

THE ROLE OF THE YOUNG OTTOMANS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF  
MENTALITY IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE ROLE OF THE YOUNG OTTOMANS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF MENTALITY IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE**

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The main topic of this study is determining the role of the Young Ottomans in mentality transformation in the Ottoman Empire from the traditional one to a modern one. Their proposals aim to change three patterns of the Ottoman state and society. The relation between state and the individual is the first issue. They tried to create an Ottoman citizenry, enhanced with freedom and political rights, from a *reaya*. In the second step they imagined a modern society. Their proposals, which imply a secular system, aim to secure the people from the yoke of the tradition and some religious bonds. Nationalism is also important for the abolition of the traditional stratification of the Ottoman society. As a last point, the individual, himself, is tried to be changed into an active, enthusiastic, this-worldly, and rational being. However what is interesting is that while their main concern had been the survival of the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic order, their proposals had the potential to undermine these very institutions. This study will try to find the traces of these contradictions and the beginning of a mental transformation.

Keywords: Mentality, Ottoman Ideal, Mental Transformation, Freedom.

## ÖZ

### OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDAKİ ZİHNIYET DEĞİŞİMİNDE GENÇ OSMANLILAR'IN OYNADIĞI ROL

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Bu çalışmanın ana başlığı Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki geleneksel zihniyetin modern zihniyete dönüşümünde Genç Osmanlılar hareketinin oynadığı rolü tespit etmektir. Bu hareketin önerilerinin amacı Osmanlı'daki üç temel öğeyi değiştirmek üzerine kurulmuştur. Devlet ile birey arasındaki ilişki ilk konudur. Bunlar reayadan hürriyet mevhumu ve siyasi haklarla güçlendirilmiş bir birey yaratmaya çalışmışlardır. İkinci aşamada modern bir toplum hayali kurmuşlardır. Laikliği ima eden önerilerinin amacı toplumu önünü tıkayan geleneksel ve bir takım dini bağlardan kurtarmayı hedeflemiştir. Milliyetçilik vurguları ise Osmanlı geleneksel toplum yapılanmasının sonunu hazırlaması açısından önemlidir. Son bir nokta olarak ise aktif, bu dünya konusunda istekli ve aklıyla hareket eden bir birey yaratma konusundaki çabaları sayılabilir. Ancak ilginç olan şu ki temel kaygılarının Osmanlı devletini ve İslami düzeni korumak ve yaşatmak olmasına rağmen getirdikleri önerilerin tam da bu kurumların altını oyuyor olmasıdır. Bu çalışma işte bu çelişkileri ve bir zihniyet dönüşümünün başlangıcının izlerini bulmaya çalışacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Zihniyet, Osmanlı İdeali, Zihniyet Dönüşümü, Hürriyet.

To family but especially my brother and his family.

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## INTRODUCTION

There have been different theories on the causes of the “decline” and demise of the Ottoman Empire<sup>1</sup>; some argue that the lives of the states or civilizations resemble the life of human, so the civilizations have had a common and inevitable fate that they disappear at the end of their natural lives. In this respect the Ottoman Empire, as a civilization with a long life, encountered its inevitable fate and demised; the First World War only accelerated this process. This theory is derived from the study of Ibn Khaldun, the *Mukkadimma*.

According to another theory, the Empire could not make necessary moves and transformations in the face of technological and scientific developments of the European states because of the clumsiness of the administrators and the conservatism of the *ulama*. As a result, the effectiveness and power of the Ottoman Empire declined against the European powers and it became a semi-colonial country at the disposal of Western capitalism. According to the proponents of this theory, the Empire could have survived and might have been a part of the Western capitalism if it only had made necessary reforms at the right time.

It is certain that both theories have brought important contributions for the understanding of the “decline” and demise of the Ottoman Empire, but they also ignore some important points: while first one depends highly on fate, the second one ignores the social stratification of the Ottoman Empire. It requires the Empire to make quick adaptations to the changing conditions in order to survive. Besides, it does not pay enough attention to the mentality of the Ottoman people for the success of such an adaptation.

However it can be argued that the main reason behind the disappearance of the Ottoman Empire from the political arena is the mentality imposed by both

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<sup>1</sup> We should state at the beginning that, we do not think it is a demise of decline but decay. As will be expressed, the main system of the Empire worked till its disappearance, however the effectiveness of this system could not resist against the changing conditions.

Islamic doctrines and traditional order on the state, society and the ordinary people. This mentality did not stimulate the “elements”<sup>2</sup> of the Empire to act in the same way as the elements of European capitalist states.

First of all, this mentality did not let the state apply mercantilist policies because the main duty of the administrators was the satisfaction of the basic needs of their subjects. Also the state could not pull away the subjects from their lands by force to create cheap labor for a probable capitalist class. Secondly, this mentality did not let the society challenge the state to obtain certain rights. Lastly, it did not let ordinary man concentrate on worldly affairs.

When the elements of the Western countries were considered, a different picture would be seen. In those countries the state could use their subjects to satisfy the needs of the bourgeoisie. They also had colonial lands for the exchange of commodities and the supply of labor. Their societies were also dynamic and had the power to get political rights from the state. The individualism was also dominant; there have been furious, selfish and eager beings living for themselves in that particular geography.

The comparison of these two different mentalities has been one of the main determinants of the analysis and understanding of the Ottoman and Turkish modernization. This is also true for this study, but we will try to avoid two main tendencies while approaching the issue. First one is the glorification and mystification of this mentality like both some Turkish nationalists and Islamists do. Such a tendency naturally bears its antithesis, because, first of all, the Ottoman Empire was not a state of Islam as Islamists praised, but an Islamic state. This means that it used Islam to legalize and legitimize its existence. The state has always been prior to religion. Second, the Ottoman Empire never let the dominance of one ethnic group or *Millet* in the society. To this effect, it even tried to keep the Turks away from politics. In addition to these the mentality of the Ottoman Empire and society

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<sup>2</sup> Subjects of the Empire, the rulers and society (millets, communities, traditional organizations...etc.)

do not represent any ideal type which should be applied today. It has many deficiencies and contradictions.

The other tendency, which should be avoided, accepts the mentality of the Empire as essentially inferior. It is a determinist and positivist approach to the historical facts.<sup>3</sup> In this tendency, it is supposed that the mentality of the Empire was inferior compared to European liberalism and capitalism. However, if it were, the Empire could not stand against the assaults of the European powers. Besides, this tendency bears a belief that accepts the European culture and mentality as superior and ideal. However, such a tendency means the denial of the massacres and disasters caused by the European states all around the world.

Anyway, in this study one of the issues focused on will be the mentality dominant in the Ottoman Empire. The ideal mentality imposed by the fundamental sources (Canonic and traditional) will be important for this study. It is well known that the realities had been different from theories, just as the abundance of the texts, written for advice to both administrators and ordinary man, are the proofs of the deviations from the ideal. Yet, the need for modernization of the Ottoman Empire started when the deviations could not be contained by the traditional and religious sources.

The studies about the modernization of the Ottoman Empire fall into two main streams. In the first group the reform attempts of the Ottoman state are focused and the modernization of the Empire is attempted to be understood in terms of the effects of these reforms. The main tendency of these studies is to start the modernization of the Empire by the reform attempts of Selim III. Enver Ziya Karal (1995) follows the traces of the reforms and tries to show the repercussions of these

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<sup>3</sup> This approach was dominant during the early period of Turkish Republic. According to the belief of the intellectuals and administrators of this period, Turkish nation could prosper if correct methods, which were not adapted by the Ottoman Empire at the right time, are applied. The criticism of the Ottoman Empire had been the main determinant of their methodology. The Empire collapsed because it could not adopt the mentality of the West. There have always been the representatives of this philosophy until present day. The studies of Taner Timur (1998) can be given as examples of this tendency.

reforms in Ottoman state and in its international relations. However the social dimension of these reforms is omitted by his studies: the effects of the reforms on the lives of the Ottoman people are ignored by him. Berkes (1964) also follows such a methodology. But his focus is wider than Karal. Berkes inspects the changes in the institutions of the Empire with the reforms promulgated by the state. He also tries to reveal the effects of the reforms on the society of the Empire through his focus on the institutional changes. However he does not pay enough attention to the effects of the modernization on micro lives. He is concerned with wider groups and institutions.

The proponents of the second group claim that the research on modernization phenomenon needs wider perspective. It can be neither constrained within the period starting with the reform attempt of Selim III, nor understood only focusing on institutional changes. The Empire always adopted innovations of the Europe within its philosophy and mentality (Grant 2006). The scope of the effects of modernization was also wider than what the first group focused (Ortaylı 1995). Individuals felt the changing conditions in their micro life. This study will also try to use this wider perspective.

The nineteenth century had been the period in which the Ottoman Empire tried to change its character; the society and subjects experienced on dilemma between the traditional and religious order and the success and influence of the West. The traditional sources started to be ineffective against the challenge of the European penetration, and a new voice represented by a certain group of intellectual and bureaucratic cadre was attempted to respond to the social and political problems.

The rapid and multiple losses of lands in Europe and military failures caused Ottomans drop the belief in their superiority and forced them to observe and understand their European counterparts. The Empire started to see her survival in alliance with one or more European states. This led to the increasing influence of foreign office bureaucrats. These bureaucrats had contacts with Europe thanks to

either being an official in the Translation Bureau or being appointed to the embassies. They were influenced by the European civilization and prosperity of these states. They aspired their state to take part in modern civilization.

Though they could not give up some basic notions of the Ottoman culture, they were different from the classic Ottoman bureaucrat and intelligentsia. What they tried to do was the synthesis of the concepts and mentalities of two cultures. Namely, they tried to remain Ottoman, but, at the same time, become modern and prosper as a European. We can see the members of this class while offering or applying reforms in the Ottoman state administration or while writing books and articles in newspapers expressing their proposals about the transformation of state and society.

As is just said, this new type of intelligentsia tried to harmonize the concepts of the European Enlightenment with the concepts of the Ottoman tradition and Islam. However while bringing the European traditions they could not understand that they undermined the very bases of the institutions on which they themselves and the Ottoman culture stand. The aspects of the European culture contained the abandonment of the basic institutions and mentality of the Ottoman society and state.

Of course it was impossible for them to realize the probable consequences of their ideal in that time, but we may now see this transformation in retrospect. They tried to bring a different look to time, property, individual, nature, world...etc., and make the Ottoman Empire a member of the civilized world.

