

The Turks and The Balkans in Modernist Travelogue: English Representations of The Turks in “hidden Europe”

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ABSTRACT

Although there is a long tradition of writing on the Balkans as “hidden Europe” and Turks, primarily as conquerors of this peninsula, a discursive relation between the Turks and the Balkans is insufficiently researched. Contemporary studies reveal that perception of the Turks in 18th and 19th century oscillated between representations on brutality and hedonism. The interwar period brings new images and final reversal, transformation and discursive rupture in English and American representations of the “inner Other”. In the year 1923 Turkish Republic accepted European trends and brought new patterns of culture. This transformation influenced the image of Turks and the Balkans as well. Even though numerous stereotypes on Turks were reproduced on the Balkans, particularly in the 19th century when inhabitants of the Balkans were orientalized and became barriers of distinct features similar to: “brutality”, “warlike”, “laziness”, “self-contradictory”. Until the Balkan Wars, the representation of Turks in English travelogues became twofold. Turks are recognized as “civilized” oppose to Christian inhabitants of the Balkans and as victims of modernity. The aim is to examine the process of change and transformation the images of “the Turk” in English and American travelogues between two world wars and its influence on the perception of the Balkans in the same time.

Key Words: Turk; the Balkans; Travelogue; Britain; Ottomans.

Modernist Seyahatnamelerde Balkanlar ve Türkler: “derin Avrupa” da İngilizlerin Türkleri Sunumu

ÖZ

“Derin Avrupa” olarak Balkanlar ve bu yarımadaın fatihleri Türklerle ilgili uzun bir yazım geleneği olmasına rağmen, Türkler ile Balkanlar arasındaki ilişkiler yeterince araştırılmış değildir. Bu alanda gerçekleştirilmiş çağdaş çalışmalar 18. ve 19. Yüzyıldaki Türklerle ilgili “vahşet ve hedonizm” vurgusunu öne çıkarmaktadır. İki savaş arası dönemde “iç Diğer” in İngiliz ve Amerikan yazım söyleminde yeni yaklaşım ve dönüşümler ortaya çıktı. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti 1923 yılında Avrupa eğilimlerini kabul etti ve yeni bir kültür desenleri politikasını gündeme getirdi. Bu dönüşüm Türkler’in Balkanlardaki imajını da etkiledi. Balkan sakinleri üzerinde özellikle 19. yüzyılda kalıplaşmış “vahşet”, “savaş yanlısı”, “tembellik”, “öz-çelişkili” gibi özelliklerle anılma şeklindeki yaklaşımlar yeniden üretildi. İngilizce seyahatnamelerde Türklerin Balkan Savaşlarına kadar temsili iki kat oldu. Türkler Balkanlar ve modernlik mağduru olarak Hıristiyan ahalisine karşı “uygar” olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı iki dünya savaşı arasında İngiliz ve Amerikan seyahatnamelerindeki “Türk” imajının değişim ve dönüşümü ve aynı zamanda bunun Balkan algısı üzerindeki etkisini incelemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Türk, Balkanlar, Seyahatname, İngiltere (Britanya), Osmanlılar

Since seventeenth of the 20th century we have witnessed a renewed talk about travelogues. According to contemporary research, travelogue is considered a text that enables insight to simplified reality, stereotypes and prejudices that maintain the relation between discourse and power. At first, imagological research, translation studies and afterwards, postcolonial criticism pointed out new means of reading literature and various forms in which the depiction and images of others can be formed.

In the past twenty years they reveal Balkan as the Other of Europe. This part of the world was associated with Turkey, Near East, „inner Orient” or was regarded “hidden Europe“. But text on the Balkans is not only a source of stereotypes; it reveals the process of inventing “the Balkans and the Turks” and therefore their interaction on the level of representation. In these travelogues, the Balkan is not only a part of the Ottoman Empire but it is a paradigm of ethnic heterogeneity, place in which polycentrism of national identity, lifestyles, customs and languages are visible, but a place in which Europe can reflect problems of coexistence and tolerance. This is why the research of the text on the Balkans gives an insight into traveler’s perception of inhabitants that “traditionally” fit and does not fit into balkanistic discourse. The representation of the Turks stay inseparable from this popular literature; they precede shaping the Balkan identity, follow this process and finally define it. The travelers review on the history of the Balkans is actually a review on the history of Ottoman Empire, while reflections on the future of the Balkans interweave with new speculations on Balkan identity defined by “century long influence of Ottoman Other”. This connection begins with first travel accounts from the Balkans – ambivalent Orient or place ruled by the Ottoman Empire. In the 18th and 19th century Oriental world is created in the space of Europe as well in the space of the Ottoman Empire. Therefore our attempt is to research the ways in which constructs of „the Balkan” and “the Turk” interviewee, including and excluding each other. The research is focused on interwar period when old identities were questioned and new identities shaped. The interwar period is regarded a time of rupture, intersection between old and new values when roles were displaced and positions replaced. The travelogues from this period reveal radical changes in English, French and American perception of the Other. In this case, they testify on changed images of the Balkans and the Turks. These changes were stimulated by events that marked liminal period – forming Republic of Turkey and political and cultural milestones that included the Balkan. Equally they show in which way the long-term representations can be nuanced, changed, even transformed for the purpose of fixing ideological positions.

