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FROM FRENK TO THE CIVILIZED: EUROPE IN OTTOMAN-TURKISH IMAGINATION[1]

Abstract

This study explores Ottoman and early Republican conceptions of Europe, showing how perceptions shifted according to political, military, and cultural contexts. In the classical period, Europe was viewed as inferior, hostile, and morally corrupt. Ottoman superiority, expressed through the ideology of gaza (holy war), positioned Europeans as "Frenk" in opposition to the heroic "Gazi." Military success reinforced this hierarchical view.

Following the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699), defeats forced the empire to re-evaluate Europe. Bureaucratic elites (Kalemiye) adopted European models as tools to strengthen their political influence against conservative groups such as the Janissaries and the ulema. This tension between reformists and traditionalists shaped Ottoman modernization, with key figures like Reşid Pasha using Europe diplomatically while introducing domestic reforms such as the Tanzimat.

A third conception emerged in the 19th century: Europe was technologically and scientifically superior but morally flawed. International exhibitions, particularly the Paris Expositions of 1867 and 1878, impressed Ottoman elites, reinforcing both admiration for progress and anxiety over decline. Intellectuals such as Ahmet Mithat and Sadullah Pasha emphasized liberty, science, and education as paths to renewal, while still criticizing Europe's imperialism.

During the Constitutional Era, debates over Ottoman identity crystallized into three ideological paradigms: Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism. Each relied on Europe as a

[1] Bu çalışma "Kelime, Kavram ve Terimler Üzerinden Osmanlı Türk Modernitesini Okumak" (OT2KT) isimli ve 121K982 numaralı TÜBİTAK projesi tarafından desteklenmiştir.

reference point—whether to emulate, resist, or adapt. Writers like Halil Halid and Ahmet Rıza also sought to counter European prejudices, exposing imperial hypocrisy.

In the early Republican period, Europe remained central, though America emerged as a new model. Thinkers like Falih Rıfkı Atay highlighted America's dynamism compared to Europe's stagnation. Yet, the notion of "being European despite Europe" persisted, demonstrating both dependence on and ambivalence toward the West. Ultimately, Ottoman and Republican intellectuals constructed their own modernity through continuous dialogue with Europe.

Keywords: Europe, Ottoman, Republic, Civilization, Imagination.

FRENK'TEN MEDENİYE: OSMANLI-TÜRK ZİHNİYETİNDE AVRUPA

Öz

Bu çalışma, Osmanlı ve erken Cumhuriyet dönemlerinde Avrupa'ya ilişkin algıların siyasal, askerî ve kültürel bağlama göre nasıl değiştiğini incelemektedir. Klasik dönemde Avrupa, aşağı, düşman ve ahlaken yozlaşmış bir coğrafya olarak görülmüştür. Gaza ideolojisi etrafında şekillenen bu bakışta Avrupalılar "Frenk", Osmanlılar ise kahraman "Gazi" kimliğiyle tanımlanmıştır. Askerî başarılar, bu üstünlük söylemini pekiştirmiştir.

1699 Karlofça Antlaşması'ndan sonra alınan yenilgiler, Avrupa algısında dönüşüme yol açmıştır. Bürokratik elitler (Kalemiye), Avrupa'yı hem model hem de siyasal güç aracı olarak kullanmış; buna karşılık ulema ve yeniçeriler muhafazakâr direnişi temsil etmiştir. Reformcu–gelenekçi çatışması Osmanlı modernleşmesinin ana eksenini oluşturmuş, Reşid Paşa gibi aktörler Tanzimat'ı hem içerideki iktidar mücadelelerinde hem de Avrupa diplomasisinde kullanmıştır.

19. Yüzyılda üçüncü bir algı ortaya çıkmıştır: Avrupa bilim ve teknikte üstün, fakat ahlaken zayıftır. 1867 ve 1878 Paris sergileri gibi uluslararası fuarlar Osmanlı aydınlarını etkilemiş; ilerleme hayranlığı ile geri kalmışlık kaygısını aynı anda beslemiştir. Ahmet Mithat ve Sadullah Paşa gibi isimler, özgürlük, bilim ve eğitimi yenilenmenin yolu olarak vurgularken Avrupa'nın emperyalizmini de eleştirmiştir.

Meşrutiyet döneminde Osmanlı kimliği tartışmaları Osmanlıcılık, İslamcılık ve Türkçülük ideolojik paradigmalarında somutlaşmıştır. Her üçü de Avrupa'yı ya örnek alınacak, ya direnilecek, ya da uyarlanacak bir referans noktası olarak görmüştür. Halil Halid ve Ahmet Rıza gibi yazarlar, Avrupa'nın önyargılarını ifşa ederek imparatorluk politikalarını eleştirmiştir.

Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde Avrupa önemini korusa da Amerika yeni bir model olarak öne çıkmıştır. Falih Rıfkı Atay, Amerika'nın dinamizmini Avrupa'nın hantallığıyla karşılaştırmıştır. Bununla birlikte "Avrupa'ya rağmen Avrupalı olmak" düşüncesi sürmüş, Batı ile bağımlılık ve mesafe arasındaki ikilem devam etmiştir. Sonuçta Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet aydınları, kendi modernlik projelerini Avrupa ile kesintisiz bir diyalog içinde inşa etmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Avrupa, Osmanlı, Cumhuriyet, Medeniyet, İmgelem.

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Introduction

"I wandered the land of the infidel and observed cities and stately mansion; I travelled the land of Islam and saw nothing but waste lands and ruins."

– Ziya Pasha

This study employs the methodology of conceptual history (Begriffsgeschichte) to examine Ottoman and early Republican perceptions of Europe. As developed by Reinhart Koselleck, conceptual history treats concepts not merely as linguistic tools but as carriers of social, political, and cultural transformations. In this sense, the concept of "Europe" functioned as a dynamic category whose meanings shifted across time, shaping and reflecting the trajectory of Ottoman-Turkish modernization.

The analysis approaches "Europe" on three levels: (1) in the classical period, through the religious and military dichotomy of Frenk versus Gazi; (2) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as refracted through bureaucratic struggles among cliques such as the Kalemiye, which instrumentalized Europe in debates on reform and diplomacy; and (3) from the Tanzimat through the Constitutional and Republican periods, where Europe was increasingly associated with modern concepts such as progress, civilization, culture, and morality. In this framework, conceptual-historical analysis is applied to a wide range of sources, including gazavatnames, ambassadorial reports, travelogues, literary works, and political treatises.