The members of this class of intelligentsia either held official posts or tried to express their views outside the governmental circle. In this study a group of intelligentsia, which can be considered in both categories<sup>4</sup>, will be the main actors to

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<sup>4</sup> The Young Ottomans were officials in origin. Their experience of publishing, for some time, went hand in hand with their official posts. The period, in which they were out of administrative circle, was their most productive times for the name of political agitation.

be focused on. They are called the Young Ottomans in the history of Turkish modernization. We will try to evaluate their role in the transformation of the Ottoman traditional mentality towards a modernist one.

There are, of course, some certain reasons why we choose the Young Ottomans. First of all, they can be considered as the first modern systematic opposition movement in the Ottoman Empire. The Empire did ever experience before such a systematic opposition movement because the head of the state had been the Sultan. The Sultanate was adorned with traditional and religious sublimity. The Sultan was the shadow of God on earth, so the objection towards him meant the opposition against the religion and *örf*<sup>5</sup>. The Sultan could immediately execute any opposition attempt. Beside this, the administration of the state could be handled by the *kul*<sup>6</sup> of the Sultan; there were no vacuum left for others to express their views. Because both financial and intellectual sources concentrated at the center, no one or no group managed to challenge the center. In this respect, the members of the Young Ottoman movement did not face with, at least, one of these obstacles, because with the *Tanzimat* and the increasing influence of bureaucracy, the administration of the state was transferred from the Palace to the Sublime Porte; that's the control of the administration was passed to the bureaucrats. Thanks to this, the Young Ottomans could target the administration by excluding the Sultan from their opposition.

Second, the members of this movement left behind important material for the researchers, so that one can understand their position, ideology and mood from their writings. Today we have articles poems, novels, etc. from which we can drive important information about them. Because they used their literary skills as an instrument to express their views and ideologies, the aspects of their standings can still be seen in their works. However two points should be clarified: First they did not concentrate on one field; they did not have thorough knowledge in specific fields; instead they dealt with every problem of the Empire. So they approached the

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<sup>5</sup> The traditions driven from Turkish state and society heritage.

<sup>6</sup> The subjects of the Sultan. They were also called *reaya* (the flock)

science and philosophy pragmatically and learnt them superficially. Namely, they had an encyclopedic knowledge. They could not offer thorough information about economy, sociology, philosophy, politics, etc. and second, because they used mainly newspapers to inform the public, there had been controversies in their writings. The daily events sometimes affected their perspective. Nevertheless, thanks to their effort to inform the public, they left behind voluminous textual material.

The last reason is also the main reason in our choice. As we have already mentioned above, they were also the members of the new type of intelligentsia who lived between the old and the new. They were neither as conservative as the intelligentsia of the earlier periods nor as radical as the following generations, but they were crucial intermediaries for the transfer of new ideas. They were the initiators of the adaptation of the concepts of European philosophical heritage in the Ottoman soil. The “Young Turks” of the latter period became more radical and braver thanks to the license provided by the Young Ottomans (especially Namık Kemal). They were the individuals who lived the duality of the Tanzimat in their own existence and reflected this duality with their ideologies; the duality which would end in favor of the new. The Young Ottomans expressed *Şeriat* and the Ottoman culture and identity as the bases of their ideology but the proposals they brought undermined these institutions, and opened new vistas.

A last point is that they were the first Islamist ideologists. What do we mean? As is well known, the Ottoman Empire always showed itself as the banner holder of Islam. The Empire exploited religion to legitimize itself. The main ideology of the Empire and all Muslims was Islam, but not Islamism. There was no challenge against Islam, so no need to be an Islamist. The glory and effectiveness of the religion filled every sphere of the community. However when the superiority of the Empire had been lost, the early proposals suggested a return to the order of the classical age. The basic institutions, the understanding of state, the society and the subject were not changed. But these new bureaucrats had a different attitude. They also accepted the superiority of Islam and Ottoman culture but at the same time they

tried to find the corollaries for European prosperity and development in the Islamic and traditional sources. This was in keeping with the common reflex of the communities outside the Western world. They could not see that their ideology would lead to a different mentality contrary to the one they tried to preserve. Shortly, they generated an Islamist ideology. They tried to reconcile Islamic doctrine with the Western concepts. However, because they took a defensive position against Europe, what they did became the adaptation of Islam to European philosophy. They created a hybrid philosophy which is not Islam anymore. While Islam has been a different ideology than capitalism and Western liberalism, this Islamism became an auxiliary ideology of capitalism.

When we talk about the Young Ottomans, mainly, three figures are prominent: Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha and Ali Suavi. They were the most active and productive members of the movement, and made important contributions to the opposition movement with their literary skills. In fact there are important differences in their ideologies, and these differences increased in time, but they can be considered as a group of individuals gathered for the same purpose. In our analysis, Namık Kemal will be mentioned more because of his literary talent and, relatively, more thorough knowledge.

This group has always attracted the interest of the scholars studying on the modernization of the Ottoman Empire. The first study about the Young Ottomans belongs to an ex-member of the movement, Ebuzziya Tevfik (1973). However, the historical facts are, sometimes, sacrificed for a romantic description, and his sympathy towards Namık Kemal. The analysis of their ideology is also not the interest of this study. There are also studies focusing on only the most famous member of the movement, Namık Kemal. Mithat Cemal Kuntay (1946) is the prominent example in this trend. However his study gives the life of Namık Kemal like a heroic story. It is hard also in this study to find a through analysis. There are articles published by the scholars about Namık Kemal at the anniversaries of birth and death of him. They were the studies focusing on one dimension of the ideology



of Namık Kemal<sup>7</sup>. Besides, the sympathy towards Namık Kemal is apparent in all these studies. (Buradaki son cümle çıkarıldı)

The article of İhsan Sungu (1999) is another study in the field. In his study, Sungu deals with the objections of the Young Ottomans towards the *Tanzimat* administration. The study is mainly composed of the quotations of the members of the Young Ottoman movement. Their criticisms are represented by the study. We cannot find the analysis of the ideology of the Young Ottomans.

The scholars studying on the modernization of the Empire, inevitably, mentioned the movement. We can find important and illuminating ideas about the movement in these studies. For instances, Berkes (1964) names it as an important opposition movement against the authority of the *Tanzimat* administration. Bernard Lewis (1972) also emphasizes their importance in the modernization of the Ottoman Empire<sup>8</sup>. However these studies focus rather on a wider picture, so it is not proper to expect more thorough analysis from these studies.

There are also studies which try to understand the modernization of the Ottoman Empire by analyzing the standings of the prominent figures in the Turkish philosophical history. Also the ideology of the Young Ottomans attracted the interest of these studies. Ülken (1966, 1999) is an important scholar in this trend. He sketches out the ideological standings of each member of the movement. His critical position is illuminative. He tries to reveal the philosophical perspective of the members with reference to the effects of the European thought on their ideologies. The main difference between Ülken's studies and this study is that Ülken does not mention the effects of the ideologies of the Young Ottomans on society and on the following generations. Also his study is not a mentality inspection. The aim is to analyze the ideology of the prominent figures in the movement.

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<sup>7</sup> see Gökçün (1955), Fındıkoğlu (1939), Boran (1942), Berkes (1942), Banarlı (1947), Akşin (1988) and Aktaş (1936)

<sup>8</sup> Also see Ortaylı (1995), Carter (1980), Karpat (2001, 2006), Mardin (2002) and Shaw (1985)

In addition, Tanpınar (1985) evaluates the members of the movement not only from the perspective of their positions in the literature but also in terms of their ideological standpoints. His ingenious claims about the members of the Young Ottomans are beyond the history of 19<sup>th</sup> century Turkish literature. His interest on the mentality of the societies and comparison between the mentalities of the East and West gives his work an outstanding value. He tries to reveal the traces of the mentality changes implied in the studies of the Young Ottomans. In fact what we will do in this study is to enlarge these allusions and try to see the traces of them on the state, society, individual and economy.

The most important and thorough study in this field belongs to Şerif Mardin (2000). This study specifically focuses on the Young Ottoman movement. He analyzes both the philosophical background inherited by the members of the movement and the intellectual atmosphere in which their ideologies flourished. The analysis of the ideology of each member of the movement consists of the main body of this study. He uses a critical methodology for his analysis. The study gives also the cultural background of the members. We can see how the members of the movement tried to match the traditional and religious institutions and beliefs of the Ottoman Empire with the philosophical notions of the West. Their contradictions and deficiencies are also shown in this study. However the aim of Mardin's study is not to show the repercussions of this contradictions and deficiencies for the mentality of the Ottoman state and society. As will be shown in this study, this contradictions and deficiencies meant some open ended claims which would be the bases for the ideologies of the following generations.

In this study, the historical realities (or context) will be the base on which the ideological analysis of these figures stands. We will try to show their effects and the importance of their activities and declarations within the period they occurred.

As is mentioned above, the aim of the study is to show the contributions of the Young Ottomans in the transformation of Ottoman mind from Ottoman ideal

type to more individualist, liberal and somehow capitalist type. Their attempt for generating Ottoman-Turkish modernity will be brought under scrutiny. But it should be stated that we do not claim that this transformation was initiated, accelerated or completed by these men. All we want to show is in what points these men opened ways for further changes. It is known that the latter Young Turks tried to legalize their movement with the arguments already used and introduced by Namık Kemal and his friends.

The body of this study will be composed of six chapters. In the first chapter the methodology of this study will be given. The Weberian approach of social sciences will be mentioned in order to clarify the two concepts; mentality and morality. They will be accepted as the main determinants in the behavior of the social actors. Besides, the similar studies in the field will also be mentioned in this chapter, and the difference of this study will be clarified.

Just after, the historical context of the period, between 1865 and 1876, will be given briefly. This period may rightly be labeled as the longest decade of “the longest century of the Ottoman Empire” (Ortaylı 1995). The repercussions of the two edicts (*Gulhane and Islahat*) mixed with the turmoil in European history and the Ottoman social harmony. The real face of the agitations of the Young Ottomans can be understood clearly under this atmosphere.

What is meant by Ottoman ideal must be explained properly; so in the third chapter the worldviews of the elements of Ottoman society will be described. The atmosphere in which the mentality is shaped will be illuminated. This chapter also bears the phenomenon which implies that the transformation of the institutions mentioned prepares the disappearance of their essence in micro and macro levels.

