1837, concentrates more on customs and manners than on travel, and is quite a rich source of sociological data.

David Urquhart, who was originally engaged in the Greek War of Independence between 1827-1830 and fought for the Greeks, later became a passionate Turcophile and wrote *Turkey and her Resources*. He published *The Spirit of The East* after a journey through Roumeli in 1838. Lastly, C.B. Elliott, late of the Bengal civil service, and the Vicar of Godalmin, Church of England, published his *Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey* in 1839.

As is clear, none of the accounts are confined to Istanbul, or to the Ottoman Empire. Walsh went to Gibraltar and Malta among other places, and travelled extensively, concentrating on religious sites. Mac Farlane stayed in Izmir and Istanbul, travelling to Çesme, Bergama, and Manisa among other places. Keppel went to Edirne, Akhisar, Manisa, Izmir, Bursa, and Mudanya. Miss Pardoe went to Bursa. Elliott travelled extensively, giving geographical descriptions, historical background, and tips for travellers in Asia Minor. His journey, akin to Walsh, concentrated on religious sites, including the Apocalyptic Churches in Izmir, Bergama, and in other places, and covering Jerusalem, Damascus, The Holy Land, Jordan and the Dead Sea.

The amount of travelling, observation, and detail that is reflected in these pages can be gathered from the fact that most of these authors wrote two volumes. They had a lot to say, and a lot to share.

A. Places

We can begin by making a few observations about the towns our authors visit. The most important place of trade in the Levant, Izmir (Smyrna) boasts the title of *Le Petit Paris du Levant*.³ Here we have a “free and familiar intercourse among all classes”. Edirne (Adrianople), as usual with “Oriental” cities, looks splendid from the outside, but the moment you enter, the spell is broken. “The streets are crooked, irregular, and narrow, and completely flowing with dirt.”⁴ Bursa (Broussa), on the other hand, “is infinitely more Oriental in its aspect than Stamboul”, because scarcely a Frank is to be seen

³ Charles Mac Farlane, *Constantinople in 1828 A Residence of 16 Months in the Turkish Capital and Provinces*. (London: John Murray, 1850) p.41.

⁴ George Keppel, *Narrative of a Journey Across the Balcan by the two passes of Selimno and Pravad: also of A visit to Azani and other Newly discovered ruins in Asia Minor, in the years 1829-1830*. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831.) p.251.

in the streets, no one wears the *fez*, everyone has *turbans*, and hardly any woman of higher classes can be seen on the streets, while the men are much more handsome than the ones in Istanbul.⁵

In Istanbul, or Stamboul, as some of them would say, all our authors seem to roam the streets without any disturbance. The exception is Walsh, perhaps because the date of his visit is the earliest, and during the troubled times of the Greek War of Independence. While visiting a Muslim quarter, the ladies in his group are "reviled" by Turkish women because they are walking and talking with men. They are called "giaour", "chiffut", and "karadhan" (the author translates these as infidel, wretch, and black soul), and one of the ladies is thumped on the back because she is leaning on the arm of one of the men.⁶ Generally, there are no other examples of such intolerance in our texts.

A common observation of all travellers is the discrepancy of Istanbul viewed from the exterior and the interior. The view from the sea is usually magical and beautiful, and Istanbul is described as "the queen of cities"⁷. But when one enters the city, as usual with all Oriental cities, the streets are narrow, dirty, and crooked, and the general state of things leaves a lot to be desired. The image does not seem to change with time, as we have a similar

⁵ Julia Pardoe, *The City of the Sultan and Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1836*, (London: Henry Colburn, 1837) vol.2, p.38.

⁶ Robert Walsh, *A Residence at Constantinople During a Period Including The Commencement, Progress, and Termination of the Greek and Turkish Revolutions*. (London: Frederick Westley and A.H. Davis, 1836) p.247. See B. Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988) pp.4,5: "...from the time of the Prophet to the present day, the ultimate definition of the Other, the alien outsider and presumptive enemy, has been the *kafir*, the unbeliever."

⁷ Adolphus Slade, *Records of Travels in Turkey, Greece, and c., and of a Cruise in the Black Sea with the Capitan Pasha in the Years 1829, 1830, and 1831*. (London: Saunders and Otley, 1833) p.77.

description from 1811 in which “the horror, the wretchedness and filth” of the interior of the city cannot be conceived, and the narrow, dark streets are full of holes, ordure, heaps of dung, mud, and carcasses of dogs.⁸ The houses are wooden and also in bad condition, this is generally attributed to the Turk being “a creature of the present”⁹, as he is believed by some of our authors to be the subject of a despotic government, with an unknown future and no property rights.

Julia Pardoe, when she lands at Galata in January 1836, is the only one who compares the “barbarous East” and “civilized Europe” to the favour of the former, as she is not hindered by the officers who only ask if they have brought any merchandise, and as opposed to their experiences in Europe, they do not have to give bribes.¹⁰

The places of interest to the travellers in Istanbul are always the same. All of them visit the mosques, the Hippodrome, the city-walls, bazaars and “charshees”, jewelers, fountains, “khans and serais”. Some go to the “opium houses” (*Tiryaki Çarşısı*), to the slave market (*Avrat Pazarı*), to the fish-market (*Balık Pazarı*), to the Lunatic Asylum, and the cemetery of Üsküdar (Scutari). Mac Farlane remarks that there are a lot of barber’s shops in Istanbul, and that most have coffee-houses hidden in them due to the order to shut them down.¹¹ Miss Pardoe wears the Turkish costume in order to enter St. Sophia, a vogue since Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. She visits many harems and also the Turkish Bath, remarking that at the bath the

⁸ Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels to Russia, Tartary and Turkey* (Philadelphia: Lorenzo Press, 1811) pp. 548-550.

⁹ J. Pardoe, vol. 2., p.163.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p.11.

¹¹ C. Mac Farlane, pp.275,276.

women are partially dressed, and that there is no “exposure” as described by Lady Mary.¹²

All of our authors go to watch the howling or whirling dervishes. There are many interesting comments, but none can be surpassed by Keppel’s comment on the howling dervishes:

...it would be difficult to say whether the sounds they uttered bore most resemblance to the braying of asses, to the howling of wolves, or the grunting of hogs.¹³

Miss Pardoe, on the other hand, watches the “Turning Dervishes” in a Tekke, and remarks that she can not defend the “bizarre” ceremonial, but cannot agree with a modern traveller in describing it as “an absurdity”. One must show respect for those who are serving God “according to their means of judgement”.¹⁴

Most of our authors stay in Pera, the quarter of the Franks. They attend balls at the embassies, and go to dinners, but they are usually critical of the society of Pera. There is the view that the Ambassadors of France, England, and Austria are the Kings of Pera. The dragomans are the nobility, and the Levantines are the commoners.¹⁵

Pera is the capital of the Frank *imperium in imperio*, inhabited by thousands of individuals. Thus, crime committed by Franks goes unpunished, because they are protected by treaties from the operation of Turkish law.¹⁶ The Perotes or natives of Pera “consider themselves as much Franks as

¹² J. Pardoe, pp.375-381, 133-137.

¹³ See G. Keppel, pp.199-201.

¹⁴ J. Pardoe, p.48.

¹⁵ A. Slade, *Records of Travels*, vol.2, pp.184,186,193.

¹⁶ A. Slade, *Turkey, Greece and Malta* (London:Saunders and Otley, 1837) pp.416,427-429.

though they had been born and nurtured on the banks of the Thames or the Seine¹⁷, a fact which most of our authors find comical. Mac Farlane draws a highly unfavourable portrait:

Of the society of Pera I have little to say, the resources of the French and English legations, and the hospitality of the resident English merchants were wanting, and a duller and more unsocial place can hardly be imagined. The dragomanerie, who effect to 'overpeer the petty traffickers', are always ready to visit and feast in the houses of others, but are extremely renitent of their own doors and their own hospitality - it is rare that a stranger can penetrate into their beggary enclosures of illiberality and prejudice; and if he be a Protestant, an additional bar is crossed at the back of the door, by their obsolete Catholic fanaticism... I was utterly disgusted, on my first arrival, with what I saw of the flippant impertinence, the vulgar ignorance and ostentation of this class...¹⁸

Likewise, Keppel, who is quite informative and enumerates the dragomans attached to the British Embassy (Messrs. Chabert, Wood, Pisani, etc...), their nationalities, and their salaries, claims that the corps dragomanique style themselves "*la noblesse de Pera*":

This amphibious class, half European, half Asiatic, are alike the dread of Turk and Frank; and it is notorious that out of all the dragomans, there is only one that our ambassador can trust. In short, they are considered a scourge by all classes...¹⁹

The dragomans seem to be an unfortunate group that all travellers disliked, despised, and insulted. There seems to be complete consensus on this point, perhaps partly due to preconceived opinions. Nevertheless, whether they attribute the need for dragomans to the non-interference policy of the state which allows each population to keep its own language and

¹⁷ J. Pardoe, p.57.

¹⁸ MacFarlane, pp.391,392.

¹⁹ G. Keppel, vol.2, pp..86, 87.

habits²⁰, or to laws which prohibit the Turks from learning the languages of “infidels”²¹, all writers agree that the dragomans form a “class” or a “vast net”, and that they hold too much power which may be used for the wrong ends. The word Dragoman becomes synonymous with “unreliability, inefficiency, and disloyalty”, and also with Greeks, although families of Italian extraction formed the majority of the interpreter service of the British Embassy.²² The dragomans symbolize Pera for our authors.

B. People

i. The Franks

From Pera and the dragomans, we shall proceed to the Europeans who live in the Empire, the Franks or Levantines, as they are sometimes called. Our authors are critical of the Franks of the Empire as well, though not as much as they are of the dragomans. The common point between the two, however, that these travellers seem to find disturbing, is the hybrid nature of the Franks that makes it difficult to define or categorize them. Adolphus Slade’s impressions reflect those of the majority of travellers:

By a Levantine is meant a Frank who has totally abandoned his native country, and fixed himself in Turkey for good. He cannot be mistaken. He is a compound of the Turk; the Greek, and the Frank; disfigured by the moustache of the first, the long hair of the second, the whiskers and dress of the third; not the dress usually worn in Europe, but a mixture of fashions for the preceding half century; no wonder that the easterners think it unbecoming. He talks many languages – none well:

²⁰ D. Urquhart, *The Spirit of the East Illustrated in a Journal of Travels Through Roumeli During an Eventful Period* (London: Henry Colburn, 1838) pp.237,238.

²¹ C.B. Elliott *Travels in the Three Great Empires of Austria, Russia, and Turkey* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1839) p.192.

²² see A. Cunningham, *Eastern Questions in the Nineteenth Century*, pp.1,2.

he is servile with Moslems, pert with Christians - your humble servant abroad, a tyrant at home.²³

The above lines bring forth a second consideration. The Frank's servility to the Moslem, his respect and eagerness to obey him, as opposed to his sauciness with Europeans, is not approved of, and may in fact be the major reason of his denigration by the "real" European.

Charles Mac Farlane entertains similar views regarding the Levantine society of Izmir:

The people too (I mean the Franks, and the men only) seemed of a strange hybridious nature, something neither Christian nor Turk, Asiatic nor European; and I was struck with a general absence of information, spirit, and liberality, really astonishing, at the present day, in people, natives of England, France, Italy, and c., or descended, as they pretty generally are, from parents born in those countries. They appeared to have, in turns, the sympathies, the listlessness, and supineness of the Moslemins, without being striking and picturesque like them; - the lightness of character and vanity of the Greeks, without the vivacity and natural talent. I thought the reigning pleasure, that of sitting three or four hours on a sofa or wooden stool and smoking ten or twenty pipes, a very dull one; their casino, or assembly rooms, with the interminable discourses on figs, sponges, and pirates, with newspapers three months old, I thought duller still. The variety of costume and feature presented by Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Franks, all seen jostling together in the narrow streets, was amusing for a while; but that soon passed, and was succeeded by a feeling of a less pleasant nature. Each class of that strange mixture was losing the characteristic markings of its caste and nation: there was no spirit, no raciness either. A turban and caftan would make the Frank a Turk; a hat and coat the Turk a Frank: - the moral changes necessary for identification would be scarcely more considerable.²⁴

This presentation fits the common view of an Orient of colour and variety, and the one we have seen of Franks who are in-between cultures, but Mac Farlane seems to be disillusioned with it. He seems to have formed

²³ A. Slade, *Records of Travels*, p.91.

²⁴ Mac Farlane, pp.7,8.

clear-cut definitions of how a Frank, a Turk, or a Greek should be, and he is upset that what he sees does not conform to his definitions. The population of the Empire differs in terms of costume and feature, but lacks "the characteristic markings" of caste and nation. What these markings should be, other than the qualities enumerated above, such as picturesqueness or vanity, is not clear.

Although it reflects the general opinions of our travellers about the Franks and the characteristics of the multi-ethnic and religious society of the Empire, Mac Farlane's views are harsher and more judgemental. We have the same stereotypes in Kinglake's comic presentation of "Giaour Izmir" ; the funny European with his "pipe of tranquility", Jews "offering services and receiving blows", a "majestic Osmanlee", smoking away, and the Frenchman with the "gobemouche expression"²⁵, but we do not have that tone of disapproval.

Another point on which the Franks of the Empire are criticized is their ignorance. Miss Pardoe finds the Franks "ignorant" in all issues of the country relating to the economy, government and ethics. Even those who have been residents for 15 or 20 years have not been able to go beyond "exanimate and crude details of mere external effects". The main reasons seem to be their lack of intimacy with native families and their reluctance to look deeper into things.²⁶

In addition to being ignorant and uninterested in the affairs of the empire, the Franks also form a clique. "He who is not for me is against me is

²⁵ A. Kinglake, *Eothen Traces of Travel Brought Home From the East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1906, rpr.1984) p.72.

²⁶ J. Pardoe, pp.87,88.

the motto of every European resident in Turkey". Any traveller who comes to Turkey enters their circle, is influenced by their ideas, and looks through their eyes at events. As a result, travellers do not form an efficient judgement about the country and its people.²⁷

A second reason for this is the traveller's lack of intimacy with Turks. Turks are hesitant in making the acquaintance of strangers and are prejudiced towards Franks, mainly because they remember "how absurdly and even cruelly they have been presented by many a passing traveller."²⁸

Third, Europeans come to Turkey with ideas of "Oriental mysteriousness, mysticism, and magnificence". The European mind

...has been so long accustomed to pillow its faith in the marvels and metaphors of tourists, that it is to be doubted whether it will willingly cast off its old associations and suffer itself to be undeceived.²⁹

Thus, Miss Pardoe attributes to Franks and previous travel narratives the responsibility for misrepresenting the East and for leading to an abyss between Turks and Europeans. This observation, echoing those made by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu a century earlier, leads her to attempt to give her readers "a more just and complete insight into Turkish domestic life than they have hitherto been enabled to obtain".³⁰

²⁷ Ibid., pp.vii,viii.

²⁸ Ibid., p. ix.

²⁹ Ibid., p.88.

³⁰ Ibid., p.x. Compare with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Travels of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. By Christopher Rick, (New York: New Amsterdam Books, 1988) p.154: " 'Tis a particular pleasure to me here to read the voyages to the Levant, which are generally so far removed from the truth and so full of absurdities I am very well diverted with 'em. They never fail giving you an account of the women, which 'tis certain they never saw, and talking very wisely of the genius of the men, into whose company they are never admitted, and very often describe mosques, which they dare not peep into. The Turks are very proud, and will not converse with a stranger they are not assured is considerable in his own country." See also M. A. Ubicini *Letters on Turkey: An Account of the Religious, Political, Social, and*

Urquhart poses a similar problem. Lack of communication between Turks, resident Europeans and travellers has led to misunderstanding and hostility. This is due to a deficiency of language, unfavourable interpretations, and the exaggeration of that which is bad. No correct estimate of the East has been reached. "These difficulties reside *solely in a European's preconceived opinions*". Lady Mary Wortley Montagu he cites as an exception, because she resided in a Turkish establishment "which at once carried her beyond the noxious influence of Frank residents and interpreters". In addition, being a woman, and barred from the world of politics, she did not commit the errors of politicians.³¹

ii. The Greeks

The Greeks, as is acknowledged by our authors, occupied the second place in importance after the Turks among the inhabitants of the empire. Generally, they are supported by the authors in their struggle for independence and territorial expansion, but there are quite different views as to their characteristics and condition in the empire.

Mac Farlane adheres to the view of the poor oppressed Greek, and his narrative abounds with stories of distressed, violated, and slaughtered Greeks, and the cruelty of the Turks to the Greeks in Izmir, no doubt influenced by the atmosphere and events of the Greek war of Independence. Slade, whose visit is later, claims that the Greeks are the most favoured

Commercial Condition of the Ottoman Empire Trans. From the French by Lady Easthope (London: John Murray, 1856) vol.II, pp.ix-xii, 428-429 for a discussion of misrepresentations of Turks by travellers.

³¹ D. Urquhart, pp.xv,xvi,xxix,xxx, italics in the original.

subjects of the Porte, and that when their privileges are compared with the rest of the population, it can not be said that tyranny is exercised towards them :

In every sense the condition of the Greeks is superior to that of every other class in the empire. The Armenians, though not more oppressed, are infinitely less considered, on account of not being so completely a nation. The Jews are absolutely despised. The Fellahs of Syria are slaves in comparison of them: and the Fellahs of Egypt are in a state disgraceful to humanity.

Slade accounts for this inverse condition of the Christians and Muslims of the empire by claiming that the Muslims are in an inferior condition because they are ruled by a lawful sovereign whom their religion teaches them to consider as such by divine right, they have no refuge from tyranny but in "sullenness and passive resistance"³².

Slade believes that the Greeks are "a mercenary cold-hearted race", and claims that it has become a proverb in the East that "the English and the Osmanleys are the only people that know how to govern the Greeks." Europe will soon regret that she has done so much and "broken old ties" for so "undeserving a race".³³

Thus Slade looks upon the Greeks as a race who deserve to be dominated due to their certain qualities, while he equates the Turks and the British in being good governors in a proverb that is most probably fictitious. Elliott, on the other hand, believes that the negative qualities of the Greeks (who are "avaricious, intriguing, treacherous, timid, servile, and immoral") are qualities servitude engenders. Tentatively, we can say that the authors'

³² A. Slade, *Records of Travels*, vol 2, pp.301-303.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp349,51.

presentations of Greeks as a people is not favourable. They are usually seen in the positions of dragomans, guides, and translators, and to a lesser extent as tradesmen, merchants, sailors, and so forth.

iii. Armenians

The Armenians of the empire, as our authors attest, were jewellers, enamellers, dyers, weavers, smiths, bankers, and money-changers. They were successful in trade, and generally well-off³⁴. The enmity between the two sects, Roman Catholics and Eutycheans, or followers of the Armenian Church, is observed as an obstruction in the way of unity. Other than these it is usually their qualities as a race or as a people that is emphasized. Slade, who was not very liberal in his praises to the Greeks, sees the Armenians as "good-looking, affable and pliant, peaceable and loyal"³⁵, whereas Mac Farlane, who seemed to sympathize with the Greeks, is literally full of hatred for the Armenians:

They are, *en masse*, interested, sordid, and dastardly, (to a degree equal to the Jews), and so coarse and graceless, that the meanest Turkish *hamal* seems a gentleman in manners compared with them. I never saw their broad, vulgar faces, shining under their flame-red calpacs, without an involuntary feeling of disgust.³⁶

Even Pardoe, who has positive things to say of the Armenians, seems to find it disturbing that they can prosper and seem content under Ottoman rule:

In a word, I should say that the Armenians, as a nation, were worthy, well-meaning, and useful, but extremely uninteresting members of

³⁴ MacFarlane, p.55, Pardoe, p.37.

³⁵ Slade, *Records of Travels*, vol 2, p.308.

³⁶ Mac Farlane, p.55.

society; possessing neither the energy of the Greek, nor the strength of character so conspicuous in the Osmanlı - a money-making, money-loving people, having a proper regard for the 'purple and fine linen' of the world; quite satisfied to bear the double yoke of the Sultan and Priesthood.³⁷

Once again, being the subject of a Turkish rule seems to be the irritating factor. The authors can not associate the possibility of contentment under such conditions with an elevated character, and feel compelled to conclude that the people under discussion must certainly possess certain inferior qualities. C. B. Elliott is not an exception either, and though he admits that the Armenians are "mild, peacable, and diligent" as individuals, they are also "vindictive, dishonest, and immoral."³⁸

iv. Jews

The qualities of the Jews as a people is hardly mentioned at all, except in comparison to the Greeks and Armenians, as we saw in Mac Farlane. What is repeated over and over again, however, is that they are "objects of pity", and that the Osmanlis "hold them in absolute contempt and neglect no mode of expressing it", that it is "impossible to express the contemptuous hatred in which the Osmanlis hold the Jewish people..."³⁹ Our authors do not condemn the Ottomans for such behaviour, nor do they try to account for its existence. They just observe it as a fact.

³⁷ Pardoe, vol. 2, p.383.

³⁸ C. B. Elliott, p.226.

³⁹ C. B. Elliott, p.218, Slade, *Records of Travels*, p. 187, Pardoe, vol. 2, p.362.

It is important to note that the authors present segments of Ottoman society according to their characteristics as a people. Some, of course, do give detailed information about their position, occupation, beliefs, and customs, but there is no logical link between this information and the conclusions that one people are treacherous or another dastardly. What I mean is, an author could try to prove the statement that all Turks are cruel and uncivilized with the claim that they torture and kill Greeks, for example, but here no reason is given for the generalization of the negative qualities of Greeks or Armenians. As with the Franks, it is considered demeaning for a people to be ruled, especially to be ruled by the Moslem Turks, and mere acceptance, let alone contentment, on the part of the subject, diminishes any inkling of respect a British traveller may have for these people. Thus, their presentation, in general, almost tries to justify this state of subjection to the Turk. On the other hand, although the Greeks are applauded for rebelling against the Turkish yoke, not only those who stay on in the empire but also the members of the new kingdom are not really seen in a better light. It will be interesting to see whether this attitude will change in the memoirs written at a later date, with the clamour for equal rights to all subjects of the empire, regardless of religion or race, that European states pressured the Porte with. So far, in these works, there is no trace of the humanitarian and egalitarian attitude that one expects Britons possessed towards the "minorities" of the Ottoman Empire when one looks at their constant complaints about Ottoman disregard for and maltreatment of Christian subjects. Their approach to the subjects of the Ottoman Empire does not differ from the treatment of the

Indians under the East India Company, and had they been the rulers, there is no hint that a brighter sun would have shone above the Greeks, Armenians and Jews.

v. Turks

Britons who came to the Ottoman Empire usually had some formed opinion about the Turks, derived from history, literature, newspapers, and conversation. It would not be wrong to add to this list travel accounts and memoirs; anyone coming out to the East in the nineteenth century looked to these narratives as sources of information and knowledge. They learnt not only about the politics, customs, religion, or places of interest in the East, but they also learnt how to evaluate, understand, and judge what they saw. This is apparent from the extreme similarity of themes and ideas in each narrative, although it is a rare case when an author makes an open reference to previous authors, in agreement, or disagreement.

A good demonstration of this point is the opening remarks about, or first encounters with, the Turks. Walsh, for instance, thinks that the Turk is a more "remarkable object of contemplation" than the Greek or Jew, because he is so "remote in his usages, feelings, and modes of thinking". As "that bitter and stubborn enemy to everything which we hold sacred or learned"⁴⁰, the Turk deserves to be studied and judged. The first Turk Walsh encounters is a janissary who boards his ship with the French Consul in Athens:

In fact there was something so coarse and robust in his person, and so sneering, vulgar, and cruel in his look, that he seemed the very

⁴⁰ Walsh, p. 1.

fellow who would beat, plunder, and abuse a poor Greek peasant in the very wantonness of authority.⁴¹

There are three levels to this simple statement. First, Walsh already has a preconceived idea that Turks are cruel. Second, he knows that Turks, janissaries in particular, are prone to violence and misconduct when there is no authority to check them, which seems to be the case. Third, Walsh knows that Turks abuse poor Greek peasants.

Pardoe, similarly, comes to Istanbul with a formed opinion about Turks. While still on deck on her arrival at the Golden Horn, a caique goes by with a bearded and turbaned Turk who is squatting on a carpet, pipe in hand; "the very personification of luxurious idleness."⁴² This represents the other popular aspects of the Turk; beard, turban, carpet and pipe, luxury, and indolence.

When we turn to Kinglake, it seems quite possible that he too had some ingrained image in his head. As soon as he reaches Semlin, he recognizes some porters to be "hyper-Turk looking fellows" who are plainly "Turks of the proud old school" and have not forgotten "the fierce, careless bearing of their once victorious race"⁴³. The fact that Kinglake can pour forth so many comments on seeing a couple of *hamals* points to his talent as a writer, but also reflects a third common conviction of the time; that the heyday of the empire is over, and the Turk's pride belongs to a bygone age.

There is a great and unsurprising parallelism in our authors' estimation of the Turks:

⁴¹ Ibid., p.120.

⁴² Pardoe, p.5.

⁴³ Kinglake, pp.9,10.

Midway between the savage and the civilized man in regard of mental resources, not yielding however to the latter in physical enjoyments, the Osmanley is placed; his vices have been overrated, because they have been chiefly drawn at periods of fanatic excitement, which should only be considered as episodes.⁴⁴

Considering the general agreement that the Turks are at best half-civilized, their presentation in these narratives is unexpectedly humane, and in fact, rather confusing, for one does not expect a people possessing quite a many important positive traits to be labelled half-civilized, even if they are presented as inferior in some respects. We shall begin with their physical qualities as observed by our travellers.

The impression that the Turks are stoutly built has been erroneously formed, based on their appearance in their flowing robes and turbans. They are not good-looking without them, because all their defects are revealed.⁴⁵ Indeed, the "Osmanlis are a narrow-shouldered and spindle-legged race, and very inferior in physical force to any European nation".⁴⁶

Secondly, the Turk's dignity is merely an outward manner, skin deep, depending on set forms, turbans, robes, a crowd of slaves and dependants; "the brute", when "agitated" or "forced to speak", reveals its "innate coarseness, through the forced and artificial veil".⁴⁷

The most prominent Turkish trait is indolence, followed by pride, and fanaticism.⁴⁸ Pride and fanaticism are qualities that one perhaps expects when one thinks of the major role Islam plays in the definition of a Turk and

⁴⁴ Slade, *Records of Travels*, vol. 2, p.289.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.288,289.

⁴⁶ Keppel, vol.2, p.182.

⁴⁷ MacFarlane, p.92.

⁴⁸ C. B. Elliott, p.203, Pardoe, pp.90-92, *Slade Records of Travels*, vol.2, p.289, MacFarlane p.190, Keppel, p.378.

its association with these, but indolence, which is a characteristic that will repeatedly come up again and again, seems surprising. It immediately brings to mind Alatas' work *The Myth of The Lazy Native*, in which he demonstrates how the South East Asians were judged to be indolent, as well as "morally inferior, disinclined to work, low in intelligence"⁴⁹ (traits which the Turk will possess more and more in the coming pages), because of their lack of interest in working according to the norms of colonial capitalism, and their refusal to work as plantation labourers. According to Alatas:

... the image of the indolent native was the product of colonial domination generally in the nineteenth century when the domination of the colonies reached a high peak and when colonial capitalist exploitation required extensive control of the area. The image of the native had a function in the exploitation complex of colonial times. This was the time when the capitalist conception of labour gained supremacy. Any type of labour which did not conform to this conception was rejected as deviation. A community which did not enthusiastically and willingly adopt this conception of labour was regarded as indolent.⁵⁰

This negative image, says Alatas, was not created by scholars, though a few became influenced by it later. Rather, it was the creation of monks, civil servants, planters, sailors, soldiers, and popular travel writers.⁵¹

We cannot claim that the tendency to see all Turks as indolent is the result of colonial domination, but I believe it would not be far-fetched to draw a parallelism and to claim that it was the product of the same mentality, or way of seeing things. Before the heyday of imperialism, and even before the

⁴⁹ S. H. Alatas, *The Myth of The Lazy Native* (London: Frank Cass, 1977) p.30.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p.70.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p.112.

word had entered politics⁵², before domination in any form had materialized, these writers constructed a similar myth about the Turks, which would continue to live at least for the rest of the century. From this perspective, indolence seems to be connected more with the inherent inferiority of an Easterner deserving of the actuality of conquest and oppression. This shows that even if orientalism and imperialism did not march together, the latter has been an outcome of the first⁵³.

The Turkish people are generally honest and loyal, but the higher classes (ie. pashas, agas, etc.,) are characterized by "the barbarous abuse of power, ... extortion, avarice, and voluptuous indolence". They sit in their cool mansions on the Bosphorus "smoking their pipes from morning till night, wrapped in stupidity, sloth, and apathy."⁵⁴ In fact, the corruption of the higher classes as opposed to the lower classes is a favourite theme. This is sometimes carried as far as showing the working classes of the empire to be superior to those of Europe.⁵⁵ The possibility of this becomes apparent when we look at Kinglake's portrayal of "Moustapha Pasha":

The Pasha received us with the smooth, kind, gentle, manner that belongs to well-bred Osmanlees; then he lightly clapped his hands, and instantly the sound filled all the lower end of the room with slaves: a syllable dropped from his lips; it bowed all heads, and conjured away the attendants like ghosts... Soon the coffee-bearers appeared, ... and presently to each of us there came a pipe-bearer.. The truth is, that most of the men in authority have risen from their humble station by the arts of the courtier, and they keep in their high estate those gentle powers of fascination to which they owe their success. Yet, unless you can contrive to learn a little of the language, you will be rather bored

⁵² See E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875-1914* (London: Abacus, 1995) p.60. The word first entered politics in Britain in the 1870s, and general use in the 1890s.

⁵³ See Mackenzie, *Orientalism*, for a critique of this view, pp.xv,xvii.

⁵⁴ MacFarlane, pp.394,395.

⁵⁵ Pardoe, vol. 2, p.33.

by your visits of ceremony; the intervention of the Dragoman is fatal to the spirit of conversation.⁵⁶

In the following conversation, which is too long to quote in its totality, the polished manner of the Pasha disappears altogether. The subversive translations of the dragoman, the claim of the English traveller of maintaining the "integrity of the Sultan's dominion", the comical and imbecile whizzing and whirring of the Pasha and his obsession with steam in reference to the developments of the Industrial Revolution are all extremely funny. They also demonstrate, in a light-hearted manner, the reigning beliefs voiced much more seriously by other authors. Kinglake's sense of humour in no way diminishes the importance of his comments. Through the fictional Pasha, the members of the Ottoman ruling elite are shown to be surrounded by slaves, living in indolent luxury, with no idea or understanding of the developments in the world. They are portrayed as incapacitated clowns. Moreover, the British wish to be seen as the protector and saviour of the empire, and the reigning British stereotypes of other Europeans, are voiced by a Turkish official as facts.⁵⁷

If we return to the characteristics of the Turks, excluding the ruling classes, the most prominent ones after indolence and pride are as follows:

Piety⁵⁸

Charity⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Kinglake, pp.12,13.

⁵⁷ See Kinglake, p.17.

⁵⁸ Walsh, vol. 2, p.485.

⁵⁹ Walsh vol.2, p.485, C. B. Elliott, p.206, Slade *Turkey Greece and Malta* pp.208,209.

Sobriety and moderation⁶⁰

Hospitality⁶¹

Honesty⁶²

Superstition⁶³

Cleanliness⁶⁴

Politeness⁶⁵

Courage⁶⁶

Simplicity in tastes⁶⁷

Parental affection and love for children⁶⁸

Mercy to animals⁶⁹.

Thus, if the Turks should be "released from the cruel yoke of the despot, and ...from the religious thralldom of their priesthood", they will have a distinguished place among other nations, because "they comprise all the materials for a great and powerful people."⁷⁰

Of course, not all agree. Slade, for instance, criticizes the author of *Turkey and Its Resources* - without mentioning that it is Urquhart - for exaggerating the resources in Turkey and the capability and willingness of the natives to make use of them. Slade blames the author with making the

⁶⁰ Walsh, vol.2, p.485, Elliott, p.206.

⁶¹ C. B. Elliott, p.205, Slade *Turkey Greece and Malta* pp.208,209.

⁶² C. B. Elliott, p.205, Keppel pp. 225,226.

⁶³ C. B. Elliott, p.206, Walsh, p.267, Pardoe pp.289-291.

⁶⁴ Keppel pp.225,226, Slade *Records of Travels* vol 2 p.297.

⁶⁵ Keppel pp.225,226.

⁶⁶ C. B. Elliott, p.205, Slade *Records of Travels* vol. 2, p.291, Keppel p.378.

⁶⁷ Slade *Records of Travels*, vol.2, p.293, Kinglake p.264.

⁶⁸ Pardoe p.97, Slade *Records of Travels*, p.322.

⁶⁹ Pardoe p.95. These quotations are only exemplary, as the citing of a few authors have been deemed sufficient for each characteristic, which usually does not mean that the others did not mention them.

⁷⁰ Keppel, p.378.

poor Turks “converse learnedly on political economy, on commerce and c.; to betray everywhere symptoms of a desire to follow European guides”. He claims that Orientals are too indolent or too well-bred to disagree with Europeans, and that Urquhart reached his evidence merely by leading questions. Slade believes that Muslims are educated to be content in the condition to which they are born ; “hence the difficulty of *civilizing* him; for unless you can implant the wants of civilization, you will not induce him to submit to its restraints.”⁷¹

Although the Turks are not portrayed wholly negatively and are shown to possess many positive characteristics, most authors still believe that they are half-civilized. The developments necessary to transform this state seem to be a change from Islam to Christianity, the abolition or radical reform of the Sultanate and the ruling classes, a change in the mentality of the Turk, and the presence of European guides to show the way. Unless these are actualized, there seems to be no hope for the Turk to be considered more than a “brute”.

vi. Women and the Harem

Most of our authors, in spite of little or no contact, find something to write about Turkish women too. The first is to eliminate the sensual image of the Oriental woman. MacFarlane observes that the women’s bodies are “clumsy and lumpy”, and “relaxed by indolence or deformed by bad dress”.

⁷¹ Slade, *Records of Travels*, pp.294,295, *Turkey, Greece, and Malta*, vol. 2, pp.77,78. Italics in the original.

Slade claims that for one pretty woman seen out of England there are one hundred pretty women in England.

Turkish women are generally portrayed as kind and affectionate, hospitable, and the best of mothers⁷². It is agreed that they are not as secluded or debased as is usually thought. Pardoe gives a lot of detail on the harem. The inside is carpeted, surrounded on three sides by a sofa, with cushions, latticed windows, and a tandour. Ladies always lie on cushions or sit with one leg under them on the sofa. They spend their time in the harem or pay visits to favourite friends accompanied by slaves, or they go out to buy merchandise, or to visit the bazaars. A favourite habit is to rearrange and accidentally drop their *yashmac* when a handsome man passes by. According to Pardoe, Turkish women are "the freest individuals in the Empire", a conclusion which again seems to echoe Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.⁷³

Most of our authors agree that the cultivation of the mind is entirely neglected among Turkish women. They are happy and content because they have a limited range of ideas and no education. They are pleased with material things like shawls and diamonds. Love or desire is the "idol" to which they are devoted from childhood, and the facility of divorce is their great ally.⁷⁴

Urquhart presents women as "women without vanity and affectation, perfectly simple and natural". The children are brought up without corporeal

⁷² MacFarlane, p.43, Slade, *Records of Travels* pp.322,331, Walsh vol.2, p.484, Pardoe vol.2, p.260.

⁷³ Pardoe, p.100. Also see *The Travels of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, p.112 : "Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire".

⁷⁴ Slade, *Records of Travels*, p.103, vol.2, pp.314,318.

punishment, the parents do everything that nurses or menial servants do in Europe, and they have a natural bond with their children. Mothers are venerated. The children have a good moral and domestic education, but their intellectual education is lacking. According to Urquhart, the harem is the "home" of the Turk, where he spends time with his family, but Europeans do not understand the Turk's attachment to his harem because they only suppose that "sensual gratifications are concealed behind the mystery that envelopes it."⁷⁵

Armenian women may be considered as "Christian sisters of their Turkish neighbours", because they resemble them in dress and manner. But their situation is worse because divorce is not permitted among them, and they live as secluded as Muslim women, and are "completely domestic slaves". Slade remarks that comparisons respecting women should not be drawn between Islam and the Christianity of the West, but between Islam and the Christian religion in the East, as there is a great difference. He also claims that Hebrew women, "their manners, customs, and duties, are the same in the nineteenth-century as they are described in the Bible"⁷⁶. How he can reasonably assert this as a fact is difficult to understand.

vii. Customs and Social Life

In regard to customs and social life, there are also a few recurrent themes. The first and most important one is the observation of equality among the Turks, a fact which interests and surprises all of our authors. It is

⁷⁵ Urquhart, pp.248-271, 416.