INVENTING THE TURK/INVENTING THE BALKANS

English and French literature on the other, from Middle age to the present day, introduce number of terms and ethnocentric images to signify external and inner confessio-

nal, ethnic, cultural otherness. Text is filled with images of Asians, Arabs, Indians and Jews. "The image of the Turk" is one of those who bear the burden of such otherness. The replacement of the "Muslim" with the "Turk" starts with Ottoman victories in the Middle East in early 16th century. It reveals the process of creating the substitute image on Islam with all meanings it had in European literature from Middle age until the present day. The fear of conquer and domination takes a form of Christian myths, so "the Turk" has been equaled with Satan (Varisco 2007: 73). The Europe secured with the help of images of the Other, representations of inner otherness and Islam, producing reflective images (Anidžer 2006: 33).

The richness of stereotypes on the Turks would be impossible to reduce and comprehend in only one study. The Turks were lead under orientalistic discourse oscillating and fluctuating between representations on brutality and sexuality (Kuran-Burçoglu 2006: 118). In the period of Ottoman expansion, the image was shifting from excitement and fear to legendary figure of dangerous and brutal Turks. By the end of 15th century, the representation on mighty conqueror and fair emperor which subjects live in peace was formed. In 16th century Turkish armada was defeated, and strategy of inferiorization has been included in representations of Turks. Later, in 17th century Turks were linked with cruelty, perfidy, and male hedonism, while in 19th century when imperial power was weakened, a new perspective on nostalgia, "dream and desire", mysteriousness, and enchantment of Orient became an important element of these images. According to this, a discourse on "the Turk" in the Balkans emerged as a mixture of mentioned elements and representations of Turks in European literature, from Middle Age to the first half of 19th century. It is clear that an important role in shaping this image had ideology, while time, space, culture and the author's intention were central elements in forming and transforming this image (Kleinlogel 1989: 119).

On the other hand, Balkan was depicted as marginal space inhabited with Balkans – depending on context "backward", "uncontrolled", "dependant on others", "freedom-loving". However, the interest of British and American travelers on the Balkans experience expansion only in 19th century. The research on images on the Balkans reveal this part of the world as a place in which unwanted events and images can be put off. In 19th century, it is depicted not only with the help of images on wars and conflicts, but using representations on "laziness", "shrewdness", "brutality" and other stereotypes that traveler from the West was regarded "oriental". Certainly, Balkan includes images similar to those on "borderline", "liminality", "warrior spirit", which enable shaping it as an inner, orientalized, but still European part. That is why the Balkanistic rhetoric does not stand out, separated from Orientalistic phenomenology, but interweave and overlap with it (Bakić-Hajden 2006: 20). In studies from 19th and 20th century, Balkan is represented as intersection, a crossroad between East and West, a place where inte-

rests of Great Powers meet and confront, from the time of Greeks and Romans, across Byzantine, France and Britain. This discourse is not only dominant on the Balkans, it comes from outside when travelers from the West were writing about it, comparing it with “Powder box”, “Cauldron of Europe”, “Network of world intrigue”, or “political labyrinth”. Although in last two centuries, in travelogue genre, a representation of Turks as conquerors dominates, interwar period opened a new, contrast representation of “The Turk on the Balkan”. This was the time when in Europe and America a new travelogue genre emerged. Its particularity was not only a fascination on some people of the Balkan, but a specific position manifested as anxiousness of incoming modernization, a fear of equalization of the world under the shelter of European culture.