In the following chapter, the attempt of the Young Ottomans to create a citizenry from *reaya* will be evaluated. They hoped that the emergence of free individuals with political rights would undermine the despotism of the Sublime

Porte and they would become proponents of the reforms in the Ottoman Empire. In this respect, they conceptualized 'freedom' and emphasized personal rights. Their social contract theories also determine the scope of the state which was too narrow for the Ottoman Empire. They also questioned the basic institutions of the Ottoman Empire such as the Sultanate and the Caliphate. It will be seen that their proposals prepared the eventual dissolution of both institutions.

There will be two related concepts in the title of chapter five; secularism and nationalism. It will be seen that the main tool which led the Young Ottomans to secular notions was their emphasis on reason. When they suggested that the state must be administrated by reason, science and technology, they also criticized the traditional state understanding of the Ottoman Empire. Besides, their clear proposals about the distinction between worldly affairs and moral dimension contradict the unlimited scope of Islam. On the other side, the legal dimension of the secular proposals prepared the end of the *millet* system which had been the guarantee of the stability in the classical period of the Ottoman Empire.

The nationalism of the Young Ottomans also bore notions which contradicted the prevailing social structure of the Ottoman society. They claimed they are Ottoman nationalists and tried to gather the Ottoman nations under a common identity and flag. However, because of the lack of an Ottoman nation as such, they praised the Turks. This tendency helped the agitators of the communities in the way of dissolution from the Empire.

In the last chapter, the traces of the mentality transformation of the ordinary people will be analyzed. The changing conditions which affected the daily life of the people forced them to adapt new rules. They tried to reconcile their beliefs and traditions. In this respect the Young Ottomans had been their voice in this reconciliation. However, as will be seen, this reconciliation in favor of modernism and capitalism led to depreciation of Islamic belief and traditional understanding.

Also as a result of this reconciliation, the world view of the people of the Empire was exposed to dramatic changes.

In this thesis, it is going to be argued that the ideational values of the Young Ottomans expressed a project for modernizing the Ottoman political and social structures while preserving their essence. However, this project, historically, represented the formidable contradictions between the project of modernization and the traditional Ottoman establishment.

## CHAPTER 1. ON METHODOLOGY

The main aim of this study is to analyze the role and contribution of “a few men” in the transformation of the mentality of the Ottomans. Or, to be clear, it can be said that we will try to unearth how they tried to legalize a mental transformation by using both Islamic doctrines and Ottoman traditional concepts and understandings. In other words, the aim is to show how they tried to make the Empire accept the mental transformation. They addressed ordinary people, administrators and the Sultan to show the necessity of a mental transformation.

In order to handle such a study, two crucial concepts and their interrelationships must be explained properly. These are mentality and morality.

Mentality is the actual beliefs and attitudes towards the outside world in a society. It is the total description of the perceptions of the people. It is shaped by the political, social, economic, legal, religious, etc. institutions. There can be different mentalities in a given period in a society both colliding and conflicting among themselves. On the other hand, morality is the ideal beliefs and attitudes supported by norms, rules, sanctions. It is the determinant according to which the attitudes and beliefs (mentality) of the people can be legalized. It is mainly shaped by traditions and religious rules. Moralists (they can be clergies, intellectuals or the state itself) set the standards that every element of society is expected to obey. These moral values and norms, sometimes, are more effective than legal codes. The more mentality matches with morality, the more is it effective<sup>9</sup>.

Whereas mentality is the actual beliefs and attitudes morality is the ideal, or expected, beliefs and attitudes. It is impossible to expect that both match any time. We can even say that because of the nature of man, there has not been a time in which the mentality and morality matched completely; there have always been deviations. In order to be effective, morality should be supported by the authority.

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<sup>9</sup> mostly composed from the study of Ülgener (1981)

The political body can either base its legal structure on moral values and norms<sup>10</sup> or regard morality as one of the stabilizers of society. Some moral norms and values can be put among legal codes.

However such supports from the authorities do not always suffice to maintain the effectiveness of the moral norms and values. The most important condition is the suitability of the moral norms with contemporary atmosphere. Because of their conservative nature, it is hard for these norms and values to adopt themselves to the changing conditions. In this case the deviations increase, namely the mentality and morality follow different paths. However, as soon as the standards are set by morality, the people feel obliged to legalize their attitudes according to predetermined norms and values. This situation leads, first, to the acceleration of hypocrisy, and second, to the depreciation in morality. The former is obvious, but the latter needs further explanation: When the people could not arrange their attitudes according to actual moral values anymore<sup>11</sup>, they try to adopt moral norms and values to their attitudes. Their relative flexibility permits such adaptations.<sup>12</sup> After this point a new and different morality starts to be shaped.

To sum up our thoughts, it can be said that mentality is more open to changes than morality. As soon as mentality, expected by morality, is dominant in a society, the effectiveness of the values and norms, proposed by mentality, will be safe. In this study the mentality, expected by morality, will be important, because it is mentality, which is a mixture of Islamic (both orthodox and heterodox) doctrines and Turco-Mungol traditions, which the Young Ottomans tried to transform.

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<sup>10</sup> Mostly in traditional and charismatic authorities.

<sup>11</sup> We do not mention religious values separately when we state moral ones, because religion is stated as one component of morality in the explanations. Of course, we do not mean that atheism does not have morality, but we thought that the subject and the society under investigation permit such negligence.

<sup>12</sup> “For this reason, Islam has been exposed to different approaches and used to legalize both monarchy, dictatorship, democracy and republic” (Esposito 2002, 111)

In fact there were two different and complementary mentalities in the Ottoman social structure: above is the mentality of the protectionist, traditional ruler and administrators, and below is the mentality of the subjects. Although the former was exposed to some dramatic changes in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the latter had continued with little changes whose traces can even be seen today.

Because our concern is directed to ideal beliefs and attitudes, proposed by morality, more than the actual situation, we should construct ideal types in order to clarify what we mean about the mentality of two sectors of the Ottoman Empire.

...it is necessary for the sociologist to formulate pure ideal types of the corresponding forms of actions which in case involve the highest possible degree of logical integration by virtue of their complete adequacy on the level of meaning. (Weber 1978, 20)

In order to construct such ideal types properly, the legal codes, moral values and norms, and the political applications of the Empire should be examined carefully. Such an examination can provide our ideal types with reflections in reality. Also because the Young Ottomans put these ideal types on their target boards, using such a method seem to be illuminative.

When we think about the Ottoman state and society, it can be observed that values and traditions played important roles. These values and traditions reflected in the attitude and behavior of the subjects, administrators and the Sultan himself. Because values and traditions were shared and owned by every element of the society, any attitude and behavior was performed with the expectation of certain repercussions or feedback from the others. For instance, when a wealthy person establishes a pious endowment or helps the poor, he/she expects prestige and appreciation in turn. Every action, performed by any member of the society, is attached a subjective meaning by that member. (Weber (1978, 4)



According to Weber action is social insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others, and is thereby oriented in its course. He divides social action into four:

- i) instrumentally rational, that is determined by expectations as to the behavior of objects in the environment of other human beings; these expectations are used as conditions or means for the attainment of the actors own rationally pursued and calculated ends.
- ii) value oriented, that is determined by a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, ascetic, religious or other form of behavior, independently of its prospects of success.
- iii) effectual (especially emotional) that is determined by the actor's specific affects and feeling states.
- iv) traditional, that is, determined by ingrained habituation. (Weber 1978, 24-25)

Weber states that first one can only be seen in Occident as a result of Protestant asceticism which perceives the order in the world as an important religious doctrine for the salvation. The importance of work and ethic in Protestant sect leads the demand for a rational and legal order.

As a consequence, and although the enjoyment of wealth is forbidden to the ascetic, it becomes his vacation to engage in economic activity which is faithful to rationalized ethical requirements and which conforms to strict legality. (Weber 1978, 257)

According to him, the rational order is the uniqueness of the Occident. Although he believes that the asceticism also exists in the East, the difference between dervish asceticism and Protestant asceticism hinders the former to reach same results like the latter (Weber 1978, 556). The difference lies in their approaches to this world and worldly affairs. While the asceticism of Occident (Protestant asceticism) seeks the salvation in this world, the other seeks it in isolation from the world and worldly affairs. The members of this type of asceticism (Dervish asceticism) have a loose touch with this world. This difference makes the former to engage himself in this world that this leads to the desire for world domination (Weber 1976).

The other social actions are common in a pre-capitalist social formation. Weber puts the Ottoman Empire in patrimonial administration category (Weber 1978, 228). For him, the two reasons of the irrationality of the Orient are oriental and Asiatic types of salvation religion and patrimonialism. Like the former, the latter (patrimonialism) does not base on rational thinking. Values and traditions play key role in the institutions of the administration. Instead of rational thinking and logical applications, rituals symbols, status and honor direct the social action. Because of the lack of any tendency toward rationality in the Eastern cultures, the Orient lagged behind in industrialization and capitalism. The lack of tendency towards world domination, for Weber, is the main obstacle for the Orient. Weber makes clear distinction between Oriental religions and Occidental (especially Protestantism) ones

The decisive historical difference between predominantly Oriental and Asiatic types of salvation religion and those found primarily in the Occident is that, the former usually culminate in contemplation, the latter in asceticism. (Weber 1978, 551)

He claims that Oriental religions are based on mystical and magical beliefs and rituals, ignore worldly affairs and mostly look for salvation in the other world. On the other hand, asceticism of the Occident considers this world crucial and looks for salvation within the order of this world, it is important for the ascetics to work over and dominate the world. If we say the difference in one sentence, while the Oriental religions see the salvation out of this world, the asceticism of the Occident sees it through this world.

However Weber looks at Islam from a different perspective. He states that the early Islam contained some puritan notions, no individual request for salvation, and no mysticism. The religious promises of it pertained to this world (Weber 1978, 625). However, after the warrior type appeared and took the control of the religion, this notion has changed; martyrdom, war and conquest became the most important rhetoric of the Muslims. With the advent of the cult of the saints and finally magic,

Islam was completely diverted from any real methodological control of life (Weber 1978, 627)

Weber's perception of Islam contains an allusion that if Islam had preserved its early form, it would have adapted to capitalism and industrialization.<sup>13</sup> But it should be noted that it is impossible to disagree with Bryan S. Turner (1998) that Weber was affected by the atmosphere of 19<sup>th</sup> century Western intellectual circles regarding his views about Islam. The details of Weber's views about Islam are not the subject of this study, but some important clarifications must be here.