⁷⁶ Slade, *Records of Travels*, vol.2, pp.327,328,329.

frequently observed that there is political equality among all classes of Turks, with no nobility or aristocracy, and no succession. So each person has the same chance of rising in status and wealth, and there is no exploitation of the masses.⁷⁷ Furthermore, as opposed to the experience of European nations who speak so much of "philanthropy and liberty", there is no "aversion" between men resulting from differences in colour, rank, class, or station⁷⁸. All these facts create an atmosphere of harmony and peace. The populace live in harmony together, and in everyday life Muslims, Jews, and Christians "enjoy equal rights and show equal courtesies."⁷⁹ "A Frank can go all over Constantinople not only without danger, but without insult"⁸⁰. Pardoe comments on the absence of capital crime in a population of 600,000 which has only 150 policemen⁸¹. Yet this does not mean that all was achieved without violence on the part of the authorities. Slade sees a baker nailed by his ear to a door-post in Eski Saray, and his dragoman tells him this is nothing, that some time ago a master-baker had his nose and ears cut off.⁸²

Another favourite theme is religion and tolerance. The principles of Islam, fasting, giving alms, circumcision, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and the like are usually narrated. Pardoe claims that "the Turks are extremely tolerant with regard to religious opinions" and that each individual is free to follow the

⁷⁷ Keppel, pp.295,296, Pardoe pp. 90-93, vol.2, p.33.

⁷⁸ Urquhart, pp.436,437. See B. Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*, p.65, who claims that inequality of status of master and slave, man and woman, and of Muslim and non-Muslim was established and regulated by law. "In principle, equality of status, and with it the right of power, belonged only to those who were free, male, and Muslim..".

⁷⁹ Walsh, p.267.

⁸⁰ Keppel, pp.82,83.

⁸¹ Pardoe, pp.90-93.

⁸² Slade, *Records of Travels*, pp.95,96.

dictates of his conscience⁸³. C. B. Elliott, on the other hand, finds the morals of the Turk lacking:

They are such as might be expected under a religion which sanctions indulgence of every description, and holds out a sensual paradise as the reward of that virtue to which sensuality forms no exception."⁸⁴

Similarly, the sanctioning of polygamy in the Qur'an is not looked upon favourably. Still, all authors declare that it is not practised so generally as is supposed, and that it is usually practised by the rich, and also that it prevents scandal⁸⁵. It is also observed that women are not shut up in their harems as is usually believed in Britain, but do go out and about, especially to the bazaars, in groups or accompanied by servants⁸⁶.

Slavery is another topic of interest. Walsh, who is highly critical of the slave-market and the dismal fate of slaves, believes that it is a shameful process. MacFarlane witnesses "the cruel exposure and sale of a Greek girl", while C. B. Elliott claims that "in no country is the slave placed in so favourable a position as in this."⁸⁷

Another major theme is that of social etiquette and table manners. Urquhart, for instance, goes into great detail about how a European guest should behave, talk, drink coffee, and enumerates the common blunders of Europeans. Men who come to the East should not judge it by their own standards and according to their dogmas, everything is relative. Slade, on the other hand, claims that "pride is necessary to ensure respect from the

⁸³ Pardoe, p.50.

⁸⁴ C. B. Elliot, p.205.

⁸⁵ C. B. Elliott, p.214, Pardoe p.102, Slade *Turkey Greece and Malta* vol 2 p.79, Urquhart p.417.

⁸⁶ MacFarlane, p.47, Walsh vol.2, p.483.

⁸⁷ Walsh, vol. 2, p.3, MacFarlane p.187, Elliott, p.185.

Osmanley, who ascribes even common politeness to submission", and thus a European must disregard good breeding in many points, as even rising to receive a guest is attributed to "the innate respect of a Christian for a Muslim"⁸⁸.

A point of interest for all authors is the Turkish manner of eating, and Turkish food. Pipes, coffee, and sweetmeats are the indispensables of every social visit. For longer visits, Pardoe narrates in detail the Turkish manner of eating. Each person squats down with their feet under them around a dinner tray with napkins on their laps and eats from common dishes with spoons. Meat and poultry are eaten with the fingers and handed to guests as a courtesy. Many small different dishes follow each other rapidly, thus hardly anyone dips their spoon or fingers a second time into the same dish, and if they do, they keep to one spot. As a usual case, Pardoe narrates a time when "nineteen dishes of fish, flesh, fowl, pastry and creams" succeeded each other, "the salt following the sweet, and the stew preceding the custard", terminated by a "pyramid of pillauf."⁸⁹

Each person rises when she has finished eating and washes her hands. Generally, coffee, sherbet, or water is drunk. Especially during Ramazan, a tale-teller comes after dinner, and with coffee and pipes men of the family join the women.

Most Europeans find this manner of eating disgusting and worth describing. C. B. Elliott is tolerant of the manner because Christ used to eat similarly with his disciples. He also inserts a footnote, claiming that the

⁸⁸ Urquhart, pp.371-397, *Slade Recor's of Travels*, p.142.

⁸⁹ Pardoe, pp.23,24.

Muslims of India and Persia who are Sheeahs, refuse to eat with Christians; except those of the highest order. "The Turks, who are Sunnees, have no such prejudice."⁹⁰

Last but not least, common is the surprise of those travellers who enter Turkish houses at the simplicity of decoration and lack of furniture, except for sofas, mats, and carpets.⁹¹

C. Politics

i. The Internal Situation

The major concerns of the travel accounts during the period under consideration regarding the internal affairs and state of the empire are the personality and policies of Mahmud II, his reforms, and the increasing weakness of the Empire.

A classic description of Sultan Mahmud II which is adhered to by all the writers with differences in minor details is as follows:

The Sultan appeared a tall, ill-made, mean-looking man, about forty. His countenance is as dark as mahogany; his beard is very full, and as black and glossy as jet -it is said that he uses artificial means to colour it. He is remarkably tall, with a demon-like expression.⁹²

Walsh sees the Sultan in a reception. Others, who see him during his public attendance at the mosque, or at some other event, give similar descriptions. MacFarlane comments on his "expression of firmness and self-confidence, haughtiness and ferocity", his wide shoulders and chest, but

⁹⁰ C. B. Elliott, p.23.

⁹¹ MacFarlane, pp.193,194.

⁹² Walsh, p.360.

does not find him very tall. He claims that there is a “defect and ungracefulness” in his legs, like most Turks, derived from continually sitting with the legs crossed under the body. Thus, Mahmud looks best on horseback.⁹³

The reforms and policies of Mahmud II are usually treated together with his character. Keppel claims that the Sultan's character has been exaggerated, that he is addicted to drink, and the orders for many of his violent acts are given while he is under the influence of spirits. He is fickle (constant changing of his peoples' and troops' dress), his reforms are ill-timed, and wounding to the people's pride. The great measure which distinguishes his reign is the extinction of the Janissaries, otherwise he has done nothing to deserve the parallelism that is drawn between him and Peter the Great.⁹⁴

Slade likewise finds the Sultan's reforming policy unsuccessful, because he attempted too much at once, and commenced at the wrong end. According to Slade, there is general disaffection with Mahmud's policies. His changing the costume of his court and soldiers to European dress, ordering them to clip their beards, and most important of all, his forbidding the turban, “that valued, darling, beautiful head-dress, at once national and religious” is folly. He also draws a comparison with India, which is interesting:

To Englishmen, the impolicy of altering the dress of a half-civilized military nation is more apparent than to other Franks, since it is known that a similar determination, relating to the Anglo-Indian army, led to the mutiny at Vellore in 1806.⁹⁵

⁹³ MacFarlane, pp.251-253.

⁹⁴ Keppel, vol.2, pp.411-414.

⁹⁵ Slade, *Records of Travels*, pp.265-267.

The Janissaries should not have been abolished, because they exercised the will of the people rather than that of the Sultan, they constituted the "legal opposition in the state", they were "a chamber of deputies elected by the people". With the destruction of the janissaries

...the spirit which had hitherto restrained the raya population in obedience, which had deterred the Russians from passing the Balkan, which had checked the corruption of the Seraglio, which had found sympathy in the entire nation, ceased to exist.

Mahmud II has increased taxation for his "personal enjoyment" and maintains regular troops for his "personal safety". He has changed everything, but reformed nothing. The reason of the weakness of the empire is corruption, and Mahmud has "religiously observed" all corrupt usages. "Capricious cruelty" is his characteristic. Another trait of Mahmud is "debauchery", exemplified by such events as his transferring some Greek girls of humble origin who please his eye to the palace.⁹⁶ How Slade came to such conclusions, especially concerning the role of the janissaries, is difficult to determine.

MacFarlane draws a similar conclusion; that it would be folly to deny "as it seems the fashion to do", that Mahmud is a "treacherous, cruel man – that the vaunted reformer of the Turk is still a barbarian".⁹⁷

Walsh, on the other hand, approves of the measures taken. By destroying the janissaries, Mahmud cut off the right hand of the ulema, demolishing "the outworks of ignorance and intolerance". In his second visit in the 1830s, Walsh's perception of the Sultan changes greatly. He claims

⁹⁶ Slade, *Turkey, Greece, and Malta*, p 239, vol.2, p.180,181.

⁹⁷ MacFarlane, p.335.

that a revolution has taken place in the Sultan himself, and that he is "of a humane and kindly disposition". The Sultan has adhered to his reconciliation with the Greeks, abolished the barbarous practice of exacting presents from every ambassador, and encouraged the arts:

Many of the reforms or changes I have detailed to you may appear too frivolous and absurd to deserve a notice, but you will recollect they refer to the reformation of a Turk, who was hitherto incapable of estimating the comparative value of anything, except that the more light and frivolous the object was to which he was attached, with more pertinacity did he adhere to it. Much energy, you say, was wasted on his reformation of dress, but Oriental dress was one great barrier which separated the people from Europeans, and besides was so interwoven with other prejudices, that it was actually necessary to remove the one before he could come at the other... You will further consider that he was not a man of an enlightened nation, endeavouring to improve others who were less so than himself; but he was a Turk, born and educated in the Seraglio, and so originally imbued with a more than usual share of the pride and prejudices of his people...

After this weird defense of the Turk, Walsh claims that taking all this into account, the comparison with Peter the Great does not do Mahmud II enough justice.⁹⁸

The major cause of the weakness of the empire, according to Keppel, is the resistance and revolt of the ulema and the janissaries to the sovereign, which prevents Turkey from "putting herself on a level with other European powers". The ulema, being the only instructed class, "are enemies to the introduction of any knowledge but their own, because their political existence depends on its suppression".⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Walsh, vol.2, pp.311, 284-298, 318-19.

⁹⁹ Keppel, pp.98,99,103,104. See the same views in extended form in Ubicini, *Letters on Turkey*, Vol. I, pp.84-86.

MacFarlane believes that the weakness of the empire is due to the system of raising the princes in the Seraglio. As opposed to the first ten monarchs, "a disgraceful succession of imbecile and effeminate sultans-cruel, but cowardly; luxurious, yet barbarous in their very luxury; a compound of the characteristics of the malignant eunuch and the sensual, uninformed woman" has emerged.¹⁰⁰

Although their analyses may bear some truth, the observations of the authors reflect a level of perception that was not apparent in their treatment of ordinary Turks. Most of them seem to be against the reforms of Mahmud II, and those who are not against them do not find them sufficient. There is a common view that being but a Turk, half-civilized, cruel, and treacherous, or imbecile and effeminate, or at best incapable of estimating the comparative value of anything, the Sultan and thus his Empire clearly have no chance. These authors are not clear about what should be done either. Walsh criticizes the Sultan with wasting much energy on the reform of Oriental dress, a frivolous act, but surprisingly our travellers also waste a lot of energy discussing it. It is the only act of reform, apart from the abolition of the janissaries, that attracts enormous attention. We have already seen Slade's valued, darling turban. The same opinion is voiced by Pardoe, who woefully laments the disappearance of the "gorgeous turban of muslin and cachemire" and its replacement by the "hideous and unmeaning fez", and the "stiff, starch, angular European dress".¹⁰¹ C. B. Elliott likewise claims that the

¹⁰⁰ MacFarlane, p.297.

¹⁰¹ Pardoe, p.7.

turban gave an air of "dignity and elegance" to the Turk, and that the alteration to the fez has "sacrificed beauty as well as utility."¹⁰²

These confused observations clearly point to the fact that although they believe the Ottoman Empire should reform itself in order to become civilized, the authors also want it to stay as Oriental as possible. There seems to be no other explanation. The empire should be picturesque, different, other... Any attempt to change this, logical or not, brings forth emotional comments and insults bordering on the hysterical. They offer no solution as to how the Sultan can possibly reform his empire and subjects, taking Europe as an example, and bring them to a level with Europe, while at the same time keeping all the exotic attributes of the Orient intact. In this respect, these writings are not in line with the theory that when the East was judged on its similarity to or difference from the West, "to be less like it was to remain in a state of otherness, of inferiority, to become more like Europe was to progress"¹⁰³. In the Ottoman case, to become more like Europe leads to criticism, at least in so far as the reforms discussed could be seen as such. Those who praise the reforms, as Walsh, do this in the realization of the limited capacities of the Turk. And the only solution offered so far is the far-fetched one that the Turk turn Christian to become Europeanized and civilized.

C. B. Elliott, for example, champions Sultan Mahmud as "one of the most remarkable men of the present century". His subjection of his rebellious vassals Czerni Georges of Servia, Ali Pasha of Janina, Soliman Pasha of Baghdad, his triumph over the janissaries, his establishment of a new

¹⁰² C. B. Elliott, p.19.

¹⁰³ R. Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule* (London: Macmillan, 1986) p.88.

system of military discipline, the Europeanization he has wrought in the habits and manners of the Turks, and the accomplishment of all these during the Greek revolution, the dismemberment of his empire in Egypt, and the Russian war, make him unrivalled in the history of the Ottoman Empire. But after all this praise, he goes and ends his first volume with a comment which seems to spring right from the Middle Ages, in its terminology, and in its ideas:

The faith of the Saracen imposter, itself holding forth no inducement to moral or spiritual excellence, not only operates as a debasing principle upon its own disciples, but with a upas (sic.) of influence, blights every germ of virtue in those subjected to its control or example. Nevertheless, in spite of all, the Christian is encouraged by the word of God to hope against hope for the dawn of a day when Mohammedanism shall be superseded by the religion of the Bible, and when that religion itself, now exhibited in this country, under forms so vitiated that it can hardly be recognized as Christianity, shall burst the veil which superstition and idolatry have thrown over it, and shall attest by its fruits the efficacy of divine truth on the heart of man.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, Walsh, in his concluding statement, claims that the destiny of Turkey depends on whether it will “finally adopt the religion and free institutions of the West, and so become a member of the great European family”, or “merge into a province of a state half Asiatic” by falling under the power of a neighbour¹⁰⁵. This brings us to another dominant British obsession, Russia.

¹⁰⁴ C.B. Elliott, pp.197, 242.

¹⁰⁵ Walsh, vol.2, p.486.

ii. The International Situation

In the pages of these memoirs, the Greek revolution and the war with Russia and Russian designs are intermixed, and both are important only to the degree that they might effect Britain's policies and position.

Walsh states that the general insurrection of the Greeks all over the empire led to the fear that they would march on Istanbul, a rather far-fetched claim. Greeks were killed on the streets, and ten of the principal Greeks of the Fener executed. The Turks began to treat all Christians with outrage and to insult them. The public execution of the Greek Patriarch at Easter led to the expansion of the insurrection. But it was a plan of the Russians to start an insurrection of the Greeks in order to get possession of Istanbul. He gives details about the cruelty of the Turks who torture 36 Greeks by suspending them by their ears on iron hooks with weights on their feet. Screws are pressed on their wrists until the joints are dislocated, and so on. All of them are then put into the furnace until the skin blisters off their bodies.¹⁰⁶

Slade also gives many details on the Greek and Russian events, and makes it clear that he regards "the integrity of Turkey as secondary to the grand question pending between Russia and England", and that he considers Turkey as only destined to be a field of battle between these rival empires.¹⁰⁷

Slade has many interesting interpretations on the subject. First, he considers it an error that the Turk allowed the Greek "the wealth and pursuits of a freeman, branding him at the same time as an inferior being". He should

¹⁰⁶ Walsh, pp.309-324, vol.2, pp.122,123.

¹⁰⁷ Slade, *Turkey, Greece, and Malta*, p.x.

not have let the Greek become intellectually superior, to ensure submission. His faulty policy has led to the Greek revolution.¹⁰⁸

Second, he regards the revolution as the greatest of Greece's errors and misfortunes:

Is it liberty to have a German prince for a monarch – a German army for protectors – German nobles to act as ministers of state? As well live under a pasha, who, at least, could be led by any clever Greek, whose divan was always open to the meanest.¹⁰⁹

Third, he believes that Russia will obtain Turkey, and that Greece will join Russia, because Constantinople was her capital for 15 centuries, because she will prefer to have a co-religionist monarch, and because she will prefer to become a great empire rather than “glory in Lilliputian independence”.¹¹⁰

Slade believes that to have any influence in the East, the British must act to be on a par with Russia. But he does not in any way blame Russia. He states that the British “revile” Russia for doing in the Ottoman Empire what they themselves have done in India.¹¹¹

Slade develops counter plans to stop Russia from becoming the only power in the East. A new kingdom should be created of Egypt, Syria, and Baghdad under Mehmed Ali of Egypt. In this way, English trade will flourish and surpass its present state in the Ottoman Empire. Russia will be checked. If Austria occupies Albania, Servia, Bosnia, Thessaly, and Macedonia, if Greece is united with Albania, and England occupies Candia and Cyprus,

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.216.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.219,220. This view of Slade is quoted and extended in the preface written by Lady Easthope in Ubcini's *Letters on Turkey*, vol.II, p.xi, as an opinion “worthy of respect”.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.220,221.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.379,380.

England will be able to protect India. The newly formed Arabian power will provide "safety to India, repose to Europe, and restraint to Russia". War against Russia with the Porte as an ally, on the other hand, even if possible, would prove useless. Thus, his solution is to uphold Mehmed Ali in the face of Russia and Turkey, to consolidate his dynasty, connect the interests of Persia, Central Asia and India with those of Mehmed Ali, and to lose no time in doing this.¹¹²

Although they do not form such elaborate plans, the other authors also hold the view that the trust of the Turk in his European allies has been misplaced.¹¹³ There is a mixture of remorse and fear in the writing of the period, remorse for not supporting the Turks in some way or another, and fear that Russia will take England's position of power and influence in the East. Keppel goes as far as to say that the Turks looked to the Russian advance as the only chance of delivery from the "intolerable yoke" of the "infidel king" Mahmud II. "If, argues the Turk, we are to have an infidel for a King, let him at least be one who will pay some regard to our lives and property."¹¹⁴ This, according to Keppel, is the only cause of Russian sympathy, as otherwise Turks despise Russians. This is demonstrated by the fact that

To the copious vocabulary of offensive terms in the Turkish language, the inhabitants added two punning ones on their victors. The word general they pronounced "*ginnavar*", or "wild hog", and Muscovite they called "*mussobeit*" or "man of evil omen".¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid., vol.2, pp.503-536.

¹¹³ Pardoe, vol.2, pp.202,203.

¹¹⁴ Keppel, pp.224,225.

¹¹⁵ Keppel, pp.226,227.

The fear of Russia and constant questioning of British prestige and power in the East does not end together with the peace of Edirne (Adrianople) or the Treaty of Hünkâr Iskelesi, but, as we will see, becomes a dominant force in future British policies. Urquhart feigns surprise at the fact that England is the country to which the Turks look, confide in, and invoke as protector, not France, Russia, or Austria. He claims the reason to be the fact that since the war with France, England has not sought to extend her territory in Europe, has sustained a neutral and peaceful position. In short, "England covets no man's land."¹¹⁶ This pun reflects the greatest wish of our English travellers too, it is the ideal image of England that they want to believe in, and also want others to believe in.

The accelerated pace of western industrialization and development from the 1820s and 1830s had many results. One was the widening of the gap between places which had access to the new technology and those that did not. This led to the differentiation of underdeveloped and developed, or uncivilized and civilized societies. The advent of the rail, steamer, and telegraph, in short, the revolution in communications, also brought with it a great increase in the number of explorers or travellers to far and different places, whose impressions were read eagerly by the public.¹¹⁷ Our authors constitute the beginnings of this process, and we have seen that they usually came to the empire with a formed image of the Turk in their minds, and that

¹¹⁶ Urquhart, pp.314-317.

¹¹⁷ See E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital 1848-1875*. (London: Abacus, 1995.)pp.77,78, R. Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1976) p.37.

in many aspects their observations and comments resemble each other. Thus, we have a western, and especially British conviction of superiority, coupled with interest in the "otherness" of Ottoman civilization. There seems to be two levels to this perception.

The first is the long-standing issue of religion. The differences between Christianity and Islam, reflected not only in belief patterns or worship, but also in social customs and habits, is an aspect of interest to all our authors; whether it concerns the position of women in society, the cleanliness of the Turk, or the practice of polygamy. It would not be fair to say that our authors have a hostile attitude, rather, they possess the hope that the Turk will come to realize the superiority of Christianity and embrace it. This is the precondition of becoming civilized. Thus, it is not the lack of economic or industrial advancement which is the primary cause of the backwardness of the empire, but religion. There emerges a naive picture that once the Turk adopts Christianity all will follow, and the empire will undergo a transformation, in having opened the way to civilization. In this sense we have a reflection of the Victorian ideology to improve the world, "by a programme of Christian regeneration to spread civilisation on the British model, since this was the only – and God-ordained – perfection open to mankind".¹¹⁸

The second level in which the Ottoman Empire is "other" is political. The empire is seen as being ruled by an all-powerful despot, who is compared to Peter the Great. While Europe is on the road to forming nation-

¹¹⁸ Hyam, p.52.

states, the multi-national and religious Ottoman Empire is simultaneously undergoing a crisis, reflected most clearly in the Greek revolution. As we have seen, the coexistence of different religions and nationalities within the empire is more an object of wonder and amazement to the traveller than one of criticism. It is the source of colour and variety, the main reason for the empire's allure to the traveller. Both the cruelty of the Turk, and perfect equality and tolerance in the empire are emphasized, and some even blame the Turk for giving too many rights to the Greeks and causing their rebellion, while others view the Greeks as an undeservedly suppressed people. There seems to be no shared view. What is in common, however, is their approach to the non-Muslims of the empire, interestingly, their presentation of these peoples is usually at least as negative as their portrayal of the Turk, and is based on so-called racial or national characteristics rather than on deeds or faults. In this period, the right of the Turk to rule them is not really questioned, but the way in which he rules is found wanting. The Franks are criticized for being content under the Turkish yoke, and the same implication extends to the others.

The Turks, primarily because they are not Christians, are unenlightened and half-civilized. But they are still the masters of a vast empire, which they can improve if they adopt western methods, and even better, if they adopt Christianity. What these western methods are remains unclear, as the existing attempts are not really approved. They are necessary not for the well-being of the subjects, but to prevent the empire from being completely taken over by Russia, which will greatly damage British interests

and prestige. Nevertheless, the methods of reform should not damage the major attribute of the empire; its colour and variety, and so while taking the west as its model the Porte should also manage to retain that Oriental flavour, reflected in such minute details as the turban.

III - Pride and Servility

From an era of revolution and reform we proceed to another tumultuous period ; the *Tanzimat*. Our first author is Cyrus Hamlin, who was appointed by the American Board in 1837 to take charge of a high school in Istanbul. He came to the empire in 1839 and stayed for 35 years. Thus his work *Among the Turks*, published in 1878, is the selected memoirs of a resident, not a travel narrative. Hamlin opened the Seminary of the American Board at Bebek in 1840. In 1859, on deciding to go through with the experiment of establishing a Christian college in Turkey, his 22 years with the American Board ended. After years of effort, the main college building was formally opened on the fourth of July, 1871, "a great success in gathering students from 18 nationalities, from 12 languages, and from all the religions of the East"¹. Thus, *Among the Turks* contains an abundance of information about Hamlin's mission, as well as many important comments about the state of the empire and its peoples.

Charles White published his *Three Years in Constantinople; or The Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844* in 1846. In accordance with the title, his object is to describe "the everyday existence and ordinary customs of the metropolitan Turks in familiar and matter-of-fact terms"², which he does with great success in three volumes. His work includes everything from markets and boats and boatsmen to guilds and horticulture, from confectioners and

¹ Cyrus Hamlin, *Among the Turks* (New York : Carter and Brothers, 1878) p.298.

² Charles White, *Three Years in Constantinople; or The Domestic Manners of the Turks in 1844* in 3 vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1846.) p.ix.

booksellers to cemeteries and tombs, and though he does save less space for politics or antiquities, he has interesting observations nevertheless.

Eliot Warburton travelled extensively through Gibraltar, Algiers, Malta, Alexandria, Cairo, the Nile, Beyrout, Jerusalem, the Lebanon, Damascus, Greece, and the Ionian Islands, recording his observations and thoughts in *The Crescent and the Cross: Romance and Realities of Eastern Travel*, published in 1848. Though he devotes a mere 15 pages to Istanbul, his portrayal of Turks and thoughts about Muslims might offer some insights.

Turkey and Its Destiny: The Result of Journeys Made in 1847 and 1848 to Examine into The State of That Country, in two volumes, is the outcome of MacFarlane's second visit to the empire, undertaken to see whether things have really improved as greatly as everyone seems to believe. Thus, almost all his observations compare and contrast the state of the empire with 1827-1828. MacFarlane stays in Izmir, Bursa, Kütahya, İzmit (Nicomedia), Edirne, Keşan, and Uzun Köprü, among other places.

Henrietta Hamlin married Cyrus Hamlin in September 1838, and accompanied him to Istanbul to take charge of his seminary for the education of Armenian youth. She shared his life and responsibilities with him until 1850, when her already failing health was shaken by an attack of influenza, and she died in Rhodes, followed shortly by her new-born daughter, leaving behind four other children to whom the book is dedicated by the editor. She was buried in the cemetery at Pera in 1851. *Light on the Dark River; or, Memorials of Mrs. Henrietta A. C. Hamlin, Missionary in Turkey*, published in 1853, is based on the letters she wrote home, and dwells on the

development of her spiritual nature, her piety, and her endurance of hardships. Thus, the letters offer scant information on her perceptions and evaluation of the empire and the Turks. Nevertheless, some of them do reflect some common notions of her time, as well as the point of view of a young missionary woman.

The Earl of Carlisle's *Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters*, published in 1854, is written in the form of a diary concerning 1853. It includes a lot of information about the places to which he has travelled (Troy, Dardanelles, Athens, Tripoli, Alexandria, Malta, Corfu, Varna etc.) as well as details about his socializing and sight-seeing.

Sir James Porter's *Turkey: Its History and Progress*, published in 1854, differs from the rest of our sources due to the fact that although it is based on the experiences of James Porter, it is written at a later date by his grandson Sir George Larpent. The first volume is based on the material left by Porter and offers information on the country, its history, commerce, climate, religion, peoples, justice, and customs. It is concerned mainly with the period of his ambassadorship at the Porte from 1747 to 1762. The second volume deals with the government, the *Tanzimat*, laws, education, the navy, and so forth, and concentrates on the period from which Porter left off until 1850. The object is so that the reader can compare the two volumes and "be enabled more fully to understand the remarkable changes which have been affected during the course of the present century"³. This dual authorship creates complications. For instance, in the first volume there is a

³ Sir James Porter, (and Sir George Larpent,) *Turkey Its History and Progress*, 2 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1854)p.iv.

history of the Turkish Empire from the invasion of Europe to the reign of Sultan Mahmud II. Obviously the last stages are written by Larpent, but throughout the whole volume, he might also be the author who comments and evaluates the information supplied by his grandfather, though we cannot be sure. Thus for convenience sake, I have referred to the first volume as Porter's, and to the second as Larpent's, though it is safer to take all comments on the nineteenth century as Larpent's.

A.Places

Charles White gives an incredible amount of detail on all kinds of places in Istanbul. His first chapter is devoted to "bezestans and surrounding tcharshy (markets) commonly called bazars". His complaint is very familiar:

One of the greatest drawbacks on visiting the bazars, or other places of interest, at Constantinople, is the necessity under which strangers labour, of submitting to the guidance and inevitable roguery of the valets de place. These men, for the most part island Greeks, outcast Italians, or reprobate Maltese, are, without exception, the most worthless and ignorant class of cicerone in the world. Their knowledge does not extend beyond the mere names of places and articles; scarcely one can speak the language correctly; not one can read so as to decipher the commonest inscription; and yet they assume the title of dragomans; as if in derision of that classic, but ill-reputed, body of men, of which they pretend to be the last link.⁴

According to White, there is no city in Europe where fewer beggars are to be found than in Istanbul. This is due to extensive charity. Harbours, landing places, and the fish market are filthy. The Turks are cleanly in their persons and in their houses, but not otherwise, though the streets of Istanbul are much cleaner than those of Pera and Galata, especially the Greek and

⁴ White, p.11

Armenian quarters.⁵ White also narrates in detail facts such as the number of boats and "kayikjees", the 2500 coffee houses in Istanbul, the "sahhaf" or booksellers, and so forth.

Although Warburton devotes little space to Istanbul, he describes the city very poetically, as is the custom:

The Bosphorus shines before us like a lake; its purple waves dance into the sunlight that turns their crests gold, and reflect along their margin the mingled foliage and fortresses that shadow their deep waters. Over these rises a richly mingled mass of palaces and gardens, and stately towers, and dark groves, with many minarets, and cypress trees, and purple domes, and gleaming crescents.⁶

Warburton continues with "fairy-like towers and minarets", "the proud array of castles and fortresses", "the beauty of the bright blue sea", and says it is impossible to exaggerate the "beauty and commanding appearance" of Istanbul.⁷ Yet, these exotic words end with an interesting and contradictory conclusion; the author does not find Istanbul "Oriental" enough:

The other sights of Constantinople are so similar or inferior to those of more thoroughly Oriental cities, that I shall not run the risk of repeating myself by describing them.⁸

These and a few comments he makes on the Turks are in direct contrast to his detailed observation and interest in such countries as Egypt. His remarks are so familiar and general that he could have written them with what he recalled from a few travelogues he had read before and what he had seen of the Turks in Egypt, without having bothered to come at all.

⁵ Ibid., p.72.

⁶ Eliot Warburton, *The Crescent and The Cross, or Romance and Realities of Eastern Travel* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1845) pp.341,342.

⁷ Ibid., p.342.

⁸ Ibid., p.348.

Charles MacFarlane, during his second visit to the empire, usually looks back to the past for comparison. Thus, he claims that nothing has been done to improve Pera or to facilitate communication, and that the streets are worse than they were in 1828. In his survey of bazaars, mosques, and the Turkish quarters of the town, he observes a visible change, in most cases a change for the better⁹. Yet, according to MacFarlane, beyond Galata and Pera "a good deal of the old fanaticism and hatred of Christians" remains. They can hardly walk about without being insulted, and it is "sheer fear of consequences" which saves them from "actual assault"¹⁰. He observes regular communication by steamship between Istanbul-Trabzon, the Danube, Odessa, Salonica and Beirut. There are many silk factories in Bursa "the richest portion of Asiatic Turkey, and the *best governed*". Except ill-managed repairs in the interior of Santa-Sophia, nothing is being done to maintain the works of public utility, and the mosques are falling apart.¹¹

A huge fire breaks out in Pera destroying hundreds of houses while MacFarlane is in Bursa. Later he also witnesses the "Grand Conflagration of Pera" on the 17th of June, and claims that the Pashas assembled there did nothing, with the exception of Reschid's rival Riza Pasha. Only the houses of those who payed were saved, the poor men's houses burnt down.¹²

⁹ Charles MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny. The Result of Journeys Made in 1847 and 1848 to Examine into The State of That Country* 2 Vols. (London: John Murray, 1850.)pp.40-41, 47.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.52.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.117, 134, 143-146, 397.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol.2, pp.656-664.

MacFarlane also revisits the dancing dervishes at Pera, which strike him as "being tame and dull, compared to what it used to be twenty years ago".¹³ Of course it can be argued that it is MacFarlane's perceptions which have changed, but most of his other comments do not point to such a development. The Medical School at Galatasaray does not leave a very positive impression on him. He claims that the "Mudir" of the School has a lesser number of students than he professes and thus saves some of the money given by the Sultan for the education, clothes, and diet of the students for himself. The reality of the school is not reflected by the Sultan's journalists who present "a charming picture of the union and brotherly love which reigned" :

And was it not beautiful to see Osmanlees and Rayahs, Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews living together in peace and amity within the same precincts, and all united by the same studies and by the same love of science? The picture was charming, but it was not true: the students quarrelled as much as George Colman's *Holy Friars*. The Turks, being so much the more numerous, bullied all the Rayahs, ate and lived apart from them, and would not associate with them; the Greeks hated the Armenians, and the Armenians the Greeks, and both united in treating the very feeble minority of poor Jews with the greatest contumely.¹⁴

MacFarlane also seems to notice no agricultural improvement in the country. Though he visits all model farms, the imperial manufactories of calicoes, fezzes, and so forth, he does not seem to be at all impressed.¹⁵

There is not much detail about places in Mrs. Hamlin's memorials. Yet what there is in part serves to show religious bias about countries and people

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.229.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp.264-267.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol.2, pp.628-639.

she knows nothing about and has never seen. On her way to the empire, in the Straits of Gibraltar, she writes:

Africa is on our right hand, Europe on our left. How different the picture! *Here* is light and beauty; a halo seems spread over everything. *There*, darkness and cruelty have rested for ages. On what scenes of guilt and woe hath the sun looked down, in his daily course over this land! How much longer shall this unhappy people sit in darkness? May the gospel speedily be sent to them; and may the Lord give it entrance and free course, until the savage shall have become the Christian throughout the continent!¹⁶

Mrs. Hamlin spends two weeks in Izmir, mostly visiting the circle of missionaries, whom she finds delightful. Yet, the other side of the picture is the "dark and dirty streets, crowded with wretched beings", a sure test for missionary zeal. The streets are "only narrow foot-paths" and "the multitudes who throng them" are "from every nation under heaven", with their languages and costumes. "Most of them are of such wretched appearance that it gives the impression of a street full of beggars". Thus it is only when you visit the "more respectable" that you see anything of "Eastern splendor and magnificance".¹⁷

What is, in part, more interesting than Mrs. Hamlin's comments in her letters, is the insertions of the editor Margarette Woods Lawrence before each chapter of related letters, in which she informs and directs the reader. Here is one passage written before Mrs. Hamlin's letters from Istanbul begin:

As you approach the city by water, the numerous mosques, with their slender and graceful minarets, and the glittering domes and magnificent palaces and seraglios which crown the summits, or are paved by the waters of the Bosphorus, make it seem the queen of cities. It is, however,

¹⁶ Henrietta Hamlin, *Light on The Dark River, or Memorials of Mrs. Henrietta A. C. Hamlin, Missionary in Turkey*, ed. Margarette Woods Lawrence, (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1853) pp. 121, 122.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

“distance” that lends the “enchantment”; for on entering the city the illusion vanishes. A population of nearly a million, made up chiefly of Mohammedans, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, intermingled with some from every tribe of earth, is crowded within its walls.

Passing through its narrow, crooked and filthy streets, with often only a line of blue sky over your head, you are jostled hither and thither by an ever-pressing throng, as diverse in language, costume, and colour, as from their extreme filthiness, some of them are disagreeable. This Oriental city was to be Mrs. Hamlin’s future home. What a contrast to her beautiful and quiet native valley!¹⁸

Thus it is not the missionary-traveller, but her editor, who does not inform us that she has ever been to this Oriental city, who inserts the stereotypical introduction of Istanbul. She does at least as well as Warburton. The usual elements are all there; mosques, minarets, crooked streets, magic, and so on. Change the proper names, and replace the nationalities or religions enumerated with Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Marathas or Parsis, and it would also be a stereotypical description of India. It is always that the words used are “jostle” and “throng”, not to mention “filthy”. It is almost as if these are the only words in the English language with which an “Oriental crowd” can be presented.

Mrs. Hamlin is not happy with the first house she stays in, in Pera, and describes it as an “imprisonment” because of the narrow, dirty, and noisy street on which she lives, the high walls before her windows which obstruct the sky, and the dust.¹⁹ Her temporary dwelling in Arnavutköy, the seminary in Bebek, and the subsequent buildings to which they move seem to offer no such discomforts, being full of light and air.

¹⁸ H. Hamlin, p.132.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp.150,154.

The Earl of Carlisle, likewise, when he comes to Istanbul in 1853, is struck by “the ruggedness, the narrowness, the steepness, and the squalidness” of the streets. He wanders that the plague has not persisted when he sees the “close dwellings and bazaars, the mangy dogs, and the no less so swarms of humankind”²⁰, reminding us of another favourite word with which to denote Orientals; “swarms”, whose dogs are always “mangy”. He also comments on the beauty of Istanbul, which “grows enormously” upon him²¹. He takes a Turkish bath at Galata, which he likes, and does all the usual things: goes to see the Sultan’s Friday worship at the mosque, shops at the bazaars, tours the chief public buildings and the mosques of St. Sophia, Sultan Ahmed, and the Süleymaniye, the Mausoleums of Süleyman and the late Sultan Mahmud, the Hippodrome, and so on. He socializes with the English residents and consuls, especially Lord Stratford, Lady Emily Dundas, Lord Edward, Admiral Slade (whose work we looked at in the previous chapter), Dr. Sandwith. He finds the streets of Izmir equal to those of Istanbul, though they even have “a still more Oriental appearance”, and does not find anything of interest, except the nice view²².