The Balkan fighter and exiled Turk exchanged the roles. Five representations from interwar period became indicative when it comes to 1. English perception of the Turks on the Balkans; 2. reveal changed attitudes toward Turks and Christians on the Balkans, 3. show how political relations shaped images on the Turks and the Balkans as “inner Otherness” or “civilization kinsman” 4. Present process of inversion of the Balkans as conquered and Turks as conquerors. During the 20s of 20th century, a traveler of Scot and Serbian descent, Lena Yovichich notice “the harmless Turks”, conquerors from the past who became marginal participants of daily life in Serbia. David Footman introduces a figure of Esad Beg, a romantic personification of Turkey. A narrative on Esad Beg enables him to construct a romantic Balkan past inhabited with Turks. While traveling through Serbia Lovett Edwards Fielding was searching for Turkish fortresses as illustrations of romantic Balkan past. Rebecca West and Jean Bates tried to withhold “romantic Orient” from the “aggression” of civilization. The past of Balkan and Orient has been perceived as better, more pleasant, peaceful and most of all “romantic”. The world becomes a surface in which traveler reflect, trying to find remainders of “savagery”, “scented, luxurious and precious Orient”, “Balkan barbarians” and “rightful Turkish master”.

HISTORICAL REVIEW

In 19th century a numerable British publications had a purpose to question Eastern Crisis and include in debates on moral obligation on saving Christians who lived under the Turkish rule. Parallel with European colonialism and inventing Orient as susceptible for colonization, Turkey has been depicted as sick man of Europe and equaled with weakness and decadency. These images culminated in the time of Gladstone election campaign. The fundamental part of these discourses was playing with stereotypes on the “brutal Turks” and oppressed Christian people, but not without significant exceptions like Punch where his Gladstone’s moralizing was avoided and the Turks represented as victims of their enemies Slovene – the aggressors who strived to divide

Empire (Berber 2010). Divided representation on Balkan Christians who served as an instrument for receiving votes in political campaigns, reflected on fictive travelogues, keeping popular conviction on Eastern Europe as a place inhabited with backward people and ensuring possibility that brutality and lack of unity come from Ottoman conqueror (Berber 2010: 24).

After the Balkan wars, free countries showed impossibility to keep peace and co-operation. The liberation from Turkish rule, induce a discourse on balkanization of South Slavic people marking attitude for territorial fragmentation, antagonism and shaping an image of conflicting peninsula. The First World War and latter cultural vacillating that interwar period brought, added to ambivalent representation on the Balkans as marginal European who hesitate between traditional and modern values. The traveler's attitude towards Balkan people fluctuated from sympathy to critic directed to their "laziness", "inconsistency", "backwardness".

In the first half of 20th century, two fundamental political subjects dominated in Turkey: nationalism and aspiration for creating modern state (Espozito 2002: 706). This period was marked by forming a modern state which has been proclaimed in October 1923. Cultural changes that followed political changes, including abolition of the caliphate defined the turning point in the history of Turkey. In the West this changes were equalled with „progres“ and "civilizing process", while the very term civilization was synonym for West (Mantran 2002: 780). Former nominal leader of most of the Islamic world is suddenly recognized as "Occidental". Substitutive image of Islam has disappeared. For English travelers, Turkey has proved its affiliation to civilization.

The rise of Mustafa Kemal and the establishment of secular state, abolition of the caliphate and reducing the importance of religious institutions were followed by forming those similar to European. It enabled further shaping of image of modern Turkey in the frame of European cultural trends. The representation of "the Turk", becomes ambivalent with the potential to question image on "oppressed Christian people" and "brutal masters".

TRAVELERS IN THE BALKANS

As it has been previously mentioned, the interwar period brought not only political changes but changes on the level of travelogue genre. The form of war travel account was abandoned, while new form of romantic enthusiasm for traveling in remote, "free and backward" parts of Europe becomes its substitute (Hammond 2002: 168). The interwar traveler was in a search for a shelter in the ambient distant from industrialization, traffic and crowd, romantic childhood peace and rural. The Balkan becomes one of the last European destinations where culture was still "hesitating between tradition and modernity".

In the middle of 20s of 20th century, Lena Yovichich was traveling through Serbia in the attempt to understand daily life and reconstruct its history. Among passer-bys who draw her attention, she distinguished “The Turks similar to those from Ali Baba and forty thieves” (Yovichich 1925: 80). The Turk becomes fairy-like figure with inevitable fez who serves refreshing drinks” (ibid). The first representation of the Turk is placed in the main Belgrade Street, where former conqueror became bootblack. Turkey which has been provoking fear from the Middle age and strived to sustain its rule on the Balkans was represented through a figure of marginal participant of daily life in its former lands.