As mentioned above, the claims of Weber about Islam contain an allusion that Islam, in its original form, bears suitable notions for a perception like Protestant asceticism, or in other words, it could have been conducive to modernism and capitalism. In *Economy and Society* he states:

Industrialization was not impeded by the Islam as the religion of individuals, but by the religiously determined structure of the Islamic states, their officialdom and their jurisprudence. (Weber 1978, 1095)

Weber was wrong in his perception of the Orient, but especially Islam, according to two important points. These are the main determinants of capitalism and modernism: individualism and domination of nature. Actually these two concepts, especially the latter, are fundamentally contrary to Eastern beliefs, not rationalism. In Islam there is obvious stress on reason and rational man. Belief is valid as soon as it is supported by reason. Stress on science is also the case in Islam. We can see same notions in Confucianism and Taoism. In these beliefs rational thinking is a gift given to human to understand the world and its order. However the notion of rationality in these beliefs does not lead to same consequences like in the West even if had they preserved their original form. Shortly, it is not the mere matter

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<sup>13</sup> which is claimed directly by Maxime Radinson (1968): "Islam is not a hinderance for the development of capitalism"

of rationality; we should search for some other reasons behind the modernization and capitalism seen in the West.

Selfish and particularized individual has played a key role in the accumulation of wealth. The accumulated capital has been reinvested to get more capital. The mentality of the individuals in Western societies became totally different from the Eastern ones and all ties between the individual and feudal relations were swept away. Private property, political rights and economic freedom provided the realm of individual autonomy. As liberal tradition claims, individuals are worthy and successful as soon as they gain profit in the economic struggle. Protestant belief and its ethic also accelerated the process.

However the individualization owes much more to the Enlightenment, because most of the Enlightenment ideologies put the societies shaped by particular individuals as the main object of their philosophies. In Eastern societies and beliefs, the community has always been more important than the individuals. The interest of individual has been seen as sacrificial for the stability and confidence of the community. The wealth has also been accepted as the common property of the community and wealthy persons have always been expected to contribute to charity, found pious endowment, help the poor, etc. The wealthy persons also used their wealth as a social mean to gain appreciation and confidence of the people or as an 'investment' for the other world. Individuals have not been particularized in Islam (even in its original form) as the supporter of these relations. In this respect, Islam could not lead to capitalism. It may have some ascetic characteristics like the Protestant sect such as the prohibition of luxury, condemnation of extravagance and the appreciation of the property gained as a result of one's own labor, but the wealth, according to doctrine, must be spent in the name of Allah, distributed among needy and shared with others.

Beside individualism, Enlightenment and developments in technology and science have led the emergence of a belief in people's mind that human can

overcome nature and in fact dominate over it. With the Enlightenment, the Western people could be rescued from the domination of the Church. The rationality provided them to save themselves from further burdens. They thought that rational thinking could solve all human problems. Beside this moral domination of the Church and moral values, nature was another obstacle to be overcome.<sup>14</sup> Every scientific and technological progress has been announced as another victory over nature. The exploitation of nature has been legalized and seen necessary for the development of humanity. The natural objects reshaped, changed, deformed, etc. in order to make them usable for the people. This freedom of action led to the abundance of the products and accelerated the spread of capitalism. On the other hand, in the Orient, nature and human being have been seen inseparable. As a part of the nature, man should respect it and benefit from it without extravagance. For instance in Islam, the nature is accepted as given in trust to the human by God. Shortly, the Orient could not find the right to exploit the nature: "Orient accepts the object as it is .... Occident always changes its form." (Tanpınar 1961, 132)

Under the light of these points, it can be seen that any attempt in the name of "modernization" of the non-European societies is an Occidentalization process. In this respect, the aim of the Young Ottomans, directed towards the modernization of the Ottoman Empire, was not a return to the original form of Islam and the classic age of the Ottoman Empire as they claimed, but a new perspective, a new vision, or actually, a new mentality for the Empire. In other words, it was, unintentionally, the Occidentalization of the Ottoman people. It was a process which demanded fundamental changes in the perspective of every subject of the Empire. Shortly, it is not a simple rationalization process but a different look at time, space, nature and the world. In this respect, our methodology will be unearthing the traces of this projected mentality transformation.

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<sup>14</sup> In fact, fight with nature has been the main subject in Western mind starting with Homer. West has always fought with nature and searched ways to dominate it.

Of course this study is not the first in this field. It owes much to the studies of Ülgener (1981) and Mardin (2000). It can be said that Ülgener dedicated his academic career to understand the mentality of the Ottoman people. His studies give a different perspective about the Ottoman world. His studies cover a broad period of the Empire and he uses poems to understand the mentality hidden behind the words. He analyzes the mentality of the people with a Weberian methodology. Ülgener determines two different mentalities as it is proposed in this study, but he puts to the stage a good and evil play. While he evaluates lower stratum, the subjects, sympathetic and sees them all the time exploited, he evaluates the upper one as extravagant and exploiter. However this is a misleading approach to the Ottoman state apparatus. As İnalçık (1973) states, and will be discussed in the following chapter, the Ottoman state philosophy is a mixture of Islamic, Turco-Mungol and Byzantine state traditions. According to this philosophy the state is responsible for the maintenance of the basic needs of the subjects, and the Sultan is the protector of the subjects against any abuse. He is also the provider of justice. Because of this, the Ottoman Empire could not follow mercantilist or despotic policies. Namely mentality of both strata was a result of the basic structures that shaped the Ottoman state and society. Lastly, the periods investigated in this study and in the studies of Ülgener are very different. He is, as if, surfing in time. One can find the poem of a 14<sup>th</sup> century poet in one page while a 19<sup>th</sup> poem was mentioned in the following one.

Mardin (2000) has an important study on the Young Ottomans: *The Genesis of the Young Ottoman Thought*. As the title implies, this study analyzes the ideology of the Young Ottomans in the intellectual tradition of the Empire; the intellectual sources they utilize and main points of their ideologies are the main topics of it. However for our study, not every single thought of the Young Ottomans is as important, but the ones which reflected their concern with the transformation in the mentality of the Ottoman elements.

In addition the study of Nevin Yazıcı (2002) should also be mentioned. The content of the book, unfortunately, does not provide what the title promises:

*Osmanlılık Fikri ve Genç Osmanlılar Cemiyeti (The Idea of Ottomanism and the Young Turks Organization)*. The book was composed of the quotations from the eminent scholars of the field and the Young Ottomans. It is hard to find thoughts of Nevin Yazıcı from these quotations.

Tanpınar (1961, 1985), Ülken (1966) and Berkes (1942) also notice such a mentality transformation, but they either do not give further details, or prefer to study more concrete data. In the following chapter the characteristics of the two mentalities will be analyzed for the two sectors of the Ottoman Empire.

In conclusion, the methodology of the study is given in this chapter. In the next chapter the historical context of the period, in which the effects of the Young Ottoman movement were seen clearly, will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This chapter will focus on the period between 1865 and 1876. Before 1865 the main incidences in the Ottoman Empire were the promulgation of Gülhane Edict (*Tanzimat Fermanı*) and the Reform Edict (*Islahat Fermanı*). The Gülhane Edict was promulgated in 1839. With this Edict the protection of life, property and honor of the subjects was guaranteed by the Sultan. The scope of the Edict covered all subjects, disregarding their religion, *millet* and sect. This Edict was the first shock in the eyes of the Ottoman millets which threatened the harmony in the Empire. The process accelerated the dissolution of the social bonds in the Empire contrary to the expectations.

After sixteen years from the promulgation of the Gulhane Edict, the Reform Edict was promulgated in 1856. This Edict expanded the scope of rights given by the Tanzimat. As a result of this Edict the position of the “minorities” had been strengthened. The Embassies in the capital shouldered the protection of each of these minorities. As soon as the members of these minorities obtained the passport of a foreign state (which is not that difficult), they became exempted from many taxes, arrestment...etc. Shortly, they could obtain the same rights given to the citizens of the states concerned.

The aim of the rulers while they promulgated these reforms was to give an end to the economic backwardness of the Empire. However, despite these reforms the economic condition of the Empire worsened year by year. The loss of lands also did not stop. First foreign debt, borrowed under the reign of Abdulmecid, accelerated the discomfort among the Ottoman subjects (but especially among the Muslims).

The administration of the Empire was held by two leading figures, Ali and Fuad Pashas, from 1843 to 1871 (excluding short interruptions). In this period it was these figures, but not the Sultans, who were in charge of the administration. It was



the time of the Sublime Porte. The two pashas administered the state without accepting any interference in their affairs. This situation led both the jealousy against the pashas and also fawning for them. This two edged sword always kept the tension high in the politics of the Empire.

On the other hand, the economic penetration of European capitalism increased day by day and the local producers of the Empire started to suffer from the unfair competition of European products. The Ottoman administration in lacked enough economic and political power and ability to challenge these assaults on its domestic market. The regime of the two Pashas was also insufficient to suppress the revolts all around the country and the Empire lost many lands under their rule. Because their positions depended on the atmosphere of the international relations of the Empire, they could not take necessary measures against these revolts. This “poor” situation of the Empire and the submissive attitude of the rulers inevitably led to some opposition. The Kuleli Revolt<sup>15</sup> (1859) was the first signal of the impending danger. The conspiracy was not successful but the attempt itself showed the discomfort among the intellectuals, some bureaucrats and military officials. Probably after the failure of this attempt the opposition became more cautious. In this respect the meeting of some young intellectuals, who were sad and mad about the situation of the country in a picnic in the Forest of Belgrade (which is even further away from the city center) in 1865 to discuss the ways to bring remedies for the recent problems of the Empire, is interesting. According to Ebuzziya, who is the first author to write about the Young Ottoman movement, first fire of the Young Ottoman movement was ignited in this picnic.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> It was a conspiracy against the Sublime Porte. It is an interesting conspiracy because of the composition of the men involved in it. There were the members of ulema, military and bureaucracy. There are not clear documents about the revolt but what is known is the members were arrested before they took any action. One thing interesting in this revolt is that the men involved were forgiven by Sultan Abdulmecid.