B. People

i) Franks

The Franks of the empire do not seem to appear as interesting to travellers in this period as they were in 1821-1839. But the criticism against

²⁰ George William Carlisle, Earl, *Diary in Turkish and Greek Waters* (London: Longman and Brown, 1854) pp.37,38.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.51.

²² *Ibid.*, pp.127,128.

the Levantines and the dragomans continues. Cyrus Hamlin, after he hears a tale about a governor seizing a beautiful maiden and taking her into his harem, which he suspects and discovers is false, complains:

I have met this same story, in all its chief points, so often, that it is evidently the stock in trade of a certain class of story-tellers, who love to practise upon the credulity of foreigners. That outrages of this nature have occurred in Turkey, is undoubtedly true. That every Greek dragoman manufactures them for every traveller who falls into his hands, is equally true. It is not absolutely necessary for one to put unlimited faith in all that he hears from people of that class.²³

Hamlin has another complaint that is quite familiar to us by now; that travellers are misinformed by dragomans. His ideas about kinds of travellers and about MacFarlane are worth quoting though. Travellers,

..intend, generally, to report the exact truth, and with some few exceptions of persons, who, like MacFarlane, go there with malign intentions, in the interest of some political party, they do report, unquestionably, what they have seen and heard. They do not understand the language. They get, from the hotel, a nice, intelligent, active dragoman. The dragoman knows everything and everybody and has most excellent recommendations from previous travellers. He is a *Levantine*. No particular race owns him. He will perhaps tell you he is a Greek. If there is a class of men on earth utterly destitute of the truth, to whom falsehood is sweeter than truth, and who are sagacious to know in a given case how much a man can be made to *swallow* without arousing suspicions, it is these *Levantines*. They have a list of classic horrors about the "unspeakable Turk", to palm off upon all unsuspecting travellers. Our knowledge of Turkey really comes from them.²⁴

According to Hamlin, the "whole class" of Levantines are the enemies of Turkey, and they never report anything good. In addition, he claims that "A great association has been formed in England for the purpose of exposing all the faults of Turkey. The testimony is mainly from travellers." He gives

²³ C. Hamlin, p.271.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.356,357.

examples to show that emphasizing only the negative events and actions without even hinting at the good would not draw "a good, elevating, refining moral impression" about the people of Great Britain or the United States either²⁵.

Charles White likewise claims that travellers come and go in complete ignorance, even adding misconceptions arising from "hasty observation and erroneous information" to their prejudices²⁶. He is one of the rare travellers who acknowledges the authors he has read and sometimes refers to them; Hobhouse, Walsh, Michaud, Reumont, Thornton, Urquhart, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

MacFarlane observes that business in Izmir has passed into the hands of the Greeks and Armenians, and that British merchants and agents have been overridden as trade is now performed without any intermediaries. This has led to no improvement in the honour or morality of trade, and in fact, has increased the number of fraudulent bankruptcies.²⁷

MacFarlane also notes the fearful increase of cases of crime in Istanbul, but opposes the belief that the transgressors are usually British-protected subjects, Maltese, or Ionian Greeks, and finds this assertion absurd. He claims they are the Hellenic subjects of King Otto and the Greek subjects of the Sultan²⁸. He has little to say about the Franks, but as we will see, does not stay silent about the Greeks and Armenians. He also concludes that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu "was sadly given to

²⁵ Ibid., pp.358,359.

²⁶ C. White, p.vii.

²⁷ MacFarlane, pp.24-26.

²⁸ Ibid., pp.81,82.

exaggeration" due to her remarks about the weather, the real weather conditions being much cooler.²⁹

The Earl of Carlisle observes that, exceptional instances aside, the condition of the Christian subjects of the Porte is "one of great practical freedom and ease". He regrets that the English holding commercial or consular positions do not hold the "universally high place" they once did.³⁰

ii) Greeks, Armenians, and Jews

The views regarding the non-Muslim subjects of the empire remain more or less the same, and the passing years do not seem to have brought a more humanistic or egalitarian approach. People are still categorized and defined according to ethnic origin, and there are many sweeping generalizations which apply to whole "races". There are exceptions, of course, such as White, who does not indulge in such generalizations about race or character, though he is able to distinguish Jewish boatmen from the others by their "mean appearance."³¹

Warburton has nothing to say about the non-Muslims of the empire, though he has many comments on the Greeks in general. He claims that when the independence of Greece was first declared, most "Fanariot (Constantinopolitan) " Greeks went there, but "finding the despotism and oppression there more galling than in the Turkish provinces, they returned hastily to the Sultan's rule". Thus, the population of Greece is diminishing

²⁹ Ibid., vol.2, pp.190,551.

³⁰ Carlisle, pp.147,151.

³¹ White, p.52.

daily. In spite of this observation, he believes that Greece has not received "sufficient credit for her gallant and successful struggle against the Turkish oppressors", thus both denying and then affirming oppression against the Greeks. He finds Greeks to be the "handsomest race of men" he has ever seen, and their women very much the reverse³².

MacFarlane's views regarding the minorities do not seem to have changed in the past twenty years. In fact, he seems to be even more annoyed with them for beginning to replace the Franks of the empire:

Modesty and diffidence were never distinguishing qualities in the Greek character; ingratitude, purse-pride, sullenness, arrogance, *grossiereté* are but too common among the Armenian race. These uneducated Greeks and Armenians, with their wives and daughters, have cleared the CASINO or Assembly rooms of the old Frank families of the place. They have it all to themselves now; they have thoroughly democratized it, -- and if my fair informants were correct -- a pretty bear garden they must have made of it!³³

MacFarlane is even more careless and disrespectful in his remarks about different nations and "races" than he used to be, and he is obviously not even hindered by the common rules of courtesy appropriate to his own times. His attitude is one of the hard-core imperialist looking over his colonies and passing judgement on the native populations:

...this was not the first time nor the last that I made the reflection that the purse-proud Armenian is the rudest and most selfish animal in the Orient.³⁴

Stemming in part from racial and religious prejudice, in part from his belief in the existence of oppression to Franks by Armenians as well as

³² Warburton, pp.363,364.

³³ MacFarlane, p.27.

³⁴ Ibid., p.197.

Turks³⁵, MacFarlane definitely has something against the Armenians amounting to pure hatred and spite, which he is at no pains to conceal nor to present in a more "civilized" manner:

The Greeks are the only people in the East who at all treat women as they ought to be treated; and were there not other considerations, I should consider this sufficient to establish the fact that of all the Sultan's subjects the Greeks are the only ones that are really open and prepared for our European civilisation. In his *domesticity*, in his tastes and habits, in all his inward man, the Armenian is thoroughly an Oriental and an anti-European. Rough-hew him as you will, reshape him for a time, shake him about by foreign travel, rub the outward rust off him in Viennese, or Parisian, or London society, still he remains a coarse Oriental! The exceptions to the general rule are remarkably few, and in most cases they are rather apparent than real. These exceptions are to be looked for almost exclusively among the classes who profess the Roman Catholic religion, and who are ashamed or angry at being called Armenians. I would not include the common people; and I would be understood to exclude among their superiors in fortune, many men of decent life and conduct; but, generally, I do believe that the rich or prosperous Armenians have all the vices of the Turkish effendis, without any of their good qualities.³⁶

This paragraph not only points to MacFarlane's ideas about Armenians, but also to all that he considers "Oriental", which equals "anti-European", and therefore means very uncivilized and despicable and deserving of every insult and condemnation. All of MacFarlane's comments about everything he sees are so contemptuous and outrageous, at best condescending, that after a certain point it is impossible to take him seriously as an observer. It is as if he is oozing with hatred and spite of anything and anyone that is not European. He has nothing even neutral to say about any nationality, the moment one slightly positive view is expressed by him, a few lines further down it is refuted by a negative comment or obliterated by a

³⁵ *Ibid.*, see pp.194-196.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.542,543.

much graver sin committed. Another example is his comments about the Bulgarians working as hired labourers on the fields and plantations of Keşan. MacFarlane finds them “rough and boorish like all of their race that we had seen”, and though they are capable of very hard work, “they seemed to me to be deficient in intelligence.”³⁷ How he can reach such conclusions, and about the whole nation, by just glancing over at them, is hard to fathom.

Mrs. Hamlin, writing in 1839, finds the Armenians “far more refined and cultivated” than she expected. She writes that there is “an ease, grace and dignity, which we do not find in America”. The manners of the children are also perfect. Yet, she is not very pleased with the empire in general, and thinks that there is “a rude, and semi-barbarian look to everything” that carries them back an age from “the advancement of the American world”. Everything they see and hear “gives an impression of ignorance, superstition and moral degradation, which disgusts as well as grieves us.”³⁸ It is not very clear to whom these observations allude, though most probably they apply to the whole of Ottoman society. She also emphasizes the degeneration of religion, and the increasing number of Armenians in Istanbul, Bursa, and Trabzon in whom “a spirit of inquiry” has been awakened through the efforts of the Protestant missionaries.³⁹

We also gather from the letters of Mr. Hamlin that they have a lot of problems with the Armenian Patriarch, with the ambassadors and members of foreign embassies who are all “bitter foes” to Protestant missions, and

³⁷ Ibid., vol2, p.553.

³⁸ H. Hamlin, pp.137,152.

³⁹ Ibid., p.172.

ofcourse, with the "Papists", as he calls them, until the 1847 charter formally acknowledging the rights of Protestants as a Christian sect.⁴⁰

In 1841, the Hamlins have 12 boarding scholars and 4 day scholars, two of them Jewish boys. These numbers increase to 40 in 1850. They use Armenian, Greek, and English for instruction. Yet, Mr. Hamlin is totally prejudiced towards Jews:

But the Jews generally; both in this city and throughout the empire, are an ignorant, superstitious, filthy, lying, covetous, greedy, servile race. The curse is still poured out upon them without abatement.⁴¹

Porter's comments about the Greeks and Armenians are similar to MacFarlane in wording and tone. Though the Armenians have an "apparent stupidity in their countenance and demeanour", they are as "subtle and designing a people" as the Greeks. They are the best grooms in Turkey, and "by the care they take of a horse seem to have something in their nature congenial with that animal"⁴². The Greeks are "too crafty and subtle, too intriguing, vain and vindictive" for a republic or a monarchy of their own, whereas under a foreign yoke, their violent passions and ambitions may be curbed. Their faith as exercised in the empire is "an amalgamation of the grossest superstition and the most absurd ceremonial".⁴³

Thus, with slight variations, the non-Muslims of the empire during the era of the Tanzimat are still categorized within broad lines according to ethnic origin and/or religion, are marginalized, and are denigrated by the majority of

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.194.

⁴¹ C. Hamlin, p.195.

⁴² Porter, Volume I, p.349.

⁴³ Ibid., vol.I p.340, vol. II p.383.

our British and American authors. In MacFarlane, there is a hint that they are beginning to take over the positions so far held by the Franks of the empire, and this is not presented as a positive development.

iii) Turks

Cyrus Hamlin, naturally, sees the empire from a primarily religious perspective. Thus, his views on the population of the Ottoman Empire are usually divided into those concerning Christian subjects, Muslims, and others. According to Hamlin the Christians are “more intelligent more thrifty, and more progressive” than the Muslims, and they prove that “even a corrupt and oppressed Christianity is better than the purest Islam”⁴⁴. This belief is in line with the majority of our previous authors, who of course all upheld Christianity but were also critical of the Christians of the East, and generally presented the Turks in a more favourable light than the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. In their judgement national or ethnic characteristics played a greater role, whereas for Hamlin religion is the defining factor, as can be seen in his previous remarks about the “cursed” Jews. Thus he believes that “the old unchangeable East has begun to move” since the 1830s, due to the evangelistic labours of the American missionaries⁴⁵.

A new observation Hamlin makes about Turkish officials is the necessity of “browbeating” them to do right.⁴⁶ He also introduces another concept that did not exist or was unobserved by previous travellers; the Europeanized Turk. He meets an Emin Pasha who was educated in England and

⁴⁴ C. Hamlin, p.26.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.29.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p.146.

distinguished himself in mathematics. Hamlin notices that: "His European culture had made him a skeptic and a misanthrope. He was a pre-Darwinite, believing in 'the forces of nature', and 'the reign of law' – nothing else." Faithlessness, or the "stripping of faith", Hamlin observes, is a frequent result with the Turk in Europe⁴⁷. Hamlin clearly prefers even an Islamic faith to no faith. He claims that "no religion has been more misunderstood than that of Islam" due to the fear, hate and danger following the fall of Constantinople. According to Hamlin, the Turkish race has unjustly been associated with "stupidity". What gives an aspect of stupidity is the "fatalism" inherent in Islam. Leaving things to *Kismet* and *Allah*, Islam induces "resignation, quietude and apathy". When strong passion "rouses" the "Osmanlee mind and soul", this mind and soul shows itself to be "capable of surmounting the most formidable difficulties".⁴⁸

As opposed to most travellers who attribute positive qualities to the masses and negative ones to the higher and ruling classes, Hamlin claims that "the ignorant multitude are still fanatical and bigoted, but the governing class has wonderfully changed"⁴⁹. Of course, this view is again primarily coloured by religious concerns, as most probably the higher and better educated classes Hamlin met had a more lenient approach to Christianity and to missionaries. Nevertheless, this is another important point on which Hamlin does not seem to agree with the majority of travellers.

Hamlin uses the words Turk, *Osmanlee*, Muhammedan, and Moslem synonymously. He observes that there is a "toning down" in the fanaticism of

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.184.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.343-347.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p.90.

"Muhammedan Turks", and that "The Moslem treats Christians with a respect he never did before". The railroad, steamer, and the telegraph, the increase in commerce and travel, and most importantly, the influence of American missions, have united "in softening the prejudices of the Moslem mind".⁵⁰

White claims that "The Turks are by no means patterns of morality; but it is indisputable that the vices and defects of their personal character and domestic institutions are constantly exaggerated". Most writers emphasize and exemplify the dark side of the picture, while they "studiously omit all traits of worth, generosity, and virtuous propriety, of which abundant instances are publicly acknowledged."⁵¹

In fact, White draws a picture of the Turk as a mass of contradictions, as a combination of good and evil, but as opposed to Hamlin, and in line with the majority of travellers, he finds a greater number of worthy qualities in the lower classes:

Thus the noblest virtues are found to be allied to the most vicious passions, the narrowest prejudices linked with the most enlarged views, and the utmost tolerance and humanity suddenly replaced by reckless cruelty and uncompromising fanaticism. Princely generosity and patriarchal charity will be observed side by side with grasping cupidity and egotism; while the purest domestic excellence is often shrouded by foul disregard to human and divine morality. Again, stoic valour and acute sense of personal dignity will be seen upon a level with grovelling servility and contempt both for private honour and public welfare. In short, there exist so many contradictions, the results of ill-directed education, hereditary customs, and personal instability, that it is difficult to decide whether good or evil must predominate in the Turkish character.

But these observations are applicable to the higher, and not to the middling and inferior classes. Among the two latter, the ascendancy of good over evil is unquestionable. In no city are social or moral ties more tenaciously observed than by them. In no city can more numerous examples be found of probity, mild single-heartedness, and domestic worth. In no city is the amount of crime against property or persons more

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.354.

⁵¹ C. White, vol.3, p.17.

limited: a result that must be attributed to inherent honesty; and not to preventive measures.⁵²

Warburton, who undertakes an extensive tour "to breathe awhile freely in the open East", makes many interesting remarks not only about the Moors, Egyptians, Nubians, Jews, and the Turks, but also about Muslims in general. A glance at a few may be useful for the sake of comparison. His highly exotic not to say Orientalist portrayal of Alexandrian society includes Turks who "in long flowing drapery, are seated in a circle smoking their chibouques in silence, and enjoying society, after the fashion of other gregarious animals".⁵³ The Turks whom he encounters in Egypt are the "Osmanlis" or governors and officers. They are "to the Arabs what the Normans were to the Irish five hundred years ago" according to Warburton ; "a proud privileged class, without a sympathy for their vassals, except such as their religion may impose". They are "vain, ignorant, presumptuous and authoritative", though also "courteous, affable and gentlemanlike" in society. In fact, the picture Warburton draws of these Turks is one of a master-race of imperialists:

They are, for the most, ignorant of Arabic, considering it derogatory to learn the language of a conquered race. Endowed with an instinct and power of command, in which the Egyptian is deficient, they occupy all posts of trust throughout the Pasha's provinces. They are also less avaricious than the Egyptians who are placed in authority: and, though equally lax in their ideas of justice, they seldom exercise the same grinding oppression that the Arab inflicts upon his fellow-countryman when in power.⁵⁴

While Warburton is on the Nile and stops for a night near a town, he is visited by the Turkish governor, who, unsurprisingly, fits the prototype of the

⁵² Ibid., vol. 3, pp.362,363.

⁵³ Warburton, pp.2, 19.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.60.

Turkish governor established since Kinglake. There is of course the pipes and the slave, and the "taste for brandy", with "little variety in the conversation": "English very good; very fond of travelling; know great deal; have very good brandy", after which the governor, who is nevertheless courteous, complimentary and obliging, leaves with the bottle.⁵⁵

While giving full reign to the cliché of the "wild freedom and perfect independence of an Eastern wanderer's life" which is to reach its peak with T.E. Lawrence in the 1920s, Warburton also refers to the favourite and familiar aspects of Islam usually alluded to by most travellers. Under his heading "The Moslem", he claims that fatalism is "the most respectable part" of his religion, and honours the Prophet Muhammed with being an imposter who has compiled the Kur'an, carrying out his "daring" and "original" views in defiance of "God and man". The Kur'an reflects "the power of credulous fanaticism", and "oppression, insecurity, poverty, and intolerance" are the shadows of Islam.⁵⁶

MacFarlane observes some alterations in the appearance and character of the Turks that have taken place during his absence of twenty years. They look much less like Turks, partly due to the disappearance of long robes, turbans, and calpacks, and they are "less picturesque and imposing" in their outward appearance. But this is also due to a more significant loss; "The Turks now seemed to have lost their pride and their sense of importance",

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.96.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.58, 64, 65.

their "former swagger and rudeness" being transferred to the "Armenian seraffs and their dependants."⁵⁷

Another change MacFarlane observes and does not seem to approve of, like Hamlin, is that the Turks, especially those who were born or brought up in "reform or new-school times" are "indifferent" to their religious habits and duties.⁵⁸ He does not find the "reform and new-school" Turks to be any better than the old ones in other respects either.⁵⁹ He claims that the Turks know that their end is coming because they are no longer Muslims, "the Mussulman sabre is broken", thus, they will be driven out of Europe by the Christians. According to MacFarlane, the Turks wait for the return of Jesus, and once the Turkish government is broken up, "the conversion of the poor Turks to Christianity" will be easy.⁶⁰

The Earl of Carlisle maintains that the lower orders of Turks possess "simplicity and loyalty of character", whereas the higher, under much apparent courtesy and good breeding, possess "servility, detraction, and vindictiveness". All of them are "incredibly uninformed and ignorant", so much so that they believe the French and English fleets who have come for the Crimean War are there in the pay of the Sultan.⁶¹

These observations contrast clearly with the writings before 1839, when pride and religious fanaticism seemed to be the prominent characteristics of the Turks. Sir James Porter, writing about the eighteenth century, points to the fanaticism of the Turks, and their ill-treatment of those of a different

⁵⁷ MacFarlane, pp.50,51.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.385.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, see vol.2, pp.157-160.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, vol.2, pp.678,679.

⁶¹ Carlisle, p.182.

religion due to "Mohammedan education", which roots deep in the minds of children "a supreme contempt of all other religions". As a result the Christians and Jews of Istanbul live in constant fear and continually have to put up with wrongs and insults⁶². He claims that the Turks "consider themselves as the only nation on earth", and behave accordingly. Rural Turks do not know trickery, deceit or roguery. Turks are strong in their parental affection and the children obedient and submissive.⁶³

Sir George Larpent begins the second volume of *Turkey: Its History and Progress* with:

In the preceeding volume, we have seen, from Sir James Porter's observations, that the Turks, during the last century, were still sunk in that state of apathy which, at the commencement of the present, threatened them with an utter dissolution of their empire.⁶⁴

Larpent ends the volume with the quotation from Walsh which claims that the destiny of Turkey depends on its adoption of the religion and institutions of the West. He claims that Walsh has been proved right, as the Ottomans have begun to adopt the free institutions of the West, though whether religion will follow remains to be seen.⁶⁵

The observations on the Turkish character written in the years 1821-1839 were generally in line with and in continuation of Porter's comments about the late eighteenth century. Religious fervour, pride, and a sense of importance incorporating contempt for non-Muslims seemed to be prominent

⁶² Porter, vol. 1, pp.228,229.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp.284,314,319.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol.2, p.385. For Walsh see Chapter 2..

characteristics of Turks of all classes in differing degrees. These were not approved by the authors, and were presented as a setback to the process of civilization, the reason why most authors found the salvation in the Turkish adoption of Christianity.

In the pages of the memoirs written after 1839, there is a hint of a changing equilibrium in Ottoman society; the Turks have left their fanaticism and pride behind, some together with their religious beliefs, they respect Christians more, and are living in expectation or fear of a time when they will either be kicked out of Europe or become Christians. Surprisingly, although this should be viewed as a step towards a more enlightened and civilized existence in accordance with the ideas expressed by the authors in the 1820s and 1830s, it leads to the portrayal of Turks of all classes, but especially the "new school", as prideless, servile people. Some qualities emphasized before are mentioned again, such as hospitality⁶⁶, charity⁶⁷, cleanliness⁶⁸, and of course indolence⁶⁹, but they are coupled with the loss of pride, religious faith, and increasing servility⁷⁰, characteristics which most travellers had attributed to the Greeks, Armenians, and Jews before 1839. It seems that by relinquishing some of their most criticized qualities, the Turks have also stopped earning respect and fear, and have begun to be seen as almost objects of pity. The exceptions to the rule are those who still fulfill their imperial functions ruthlessly as the Ottomans in Egypt portrayed by Warburton, a proud ruling race who do not bother to learn the language of

⁶⁶ C. Hamlin, p.145.

⁶⁷ White, vol.2, p.26.

⁶⁸ White, vol.3, p.176.

⁶⁹ Carlisle, pp.99,183, MacFarlane vol.2, p.280.

⁷⁰ MacFarlane, p.51, vol.2 p.678, Carlisle p.182.

their conquered subjects. The descriptions of Ottoman society as a whole as well as the Turks themselves have begun more and more to incorporate words such as throng, horde, swarm, filthy, jostle, animal, and brute, favourite words with which to denote colonial crowds. Frantz Fanon describes this process as a Manichean world:

At times this Manichaenism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanizes the native, or to speak plainly it turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. He speaks of the yellow man's reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations. When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms he constantly refers to the bestiary.⁷¹

Though the examples encountered in travel literature on the Ottoman Empire are usually not as exaggerated, the parallelism is obvious. The word Oriental has begun to have a more negative and inferior, rather than an exotic and different, connotation.

iv) Women and the Harem

According to Charles White, the Turkish women of the common and middle classes are the same as they are all over the world, occupied with the duties of their households, while the higher classes spend time superintending the education of their children and slaves, as well as in dressing bathing, visiting, "and not infrequently in political intrigues, in which

⁷¹ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of The Earth* (London: Penguin Books, 1990) pp.32,33.

they take a lively interest and prominent share⁷². Nevertheless, White has a more positive opinion about Turkish women of rank than those of Europe:

In short, with the exception of novel reading, love-making, love-letter writing, and receiving the visits of the male sex, ladies of rank at Constantinople pass their time much as the ladies of other great capitals, with this difference, also, that they are more united in their families, more respectful to their parents, more obedient to their husbands, and infinitely less perverted in mind and principle than that which is considered the fashionable portion of the female population of Paris, London, or Vienna.⁷³

The number of Turkish ladies who can read is much less when compared to those of Pera or the Fener. According to White, Turkish women who can read never open a bad book, while the others scarcely read a good work but prefer "thrashy collections of degenerate novels".⁷⁴

Turkish children have "an air of ease, roundness and self-possession", dress originally in brilliant colours, are reserved and modest, and display "tender fondness" towards their parents.⁷⁵

MacFarlane is critical of the "fair Smyrniotes'" adoption of the hairstyles and bonnets of Europe, which destroys their beauty, and also of Perote ladies' (Greek and Armenian Catholics) dressing in the French manner or alla franga, which does not suit their thick feet and ankles.⁷⁶ He claims that the specimens of needle skill "which charmed Miss Pardoe and other English ladies" are not the handiwork of Turkish ladies, but of Armenian men and women, and are bought in the bazaars.⁷⁷ He states that the reality of

⁷² White, pp.305,306.

⁷³ Ibid., pp.305,306.

⁷⁴ Ibid., vol.2, p.181.

⁷⁵ Ibid., vol.3, p.246.

⁷⁶ MacFarlane, pp.23,24,112,113.

⁷⁷ Ibid., vol.2, p.255.

domestic life within the harem bears no resemblance to the "fancy pictures" drawn by Miss Pardoe. Turkish women are only excited by jealousy and hatred, constantly quarrel with each other and with their masters, and thus "the poorman that had but one wife had a chance of peace within doors, the rich man who had two or more wives had none"⁷⁸.

MacFarlane, as expected, does not have a high estimate of the character, intellects, or tastes of the great Turkish ladies. They are not "caged birds", as he observes, but are more out of doors during daytime than "the most fashionable and stirring ladies of the London season"⁷⁹. Nevertheless, MacFarlane is totally against the harem system, and declares that unless it is abolished, there is no hope for the social regeneration of the empire, it will "perish amidst the contempt and scorn of the rest of the world", because "If you degrade woman, you degrade the mother and first teacher of the future man: the demoralization of the parent tells upon the child."⁸⁰

Mrs. Hamlin points to the fact that Turkish women are glad to talk to European women "that they may examine their dress and ask a thousand foolish questions". They are all ignorant, as not one in five hundred can read a word.⁸¹

Sir Larpent believes that the Turkish woman is "in the eye of the law and religion, a moral and responsible being", and possesses her rights and

⁷⁸ Ibid., vol.2, p.520.

⁷⁹ Ibid., vol.2, p.260.

⁸⁰ Ibid., vol.2, pp.256,257.

⁸¹ H. Hamlin, p.173.

duties. He holds the same opinions as Urquhart, professed in *The Spirit of The East*, concerning Turkish women and children⁸².

In general, there seems to be no alteration or development in the presentation of Turkish women. There are opposing views about their degree of freedom, intellectual capacities, and morality, as there were before 1839.

v. Customs and Social Life

The observed facts of social life and Ottoman customs generally continue the same themes of slavery, equality, polygamy, food and table manners, clothes and appearances, among others. Without going into too much detail and repeating the remarks of the previous chapter at length, we will take a quick look at some of the basic assumptions of our authors.

Polygamy is still a major topic of concern and comment for the majority of our authors. While White and Hamlin contend that among the common people hardly an instance of polygamy is known, and that the practice is an exception even among those of rank and wealth, MacFarlane maintains that polygamy is far from being so very much out of fashion. Sir Larpent quotes Urquhart's *Spirit of The East* about polygamy, women and children, and agrees with Urquhart on every aspect, asserting that polygamy does not exist to a great extent.⁸³

⁸² Porter, vol.2, p.378.

⁸³ C. Hamlin, p.350, White, pp.306-307, MacFarlane vol.2, p.521, Porter vol.2, pp.370-382. See Alan Duben and Cem Behar *Istanbul Households: Marriage Family and Fertility 1880-*

A second controversial topic is that of slavery. White repeats the familiar notion that European ideas of slavery in the Ottoman Empire are erroneous, as slaves are better treated than the menials in Europe and treated more or less the same as the apprentices in London. In 1842, he accompanies a Turkish officer, under the character of a physician, to a house where Circassian women are educated to be sold later as slaves. He claims that the women earnestly desired to be purchased as they knew they would have better fortunes; either as mothers of the Sultan's children, or as wives to influential and wealthy men. White gives a lot of detailed information on forms of slavery, the status and duties of slaves, and observes that the *dadi* or children's governess is the most esteemed female slave in the empire. He sees only one instance of maltreating slaves, when a girl is struck across the face. According to White, the importation of white slaves to the empire has largely diminished within the last ten years due to the war with Russia and the decreasing wealth of Turkish pashas.⁸⁴

Larpernt similarly asserts that the number of slaves are diminishing, whereas MacFarlane maintains that the trade in both white and black slaves is "uncommonly active"⁸⁵. According to MacFarlane, black slaves in the empire are very often dissatisfied with their masters and run away. Those who have a kind master never know how long they will stay with him, as

1940 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) for detailed information on marriage and the westernization of family life.

⁸⁴ C. White, vol.2, pp.304-305, pp.290,298, 283, 309.

⁸⁵ Porter vol.2, p.87, MacFarlane vol.2, p.406. See B. Lewis *Race and Color in Islam* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971) p.81, who says that after the Russian annexation of the Caucasian lands (1801-28) the supply of white slaves diminished and was replaced by a "large-scale revival of slaving in black Africa". See Y. H. Erdem, *Slavery in The Ottoman Empire and Its Demise 1800-1909* (Oxford: St. Antony's College, 1996) pp.55,58, for a counter argument.

slaves and whole harems are frequently sold to fetch a good price for a master whose fortunes have changed. MacFarlane, whose low estimation of "black human nature" is not raised by what he sees in the Ottoman Empire, claims that blacks are not treated any better in the Ottoman domains than they are in the slave-holding states of America or the West Indian islands of Britain.⁸⁶

A third familiar aspect of Ottoman society that draws comment is the presence of equality and the absence of hereditary titles or a nobility. Thus White remarks that in the empire there are in general no family distinctions or records, no hereditary titles, and few family names. With the exception of the Şerifs, all hereditary ranks disappeared with Sultan Mahmud's abolition of feudal rights.⁸⁷ Larpent likewise claims that Ottoman society is a unity politically and civilly, except for the official hierarchy of state functionaries, and that not birth but "merit and abilities" recommend one to great offices.⁸⁸ MacFarlane, on the other hand, claims that there is "an equality of poverty and insignificance."⁸⁹

We also have comments on food, the large number of courses eaten, and table manners⁹⁰, as well as on coffee, pipes, and sweetmeats. White states that pipes are to Turks what choice pictures or plates are to Europeans. The offer of a pipe and coffee can be regarded as a ceremony. Pipes without coffee can only be offered to inferiors, pipes and coffee are necessary

⁸⁶ MacFarlane, vol.2, pp. 414-415. See B. Lewis, *Race and Color in Islam*, pp.101,102. He maintains that Muslim freedom from racial prejudice was "a myth", and there was prejudice and discrimination in Islamic countries though not as much as that exercised in the Republic of South Africa or the US.

⁸⁷ White, vol.2, pp.306-308.

⁸⁸ Porter, vol.2, pp.387, 392, 316.

⁸⁹ MacFarlane, p.401.

⁹⁰ See C. Hamlin, p.176, H. Hamlin, pp.126-127.

offerings to an equal, and an addition of sherbet and sweetmeats are essential for superiors.⁹¹

There are remarks about the fez and its uselessness in shading the eyes from the sun⁹². MacFarlane again mentions the woeful disappearance of the turban and its replacement by the fez, which, "like the *bonnet rouge*" of the French republicans, is "a great symbol of equality". But, he declares, it is only a symbol, and "the equality is only a theory"⁹³. White observes that the Turks wear blue, chocolate and olive brown coats, green being reserved for the Prophet's kin. Males only wear rings on the little finger of the right hand, if they wear jewellery at all, while women wear an abundance of all kinds of jewellery. Turks are very partial for perfumes and aromatic oils. Carpets are the most important item of household furniture for them, for convenience, luxury, and for devotion⁹⁴.

The Earl of Carlisle finds morality in the empire in such a shocking state that he claims that if it were fully known it would "arrest the somewhat profuse flow of English sympathy for the Ottoman race." An example he gives to prove his point is the Karagöz exhibition, "a sort of Turkish Punch" that he refuses to watch.⁹⁵

Two new observations which hint at the deterioration of Ottoman society are about the increase in crime rates and depopulation. MacFarlane lays stress on the increased cases of "house-breaking, robbing on the highway, stabbing and throat-cutting" in Izmir, which were not known twenty years ago.

⁹¹ White, vol.2, pp.129-132, 136.

⁹² Ibid., vol.2, p.51.

⁹³ MacFarlane, p.23.

⁹⁴ White, vol.2, pp.51, 59, 118.

⁹⁵ Carlisle, pp.38,39.

He also points to the fact that crime has increased in Istanbul too, due to the sudden influx of population, inefficient and "corrupt, indolent and stupid" police, and especially due to the "general demoralization which always attends the decay and decomposition of a country".⁹⁶

Depopulation, or the decaying number of Turks is mentioned by Carlisle, Larpent, and also by MacFarlane, who claims that forced abortion is practised by Turkish women who fear conscription for their sons, in spite of the limitation of military service to five years.⁹⁷

C. Politics

i) The Internal Situation

One point on which all our authors seem to be in total agreement is the weak and unassuming appearance of Sultan Abdulmecid, which brings to mind the vigorous and fiery memory of Sultan Mahmud. Mrs. Hamlin, in 1841, observes that the Sultan looks "pale and sickly" and has a "feeble step"⁹⁸. MacFarlane stops before the tourbé of Sultan Mahmud "with emotion", to contemplate:

A greater contrast between a son and his father is scarcely to be conceived than in the person and character of Sultan Abdul Medjid, who is frail, narrow-chested, dull-eyed, sickly-looking, with an expression of countenance that is gentle and amiable, but not very intellectual, and with features that are not at all handsome.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ MacFarlane, pp.28, 81.

⁹⁷ Carlisle, p.171, Porter, vol.2, p.382, MacFarlane, pp.236,237.

⁹⁸ H. Hamlin, p.174.

⁹⁹ MacFarlane, p.108.

When MacFarlane, together with Commander Lynch of the US navy and his five officers, watches the Sultan's visit to a *tekke*, none of the Americans can believe that Abdulmecid is the Sultan:

All the Americans were eager to see the great Eastern potentate. 'Which is the Sultan? Which is the Sultan?' I could not *point*, but I explained by words. Captain Lynch was astonished. 'That shabby-looking man in the skull-cap and plain blue mantle, the Sultan!' One of the Lieutenants said that he looked like a New York Jew in bad health. Another of the party, a handsome young midshipman, who had not understood my words, and who could not for his life conceive that any man in the procession which had passed us could possibly be the Ottoman Emperor, stood stretching his neck and gazing towards the gate, in expectation of some splendid apparition of robes, turbans, ostrich plumes, and dazzling jewels, several seconds after the Padishah has disappeared within the apartment of the Sheik.¹⁰⁰

MacFarlane is obviously making fun of the young American's exotic expectations, which are a far fetch from the dull reality, and represent the expectations and fantasies of the majority of people who have not been to the empire. We can safely conclude that he himself would have preferred to see a turbanned and robed Sultan, with or without the plumes and jewels, rather than a sickly one in a skull-cap.

Another American who sees the Sultan, Mr. Hamlin, has no such fantasies. He visits the Sultan in 1847, with Professor J. Lawrence Smith and Mr J. P. Brown, secretary of the American Legation (acting as interpreter), to demonstrate the telegraph. He finds the Sultan "plainly and simply" dressed, and possessing "the bearing of a gentleman". As opposed to Oriental despots (and here Hamlin's Orientalism comes through, one has to ask how many Oriental despots he has seen) the Sultan does not hold himself

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.232,233.

superior to the ordinary range of human feelings. He is shown extreme deference by all the members of the Sublime Porte. In spite of the courteous reception and the interest shown by the Sultan, the telegraphic line is not built, until the Crimean War makes it a necessity.¹⁰¹

The Earl of Carlisle, who watches the procession of Sultan Abdulmecid to the mosque of Sultanahmed likewise finds him looking "pale" and "old for his age" :

The impression his aspect conveys is of a man, gentle, unassuming, feeble, unstrung, doomed; no energy of purpose gleamed in that passive glance; no augury of victory sat on that still brow.¹⁰²

Thus there is no hint of the "cruel Turk" in the appearance of the new Sultan, and in line with the presentation of his empire by these authors, he is drawn as a meek, bleak, almost servile character. But this by all means does not spell the end of cruelty or barbarism. White underlines the enforcement of the "murderous seraglio law which condemns collateral issue to death". He states that it casts a stigma upon the Turks and their rulers, and dangers the security of the empire by creating hostility. If humanity and religion are not considered setbacks, self-interest and policy must put a stop to the practice of this law.¹⁰³

Another person who merits comment, especially as an advocate of Europeanization, both in policy and in person, is Reşid Pasha:

Cleverness, love of regularity, talent, and inflexible industry are qualities which no one gainsays in Reschid Pasha, the man of business. In his character there is an unmistakable mildness, even gentleness of heart, which are not so entirely suited to his position and task... Truly Turkish is

¹⁰¹ C. Hamlin, pp.188-194.

¹⁰² Carlisle, p.62.