1. The Ottoman Conception of Europe in the Classical Period

The central aim of this approach is to reveal how "Europe" functioned not simply as a geographical reference but as a key element in the construction of social imaginaries. By tracing semantic shifts over time, this study demonstrates how the image of Europe operated both as a mechanism of othering and as a vital reference point for reform, diplomacy, and modernization within Ottoman-Turkish political thought. Where does Europe sit in the Ottoman-Turkish world view? How and in what way did the Ottomans conceive of Europe? There were three different concepts of Europe in the Ottoman psyche. The first one can be labelled "miserable" and Europe was "cursed" in comparison to the superior Ottomans. According to this vision, Europe is an inferior, heathen and hostile place for the early Ottomans. People inhabiting that continent are less than human. Ottomans establish their dominance over those damned people who live on that continent. Ottomans are superior, as they believe in Allah. Military success reinforced this viewpoint. For the world empire of Suleiman the Magnificent -- who provided order for his subjects and by dint of his superior power, the rest of the world, Europe is a place where misery is rife and chaos stalks the benighted lands. Europe consists of countries in grave need of the Sultan's help and civilizing

influence, such as France. In a letter to the French King Francois in the early sixteenth century, Sultan Süleyman presented himself in the following manner

I, Who am Sultan of The Sultans of East and West, Fortunate lord of the domains of the Romans, Persian and Araps, Hero of Creation, Champion of the earth and time, Padishah and Sultan of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, of the extolled Mekke and Medina the illustrious and Jerusalem the noble, of the throne of Egypt and the province of Yemen, Aden and Sana'a, of Baghdad and Basra and Lahsa and Ctesiphon, of the land of Algier and Azerbaijan, of the regions of the Kipchaks and lands of Tartars, of Kurdistan and Luristan and all many kingdoms and lands besides; Sultan Suleyman Khan, son of Sultan Selim Khan. You are Francois, king of the province (Vilayet) of France. (İnalcık, 2001: 127-128.)

Hegemonic Ottomans should establish themselves over Europe in its misery. A gazavatname (--travel book) (Vatin, 1999:163.) is a travelogue linked to the concept of "gaza", which is the struggle of believers against the unbelievers. This view completely dominates the Ottoman texts about the relationship between the Ottomans and the Europeans until the 18th century. In the gazavatnames the two ideas are that of "Gazi" and "Frenk" which referred to the Latin Christians. A Gazi is someone who performs gaza, fighting against the infidels. In the gazavatname the words Turk, Ottoman and Muslim are all associated with the concept of "Gazi". The strongest characteristics of "Frenk" are fearfulness and shyness, whereas bravery and heroism are inherent in the "Gazi". The Ottoman view of "Us" and "Them" in this period is completely encompassed in the conceptual pair of Gazi versus Frenk.

2. After Karlowitz: Defeats and the Re-conceptualization of Europe

The second phase of the Ottomans' view of Europe can first be detected when the "Invincible Turk" began to suffer defeats in Europe and was forced to retreat. The Ottomans were in turn forced to re-evaluate their concept of Europe and the beginnings of social equality between the Empire and Europe can be seen.

After the Treaty of Karlowitz, Europe began to be conceived in different ways among the powerful cliques operating within the Ottoman political system. Unlike the İlmiye and Seyfiye cliques, the Kalemiye, which was distinguished since its foundation as one of the two cliques focusing on increasing knowledge within the empire. The Kalemiye began to use Europe as a means of influence and power against the other cliques. Europe became a major influence on policy formulation affecting both political power and political thought. The efforts of the Kalemiye to convert the military empire of the Ottomans into a bureaucratic state was strengthened by the Sultan's legitimacy crisis. Both Ulema and Seyfiye had tried to question his legitimacy and so the Sultan felt himself obliged to adopt the Kalemiye's idea of new order.

There were two opposite poles in the Ottoman Empire. On the one side there was the Bureaucracy-embodied by the Kalemiye, made up of permanent envoys or ambassadors at large in, and interacting with, Europe. The Bureaucracy also consisted of the Ayans, who were ready to accept the new ideas springing from the scientific, economic and technological revolution in Europe, and to a certain extent, the Sultan, who was pursuing the return of absolute power he had in the past. On the other side there was the alliance between the Janissaries and the Ulema whose political view can be summarized as conservative. In other words, those two groups can be classified as status quo supporters and reformists. The conflict between those poles led to Turkish modernization. The Patrona Halil Rebellion in 1730, the dethronement of Selim III and ultimately the liquidation of the Janissaries in 1826 changed the direction of the Tanzimat and Meşrutiyet (Constitutional Era) and this process ultimately led to the Republic. This conflict was also the domestic element of the Turkish modernization story. This story had a foreign element too, which we will discuss later.

Ambitious Ottoman statesmen, nurtured in the political environment of the empire, tried to exploit any advantage on the path to promotion tempered by the effect of his social class. While Mehmed Said Galip Pasha who was promoted from foreign affairs minister to the standing of Grand Vizier, enthusiastically supported the abolition of Janissaries while his antagonist, Halet Efendi, strongly opposed this intention. Galip Efendi found a protégé, Pertev Pasha, and Pertev Pasha did the same with Reşid Pasha. Thus, Galip Efendi became one of the important actors in modern diplomacy and the reformist front in the history of Ottoman modernization. (Köprülü, 1979: 710.) Halet Efendi, Akif Pasha* and Hüsrev Pasha** were in the opposite camp, as traditionalists, and opposed Galip Efendi, Pertev Pasha (who incurred the wrath of his antagonist and was choked to death) (Turan,1979: 554-556; Tanpınar, 1978:242-246.) and Reşit Pasha. The conflicts were based upon prosperity and in a power struggle rather than in reforms. These ambitious statesmen perceived conservatism and modernism simply to personal prosperity.

As was mentioned above, Ottoman statesmen were connected with different political groups, and this fact had deep-seated effects on the ensuing power struggle. Moreover, these

* Akif Pasha's Tabsıra is remarkable for reporting the relentless conflict between Akif Pasha and Pertev Pasha. This work is also notable for shedding light on the conflicts between pashas and the effect of Europe on these conflicts. Vide. Akif Paşa, 1300(H),1882/1883.