<sup>16</sup> We have to trust Ebuzziya (1978) about the picnic incidence but we have further information about the following circumstances.

The organization of the movement was imitated from the Italian nationalist movement *Carbonari*. According to this cell type organization, every cell would be composed of seven members. The ordinary members would only know the other members of his cell. According to allegations many high ranked officials were among the members of the movement besides some low ranked ones, military personnel and intellectuals. The active members of the so-called movement were Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha and Ali Suavi. They were, mainly, seen as columnists in the newspapers of the capital during this period. They led the opposition against Ali and Fuad Pashas from their columns. The newspaper of Namık Kemal was *Tasvir-i Efkar*<sup>17</sup>. Ali Suavi used the *Muhbir*<sup>18</sup> for his agitations. However these two newspapers have always been under threat of Ali Pasha government. Because of this reason they had to be cautious in their criticism.

The year 1867 was a turning point for both editors of these newspapers (we mean Namık Kemal and Ali Suavi) as well as the movement. The Cretan crisis and the insolvency of the government against it were highly criticized by the newspapers. However the most effective attempt was Ali Suavi's private charity organization for the Cretans who had been driven out of their homes. Such a private organization meant the declaration of the insolvency of the government in public eye. Ali Pasha noted this move as a minus grade for Ali Suavi. After one month Ali Suavi wrote a bitter criticism about the Porte's relinquishment of the fortress of Belgrade. It was the right time for Ali Pasha to close the *Muhbir* and exile Ali Suavi.

*Tasvir-i Efkar* responded to this measure of the government by printing the order closing *Muhbir* and a protesting commentary of the Filip Efendi (the owner of the *Muhbir*). When the article of Namık Kemal, protesting the European interference in the Cretan revolt, was added to this protest, the inevitable end came for *Tasvir-i Efkar*. Now the leading figures of the movement were deactivated by the

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<sup>17</sup>Tasvir-i Efkar (The description of the thoughts): It was a private newspaper in the capital city. The owner of the newspaper was Agah Efendi.

<sup>18</sup> Muhbir (informer, news reporter): It was owned by Ali Suavi. It was famous for its harsh criticism against Sublime Porte.

government; Ali Suavi was arrested and exiled to Kastamonu and the newspaper, which Namik Kemal and Ziya Pasha expressed their views, was closed. It seemed that the political atmosphere of the capital calmed down in favor of the government. However the opposition was already beginning.

Mustafa Fazıl Pasha (then would be the financier of the movement) was the descendant of Mehmet Ali Pasha who captured the administrative hold of Egypt from the Ottoman Empire. The governors of the Egypt were called *khedive*. The administrative right of Egypt passed to the elder member of the family. At that period the governor of Egypt was the brother of Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, Khedive Ismail. Mustafa Fazıl was raised in Istanbul and held important posts. However his ultimate goal was to ascend to the throne of Egypt. Being in the capital and obtaining important posts were only means for this goal.

While he was holding one of these important posts, he committed a “crime” which was totally contrary to his aim: criticizing the financial policies of Fuad Pasha. As a result of his this criticism he was asked to leave the capital within twenty four hours. He left the capital for Paris. He was further away from reaching goal. On the other hand, Ismail, now, became advantageous against his brother. His plan was getting approval of the Sultan in order to transfer the administration of Egypt to his own descendents. There was only one solution for Mustafa Fazıl: degrading the government which left the door open for Ismail to realize his plans.

His first attempt was the declaration of his leadership of the movement named the Young Ottomans. It was criticized, even mocked, by some European newspapers like *Nord*. According to this newspaper, Mustafa Fazıl was a forger who uses people to reach his ultimate goal of obtaining the throne of the Egypt. First Namik Kemal responded bitterly to this criticism, and then Mustafa Fazıl replied the allegations. In the following period Mustafa Fazıl issued a letter addressed to the Sultan about the reform proposals of the Young Ottomans. The arrival of the letter coincided with the closing of the *Muhbir* and *Tasvir-i Efkar*.

The letter was immediately translated and 50.000 copies of it were distributed in the capital. The turmoil, accelerated by this letter, caused the exile of the opposition movement. Ali Suavi was already exiled and he was forced to go *Kastamonu*. Namık Kemal was appointed to *Erzurum* as assistant governor while Ziya Pasha to Cyprus as the Council of Judicial Ordinances. However thanks to their good connections Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha managed to postpone their appointment.

At this time Mustafa Fazıl invited them to Paris to generate an opposition front. Namık Kemal, Ziya Pasha and Ali Suavi accepted the invitation and fled to Paris secretly to organize the opposition. The figures, gathered in the residence of Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, were promised the financing of their activities. Mustafa Fazıl deposited a certain amount of money to the bank in the name of Ziya Pasha and their salaries were paid by the Pasha. At the first meeting Ali Suavi demanded to publish *Muhbir* in London. They agreed on this proposal, but they decided to initiate the publication of a new one in the near future.

However the visit of Abdulaziz to the European countries changed the fate of the movement. In Abdulaziz's visit to Paris, Mustafa Fazıl was invited to the presence of the Sultan and he was advised to return to Istanbul. He was also promised a post. He accepted this offer and returned to Istanbul even before the first issue of *Muhbir*. He told the members that he accepted to return to Istanbul in order to make the necessary reforms. However his main intention was different. When it was realized that his return did not bring any progress the tone of the *Muhbir* in its approach to the government, in which Mustafa Pasha was involved, became harsher. This was a break between Ali Suavi and the other members of the movement.

When *Muhbir* took a different side, Mustafa Fazıl ordered Namık Kemal to establish a newspaper urgently. As a result the famous *Hürriyet* emerged in 1868. However, the more Mustafa Fazıl got involved in the politics of the Sublime Porte,

the more distanced he became from the critical stand of *Hürriyet* about the policies of the government. He demanded smoother criticism from Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha. Such orders inevitably led the members to question their positions. In addition to these, the financial support of the Pasha shrunk in time to such an extent that Namık Kemal could not meet the publication costs.

In the following period, the leading figures of the movement, Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, diverged into different camps because of the ongoing orders of Mustafa Pasha to Namık Kemal to dissociate himself from Ziya Pasha. Namık Kemal obeyed the order at the end, and left *Hürriyet* and declared his dissociation from the newspaper. Now Ziya Pasha was left alone. He wanted to continue publishing but he had no financial sources. But there appeared one who needed such a platform to use for his aims: Ismail, the khedive of Egypt.

Meanwhile, Mustafa Fazıl was back in Istanbul and founded good relations with the Porte. He had only one goal in his mind which inevitably disturbed his brother Ismail. Ismail feared the probable circumstances in the Porte and saw Ali Pasha and his brother in alliance. In order to abolish this alliance and hinder his brother capturing the throne of Egypt after him, he decided to use Ziya Pasha and *Hürriyet* for an anti-Ali Pasha propaganda. Ziya accepted the offer and followed the order of his new financier.

However the continuity of financial support of Ismail depended on his relations with the Porte. Just when he reached his goal in 1870, he cut off his support. Now Ziya Pasha was deprived of both money and staff. In addition to this the British authorities started a lawsuit against him for the article of Suavi advocating the assassination of Ali Pasha. Under these conditions he fled to Geneva and continued the publication of *Hürriyet* under difficult conditions.

On the other hand, Namık Kemal stayed in London for a while then returned to capital in 1870. He was promised to be safe in capital by the government. In 1871

Ali Pasha died. The Young Ottomans always thought the most important obstacle for the modernization of the Empire had been Ali and Fuad Pashas. Now the last member of this coalition had died<sup>19</sup> and was succeeded by Mahmud Nedim Pasha. The other members of the Movement came back to the capital with great hopes after the general amnesty of the Grand Vizier. But the coherence of the Movement almost disappeared. Ziya Pasha, also returned to Istanbul and took an important political post in the government. Namık Kemal and his friends started to publish the newspaper *İbret*<sup>20</sup>.

To sum up, the Young Ottomans could not find what they expected from the new government. The despotic reign of Abdulaziz was completed with the clumsiness of the Grand Vizier soon after. They remembered the regime of Ali and Fuad Pashas with yearning. The freedom promised was not delivered; the publication of their newspapers was suspended many times.

However the worst was yet to come. As a result of a conspiracy, the *İbret*, the leading voice of the opposition, was closed and its staff was exiled to different ends of the Empire. Although their enthusiasm and expectations were refreshed in 1876 by the deposition of Abdulaziz and promulgation of the constitution, new Sultan Abdulhamid, soon found a way to close the parliament and suspend the constitution.

In the following years the last ashes of the Young Ottoman Movement disappeared. Abdulhamid II was keen to eliminate any opposition against his regime. He first exiled and executed Ahmet Mithat Pasha. After a while Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha were exiled for official posts in rural areas of the Empire. The autocracy of the Sultanate was built up by Abdulhamid II and the first opposition movement of the Empire came to an end under his rule.

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<sup>19</sup> Fuad Pasha died earlier.

<sup>20</sup> *İbret* (lesson learnt through a misfortune)

At the end, none of the opponents reached their goals; Ismail got approval from the Sultan to transfer the throne of Egypt to his own descendants. Mustafa Fazıl was forced to content himself with money which was enough for his extravagant life and gambling habit. Ali Suavi was killed in a coup attempt to bring Prince Murad to the Sultanate. Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha died in great poverty where they were exiled.

In fact this complex set of occurrences was the reflection of their standings. They were not autonomous like European intellectuals. They were bureaucrats and stayed as such till the end of their lives. As we said above, they lived the duality of the Tanzimat through their lives. They neither totally rejected the past nor accepted the whole process of modernity and European civilization. However the door they opened became a point of entry for the more radical movements.

The historical context is important to understand the philosophy of the intellectuals. The atmosphere in which the intellectual thinking flourished should be kept in mind to comprehend the real effects of their philosophy. In this sense, in this chapter the history of the movement and the period mentioned has been given briefly. In the following chapter, an ideal Ottoman type will be described in order to be able to comprehend the effects of the aspired mentality transformation in the Ottoman social body.