¹⁰³ White, pp.22,23, 222,223.

the unalterable, almost marble, calmness which is displayed in his demeanour and features. Were it not for the sudden flash of intelligence which, every now and then animates his countenance, he might be taken for a lazy, unsympathetic Turk. His person would not gainsay this opinion, for he is of middle height, rather short than tall, powerfully built, though rather clumsy. His features, on the other hand, are regular, his brown eyes are of an almond shape, his complexion dark – all Turkish traits. ... Reschid Pasha loves the Europeans, seeks their society, and opens his house to them at Constantinople. He lives himself very much on the European style, sits on a chair, and uses knives and forks in eating; as a minister of Reform he believes he must give his countrymen a good example in the avoidance of the custom which more than all the rest checks the progress of cultivation. He has only one wife, who is now past her youth, and who has borne him several children.¹⁰⁴

Still, Reşid Pasha remains a Turk in that he cannot say no to a bribe, and keeps a household of 300-400 servants who pester visitors with demands of *backshish*. He also allows his wife to purchase, educate, and resell young female slaves.¹⁰⁵

A major development which interests our authors is the Hatt-ı Şerif of Gülhane. Hamlin claims that when it was issued, three fourths of the people were still in the "middle ages". The empire was in a very critical condition, as it had been "stationary" for the last two centuries while other nations were making rapid progress. In spite of the efforts of Sultan Mahmud the reformer, "who had nobly struggled against destiny for thirty years", at the accession of Sultan Abdulmecid as a youth of sixteen, the empire had reached "the very brink of destruction", with "neither army nor navy, neither officers nor soldiers, neither money nor credit". Hamlin believes that the edict, which is "an open confession before all the world, of the miserable condition of the empire", is

¹⁰⁴ Porter, vol.2, pp.265-267.

¹⁰⁵ See Porter, vol.2, p.267, MacFarlane, vol.2, pp.136-140.

the triumph of English policy and a check on Russia. It will wake up the "slumbering East".¹⁰⁶

White believes that although the motives behind the edict were praiseworthy, the reforms have been introduced without preliminary investigation and forecalculation. The chances of successful application would have been higher had Prussia or Austria been taken as role models instead of France, which, being unified in language, faith, customs, and tendencies, is very different from the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰⁷

MacFarlane comes to the empire to see for himself "the considerable progress in order and justice, and civilisation" that the Ottomans are making¹⁰⁸. Yet his findings are not supportive of this claim. Corruption still reigns supreme, though there is less bloodshed and execution. He thinks that the edict of Gülhane is "a miserable mockery", and that the finance system of Resid Pasha and his "reform school" is more oppressive, unjust and cruel than the old system. He claims that Islam is decaying, and not being replaced by some other belief but by a "through and heartless infidelity". Sir Stratford Canning, who cannot forget the refusal of the Czar for his embassy at St. Petersburg in 1832, clings to the idea that "Reschid is the honestest minister to be found in Turkey and that Turkey is on the path to regeneration", but MacFarlane is not fooled by such naive hopes.¹⁰⁹

As opposed to MacFarlane, both Hamlin and Larpent are hopeful about the reforms. Larpent claims that "a mere comparison of the condition of

¹⁰⁶ C. Hamlin, pp.28, 29, 46, 55, 56.

¹⁰⁷ White, pp.111, 112.

¹⁰⁸ MacFarlane, p.iii.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.29, 75, 76, vol.2, pp.558-559, 572, 669-670.

Turkey in 1839 and in 1854 will show how much has been already done". He quotes the whole document read by Reschid Pasha and analyzes it in depth. He states that it is not the Koran which is opposed to reform but the religious body. He affirms the principal objects of Reform to be "the security of life and property to all subjects of the Turkish Empire" irrespective of their religion, "a regular mode of taxation", and a regular method of conscription. He declares that he has "a strong faith in the vitality of Turkey".¹¹⁰

According to Hamlin, great progress has been made, especially in education. Printed school books and the press have been introduced, and a printing-house established at Gülhane. The telegraph and the press spread news throughout the empire, the Christian scriptures have been translated and circulated in all the languages of the empire, common schools, the Military and Naval Academies, and the Medical College are successful institutions. There has also been progress in the administration of affairs, such as religious liberty, end of confiscation and death without trial, and the increasing number of Christian subjects admitted to high offices of state. Hamlin is hopeful for the empire, and prescribes "PEACE, TIME, AND EDUCATION" for its regeneration. Nevertheless, Hamlin's *Among the Turks* covers a longer time span, and the relatively late date of its authorship and publication should remind us that some of these developments were nonexistent when the other travellers visited the empire, and came into being after 1853.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Porter, vol.2, pp. 9, 77, 24, 252, 318.

¹¹¹ Hamlin, pp.361-369, list of Christian officials: 371-375, 378.

The Earl of Carlisle and MacFarlane are not so hopeful, and not pleased with the developments they see. Carlisle claims that behind the capital and state establishments, one can only find "deserted villages, uncultivated plains, banditti-haunted mountains, torpid laws, a corrupt administration, a disappearing people."¹¹²

Likewise, MacFarlane concludes his book with the statement that all that he had seen except scenery were "spectacles of misery, oppression, monstrous folly, and revolting crime", in short, "an empire in dissolution".¹¹³

According to Warburton as well, the Ottoman Empire is an empire falling apart, trying to hold on to its bygone majesty and pride, and looking up at the West, which it had for so long despised, for assistance. In spite of the efforts at regeneration, carried on since Sultan Mahmud, "one of the five great men of our age", the empire is doomed to failure and conquest:

At the bidding of his Sultan, the Turk laid aside the external distinctions of his race, and with them he abandoned the sustaining pride, the consciousness of superiority, the elevating fanaticism that fused his patriotism and his creed into one great passion. His contempt for the Frank, whose politics, dress, and mode of warfare he had been compelled to assume, has reacted into respect and fear; such fear at least, as a Turk can know, for they are a gallant people still, those Osmanlis; and though they feel that their empire is drawing to a close, and are prepared for the fulfillment of one of those strange old prophecies, like that which prepared the Yneas for the subjugation of *their* country, they will doubtless die fearlessly in defence of those walls so fearlessly won by their fierce ancestors.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Carlisle, p.184.

¹¹³ MacFarlane, vol.2, pp.680-681.

¹¹⁴ Warburton, pp.350, 351.

ii) The International Situation

The crucial point that is debated by most authors is whether or not to uphold Ottoman independence in the face of Russia. Simply put, those who believe that the empire will regenerate through the reforms support the idea of upholding the empire, while those who have no such confidence debate the outcome of its fall.

White believes that British policy must be based on the maintenance of Turkish independence.¹¹⁵ Because if Istanbul were possessed by any other state –even if a newly created state – the result would affect British commerce and influence in the East, as well as lead to an increased naval expenditure. In order to continue its existence and influence, and to protect the balance of power in the East, thereby also protecting British interests, the Ottoman government should “avoid establishing any community of rights or interests among the races subjected to its rule”. Each race should be governed according to its “own usages and individual creed”, and there should be no uniformity in administration. The application of equality to the inhabitants of the Ottoman empire such as it exists in England and France “would be tantamount to the destruction of the predominant race, and with it, of the best guarantee for peace in the East.”¹¹⁶

Thus, what White advocates for the protection of British interests is in direct opposition to the professed ideals of the Gülhane edict, as well as the road of modernization that European states point to. He does not seem to believe that non-Muslims are oppressed, even though he himself emphasizes

¹¹⁵ White, p.xvii.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.116-119.

the need for keeping the “different gradations of the political and social edifice” intact:

With the increasing embarrassments to commerce and industry that continental states are raising against Great Britain, it is essential that we should not allow a false cry of ‘philantropy and oppressed Christianity’ to throw us off our guard in the Levant.¹¹⁷

Thus, trade comes first. Nevertheless, the most urgent thing to be done to uphold Ottoman independence by the British themselves is to protect it from the ageless enemy, Russia, and thus from extinction:

Unless a firm and unyielding barrier be raised between the Porte and those whose further progress towards the Bosphorus would be fatal to British and Austrian interests in the Levant, fifty years cannot elapse ere travellers will flock to Constantinople to search for relics of Moslem institutions with as much eagerness as they now seek for vestiges of Christian or Pagan antiquities.¹¹⁸

MacFarlane claims that Russia is “ a power incessantly abused by certain politicians for doing no more than we have ourselves done, and have, (in good part) been obliged to do, in India and the regions beyond the Indus”¹¹⁹. He maintains that the Russians have improved the condition of the common people, promoted agriculture, established law and order, and done many other beneficial things to civilize the regions they have conquered, like the English. He names Urquhart as the person who began the “Circassian mania” of seeing Circassia as “ a land of liberty and a bulwark against Russia”. He charges Urquhart with merely touching the Circassian coast, and taking care not to tell Englishmen that “his ‘patriots’ were savages that

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.119.

¹¹⁸ White, vol.3, p.361. Same paragraph quoted by Porter in vol.1, pp.219, 220.

¹¹⁹ MacFarlane, vol.2, p.421. See the same opinion expressed in exactly the same words in Slade's *Turkey, Greece, and Malta*, pp.379-380, reference 103 in Chapter 2.

trafficked in their own flesh and blood, and that his 'heroes' were kidnappers and childstealers". MacFarlane believes that the downfall of the empire is inevitable, and declares that the distribution of Ottoman lands must be settled by a "Congress of *all* Christendom" :

Wage war as you will, it must come to this at last – a Congress, and the expulsion of the Turks, as a governing power, from Europe, and the greater part of Asia Minor.¹²⁰

For MacFarlane, other than the difficulties the empire is in, such as the Albanian and Bulgarian troubles, the Bosnian revolt, the difficulties with the Kurds, and all the deplorable conditions he points to in his work, the decisive and fatal symptom of the end of the empire is that :

...from one end of the immense Empire to the other, all heart has been taken out of the dwindling, fastly disappearing Turkish population, while many of that race lying near one of the Asiatic frontiers of Russia have long been publicly proclaiming that they will welcome the Russians and return to Christianity, the religion of their forefathers, so soon as the Russians come.¹²¹

Fears of Russia turn to reality with the outbreak of the Crimean War. The Earl of Carlisle, in June 1853, notes in his diary that there is no immediate prospect of war. Within less than a month, he receives the news that the Russians have entered Moldavia with 80,000 men. In November, he notes the presence of French and British fleets, and then the beginning of the campaign.¹²² Carlisle admires the "high and even heroic spirit" of the Turkish rulers and people who have not shrunk from encountering the Russians. Although he believes it is not well "for any Christian state to leave its co-

¹²⁰ MacFarlane, vol.2, pp.677, 678.

¹²¹ Ibid., vol.2, pp.679-680.

¹²² Carlisle, pp.42, 65, 168, 179.

religionists to the uncovenanted forbearance of Mussulman rulers", he nevertheless states that the justice of the cause is on the Ottoman side. He also notes the fact that some of the Turks are not pleased with the allied presence in Istanbul¹²³.

According to Larpent, the Crimean War is a "most fortunate event" for the Ottoman Empire. She has acquired western friends who act from "disinterested motives", and has been freed from "the clutches of Russia". The future depends on her relations with France and England, and on whether or not she can "act up to the spirit of the Hatt-ı Sherif of Gülhane".¹²⁴

Hamlin is the only one who asserts, of course writing at a later date when the war has long been concluded, that England fought the Crimean War in her own interests, not in the interest of Turkey.¹²⁵

Larpent answers the criticism that England and France sent their armies "to protect the faith of the false prophet and this religion of arrogant pride and unbridled sensuality." He claims that English and French fleets sailed to defend the empire, not her religion, and they were bound by treaties to do so. The European equilibrium was endangered and destroyed, and it was necessary to put a check on the aspirations of the Russian Tzar. He continues:

The Turks have shown themselves worthy of our support and assistance; they have striven hard during the last few years to improve the internal condition of their Empire, and in the present contest it does not appear that the progress of civilization has in any way damped their courage. They are allies of whom we have not the slightest cause to feel ashamed, and are, at any rate, far superior to those for whom we have heretofore expended both men and money. When once this war is satisfactorily

¹²³ Ibid., pp.181, 331.

¹²⁴ Porter, vol.2, p.13.

¹²⁵ C. Hamlin, p.226.

terminated, it will be our duty to furnish the Turk with assistance of a different nature, and with God's blessing, we may still hope to render the whole nation conscious of the blessings of civilization.¹²⁶

We will see how shared Larpent's ideas are and to what extent his predictions come true in the next chapter.

Thematically, there is a certain consistency in the presentation of the Ottoman Empire and its subjects since the 1820s. Overall, the empire is still exotic and colourful, and still the antithesis of Europe, primarily due to the Islamic faith and lifestyle. Nevertheless, there is an undercurrent of serious variation in the perception, and if not in the perception, then definitely in the presentation, of the Ottoman Empire during the *Tanzimat*.

First of all, and in line with the developments in the world in which the "benign condescension" towards people living outside Europe had begun to give way to "haughty superiority",¹²⁷ the sense of western superiority and contempt for non-westerners has clearly begun to override the envisioning of the empire as an exotic and romantic conglomeration of different races, languages, and customs. Hardly any of the nationalities living in the empire are presented in a positive light. The non-Muslims are not only presented with extremely vile terminology, but it is even questioned whether they should be given equal rights or should just continue to survive as they have done for the sake of the ongoing peace and British domination in the East. There are

¹²⁶ Porter, vol.2, pp.424,425.

¹²⁷ See Raymond F. Betts, *The False Dawn: European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, c.1975) p.155.

the same varied views about the major Ottoman attractions for the British; slavery, polygamy, Islam, equality, food, clothes, and so on, with opinions ranging between the two extreme points of view of Urquhart and MacFarlane.

The presentation of the empire, from the Sultan down to the masses, is seen to be undergoing a transformation. There seems to be a marked deterioration in the vitality, energy, and character of the empire. Increasing crime, poverty, and depopulation among the Turks point to its downfall. The Turks no longer look as Turks should in their western outfits. Adoption of western fashions by men or women is a matter for criticism as it does not suit their Oriental physiques and kills their exotic charms. Though the Turks retain some of their defining characteristics, such as indolence and fatalism, their foremost quality; religious fervour, or piety, in whichever way it is interpreted, seems to be fading, especially among those who are thought to belong to the "new-school". These new men, exemplified by Reşid Pasha, "love" Europeans, sit on chairs, use knives and forks, and have only one wife. But they still take bribes, and they close their eyes to the encouragement of slavery even under their own roof.

Though some authors are enthusiastic about the reforms, there are contradictory views as to their appropriateness and effectiveness. The reforms of Mahmud II were debated even more, but then the criticisms were mostly directed at the need for the empire to become more "civilized", now they are aimed at keeping it alive. Of course Russophobia always existed, but now it seems that the authors all agree that the empire can not function on its own, let alone resist Russian advances. Rather than strengthening the

empire, the reforms seem to have taken the life out of the empire and its inhabitants.

These trends are all reflected in the presentation of Sultan Abdulmecid. As opposed to Mahmud II, Abdulmecid presents a more simple and civilized, but also weaker and less able picture. Mahmud II was perceived as demonic and ruthless, but also as able and strong enough to rule his empire in his own way. He possessed power. Abdulmecid, like his domains and his people, lacks power, spirit, energy, and force of character. The Ottoman Sultan is no longer seen to be an imperial, charismatic personage.

According to some authors, there is a slackening of religious belief and pride, and of contempt for non-Muslims, among the Turks. This, surprisingly, is not found to be pleasing. In spite of the old and persistent view that Islam presents the major setback to civilization and enlightenment, the Turks' so called loss of faith – and in some cases, readiness to become Christians – is perceived as regression. The Turks used to be proud, and insolent to Christians. Now, at least some of them fear and respect Christians. Similarly, this alteration, which should have been seen as “progress” if we look at the narratives of the 1820s and 1830s, seems to have shattered the status of the Turks in the eyes of the British. The Ottomans are still seen as the antithesis of Europe, but the more they try to become “civilized” in the European way, the less they are respected, because this also points to their decreasing power. They are no longer seen as the masters of an empire. At best, the empire is seen paternally, as in Hamlin, in need of time and education, at

worst, it is seen as a domain inhabited by “dirty little Turks”¹²⁸ waiting – almost wishing – to be conquered and converted. In these respects, the literature on the Ottomans has definitely begun to conform to imperial discourse, defined by Andrew Porter as:

the existence at a particular time of a specific terminology, discernible patterns of linguistic usage, and underlying logical or conceptual assumptions, combined in the discussion of imperial issues with the clear purpose of exercising power and control over other peoples¹²⁹.

¹²⁸ MacFarlane, p.90.

¹²⁹ Andrew Porter, *European Imperialism 1860-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1994) p.67.

IV – Cowards and Saviours

With the outbreak of the Crimean War, the number of travel accounts and memoirs which begin with a breath-taking description of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus greatly decrease in number. Very few of the new visitors to the empire think of “stately Turks and dark-eyed beauties revelling in gorgeous and mysterious harems”¹. They have quite different concerns than a leisurely tour or a visit to the bazaar, and for the majority of them this is an unexpected and unwelcome affair. They are here to defend “a race that almost every Christian despises”².

Letters written home or memoirs published by those who took part in the Crimean War, as well as some of the historical accounts written about the war later, offer some interesting insights about how the Turks are perceived and presented by the British, and point to the way in which the discourse on the Ottoman empire developed. In this chapter, they are treated together with the general developments taking place in different fronts to render the accounts more meaningful. The Ottoman troops in the Crimea are generalized as Turks by all authors without adherence to ethnic differentiations, though there were Egyptian and Tunisian regular troops and Bosnian and Albanian irregular troops (Basibozuks) within the Ottoman army. How aware the authors were of this fact,

¹ George Palmer Evelyn, *A Diary of The Crimea*, ed., Cyril Falls (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., 1954) p.28.

² T. Gowing, *A Voice From the Ranks*, quoted in C. Hibbert, *The Destruction of Lord Raglan, A Tragedy of The Crimean War* (Baltimore: Pelican, 1963) p.30.

or whether it mattered to them or not as they saw these troops as fighting for the Turkish empire, is not clear. In the selection I have made, there is little comment on the state of the empire, Ottoman customs, or any elaboration on the characteristics of the non-Muslim subjects of the empire. Most authors concentrate on the events of the war, the difficulties of survival in adverse conditions, daily routine, and of course, their ancient allies, the Turks.

The first allied troops who came for the Crimean War landed at Gallipoli and Scutari, before being transferred to Varna on the Bulgarian shore of the Black Sea. We have the presentation of Gallipoli as a classically chaotic and colourful Oriental town by William Howard Russell, the famous *Times* correspondent:

To fill it up, you must, however, catch a number of the biggest breeched, longest bearded, dirtiest, and stateliest old Turks; provide them with pipes and keep them smoking all day on little wooden stages or platforms about two feet from the ground by the water's edge or up the main streets, as well as in the shops of the bazaar,...see that they have no slippers on, nothing but shawl turbans, fur-lined flowing coats and bright-hued sashes round the waist, in which are to be stuck silver sheathed yataghans and ornamented Damascus pistols; don't let them move more than their eyes, or express any emotion at the sight of anything except an English lady; then gather a noisy, picturesque and active crowd of fez-capped Greeks in baggy blue breeches, smart jackets, sashes, and rich vests -of soberly dressed Armenians- of intellectual-looking Jews, with keen flashing eyes- Chasseurs de Vincennes, Zouaves, British riflemen, Vivandieres, Sappers and Miners, Nubian slaves, camel-drivers, commissaries, officers and sailors, and direct them in streams through the streets round the little islets in which the smoking Turks are harboured, and you will do much to populate the place.

It will be observed that women are not mentioned in this description, but children were not by any means wanting – on the contrary, there was a glot of them, in the Greek quarter particularly, and now and then a bundle of clothes in yellow leather boots, and covered at the top with a piece of

white linen, might be seen moving about, which you will do well to believe contained a woman neither young nor pretty.³

The presentation of Constantinople by those who go on shore are similar and familiar. Most of the men, like our previous travellers, choose to stay in Mysseri's Hotel, the hotel of the dragoman and servant of Kinglake mentioned in *Eothen*, who now has an English wife. There are those like Colonel Edward Cooper Hodge, who come to Istanbul at a later date, and take touristic trips with a caique, see the howling dervishes, and find everything "charming", "all new, all interesting"⁴. But for most of them, like Dr. Douglas Reid, Assistant Surgeon, Istanbul is a "filthy hole", with dark, narrow, muddy, and disgusting streets, the houses "built of wood and full of filth", and people who look as if they never washed.⁵

The troops were transferred to Varna with the objective of relieving Silistria, besieged by the Russians on April 14. But the Turkish army under Omar Pasha and Captain James Butler, Lieutenant Nasmyth, and General Cannon, all British officers of the Indian Army, defeated and repulsed the Russian Army under Prince Gortschakoff. They retreated across the Danube, and in late June, the siege was raised, and the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia evacuated. The imminent object of the war was achieved, and there was nothing left for the Allies to do :

³ William Howard Russell, *Russell's Despatches From The Crimea 1854-1856* ed., Nicolas Bentley, (London: Panther Books, 1970) , pp.29,30.

⁴ E. C. Hodge, *Little Hodge: Being Extracts From The Diaries and Letters of Colonel Edward Cooper Hodge Written During The Crimean War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1971) p.136.

⁵ D. A. Reid. *Soldier-Surgeon The Crimean War Letters of D. Reid*, ed by J. O. Baylen and A. Conway, (St. Catherine's Press, 1911) p.37.

...the British army, dusty, bored and gasping in the heat, was looking bitterly at the Turks they had come to rescue, angrily aware the sickman of Europe had routed the Russians without their assistance. It didn't make for amity among the allies.⁶

Still, the war continued, with a new objective of taking the principal Russian naval base Sebastopol. In this way, future naval threats to Istanbul would be averted. "Everyone realized now that Britain and France were fighting against Russia and not for Turkish independence."⁷ The Allies landed at Calamita Bay, north of Sebastopol, on September 14.

On September 20, the Allies defeated the Russians at the Battle of the Alma, the first battle of the campaign. Four days later they began their "flank march" around Sebastopol, arriving at Balaclava. The Battle of Balaclava and the controversial Charge of the Light Brigade took place on October 25. Disorganization, antagonisms, and misunderstandings led to 247 casualties out of 673 men, 113 of them dying, and the death or necessary destruction of all horses, all in only 20 minutes. The Battle of Inkerman on November 5, known as "the soldiers' battle" because the army fought without higher direction, was followed by a hurricane on November 14, sinking 16 ships loaded with stores for the troops⁸.

By this time, the inefficient administration of the British Army, the lack of proper food, warm clothing, fuel and housing, together with inadequate hospital facilities to care for the sick and wounded and to combat cholera, pneumonia, and

⁶ J. Harris, *The Gallant Six Hundred A Tragedy of Obsessions* (New York: 1974) pp.88,89.

⁷ Hibbert, p.48.

⁸ Philip Warner, *The Crimean War: A Reappraisal* (London: Barker, 1972) p.78.

typhus were made known to the British public through the press. Soldiers came back to tents swimming in mud and water after hours of duty in the cold and wet trenches. Horses died of starvation and overwork. Women who had come to the battlefield with their husbands endured the same conditions, working as nurses, laundresses or cooks, some as maids to officers' wives, while some were simply camp followers. Those who were left behind at Scutari and Vama lived in unbelievable conditions as beggars and drunkards with no maintenance⁹. The British Army had not seen any active service outside of the colonies since 1815, and was neglected and in bad condition. The men in charge in the Crimea, including Lord Raglan the Commander in Chief, and even the notorious Lord Cardigan and Lord Lucan were thought to be too old for active service.

William Howard Russell, correspondent for *The Times*, became famous with his despatches in which he criticized the British government, the War Office, and Lord Raglan, and portrayed the sufferings of the troops. He became a model for all later correspondents. His despatches led to the resignation of Lord Aberdeen's government on February 5, 1855, and to the formation of a new government by Lord Palmerston¹⁰. His accounts had a great influence on public reaction to the war, and were used by many authors who had never been

⁹ See Piers Compton, *Colonel's Lady and Camp-Follower: The Story of Women in The Crimean War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, c1970.) pp.9-22.

¹⁰ Russell, p.11.

to the Crimea as the basis for their work, including Alfred Tennyson for his "Charge of the Light Brigade".¹¹

Of course there were many who accused Russell of being unjust, subjective, and sensational. Some officers blamed him with "laying open the whole army to the ridicule of the universe", and claimed that an army could not go on "while reading such assaults against its general"¹². But the strongest criticism against *The Times* and Russell was concerned with their role in supplying secret information about military affairs to the enemy through their news:

It is known, however, that Gortschakoff had an officer employed in doing nothing else than collating the English newspapers, and that he considered *The Times* equal to half-a-dozen good spies.¹³

Nevertheless, *The Times* was the main source of information and the only authority about the war and conditions in the Crimea for the public. When Roger Fenton, who was to photograph the Crimean War, came to Balacava, he wrote to his publisher William Agnew on March 9, 1855 that "Everything seems in much better order than *The Times* led me to expect".¹⁴

In fact, conditions had begun to improve by the spring of 1855. Not only the advent of warmer weather, but also the stream of provisions flowing to the Crimea were largely responsible for this improvement. A light railway from

¹¹ Mary Ruth Miller, *The Crimean War in British Periodical Literature 1854-1859* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1969) pp.90-94.

¹² Lieut. Col. A. Sterling, *The Highland Brigade in the Crimea* (Minneapolis: Absinthe Press, 1995) pp.vi,103.

¹³ Sterling, p.vi.

¹⁴ Roger Fenton, *Photographs and Letters from The Crimea* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954) p.46.

Balaclava harbour to the front was constructed, making the transfer of men and supplies much easier. Hospitals were reorganized, and so were medical services, supervised by Florence Nightingale and her nurses.

In the meantime, "the stout-hearted defenders of Kalafat and Silistria" proved themselves "the worthy allies rather than the helpless dependents of their western brothers-in-arms"¹⁵. The Turks defeated the Russians at Eupatoria on January 17, 1855. But as opposed to the praise above, they continued to be seen as helpless dependents by the majority. Although one author went so far as to attribute the death of Czar Nicholas I (March 2, 1855) to shock occasioned by the success and valour of the Turkish Army under Omar Pasha¹⁶, Turkish success at Eupatoria and even their following resistance at Kars was, and still is, attributed to "that peculiar paternal brand of leadership that achieved so much success for British arms in the nineteenth century."¹⁷ Ironically, in most cases it was the Indian officers who were also despised by the British that provided this leadership to the Turks.

There were some reasons for the hesitation to associate Turkish soldiers with military success, and the most obvious one was their performance at Balaclava. Although the Turks had been victorious at Silistria, most of their British allies believed that they had no chance against the Russians. For instance, according to Brigadier-Major Sterling, the Turks' success at Silistria

¹⁵ George Brackenbury, *The Campaign in The Crimea, A Historical Sketch in 2 volumes*, (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855) Vol.2, pp.6,7.

¹⁶ Thomas Buzzard, *With The Turkish Army in The Crimea and Asia Minor A Personal Narrative* (London : John Murray, 1915) p.12.

¹⁷ Warner, pp.129,201.

was attributed to the garrison not being able to run away from the Russians and the Russians "not being in earnest" in their wish to take it.¹⁸

These views involved some projection of the present to the past, for the British blamed the Turkish soldiers for running from the enemy during the battle of Balaclava. This is the only event which appears in almost all of the memoirs and histories analyzed in this study, and is usually the only or at least the major event in which the Turks are mentioned at all, though the particulars change.

There were 500 Turks in the first redoubt on Canrobert's Hill, and they had 3 twelve-pounder guns. The Russians advancing on them had 30 guns, and numbered 20 to 1. The Turks resisted for one hour and a half in their redoubt, until the Russian infantry charged with the bayonet and they had lost 170 of their 500 men. As no reinforcements came, they fell back, and the fortification and the guns were taken by the Russians. The Turks in the next redoubts; 2, 3, and 4, seeing the fate of their friends and the advancing Russians, turned and fled towards the port¹⁹. Some of the authors claim that the Turks "fought with the greatest resolution and gallantry"²⁰, while others claim that the Turks did not hold their redoubts long enough for the British to bring them help²¹. But what is more humiliating than this military shortcoming or lack of gallantry is the next episode:

¹⁸ Sterling, p.91.

¹⁹ D.S. Thomas, *Charge, Hurrah! Hurrah! A Life of Cardigan of Balaclava* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974) pp.229, 230, Hibbert p.164, Brackenbury p.34.

²⁰ Buzzard, pp.44,45.

²¹ Russell, p.121.

The Turks, seeing the terrifyingly superior numbers of the Russian troops and dismayed by the fate of their unsupported fellow-countrymen in the forward redoubt, had now understandably lost their nerve and were flying headlong for Balaclava 'like a swarm of bees', shouting 'Ship! Ship! Johnny! Ship!'. They dashed past the camp of the 93rd Highlanders, the last line of defence above Balaclava, stopping on their way to pick up empty bottles, for which they appeared to 'have a great appreciation'. Several of them, as they stopped to pick up their loot, were beaten savagely over the back by the fierce wife of a soldier, who upbraided them angrily for their cowardice and for trampling over her washing laid out to dry in the sun.²²

The same episode is repeated by other authors, with a slight change in the details. In one, we have the addition of pots and pans to the empty bottles. The wife who beats them is discovered to be a Mrs. Smith, whose husband is soldier-servant to Lieutenant Sinclair²³. In yet another account, the soldier's wife not only pursues and beats the fleeing Turks, but also curses them for cowards, pulls their hair, and boxes their ears.²⁴ We have the same account in Kinglake's *Invasion of the Crimea*, though he defends "the brave Turkish soldiery":

If our people in general had known the truth, they would have been guilty of unspeakable meanness when they cast off all blame from themselves, and laid it upon the Turkish soldiery – upon men who had been not only entrusted to the honour and friendship of our army, but were actually engaged at a post of danger in defending the first approaches to the English port of supply.²⁵

Not only the inaccuracy, but also the comical nature of these accounts are apparent, but they also become ironical in the face of British blunders during

²² Hibbert, p.167, quoted from Roberts, *Letters From Headquarters*, Mrs. Duberly *Journal Kept During the Russian War*, and Cavendish.

²³ Compton, pp.89,90.

²⁴ Cecil Blanche Woodham Smith, *The Reason Why* (London: Constable, 1953)p.223.

²⁵ See A. Kinglake, *The Invasion of the Crimea*, Vol. V. (Edinburgh, 1877), pp.64-65, 83-84.

the same war. It is almost as if the Turks become the scapegoats for British frustration and suffering in the Crimea. They are held in "savage contempt", are "maligned" and "despised", are beaten across the head with a whip and flung into mud for their cowardice, and they are lashed for stealing. There is the view that "The Russians are angels compared to these dogs", although some merely perceive the Turks to be "broken-hearted, despised, neglected, ill-treated, miserable men" who are not a match for "a small boy with a spoon".²⁶

In fact, in most accounts it is mentioned that the Turkish soldiers were unpaid and had very little to eat, their meal for the most time consisting of hard biscuits, water and *yah* (*yağ*), and that they were seen walking about the British camps "looking for fragments of rejected biscuit".²⁷

We are informed by a contemporary that although the French treated the Turks in a "reckless way" and "bullied" them, the British were ordered to "pay every deference to the most ancient and faithful of our allies"²⁸. According to modern historians, this does not seem to have been the case:

The Turks, although allies, were treated appallingly, most of the Europeans regarded them as an inferior race and bullied and beat them. Cardigan set the example in the Cavalry, having them on his field days but giving them no orders and then swearing at them for not being in the proper place.²⁹

There is also the view that had there been less prejudice towards the Turks, they might have been put to better use:

²⁶ Hibbert, p.167, Russell, p.119.

²⁷ Warner, p.19, Buzzard, p.206, Russell, p.109.

²⁸ Russell, p.32.

²⁹ Harris, p.61.

There were men in the British Army with experience in handling Oriental troops, and in their opinion, much might have been made of the Turks; only four months ago, under the command of officers from the Bengal Army of the East India Company, they had fought supremely well at Silistria. However, to Lord Raglan Turks were bandits, and officers of the Bengal Army only one degree more acceptable. The Turkish troops had been treated with contempt, their commissariat arrangements were almost non-existent, they were half-starved, and their morale was low.³⁰

Nevertheless, it would be impossible for the Turks to erase the memory and “disgrace” of Balacava. Sarah Anne Terrot, one of the eight Sellonite Sisters among the group with Florence Nightingale at Scutari, writes that the Turks never displayed anything but “respect and kindness” to them, while “our men often reproached the poor Turks – ‘Ah, Johnnie, no bono! Johnnie hides Balacava’ – meaning to refer to the disastrous cowardice of that day.”³¹

The prejudice towards “Oriental” soldiers seems to have been quite widespread among the ranks of the army. Lord Cardigan, who had himself served in Cawnpore in 1837-38 as Lieutenant-Colonel, could not “endure” Indian Officers, “that is British officers who had served in India”, and was notorious for picking on his Indian officers and treating them badly.³²

Similarly Anthony Sterling, who was Brigadier Major to Sir Colin Campbell, General of the Highland Brigade – who returned from the Indian Army in 1853 “with a high military character” – is outraged at the possibility of fighting alongside Indian officers:

³⁰ Woodham Smith, p.223.

³¹ Sarah Anne Terrot, *Nurse Sarah Anne: With Florence Nightingale at Scutari* ed. Robert G. Richardson (London: John Murray, c.1977) p.102.

³² Woodham Smith, p.55.

The question of Indian Officers, I see, continues its march. They are now to take rank with us out of India. This being decided, and so many of them stuck in here, the next step will be to open the good things in India to the Queen's officers... We shall have these gentlemen sent out here to rule over us; taking away our earnings and teaching us how to fight. God help them!... The Indian Officers will find the Russians a very different foe from the Asiatics they have been accustomed to skirmish against.³³

So it seems that it is one's "European" enemy who inspires respect. The Indian Officers were not respected because their opponents were mere Asiatics. Although Sterling is clearly against Indian Officers, he seems to be devoted to Sir Colin Campbell, and writes a letter to *The Times* on October 19, 1855, concerning the article of the 4th of October which unjustly attacks him. Sterling defends Sir Colin and his military conduct in the Punjab, and his letter is published in *The Times* on November 13, 1855.

Sterling similarly sees the Turks as a hopeless case. According to him the Turks "will never submit to be civilized and to be made really strong and capable of self-defence".³⁴

Thus, the second reason why the Turks are despised seems to be because they are Orientals, or, what amounts to the same thing, because they are an inferior race. They are portrayed as indolent, cowardly, dirty, hopeless beings, who can, according to the most liberal authors, perhaps improve a little under the guidance of British officers who know how to handle Orientals, which means, in this context, Indian Officers. Thus their presentation is generally in

³³ Sterling, pp.167, 168. Sir Colin Campbell also took command of the Anglo-Turkish division at Balaclava between 16 October 1854- 15 June 1855.

³⁴ Sterling, p.242.

line with and in continuation of the period following 1839, though none of their positive qualities except perhaps endurance seems to have survived, and only a few of the men who write about them associate them with courage. The Turk has no pride left, and seems to be a pitiful, servile, grovelling type who can only exhibit a semblance of tolerable qualities if he is ruled and led efficiently and in accordance with these characteristics. Thus not only the officers at Silistria, Eupatoria, and Kars, but also those in charge of the British Medical Staff attached to the Ottoman Army are men with Eastern experience, for instance Dr. John Fuller, Inspector General of Hospitals, is a retired army surgeon of the East India Company, and Deputy Inspector Dr. Alexander Farquhar is a surgeon with ten years' experience in Alexandria. It is not surprising that the British employed so many men who had gained experience in the East, for they were the only ones who had had a chance to see any active service in the last forty years. What is surprising is that they did not respect them, and usually did not promote them, but preferred to promote junior officers with social rank³⁵. While soldiers of military rank such as Lord Raglan and Lord Cardigan despised the Indian Officers, the common soldiers in turn projected this mentality to the Turkish soldiers and saw them as lesser beings to be bullied, ridiculed, and despised.

After the death of Czar Nicholas on March 2, 1855, the diplomats of England, France, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Austria held a conference at Vienna, on March 15. Agreement could not be reached, and on 15 April the Vienna Conference ended without achieving peace. The Kingdom of Sardinia

³⁵ Sterling, p.230.

joined the Allies. The real aim of the Minister for Sardinia, Cavour, was to gain foreign support for a united Italy. Sardinia produced 15,000 men in addition to the existing 40,000 British and 100,000 French.³⁶

The prolonged siege of Sebastopol continued with the capture of Kertch and Yenikale, and of Mamelon. Lord Raglan died on June 26, 1855, either of grief or cholera. He was succeeded by General James Simpson. The Battle of the Tcherneya on 15 August, and assaults on the Malakof and Redan finally culminated in the Russian evacuation of southern Sebastopol in September.

Meanwhile, developments had taken place on the other front. General Williams was appointed as commissioner to direct the movements of the Ottoman Army in Asia Minor in 1854. He had "a profound insight into their habits and national character":

It was scarcely a novelty to him that he should have to deal with soldiers, whose valour and endurance is such that, if well commanded, they are hardly inferior to any troops in the world, - with officers, who from the very system under which they are appointed and promoted are, with few exceptions, grossly incompetent, - with officials of every grade insolent and corrupt, and with Pashas, whose greed and venality are only equalled by the indolence and apathy which they mistake for a philosophic resignation to the decrees of destiny.³⁷

Thus we have a short summary of the state of the Ottoman Army, as well as the familiar presentation of the higher classes of Turks. But according to Lake, the corruption in the army has not reached the lower orders:

³⁶ Warner, p.161.