** Hüsrev Pasha, the founder of the new Ottoman army, is known to have made use of the reforms for his personal prosperity though he was involved in reformist activities. In his letters Moltke paid special attention to Hüsrev Pasha and mentioned about his features and influence. According to Moltke, Hüsrev Pasha emulated the West. He decorated his office in the General Staff in accordance with European tastes and did not refrain from drinking champagne with Europeans. However, this was just a façade to keep his grip on power. In fact, he secretly hated and ridiculed reforms. Reforms were only a means to power, and the power was the sole passion of this old man. H. Von Moltke, 1995: 42: for the conflict between Mustafa Reşit and Hüsrev Pasha vide. İnalcık, 1999:41-45.

connections determined whether they were traditionalist (on the side of status quo) or reformist. We can understand neither Ratib Efendi nor Halet Efendi unless we take into account the environment of political struggle. In this context, we cannot draw a complete Ottoman portrait only with the opinions of Ratib Efendi or Halet Efendi. A portrait drawn from only one viewpoint always remains incomplete (Eldem, 1999: 189-199). 18th and 19th century Ottoman interior history is the history of conflicts between statesmen, and it is not possible to draw an Ottoman portrait ignoring those conflicts. The statesmens' differing attitudes towards Europe and their being modernist/reformist or traditionalist/conservative is related to a historical conflict that goes beyond their individual perceptions.

Kalemiye developed good relations with Europe in contrast to the Seyfiye and İlmiye. Thus, Kalemiye tried to come to power and remain in power using Europe's influence against its rival cliques and the Sultan. In a letter sent to the French National Assembly in July 1839 by London Ambassador Resid Pasha and Paris Ambassador Ahmet Fethi Pasha, the necessity of the Ottoman Empire's acceptance of a European legal system was referred to with the following expression: "*The integrity of Ottoman Empire's continuity, wellbeing and possessions is essential and important for the balance of power in Europe and for the general benefits of European states.*" (Kurdakul, 2000: 39) In another letter dated July 27, 1839, from the Grand Vizier the following opinion was expressed: "*We cannot progress without civilization. The civilization we need is European in origin.*" (Kodaman 1987: 73) Reşid Pasha, taking advantage of the conflict between European states, implemented a policy of balance and tried to provide continuity in the Ottoman Empire. In his report about Reşid Pasha, the ambassador of France in İstanbul stated Reşid Pasha's thoughts with these words: "*Sultan's desire and will is enough to carry out all the reforms easily as long as the great powers convince the sultan of the necessity of reforms with direct or joint intervention and show him the path he is supposed to follow.*"*** Reşid Pasha invited the representatives of foreign countries to the ceremony organized for the announcement of the Tanzimat and they attended this ceremony. When the French Ambassador's report is taken into consideration, it is clear that Reşit Pasha invited the representatives of foreign countries simply to give the Sultan the impression of European support. If the matter is surveyed through the reports of Engelhart and Canning, it can be seen that they treat the Tanzimat as if it became possible with the support of Europeans to help Ottomans. (Engelhart 2000; also, Pool, 1988).**** That is to say, they ignore the fact that the Tanzimat is an extension of Ottoman

*** French Foreign Ministry Archive, TURQUE (1841) Vol. 283, pp. 179-199, by transfer from Kodaman *1987:* 74. In Tezakir Cevdet Paşa gives information that confirms the French Ambassador's report: "Reşit Pasha created an alliance with the Europeans at that time and tried to settle the Egypt issue. However, he was trying to connect the Egypt issue with Tanzimat-ı Hayriyye and carry out both issues together."Cevdet Paşa, 1986: (1-12), 7.

**** Both of the reports take over the Tanzimat. Many researchers acknowledge the reports true without any criticism. The most extreme example of these studies is D. Mehmet Doğan 1979. Allan Cunningham attributes the Tanzimat to Canning in his study 1968: 245-264. Çağlar Keyder evaluates the Tanzimat within the world system. Keyder indicates that the Tanzimat was the first of the reforms the capitalist states that would radically

internal history, and it is a result of the conflict between status and power groups. They wholly believe that the Tanzimat is a direct result of pressure from European states. This is not true as the Tanzimat is not only a result of the pressures of external forces but also an extension of the domestic political conflicts[*****], such as the conflicts between Akif-Pertev Pashas and Hüsrev-Reşid Pashas. With the support of foreign powers, the clerks in the department of Kalemiye (Foreign Affairs) made reforms in order to seize and retain power, and one of those reforms was the Tanzimat, implemented with the aim of reconstructing the ideology (doxa) of the state. The basic problem is to evaluate the Tanzimat filtered through the personality of Reşid Pasha. If the matter is evaluated irrespective of the previous process, the Tanzimat is attributed to Reşid Pasha or to Canning. Careful reading and diachronic text analyses indicate that the Tanzimat, notwithstanding the person and the institutions, is the result of a long process that begins with Katip Çelebi and develops with the intellectual contributions of Müteferrika, Ahmed Resmi, Azmi, Ratıb Efendi, Baş Hoca İshak, Seyyid Mustafa, Mahmud Raif and Sadık Rıfat Pasha. The success of Reşid Pasha was to make use of the Edict of Gülhane as a diplomatic weapon against the Sultan and his political opponents in order to make them accept the reform easily; furthermore, he aimed to use it for the settlement of the Egypt issue with the help of the European great powers. (Davison, 1996: 47).

The bureaucrats who seized power regarded Europe as the mainstay of their legitimacy. Namık Kemal included Fuat Pasha's thoughts which are important in terms of political theory in an article published in *İbret* as follows:

"A state includes two powers. One comes from above and the other from below. In our country the power coming from above oppresses all of us. However, there is no possibility to create a power coming from below. Thus, we have to use power coming from the sides. That power is the foreign embassies." (İbret, Ramadan 1289: Number 46)

Europe's involvement in Ottoman political life proved to be decisive, and status and power cliques used Europe as means in order to reign over the others. Their opinions of

change the legal structure in order to provide a legal basis for the application of commercial contracts. In other words, irrespective of the Ottoman social and political structure all reform movements are attributed to the European States. Keyder 2000:36. Turkish intellectuals could not have developed an unbiased approach to the Tanzimat because they have been determining their position and attitude according to the Tanzimat. As the Turkish intellectuals' ideological stances affect their approach to the Tanzimat, the problem reproduces itself in a vicious circle. To have information about the Turkish intellectuals and academicians' unbiased approach to the Tanzimat, vide. Kazım Yetiş, 1994: 107-134.