### CHAPTER 3. THE OTTOMAN IDEAL

The Ottoman Empire is a synthesis between Turko-Mungol (including Sasanid), Islamic and Byzantine state and social traditions. Despite similarities between with either one of them, it's hard to put it into one of these categories. Only thanks to its cultural heritage, experiences and geographical position, it could create a unique state and society model. Especially in its classical age, it strengthened its state structure by avoiding the mistakes of previous Turkish and Islamic states, and put the dynasty and the state above everything in order avoid any dissolution attempt. In the Ottoman Empire there had been only one noble entity: the Ottoman family. Although *Sheria* had been the main jurisdiction body, the Sultans and the state did not abandon the jurisdiction power completely to it. In fact, many times the jurisdiction power of the Sultans came over the *Sheria*. Shortly, the stability of the state was over everything. As Ocak (1998) puts it correctly, that in the Ottoman Empire everything was for the state; also the religion itself. Namely, here, what we will do is to describe a unique state and society model, understand the main characteristic of it, or in other words, "the official ideology" of the Ottoman Empire will be examined in order to understand how the transformation of it into a modern structure, to the extent that it could be transformed, had been a difficult process.

Before we proceed any further, it will be illuminative to cite Ocak's description of the official ideology of a state.

Official ideology of a state, shortly, is a completion of its manner of perception and understanding of itself, the land it reigns, the people living on this land and other states, and its world view, mentality, and the values it praises. (Ocak, 1998, 72)

Under the light of this explanation we can detail our analysis. First of all, the Ottoman Empire was a precapitalist traditional state and society. Because of this, the division of ruler and the ruled was made carefully and the way, each should behave and approach each other, is described in detail. The ruled, *reaya*, was expected to stay in his compartment and not to interfere with the administration task. The rulers



created a different and high class and perceived themselves totally different from the ruled. Given these, it is important to divide the Ottoman society into two main sectors and analyze each of them separately. Firstly, the ruling class will be discussed and later the *reaya*<sup>21</sup>.

As noted, the Ottomans avoided the main deficiencies of the past Turkish states which caused the dissolution of them. It had been because of the preservation of possession and sovereignty rights of the tribal chiefs (*beys*) and the warrior leaders on the lands they conquer. This right caused the continuation of nobility in society and an ongoing threat against the central authority. The first Ottoman rulers, although they were one of the tribal chiefs under Seljuk state, ignored the right of their warlords and gathered every piece of land under their suzerainty, with the expansion of the state through Anatolia. They abolished the nobility of the tribal chiefs and offered them only a rank in the Ottoman body of administration. Besides, the Sultans paid attention to keep the members of these tribes away from the central administration in case of any rebellion. With the dismissal and execution of Çandarlı family by Mehmet II, the last remnants of high ranking Turkish administrators were removed from the center. Their successors were the administrators educated and trained through the slave system.

The “*devşirme*” system was used by all Near Eastern states, but reached its zenith under the Ottoman control. Murat I was the initiator of the system. He used the war captives and trained Christian boys in the Janissary corps. In latter period the system was expanded and the periodic collection of Christian boys became the main source of the system. These boys were divided into two main groups according their appearance, talent and intelligence and the most able ones were taken for the inner (*Enderun*) section of the Palace. *Enderun* was the education and training institute of high-ranking administrators of the empire. The boys were raised with a complete obedience to the Sultan. Their legal position was also different from the subjects. They were the slaves (*kuls*) of the Sultan and their fate was depended on

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<sup>21</sup> the subjects of the Sultan. Its simple meaning is flock where the shepherd is the Sultan

the Sultan. They were also raised in complete isolation from the outside world. In this close system their only duty was to serve the Sultan, and the state. When their education was completed, they were either sent to provinces as governors or placed to a post in the Palace.

Beside these, there was *ulema* class which was shaped by educated Muslims under the supervision of *Şeyh'ul-Islam*. They were mainly educated with religious sciences and appointed as *mufti*<sup>22</sup> and *khadi*<sup>23</sup> to the provinces, *müderriş*<sup>24</sup> to the *medreses* or official under the control of *Şeyh'ül-Islam*. The last administrative unit involved the provincial rulers. They were either leading figures (*eşraf*) or exgovernors of the region who were appointed by the central authority to collect the tax as effectively as possible. Namely they were the ones who were essential to keep the preferred *status quo*.

These are the men who were called the Ottomans. Namely the Ottoman identity does not include all the people of the Empire but the rulers. “It is not an ethnic but a political description of an identity transcending all ethnic social and economic identities... the identity of the ruling class.” (Köprülü 1984, 39). The members of this identity were expected to know Ottoman Turkish language which is composed of Arabic Persian and Turkish language elements, and shared the same values, perception, taste and culture; a high culture involving the most refined elements of living, art and knowledge. They were aware of the same codes which were important for the administration of such a large Empire. They were at the same distance towards all ethnic communities of the Empire. The only aim of them was the preservation of the ongoing order. The changes and innovations were perceived suspiciously and the preservation of the exiting order was always preferred.

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<sup>22</sup> executive of the religious affairs in provinces.

<sup>23</sup> responsible for the judicial affairs in provinces.

<sup>24</sup> professor of the medresses

The preservation of the existing order highly depended on the preservation of justice. Justice had been the main backbone of the Middle Eastern states. The prestige of the Sultan was always related with the justice he set on his land. Ottoman Sultans also saw justice as the main issue for the stability of their state. The main function of the state was ruling its subjects justly. Justice is also the main element of one of the most important doctrines of the Turkish states: the circle of justice. “According to it, to control the state requires a large army, to support the troops requires great wealth, to obtain wealth the people must be prosperous, for the people to be prosperous the laws must be just.” (İnalçık 1973, 14). Justice was so important for the Ottoman state that the *divan*, main administrative organ of the state, was also used as a court to deal with every application and complain made by ordinary people.

As is expressed in circle of justice schema, justice is a must to obtain the wealth. However wealth was not perceived by the Ottoman rulers in the same way as was perceived by the mercantilist European states. To begin with the rulers, the wealth came in the second place after obtaining a post in the higher administration circle. The trade of post, as Mardin (2002, 210) states, was the distinguishing feature of the Ottoman system. The officials used their wealth to distribute to the poor, or found pious foundations to gain the confidence and sympathy of the people, or to ascent to higher ranks. Both were related with obtaining power. Besides, the security of the wealth they obtained depended on the preservation of their posts. Because they were the slaves of Sultan, their properties were confiscated after their demise or dismissal. They could not transfer the wealth to their heirs. Because of these reasons, wealth was a temporary possession of something which can be dispensed for the above goals. When we consider the Islamic notion (especially its humble form) the unimportance of wealth and the people’s perception about it can be understood more clearly. The picture, concerning the state (treasury) and the Sultan, appears different.

Muslim rulers were expected to be generous for their subjects. Their prestige was mostly determined by their charity activities, distributing presents in ceremonies

and appointments, organizing feasts for everyone, etc. The accumulating and keeping of wealth in the treasuries by the Sultans had been a shame for them and condemned by both ancient sources of Turko-Islamic traditions such as *Siyasetname*, *Kutadgubilig*, and by the numerous Ottoman chronicles. The abundance of coin in circulation was also another indicator of the prestige of Sultans. It is believed that the more coin in circulation, the wealthier the state and its subjects. That is the mentality of the Ottoman treasury. As Immanuel Wallerstein stresses, the Ottoman Empire was a world empire:

A world-empire and a world-economy are two very different kinds of social systems in terms of their politics, their economics and their cultural expressions. A world-empire is defined as a single social economy (division of labor) with an overarching, political structure. A world-economy is defined as a single social economy containing multiple state structures. These two systems have different modes of production. A world-empire uses a redistributive/ tributary mode in which capital accumulation is not maximized, and in which the basic redistribution is a function of political decisions. A world-economy uses a capitalist mode in which capital accumulation per se is the controlling consideration of social action, and this objective is pursued through the market, which is however at most only partially free from political and social constraint. (Wallerstein 1981, 117)

This quotation summarizes why a world-empire, like the Ottoman Empire, could not seek to achieve what the mercantilist states did. Besides, the attitude of the Ottoman Empire against the export and the import trade was another indicator of their traditionalist character. The Ottoman rulers paid attention to the abundance of product in the market and satisfaction of basic needs of their subjects. In this respect, they saw import positively and export negatively since the import provided the flow of products and satisfaction of market, and export meant the withdrawal of products from local bazaars.<sup>25</sup> They did not seek the accumulation of silver and coin in state treasury.

The other and most important tool of the Ottoman rulers for controlling the local market was the “*narh*” system. According to this system, the prices of the basic

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<sup>25</sup> For further information see Faroqui (1997, 2003) and Pamuk (1988)

products (in fact it included almost everything except luxury products) were determined and strictly controlled by the agents of the state. The products could only be supplied between maximum and minimum prices determined by *khadi* in provinces and central administration in capital by consulting with the merchants and producers. The main aim of this system was the protection of the subjects from the scarcity and abundance of the goods. The guild system is also a component of the system. In addition to the price determination, the number of the artisans and craftsmen deployed in every guild was also fixed by the agents of the state.

Besides, the increase in tax rates was disliked by the administrators and chronicles of the Empire (Akdağ, 1974). It was perceived as a setback for the welfare of the subjects. In fact, all above measures and applications were done for for the sake of a fair system, for justice. Justice is for the protection of the *reaya* from abuses. In this respect, tyranny (*zulüm*) was a very important concept in the Ottoman justice system. “*zulüm*’ according to Ottoman law, is the application of the bad innovations (*bid’at*), which are approved by neither *örf* nor *Sheria*, by the officials on the *reaya*.” (Mumcu 1972, 9). The Sultan had to protect *reaya* from such abuses of his *kuls* and provide the security and confidence of the subjects. According to Near Eastern state tradition, the *reaya* is given in trust by God to the Sultan (İnalçık 1973, 67). In this respect, any subject had right to apply to the *divan* in case of any abuse. *Divan* and the Sultan had to take these complaints into consideration and listen to the *reaya*. In early times even the Sultan himself, was called to the court as a defendant.