³⁷ Sir H. A. Lake, *Kars and Our Captivity in Russia (With Letters from Major-General Sir Williams, Captain Thompson, and Major Teesdale)* (London: Richard Bentley, 1856) pp.3,4. See also H. Sandwith, *A Narrative of The Siege of Kars and of The Six Months' Resistance By The Turkish Garrison Under General Williams To The Russian Army* (London: John Murray, 1856) who gives a similar account, p.132.

The Turkish soldier, I must again repeat, is a brave, loyal, long-suffering, hardy fellow, and if well led, is inferior to no soldier in the world. The national decay occasioned by the venality, the rapacity, and intrigue combined with the indolence and sensualism of the higher orders of Turkish officials has scarcely yet reached the over-worked, ill-paid, and maltreated commonalty, who are often preserved by their very poverty and sufferings from the crimes, vices and abominations which degrade their social superiors.³⁸

Turkish officials are so corrupt that it is only due to the "confidence reposed in the honour of the British government" that the Lazistan riflemen come to assist in the defense of Kars. We also learn that 1600 "Bashi-Bazouks" or irregulars, "splendid marksmen" and "cool determined fellows" are to join in the defense.

Captain Thompson narrates an incident which is interesting especially because it is a replica of *Eothen*, though not as comical and detailed, it portrays the prototype of the Turkish pasha. It is also interesting due to his final judgement and his comparison of Turks and the "natives" of India:

We have been paying a round of state visits to Commander-in-Chief, Kerim Pasha, and the Commander of the Province of Kars, Suri Pasha, and all the rest of the big-wigs here. The correct form is this, - you walk into the room; the Pasha gets up, salaams and shakes hands; you then sit down upon the divan, and he again bows to you, and you return it. The Pasha then claps his hands, and attendants appear with long pipes with beautiful amber mouth-pieces already lighted, which they give to each person. The Pasha again claps his hands, re-enter attendants with small cups of coffee and sherbet for each of the company, - you smoke and drink coffee in silence for a short time till a sudden thought seems to strike the Pasha, and he asks you if you are well, to which knotty question you return a favourable answer, and the conversation becomes general. The Pasha of course exhibits an incredible amount of ignorance on every common subject, and takes everything you say for granted. After you have smoked yourself into a white heat and then endeavoured to allay it

³⁸ Lake, pp.7,8.

with coffee, you rise, shake hands, bow and retire, and the same scene, pipes, coffee, conversation and ignorance takes place at the next house you visit. They (the Turks) are far behind the natives of India, both in civilisation and intelligence, and are a very debauched, good-for-nothing set.³⁹

Thus, the stereotpye of the pasha as well as that of the common Turk persists throughout the Crimean War, but with little inkling of the pride, gravity, manners, or any of the few positive qualities that they used to possess. Even their departure from the Barrack Hospital at Kuleli is an incident affording "pleasure", as they are "a miserable-looking set, and we were glad to get rid of them".⁴⁰

Kars came under siege in June 1855. After the fall of Sebastopol on September 29, 1855, the Russians attacked. The Turkish Army under the Indian Officers and the Russians under General Mouravieff had a battle on the heights above Kars lasting seven and a half hours. The enemy was driven off with 2800 dead and double that number wounded. Lake writes in his letter that "The Turks fought like heroes", especially considering the hard work and long hours they had endured for the last four months, on "less than half a ration of bread" and without pay for 29 months. Lake concludes his letter to the Earl of Clarendon with :

³⁹ Thompson in Lake, pp.35,36.

⁴⁰ Fanny Taylor, *Eastern Hospitals and English Nurses: The Narrative of Twelve Months' Experience in The Hospitals of Koulali and Scutari By A Lady Volunteer in Two Volumes* (London: Hurst and Blackett Publishers, 1856) vol.2, p.153.

I think your Lordship will admit that they have proved themselves worthy of the admiration of Europe and established an undoubted claim to be placed amongst the most distinguished of its troops.⁴¹

In October, Omar Pasha's army arrived at the Bay of Soukhum-Kale, a port in Transcaucasia, to campaign for the relief of Kars. In November they encountered the Russians on the River Ingour and defeated them⁴². But because they had been delayed until the beginning of October, they were not able to help Kars. According to Laurence Oliphant:

Had it been undertaken at a sufficiently early period of the year, and with such troops as would have insured success, military and political results would have been attained, among which the salvation of Kars would have been the most certain, but at the same time the least important.⁴³

With no provisions being sent in and no help despite all the stories of troops coming to their relief, and the garrison weakened by starvation, General Williams had to surrender the town before winter. On the 28th of November, 1855, the Turks laid down their arms and capitulated, as on the previous day, 230 men had died of starvation.⁴⁴

On November 28, Kars surrendered. On January 16, 1856, the Czar's acceptance of Austria's demands led to the Paris Peace Conference which began on February 23. On March 30 the Treaty of Paris was signed, and was

⁴¹ Lake, p.25.

⁴² See Buzzard, p.250.

⁴³ Laurence Oliphant, *The Trans-Caucasian Campaign of The Turkish Army Under Omar Pasha A Personal Narrative* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, MDCCLVI) pp.207-208.

⁴⁴ Teesdale in Lake, p.236.

ratified on April 27, 1856. The news of the peace treaty was conveyed to the British Army on the 2nd of April by electric telegraph wire.⁴⁵

Most of these accounts of the Crimean War concentrate on events which took place in the Crimean peninsula and on the French and British participants. For the majority of our authors, the Crimean War means suffering, cholera, mud, lack of proper food and tents, insufficient administration and services, the press (especially *The Times* and Russell) and its effects on the government, the army and the public. It means Florence Nightingale, the Battles of the Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman, and the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade with a discussion of its causes, with the distribution of blame between Lord Raglan, Lord Lucan, Lord Cardigan, and others.

The other allies, the Ottomans or Turks, do not really come into the picture drawn by the majority of these authors, except as the undeserving cowards the British have come to save. It is normal for the writer of letters or memoirs to be subjective and personal in his/her choice of material, but the same may be more questionable in historical scholarship. Most of the historiography we have analyzed have restricted the Crimean War to the Crimean peninsula and have not given – if they even mentioned – any importance to battles and events taking place on other fronts where the majority

⁴⁵ The first telegraph wire in the Ottoman Empire was laid by the British as an underwater cable in the Black Sea connecting the Crimean Peninsula with Varna. See Roderic Davison, *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History: 1774-1923: The Impact of the West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), "The Advent of the Electric Telegraph in the Ottoman Empire".

were not British or French. For a war which was supposedly undertaken for the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire in one way or another, and in which a large Ottoman army functioned, this Eurocentric historiographical approach is interesting, especially when the declared objective is not to highlight one specific feature or theme about the war but to give a general understanding. Thus we may conclude, at least for the selection underhand, that for the majority of the British the Crimean War was a war fought by the French and British against the Russians, with the Turks sometimes appearing on the sidelines. If one wants to learn something more about the sidelines, one should look for titles that specifically emphasize "Kars", "Transcaucasia", "Turk", and so forth.

This alone seems to validate the fact that the war was not fought on behalf of the Ottomans at all, although the view that the British are fighting for their Turkish allies is voiced again and again, and belief in this is the third reason for the denigration of the Turks in addition to their comical cowardice at Balacava and their inferior qualities as a race. For when they are mentioned, this is usually in the form of a severe judgement of their military conduct at Balacava, or a generalization of their pitiful and despicable qualities as a people. Though some historians claim that "the patriotism of the British and French and their lack of concern at fighting with Muslim allies against a Christian enemy can hardly have escaped Turkish notice", for the majority, the second point does not seem to have been the case.⁴⁶ Although there were doubtless

⁴⁶ See Bernard Lewis, *Islam and The West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.) pp.169-170.

other views, one lingering result of the Crimean War was the belief that Turks might fight well behind a defence but ran from the enemy on the open field.

Thus, as Jale Parla has pointed out, the Crimean War "created and nourished its own myth" about the Turks, one in which their courage and military abilities were replaced by weakness and dependency. This myth "tried to inculcate the belief that the West was helping a weaker sibling nation" which was not so very different from itself. Russia was portrayed as the Other, as an Eastern country, the Ottoman Empire as part of the enlarged West. Though the Ottoman Empire was not perceived to be a part of Western culture due to this rhetoric, "the Turkish myth, which rested upon the power and glory of the Ottomans" lost ground.⁴⁷

Therefore, the Turks are portrayed more as helpless dependents than as worthy allies. But there are two levels on which they are portrayed that seems consistent in all accounts. The higher ranks and orders, such as Pashas or the slightly more educated Turks, are shown to be incompetent, insolent and greedy. The lower orders and common soldiers, mainly due to this corrupt state of their rulers, are clueless, cowardly, and in a pitiful condition. They are either

⁴⁷ " Kırım Savaşı kendi mitini yaratmış ve beslemiştir. Bu mit Batı'nın kendisinden daha çok değişik olmayan ve giderek daha da kendisine benzeyen zayıf bir kardeş millete yardım etmekte olduğu inancını aşılamaaya çalışıyordu. Savaş retoriği Türkiye'ye karşı duyulan yabancılik duygusunu silmeyi ve bunu Rusya'ya yöneltmeyi amaçlıyordu. Artık Rusya bir Doğu ülkesi olarak görülüyor, buna karşılık Batı, sözde Türkiye'yi de içerecek biçimde genişletilmiş oluyordu. Bu retorik sayesinde hiç kimse gerçekte Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu Batı kültürünün bir parçası olarak görmeye başlamadı doğal olarak, yalnızca Osmanlılar'ın gücü ve görkemine dayalı Türk miti yeni tarihsel gerçek karşısında geçerliliğini yitirdi." J. Parla, *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik*, pp.107,108.

bullied, beaten, and despised, or drilled, disciplined, and led to victory. In the second case, the talented Indian Officers of the British Army, who are used to handling Oriental troops, are especially successful. Their peculiar paternal mode of leadership works wonders on the hopeless troops, while their experience of Oriental intrigue outdoes the Pashas.

The second level is the constant comparison of Turks and Indians or Indian Officers, and the similarity of the attitude towards them. The authors and soldiers quoted show that there was a predisposition to perceive the Indian Officers and Turks in a similar light, as Orientals, albeit in differing degrees. The Indian Officers were a few rungs higher on the ladder, not being Oriental by birth but having the capacity to organize and lead Orientals, but they were inferior to genuine Britons due to contact with and knowledge about Orientals. The Turks were usually perceived as half-civilized bandits, even as colonial subjects to be administered by the Indian Officers and despised by the rest, lower on the scale than the "natives" of India whom the Britons looked down on. Very few of our authors managed to see them even paternally, and for the majority of soldiers they were worse than the enemy. It is surprising that one of the important results of the Crimean War was to end the Duke of Wellington's method of selecting officers by their social connections, and the disappearance of "the prejudice against officers of experience – Indian officers- " :

In the Indian Mutiny of 1857, officers with Crimean experience were to lead their men with skill, and with a new-found consideration for the welfare of their troops.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ R. L. V. Ffrench Blake, *The Crimean War* (London: Sphere Books, 1973) p.146.

Occurring at the height of Victorian prosperity and ending shortly before the Indian Rebellion or "Mutiny" of 1857, the Crimean War was a prelude to the neocolonial era. As such, the imperialist mentality is reflected in the pages of its history and memory⁴⁹. The Turks in most of these accounts, though still indolent, apathetic, and ignorant, no longer possess courage or pride, and are presented as only fit for colonial rule and domination, they are incapable of defending their own empire, but need Britons to save them from the enemy and put them back on their feet, a hard task indeed. They have fallen so low, that only men with an experience of Orientals and colonial subjects can possibly understand and mould them into shape, and only they have a few paternally well-intentioned words to say about them.

⁴⁹ E. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London: Vintage, 1994) p.8: "Imperialism means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory".

V- The Pasha and The Peasant

A. Places

Our selected memoirs and travel accounts for the period after the Crimean War begin with Emilia Bithynia Hornby's *Constantinople During The Crimean War*, an epistolary travelogue published in 1863. It is a revised edition of her *In and Around Stamboul*, and portrays her impressions during her residence in the Ottoman Empire between 1855 and 1858 through letters written home to family and friends. Mrs Hornby – wife of Sir Edmund (Marconi) Hornby – is mostly concerned with life in Istanbul, and makes general comments on social life and the inhabitants. Therefore I have found it appropriate to treat her letters together with the regular travel accounts, which they resemble more than the accounts of the war. Her comments related to the war are scarce and general, being limited to observations such as “the degraded state of the poor Turkish soldiers”.¹

While she was in Istanbul, Mrs Hornby stayed first at Mysseri's Hotel, then at Therapia and Ortakoy. She visited Sebastopol in 1856 after the war ended, and went to Izmit and to the Princes Islands. She attended two embassy balls at which Sultan Abdulmecid was present, and visited a few harems. Her husband received his “Order of the Medjidi” during a grand dinner-party given at the Dolmabahce Palace by the Sultan.

James Baker, Lieutenant-Colonel, who was in the Ottoman empire shortly during the Crimean War, resided and travelled in the empire for three years

¹ Lady Hornby, *Constantinople During The Crimean War* (London: Richard Bentley, 1863) p.46.

between 1874-1877, and published *Turkey in Europe* in 1877. He gives detailed information not only about his extensive travels to Burgas, Karacadag, Kazanlık, Salonica, and so forth, but also about the state of the country, its history, the army, navy, the minorities, and a variety of other issues. Though he begins his narrative with the classical introduction of an Istanbul of "beautiful domes and minarets", and of "a sea of mist", he is our first author to complain about modernity based on a western model:

Time here, as elsewhere, had wrought a change. Large blocks of picturesque Oriental buildings, which I remembered to have seen during the Crimean War, were gone, and in their place there stood great, ugly, modern edifices, devoid of all pretensions to architectural beauty, and which destroyed the general effect of Oriental scenery. They seemed to say 'Look at us! We are the produce of the Hatt-i Humayoun, the Hatt-i Cherifs, and the Iradets! We are Stamboul reformed upon a Western model!'²

Fanny Janet Blunt published *The People of Turkey: Twenty Years Residence Among Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Turks and Armenians* with the name "By a Consul's Daughter and Wife" in 1878. Her *My Reminiscences* was published in 1918. The first is an informative book, not so much a travel account as the observations and experiences of a resident. The Preface, written by Stanley Lane Poole, informs us that this is not a book based on an experience of three months residence in Turkey, as is usually the case with other published works on the Ottomans. We are further informed that the book differs from others in seeing comment as "superfluous and insulting to

² James Baker, *Turkey in Europe* (London, Paris, and New York: Cassel Petter and Galpin, 1877) p.7.

the intelligence of the reader", and thus leaves the drawing of conclusions to the reader.³

Written later, *My Reminiscences* covers the period roughly from 1840 to 1901. It concentrates more on the author's own life and personal details, though there are observations familiar to those narrated in *The People of Turkey*. Blunt was born at Therapia, and after her father's house of business as representative of the East India Company was destroyed during the Janissary Rebellion, he accepted the post of British Consul at Bursa, where she lived until her marriage to Mr Blunt in 1858, Vice-Consul at Uskub in Albania at that date. She later accompanied her husband to Edirne, Monastir, and Salonica (as Consul-General), and she also resided in Istanbul, Bursa, and England for short periods in between. In 1899, after around 25 years in Macedonia, she went to Boston with her husband for his final years as British Consul, and later settled in Malta for good.

Blunt could speak Turkish, Greek, and a little Bulgarian, and differs from the rest of our authors not only in this respect, but also in the duration and nature of her residence in different parts of the empire. The only author to whom she may be compared in this respect is Cyrus Hamlin, but Hamlin did not have the same opportunity for travel and observation as she, nor did he possess a background stemmed in the country. Though her mother, Miss Mary Zohrab, came from parents of Persian and old Venetian families settled in the empire, Blunt considers herself purely English. Nor does the fact that she was born and brought up in the country seem to make her feel more at

³ Fanny Janet Blunt, *The People of Turkey: Twenty Years' Residence Among Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Turks and Armenians By A Consul's Daughter and Wife*. Ed. By Stanley Lane Poole (London: John Murray: 1878) pp. viii, ix, xi.

home. As will be seen, her writing displays the same sense of identity, the same tone, and the same point of view as the majority of travel accounts written by the British.

Blunt's description of places in *My Reminiscences* resembles those of her fellow travellers. On going to Bursa with her family "during the early days of Queen Victoria's reign", she experiences disappointment when she sees "the ill-paved streets", "the stifling smells" of the "heaps of decaying dirt", and "the mangy dogs". She is struck by the poor appearance of the Christians, which she shortly learns is deceptive, as the Christians liked to appear so in order to escape the oppression of the Turks. According to Blunt, "A Christian in those days was a dog to be harassed, starved, and thrashed on the slightest provocation", the reason why he liked to hide his possessions. In contrast, the Turkish quarters of Bursa seem well-built and clean, and the people of a "more dignified appearance".⁴

Blunt claims that in those days (1840s) there was no European society in Bursa, not even a foreign consulate. The Great Powers were represented by a "self-made Consul", Signor Fortunato, an Italian adventurer who had married a native woman. His knowledge of foreign languages enabled him to function in such a manner.⁵

According to Blunt, although Bursa was rich in natural products, it was deficient in many of the ordinary necessities, there being no schools, no technical institutes, nor any hospitals, but only medreses and a court of justice. Nevertheless, she writes that the childhood she spent in Bursa was a

⁴ F. J. Blunt, *My Reminiscences* (London: John Murray, 1918) pp.4, 5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.6.

very happy one, and she took lessons with the children of the American missionary who lived nearby, and played with her brother. Her sister Nancy died as a result of the epidemic of Asiatic cholera.⁶

Blunt experiences two "catastrophes" during her residence in Bursa; the earthquake, and the Crimean War. The latter is felt indirectly at Bursa, because it is a "recruiting and provisioning station", and also a place where many officers and soldiers visit the mineral springs to relieve their rheumatism, a consequence of the bitter weather of the Crimea. Blunt claims that the Turks were much behind European nations in the art of war, and that they had no experienced officers. The earthquake, which strikes during the Crimean War, continues in the form of shocks for 40 days and nights, and leaving her father behind, the family move to Istanbul, and settle in Scutari, after which she and her brother go to London for two years.⁷

About Edirne, where she stays for seven years after 1862, she writes that the "Turks were far more liberal and accommodating" than those in Bursa: "During all the years we spent there I do not remember any acts of violence or brutality either to the European or Christian residents."⁸

Frances Elliot wrote *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople* in 1892, and published it a year later. She professes her objective to be the description of what she saw from the point of view of the contrast between "the splendours of ancient Byzantium and the meanness of modern Stamboul", leaving to others "the often repeated details of Harems, Bazaars,

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.14,19.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37, 38-40, 49.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.100,101.

and Dervishes".⁹ She is definitely successful, so successful in fact, in perceiving everything to be mean, disgusting, or revolting, that she can definitely compete with MacFarlane.

True to her books title, Elliot's travels are restricted to Istanbul, and for the most part involve the usual places of interest to the traveller; the Seven Towers, St Sophia, Mosque of Ahmed and other mosques, the Hippodrome, the Old Seraglio, the turbe of Mahmud II, and the forest of Belgrade, with the addition of a few ancient sites. She cites her "principal authorities" to be Gibbon, von Hammer, Lamartine, Gautier, Sir Henry Elliot, and various English and German Handbooks, among others.¹⁰

F. Elliot arrives on the Orient Express. As Mysseri's (the Hotel d'Angleterre) is "dark, noisy and inconvenient" in these modern times, she stays at the Hotel Royal, also in Pera, and kept by the same proprietor, the "place to go to".¹¹

F. Elliot's *Diary* is more a reflection of her personal fantasies, dreams, and fears than actual experience. Each new observation or site leads her to reconstruct the past for the reader, make historical characters talk, or simply to emphasize how disillusioned she is with everything she sees, even nature:

The East, indeed! Where is it? We are at the end of May, but no colour rests on the walls which rise around, in a network of wretched little houses. None in the tiny gardens, or on the rugged banks, crumbling downwards. Nor on tree or plant, or on the domes of the small mosques we pass, with slenderest of minarets, for this is a degraded part of Stamboul.

All Northern! Hopelessly Northern! And small as a doll's house.

⁹ Frances Elliot, *Diary of an Idle Woman in Constantinople* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1893) preface, p.5, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, preface, p.6.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.35,36.

I hate the common little buildings, not two alike in the whole city, piled one on the other, as if they were a puzzle without room to set it out. The diminutive windows half-closed with carved wooden shutters to conceal the harem.¹²

Her disillusionment with Istanbul is voiced again and again. The hills are too low and flat, even "unimpressive". There is no vestige of antiquity except the ruin of the Seven Towers and St Sophia. All is ruin. "Is this Constantinople of which I have heard so much?" Elliot asks. Then, she decides that though "Stamboul" is "an epitome of the East", it is an East which is "shorn of all that is venerable and ancient, beautiful and grand- a beggarly remnant of the loveliest capital in the world..."¹³ St Sophia does not impress her, and here she meets "those evil glances which the Turk turns on the Christian", which reflect his belief that "to murder an unbeliever is a holy deed."¹⁴ She embellishes this fearful fantasy further, and paints an imaginary scene of the invasion of St Sophia by "the savage horde", made up of Turks, Turcomans, Kurds, janissaries, dervishes, sheiks, and headed by Mehmed II, the Conqueror:

Mounted on his war-horse, Mahomet II appears, his hands and face smeared with blood, the feet of his war-horse dyed with human gore. Silent, awful, terrible, like a visible spirit of evil he passes...¹⁵

At the end of the day, the walls are washed clean of blood, the muezzin calls to prayer, and St Sophia becomes a mosque.

Elliot finds no variation between the mosques. There is no art, but excessive monotony. "If you have seen one mosque, you have seen all" she

¹² Ibid., p.19.

¹³ Ibid., pp.21,22,43.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp.55-59.

¹⁵ Ibid., see pp.62,63.

claims. The Hippodrome, on the other hand, "is an oblong area of a most vulgar and unpleasant aspect", surrounded by "mean wooden houses and degraded walls". As one of the examples to the historic dramas enacted within its walls", she gives the destruction of the janissaries by Mahmud II. Her comments on her first sight of a Turkish cemetery is that it "revolts me by its look of cynical desolation".¹⁶

In addition to the favourite association of Islam with violence and bloodshed, Elliot reflects another well-known fantasy: The Eastern cruelty-lust-tyranny trio. Her description of the fantasies the Old Seraglio awakens in her is worth quoting, especially as there is a pang of regret accompanying her realization that these are no longer true, though no sign of even the slightest doubt as to whether they actually ever were seems to be present:

The old Seraglio! What a name! A place of love, murder, beauty, ambition, and torture through so many ages; of dark trees and gleaming walls, fretted fountains, gilded kiosks and enchanting halls, fair open spaces, greenly planted lawns, and sombre gloomy courts.

Who knows? Death walked with life, beauty with decay, in this charming abode, where love, despair, hope, agony, and ambition strove with each other! These are the tragedies of Eastern life, so short, so cruel! No Western sentiment to turn the edge, and clothe even murder with the poetry of passion. The crude, naked crime, the force of animal lust, the full gripe of tyranny! These days are past with the power of evil. The Seraglio exists no more, save in its outward features, and sultans are now governed by the force of public law.¹⁷

Elliot finds nothing to admire in Istanbul, primarily because she thinks nothing is characteristic of the East nor of the West.

Sir Charles Eliot's *Turkey in Europe*, first published in 1900 and then in 1908, is a result of his visits to Turkey in 1884, 1889, 1890, and his period as

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.71-111, 31.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.19, 20, 192,193.

secretary at the H. M. Embassy in Istanbul from 1893 to 1898. He later added two supplementary chapters on Turkey in 1907. He writes only about Turkey in Europe because he believes that "the Turks are an Asiatic people who have settled but not taken root in our continent", thus their presence in Europe may be treated independently from their presence in Anatolia.

Eliot's book is very detailed, offering information on the history and the languages of all the nationalities of the empire, as well as many anecdotes. According to Eliot, Istanbul has always been "a meeting-place where the races of Europe and Asia gather together" and lose their national peculiarities to turn into "the type which is called Levantine"¹⁸.

Dorina Neave's *Twenty-Six Years On The Bosphorus* is mostly concerned with the 1880s and 1890s. She lived in Istanbul, Kandilli, with her family between 1881-1907, after which she married Sir Thomas Neave and moved to England. Her father George Clifton was a member of the Supreme Consular Court in Turkey. Though she was a resident, we have the description of familiar places and sites such as the St Sophia, Suleymaniye, and Sultan Ahmed mosques, the Old Seraglio, the walls, the stables of the Yildiz Kosk, the Hippodrome, Yerebatan Sarnici, the Imperial Ottoman Museum and so forth. What is most interesting about Neave's memoirs is that in spite of a positive and tolerant attitude in general, her descriptions and terminology are strikingly imperialistic, perhaps in line with the developments and tendencies of her day. Here is a rather long but revealing description of Galata, in which she employs the favourite selection of words with colonial

¹⁸ Sir Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe* (London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965) p.134.

connotations such as throng, native, and jostle, as well as squeezing in all that is usually associated with the East : multitude of races, costumes and animals, beggars, vendors, mysteriously veiled women, and constant commotion. Two aspects which usually have a great role in writings about the colonies, whether in fact or fiction, make their introduction into Ottoman society with her. The first is the attractions of western women for the native, who harasses them if he gets the chance. As Mrinalini Sinha has pointed out about India, the image of the white woman, "pure and passionless" and "as the victim of a lascivious native male was a particularly powerful one in colonial society".¹⁹ The second is "the fear of getting embroiled with the natives":

It is thronged with an endless stream of human beings of every race and country, passing to and fro unceasingly from morning till night. It was like glancing through an everchanging kaleidoscope to watch the motley crowd surging across it: Greeks, Armenians, Circassians, Arabs, Tartars, Persians, Albanians, Montenegrins and Turks, in every style of native costume or military uniform; some walking, some on horseback, others riding donkeys or mules, or driving arabas or carriages. Beggars lined each side of the bridge, exposing their leprosy-covered limbs, while street dogs prowled around the vendors of pistachio nuts and Turkish Delight. Nowhere could a more varied or typical Eastern crowd be found than that which jostled past diplomats and other representatives of the Western countries, as soldier, porter, dervish, and beggar intermingled with the veiled ladies from the harems, who hurried by on foot with downcast eyes, in their elegant multi coloured feridjes, or drove past slowly in their closed carriages, mysteriously veiled in the finest folds of their yashmaks. It was here that the soldiers took advantage of the crush and crowd to push and pinch and generally to annoy European ladies, who appeared to them to be bold and brazen hussies in walking unveiled through the streets, in striking contrast to their own modestly veiled hanoums... but I found it was wiser to take no notice of these insults, for fear of getting embroiled with the natives.²⁰

¹⁹ See Mrinalini Sinha in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds. *Western Women and Imperialism Complicity and Resistance*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992) p.105.

²⁰ Dorina L. Neave, *Twenty-Six Years On The Bosphorus* (London: Grayson and Grayson, 1933) pp.46, 47.

In all this, perhaps the continuous use of the word “natives” is the most striking, and it is unclear whether it refers to all the nationalities she has enumerated, or just to the Turks. Still, we can safely say that the soldiers she refers to who insult the ladies are Turks, or she takes them to be Turks, because she puts forth the same claim in an earlier part of her memoirs; that Turkish soldiers pushed, pinched, and kissed European women who took their fancy if they were without an escort.²¹

Interestingly, if we look at the image of the Ottoman Empire in Japan during the Meiji Period (1868-1912) we will see many parallelisms. The description of Istanbul is identical with that narrated by the British; the narrow and muddy streets, the dogs and beggars, and the smelly wooden houses, in contrast to the view from the sea. However, it is pointed out that although the streets are worse than those of England and Russia, they are still better than those of Tokyo.²² Likewise, according to the naval officers of Japan who visited Istanbul in 1891, “Turkey was a country without any change from the past and it was a country falling behind Western modern civilisation”²³. We also have the image of the Turk as a potentially excellent soldier in terms of a “courageous mind and bravery”, “martial obstinacy and robust health”, though

²¹ Ibid., p. 14.

²² See Shiraiwa Kazuhiko “The Japanese Image of Turkey in Meiji Literature” trans. By H. Özkaya and S. Esenbel, in S. Esenbel and I. Chiharu, *The Rising Sun and The Turkish Crescent: New Perspectives on The History of Japanese Turkish Relations*, (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University Press, 2003) pp. 56,57,71.

²³ Ibid., p.67.

he lacks the skills to be "an official, trader, or politician".²⁴ According to Kamada Eikichi, who visited Istanbul in 1896, "the lack of able officers" is the reason for the decline of the Ottoman army, though we are informed that the ideas of the German General Kerényi may have been somewhat influential on those of Eikichi.²⁵

These observations point to the influence of a universal modernist reasoning that surpasses East and West distinctions, as the Japanese travellers' conclusions are similar to those of the British. However, the point of reference or comparison for these authors is not Tokyo or any other Japanese city, but the streets of London or St. Petersburg, and not Japanese civilization, but western civilization. Unlike the British who increasingly emphasize the "typically Eastern" characteristics of Istanbul and prefer to compare it to other cities in the East, the Japanese automatically compare it to the West, though they find it backward. However:

Like Westerners, the Japanese romanticized the multi-ethnic heritage of the Ottoman world as a kind of exotic melting pot of Antiquity, Europe, and the Near East that distinguished it from the modern West, and to some extent the pure Near East of Islam. Unlike the Western Orientalist romantics, however, the Japanese romantics sought a personal identification within this Orientalizing image. Perhaps it became a mirror for their own search for an Asian identity. For them, the Ottoman Turks and the Japanese had much in common because of a martial warrior heritage and an Asian sensibility.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid., p.72.

²⁵ Ibid., p.74.

²⁶ Selçuk Esenbel, "Japanese Perspectives of the Ottoman World" in *The Rising Sun and The Turkish Crescent*, pp.35,36.

B. People

i) Levantines, Greeks, Armenians and Jews

According to Sir Eliot, a multitude of races from Europe and Asia have gathered in Istanbul and have turned into a definite "type" called Levantine. Living in an imperial city, these people had to develop their talents in "diplomacy and the arts of pleasing". A similar state had existed in Byzantium, but the Turkish conquest "intensified all the faults of the inhabitants":

They had to learn subserviency, not only to an emperor but to a governing class of scornful aliens. The only road to power and prosperity lay in pleasing and flattering the Turks. The latter, with their incapacity for administration and commerce, required continual assistance; but they continually let the Christian know that, though he might be intellectually their superior, and apparently indispensable, he was but a dog in their eyes, who might be whipped or killed in a moment of caprice. Every Christian who served the Turk was working against his own religion and the traditions of his own race. Whatever ingenuity he might display, whatever rewards he might gain, he could not be stirred by a noble ambition or feel he was labouring for a great cause. The number of foreign colonies at Constantinople had doubtless always afforded employment for the characteristic Levantine profession of go-between, interpreter, dragoman, agent, or whatever it is called. The Turks increased this employment tenfold, for they understood neither the languages of their subjects, nor anything of trade and finance.²⁷

Thus, for Sir Eliot the Levantines are a subject people who have to please their imperial masters, the Turks, to survive. Their faults are a result of their difficult position more than anything else.

Later on, Sir Eliot maintains that for most purposes the term Levantine is synonymous with "urban Greek", because the Levantines of such towns as Istanbul, Izmir, and Salonica derive many characteristics from the Greek.

²⁷ Sir Eliot, pp. 136, 137.

Nevertheless, Sir Eliot claims that it would be "unfair to regard the Greeks as mere Levantines", because they possess other more "poetical" aspects. Levantine life, he declares, is "a curious mixture of Paris and the East".²⁸

According to Sir Eliot, the Greeks represent "the intelligence of Turkey". Although they are not recognized as the upper layer of the Christian population anymore, and are no longer largely employed by the Porte, they are preeminent in the learned professions due to their intelligence and ambition. They are not regarded favourably by the Ottoman government because they excel in everything the government finds hateful; politics, public speaking, and the press.²⁹

Frances Elliot likewise claims that the Greeks usually have to take the "lesser part" of business, but seem contented. They are graceful, tall, agile, good-looking people. Baker finds them to be a "most industrious, energetic, and hospitable race", and as opposed to the "vulgar saying" that in a bargain or intrigue "the Armenian can outwit two Jews, and one Greek two Armenians", he finds the Greeks to be "just as truthful as other Christians" in the empire. According to Baker, the faults of the Greek is "love of intrigue, and a deficiency in the power of making individual interests subservient to the interests of the State"³⁰, a fault, we can conclude, which is explainable by the fact that he serves a Turkish, and not a Greek state.

Fanny Blunt has devoted the first part of her book entirely to "The Races of Turkey : Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, Armenians and Jews, The Circassians, Tatars and Gipsies". But even before her narration

²⁸ Ibid., pp.300,301, 303.

²⁹ Ibid., p.300.

³⁰ F. Elliot, p.38, Baker, pp.87,88, 91.

begins, her editor Stanley Lane Poole, who had claimed that there was no comment or "wish to point the moral" in her book, a few paragraphs later claims that "The Author's long experience leaves no doubt of the vast superiority of the Greeks to the other races", and explains that they have been spoken of with distrust and contempt because they took the "first rank as merchants in the East" and aroused the jealousy of all the European merchants.³¹

Poole pronounces that, of the Turks, it is not necessary to say much, as "most people are fairly enlightened as to the manners and rule of the Turk; and the author has intentionally avoided crowding her pages with Turkish atrocities", as they are all similar and "no pleasant reading"³². In this way, we witness a very detached, objective introduction to a commentless book.

According to Blunt, Greek peasants are very patriotic, and their women are "clean and industrious, fond mothers and virtuous wives", whereas the Greek women of the towns have faults of character such as "fondness of dress and display, vanity and jealousy of the better circumstances of her neighbours". As a nation the Greeks have many virtues and talents, and their faults are "vanity, bravado, overweening conceit", faults which will disappear "with the spread of education and the restoring of freedom long withheld". Blunt confirms the rumour that the Greeks are dishonest in their dealings, but attributes this to the corrupt administration and system of bribery which leaves honest dealing out of the question, as

³¹ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, p.xv.

³² *Ibid.*, p.xxi.

well as to the Greeks' hatred of their rulers and their attempts to promote the interests of their own nation.³³

Baker declares that the Bulgarians form the bulk of the population of Turkey in Europe, but it is not known³⁴. This is due to the Bulgarians being dominated by the Greek Church of Constantinople, thus "from political as well as for Church purposes, they were designated as Greeks". The revival of the Bulgarian National Church has put a stop to this, and has also become "a great obstacle to Russian intrigue" as well. Before the revival of their church, the Bulgarians were persecuted by the Ottoman authorities and the Greek priesthood, and were treated as an "inferior race" by their "Mahommedan fellow-subjects". All these, Baker claims, have produced "a submission and patience under suffering which is both pitiable and admirable" in the Bulgarian.³⁵

Sir Eliot likewise claims that until lately all Christians in Ottoman Europe were called Greeks, and gives "the accurate and talented authoress of *The People of Turkey*" as an example to this practise³⁶. Blunt had found the Bulgarians to be peace-loving, hard-working people, possessing many domestic virtues, but intellectually inferior to the Greeks.³⁷

Blunt also remarks that the Armenians show great ability in commerce and banking, as well as in the mechanical arts. She claims that in Istanbul, some of the rich Armenians are "closely connected with the high dignities of the empire", and are shown "regard and contempt" in turns by the Turks.

³³ Ibid., pp. 39,40,42,43,44,54,61.

³⁴ Baker, pp. 22, 30, 81.

³⁵ Ibid., pp.81,82,67,68,48.

³⁶ Sir Eliot, p.312.

³⁷ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, pp.34,38.

Although the Armenian women of Istanbul are renowned for their beauty, Armenian women in general are secluded and backward in every respect. Nevertheless, many well-educated Armenians of both sexes in Istanbul and Izmir are "scarcely to be distinguished from Europeans in society".³⁸

According to Sir Eliot, the Armenians are an example of political failure, being divided between three empires; Russia, Persia, and Turkey. In many respects they resemble the Jews, both races possessing "an extraordinary aptitude for finance and commerce", "the necessary adaptability to varying circumstances", as well as faithfulness to their religion in spite of outward conformity to ordinary social usages.³⁹ Physically, Armenians are a short, stolid, large-nosed race, "with features of the type often called Jewish". Sir Eliot believes that "this physiognomy is not really characteristic of the Israelites, but is simply Oriental"⁴⁰.

Sir Eliot declares that most Armenians were content to live among the Turks and spend their money in Turkey. In return,

The Turks treated them with good-humoured confidence, and the phrase, *millet-i-sadika*, 'the loyal community', was regularly applied to them. The Muslims did not, of course, consider them as equals; they regarded them much as the kinder class of proprietors in the Southern States regarded their slaves – as people to whom they might trust their business, money, and even their children, but who were almost as far removed from them as a pet dog.⁴¹

Like the Levantines, Sir Eliot portrays the Armenians as dependent on the whim of their imperial masters, the Turks, for survival. He explains the 1895 massacres of Armenians from this perspective, and declares that the

³⁸ Ibid., pp.131-133.