[*****] Ubucini interviewed an Ottoman bureaucrat who supports none of the parties and is kept out of the affairs for this reason. The bureaucrat's critics dedication to the power struggle are remarkable. "The power resembles the top of a minaret, but there is one single place over there and the one who is on the top of the minaret should not allow anyone to go upstairs. If he allows, he falls down and his head is shattered. As you can see, there is a trap, a cliff lying below the minaret. Living in a constant doubt and spying the surroundings continually take all the time, and those who are busy with power struggle do not have any time to spare for state affairs." F. H. A. Ubucini 1977: 156.

Europe changed when they fell from power. In this sense, ironic situations arose in Ottoman-Turkish political life and thought. Reşit Pasha's apprentices Ali and Fuat Pashas followed a policy tending to France after they separated from their master. Reşid Pasha launched the first opposition against his own protégés when they came into power. He severely criticized the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856 that was enacted with Ali Pasha's efforts who hoped to gain influence with the European states. In an article, Reşid Pasha reminds his apprentices that European states would have the right to interfere with the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. (Reşid Pasha, 1305(H) 1887/1888: 53-72.)

3. Perceptions of Europe during the Tanzimat and Constitutional Periods

In the Ottomans' vision, the third viewpoint of Europe is that Europeans are superior to Ottomans in terms of technique and science, but miserable in terms of morality. I do not believe that we can give an exact answer to this question: Did Ottoman bureaucrats and intellectuals spontaneously go to Europe and decide that Europe was an advanced civilization? Or while constructing the view of a superior hegemonic Europe and an imperial Europe, did Europe use the dialectics of progressivist-reactionist and convince the Ottoman intellectuals and bureaucrats using epistemic pressure together with violence that orientals are lazy and ill? On the one hand there stands the Ottoman bureaucrat who wants to come into power via European techniques and science; on the other hand, there stands the European who wants to construct a superior European position over the miserable easterner. It is a complex situation.

It is quite thought-provoking that one of the basic concepts of Ottoman thought is progress itself. However, Europe forms its whole ethos on the basis of this concept. The idea of progress is a strategy that Europe uses very frequently in order to mold the east.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, natural sciences made great progress and the contributions of sciences and technical inventions to society introduced the belief in the benefits of progress (fortschritt, progressus) to 18th century European societies. Enlightenment thinkers believed whole-heartedly that society was in a state of progression as well as nature. The notion that 'man is the lord of nature', so that the ideology of progress was the product of man's efforts to position himself within the world. Attributing a strategic meaning, Europe used the ideology of progress both in the establishment of an imperial realm and in the exploitation of subjugated peoples. Concepts like primitive, barbarian and despot were produced as a result of the ideology of progress, and in the presence of all these concepts, Europe was glorified as a continent with an advanced civilization.

Europeans held splendid exhibitions in order to reinforce the belief that their civilization is an advanced one. Technical progress gave the European people the feeling that they were more advanced than others. Science and technology were regarded as the sole and

only way of development. The world fairs, which were attended by most of the Ottoman intellectuals, were a measure of industrialization and technological progress. In the words of Walter Benjamin, industrial exhibitions and world fairs were the pilgrimage places for fetishes that were called commodity. World's fairs distorted the exchange value of these commodities. Moreover, they created a framework in which the utility of these commodities was ignored, and formed a phantasmagoria invaded by people simply to spend time. The new industry also made it possible for the people to obtain manufacturing goods and enabled them to believe and enter into this phantasmagoria. (Benjamin 2002: 94.) European citizens bought into this new world of commercialism and acquisition at the cost of increasing escape from self and society. Kings, princes, diplomats, bankers, merchants, travelers and citizens from all over the world were flocking to the world's fairs and visiting the ostentatious palaces and halls where the latest devices and attractions were displayed. More than six million people visited the London World's Fair held in 1851, and nearly eleven million people visited the Paris Exposition of 1867. (Löscburg, 1998: 126.) The fair was like a mighty power that brought together millions of people from all over the world and it was a huge temple that brought together the whole world to worship technology, the new god of imperialism.

Two Ottoman travelers visited the London Exposition in 1851.[******] One of them is Mehmet Rauf[*******] the author of Seyahatname-i Avrupa. The other was Süleyman Efendi[********]

[******] As Nazım Bey and Miralay Mesud Bey many officer joined The Great Exhibition of 1851. BOA.İ.HR, 10746, BOA.İ.HR, 10669, BOA.İ:HR,10995 This Ottoman officer affected European civilisation. Vanke, 2008: 193.

[*******] Mehmet Rauf was Amedi Divan-ı Humayun Hulafası. Mehmet Rauf Efendi also attended the Paris Exhibition of 1867. BOA, MKT.MHM,354/19.

[********] Şükran Özler and Baki Asıltürk were unable to determine who was author of the book Seyahatname-i Londra. Özler 1957, Asiltürk 2000 and also Asıltürk, 2013:38. Erkan Serçe argues that Mehmet Rauf is author of Seyahatname-i Londra. Serçe 2007. Whereas Mehmet Rauf wrote Avrupa Seyahatnamesi in 1851. Seyahatname-i Londra was published in 1853. Actually there are two travel books and two authors. However Serçe is not aware that there are two travel books and two authors . The author of Seyahatname-i Londra set out by Tagus Steamer. He landed on the island of Malta. Fiktet Turan traced the specific Tagus Steamer. He came across the name Soloman in the custom records in Malta. Turan has suggested that Soloman (Süleyman) is the author of Seyahatme-i Londra. Turan didnt find any document relating to the identity of Soloman in The National Archives. Turan 2009: 4-5. However I came across a document relating to the identity of Soloman in The National Archives. A British Offical asked the Ottoman Ambassador, Kostaki Musurus Pasha, "Who are Süleyman, İbrahim and Ressam?". Musurus Pasha answered they were students of ship building travelling to the Royal Dockyards at Portsmouth. As we have learned from documentary evidence, İbrahim and Ressam Efendi discharged from her Majesty's Prince Regent at Musurus Pasha's request. Süleyman stayed in London. Ressam and İbrahim returned to İstanbul PRO.FO 78/921(24. Feb.1852-28 Feb.1852)) Later Süleyman also returned to Istanbul. I found a document relating to the identity of Süleyman in the Ottoman Archives. As we have learned from this document, Süleyman and Ressam Rafel were employed in the Tophane-i Amire which was the center of the arms industry. Rafel was also a painter. I am guessing that Süleyman and Rafel were on a secret mission in England. They had gone to examine the industrial instruments in the Great Exhibition. I believe that Süleyman and Rafel were industrial spies. Because of this situation, Süleyman obscured his identity in Seyahatname-I Londra. Cemil Meriç argues that Aleko is author of the book of the Seyahatname-i Londra. But he doesn't cite any evidence. Meriç, 1980: 220. Aleko did not author any travel books. He translated Resimli Fransa ve İngiltere Seyahat ve Sefaretnamesi. Aleko was a translator in 1834 in the Embassy in London. BOA, HAT, 1204/47268 Author of Resimli Fransa ve İngiltere Seyahat ve Sefaretname is Beylikçi Nuri Efendi