They are rather a disreputable looking crowd, all wearing the fez and obviously of Turkish descent. When trade seems slack, the bootblack tries to attract public attention by loud and insistent, though unintelligible cries, while he simultaneously taps his wooden box with the back of a boot brush (Yovichich 1925, 77).

Afterwards, she notices them on the market as sellers of refreshing local drinks. Still, they remind her on hero from “Oriental stories”. Orientalized, they are harmless participants of daily life.

Here also is the picturesque seller of ‘Boza’, (a cooling drink made of Indian corn). He is no doubt of Turkish descent, if not actually a Mohammedan, and always wears a red fez. Hung across his back, he carries a huge brass receptacle, - in shape something like what one imagines the jars in, ‘Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves’ to have been. When one comes to think of it, there is something of, ‘The Arabian Nights’ atmosphere about this quaint vendor of Boza. The passer-by is not allowed to forget the fact of his presence, for his strident cries of, ‘Ladna, ledena boza’, (ice cold boza) continually rend the air, and incidentally ones ear drums. In the height of the summer and right on to late autumn, the brilliant colourings at the market are worthy of a painter’s brush (Yovichich 1925, 80).

The exoticism of the past is demonstrated through hidden regret for exiled inhabitants or reflections on their marginalization. The discourse on the Turks is transformed – “brutal master”, is replaced with “small”, “poor”, “unfortunate”. During the twenties and thirties of 20th, the Victorian effort to preserve Ottoman Empire on the Balkans was well-known. David Footman was one of those who expressed open, romantic, regret for exiled Turks. In this, apparently 19th century manner, Footman expressed his regret for Turks. “The noble Turk” had refined characteristics: he was civilized and had sublime features. He was proud, dignified, and sleek. This is how; Footman shaped an image of “Good Turk”, a romantic representation of Orient, also present in text, a few decades before the fall of the Ottoman Empire. It is the personification of high civilization breathing its last. During the 20s and 30s Heathcote and Footman judged the Empire by the best examples of it – “good Turks”, representing them as gentleman who

deserve honor and respect, imperial admiration and literary monuments (Yovichich 1925, 123). Footman is visiting his friend Essad Beg who was trying to adapt the new social circumstances. Essad Beg is romantic metaphor of Turkey; this figure reveals features similar to kindness, vulnerability, displacing it from the Balkans (Yovichich 1925, 124). Essad beg is growing flowers with tenderness and care. He is skinny, fair and kind. The house where he lives reflects a tragic obsolescence of material culture and institutions.

Essad's place lies due north of Skoplje. We crossed the bridge, went through the bazaars and past the Kršumli Han, through the Turkish residential quarter with its mosques and blank mud walls, and out into the plain that lies between the town and the Skopska Crna Gora...The horses trotted silently on the dusty unmetalled road. Essad's villa was half-way across the plain, by a clump of trees. It was an old Turkish house of mud-brick, with a big garden enclosed by a mud-brick wall. Outside were cattle sheds and the little shanties of the family retainers. We drove in through the gateway. Inside it was a mess of tall sunflowers and rambling roses. Essad was waiting for me and we had coffee at a table seat under a sort of pergola. Then he took me off to see his garden and orchard. He was a men of about forty, of medium height and slender. He had blue eyes and fair hair and a short fair moustache. He spoke slowly and his voice was very soft (Footman 1935: 121).

Essad is orientalized, becoming Orient on the edge of Europe, while the Balkan must be directed to the modernization and occidentalization. Physically and symbolically, the Turk disappears from the Balkan, for the Ottoman Empire must be replaced with other imperial powers. Turkey does not have successors on the Balkan and there is no future for her.

We sat over it for a long time and I heard more about his difficulties. Essad's family had occupied the estate for over four hundred years. At one time they had been very rich. But the estate had fallen under the Yugoslavian Agrarian Reform measures. Essad had received no compensation as yet and did not think much of his prospects of getting any. He was one of three brothers. All had been educated in Stamboul. His eldest brother had been there when war broke out, had got a commission in the Turkish army and been killed on the Russian front. The other brother was in Stamboul now and kept writing to urge Essad to join him. But he found it hard to leave a place where his family had been so long. Besides, he had his mother to look after. She was getting old now. On the other hand he had nothing to stay here for. He had no son or nephew to take the place on when he died. And anyhow he knew there was no future for a Turk in Macedonia (Footman 1935, 122).

For Footman, nothing, not even friendly support will retain Turkey on the Balkan, which is the reason to regret for the absence of "Good Turk". His polarization on

“good” and “bad Turk” stays unclear, leaving the reader without explanation who was good, and who was bad.