³⁹ Sir Eliot, pp.383, 391.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.388.

⁴¹ Ibid., p.397.

Turks acted in such a manner because they were alarmed. They believed that there was a plot against their Empire. To make this point clear, he draws an analogy between the Turks and the Anglo-Indians:

Perhaps this frame of mind will be more intelligible if we try to imagine what would be the feelings of Anglo-Indians if they supposed that the natives, under the influence of Russian intrigues, were preparing to repeat the horrors of the Mutiny. Probably the orders issued to the local Ottoman authorities warned them to be on their guard against any revolutionary movement of the Armenians, and should there be any reason to apprehend one, to take the offensive without delay.⁴²

Sir Eliot states that after 1896, the Turks were "alarmed" at what they had done because they thought Europe would be enraged. They felt "reassured and confident" once they realized that Europe was "too indifferent or too divided" to interfere. And the native Christians felt "that neither Russia nor England could be depended upon to act as champions of Christianity unless it suited their other interests at the moment".⁴³

According to Sir Eliot, on the whole, the Christians of Istanbul are at least as well off as the Muslims, because the taxes are light, and their natural genius for trade causes these communities to flourish. Although there are restrictions, the Christians are usually left to themselves. They have "relatively little to complain of in the way of permanent oppression, because some Power or other is always ready to air their grievances." But, Eliot claims, there is no one to protect the Turks from their own government:

I am no hater of Turks, and think that in many ways they are better than the Rayahs. But they are the ruling race; they have only themselves to thank for whatever oppression they endure, and it is

⁴² Ibid., p.407.

⁴³ Ibid., p.413.

ridiculous to appeal to foreign Powers, as "Young" Turks often do, for aid in throwing off their self-imposed yoke.⁴⁴

Thus, there seems to be less prejudice towards the Levantines, Greeks, and Armenians of the Ottoman Empire than there was in the majority of earlier memoirs and travel accounts. They are not portrayed as inferior, servile, intriguing "races", but it is emphasized that whatever faults they possess is due to their position of subjection to the Turks, and the necessity of pursuing a tolerable life under oppression and insecurity. The "native Christians" of the empire have to mould themselves into a variety of shapes and forms in order to survive under different circumstances and the more so if they want to achieve something better than mere survival. The Turks, on the other hand, in relation to the Christians of their empire, are perceived more and more in a similar light with the British in India, though lacking the capacity for administration, commerce, finance, or anything useful, they nevertheless are the "governing race". This title is the only point on which the Briton can identify with the Turk, and perceive his fellow Christians (who form a distinct category of native or Eastern Christians) to be on a par with the natives of India.

There seems to be less of a favourable development in the presentation of the Jews, though there definitely is development. Blunt divides the Jews into two classes: conservative Jews, who are strict, rigid, intolerant, cunning, avaricious, and strongly opposed to liberal education; and progressive Jews, who are their opposite in all these respects. But, she still

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

claims that "With regard to moral and personal qualifications, the Jews of Turkey are the most backward and debased of any of the races".⁴⁵ Baker states that as the Jews are indifferent to Pan-Hellenic or Pan-Slavonic intrigues, they give the Porte little trouble, and "Jews and Mahommedans get on admirably together, but there is bitter antagonism between the Jews and the Greeks."⁴⁶ Frances Elliot, on the other hand, declares that the Jew "is servile and subtle as in the middle ages", and an "offence" to both Muslims and Christians, so "to be tolerated he has to keep his creed well out of sight"⁴⁷.

Like the Bulgarians, a nation which attracts more attention than in the previous years is the Albanians. Sir Eliot compliments them with being "distinctly Europeans, and not Asiatics", in spite of their many peculiarities. James Baker states that they are "faithful, honest, and sober to a degree", and capable guards, military messengers, and attendants, and are of infinite service to the empire in times of war; being the "bravest troops in the world."⁴⁸

Blunt, in *The People of Turkey*, also takes a look at the Gipsies, whom she finds "idle, false, and treacherous". One short quotation about the Gipsies is sufficient to reveal her ideas about them, as well as to prove the degree to which "drawing conclusions" is left to her reader:

The whole tribe is a curious mixture of the human and the animal; it is endowed with the scent of the dog, the cunning of the monkey, and the form and vices, but none of the virtues apparently, of mankind.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, pp.137,138.

⁴⁶ Baker, p.415.

⁴⁷ F. Elliot, pp.39,40.

⁴⁸ Baker, p.376.

⁴⁹ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, p.168.

ii-Turks

A major point of interest, as it always seems to have been for travellers to the Ottoman lands, is the Turkish officials, whom they sometimes generalize as Pashas. As has usually been the case before 1853, the Turks are mostly presented either as Pashas, or as peasants in this period as well. But we have the introduction of two other "types"; the modern Turk, and the old Turk.

Mrs Hornby voices well-known complaints about the "corrupt and degraded" state of the Turkish Ministry her husband has to deal with, and "the shameful way of proceeding", which involves "sitting day after day on a divan, smoking an immense chiboque, and dragging out a few words of business in a dreamy kind of way at intervals of about half an hour". She claims that as opposed to "education, talent, genius", "fanaticism, false-witness, calm cruelty, and above all, consummate falsehood and deceit, under a smiling, bland exterior" are the qualities which make a Turkish favourite, and these are not only the "essentials to success", but also "leading traits in the Eastern character".⁵⁰

Baker likewise states that Turkish rulers deserve great blame. He claims that usually the character of Turkish people is mixed up with that of Turkish officials, and "broad and sweeping condemnation is made of the whole nation by those who only gain their information second-hand".⁵¹ According to Baker, there are two types of Turkish officials; the fat and the

⁵⁰ Hornby, pp.96,130.

⁵¹ Baker, pp.223,v.

lean: "The fat variety is generally coarse, vulgar, and bumptious; while the lean official is refined, courteous, and a perfect gentleman".⁵²

Blunt's editor Poole takes up his pen to explain to us the reasons for the corrupt state of the administration. Poole thinks that Turks are "vicious and dishonest" because of the way they are brought up as children. In addition to home influences, the official class is "educated in fanatical mosque-schools, living the indolent self-indulgent life of Stamboul, getting and keeping office by bribery, administering 'justice' to the highest bidder..."⁵³

Blunt herself has slightly more positive things to say. She claims that officials in Turkey are dishonest because they have to pay vast sums to attain their posts, which then they can not repay with their salaries. Thus, according to Blunt, "An honest official in Turkey means a bankrupt". But she also points to a major development, that the sons of "all good and wealthy families" in Istanbul are sent to the military schools or to the "*Kalem* (Chancellerie d'Etat)". Blunt declares the officials who pass through this school to be more polite, liberal, and "superior in many respects to the mean creatures who in former times were entrusted with offices for which they were quite unfit".⁵⁴

In Sir Eliot, we have an account of an imaginary interview between a high Turkish official, who has stayed late at his office due to heavy rain, and an "apostle of civilisation", who is shown by the author to be more interested in financial gain than in bringing civilisation to the Ottoman Empire. According to the apostle, the Governor-General (Vali) of Karakoy is "all that a Turk

⁵² Ibid., p.236.

⁵³ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, pp.xxi,xxii.

⁵⁴ Ibid., pp.100-102.

should be. He had an ample beard, his figure was like a haystack, and his nose like a potato".⁵⁵ But, his appearance is not the only aspect which makes him a Turk. In line with the recurring image of the haphazard Turkish political system which depends on chance and favour, the Vali has filled the various posts of Field-Marshal, Aide-de-Camp General of His Imperial Majesty, a Vizier of the first rank, has been awarded with the first class of the "Iftikhar, Liakat, Osmanie, and Mejedie", handling much money and seeing a lot of blood. He has also been Minister of War, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Grand Vizier. Then, because "he ceased to please the Sultan", he was taken from his position as Grand Vizier, and made the Vali of Karakoy, a "dignified but distant post". There is no need to comment on the impossibility of a man being successful in all these posts, each requiring different training and ability, and still less on the character of our Vali. He is familiar with "a smattering of French and some European culture", takes photos with a Kodak when there are no "mollahs" around, and keeps a French encyclopedia and a bottle of "Koniak" in his cupboard. He is the stereotype of the Turkish official, who combines a greed for money and fear of the Sultan in his being, despises the Christian, and thinks that "dynamos and dynamite" are the same thing. Nothing has changed with him since the 1830s, except the clapping of hands, slaves, coffee, and chiboques, which may have been included had the apostle visited him during official office hours.⁵⁶

The Turkish peasant, the second favourite type with most travellers, presents a striking contrast to the Turkish official. First of all, he is much more

⁵⁵ Sir Eliot, pp.1-5.

⁵⁶ Ibid., see pp.1-8.

“picturesque-looking”, with his beard and multi-coloured turban.⁵⁷ Second, he is a “good, quiet, submissive subject”, who pays his taxes and furnishes the Sultan with troops, but is also “poor, ignorant, helpless, and improvident to an almost incredible degree”. The Turkish peasant is “the best and most industrious and useful of the Sultan’s subjects”, is well-built and strong, with extraordinary powers of endurance, and a simple and sober lifestyle. But he is in poverty, and the peasantry in general are decreasing in numbers and showing deterioration.⁵⁸

For Sir Eliot too, the peasant is the “true Turk”, possessing many positive characteristics such as dignified courtesy and beautiful manners (“due no doubt to the consciousness that every Turk, as a member of the ruling race, is an aristocrat”), hospitality, industriousness, honesty, and truthfulness. But, we must not forget “his extraordinary stupidity, or rather the extraordinary limitation of his knowledge and interests”:

The ordinary Turk does not take an interest in anything, and his intelligence seems incapable of grappling with any problem more complex than his immediate daily needs. A natural want of curiosity, and a conviction that their own religion contains all that man knows or needs to know, keep the provincial population in a state of ignorance which seems incredible and fantastic. There are thousands, perhaps millions, of people in the Ottoman Empire who believe that the Sultan is suzerain of Europe and that all other monarchs pay him tribute.⁵⁹

In addition to these, “the characteristic which has been of most vital importance in forming the destiny of the Ottoman race” is their innate sense of discipline, which has raised “to the status of a great nation a Siberian tribe” and kept the Ottoman Empire together, by making the peasant-turned-soldier

⁵⁷ Hornby, p.80.

⁵⁸ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, pp.88-91.

⁵⁹ Sir Eliot, pp.94,95.

endure every privation including the "corruption and incapacity" of his officers, and thereby preventing inevitable anarchy.⁶⁰

Baker adds many more to the positive qualities of the Turkish soldiers. Patience, discipline, sobriety, bravery, honesty, modesty, as well as humanity (kindness to children, women and animals in peace time) have made the nation what it is.⁶¹ The Turk makes "the finest material for a soldier" because he is "strong, hardy, patient, brave, intelligent, obedient, and sober, and becomes easily attached to his officers". According to Baker, it is not true that he fights well behind ramparts and not in the open field – which idea, we know, is a legacy of the Crimean War - :

The reason that the Turk fights so well behind a rampart consists in his being then in a position, which is independent of the ignorance and faults of his officers. He is thus able to develop his natural bravery and being, comparatively speaking, his own master, he fights to the death. In the open field the fact of his sometimes running away is caused by the faults of his officers. No troops in the world will stand in the open field, unless they have confidence in their officers.⁶²

Some other general characteristics of the Turks which are mentioned are :

Superstition⁶³

Hospitality⁶⁴

Charity⁶⁵

Resignation⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.96.

⁶¹ Baker, p.155.

⁶² Ibid., pp.312,313.

⁶³ Hornby p.78, Blunt *The People of Turkey* vol.2, pp.221, 222.

⁶⁴ Blunt, *The People of Turkey* vol.2, pp.38,39.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp.38,39.

Apathy⁶⁷

Cruelty⁶⁸

Fanaticism⁶⁹

Ignorance⁷⁰

Stagnation or non-progressiveness⁷¹

Baker says that if he had to devise a Turkish banner, he would inscribe on one side of it "Evet Effendim (Certainly Sir)", on the other "Yarin (Tomorrow)", and below, the motto "There is but one God, and backshish is His prophet". According to Baker the Christians in Turkey share these faults with the Turks, and they are the main bar to progress. The only means of cure are "railways, telegraphs, and time".⁷²

According to Blunt, the non-progressiveness of the Turks is mostly due to a lack of activity or intelligence in business. They never undertake banking, make railways, form companies, or venture into any enterprise "involving risk and requiring intelligence, activity, system, and honesty to ensure success". This has three reasons. The first is the "naturally stagnant and lethargic disposition" of the Turks. The second is their habit, as the "dominant race", of using Christians to act, work, and think for them, while

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.134.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.173.

⁶⁸ F. Elliot, p.48, Hornby, p.130.

⁶⁹ F. Elliot p.48, Blunt *The People of Turkey* vol.2 p.330, Sir Eliot p.173.

⁷⁰ F. Elliot, p.48, Sir Eliot pp.94,95.

⁷¹ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, p.94, Sir Eliot p.131.

⁷² Baker, pp.224,225.

neglecting to treat them with justice and generosity. The third is "the want of the support of the Government".⁷³

According to Sir Eliot, most of the vices of the Turk can be attributed to his being a nomad by nature, even his laziness:

In some ways the popular European idea of Oriental indolence is unjust; for the Turk, as a peasant, is the most laborious and industrious of men, and as a soldier the most enterprising. But clearly many of the qualities which we have already reviewed tend to produce inertia. The Turk is too proud to do many things; too stupid to do others. His religion – of which more anon – inculcates a fatalism which leads to a conviction that effort is useless. But perhaps what gives more than anything else the impression that the Turk is fundamentally indolent is the fact that all his recreations consist of repose. When the nomad halts, he does not wish to sing, or dance, or distract himself with games after the European fashion, but merely to rest quietly. He has a power of sitting still, of doing nothing, and wanting to do nothing, which seems to us animal rather than human. His idea of bliss – what he calls keif – is to recline in the shade, smoking and listening to the soothing murmur of running water.⁷⁴

Sir Eliot states that because the Turk is a "travelling nomad", "he is "the most and the least assimilative of mortals", borrowing everything from religion and clothes to language and customs, but managing to remain "profoundly Turkish" at the same time:

In fact, when one comes to reflect, there is hardly anything which is Turkish and not borrowed. The religion is Arabic; the language half Arabic and Persian; the literature almost entirely imitative; the art Persian or Byzantine; the costumes in the upper classes and army mostly European. There is nothing characteristic in manufactures or commerce, except an aversion to such pursuits. The Turk makes nothing at all; he takes whatever he can get as plunder or pillage; he lives in the houses which he finds or which he orders to be built for him. In unfavourable circumstances he is a marauder; in favourable, a grand seigneur who thinks it is his right to enjoy with grace and dignity all that the world can yield, but who will not lower himself by engaging

⁷³ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, pp.94-96.

⁷⁴ Sir Eliot, pp.96, 97.

in art, literature, trade or manufacture. Why should he when there are other people to do these things for him?⁷⁵

According to Sir Eliot, the true Turk has three spheres of activity, and the rest are distasteful to him. The Turk is either a Government official, an agriculturist and a breeder of animals, or a soldier. The latter is purely instinctive:

The Turkish army is not so much a profession, or an institution necessitated by the fears and aims of the Government, as the active but still quiet normal state of the Turkish nation. Hence its equipment and commissariat must not be judged by European standards, nor does the incapacity or corruption of its officers impair its efficiency as much as might be supposed. Every Turk is born a soldier, and adopts other pursuits chiefly because the times are bad. When there is a question of fighting, if only in a riot, the stolid peasant wakes up and shows a surprising power of organisation and finding expedients, and alas! a surprising ferocity. The ordinary Turk is an honest, good-humoured soul, kind to children and animals, and very patient; but when the fighting spirit comes on him, he becomes like the terrible warriors of the Huns or Jenghiz Khan, and slays, burns, and ravages without mercy or discrimination.⁷⁶

Frances Elliot presents a similar nomadic Turk, who possesses the "dignity of the desert", the self-possession which results from "living alone in the solitude of the steppes", and indifference to everyone. Had they remained in their "native Asia", the Turks

might have been respected as a conservative race clinging to their own religion, manners, and habits; but as transplanted into Europe, and taking place among civilized nations, one comes absolutely to detest them, as mere political necessities maintained in a position they fail to fill."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp.91,92.

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp.92,93.

⁷⁷ F. Elliot, p.48.

According to Frances Elliot, animals are treated better than Christians by Turks, who may cut the throats of men and women "with impunity", especially if they are Christians. "It is after all but a blind and stupid humanity"⁷⁸, she claims.

Thus, to a great degree, the nomadic qualities of the Turks have overtaken their Islamic ones in these writings, because the Turks have been nomads from the beginning of their existence, whereas they adopted Islam later. The majority of the qualities attributed to the Turk are shown to come from his instinct of travel and war, which have inhibited the development of a tradition of patient work and creativity, and thus the construction of an original social, political, and cultural system of existence. The Turkish peasant, when he turns soldier, seems to be a success, though the picture drawn seems at first to be in direct contrast to the observations about the Crimean War. However, the contradiction is explained away by the inferiority of the officers in charge, and the ensuing lack of trust, which seems plausible when we remember that the Turks were presented as fighting better under the Anglo-Indian officers, though of course the general presentation of the Turks was not in line with a naturally courageous and capable race of soldiers. Another question that comes to one's mind is how such an apparently stupid people become good soldiers. For soldiers need as much intelligence as merchants and entrepreneurs, and it seems doubtful that the intellectual capacities of the Turks as drawn in these narratives were

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.29.

developed enough for the level of organisation, discipline, and an understanding of the chain of command necessary for the simplest skirmish.

A somewhat new type of Turk that makes his appearance in these pages is the "modern Turk", though what this term refers to is rather vague. Mrs Hornby, writing about 1855-1858, finds this type of Turk the worst of all kinds:

The worst people are those most Europeanized, and the prejudiced and intolerant Mussulman, who hates us, is far better than the unprincipled renegade who cheats us.⁷⁹

According to Hornby, the modern Turk has no religious or political "prejudices", which we should probably understand as principles:

They drink champagne and brandy, and defy the laws of the Koran comfortably enough, in secret. Of course this does not apply to the real Turkish gentleman and strict Mussulman, who is seldom heard of now, and never mentioned in the same breath with "reform" or European manners.⁸⁰

In another example, Hornby contrasts a modern Turk who has "a sharp, insincere face, and a restless manner" with the "fine, dignified Turkish gentleman of the old school of Eastern manners."⁸¹ Who this old Turk is also remains unclear. He does not belong to the category of Pashas or officials, peasants, or soldiers, and is definitely not a merchant, nor is he strictly a fanatic Muslim. He seems to have no defining characteristics except polished manners, dignity, and a vague claim at being the real Turk. Likewise, it is not clear in what capacity the modern or Europeanized Turk has earned this

⁷⁹ Hornby, p.172.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp.208,209.

⁸¹ Ibid., p.283.

title, except by being an unprincipled cheat, and not a very pious one at that, but why this makes him modern, and what other European manners or customs he displays, or in what aspects he is "reformed", is a mystery.

The old Turk also comes up in Neave, who informs us that her father – who lived more than 40 years in the country without learning to speak either Turkish or Greek – "was friendly with the good type of Old Turk, but his impatience with the ordinary native became, I fear, proverbial". Thus, his family lived in terror of his being attacked "through the manner in which he dealt with the natives, whose language he never troubled to master".⁸²

This, in itself, is a statement waiting for approval. First, of the fact that it is not necessary to learn the language of a "native" to deal with him, and second, of the subtle conviction that such behaviour is what he deserved. Neave's presentation is almost a replica of the literature written by the British on India; the natives forming a type which replicates the natives of India, the Europeans in the Ottoman Empire being presented in exactly the same manner and terminology as the sahib-log, and the old Turk somehow resembling the higher classes and native princes whose major attribute according to this literature was their ability to get on well with the British.

Thus, the Turk, who was primarily an Islamic being, has mostly been replaced by a Turk who is still a Muslim, but at least for some of our authors, a Muslim who derives the majority of his characteristics from his nomadic nature rather than his religion. To this nature can be attributed the greater part of his faults and half-civilized state, as well as his soldierly virtues. The

⁸² Neave, pp.48, 49.

Turk, as perceived by the British, can be categorized into distinct types: the Pasha or official, the peasant or the peasant who becomes a soldier, the modern Turk, and the old Turk. The first two have been with us since the 1820s, and they are fully developed and embellished by now. The last two figure a lot less, and thus are rather abstract types, who are perhaps still to be developed and formulated in the coming years. What emerges, however, is that for the majority of our travellers, be he a peasant, soldier, or Pasha, poor or rich, stupid or cunning, the Turk of the post-1850s is either a "native", or more often, a member of the "ruling-race", and conscious of this role. It does not matter that he has no capacity to fulfill this role, as long as the empire remains in his hands, he will exert his power to the utmost to retain his position and to use its advantages to the fullest. This aspect of the Turk, simultaneously with the presentation of his characteristics as those of a "native", becomes more important for the travellers after the Crimean War. It is doubtful whether the Turks have undergone any changes in this respect, and whether the poor peasant has suddenly begun to feel that he is the lord of all the populations of the empire, though there is a slight possibility in the case of the Pashas. Rather, with the rise of imperialism and the popularization of empire-building, it is very probable that the British can now comfortably view the Turk as an empire-builder, much like the British in India, who rule over a variety of races, religions, and cultures, "natives" whose language they cannot speak, whose hopes and fears they care nothing about, and whom they have no qualms of killing in thousands if they fear for their empire. However, this simple picture is complicated by the fact that for

the majority of Britons, the Turk himself is just another native, possessing many an inferior qualities and deserving to be ruled himself. As opposed to the British in India, the Turkish administrators display no qualities such as a higher level of intelligence, experience, or industriousness in ruling the "natives". Rather, they are inferior to the people they rule in these respects. They bring no progress or civilization into their empire, and not only hinder any positive developments, but are also dependent on their subjects for the maintenance of their empire. Moreover, a large part of the natives they rule are not Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists, but white Christians. This has always been disturbing to the Britons, and was mostly evaded by the observation that these people form a different category of "Eastern" Christianity, which has nothing to do with the Christianity of the West, and thus they are usually at least as inferior as the Turks in moral qualifications, and are more Asiatic than European. Now, it is accepted that this inferiority is engendered more by centuries of subjection to the Turk, and will disappear when this state is over. Although none of these arguments justify the right of the Turk to rule an empire, at least they seem to make it slightly more tolerable.

iii. Women and The Harem

The presentation of Turkish women is generally similar to the presentations before 1853. The only change, which had already been hinted at before this date, is the desire of Turkish women to imitate European fashions.

The first familiar theme comes from Hornby; the extreme care Turkish women take of their appearance, for lack of anything else to do:

As to beauty of mere dress and ease of attitude, nothing that I have seen in life or in pictures can give the slightest idea of the wonderful grace, the extreme delicacy, and bird-of-paradise-like uselessness of the Turkish belle. Women of rank look like hothouse flowers, and are really *cultivated* to the highest perfection of physical beauty, having no other employment but to make their skins as snow-white and their eyebrows as jet-black as possible.⁸³

This uselessness, delicacy, and emptiness reflects on the younger generations. What a different idea a Turkish boy would have of his mother, says Hornby,

...if he saw her occupied in reading and teaching instead of sitting on a divan, slapping and quarrelling with her slaves for want of something to do, and sunk in the most degrading ignorance.⁸⁴

Thus Turkish women are still ignorant, helpless, living in a void, concerned only with trivialities, and affording no guidance or education to their children. Even their babies hardly resemble babies, but are "wonderful little illustrations of Eastern inconsistency and incompleteness, finery and untidiness". They have an old look about them, and they wear jackets and trousers, jewelled fezzes and ragged shoes, and eat cucumbers and chesnuts while they are nursed. They are "wonderful little bundles of fat, uncomfortableness, and finery".⁸⁵

Blunt likewise claims that no attention is paid to the dress, ablutions, education, or food of children, and that they are allowed to eat whatever they want, the indulgence of sweets and unwholesome food by children often

⁸³ Hornby, p.59.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.396.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.60.

leading to "serious consequences". They possess no instructive books, toys, or games to pass their time fruitfully.⁸⁶ But she also puts forth a much more serious claim:

All Turkish mothers and many Armenians of the lower orders administer strong sleeping draughts; generally of opium, poppy-head or theriac, to their infants; some carry the abuse of these to such an extent that the children appear always in a drowsy state, the countenance pale, the eyelids half-closed, the pupils of the eyes contracted, the lips parched and dry, and a peculiar hazy expression fixed upon the face; all the movements are lethargic, in marked contrast to the sprightly motion of a healthy European child.⁸⁷

This serious condemnation erases any merits Turkish women may have laid claim to as mothers, usually attested to by most authors in previous chapters. Not only does it destroy any inkling of responsible motherhood, but of humanity, that the Turkish and (up to a certain extent) Armenian women may possess. It portrays them not only as ignorant, selfish, and imbecile, but also as cruel and inhuman beings. It is not clear whether Blunt has forgotten this accusation when she writes years later in her *Reminiscences* that Turkish women do not lack intelligence, feeling, or dignity, but have no chance of moral development due to religious prejudice, lack of freedom, and lack of knowledge of the world⁸⁸.

In other respects, Blunt's presentation of Turkish women is similar to the usual one. She narrates in detail the homelife and routine of Turkish women: They begin the day with coffee, cigarettes, and a bath, attend to their husbands' needs, send them and the children off to work and school. Even if they have slaves in the house, they help in household work such as

⁸⁶ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, vol 2, pp.11, 154-159.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.10.

⁸⁸ Blunt, *Reminiscences*, p.165.

preserve-making, washing and ironing to fill up the hours. In Istanbul, those women interested in European occupations learn music, foreign languages and fine needle-work instead. After these chores are finished, they go out, "visiting and promenading" being the principal amusements. If Turkish women go visiting, they flirt with the grooms and agas in attendance. If they are going on a long drive or for a picnic, they can

only be compared to a flock of strange birds suddenly let loose from their cages, not knowing what to make of their new freedom. Flirting, smoking, eating fruits and sweets, walking about, running, or lounging on the carpets they bring with them, varied by music and singing, fill the day.⁸⁹

When they return home, they receive their master, dinner is followed by coffee and cigarettes and a discussion of the events of the day, after which the ladies retire. According to Blunt, women are perfect mistresses of their time and property when they are at home, and are allowed to be outspoken. They go at least once a month to the public hamam even though they have their own home baths, because they want to "chat over the news of the day and their family affairs".⁹⁰

Blunt seems to be more approving of the higher classes of Turkish women, who are superior in manner and personality, if not in knowledge, to the rest. "The real Turkish Hanoum", or lady, is

... a dignified, quiet person, elegant, sensible, and often naturally eloquent, condescending and kind to those who gain her goodwill, proud and reserved to those who do not merit her esteem... Her manners, principles, and choice of language offer a pleasant contrast to those prevalent among the generality, and render her society extremely agreeable.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, see pp.112-114.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.235.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp.261,262.

According to Frances Elliot, all Turkish women are conventional and like each other in look and movement. Their "intellectual gifts" are "nil", except for the close relations of a vizier or the Sultan. Thus, the Turkish woman "is a mere nullity".⁹²

Baker and Neave, on the other hand, both point to Turkish women's efforts to imitate European manners and fashions. Baker observes that the ladies of Istanbul can be seen driving about "in their handsome broughams" to do their shopping, for the most part "deaked out in the latest Paris fashions"⁹³. Neave claims that they try in every possible way to imitate European manners and customs, which she finds pitiful, as "the Oriental ways were far more charming".⁹⁴ Neave states that the only amusements women are allowed to pursue are paying visits to each other, going for drives, shopping, and being rowed on the Bosphorus. Like the "real old Turk", she finds his ladies to be "refined, dignified, with charming manners and possessed of great strength of character". She claims that although some Turkish women are kept almost as prisoners, the wives and daughters of the Turkish officers in the Diplomatic service who travel abroad are given a lot more freedom, because these men like their women to be educated. Education and knowledge of English or French bring discontent into these women's lives, because they can then become knowledgeable in the ways of

⁹² F. Elliot, pp.340,342,343.

⁹³ Baker, p.11.

⁹⁴ Neave, p.65.

the world and compare their restricted lives and "pathetic lot" with that of other women⁹⁵.

According to these memoirs and accounts, the lives of Turkish women have shown hardly any improvement in the last 50 or 60 years. The majority are still secluded, ignorant, and simple. The exceptions are to be found among the higher classes, or the "real" Turkish ladies, who seem more refined and dignified, and some other (probably not so real) ladies who try to imitate European ways. Some of these modernizing women seem to make an honest effort at increasing their level of education and knowledge, which usually makes them unhappy as it accentuates their restricted and placid lives, while others seem to be content in becoming "Europeanized" by following the latest fashion. Except for the "real" Turkish ladies, whatever the term means, Turkish women, young or old, low or high, do not inspire respect or approval in the majority of our travellers, but at best make them feel compassion and pity. It is generally agreed that the "degraded condition of the Turks is due to the absence of sound education and the harem system"⁹⁶, their mothers being what they are.

iv. Customs and Social Life

Our authors seem to be struck less by the social life and customs of Ottoman society than previous travellers. One reason, of course, could be

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.63,64.

⁹⁶ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, vol 2, pp.153,154.

the familiarity of such topics to the reader by now. Another one is definitely the increasingly troubled and complicated political situation of the Ottoman Empire, which takes priority.

Nevertheless, we encounter similar topics, some of which still reign supreme, while others slowly recede to the background. Slavery is an example of the latter, and is usually passed over with dry comments about its "paternal and humane" characteristics and the fact that it is still a "blot" on the country.⁹⁷ Polygamy gets more or less the same treatment⁹⁸. There is still an interest in the costumes and colours of the empire, but very few of our authors echo previous comments on the adoption of the fez in place of the turban, how inadequate it is as protection from the sun and unsuited to the "Turkish countenance", or about the slow disappearance of beards, once "the pride and glory of Mussulmans" the loss of which "greatly disfigured men with small and receding jaws"⁹⁹.

Long descriptions of a variety of races, languages and costumes still reign supreme, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter.¹⁰⁰ This characteristic of the Ottoman Empire is no longer seen as unique, but is portrayed as "typically Eastern". Frances Elliot, who arrives after Ramazan during the feast of Bayram, is struck by "clothes of every possible tint, except green"; scarlet, blue, yellow, brilliant lilac, and mauve, "mingled in the wildest way". She finds

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 127, vol 2, p. 99.

⁹⁹ Hornby, p. 172.

¹⁰⁰ See also Baker p. 13.

“the love of colour” to be “quite African”, and likens the scene to “low opera comique” because the crowd is “so vulgar, the surroundings so mean”.¹⁰¹

Another important observation about clothes is the disappearance of national costumes and their replacement by “ a counterfeit or borrowed attire”. The adoption of European dress for indoor wear among the higher orders of ladies has led to “extravagance, bad taste, and incongruity.”¹⁰²

The beginnings of modernity and progress is also seen in everyday life, such as in the existence of trams and cabs¹⁰³, and the gradual change within houses, divans giving way to modern French furniture, ornaments, china jars and plates leaving their place to photograph frames and modern vases¹⁰⁴. These attempts at modernizing on a European model are not always seen to be successful:

A small European sofa, a few chairs placed stiffly against the wall, a console supporting a mirror and decorated with tus lamps or candlesticks, together with a few goblets and a small table standing in the centre with cigarettes and tiny ash-trays, complete the furniture of the grandest provincial *Buyuk-oda*.¹⁰⁵

In fact, according to some authors, such attempts at modernization or Europeanization lead to a middle state:

Not even the tradition of Asiatic life. All is dying out. All matter of fact and modern. Neither Europe nor Asia, but with the worst elements of each!¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ F. Elliot, p.21.

¹⁰² Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, vol.2, pp.71, 58.

¹⁰³ F. Elliot, p.43.

¹⁰⁴ Neave, p.73.

¹⁰⁵ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, pp.218,219.

¹⁰⁶ F. Elliot, p.44.

As with the discussion of the fez and European dress, attempts at change and progress by the Ottomans is not looked upon favourably by the authors. Instead of seeing it as an effort to adopt the appropriate aspects of European material culture and mould it into the existing traditions, they see it as merely imitative, and claim that it leads to an empire that is not Eastern, nor Western, but a hybrid civilisation, a most despised characteristic.

One aspect of Ottoman society that has not changed, and still fascinates all authors, is the absence of an aristocracy, hereditary rank, even family names¹⁰⁷. Absolute equality among the Turks is still a factor to be emphasized, and has begun to acquire the status of a fantasy:

In no country is there a more open career to talent and to luck. The son of a peasant may still become Grand Vizier, as in the *Arabian Nights*; and if pliancy and subserviency are rewarded more than real merit, it must at least be admitted that absolute and democratic equality among Muslims prevails under the government of the Sultan as completely as in the United States.¹⁰⁸

This is exactly what provides the fascination; the exotic aspects of such a practice, that an insignificant man can wake up the next morning as one of the most powerful men of the Empire, something which can in reality only occur in the *Arabian Nights*. The emphasis of such practice, rather than being complimentary to Turkish ideas of equality or democracy, points to the chaotic, simple, and even barbaric system of Turkish politics and administration, for how else could any man – of whatever social standing – with no training, no experience, and in fact, no idea of governmental issues, administer an empire? This fantasy, among many others, has perhaps

¹⁰⁷ See Sir Eliot, p.114.

¹⁰⁸ Sir Eliot, p.115.

proved to be the most outstandingly enduring one, and is repeated in different forms over and over again, and with almost the same words and the same examples:

In Turkey there is no aristocracy. All men below the Sultan are equal, not only in the eyes of the law, but by creed and custom. A shoebblack may be made Grand Vizier, and it is by no means uncommon to see some of the highest officials of the State who have been servants to predecessors in office. There are no family names, but in some cases titles are hereditary.¹⁰⁹

Here we have another one:

Thus there are in Turkey no fixed grades of society or of professions. Society is in confusion. A man who carries a tray of sherbet in the street may be transformed into a vizier to-morrow, while a really accomplished and educated tactician may be relegated into the wilds of Asia, or a first-rate sailor placed at the head of a medical college. There is no rule or reason to anything, but a general lopsy-turvy depending on favour.¹¹⁰

Thus, if we look at these travel accounts and memoirs, the Ottoman state should be run by peasants, servants, vendors, and shoebblacks, who come to power overnight, with no former experience or training. These views also confirm the presentation of the Turks as either peasants, soldiers, or pashas, with no social class in between. Turks are either hard-working, honest, manual labourers, or indolent, corrupt, and intriguing pashas. The former are transformed into the latter nearly the instant they come to power. How they become so degenerate so quickly, and how they can actually come to power when all posts are payed for and so expensive, and how this accords with notions of equality among Turks are questions that are not asked, let alone answered. In these narratives, there exist no Turks who

¹⁰⁹ Baker, pp.156,157.

¹¹⁰ F. Elliot, p.240.

possess an education, a job necessitating some intellectual capacity or knowledge, and a tolerable degree of honesty, who lead what we would deem somewhat ordinary lives. Hornby's observations also reflect this belief:

One thing which strikes you here is the vast superiority of the poor over the rich. The poor are really the aristocracy of the country, both physically and morally. For his dignified bearing and manners, a poor man might be an emperor; he is honest, labourious and most abstemious. A year or two of 'place' under this disgraceful system, and the curious turns of fortune here, enervate and degrade him in body and mind. There seems no honest work for honest men to do, except to rear a few grapes and melons, to row a caique, or bear heavy burdens on their backs. The whole system is one of bribery and corruption, and a 'place' can only be kept by doing as others do.¹¹¹

A new topic, introduced by Neave, is the social life of the "English colony" at Istanbul, consisting mostly of the members and families of the embassies and legations. Though there is ample mention of the balls, meetings, and visits some of the European residents and travellers attend while they are in Istanbul, Neave is the first one to describe in detail the colourful and varied social life of the British residents. In this respect, they greatly resemble the British in India, with their "country residences", their "Club", their tennis and polo tournaments, and their cricket. The only difference seems to be the "cosmopolitan nature of every sports meeting", in which English, French, American, Austrian, German, Italian, Greek, Armenian, and Turkish (male) societies are represented. The Turks, of course, only belong to the "organizing committee" of these sports activities, and though they are "very fond of the Briton", they look upon him as the "deli Ingiliz":

There was nothing the Old Turk loved better than to watch our cricket matches on the field at Beicos in Asia; he took the greatest interest in the

¹¹¹ Hornby, p.98.

game, and sat for hours watching in astonishment, as our men ran and stood in the blazing midday sun, a thing that a native never dreams of doing, if he can help it.¹¹²

The only activities of the British which were not approved by the Turks were the mixed bathing and dancing during the balls given every Saturday night at the Summer Palace of Therapia. Due to mounting objections, in the end the mixed bathing had to be discontinued:

...as we had no wish to offend the "Old" Turks, who were our good friends. They always treated us with respect and affection, and on no occasion did they profane our Churches.¹¹³

This reminds us of the "old Turk". Neave uses the word alternately with "native" here, as opposed to her previous observations in which she presented them as opposites, but it is really again not clear to whom she refers. The old Turk seems to be a vague entity the Briton has no scruples associating with, because he seems to be dignified and grave, and also shows the Briton respect. He reminds one of "our most ancient and faithful ally", and like him, remains a mystery in these pages, almost a construct.