who was the author of Seyahatname-i Londra. Both of Mehmet Rauf and Süleyman Efendi were impressed by this fair. We can easily see this impression in their reports.

The Ottoman Sultan, Abdülaziz, went abroad for the first time on the occasion of the world's fair. The Paris Exposition of 1867, attended by Sultan Abdülaziz as a guest of honor, was the most glorious fair in which all the phantasmagoria of capitalist culture was displayed. The Sultan and his attendants were considerably impressed by this fair.******** Prince Murat and Prince Abdülhamit, who were traveling with Sultan Abdülaziz were also impressed by this fair, like their uncle. Murat V, who ascended the throne in 1876 and whose reign lasted for three months, is known to have uttered the expression during this travel: "If we cannot resemble them, they do not let us survive." (Iacovella, 1998: 24.) In Murat V's words the pressure of Europe can be felt: "If we do not adopt their civilization, we find ourselves in the steppes of Central Asia." The intellectuals of the period are also observed to have been of the same opinion. In this context, the necessity to transfer European civilization and science to the Ottoman Empire arose as a result of the military, economic and epistemic imposition and challenge from Europe rather than being a spontaneous situation. Europe's increasing pressures, military and technological impositions, dismissive attitudes towards Ottoman ontological and epistemological fields, progressive and evolutionist conception of history and showing itself as an advanced culture, led the Ottoman administrators to realise the deeply-felt belief that they had fallen behind the Europeans. Thus, a new vision and image occurred: Europe is advanced, whereas Ottoman Empire is backward and uncivilized (Şirin, 2009).

The Paris Exposition of 1878 has a significant impact on Sadullah Pasha's *19. Asır Manzumesi*. Pasha participated in the exposition and was very impressed. In his writing on the experience, Europe is described as an earthly paradise. Pasha states his formula for the establishment of such a paradise in the world: *In front of the central door a statue of liberty holding a scepter and sitting on a chair welcomes you. With its appearance and attitude the statue stands as if it was going to deliver a speech to the audience: O dear visitors! While having a look at the fascinating exhibition of development, do not forget that all this progress is the work of liberty. Tribes and nations achieve happiness thanks to liberty. In the absence of liberty there is no safety, in the absence of safety*

who was the Ottoman Ambassador. I have previously surmised that Beylikçi Nuri was author of Resimli Fransa ve İngiltere Seyahat ve Sefaretname. Şirin, 2009: 252. As I have learned from this document in the Ottoman Archives, I am sure that Beylikçi Nuri wrote Resimli (Picture) Fransa ve İngiltere Seyahat ve Sefaretname in 1834. BOA, HAT,46430/K/1174. There are 15 pictures in the book. Translator Aleko Efendi was also painter. He probably illustrated the book. For more, see an analysis of Seyahatname-i Londra: Wagner, 2013:229-264.

******** Particularly Sultan Abdülaziz affected by Navy Power in Paris. Her Majesty's Paris ambassador reported that Sultan Abdülaziz was particularly affected by the Navy. He wrote that "If we make a big show of the navy, Sultan Abdülaziz will be affected by this show". PRO, FO 78/2010. Actually, A big naval show was made on 26th July 1867 in Portsmouth. Pro, FO 78/2010, p 169. When Sultan Abdülaziz returned to his country, he purchased many ships from foreign countries.

there is no wealth, and in the absence of wealth there is no happiness. (Sadullah Pasha, "1878 Paris Ekspozisyonu", Akyıldız, 2011: 377.)

It is notable that the Exposition Universelle of 1889 held in Paris on the centenary of the French Revolution impressed Ahmet Mithat, and by this means the belief that the West is advanced, but the East is uncivilized settles in the centre of his literature precisely. Ahmet Mithat left the exhibition with a sense of fascination just like Sadullah Pasha and the other Ottoman bureaucrats and intellectuals. What the organizers of the exhibition wanted, was exactly this impact. The exhibition was the representation of the new world by which the West demonstrated its superiority. This exhibition was visited by 32 million people. The "Machinery Palace" section attracted Ahmet Mithat's attention the most. For a techno-maniac Ottoman the "Machinery Palace" was a special area where Europe demonstrated its superiority. The note in *Avrupa'da Bir Cevelan* indicates how Ahmet Mithat was impressed: "Today after seeing the machines, I realized that Europe has achieved such an astonishing degree of material progress." (Ahmet Mithat, 1307 (H) (1889/1890): 656.) Just like other intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire and non-European countries like Egypt, Iran and Japan, Ahmet Mithat either could not see the imperial intentions behind the exhibition or did not want to see. He wanted to believe that this imperial intention would be curbed after transferring the technique and science of Europe.*********

The system of Kalemiye, which wanted to institute its own power thanks to the technology and science of Europe, sought to transfer European knowledge in order to transform the militaristic empire into a bureaucratic state. This was an attempt to change the political system on the basis of European knowledge. Ottoman intellectuals used to agree that the old knowledge could not produce anything new, and the political sphere had to be reconstructed with concepts borrowed from Europe.