I felt it, and told myself firmly that it was no use getting worked up and sentimental about Turks. It is easy to do so when you meet people like Essad with his breeding and his background and traditions. Though Essad was a particularly good Turk and there have been many bad ones, we should judge a civilization by its best products. The Turkish country gentleman in Macedonia stood on the whole for dignity, good manners, meticulous honor and a respect for the past. They are pleasant qualities but they have become out of date and sterile. What we want now is salesmanship, energy, machine-made idealism directed with an eye on practicalities and that form of public-school spirit which finds its perfect expression in the insincere bonhomie of a Rotarian Congress. Essad was quite right when he said there was no future for a Turks in Macedonia. There is nothing for him to do (Footman 1935, 124).

The noble gentleman has disappeared from small Balkan countries and even Turkey exposed to modernization. They are pleasant qualities but they have become out of date and sterile. What we want now is salesmanship, energy, machine-made idealism directed with an eye on practicalities and that form of public-school spirit which finds its perfect expression in the insincere bonhomie of a Rotarian Congress. Essad was quite right when he said there was no future for a Turks in Macedonia. There is nothing for him to do (Footman 1935, 124).

Negatively stigmatized Turks were replaced by good Turks – exiled people from the Balkan, those who only remind on bright civilization. They will leave their properties, adapt to reforms in Turkey and those in whole Europe, or disappear. Not only in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, when searching for the Other was the romanticist obsession, but also in 1920s and 1930s was the Balkans romantic. In the twentieth century, still being associated of primitiveness, variety, and diversity and intertribal wars incomprehensible to the West, the Balkans remained the inspiration for literary works based on romantic fascination. As it caused fear of wars and revolutions, of heterogeneity and disintegration, as it threatened with assassination attempts, Oriental truculence and horrified by its paradox, this part of Europe was coveted as one of the main topoi of romanticist journeys which fed the imagination of Western European writers.

In Romania, Jean Bates looked for the remnants of the quiet, mysterious, enchanted Orient. They were now only in the remains of material culture, making the Balkans incomplete in a way.

The reflections of water on ships and boats, mosques with thin minarets and indigo-black forest, the scent of roses coming from once Turkish gardens, were the breathing of the old Orient (Bates 1920: 13).

With the colonial expansion of Europe, particularly in the nineteenth century, orientalization of everything that is called the Orient intensified. Great part of the world symbolically situated beyond the borders of Northern, Western, some parts of Southern Europe and America was denoted as the Orient, as not belonging to Europe and the West. While in the nineteenth century it was equated with backwardness, variety of inferiority, but also with splendor and despotism, in the twentieth century nostalgia for the past appeared. The discontent caused by the industrialization and changes it had brought to social life ended in wishing for the past to return. The journey to the Balkans was one of such travels to the past, but there were increasingly fewer sights such as “thin minarets” and “fragrant gardens”. This is the reason why Rebecca West went to Kalemegdan to remember “the Oriental past”. Through the sturdy ramparts built by ancient people and strengthened by the Orient, the Occident started to break through, disturbing the peace of modern sculptures:

The water surface suddenly rippled and became rough, flickering silver in the places where the sunlight was forcing its way through grey and purple clouds. We shivered and sought a shelter in the fortress. It was enormous. It was shaped by the Oriental tradition which had obliged the ruler to represent his own greatness symbolically through the dimension of his palace. The labyrinth of passages and cells remained mostly the same as it had been when the Turks had retreated from there seventeen years before (Vest 2004, 362).

This insecure movement within the tough Oriental walls and romantic strolls are distorted by “civilization”, or “modernization” (Vest 2004, 358). It announces the coming of the new and the disappearance of the old and romantic, uncorrupted world whose preservation Rebecca West desired. This porosity of the construction of the uncorrupted and childish inquisitive world was expressed in Rebecca West’s fear of “the threatening degeneration”. The degeneration can emerge from the unnatural mixture and contact between the East and the West whose consequences are unknown. The degeneration is expressed as the projected fear of hybridity, of the mixture of inhabitants, and eventually, of the destabilization of the firmly determined identities.