C. Politics

In treating the internal and international situation of the Ottoman Empire, and discussing its administration, policies, and rulers, the authors of the period under concern refer quite often to history, going as far back as the conquest of Istanbul in 1453.

¹¹² Neave, pp.146,147.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.148.

For instance, Baker claims that after the possession of Istanbul, the Sultans and thus the nation gradually became "more apathetic and corrupt", due to the rulers of the country being educated "under the effeminating influence of the seraglio" instead of studying the art of ruling "in the command of armies and in the government of provinces". The Janissaries began to dominate the sovereigns with their "arrogance and savage cruelty". Thus, according to Baker, the period from the occupation of Istanbul until the reign of Mahmud II beginning in 1808 can be called "the era of Turkish anarchy"¹¹⁴.

Frances Elliot often refers to history, but her aim is merely to reconstruct bloody historical episodes, which she claims she has not "invented", but simply reproduced from the chronicles, the details of modern reigns, and what she herself "saw and heard"¹¹⁵. Here is one example:

After the Turks came into possession at the siege of Constantinople, Mahomet II at once accepted this locality as congenial to his blood-thirsty tastes, and made of the towers a strong castle for his favourite janissaries, destined to become later the royal shambles – 1458. Here, in a small open court, the heads of his victims were piled up until they reached the battlements, which, if you saw how high they were, you would better understand. In one of the Seven Towers a deep hole bore the ominous designation of "The Well of Blood". There were caves in the rock for torture, and that worse than torture, a lingering death.¹¹⁶

As opposed to Frances Elliot, Sir Eliot claims that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Turks can not have been regarded as "unspeakable

¹¹⁴ Baker, pp. 191, 192, 155. A similar kind of periodisation is followed in Clarence Richard Johnson's *Constantinople Today or The Pathfinder Survey of Constantinople A Study in Oriental Social Life* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922) pp. 53,54, in which the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries are titled "The Period of the Supremacy of Asiatic Ideas", when Ottoman rulers acted as Oriental despots, and from the second half of the nineteenth century until the 1920s is deemed to be "Period of Attempted Adjustment to Modern European Ideas".

¹¹⁵ F. Elliot, preface pp.5, 6.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.16.

barbarians far below the standard of Christian Europe”, because they were the same as the Greeks, Slavs, Albanians, and Roumanians in morals, humanity, and civilisation, and superior to them in energy and union. But soon after the conquest of Istanbul, they developed two characteristics which made them inferior to Byzantium; the Sultan became “an absolute Asiatic despot”, being “indolent and indisposed to interfere in details”, and the form of government was made up of a crew of adventurers, consisting of “apostates, renegades, and people who had more ability than moral qualities.”¹¹⁷

In fact, according to Sir Eliot, the Turks possess no history save a military one, as opposed to their Christian subjects:

Modern writers are unwilling to regard history as a mere catalogue of reigns and battles and pay more attention to the various movements, political, religious, intellectual, social, and commercial which the life of each nation presents. This is very just in the case of nearly all nations; but the peculiarity of the Turks is at once apparent when we observe that their history is almost exclusively a catalogue of names and battles. For instance, for the Hungarians the Turkish occupation of Hungary had many important consequences, social and political. Hungary would not be what she is now if that occupation had never taken place, or had continued longer. But the same occupation had no social or political consequence for the Turks; they remained after it as they were before it; its importance for them is accurately measured by the military gain and loss.¹¹⁸

According to Sir Eliot, the peculiarity of the Turks is that they have existed for 450 years without change:

...the statement that the Turks are unchanging requires very little qualification. Any one can see their imperturbability by thinking of what has occurred in Turkey in his own life time or at least in this century. The reforms of Mahmud and Abd-ul-Mejid, the Hatt-i-Sherif of Gulhane, the Hatt-i-Humayun of 1856, and the establishment of parliamentary government by the present Sultan were measures which would have revolutionized any ordinary country, but they have

¹¹⁷ Sir Eliot, pp.54,55.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.56.

simply collapsed in Turkey without result and without fuss. Despite all statutes to the contrary, religious equality does not prevail, nor is Turkey constitutionally governed. The only important changes which have taken place since 1453 and really affected Ottoman society have a military character, for they concern the institution of Janissaries and military fiefs (*timar*).¹¹⁹

Sir Eliot claims that the last period of Turkish history from 1820 onwards is marked by "the curtailment of the Empire" through the creation of independent states in its territory.¹²⁰ But it is not only the Turks who have remained unchanging and stagnant save for military conquests and plunders. Their "kindred tribes" exhibit similar tendencies, and the only distinction between them and the Turks is linguistic:

If we consider these people – the Turks, Mongols, Magyars, Manchus, and the rest - as a whole, the part which they have played in history has been a large but strange one. Their contributions to the art, literature, science, and religion of the world are practically nil. Their destiny has not been to instruct, to charm, or to improve, hardly even to govern, but simply to conquer. The sterility of their authors has deprived them of the fame which the scale, if not the grandeur, of their exploits deserves. When one tries to place together these obscure and fragmentary records, what a catalogue of terrible names passes through the memory: "The Scourge of God", Huns, Avars, and Turks: the Ghaznevids, the Mamluks, the Golden Horde, the Great Mogul, Jenghiz Khan, Tamerlane, Mohammed the Conqueror. Who can reckon the tribute they have taken, the cities they have sacked, the blood they have spilled? They have ruled from the North of Africa to the shores of the Pacific; they have sent expeditions against Vienna and Japan; they have ruled in Russia, in Persia and in India; and though their empires have mostly been ephemeral, a Turk still sits on the throne of Constantinople, and a Manchu on that of Peking.¹²¹

It is difficult to decide which generalization is the most reductionist, that the Turks have no history save a military one, that they have stayed stagnant for 450 years, or that they and their "kindred tribes" have made no

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.58,59.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.57,58.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp.72,73.

contribution to world civilization but have merely killed, plundered and conquered. How some of them still manage to hold onto their thrones when even their ability to “govern” is questioned is another matter. What makes these “facts” even more interesting is the observations of Sir Eliot a few pages later, in which he points to the parallelism between the Turks in Europe and the British in Asia (India), of course taking care to inform the reader that it is only true “in its most general outline”. Still, the fact that he can even stoop to draw a parallel between this savage tribe – which he honours with being a nation, though he has claimed that the members possess no history, culture, or even a language, the existing language being half Arabic and half Persian – and the British nation, is really touching:

In both cases a large extent of territory, comprising the most diverse races, is administered by a comparatively small body of invaders, who, owing to difference of language, can only communicate imperfectly with their subjects. In both the ruling race has an overweening sense of its own superiority and remains a nation apart, mixing little with the conquered population, whose customs and ideals it tolerates, but makes little effort to understand. In both there is in practice a religious distinction between the native and the governing race, though of course, in India the theory is widely different from that prevalent in Turkey. Naturally the parallel is only true in its most general outline, but it will enable the reader to realise the isolated position of the Turk in his own country.¹²²

The single achievement that Eliot attributes to the Turks, if it can be called an achievement, is their preservation, “as if in a museum”, of these conquered peoples. This is mainly due to their idea of government, which is merely “to take tribute and secure the paramount position of the Osmanli”. But, it also stems from their realization that, if they allowed their numerically superior subjects to unite, their role would be over. Thus,

¹²² *ibid.*, pp.88,89.

They have thoroughly learned, and still put into practice with admirable skill, the lesson of *divide et impera*; and hence they have always done, and still do, all in their power to prevent the obliteration of racial, linguistic, and religious differences.¹²³

Therefore according to Sir Eliot, inspite of all their inadequacies, the Turks are successful imperialists, who divide and rule, like the British, to keep their empire alive. How such a skill is compatible with their attested stupidity, their nomadic nature, their violent disposition, their corruption and apathy and hopeless state at administering and organizing their empire is hard to understand, especially if we remember that they are not only governing Muslims but also Christians; Greeks, Armenians, Bulgarians, Servians, and others, who are perceived to be more intelligent and talented in many ways than themselves by the majority of authors since 1856.

As opposed to Sir Eliot, Baker does not believe that the Turks have been idle or deficient in organizing "an admirable framework of government", but have not administered it honestly. According to Baker, such countries as Russia, whose "government officials are quite as venal as those of Turkey", advance in progress and civilisation, because in Turkey an apathy in administration is added to venality. Baker claims that it is not mere laws which are needed, as the existing ones and the machinery of government are admirable, but "an honest and active administration, and TIME". He also adds that while "judging Turkey", it must be remembered that Russia is always anxious to misrepresent Turkey and to obstruct her progress.¹²⁴

¹²³ Ibid., p.16.

¹²⁴ Baker, pp. 176-177, vi, 495-496.

The end of the Crimean War and the Treaty of Paris marked a "new era" in the life of Turkey according to Baker. Though her previous efforts at reform had continually been frustrated by Russia through internal rebellions as well as wars, with the defeat of Russia, it seemed as if "a clear road was open to reform and good government". But because her resources were exhausted, Turkey began to borrow, and the loans led to corruption first of the state, and then of the rest. Although prior to the loans Turkey had been honest in her declared intentions of reform, after this period promises of reform were made merely to obtain new loans, with no intention of carrying them out. This led to increased liabilities, increased taxation, discontent, and finally to rebellion. "The Mahommedans attributed their hardships to the introduction of Christian customs, the Christians to the misgovernment of their Mahommedan rulers, and thus fanaticism grew and flourished". According to Baker, Russia contributed to this process through the use of her agents.¹²⁵

Sir Eliot, who does not think as positively about the government as Baker, claims that there are two reasons why the Turks - the majority of whom are honest, patriotic, God-fearing men, some even intelligent and energetic - "let so strange a government continue". The first is that no changes or reforms alter the Turkish state, it is "simply what it has always been" in spite of changing written laws and institutions, which Eliot likens to "disguises"¹²⁶. The second reason is the Turks' correct instinct that an alteration in the present order of things could end their rule over the

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.196-198.

¹²⁶ Sir Eliot, pp.131,132.

Christians. According to Eliot, Turks are superior to Christians as long as they rule by force, because they are "stronger, braver, more united". But if force is to be replaced by progress, commerce, finance, and law, the Christian will be superior. In fact, Eliot maintains that the fear of Christians is the second major reason for the Turks' toleration of their strange governments:

Those who have associated with Turks will have discovered a fact which it is difficult for the rest of the world to believe, namely, that they are afraid of Christians. The periodical outbreaks formerly called "atrocities", but now described as "events" (a beautiful euphemism which the Sublime Porte has imposed on the diplomatic language of Europe), appear to us a cowardly slaughter of unarmed men and helpless women and children. But no doubt the average Turk regards these same events as necessary measures of self-defence. He is always ready to believe that the Armenians and Bulgarians are importing arms or planning to burn down Constantinople, and says with sincere alarm that no Muslim's life is safe.¹²⁷

Frances Elliot, like Baker, claims that "no country has better or juster laws than Turkey" which are not put into practice or are disobeyed. In these "profoundly Asiatic people", force and fatality rule, so they cannot give direction to life but are pulled along by it. Consequently, there is no reform. "Is not the Turk actually weakened at the core by his contact with European civilisation?"¹²⁸ Elliot asks.

After these ideas about the Turkish government, administration, and history, how do these authors view and present the Sultans? According to Blunt, Abdulmecid was a liberal, and sincerely wished to improve his empire, but was "too weak", and "a lover of pleasure and ease". He had a sympathy

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.153,154.

¹²⁸ F. Elliot, pp.239,240.

and liking for England which also effected his nation, but he did not have the knowledge or the courage to make sure that his reforms were carried through.¹²⁹

F. Elliot states that Abdulaziz acknowledged one legal wife, erected schools, and provided instruction for his Greek, Armenian and Jewish subjects under the supervision of Ali Pasha, and "the great legislator and *litterateur*" Fuad Pasha, "two of the most excellent and distinguished statesmen Turkey ever possessed". The Turkish national costume was abandoned, and the European coat and a fez replaced the caftan and turban (she seems to have confused dates here). Then, in 1867, Abdulaziz decided to visit Western Europe "to judge with his own eyes of our modern civilisation". He was accompanied by Fuad Pasha and the young princes Murad and Hamid.¹³⁰ According to Elliot,

From that day Young and Old Turkey became rival parties in the State. In consequence of his voyage westwards to see the world, Aziz was supposed to head those who aspired for as much liberty of thought and action as was compatible with a religion founded in the desert.¹³¹

Elliot seems to forget that it was not only Islam which was founded in the desert. Next, she makes the Sultan and Grand Vizier talk. The Sultan says that though the European cities are well built, they are not as beautiful as Istanbul, and everyone is concerned with making money. The women "are shamefully exposed at balls and receptions, hanging on the arms of

¹²⁹ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, pp.117-118, 81.

¹³⁰ F. Elliot, pp.260,261.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p.261.

strange men", their husbands are indifferent, and their partners "hold them up with the indifference of a eunuch" in spite of their sweet smiles.

Next, the Sultan claims that you cannot call education and civilisation a system which allows thousands to die of starvation and to be imprisoned in London. He says that the kings in Europe are "the servants of their people ; we are the masters".

Elliot probably thinks that all this is not enough to get her message through to the reader, namely, to show him the ignorance, imbecility, and smug self-satisfaction of the Sultan. So after the Sultan has expressed his opinions, she makes Ali and Fuad Pashas exchange ideas:

"Has his Majesty touched on State affairs?" asked Fuad.

"He has not so much as mentioned them" replied Ali, shaking his head.

"When we fall", continued Fuad, "Turkey will return to what it was."

"You think Abdul Aziz will rule like his predecessors?"

"Neither more nor less. He believes that he knows as much as all Europe put together. 'I have nothing to learn from these states', he says. One thing pleased him in France. Guess."

Ali, whose face grew darker and darker as Fuad continued, shook his head.

"A woman. In England he admired the fleet. Austria and Prussia did not interest him at all. Always dwelling on the Empress of the French, he swore he would find a woman as beautiful..."¹³²

Thus Abdulaziz, as well as his predecessors, are shown by Elliot to be ignorant, arrogant, lecherous beings with no interest in state affairs. Abdulaziz is likewise described as a "sensual, extravagant, and narrow minded" personage by Blunt, who says that his wasteful habits ruined his country.¹³³ He was a Sultan of "insipid personality", with none of the strong characteristics of his father nor the virtues of his brother. Neither did he have

¹³² F. Elliot, pp.263-266.

¹³³ Blunt, *The People of Turkey*, p.119.

any fighting tendencies, so he reared "a regiment of fighting cocks which he loved to watch, and childishly honoured the most valiant by hanging military decorations round their necks." Blunt declares that Abdulaziz was able to manage the first ten or fifteen years of his reign due to Ali, Fuad, and Midhad Pashas, but his replacing these able ministers with others "who traded in the purchase and sale of every post of importance" led to disorganization and his own dethronement.¹³⁴

Abdulhamid is a personage of great interest to the majority of our authors. Blunt's comments are extremely interesting in this respect, because there is a marked contrast in what she wrote in 1876 in *The People of Turkey* when Abdulhamid had recently come to the throne, and what she wrote in *My Reminiscences* 30 years later. In 1876, her tone is very hopeful and complimentary:

Sultan Abdul-Hamid is much esteemed and highly spoken of by persons who have had the honour of conversing with his Imperial Majesty. He is, moreover, said to be qualified for his position, being liberal in his ideas, and possessed of many of the qualities of a good sovereign, and desirous of carrying out the reforms that alone can ensure the happiness of his people and restore prosperity to the country.¹³⁵

Writing later, Blunt claims that as soon as he consolidated his power, Sultan Abdulhamid "dropped his hypocritical mask of modest humiliation", and took over the whole administration, pushing aside his ministers. He employed a terrible system of spies and a body of "Albanian cut-throats" to protect his own life, and thus was able to rule for thirty-three years. This was also due to his "great cunning":

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.158,159.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.124.

His system was to help in turn the different peoples and countries in his Empire, and so soon as he found the favoured country was becoming too forward or too strong, to drop it and to give his imperial favour to its natural rival. In this way there was perpetual discord in the units of his Empire but safety for himself. The Foreign Office of Turkey was absolutely under his sole and personal control, and he managed by treachery and false promises to hoodwink by turns all the Great Powers.¹³⁶

Blunt's description is a good example of the divide and rule variation explained by Sir Eliot. She claims that the condition of things during his reign disgusted and frustrated the patriotic Turks whose efforts to improve things were unsuccessful. During the zenith of Abdulhamid's power, Istanbul was like "a city of the dead", except for the bazaars and business parts, the city was empty and silent. Ironically, Blunt is presented with a decoration by the Sultan she hates for her work amongst Turkish women.¹³⁷

Surprisingly, Frances Elliot has rather favourable things to say about Sultan Abdulhamid, some of which are so personal one wanders how she came by such knowledge. The Sultan is modest in the requirements of his harem, usually eats alone, consuming water and plain food. When he receives royal visitors and ambassadors, he does so with the "most finished courtesy", "every European luxury being understood and served upon the board". He works very hard, "signing every document himself, from the appointment of a governor to the lowest officer of the palace". He protects mollahs and dervishes, but also "he is liberal, and takes pleasure in rewarding those who serve him well". He gives magnificent gifts of gems and

¹³⁶ Blunt, *My Reminiscences*, pp.161,162.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.161-162, 225.

pearls to European ladies, and has drawers full of these in the Old Seraglio.¹³⁸

After all these comments, which are too liberal for her usual style, Elliot is quite disillusioned when she actually sees the Sultan in person at his Friday worship, to which he comes in an open landau:

...the most wretched, pinched-up little sovereign I ever saw. A most unhappy-looking man, of dark complexion, with a look of absolute terror in his large eastern eyes.¹³⁹

But Elliot claims that if he could overcome his terror of assassination and his fears, he would have "an agreeable and refined countenance, eminently Asiatic in type, and with a certain charm of expression". She decides that "The poorest beggar in his dominions is happier than he".¹⁴⁰

The Sultan does not respond to cheers as he enters the mosque, "maintaining as immovable a visage as an idol carved in wood". In fact, the ceremony of the Selamlık is the one and the only instance in which Elliot is actually impressed by something, and she describes it in detail. She is extremely impressed by the horses, and the good order and silence of the 5000 troops present. When the Sultan takes the reins of the two grey horses of an elegant Victoria and leaves, followed by six loose horses, Elliot declares that everything has been managed perfectly:

...so entirely has Asiatic pomp been superseded by the quiet aspect of European civilisation that scarcely a native costume is visible among the troops except the green-turbaned Bashi-bazouks and the Albanians.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ F. Elliot, pp.177-179.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.184.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.184.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.185, 186.

The ladies, consisting of the near relations and mother of the Sultan, as well as the chief eunuch, pashas, viziers, ministers, aghas, high officers of the selamlık, are all present. The men are "all bursting with importance, fat, dark-visaged and immovable, but not specially Eastern in appearance"¹⁴².

It is worth noting that what Elliot finds impressive in these ceremonies is the absence of "Asiatic pomp", whereas her main criticisms about Istanbul were directed at the absence of the "East" in nature and her surroundings, and even more, at the presence of something neither Eastern nor Western.

According to Sir Eliot, the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid offers the best example of real autocracy to the world; "a state where everything is directed by the pleasure of the ruler". This is due to the fact that all the conditions necessary for real autocracy are present: the telegraph, a ruler who "scorns delights and is content to devote day and night to the examination of minutiae" which most would leave to their subordinates, and the destruction of all elements that could oppose the Imperial will, all leading to the centralization of power in Abdulhamid's hands.¹⁴³

Neave's comments on first seeing the Sultan greatly resemble those of Frances Elliot:

Was this small shrunken old man, dark-skinned, with a long nose, dyed beard, and an Armenian cast of features, who glanced furtively up at us as we courtseyed, the most feared, the most dreaded despot in Europe?¹⁴⁴

Neave states that during his long reign, Abdulhamid ruled "with a rod of iron", and a great many people were drowned, exiled, poisoned,

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.182,183.

¹⁴³ Sir Eliot, pp.123,124.

¹⁴⁴ Neave, p.39.

massacred, or had their property confiscated. Though he earned the title "The Great Assassin" or "Abdul The Damned" by these acts, he was also "a born diplomatist, and an extraordinarily clever and cunning man", who could outwit his own ministers as well as the Powers. But, he was also seen as a "terrified coward" by his subjects due to his spies, journals, and the whole system constructed to safeguard his life. Still, he could also show "considerable presence of mind and courage in face of danger", as when a bomb was thrown at him while he was leaving the mosque.¹⁴⁵

Another important aspect of Abdulhamid's reign is the "disposition to treat politics and religion as one whole", and the Pan Islamic movement, based on the idea that the Sultan is the Caliph of the whole Muslim world¹⁴⁶.

The last development which is emphasized is the weakening of the dread of Russia and the strengthening of German influence in the Empire, especially after the 1898 visit of the Emperor and Empress of Germany to the Porte, which was "a great *coup* for German policy in Turkey". Both Neave and Sir Eliot point to the criticisms directed at the German Emperor, who with his "demonstrations of friendship and regard" for Abdulhamid at a time when Europe had denounced his rule, seemed to encourage the Sultan's oppression of his subjects¹⁴⁷. Sir Eliot maintains that Britain has no right to criticize Germany, because

From the Crimean War onwards, during many years, we were the allies and supporters of the Turks, and when at last we ceased to play that part it was less from moral indignation than from a feeling that, as

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., pp.25-28.

¹⁴⁶ Sir Eliot, pp.424, 425.

¹⁴⁷ Neave, pp.41,43, Sir Eliot pp.419-421.

the late Lord Salisbury once candidly said, we had put our money on the wrong horse.¹⁴⁸

Neave is concerned with a different aspect of this development, the rise of the German Empire and the decline of British prestige:

From this point the friendship and closeness of the relations between Germany and Turkey steadily increased at the expense of Great Britain, and we British in Turkey had the disagreeable experience of watching the rapid spread of German influence, while that of the British waned and withered. With increasing alarm we noticed that even we personally were being treated with far less respect and friendliness by Turks.¹⁴⁹

Thus ended an era, marked by British influence for the Ottomans and the efforts to preserve "the independence and integrity" of the sick man for the British. Though the effects of at least a century of mutual interest and influence would no doubt continue until posterity, Ottoman-British relations, or Turkish-British relations, would never be the same.

In the presentation of the Ottoman Empire and its subjects after 1856, the predominant theme is a discussion of "empire". Though not all our authors give the primary importance to this theme, clearly for most of them the first attribute of the Turk is that he is a member of the ruling-race, be he a peasant or a Pasha, and in spite of the fact that he increasingly resembles a "native". Thus, this attribution does not entail the right to hold such a position. The Turk is the ruling-race, because he has held this position since 1453 by force, not because he has in anyway earned it. Like the Anglo-Indians, the Turk rules a vast empire, composed of different ethnic, religious, and

¹⁴⁸ Sir Eliot, p.421.

¹⁴⁹ Neave, pp.42-44.

linguistic groups. He has not bothered to learn their languages, and he has not interfered with their religion and social life as long as they were faithful to the laws of the empire and they paid their taxes, much like the English after the "Mutiny" of 1857.¹⁵⁰ If these conditions were not carried out, and if they perceived any action, real or imagined, to be aimed at destroying the empire, through religious affiliation with another power, through attempts at national independence, or in search of additional rights and privileges, the Turks retaliated with cruel measures. So far, the parallelism holds true. However, things were not so clear-cut. The major difficulty was posed by the fact that the Turks, as Muslims, not only ruled Muslims, but also Christians and Jews. They ruled white men, who were supposed to be superior to them in religion, morals, intellect, history, and race. The only way in which such an "anomaly" could be justified, no doubt, was by showing that the white Christians they dominated had something different than, and inferior to, the white Christians of Europe. I believe that this is the major reason why the Greeks and Armenians of the Ottoman Empire were shown to be "racially" inferior until 1856. The Jews and the Muslims did not really count, it did not seem so absurd that they could be ruled by Turks. But the Greeks and Armenians were usually presented as "worse than the Turks" by the majority of our authors, and their Christianity was shown to be different from –and inferior to – the Christianity of Europe. After 1856, the tendency to present them as racially and intrinsically inferior has given way to the emphasis that their faults derive from centuries of Ottoman rule.

¹⁵⁰ The British government realized after the *Mutiny* that "there had been excessive interference with the fabric of domestic Indian life". See R. A. Huttenback, *The British Imperial Experience* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966) p.68.

A similar justification was formulated by the British about their own colonies:

Endless emphasis on the differences between “natives” and themselves was one of the necessary props of the empire. They could only have ruled subject peoples, especially when hopelessly outnumbered, by honestly believing themselves to be racially superior, and the subject race to be “biologically different”.¹⁵¹

In the Ottoman case the difference could not be biological, but it was moral and racial in the sense that due to long residence in the East, these people had become “Asiatics”. Both ways, it was easier to justify Turkish domination, especially as the faulty characteristics of the Greeks and Armenians could be shown to prevent them from uniting against their rulers and as pushing them into being part of Russian intrigue.

The second step through which Turkish rule could be explained was much less complicated. Turks were bad governors. The corrupt and chaotic state of the administration, the personalities of most Sultans and state officials, and the internal state of the country; revolution, rebellion, dissatisfied populations, strife, heavy taxes, and so forth were proof enough. Add to this the endless enmity with Russia, the dissolution of the empire, foreign debt, and the need for foreign military support, and the picture was clear.

To point to another parallelism, eighteenth and nineteenth century Orientalist scholarship depicts India as

a lawless and chaotic land, inhabited by various despotic governments and roving bands of thugs and bandits; it is characterized by myriad of superstitions and contradictory religious beliefs and troubled by a

¹⁵¹ See R. Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976) p.157.

history of bribery and corruption, which served as poor imitations of civil jurisprudence.¹⁵²

Thus, in the nineteenth century, Turks could only still remain as the governors because the British allowed them to. They were the governors in theory only. In return for the right to hold their place, they promised reform and a betterment of the conditions of the Christian populace. It was not done, or it was not enough. After 1856, there is a lot less written on how the empire will progress if there is reform, what kinds of reforms should be introduced, how Russia can be pushed back, and so forth. Instead, there is a discussion on the history of the empire to show that administration has always been inadequate, that reforms have always remained theoretical, and that nothing has changed, let alone improved, in the empire for centuries. Some authors attribute this to a lack of honesty, others to the lack of intelligence, yet others to indolence, but with the acceptance of the Turk as the master-race there comes the confident belief that his end is near. What he has in his hands can hardly be called an "empire" anymore, and it is shortly to exist no more.

It is in accordance with this framework that the Turkish political system is shown to be chaotic and dependent on chance and favour. None of the authors seem to believe that there is an organization, or some kind of a working system of administration, but prefer to view the Ottoman state as one made up of unqualified men who are promoted overnight and made to hold completely incompatible positions while they are in favour. Although this picture at first tends to shine like a fantasy of equality and unlimited chances for all, more rightly it points to an unprofessional and unethical system based

¹⁵² See Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter, *Imperialism and Orientalism A Documentary Sourcebook* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) p.67.

on bribery and flattery. Therefore, apart from such exceptions as Ali and Fuad Pashas, all government officials are generalized to be incapable ignoramus who live for individual profit and pleasure. With such a sly, indolent, dishonest and corrupt group of men, the Ottoman Empire is on the verge of destruction. Though he is greatly criticized and presented as the most typical example of and the worst kind of Eastern despot or autocrat, Sultan Abdulhamid –after Mahmud II – is the only Sultan of the century who is portrayed as having introduced some kind of order into the administration of the country by centralizing all power within his own person and by applying the principle of divide and rule with success.

The third point with which Turkish supremacy is explained is with reference to history. In this respect the period after 1856 offers a new theme; the nomadic origins of the Turks. This makes it much easier to prove that the Turks have never contributed to civilisation in any way, another major point which differentiates them from the Anglo-Indians, who could at least boast that they had brought "civilisation" and "unification" to India in the form of education, sanitation, railways, and what not. The Turks, on the contrary, have not only introduced nothing to the peoples they conquered, but have used them to cover up for their own deficiencies, trade, finance, enterprise, production, and everything that requires the smallest degree of brains and spirit the conquered peoples have developed and continued, while the apathetic Turks sat and smoked.

Taking all these into account, it was easier to accept the Turk as the ruler of an empire, having shown that there was no history, no culture, no

administration, and only the left-overs of an empire, the Turk could be categorically accepted as an imperialist. What was necessary to complete the picture was the Turk himself. We have seen that there was a dual tendency to perceive the Turk as the imperialist and the native. Taking all of the above points into consideration, it follows that the two do not have to be incompatible, a Turk does not have to possess anything more than a "native" was expected to possess to rule in such a manner. His task was made even easier by the portrayal of the Turkish masses; the peasants and the soldiers, who were patient, enduring, good, honest, and easily disciplined according to all, and brave or cowardly, indolent or industrious, stupid or intelligent according to different authors. Overall, a perfect flock of sheep. What easier to rule? As much as a mere Turk could be master to the members of a harem as shown in these pages – clueless, secluded, pitiful women who have been brought up to be happy with trivialities and the occasional attention of their masters – so a mere Turk could manage an empire of mere Turks, Jews, Muslims, and Christians who had become Asiatic, but were nevertheless the first to rebel. How successfully he managed, even with British support, is there for everyone to see.

VI – Epilogue - Then and Now

A brief look at some studies and travel-accounts of the 1980s and 1990s will, I believe, demonstrate the lingering influence of nineteenth century travel-literature, as well as highlight the way in which these works help to shape the understanding of modern Turkey.

Journey to Kars by Philip Glazebrook, *Turkish Reflections A Biography of A Place* by Mary Lee Settle, *Looking for Osman: One Man's Travels Through the Paradox of Modern Turkey* by Eric Lawlor, *A Fez of the Heart Travels Around Turkey in Search of A Hat* by Jeremy Seal, *Dervish or Travels in Modern Turkey* by Tim Kelsey, *Turkey Unveiled Atatürk and After* by Nicole and Hugh Pope, and *From The Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium* by William Dalrymple all have certain themes in common. All these authors write primarily about their travels and their personal experiences in Turkey. Dalrymple for instance, retraces the journey of two monks, John Moschos and his pupil Sophronius who travelled across the Byzantine world in 587 A.D, and in doing so, portrays the dying civilisation of Eastern Christianity. His book begins in 1994 in Greece, and he travels through Turkey, Beirut, the West Bank, and Egypt, though his journey takes less than six months. Like the rest of our authors, Dalrymple travels widely in Turkey as well, Istanbul, Ankara, Antakya, Urfa and Diyarbakır being among the main cities of interest for him.

Mary Lee Settle, who lives in Bodrum between 1972-1974, comes back in 1989, and travels through Istanbul, Trabzon, Erzurum, Amasya, Sivas, Sinop, Konya, Antalya, Alanya, Kayseri, Ankara, Midas, and Sakarya.

Though they do not visit so many cities, all authors travel through several. Jeremy Seal, a journalist who worked as an English teacher at Ankara in 1984, even tries to give his readers a sense of these places by translating their names into English. According to Seal, Gaziantep “translates as Warrior -or even destroyer of Christians– Pistachio”, while Menemen means “Omelette”.¹

One point of interest common to most of these narratives is the Ottoman-Islamic past of modern Turkey. Interestingly, the first and most important point for comparison between the past and the present is tolerance:

The achievements of early Ottoman Constantinople were built on the foundation of religious and ethnic tolerance. The great majority of senior Ottoman officials were not ethnic Turks, but Christian or Jewish converts. At a time when every capital in Europe was ablaze with burning heretics, according to the exiled seventeenth-century Huguenot M. de la Motraye there was “no country on earth where the exercise of all Religions is more free and less subject to being troubled, than in Turkey”. It was the gradual erosion of that tradition of tolerance under the tidal wave of nineteenth-century nationalism that as much as anything brought down the Ottomans.²

As opposed to the religious and ethnic tolerance exercised in the Ottoman Empire, modern Turkey is shown to be a brutal state which increasingly represses and even exterminates its religious and ethnic minorities. When Dalrymple crosses the Turkish border into Syria, he remarks:

Immediately the atmosphere changed. Ten years ago, on my first journey around the Near East, I remember my nervousness at leaving

¹ Jeremy Seal, *A Fez of the Heart: Travels Around Turkey In Search of a Hat* (London: Picador, 1996) pp.104,110.

² William Dalrymple, *From The Holy Mountain: A Journey In The Shadow of Byzantium* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997) p.28.

the then peaceable countryside of south-east Turkey for what I conceived to be the sinister terrorist state of Syria. Now the roles are reversed. Syria may still be a one-party police state, but it is a police state that leaves its citizens alone as long as they keep out of politics; certainly it feels like the Garden of Eden compared with the tension on the other side of the border.³

The main cause for this change since the Ottoman era is shown to be the efforts of Ataturk and his successors to wipe out the Ottoman legacy and to create a totally new secular Turkish nation-state, complete with a Turkish identity, a new history, language, and costume. Naturally, this project, which involves the denial of the past, the indoctrination of the masses with an invented historical background – claiming that the Turk is almost the originator of all civilisation and his language the first from which all the others sprung – the effort to mould minorities such as the Kurds into Turks, and the repression of any Islamic tendencies as efforts to return to the Ottoman past, is criticized by all authors.⁴

Ataturk is believed to have been “blindly antireligious” and “too ruthless”, and is blamed with forcing Islam to go underground.⁵ His program for westernization is not approved by the majority of authors, who believe that it destroyed the culture, religion, history, and language of a people, much like a colonization process:

Ataturk’s program was an astonishing assault on an indigenous culture, the more so for being mounted not by a colonial power but by a fervent nationalist. Such was his enthusiasm for *la vie occidentale*,

³ Ibid., p.138.

⁴ Seal pp.141,142, Tim Kelsey, *Dervish Travels in Modern Turkey* (London: Penguin Books,1997) pp. 13,17, 33, Hugh and Nicole Pope *Turkey Unveiled: Ataturk and After* (London: John Murray, 1997) pp.51,59.

⁵ Mary Lee Settle, *Turkish Reflections A Biography of A Place* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992) p.126.

his countrymen are lucky that he didn't insist on their converting to Christianity and learning French.⁶

The reforms and westernization of the 1920s and 1930s are viewed unfavourably by these authors for another reason. Not only has it produced divisions and contradictions within the social fabric, but it has also put an end to the exotic facade of the Ottoman Empire, which was already fading during the nineteenth century. "The modern era is well advanced in Turkey, and modernity is tough on the exotic"⁷ claims Eric Lawlor. This points to another side-effect of nineteenth century travel-accounts. Settle's favourite travel book is *Eothen*, and she comes to Turkey hoping to find the "Asiatic contentment" portrayed by Kinglake. Because she believes that in Istanbul "Yesterday and today are intertwined every place", she goes to a *hamam*, expecting "marble floors and steam-misted tiled rooms with ancient columns", Turkish coffee, thick towels, and brass bowls. What she gets is an "unassuming side door", "a cold dirty cubicle", "a thin towel", "plastic dog bowls", and an "enormously fat naked old woman" who beats her up on the massage platform.⁸

The same experience is undergone by Lawlor, who goes to the Turkish bath with Warburton's *The Crescent and The Cross* in mind. Instead of soft linens and wooden patterns "inlaid with mother-of-pearl", he gets an "aging dishcloth" and an old pair of Dr. Scholl's sandals, instead of soft cushions, pipes and sherbets, he is made to sit on a "scalding bench" next to

⁶ Eric Lawlor, *Looking for Osman One Man's Travels Through the Paradox of Modern Turkey* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993) p.7.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp.12,13.

⁸ Settle, pp.37,48.

a German, and after sustaining “third-degree burns” on their bottoms, they are likewise “beaten up” by a masseur whom the German likens to “King Kong”. Thus, both authors’ quest for the exotic, and for the “Turkey of a century ago”, is frustrated⁹.

Though they put an end to religious and ethnic tolerance, colour and variety, and to the exotic, and despite their ruthlessness, Ataturk’s reforms were unable to create a totally new society. Instead, they merely pushed traditions and beliefs underground:

Ataturk did not succeed in breaking with the past. A despot in a long line of despots, he was himself a medieval figure. A Sultan in modern dress. No, the continuities are everywhere and daily grow more obvious. “The peasant is master of this country”, said Ataturk, and events may prove him right. Istanbul is filling with immigrants from Anatolia – veiled women trailing after men still covered with the dust of Asia. As some in Istanbul talk of making this city an integral part of the West, the peasant is making it an integral part of the East.¹⁰

Thus, one point for criticism about the Turkish project of modernity is its repression of Islam, of the Ottoman past and culture. What is not taken into account, however, is that before 1923, the Ottoman Turks were denied by many authors the existence of a culture, language, or history in the first place. In this respect, the Ottoman denial that Islam and the East are inferior to Christianity and the West culminated in the Turkish Republic’s rejection of Islam and the East. Ironically, this development, which was seen as the only way out for the Ottoman Empire throughout the nineteenth century, is now shown to be a major mistake. Furthermore, this radical transformation is not perceived to have led to much progress in the Turkish state or the population.