The bureaucrats in power such as Reşit Pasha, Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha, the intellectuals like Şinasi, Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha who are leading the opposition especially against the monarchy of Ali Pasha, and bureaucrats like Münif Pasha and Hayrullah Efendi (Hillebarnd. 2013a: 119-151) who think that Ottoman development can only be possible

********* William A. Drew who visited The Great Exhibition in 1851 could see the imperial intent behind the exhition. The Great Fair has influenced the people of -- other countries to bring their products and manufactures -- for exhibition. Those nations had a motive immedately selfish. (Wiliam A. Drew, 1852: 324-325). But another American traveler was mesmerized by The Great Exhibition. (Zadock Thompson, 1852). After The Great Exhibition some Americans began to think that "We often talk as if we were the only civilized nation on earth… It is time that the conceit was taken out of us." (Robert F. Dalzell, 1960: 44). Horace Greely has written that how the British Press had created a general impression that the Americans Exposition of Industry was a mortifying failure, and when even some of the Americans in Europe, taking their cue from the Press, were declaring themselves "ashamed of their country" because of such failure. Greely, 1851:vi. Travelers' descriptions who participated in the Exhibition indicated that British showed that no matter how developed the industry and technology all over the world.

through education, perceive Europe in a different manner in the period of the Tanzimat. Those in power, reach the consensus that Ottoman presence is dependent on diplomatic relations with Europe and the recipe for survival of the state is to conduct a balance policy taking advantage of the conflicts between European states. On the other hand, opponents violently opposed European interference in Ottoman internal affairs. The opponents thought that Europe intended to colonize the Ottoman Empire, so it was not possible for Ottomans to be accepted into the European family. However, all three groups agreed on the superiority of Europe. They all redefined Europe and their own society within the framework of modern European episteme and East-West dialectics. In spite of its superiority in many areas, European civilization was flawed in terms of morality. The attempts to create a more humane civilization out of the combination of the European and Ottoman models reveal the Ottoman intellectuals' approaches to the matter in the period of the Tanzimat. Europe was both decent and wicked.

The generation of the Tanzimat criticizes its own society over the other and wants to reestablish the society over the other. They borrow the concepts like country, nation, liberty, equality, fraternity, public, education, labor and ignorance from Europe. Within the framework of these concepts, they support a parliamentary order in favor of the public that is accompanied with positivist science. Both they and their country also have a name and their country's name is not Memalik-i Osman, but Turkistan. The state is not for the benefit of sultan and the noble classes; it is for the benefit of the citizen. They wish to change the center of the Ottoman universe from state to the public and from the Sultan to the individual. They undertake the duty of social engineering with the concepts borrowed from Europe.

Travel Books such as those by Ahmet Mithat, Avrupa'da Bir Cevelan (1890) (Akyıldız, 2013: 203-226), Karçınzade Süleyman Şükrü, Seyâhâtü'l Kübra (1893), Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, Avrupa'da Ne Gördüm? (1891) and Tuna'da Bir Hafta (1911), Mehmet Enisi Yalkı, Avrupa Hatıralarım, Alman Ruhu (1895) (Daşcıoğlu, Gürses, 2012: 315-328), Mustafa Said Bey, Avrupa Seyahatnamesi, (1898) Şerafettin Mağmumi, Avrupa Seyahat Hatıraları (1910) (Agai, 2013: 29-75), Tunalı Hilmi, Avrupa'da Tahsil (1903),Necmeddin Arif, Paris'te tahsil (1890), Selim Sırrı Tarcan, Bizce Mechul Hayatlar: İsveç'de Gördüklerim (1908-1910) were more frequently published during The Constitutional period (Hillebrand, 2013b: 53-77).

4. Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset and the European Image

The period of the Constitutional Era emerged as a result of the search of bureaucrats and intellectuals for a new political and social order. Abdulhamid II contributed to the emergence of three paradigms of Turkish thought by suspending the constitutional administration and strengthening his absolute monarchy. These three paradigms were named by Yusuf Akçura in 1904 and emerged as a manifestation of the modernization efforts. Akçura

published Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (The Three Types of Policy: Türkçülük, İslamcılık, Osmanlıcılık) as a series of articles in the Cairo based newspaper, "Turk". Ziya Gökalp published an article entitled Üç Cereyan (The Tree Currents) in 1913 in the Journal "Türk Yurdu". Gökalp's text focuses on political processes internal to the self. They are modernization (Muasırlaşmak), islamisation (İslamlaşmak) and Turkification (Türkleşmek). Another common characteristic of these there paradigms is that they were formed on the basis of the European image. Three paradigms Turkification, Islamisation and Modernisation, the castles of free thought were expounded in three periodicals. Turkification in *Türk Yurdu*, Islamisation in *Sebilürreşat* and modernisation in *İçtihat* and these turned into an ideological way of thinking. When these three periodicals are analyzed simultaneously, the importance of European impression, perception and image on the three thoughts is evident. The thinkers of the three paradigms sought answer to the question: Which aspects of European civilization should be imitated? *Sebilürreşat* sent Ferit Kam to Europe with the aim of "recognizing the essential nature of European civilization and understanding the scientific institutions, moral and social structure and technology of Europe". Ferit Kam's impressions of Europe were published in *Sebilürreşat* under the title of "Avrupa Mektupları" Letters from Europe between 24th July 1913 and 2 January, 1914. (Ferit Kam, 2000: 5.) The leading figures of the period like Ahmet Hamdi Aksekili, Mehmet Hayrettin, Kolçali Abdülaziz, Mustafa Rakım, Ömer Rıza Mısırlı, Mustafa Sabri, Ahmet Cevdet, Eşref Edip, Salahattin Nuri and Ahmet Fuat also published their impressions of Europe in the same periodical. In *İçtihat*, Abdullah Cevdet explained the new society of his dreams on the basis of his "What kind of Europe" ideal. İbrahim Hakkı, Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp published their articles on Europe in *Türk Yurdu*. The European image of these three periodicals is important in terms of indicating the difference in the three thoughts was formed on the basis of differing perceptions of Europe. Ottoman thought of the Constitutional Era was born out of a perception of Europe. In essence, all three thoughts were born and flourished in the Ottoman country as a manifestation of modernization. The new generation of Westernist introduced a new counter concept to civilization: hars (culture). The relation between civilization and culture was expressed by Şemseddin Sami and Ziya Gökalp. Although Europe was represented as more civilized, it was still represented as less moral, less harmonious and more hypocritical. In other words, civilisation was not Western, it was comtemporary. Hence, it was possible to become civilized without becoming westernized. Abdullah Cevdet opposed the idea of Gökalp. He thought that civilization and culture (hars) were inseparable. It was not possible to become civilized without becoming westernised at the same time.