However, although the confidence of the subjects was essential for the Ottoman administration, the subjects had no political commitment right to the administration of the state. In fact all these measures were taken to keep them away and avoid any discomfort which can turn into a political upheaval. According to Ottoman official ideology, the ideal *reaya* is the one who:

- i) is obedient to the order of the Sultan,
- ii) does not demand any political right in the administration,

- iii) does not resist in any condition against the state stability,
- iv) does not leave his place and compartment he belongs to, (Ocak 1998, 92)
- v) does not change his *reaya* situation [For a man to pass from *reaya* to military status was considered a breach of the fundamental principles of state. (İnalçık 1973, 69)]

The subjects were organized according to an order onto which the protectionist, interventionist and absolute state notion could fit. On the economic level, the state expected *reaya* to be contained with few and adopt the livelihood economic conditions. The basic needs of the subjects were provided by the state, so demanding more and luxury items were seen as a threat against the stability of the society and the state. The taxation system of the Empire gives clear evidence about this mentality such as surplus, from which the tax is taken, is accepted as the amount above what the peasants needed to feed, cloth themselves and maintain production. (Owen 1981, p.11)

These are the main features of the upper sector of the Empire. Some other comments will be added in the end of this part after analyzing the situation of the ruled, *reaya*.

The subjects were divided into communities on the basis of *millet system* according to their religions. There were three main communities: the Christians the Jews, and the Muslims. Each of them were applied their own religious laws and directed by their own religious authorities. In the cities each community were accommodated in their own compartment, in different regions of the city, but this division had never caused any problem in their interrelations. In fact, as a traditional society, this separate order was desired by each of them. Because in case of a mixture, the non-Muslims could have faced the *Sheria* law and the Muslims could have suspected about the religious character of their state. The administration tolerated the religious beliefs and customs of the non-Muslims because the stability and security had been the main concern of the rulers.

For the Muslims, the Sunni belief was the determinant; the other sects were perceived as deviations from the *Sunni* orthodox tradition. However the members other sects were categorized under the Muslim sector. There was not any national sentiment among the subjects in the classical age but the religion was the critical point in their perception of the other. The religion was not an obstacle to access the sources (except for being *ulema* or joining the *askeriyya* class) of the Empire.

According to “the circle of justice” the state needs tax and this depends on the welfare of the *reaya*. The *reaya* was very important for the state because he was the main tax unit. The *reaya* was expected not to change this situation, for instance by becoming a soldier. The main part of the subjects was composed of peasants working on the arable lands. The other categories were the merchants and the craftsmen. As the transfer of *reaya* from his status to military was not approved by the administration, the transfer among these categories was also not approved and the administration always tried to block ones who tried to change their economic category; the peasants fleeing to the cities were forced to return, the craftsmen were forced to preserve their position, etc. Even the members of these categories complained about their colleagues changing their status. For instance the craftsmen complained to the authorities many times about the ones who decided to be merchants. Like the state, society itself was intolerant to the changes; the members of society preferred the existing order.

In fact, the social mobility had been rare as soon as economic and political stability set in the Empire. While the state expected certain manners from the subjects, the ruled also had some expectations and demands from the ruler. Firstly, the state should provide enough goods for the market, the raw materials should be available for the craftsmen and the security must be set in the Empire. Apart from these, the subjects were aware of their obligations to stay away from any demand participating in the administration of the state. In Middle Eastern state tradition, there is a hierarchical order. The subjects of these states saw the state as a sublime power providing their needs in return for full obedience. It’s impossible to reach and

touch it. The ruler is the one chosen by God (*zil'ullah fi'l-arz*<sup>26</sup>) and administration of the state was monopolized by the able and educated people; the cultural and sociological position of the subjects was accepted as unfit for the administration. Shortly, from both Islamic and traditional point of view, the subjects perceived the state as a different notion from their daily lives, sublime and provider of the order. We can exemplify it by expressing revolts resulting in the dethroning of some Sultans: Although the Sultans, Grand Viziers and some high-ranking officials were dismissed by the rebellions, any change in dynasty or the administration style never came to the agenda. Another member of the Ottoman family was ascended to the throne and let the ongoing administration style was continued.

The policy of the upper strata, ruler, and the mentality of the lower one, the ruled, was complementary. Namely, while the state set and protected the order, collected the taxes as much as it could, and impose a modest livelihood to the subjects, the ruled, sure of his living and satisfaction of his basic needs, lived and worked without endeavoring and forcing himself too much. One of the policies of the state, to keep the subjects within the modest standards was leaving the moral and religious area to the dervish order and heterodox beliefs (especially *tassavuf*) while for itself the *Sunni* orthodox belief was the main doctrine. The state let the other-worldly Sufi orders flourish in society in so far as they did not threaten the public order. The ruler even supported them by donating lands to their pious endowments. Some Sultans joined Sufi orders and conversed with their sheikhs.

With the penetration of these mystic orders into society, people became more humble, other-worldly, inactive, etc. The *Bayramiye*, *Mevleviye* and *Bektashi* orders were the main groups. These heterodox beliefs shaped the people's perception of time, place, property and material. The main doctrine of these beliefs was their ignorance of property, material and this world for the moral happiness of the man. For these, this world is a place to make preparation for the eternal life. The man becomes wise (or human-*beşer* becomes man-*insan*) if he suits out himself from

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<sup>26</sup> the shadow of God on earth.



material needs. Because of this, the Ottoman people put long distances between them and the property, they did not think to evaluate it, or break into pieces or analyze its component...etc. As Tanpınar states “the East accepts the material as it is or as the changes it gave it at first contact.” (Tanpınar 1961, 132). Because of this, the Ottoman craft made only partial changes on the raw materials.

Nature is another object which remains away from the heavy contact of the Eastern people. In Eastern beliefs, the nature has never been an object with which the people should fight and dominate. The big religions of the East like Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam accepted the nature as an element of the world with which the human shares life. In Islam, nature is given in trust to the man, and man’s obligation is to save it in its original form. In Sufi orders every object in this world repeats (*zikir*) the name of God, so their exploitation or damage is a sin.

These orders also recommend people a livelihood economy; working and examining too much are wasteful activities which block the man thinking Allah. For instance in *Marifetname* one advice is:

It’s wise to deal with worldly affairs as much as needed... the wise man is the one who does not worry about his body (*nefs*) and life and work too much to own the day and does not work too much to hinder himself from pray and contemplation. [quoted from Ülgener (1981, 10-11)]

The scientific activity should also be dedicated to understand the order of God, it’s a way to reach to the divinity. This order puts belief, moral values and contemplation in the place of speculative and rational thinking (Sayar 1986). Namely, every attention was diverted to the other world. In this respect, the wealth was a social function. The money was a mean, not the object, to gain regard of the people by giving charity and almsgiving and for a good investment for the other world. The riches, even today, have been expected to build a mosque or contribute to charity, and help the poor and needy. Famous expression “Shroud does not have pocket” summarizes all above.

According to one of the main doctrines of Islam, every one has a predetermined fate and it's impossible to escape from the decisions of the creator. Working too much and investing for the future are wasteful activities because the future is only known by God. In this respect the earnings should be daily, and tomorrow should be considered tomorrow. The word "rızk" which refers to earning means earning of one day. It is unwise to demand more since one earns his *rık* for the day.

The guild organization of the Empire, also, sharpened the situation. Guilds are the organization of the artisans and craftsmen in which the number of people deployed, working conditions and regulations to be obeyed were determined strictly. There was a hierarchical structure in the guilds and appointment to a higher rank and establishing a new business were subject to ceremonies and approval of the masters. The apprentice-master relation was the key element in appointments and apprentices were expected to be in full obedience to their master's personalities. Every guild was headed by a spiritual sheikh and words were strictly obeyed by the guild members. *Futuwwaname* is the constitution of the guilds and it contains the direction and orders of the sheikh. "According to *Futuwwa* ethic, the perfect person is the one who is generous, self-sacrificing and obedient to his superiors." (İnalçık 1973, 151). The amount of product and which goods would be produced and sold by which artisans or craftsmen were fixed carefully. Within the extent of protection of the *reaya*, the abundance and scarcity in the market was avoided by the state and it is imposed on guilds. Avarice and competition were considered as shameful behavior among the guild members.

This is the general atmosphere in which the mentality of the Ottoman people was shaped. It has really been a difficult task to transform this mentality into modern, individualist and capitalist one. The endeavor is still going on, but we can say about the Ottoman Empire that the lower strata almost preserved its traditionalist character until the demise of the Ottoman Empire and transfer it to the Republican

Turkey. On the other hand, the upper strata achieved partial modernization, and bifurcation in education and justice system went on until its disappearance.

The following three chapters involve the main body of the study. In these chapters the traces of the transformation of the mentality within the Ottoman society and the role of the Young Ottomans in this process will be discussed. In the next chapter the interchanges in the citizenry and the notion of state of the Ottoman subjects (ruled) and the administrators (ruler) will be given respectively.

## CHAPTER 4. MAN AND THE STATE

When one starts to analyze the European Enlightenment and modernity, one can easily see that the individual is put as the main actor of both processes. Unlike the traditional orders, which evaluate the status of the individuals in the extent of their belongings to a community or a class (not the class in the modern sense), the new era needed individuals, enhanced with activism and enthusiasm, acting freely and selfishly. Because the theory has been that the collection of such individuals will automatically take the societies and humanity further on the way of prosperity and freedom. In order to create such individuals ancient institutions and beliefs had to be shaken, reformed and if they resisted, destroyed. Just as the monarchies were shaken, the Christian beliefs were reformed, and the feudal system and bonds were destroyed. The individuals, emancipated from these bonds, revealed the incorrectness of the superstitions, traveled the world; got richer thanks to the inflow of bullion and increasing commerce, and most importantly, stood against ancient regimes for democratic rights.

In this side of the world, there had, both vertically and horizontally, been different structures, but there were traditions and beliefs that classified the man according to their membership to a community. As is described in the previous chapter, being Muslim, member of a guild, sect or order put the individuals to certain departments which cannot be changed by their personal efforts. In this respect a Muslim is the worthiest creature of all. It is a blessing given to him by God; he is worthy because of his belonging to Muslim community. (Aktaş 1936)

However what the Young Ottomans had in mind was different. They were aware of the importance of the term individualism. Especially for Namık Kemal, the individual is very important, because of the political rights he must hold.<sup>27</sup> In order to create such men, they also put the ancient bonds under critical scrutiny, and tried

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<sup>27</sup> In fact what his aim is to create an identity for a simple Ottoman subject. He always addresses to the Ottoman people and tries to activate them with his writings.

to free man from them: The guild system was criticized because it hindered the personal improvement, the religious orders were criticized because they imposed indolence and humble lifestyle to their members, and the Ottoman state system was criticized which divided the society among the rulers and ruled and decrease the ruled to a subordinated position (flocks of the Sultan) and applied slave system for the officials. The common concept of all their criticism (especially Namık Kemal's) had been freedom (*hürriyet*).