⁹ Lawlor, pp.9, 10, 38.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.213.

The problems of the late Ottoman Empire and those of the Turkish Republic seem identical:

...the struggle by pro-Islamic conservatives against western-inspired reform, the meddling of foreign powers, conflicts with minority groups, hostile neighbours, muddled financial management.

...
 ...short-term appointment of unqualified officials, an unfair and wasteful tax system, and regular debasement of the currency...¹¹

Thus, the view that Christianity and Islam are totally opposite belief systems, ideologies, and life-styles, voiced by the majority of authors during the nineteenth century, and proposed to be the “real” reason for the otherness and semi-civilized state of the Ottoman Empire, is reversed by some authors in the twentieth century. The new approach is not only to criticize the repression of Islam for the sake of secularism, but to emphasize the similarities – rather than the differences – of Islam and Christianity:

Today the West often views Islam as a civilisation very different from and indeed innately hostile to Christianity. Only when you travel in Christianity's Eastern homelands do you realize how closely the two religions are really linked. For the former grew directly out of the latter and still, to this day, embodies many aspects and practices of the early Christian world now lost in Christianity's modern Western incarnation. When the early Byzantines were first confronted by the Prophet's armies, they assumed that Islam was merely a heretical form of Christianity, and in many ways they were not so far wrong: Islam accepts much of the Old and New Testaments, and venerates both Jesus and the ancient Jewish prophets.

Certainly if John Moschos were to come back today it is likely that he would find much more that was familiar in the practices of a modern Muslim Sufi than he would with those of, say, a contemporary American Evangelical. Yet this simple truth has been lost by our tendency to think of Christianity as a Western religion rather than the Oriental faith it actually is. Moreover the modern demonisation of Islam in the West, and the recent growth of Muslim fundamentalism (itself in many ways a reaction to the West's repeated humiliation of the Muslim

¹¹ Pope, pp.29,30.

world), have led to an atmosphere where few are aware of, or indeed wish to be aware of, the profound kinship of Christianity and Islam.¹²

It is this, Dalrymple claims, that makes the position of the Eastern Christians “increasingly untenable” in recent times; their religious links with the West, and cultural links with the East.¹³

In spite of efforts to eradicate the Ottoman past, modern Turkey has not been successful in leaving behind the Ottoman image, which has lingered:

Neither quite this nor altogether that, terrifically itself yet perpetually ambiguous, Turkey stands alone among the nations. For centuries it was the terror of Christianity; for generations it was the Sick Man of Europe; today it stands formidably on the edge of Asia surrounded in the universal mind, as always, by an aura of mingled respect, resentment, and fear. The assaults of tourism have not much weakened this daunting national personality. The echoes of historical quarrels, old and new, still swirl around the name of Turkey: the accusations of Greeks, the recriminations of Armenians, the clash between a secular state and a reviving Islam. One treads carefully in the Turkish presence. Turkey is no joke.¹⁴

In this sense, the Turkish state's efforts to systematically erase the Ottoman past and to construct a new nation is shown to have failed. Not only has it resulted in a cultural void and an identity crisis, but it has not been able to change the negative image of the Turk as exemplified by the “ogrelike cartoon caricatures” in *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Midnight Express*.¹⁵ Rather, it has reinforced this image by destroying the reign of religious, ethnic, and

¹² Dalrymple, p. 168.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

¹⁴ Introduction by Jan Morris in Settle, p. ix.

¹⁵ Settle, pp. xi, xii.

cultural diversity and tolerance, with its brutality, and with its inability to impose "the logic of nationhood on the people of Anatolia."¹⁶

From this perspective, the minorities, as with the travel-literature on the Ottomans, is the major theme of interest in contemporary studies on Turkey. The denial of the existence, followed by the oppression, and even the extermination of the minorities who stayed on in the Republic, but who were not a part of "Ataturk's historical fiction" is intensely criticized¹⁷. The difficulties the Greeks and Armenians living in Istanbul undergo is emphasized¹⁸, as is the "Turkish government's ruthless attempt to crush the current Kurdish insurgency, and indeed anyone who speaks out, however moderately, for Kurdish rights"¹⁹.

According to some authors, all the different Christian communities driven out of Anatolia by the Turks between 1914-1924, Syriac, Greek Orthodox, Armenian, and other, present a stark contrast to the situation during the early years of the Ottoman Empire, when Christians and Muslims lived together in peace and harmony²⁰. Others point to the similarities between "the language of nineteenth-century European criticism of the Ottomans" and the contemporary Western denouncement of Turkish abuses of human rights and treatment of Kurds, implying that intolerance and abuse of the minorities has been a Turkish habit since the nineteenth century. However, they also point out that the European powers encouraged the Greeks and the Armenians to rebel to weaken and divide the Ottoman

¹⁶ Kelsey, p.25.

¹⁷ Kelsey, pp.25, 253, 304-312, 321-322.

¹⁸ Dalrymple pp.31-34.

¹⁹ Dalrymple p.79, Lawlor, p.126.

²⁰ Dalrymple, pp.338,339.

Empire, and then abandoned them. They preferred to associate themselves with the Muslims in power rather than the "downtrodden" Christians of the Empire; "the Syrian or Greek Christian under Ottoman rule was perhaps the most wretched and most despised of all the inhabitants of the Empire"²¹.

Likewise, all authors acknowledge the genocide or massacre of Armenians in 1915²², though some claim that the modern Turkish government is not to blame, as this is "like blaming the modern Russians for the Czarist pogroms, or the modern Lithunians for their zealous anti-Semitism" during the German occupation of World War II.²³ Others point out that "not all Turks were to blame", and that "There are Armenians in all our pasts"; such as the Irish of England and the Indians of America.²⁴

The solution offered to the contemporary minorities problem is, ironically, that Turkey "needs to remember its history and take a leaf out of the Ottoman book. Toleration can be a real asset"²⁵. Modern writers seem to prefer the then much criticized intolerance of the Ottoman Empire and its treatment of its minorities to the policies of the Turkish state. However, as European attitudes to their colonized subjects in the nineteenth century were never compared with the Ottoman treatment of their own subjects, so the present state of the ethnic and religious minorities within Europe is not set as an example for the Turks to follow.

²¹ Pope, pp.35-38, P. Glazebrook, *Journey to Kars: A Modern Traveller in The Ottoman Lands*, (London: Atheneum, 1984) pp.112-113.

²² Dalrymple, pp.310,311, Lawlor pp.115,116, Seal 224.

²³ Settle, pp.66,67.

²⁴ Lawlor, p.116.

²⁵ Kelsey, p.xi.

Thus, to a great degree, contemporary travel accounts draw on the Ottoman past to explain the Turkish present, and view the state's ideological and religious break with the past as the cause of most problems. They seem to favour the Ottoman past –however imperfect – to the Turkish present, which seems to be made up of attempts at rigid modernity, as well as brutality, which repress contradictory social, religious, and cultural undercurrents. Therefore, there are many parallelisms and continuities that have not been destroyed yet. This is most evident in the attempts at reform undertaken a century apart:

Thomas Allom has recounted how the fez was reviled as a foreign and Christian innovation on its introduction in the 1820s. But in the hundred-odd years that had since elapsed, it had been appropriated by traditionalist Turkey and had come to be associated with a deeply felt conservatism, particularly in rural Turkey, that held Islamic Orthodoxy dear and gazed askance on the new reforms. The fez largely assumed the ideological identity of the turban. The abolition of caliphates and sultanates had provoked widespread reaction, but Atatürk appreciated that the abolition of the fez was bound to cause an altogether more intimate sense of offence. Male Turks would be required to discard an article of headgear which was not only engrained in daily habit, but which also stood for their cultural, religious, and personal identity. 'The despotism which would exert a sway over individual tastes and feelings is most difficult of endurance' Thomas Allom had remarked in the previous century. He was referring to Mahmud's introduction of the fez at the expense of the turban, but such are the convoluted processes of history that he might equally have been referring to its abolition.²⁶

Thus, history is seen to be repeating itself, and Atatürk is shown to replicate Mahmud's efforts when it comes to westernization.

²⁶ Seal, p.65.

Parallelism in the perception of the Turkish Republic and the Ottoman Empire continues in other respects as well. Life is not active in Turkey, but as it was frequently asserted about the Ottomans, it is "idle". Polygamy and dervishes still exist, though they are illegal, as the famous "fatalism" of the Turks²⁷. Modernization is still an aspect for criticism²⁸, as the Turk himself. Turks are still portrayed as "slow and stately, dignified", as a "people of great pride", with their hospitality and communal sense. However, these traits, together with "courtly manners", "the always incipient flashes of violence, the dignity" pertain more to the poor than to the rich who follow western manners²⁹. The poor and the uneducated have been excluded from the "talk of reform", and nothing has been done to bridge the gap between the rural poor and the urban intellectuals³⁰.

The Turk's eagerness to help, the middle classes' obsession with modernity and progress, the Turk's nomadic origins, his carelessness about exactitude and order are other familiar traits³¹. According to Seal, "the whole point of being Turkish" is "indecision, not ideology", while Lawlor claims that though during the nineteenth century "travelers routinely referred to them as terrible, lazy, unspeakable, libidinous, unconscionable, and full of treachery", all this information about the Turks is "nonsense", as "Too much is made of national character".³² Though Kelsey meets and talks with a large number of people such as Okay Temiz, the famous musician who emigrated to Finland

²⁷ Kelsey, pp.80, 82, 135-137, 142, 17.

²⁸ Glazebrook, p.15.

²⁹ Settle, pp.23, 70.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.104,105.

³¹ Lawlor pp.41, 6, 74, Settle 201,

³² Seal p.291, Lawlor, p.174.

because Istanbul “rejected” him; Selim, a “freelance” historian who is frustrated because he is denied access to the archives, the Moguls, the music band who blended Turkish melody and Western rock to immense success in the 1970s; Sisi, the transvestite who aspires to politics; the bekçi (nightwatchman) of a brothel in Tokat, who reads Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* while on duty, and Babur, a senior Turkish policemen in Sivas who writes poetry and reads Nazım Hikmet, as well as many other interesting people³³, he nevertheless does not hesitate to reduce all Turks to one totalizing stereotype, or to make too much of “national character”, as Lawlor would say. Ibrahim Tatlıses, “the Crown Prince of Arabesk” symbolizes the Turk for Kelsey, as he will for his readers:

Ibo is a vast legend. He is the country’s best singer, with a claim to be considered amongst the very best in the world: in terms of the quality of his voice, comparisons with any of the operatic tenors should be taken seriously. Yet Ibo is so ordinary: the regulation Turkish moustache, a curly-bobbed crust of black hair on his head, a stupid grin. Mr Turk, full-blooded, straight-talking. No Atatürk here; no blue eyes and blond hair. He is Turk all over, and people feel good about that. He seems just like his audience. He beats his women and so do they.³⁴

Likewise, *arabesk*, which is a music “full of old Islamic fatalism”, and which speaks of “confusion and failure” is a uniquely Turkish culture according to Kelsey. Because “cultural union with the West, equality with the West - does not make sense to most Turks any more”, people look back to the East and Islam, which is characterized by *arabesk*³⁵.

³³ Kelsey, pp.1, 58,59, 181.

³⁴ Ibid, p.51.

³⁵ Ibid., pp.55, 59.

Though Kelsey observes that the image Turkey likes to project of itself and what it likes to “believe about itself” is that it is “self-conscious, sophisticated, politically correct, trendy, enlightened, responsible”, he does not seem to agree. Nor do the Popes, who claim that the Turks “still suffer from a sense of cultural inferiority”, proved by the fact that many of their elite universities give instruction in English³⁶.

What some of these authors do, perhaps with honest and good intentions, is to overlook the fact that modern Turkey, like modern England, is made up of a large number of different social and economic classes, with their own music, entertainment, style of dress, eating-manners, political and religious views, and values. To brush all this aside, and to present Turkey as made up of an elite consisting of “peroxide blondes” and superficial intellectuals who imitate western ways³⁷, and an “ordinary” populace who resemble Ibo and beat their women, is the same as presenting the Ottoman Empire as made up of Pashas and peasants.

The image of the Turks as “the forces of darkness and disorder” which came out of Asia in the form of “Attila and Timur the Lame and Genghiz Khan”; the “fear of darkness, of unreason, of evil powers”³⁸ also lingers on:

Haunting Europe still are age-old suspicions about the Turks, the horde at the gates of Vienna, a people with an alien Muslim tradition, a police force with an appalling record of brutality towards its own population...³⁹

³⁶ Kelsey, p.6, Pope, p.13.

³⁷ See Kelsey, p.4.

³⁸ Glazebrook, p.234.

³⁹ Pope, p.187.

Thus the envisioning of the Turk as a nomad who violates and plunders has outlived the Ottoman Empire, together with the cruelty and corruption of his administrators. These are in turn applied to the modern Turkish state and population:

I believe that much of what has always distressed and surprised the European in Turkey may be understood by accepting that the Turks are a nomadic race.⁴⁰

Thus, with a few exceptions, what we have is the merging of historical prejudice and the modern reality to form a "coherent" picture. The rightly criticized brutality and policies of the modern Turkish state are connected to the old fear of Ottoman violence and barbarity, with no differentiation between myth and reality, fiction and fact. This no doubt produces a more striking image, but greatly destroys the validity and objectivity of an otherwise sound point of view.

Christopher Brewin points to the three levels of the image of Turkey in Europe. The first, which still exists, is the image of Turkey as the Other, as essentially different. The second is the "foreground political issues" such as human rights, Cyprus, the Kurds, inflation, the danger of Islamic fundamentalism, and other policies and institutionalized attitudes. I do not see any differences of perception on this second level since the Ottoman times either. The third level is the "instrumental value, or danger" of Turkey to the observer⁴¹. Though the particulars of this level may have changed since the Ottoman period, the conclusion is more or less the same, the presence of

⁴⁰ Glazebrook, p.88.

⁴¹ Christopher Brewin, "The Image of The Turk in Europe", in Nedret Kuran Burçoğlu, ed., *The Image of The Turk in Europe From The Declaration of The Republic in 1923 to The 1990s* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000) pp.94-105.

Turkey in Europe, where it does not belong, is more of a danger or disturbance to Europe rather than the opposite.

In fact, the countries with which Turkey is always compared continue to be the old colonies of Britain, never a European state itself, the travellers' own homeland, which would more naturally be a point of reference:

It is strange that there is no strong smell peculiar to Turkey, which pervades it as the pungent sweetness of India reaches into everything that India touches.⁴²

No doubt this stems from the innate and everlasting differences that divide Europeans and Asians. Thus, all "Asiatics", Turks, Indians, whomever, form a category vastly different from the Europeans, and have not only been the Other, but the inferior Other since the Crimean War:

Joint-commands with the Turks in the Crimean War (as at Kars) had made Englishmen contemptuous of the incompetence, corruption and cowardice of Turkish officials... Experience of India too, especially after the Mutiny, was likely to make an Englishman dislike and despise Asiatics, as well as giving him an exalted view of his own superiority not found in earlier travellers.⁴³

Asiatics seem to be unable to avoid going from one extreme to the other according to these authors:

In many ways, Turkey's development since the Second World War seems to have followed exactly the opposite course to that of India. There Gandhi tried to wean the whole country onto *dhotis*, non-violence and spinning wheels; the result was crass materialism and the almost daily burning of brides in "kitchen accidents" if they fail to deliver the new moped or colour television promised as dowry. In Turkey Ataturk tried the reverse approach: he banned the fez, outlawed the Arabic script and tried to drag the Turks kicking and screaming into Europe. The result: a resurgent Islamic movement, mullahs being cheered in the mosques whenever they announce that the earth is flat, and the sophisticated career women of Istanbul

⁴² Glazebrook, p.113.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.85.

competing with each other to wear the most all-enveloping veil or medieval-looking burkha.⁴⁴

Religion, custom, and the form of government –empire or republic- seem to recede to the background in the face of such generalizations. Whether they are Muslims or Hindus, Turks or Indians, colonizers or the colonized, “Orientals” or “Asiatics” form one static category for the European to probe and analyze⁴⁵. Their differences hardly seem to matter. They are Asiatics, who “with their love of sweets, loud noises”, and their “inquisitiveness” seem to Europeans like “children”.⁴⁶

This division of the world into East and West, Asiatic and Westerner, though not restricted to the travel-accounts, serves a sound purpose in their case. As Glazebrook observes, the traveller could pose as “the knights-errant of Scott and Southey and Tennyson” when he presented himself as travelling in an East where there were “cruel pashas, wild horsemen armed with lance and sword, inhuman tortures, stone castles guarding river-crossings- all the trappings of Romance...”⁴⁷ Thus, the more backward and barbaric they showed the situation in the lands they travelled to be, the more progressive and heroic they –and by extension their readers- would appear. This was

⁴⁴ Dalrymple, p.29.

⁴⁵ This seems to be a continuation of the nineteenth century ethnocentric perception of the world, which “seldom made any refined distinctions among the indigenous populations encountered or the dialectical relationship any such abrupt cultural encounter was bound to involve. It is noteworthy that some Englishmen cast as far apart as India and New Zealand disparagingly referred to members of the resident populations in these lands as “niggers”, a lamentable example of gross prejudice.” Raymond F. Betts, *The False Dawn: European Imperialism in The Nineteenth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, c1975) p.216.

⁴⁶ Glazebrook, p.111.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.47.

easier done with “a tone of lofty contempt”, the creation of “dramatic truth” through “selection and embellishment”, and “even invention”, and a portrayal of the land one travels to as “mysterious and hostile territory”.⁴⁸

No doubt these literary devices and the ensuing sense of adventure and confirmed superiority have contributed a great deal to the popularity of the travel-account in the nineteenth century, as they continue to uphold the genre today. In spite of the many truthful portrayals and deep observations in these narratives, the presence of centuries’ old myths and many layers of individual perception and interpretation which are taken as empirical truths on the Ottomans and Turks blur their objectivity, and their main function even in our own times seems to be the emphasis on the vast and eternal differences between East and West that prevent their union and lead to the domination of one by the other. The Turks for their part no doubt have afforded many a chance for the realization of this image, and continue to fulfill their roles to perfection.

When Glazebrook enters Bulgaria by train from Turkey, he sees a peasant in a cart driving his donkey through the field. “I recognized in him a European – *mon frere, mon semblable*” he says:

Neither NATO, nor the EEC, nor the self-proclaimed Europeanization of Ataturk, could ever make a Turk *mon frere, mon semblable*. Nor did I want him to be. From Turkey and the Turks I wanted something else, perhaps the antithesis of the “homeliness” of Europe.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp.123, 153, 168.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p.197.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages, we have taken a look at some of the memoirs and travelogues written about the Ottoman Empire between the years 1821-1876. Among the many themes and events these authors explored, the presentation of the Franks and Levantines, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, the relations between these peoples, comments on such practices as slavery, polygamy, and a career open to talent, observations about places of interest, the Sultans, political events, the increasing troubles of the empire, and the relations of Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Britain, emerge as the dominant points of interest for the majority of these authors. Although they each hold some individual views and make original interpretations, on many points their narratives converge, making it possible to arrive at a general picture of what the Ottoman Empire and the Turks could have meant to a nineteenth century Briton, for these authors were undoubtedly influential in shaping the popular imagination about the Ottoman Empire and the Turks.

Even in the 1820s, the majority of travellers came to the Ottoman domains with an already ingrained image of the Turk in their minds. This image was usually reinforced by what they saw, and finalized in the pages they wrote. What originally made the Turk and the Ottoman Empire so interesting to most of these men and women was their belief that they were the epitome of the Other. Thus, most narratives emphasized the differences rather than the similarities between East and West, and even when they did

not, the picture which emerged seemed to show that the former abounded. Though the majority of Turks were believed to possess many positive characteristics such as honesty, piety, hospitality, moderation, endurance, courage, and mercy and affection towards children and animals, they were also portrayed as coarse, cruel, indolent, proud, and to some extent, intolerant of non-Muslims and their practices, at least during times of trouble. The higher orders, moulded into an eternal type as "the Pasha", were shown to be an avaricious, voluptuous, indolent, ignorant, apathetic and corrupt set of men, their traits and practices forming a major obstacle to the improvement of the state of the Ottoman Empire.

Therefore, in the memoirs written until Tanzimat, it is generally agreed that the Turks are half-civilized. In this respect, these writings display cultural arrogance which rests on the superiority of western culture and holds rationality, progress, and civilisation to be synonymous with Christianity and the west. Nevertheless, these authors are condescending enough to accord the Turk with some chance of improvement if he abandons his religion and such institutions and practices which are connected to his religious beliefs and embraces Christianity and western methods and institutions instead. Thus, the major reason for the Otherness and half-civilized state of the Ottoman Empire and its peoples is shown to be Islam.

This clear-cut picture is complicated by two interconnected factors. First, although they are deemed to be half-civilized, the Ottoman Empire and the Turks nevertheless inspire some sort of respect – perhaps mixed with some fear – in the Briton, as well as interest. In this sense, the Otherness of

the Ottomans is not seen as wholly negative, but also as romantic and exotic. This is why in spite of the profession that their redemption lies in the adoption of western religion and institutions, Ottoman efforts in this direction meet with severe criticism from the authors, who consciously or not want the empire to hold on to its exotic attributes which are the main point of interest for the traveller.

Second, and the most surprising finding in this research for me; the majority of the authors identify with the Turk as opposed to the Christian subjects of the empire. The Greeks and Armenians are shown to be of a greatly inferior moral and social status than the Turks. Though their intellectual capacities are only questioned by a minority of authors, as human beings, the Christian subjects are shown to be lesser beings deserving of domination. Until after 1856, the dominant view is that these people possess inferior traits as a "race", that they are servile, intriguing, dishonest, and what not, and do not deserve to be respected. This forms a logical answer to the question of how they can be ruled by mere Asiatics and Muslims, and live contently in subservience. Thus, their presentation tries to justify their state of subjection to the Turk, and they are marginalized and denigrated.

It is only well after the Crimean War that these views show some sign of alteration. The fact that they have become so degenerate due to centuries of subjection gains ground. Some authors attribute this to the immoral state of Eastern Christianity, and make sure that they draw a line between eastern and western Christianity. Others claim that it is constant competition to please their rulers that leads to the dejection of these peoples and prevents them

from uniting. It is emphasized that they have to follow such a path in order to survive under a degenerate system of rule, and sometimes the Turks are credited with following a policy of divide and rule to ensure this. Still, all authors, in one way or another, distance themselves from their Christian brothers and sisters, even while elaborating on the injustice inflicted on these peoples by the Turks – not a fact all agree upon – they nevertheless show that they have no sympathy for them.

It is only in the 1870s that the Christian subjects begin to be presented in a favourable light, and it is claimed that their remaining negative or inferior characteristics will disappear once they achieve independence. This realization goes hand in hand with their portrayal increasingly as a “conquered” or “colonized” people, and the simultaneous emphasis of the Turks as a ruling-race. It is pointed out that the Turks rule by force a people who are much more intelligent, talented, and industrious than themselves, and who are responsible for all the activity and accomplishments in the empire.

In fact, together with the Christian subjects, the presentation of the Turks undergoes a transformation after mid-century. The two types into which the Turks have been divided are further developed and finalized; the Pasha and the peasant, with no class in between. The peasants begin more and more to resemble a flock of sheep, and differ from the non-Muslims in their stupidity, ignorance, apathy and incapability, as well as in their sense of superiority in being the ruling race. The Pashas, in turn, become even more intriguing and evil. The common soldiers, who come from the ranks of the

peasantry, confirm this picture with the image of the well-intentioned but stupid, and increasingly helpless peasant-turned-soldier. Their courage, as in the Crimean War, is questioned, and it is claimed that they do not trust their corrupt and incapacitated officers - a derivation of the Pasha- and it is argued that they can create wonders only if they are led by efficient and trustworthy men; Anglo-Indians who also have a hold on Oriental ways and manners.

Thus, though the stereotype of the courageous and cruel, lascivious and proud Turk draws into the background, we have his segmentation into the types of the Pasha and the peasant, and their finalization. The former represents a vile and unworthy ruling-class which increasingly spells the end of empire, while the latter becomes the "natives" who are exploited and pushed around by him. What does not fit into this picture, however, is the continuous emphasis on the lack of succession, nobility and aristocracy within the empire. Thus, it is not explained how the honest peasant (or vendor, or shoeblack, or hamal) can buy his way into the system and turn Pasha overnight, nor is it explained how he suddenly changes from a meek, unassuming, and stupid but honest man into a corrupt and avaricious intriguer. What this points to, however, is obviously the inefficient and chaotic state of the Ottoman administration, which is also underlined by the recurring examples of men who hold a variety of unconnected positions far different in purpose and station from each other, and who are then chucked away to some corner of the empire on the whim of the Sultan. These examples refute the existence of the much repeated career open to talent, and equality, and

rather point to the reign of despotism, favour, and corruption, thereby creating a contradiction within the narratives.

Thus, after 1856, imperial ideas begin to influence the writing on the Ottoman Empire to a noteworthy degree. The sense of western superiority and contempt for non-westerners far overrides the envisioning of the Ottoman Empire as an exotic and romantic conglomeration of different races, languages, and customs. There is no longer a consensus on the possibility of the Turk's becoming civilized once he westernizes and adopts Christianity. Though there is still a discussion about the effectiveness of the reforming efforts in most authors, they no longer center on civilizing the empire, but on keeping it alive for British ends. There is a general conviction that the Ottoman empire cannot stand alone without British support and guidance, no doubt partly stemming from the belief that the British saved the Turks from the Russians during the Crimean War. In this respect, the presentation of the new type who begins to emerge; the "modern" Turk or Turk of the "new school", points to the belief that the Turk has no chance of improvement even if he does try to westernize, and even if he slackens his hold on the prejudices and principles of his religion. Likewise, the criticism of attempts to imitate western ways by women and society dwell on the creation of a state that is neither western nor eastern, a hybrid state that is not looked upon favourably by the authors. There seems to be less respect for the Turks as they try to become more "civilised" in the European way, because it points to their waning power. This may also be due, as in Bengal, to the myth of European imperialism that has "portrayed the modern as something that had

already happened somewhere else”, leading in nationalist writings to “a search for essences, origins, authenticities”, to validate the claim of being “different but modern”.¹

As a result, the literature on the Ottoman Empire begins to resemble imperial discourse. The empire is often deemed to be “typically Eastern”, and ruled by insolent and greedy Pashas, protected by cowardly and incompetent soldiers (for this is what they are under their own officers), populated by stupid and meek peasants, and the more intelligent but degenerate non-Muslims. There is an increasing parallelism between the terminology employed to present the Ottomans and the colonial empires of their time; throngs, hordes, swarms, brutes, animals who jostle around. The variety of religion, race, colour, language, and costume in the Ottoman Empire is continuously underlined to point to its typically Eastern characteristic; exotic, but also chaotic, ununified, and half-civilized. There are increasing comparisons and contrasts between the Turks and the Anglo-Indians as the imperialists ruling vast empires through divide-and-rule policies. There is a duality in perception and presentation here however. The Turks are increasingly presented as a governing class like the Anglo-Indians – ruling a much larger and varied populace without even bothering to learn their languages, and to a large extent without interfering in their social and religious practices as long as taxes are paid and no trouble is stirred. The lower orders of Turks also fit into the category of “natives” in terms of status

¹ See Dipesh Chakrabarty “The Difference- Deferral of a Colonial Modernity, Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal, in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire Colonial Cultures in A Bourgeois World* (London: University of California Press, 1997) p373.

and characteristics. However, the Turks and the British are obviously incomparable in terms of intelligence, industry and morality, as the former possess none of these attributes. Thus it is emphasized that due to their lethargic disposition and lack of talent, the Turks have used the Christian subjects for everything in the Empire, except farming, raising cattle, and war.

The presentation of Turkish women does not show much of a development from the 1820s, but with time, less emphasis is laid on their virtues as ideal mothers and wives, and more emphasis is put on the fact that they are ignorant and backward, and inadequate to raise children. Thus, we either have the figure of the “uneducated housewife/mother”² who is shown to be a central barrier to the enlightenment of the future generations, the figure of the modernizing (usually in superficial ways) Turkish woman who becomes discontented if she takes it to heart, and a vague but proud and upright figure of the “real” Turkish woman of the upper classes who is uneducated but polished in manner and strong in personality. As opposed to Orientalist writings about India or Egypt for instance, the sexual image of the Turkish woman is held at a minimal level. Though the harem system and the veil alone are sufficiently erotic and exotic in pointing to a repressed and hidden sexuality, most travellers seem to have left its embellishment to the world of literature, and even the favourite image of a *yashmak* that slips aside or falls, revealing a sensually fascinating face, is employed less and less, as are the fantasies of secretly entering a harem and barely escaping with one’s

² According to Dipash Chakrabarty, in Bengal “The civilizing discourse that propelled both imperialist and nationalist thought thus produced the figure of the ‘uneducated housewife/mother’ as one of the central problems that the project of making Bengalis into citizen-subjects had to negotiate.” *Colonial Cultures in A Bourgeois World*, p.378.

life. These well-known fantasies are pushed aside by the common and grim realities of nineteenth century Ottoman life, both inside and outside the harem.

In line with colonial discourse, the Turks are also denied any possession of history or a culture. Some authors claim that they have been stagnant for the last four centuries, and have accomplished nothing in the empire that is not owing to the Christian minorities. The Turks have borrowed everything from other peoples, from their religion to their clothes, from their language to their art and literature. Thus, with a number of authors, their nomadic attributes come to the foreground in the 1870s. As opposed to the previous image of the Turks as an ancient ally with a rich history and culture of Islam – even if violent and sensual and inferior to the west – now we have the Turk as a nomad, whose history consists of ravage, plunder, and violence. It follows that as the Turks have made their history purely by force and power, once these begin to slip from their hands, they will be reduced to a nonentity. This is the major point in which their empire differs from that of the Britons. Rather than bringing civilisation, culture, and progress to the lands they have conquered – what the British like to believe about themselves – they have even destroyed the existing framework to the best of their ability and have added nothing in return. They still sit at the head of an Empire because the British allow them to.

Since the 1820s, Russia looms in the background of every memoir written about the Ottomans, like a dark, evil power waiting for the right

moment to destroy the Ottoman Empire and thus the British. It is clearly stated by most authors that the Ottoman Empire is only seen as a field of battle between the Russians and the Britons, before, as well as after, the Crimean War. The protection of British interests and the upholding of British prestige in the East are projected as the only reasons why the Turks are allowed to linger in Istanbul, why the sick man is allowed to breathe, and why the nonapplication of the declared reforms concerning the Christian subjects are overlooked. The weakening of the dread of Russia and increasing German influence over the Ottoman Empire simultaneously spell the end of both the need to uphold Ottoman independence in the face of Russia for the British, and the need for British protection and guidance for the Ottomans, resulting in the decline of British prestige -if not power- in the East until World War I. The only point which seems to unite the British and the Turks in these memoirs is their mutual realization that to give the Christian minorities equal rights or to allow Russian influence to rule would destroy the Turkish ruling-class and thus the Ottoman Empire, putting an end to British power and influence as well as Turkish residence at the Porte.

Not all western writers viewed the Turks with prejudice, nor did they all come to envision them in a parallel manner with the subjects in their colonies. As we have seen, there were pro-Turks like Urquhart who went as far as championing the harem and the virtues of Turkish home-life, writers like Pardoe who went to great lengths to show how different but deserving of respect Turkish domestic life was, and James Baker, who had great hopes in the reformation of the state and administration with a bit of honesty and

energy. We have a majority of authors ranging between the all-positive and pro-Turk views of Urquhart and the all-negative, anti-Turk views of MacFarlane or Frances Elliot. Many authors tried to dispel reigning suspicions about the sexual exploitation and confinement of women, the cruelty of the system of slavery, as well as the image of the Ottoman Empire as one of Greeks, Armenians, Jews and Turks at each others' throat. Thus, I agree with Mohammed Sharafuddin that "some conscientious and high-minded writers may be born out of a society that has been defined as imperial"³, as I also believe that the opposite conviction would be unfair and ahistorical. On the other hand, I do not believe that "Orientalism" rests on such convictions as that "the thought of all western writers was wholly conditioned by an all-enveloping cultural grid."⁴ I hope that I have been able to show that this was not the case, but that within the world of travel accounts and memoirs – even if not in Sharafuddin's world of narrative verse – there was a common basis of viewing the Ottoman Empire according to British values, morals, and politics, and although some authors defied some of the outcomes of this process in their writings, they consolidated and strengthened the others. These texts form a "unified discourse" in the sense that they pursue the same themes with the same intensity and often repeat and reaffirm or develop what has been said before, much more than they refute or ignore them. Although nearly all authors begin their works with a declaration of the unjustness and errors of previous travel accounts – due to a short stay, lack of opportunity or inclination to get to know the inhabitants,

³ Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism Literary Encounters With The Orient* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1996) p.ix.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.xvii.

the false information supplied by dragomans, personal misjudgements of the author and so forth – they usually end up repeating and confirming each other's conclusions, so it is never clear who these previous travellers are. What seems clear, however, is that in the fifty or so years from the 1820s, the inclination to see the Ottoman Empire as an inferior and dependent colonial space - as opposed to seeing it as a different civilisation worthy of some respect- and the Turks as a people fit to be ruled – although they played at ruling their own subjects more rigorously – gained ground.

Thus, together with many of the colonized peoples, the Turks increasingly came to be viewed – by some if not all – as a dependent people with no history, no culture, and no achievements. What differentiates them from the colonized are the mere trappings of being a master-race; ruling over lands increasingly torn apart by political and religious strife, and being allowed to survive due to the interests of the Great Powers, especially Britain. With the outbreak of World War I, and the ensuing Turkish War of Independence, the remains of the empire were shared by a variety of the nations living there, and the international balance of power took new forms. The “Ottomans” were buried in the dusty pages of history, and their legacy was a multitude of new nation-states and the tragic problems in the Balkans and the Middle East. But the memoirs written about the Ottoman Empire, with their dual function as fact and fiction, still live to shape the understanding of these events and peoples for future times. As we have seen, these works did not merely present a picture of the Ottoman Empire and its peoples for their

readers in the nineteenth century, but carried that picture into posterity, albeit with minor variations.

The negative presentation of the Eastern Christians undertaken to justify their subjection to the Turks in these narratives may also throw some light on Edward Said's ambivalence to the Turks. Being an Eastern Christian himself, and the target of such prejudice, Said obviously does not have recourse to such a strategy. How then, could he fit the Ottomans into his theory of the Western-Oriental power relations? The Ottomans, being an imperial power, but also Oriental and Islamic, would be disruptive to his theory. Thus, one of the few contexts in which he mentions them, apart from their imperial rule over the Arab world, is in their role as "the Sick Man of Europe", "being surveyed by Britain and France for its dismemberment"⁵ after World War I, when it, like most Oriental powers, has been relegated to its deserved position; that of a potential colonial space.

The second way in which the Ottoman Empire is mentioned at all by Said is connected to its other role; that of the imperialist. In both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, Said emphasizes the importance of having grown up as an Oriental subject in two British colonies; Palestine and Egypt, as well as having received a western education, in the formation of his outlook and his work⁶. This feeling of being an exile, of not belonging, also comes before us in his memoir *Out of Place*, an emotional and vivid account of his early years as well as insights into his parents' past. In this work, the

⁵ E. Said, *Orientalism*, p.223.

⁶ Said, *Orientalism* p.25, *Culture and imperialism*, p.xxx.

only reference he makes to the Ottoman Empire is his fathers' leaving Palestine "to escape conscription into the Ottoman army":

Later I read somewhere that a war had broken out in Bulgaria around 1911 for which troops were needed; I imagined him running away from the morbid fate of becoming Palestinian cannon fodder for the Ottoman army in Bulgaria.⁷

Later, we learn that while studying in America, his father Wadie:

Hearing the Canadians were sending a battalion to "fight the Turks in Palestine", he crossed the border and enlisted. When he discovered that there was to be no such battalion he simply deserted.⁸

What we have here is a very clear picture of the Ottoman Turks as a ruthless and hated imperial power. But unlike the British, the Ottoman influence on the formation of his parents' or of his own character is not discussed at all, and as in *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*, the Ottomans are largely ignored. Could it be that Said could not bring himself to come to terms with a Muslim Oriental power ruling over the Arabs, whereas the Western Christian empire was somehow easier to accept, and hence perhaps less hateful?

To find the answer to this question was not the main objective of this study. However, it does serve to highlight the major problem of both Orientalist and anti-Orientalist theories and works, of the present and of the past; the difficulty of representing the Ottoman Empire and the Turks in the language of imperialism, and thus of either ignoring them, or of resorting to the dual image: the Sick Man, a colonial space at the mercy of European powers who cannot decide how to share it, or, the ruthless and corrupt

⁷ Said, *Out of Place A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999) p.8.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.9.

imperialist power playing at ruling Christians, Jews, Muslims, Arabs and Greeks, Armenians and Albanians. Both ways, and in both Orientalist and anti-Orientalist works, what we have is a highly "Orientalized" image of the Ottoman Empire and the Turks.

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