As has been said, the late Ottoman intellectuals sought answers to the question of "Which aspects of Europe will we imitate?" Besides, they continued to ponder the matter that Europeans had unrealistic knowledge of the East, especially about the Ottomans. The ignorance of European public opinion about both the Ottoman country and society was on the

agenda of the late Ottoman intellectuals like Namık Kemal whose article entitled "Europe does not know the East" was published in *İbret.* Unlike Namık Kemal, the late Ottoman intellectuals were engaged in informing European public opinion instead of Ottoman public opinion. Halil Halid, who was the first Turkish instructor in Cambridge, was undoubtedly the leading figure in charge of such an activity. Spending most of his time in England, Halil Halid wrote the book *The Diary of a Turk* in 1903 with the aim of revealing the prejudice against Turks in England and informing the British about the Turks. (Halil Halid 2008.) He also strove to raise awareness of the peoples of the East against British imperialism. In 1904, he wrote another book entitled *A Study in English Turcophobia* and it was published in English and French. Halil Halid expressed in his book that the British intended to found a large colonial empire in Asia and concealed their colonial desire by claiming to bring peace and prosperity to Asia. In 1907, Halil Halid wrote *Hilal ve Haç Çekişmesi* which had a great impact both in England and in the Islamic world. (Halil Halid 1997)

The British policies towards the Ottoman Empire deeply affected the views of Ottoman intellectuals concerning Europe. The image of imperial Europe became clear in the eyes of Ottoman intellectuals. The outbreak of the First World War after the Balkan Wars forced Ottoman intellectuals to reconsider Europe and European civilization. While their country was in a war for survival with some of the European states, intellectuals like Ahmet Rıza were involved in this war with their pens on the intellectual battlefield. Ahmet Rıza wrote his book *Batı'nın Doğu Politikasının Ahlaken İflası* in Paris in 1922, two months before the great victory. Evoking the deep impact of events in every line, this book explains the reasons for the Turkish war of survival to European public opinion and declares that the policy towards the East adopted by European imperialism is morally bankrupt. In this book Ahmet Rıza underlines that viewing Turks as a brutal, barbarian and uncivilized nation is a policy beyond ignorance. Creating the belief that Turks are brutal, the British seek to ensure the legitimacy of eliminating them. (Ahmet Rıza 1982). Ahmet Rıza, like Halil Halid, tried to inform European public opinion about Europe's imperial desires and repair the image of the Turk. On the other hand, he tried to raise awareness of Muslims by telling the Muslim world about the current status.

"How does Europe know us?", "Do we need to introduce ourselves to Europe?" and "How should we introduce ourselves to Europe?" were the most important questions Ottoman intellectuals pondered. The fact that European people regarded the Turks as an uncivilized, barbarian and brutal nation was a common problem of the late Ottoman intellectuals. Worrying about this issue, İsmail Hakkı Baltacıoğlu gave a lecture entitled "How Europe knows us" in Dar'ül-Fünûn on April 27, 1913. In this lecture he portrays the shallow knowledge of the Europeans about the East and the Ottomans through his own experiences and underlines that the Turks must introduce themselves to Europe. The attitude adopted by the Europeans during the Balkan Wars also influenced İsmail Hakkı deeply, like other intellectuals. Thus, he began to rethink about Europe. At the end of the lecture he refers to this

issue. *"O civilized Europe! Do you not have mercy and justice that you condone the thuggery of the Bulgarians and the Greeks who slaughtered our sons and raped our women? O civilized Europe! Do you not have any conscience that you consent such a bright and magnificent civilization with its mosques, fountains and all high officials to be violated by the uncivilized enemies?... Do you not see that there is a nation who wants to survive despite all difficulties? And this nation deserves to exist…"*(Baltacıoğlu, 1329(H) 1911: 28.) İsmail Hakkı's last words are the common dream of the Ottoman people. This dream provided them the strength to carry out and win the War of Independence against the imperial forces.

5. The Early Republican Period

Just as in the Ottoman period, travel writings also have an important message in the Republican period. The Republic's elite, who want to create a new society and generation, regarded travel as a tool to educate the public. At the same time travel books were an indication of the quest of the new regime for a role in the world. Important journalists of the Republican period, like Falih Rıfkı's writing about his travels, indicate that the traveler was still an important catalyst for modernization. Searching for a model for the new Republic, Falih Rıfkı made great efforts to educate and mold a new generation with the help of his travel impressions.

Falih Rıfkı Atay in 1927 tells about his travels to Latin American countries, especially Brazil in his book *Deniz Aşırı* published in 1931. Atay published some notes on these travels in *Hakimiyeti Milliye* (the official journal of the CHP republican party) in 1927 and later released his book, *Deniz Aşırı*, using unpublished sections of his travel notes. Stating the following, Atay underlined the importance of his travels: "We will create a new locality and elite. The new locality is Ankara, and the new elite will be educated in the new wisdom and culture institutes of Ankara. The young bloods who are ready to discharge their duties in every part of their homeland and overcome all their weak senses with their hope and enthusiasm will create The New Turkey. These young bloods will be educated with this discipline. When they adopt an idea, they will struggle to carry out that idea. The new world is the work of this discipline." (Atay 1931: 4-5.) Atay, unlike the Ottoman intellectuals, looked for a new model that was not beholden to Europe. Instead he held up the new world, America, as a model for the new Turkey. According to Atay, Europe was more cumbersome and slower than America. America was the center of the new world and more vibrant and energetic. Therefore, America should be the role-model for Turkey. (Atay,*1931*: 38-42.) He considered America to be the peak of Western Civilization. America was the new dream of Turkish distinguished intellectuals, the new leaders of the nation-state.

In 1930 and 1932 Atay traveled to the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy in 1930 and 1932, and he told about his observations during these travels in his book entitled *Faşist Roma Kemalist*

Tiran Kaybolmuş Makedonya. This book consists of his observations, especially on Italy and on Macedonia, Albania and Greece in the Balkans.

Two years after from his travels in 1930, Atay visited Russia and Italy again. His book entitled, *Moskova-Roma Ankara* (1932) is based on these journeys. Both countries are presented as the two best examples for Turkey in this book. Atay observes both countries closely during the period of extreme economic hardship during the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Falih Rıfkı Atay visited London and Paris during the London Conference of 1933, and reported his observations and assessments in his book entitled *Taymis Kıyıları* (Selçuk Şirin, 2009).