DE-ORIENTALIZATION OF TURKEY AND BALKANIZATION OF THE BALKANS

The sublime imperial lord was transformed by the courses of modernization, and in English travelogues about the Balkans the negatively stigmatized Turk was placed into the context of „Balkan mentality“, thus confirming the permanence of the thought that „if there were no Orient, it should be invented“ (Burr 1935: 279). The orientalization of indolence, cruelty and patriarchalism was added to this construct, to this negative stigma. This is not only recognized in the one century old travelogues and in the quasi-

scientific studies of the period, but also in the modern academic discourse. A popular discourse is the one about the indirect Ottoman influence on the Balkans regarding all elements of everyday life which were not in the direct contact with the Ottoman sphere. There is in them, allegedly, a kind of reaction to the Ottoman rule, especially in terms of centralized despotism and administrative system. This is defined as the modification of the national culture which preserves some forms of the Ottoman social system. This perception of specific elements of culture has brought to the stereotypes about the tendency towards isolation in smaller territorial entities, local patriotism or distrust in authorities (Rot 2001: 194). This distrust, separatism and preference for fragmentation are an introduction into the balkanization which can be subsumed under the Orientalist discourse. Although the Ottoman Empire had been conquering in order to unite under its politics, the centuries long rule was represented as the cause of reactive separatism. As if the Balkan peoples, endeavouring to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire, had acquired the habit of fragmentation and, instead of the unity, they had built mutual distrust.

However, in spite of the political disappointment in the Balkans, a fresh form of romanticism could be noticed in the interwar period. While Hammond saw it as the change of the Balkanist discourse induced by the fascination characteristic of British travelers to the Balkans, the interwar inversion is more important – it replaced disharmony, confusion and barbarism with the new fascination for the East. Now the West and the East changed places. The West was burdened by the negative hue which colored industrialization and massiveness, and the East was desired as the place of wealth and harmony. Thus, the past was idealized, the desired East was actually the one from the remote past, while modernity was a source of the negative but inevitable. The interwar travelogues are often named modernistic, but its connection with the nineteenth century and Victorian system is still present. While the nineteenth century traveler in the Balkans detected “backwardness” or “brutality”, lack of civilization, the interwar traveler in all mentioned stereotypes emphasized “the positive aspect”. The “lack of civilization” of the nineteenth century was replaced by the “nostalgia for rurality” or “the longing for the past times”. Instead of “brutality” we can notice “free expression of uncontrolled emotions”, “uncultivated space” was replaced with “the idyllic rural sights”, “indolence” with “enjoying the natural state”, and “primitiveness” was not horrifying but wished for. All Victorian values were reversed to enable the inversion of the Us/Others dichotomy. In the same manner, the East and the West exchanged places. The once negative pole got a positive connotation (Hammond 2002: 170). Everything that had passed was missed at that moment. In this way, the perception of the Ottoman Empire was also being changed, becoming the reminiscence of the past, historical, former and thus better.

The four selected representations are only a fragment of the interwar image of the Turks in the Balkans. Interweaving and modifying the images of Turkey and shaping the images of the Balkans are complex processes which are to last for several centuries. The presentation of the Turks in the Balkans is carried through the channels of socialization and educational systems, proving that the presentations can resemble reality itself. Within the Balkan countries, and we will mention here the interwar Yugoslav example, it is not unidirectional as it may look like at first. Alongside with the presentations having a negative sign of dominance, ruling and oppression, the process of the identification with the former Ottoman ruler was in progress. The construction of Yugoslav character between the two world wars was based precisely on this ambivalence – the Turks are oppressors but also the closest cultural kinsmen. The so-called Yugoslav character was named “Oriental”. An ideal-typical Balkan obtained the character governed by Orientalism, and in the Balkans itself the rhetoric has two pivotal factors – the long rule of the Ottoman Empire and the lack of understanding the Balkans by the Great Powers i.e. the essentialized West. Thus, the lack of comprehension emerges from profound sensitivity, temperament, romanticism. The Orientalist discourse is only masked by the speech about the Balkans’ borderline position. In this way the Balkans is devised in the process of mixing cultural and genetic elements, forming a Balkan Turk, a Balkan Oriental or an Oriental Balkan. The interwar image arose as the result of the echo of the political changes that had happened in Turkey. On the other side, in the Balkans, the political processes and the involvement of the Great Powers did not seem to have yielded the desired results. The Balkans is still preserved as the image of tacit backwardness, the unrecognized part of Europe and this is the very perspective from which political events and social changes in Turkey are contrasted with the Balkans. Thus, Turkey is transposed from the Balkans, and ceasing to be an empire, and in this way a threat to Great Britain, it becomes the reflection (pathetically, wretchedly), at the same time looking like a memory of imperialism – the age which is exposed to modern criticism - but in a way that enables it to continue to last, though in a different form.

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