Atay's observations on India at the end of World War II take place in *Hind.* Atay is not in search of a model during his travel to India. He aims to show the reader, via the example of India, the process of modernization taken by the young republic. After many years, while visiting India in search of Atay, Niyazi Berkes tells the reader in *Asya Mektupları* that republican modernization is the right direction for progress. The literary elite of the republican era inherited their characteristics from the Ottomans: They either criticize their own social and political patterns via idealized states such as Europe and America or legitimize their own social and political patterns via marginalized states of Asia and Iran.

In the works of Burhan Belge, one of the important figures of the Kadro Movement, the image of Europe is situated in the center. Analyzing his articles in Hakimiyet-i Milliye between 1928 and 1930, it can be concluded that he had the desire to establish a new social order via a continuous criticism and comparison of Turkey with Europe. (Yıldız 2011: 85-88.)

Yakup Kadri criticizes European civilization and the East via an easterner in *Alp Dağlarından ve Miss Chalfin'in Albümünden*. Moreover, just like Loti and Farer, he deals with the critique of the East and the ignorance of Europe about Turkey and Turkish people from the perspective of a Turkish-friendly British woman. This style of narration had been used before Yakup Kadri; this is a form of writing that James Molier used in *Hacı Baba'nın Maceraları*, *İsfahan* and *İstanbul ve Londra*. Miss Chalfin sends letters from İstanbul to her master, James. In our opinion, using this technique Yakup Kadri deliberately makes a reference to James Molier and so links the two writings from different periods of Turkish history.

In *Alp Dağları* Yakup Kadri provides the comparison between the East and the West after the critique of Europe of the period. He explains the reasons why European civilization is superior with the following words: *"Are we lower than them in terms of intelligence? Are we weaker than them in terms of character? What are the virtues that make their progress possible? What are the deficiencies that make us fall behind? We should not try in vain to find excuses. What makes European progress is neither their intelligence nor character. It is their enthusiasm and cheerfulness that we regard as insanity. This insanity enables them to cope with dangers and the hardest factors of*

nature." Then he addresses the problems of his country, and tries to disclose the secret of civilization by praying, as in the following lines: *"O my dear God, when will you bestow this childish enthusiasm upon the Turkish nation? O my dear God, when will you make the secret of civilization visible to the Turkish nation?"* (Karaosmanoğlu 1942: 49.)

The intellectuals close to the command of the revolution such as Falih Rıfkı, Burhan Asaf, Şevket Süreyya and Yakup Kadri idealized America and Europe in their works. Moreover, they criticized the outdated values of their own country via this idealization. As two World Wars revealed the imperialist desires of Europe, these intellectuals viewed Europe with caution. However, they could not completely break away from European civilization and look for another alternative. The idea of "being European despite Europe" which was inherited directly from the Ottomans was adopted as an ideal. Of course, we cannot ignore the attitude, authoritarianism and the symbolic and actual physical violence of Europe, which tempers this adoption. Many non-European societies continue to believe that they can only progress based on the Western model.

Conclusion

Ahmet Mithat Efendi's notion of the "right kind of Westernization" is not merely a cultural reaction specific to his time but one of the most persistent intellectual motifs in Ottoman–Turkish modernization. This ideal, as formulated in his works, represents both the continuity and the inner contradictions of the Tanzimat intelligentsia's project of "civilizational transfer." The synthesis Ahmet Mithat envisioned to be Western in science and technology yet Eastern in spirit was not a historical possibility but an ideological desire. This desire functioned as a compensatory form against the epistemic asymmetry that the Ottoman world experienced vis-à-vis Europe. Thus, his vision of "proper Westernization" embodies both the ideological justification and the existential tension of the modernization process itself.

This tension, vividly dramatized in *Felatun Bey and Rakım Efendi*, would later resonate throughout the entire corpus of Turkish literature. From Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem's *Araba Sevdası* to Halit Ziya's *Aşk-ı Memnu*, from Yakup Kadri's *Kiralık Konak* to Tanpınar's *Huzur* and Atay's *Tutunamayanlar*, one can trace the same cultural pendulum between East and West that Ahmet Mithat first articulated. Turkish literature has long attempted to define its identity within this oscillation. In this sense, Ahmet Mithat's "right Westernization" is not simply an intellectual stance but a *cultural destiny* a quest that is endlessly repeated yet never fulfilled.

The failure of this ideal, however, cannot be attributed solely to historical contingencies; it stems from the structural asymmetry inherent in modernization itself. The Europe in which capitalism and modern science were born presented modernity not as a model to emulate but as a form of hegemony. The Ottoman intellectual, even when aware of this imbalance, could not escape it; he critiqued modernity from within its epistemological

framework. This explains why Ahmet Mithat's and his contemporaries' attempts at synthesis were destined to remain inconclusive. Their project of "proper Westernization" sought to resist Eurocentrism by speaking its very language, thereby reproducing what it aimed to transcend.

Viewed from today's perspective, Ahmet Mithat's utopia emerges not only as an ideal but also as a critique of modernity itself. He sought ways to appropriate Western technique without succumbing to its spiritual emptiness. Yet the limits of this endeavor were defined both by the historical position of the Ottoman intelligentsia and by the global dynamics of modernity. The universalization of capitalism rendered any local alternative modernity impossible. Hence, the East–West synthesis imagined by Ahmet Mithat could not materialize historically, though it persisted intellectually as a liminal form a suspended horizon of thought.

The method of intertextual analysis proves crucial for understanding this continuity of ideas. Ottoman–Turkish intellectual history is less a history of individual geniuses than of recurring discursive patterns. Ahmet Mithat's writings form one link in a long chain of discourse extending from Sadullah Paşa and Namık Kemal to Tanpınar and beyond. To analyze this chain is to move beyond person-centered readings and to uncover the structural dynamics of intellectual evolution. Each writer speaks with, through, and against his predecessors; thus, to understand Ahmet Mithat is to understand the tradition that speaks through him.

In conclusion, Ahmet Mithat's concept of "proper Westernization" represents both the possibility and the limit of Ottoman–Turkish modernization. His attempt to domesticate modernity while remaining trapped within its universalist logic demonstrates the paradox of a periphery seeking autonomy through the very language of the center. The "East–West synthesis" remains a legacy of this historical paradox a formula endlessly rearticulated yet never resolved. Ultimately, Ahmet Mithat's dream may be read as a call to intellectual vigilance: an invitation to think within modernity, but not entirely under its spell.

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