If we name Namık Kemal as the first banner-holder of freedom in Turkish political history, it will not be a wrong expression. As being a loyal libertarian, he accepts the freedom as a natural right of every human being; it is not a gift granted by a superior, nor can be correlated with a rank or duty. The man is free because of his very existence.

In this respect, it can easily be grasped that for Namık Kemal, the individual rights are more important than the public rights. The freedom of the individuals can not be limited in the name of the safety of the public, because what is good for society is the collection of the satisfactions of individual needs. Two quotations from Namık Kemal will be helpful to illuminate this issue:

If the creature of the past and the future gathered and picked a hair from the head of an Abyssinian boy without his consent, it would be cruelty like a man committing homicide.<sup>28</sup>

No one has right to attack to the freedom for the sake of public benefit. Everyone is the sultan of his world.<sup>29</sup>

Especially last quotation depicts the clear contrast between the standing of Namık Kemal and the Ottoman traditional order, as well as Islam. Because, starting

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<sup>28</sup> “*Alemde gelmiş gelecek ne kadar mahluk var ise bir yere toplanarak en aciz bir Habeş çocuğunun rızasını istihlal etmeksizin başından bir kıl koparmaya teşebbüs etseler hareketleri aynıyla bir adamın ifnaya kalkışması gibi bir zulm-i sarh olur.*” [Bazı Mulahazat-ı Devlet ve Millet, quoted from Özön (1938)]

<sup>29</sup> “*Umum namına o istiklale taarruz etmekte hiçbir ferdin kat'a hakkı olamaz. Her kimse kendi aleminin padişahıdır.*” [quoted from Aktaş (1936, 6)]

from the latter, in the history of Islam first war<sup>30</sup> between two groups occurred because of the disagreement about the priority of the individual rights or the public rights, and the proponents of the latter won the battle and the Islamic state tradition flourished on this philosophy. The Ottoman Empire, as the follower of this tradition, put the safety of all as the main target, and did not hesitate to kill thousands for the sake of public benefits. The right given to the Sultan to eliminate his brother is another example of the understanding of the Ottoman administrators.

While the source of the freedom is the very existence of individuals, they can realize this by way of their reason. From this point of view, reason becomes the main tool in comprehending the world in contrast to a traditional Ottoman subject who tries to open his “eye of the hearth” (*kalp gözü*) to realize allegedly the ‘real’ side of occurrences. Thanks to reason, the individual can attain knowledge of his existence and freedom. Namely he brings down the Truth to the material world. This is a “bit” too much in extending the limit of reason according to Islamic thought. Anyway, his emphasis on freedom is clear:

Man is free because he has will to act, he has will to act because he has reason...If one’s head is even smashed with stones, is it possible to change his mind? Or his heart is cut into pieces with knives, is it possible to change what he believes to be correct? So every idea is free and natural. If it is changed, it won’t be accomplished by force but will of the person.<sup>31</sup>

Namık Kemal uses Western liberal tradition to support his idea and tries to reconcile it with Islam to found his hybrid philosophy. However this natural right

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<sup>30</sup> Camel Incidence: It is the first big conflict between two Muslim groups. The main cause of this was the assassination of Caliph Osman. The first group was led by the successor caliph Ali and the other by the wife of Prophet Ayşe. Ayşe claimed that the right of Muslim is more important than the community, so the murderer of Osman should be found urgently. On the other side Ali claimed that the stability of the community is more important so the assassin should be found and executed after the establishment of stability.

<sup>31</sup>“*İnsanın hürriyeti, muhtar olduğundan, ihtiyarı ise sahib-i fikir bulunduğundan gelir...Bir adamın velev taşlarla beyni ezilsin, fikrinde kanaat ettiği tasdikata tagyir etmek kabil midir? Veleve hançerle yüreği paralansın, vicdanınca tasdik ettiği mu’tekadadı gönülünden çıkarmak mümkün olabilir mi? Demek ki nakli, akli, hikemi, siyasi, ilmi, zevki her nev’i efkar zaten serbest, zaten tabiidir. Değişirse kimsenin icbarıyla değil, tabiatın ilcasıyla değişir.*” [Hürriyet-iEfkâr, quoted from Kaplan (1974, 203)]

notion is problematic for the Islamic point of view. Firstly, Western thinkers attained this notion by releasing political philosophy from association with theology (Mardin 2000, 316). Namely, they built another domain for their play. According to this philosophy, which Namık Kemal aspires, the law of nature can be known by the light of reason, and the reason can attain knowledge of the natural law through sense experience. “This assumption automatically leads to the point that the binding force of law of the matter does not lapse even at God’s own command.”(Mardin 2000, 318). As is seen, Namık Kemal, while supporting this philosophy, unintentionally, gives the control of the occurrences to natural law. Furthermore, if reason can attain the knowledge of it, it may also control it. This maybe what Namık Kemal was looking for, but one thing is certain; he found it in a very different source. Because, according to Islam, God is the main commander of the natural occurrences. The *kaza*<sup>32</sup> and *kader*<sup>33</sup> understanding gives partial control and understanding to human. There are always some points and distances which human reason cannot attain. They are the hidden proofs of the glory of God.

Very shortly, Namık Kemal is a member of the individualist tradition. He laments on the tradition and customs which hinder the freedom of people. The freedom of every man, normally, brings the equality among individuals to the agenda. Namık Kemal’s answer to the following question “How can an order be founded among individuals who are equal and have same rights?” leads to the state philosophy of the Young Ottomans.

Loyal to the libertarian tradition, Namık Kemal states that the scope of the freedom of an individual is limited with another individual’s freedom. Individuals can enjoy this right as long as they do not interfere with another’s scope of freedom. Here, the reason is again at the stage to set the order among individuals.

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<sup>32</sup> destiny, predestination

<sup>33</sup> fate

A power is needed for the sake of the individual benefit in order not to let anyone go beyond his freedom and interfere with another's scope of freedom. The one that is responsible for setting this power is not the divinity or any secret superior but reason.<sup>34</sup>

Freedom is very important for the Young Ottomans, because freedom will give the Ottoman subject political rights against the Ottoman administration. In order to understand the importance of freedom, social contract theories of both Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha should be analyzed.

For Namık Kemal, society is the collection of the individuals who hold freedom and the will to act. As the above argument implies, at the very beginning the individuals decided to found an order, in order to block any instability or chaos, by their reason. Namely there was a peace (as Locke states) at the beginning among individuals, and what they did was the preservation of the existing order.<sup>35</sup> This agreement neither abolished individual rights nor created a public law. Just as he insists that "There is no public law but law of individuals." [quoted from Fındıkoğlu (1941, 211)]

For him it is even absurd to state such a law. What society (or public) consists of is only the individuals who have rights of their own. Namely, any law that ignores personal rights is invalid.

In the following step, these individuals made a contract among themselves and appointed a person as the administrator. But, this is not a transfer of sovereignty, because the sovereignty belongs to each individual. In this respect, the Sultan, or anyone, who is appointed by the agreement of these individuals, is only a trustee. The agreement of the individuals can withdraw this appointment anytime in case of any unjust administration. Again the transfer of administration does not create a

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<sup>34</sup> "*hakk-ı hürriyetinin haricine çıkarmamak için cemiyet içinde bir kuvve-i galibinin vücudu, selamet-i beşerin levazım-ı zarurîyesindedir...kuvve-i galibe koymaya yetkili güç ne ilahidir, ne de gizli bir güçtür. Akıldır.*" [Namık Kemal, Hukuk, quoted from Aktaş (1936, 6)]

<sup>35</sup> This claim contradicts with Islamic theory which accepts the God as the order giver of the trouble-maker humanity.



different legal body. The right of the individuals always exists and there is no need to create a different structure. According to him, such a distinction (individual rights on one side and the public rights (*hukuk-u siyasiye*) on the opposite side) is the main reason behind chaos in a society.

Firstly, what Namık Kemal does, which contradicts with Islamic philosophy, is that, for the satisfaction of liberal understanding, he reverses the Islamic state theory by changing the trusteeship notion. In Islam it is God that gives governor the right to rule, not the individuals. According to the theory God appoints the wisest person among believers, in order to continue the order set up. However Namık Kemal omits God and gives the individuals the right to appoint whom they want. Besides, sovereignty does not belong to all, in Islam, but to God only.

Second, the state is described as an invention of the people by him. It is an artificial institution and the law exists to protect personal rights. However the state, according to Islamic state philosophy, is the instrument to continue the divine order, and the law, namely the *Sheria*, is not for the protection of the personal rights but for the sake of preserving the divine order.

When the claims of Ziya Pasha about the origin of the society and state are considered, it can be comprehended that he also labels the state as an artificial institution. To understand the claims of Ziya Pasha, the following, long quotation is needed,

If one ever brings the fashion in which society arise and which in turn gave rise to tribal origin and governments, reason leads one to the following explanation: at first a few families were roaming completely naked through the mountains, remaining on an elevation in summer and living in lower parts in the winter, inside caves and feeding on wild fruits. With the establishment of contacts between families, this roaming was undertaken (by a few families) at one time. The single families, who saw two or three families gathered in one place, joined them, and a new form was evolved and the community progressively came into being. However, ambition, greed and the desire of the victories to subjugate the defeated being congenital tendencies of human character, the result of daily intercourse between

families was the rise of dispute and enmity. To settle these disputes a principle became necessary. Thus the wisest and oldest (man) among the families was chosen and these words were said to him: ‘because of your superior qualities, the members of the community have agreed that you be brought to the office of government. You shall serve them by taking care of such and such a matter. Since you consequently will not have time to gather nourishment like others, as long as you occupy this function everybody or every family shall give you this much victuals everyday. If you do not fulfill your duty satisfactorily, they shall find somebody to replace you.’ In short he was brought to this office with the words, ‘You shall be a paid servant of the community.’ When with passing of the time, the community grew and houses and villages were built and other families began to gather in various places in a similar fashion and were shaped into a society, and when disputes began to arise between them and the judge, who had been chosen to settle the disputes, was not sufficient any longer, the need was felt for a superior chief to protect the community from the attacks of the enemy and to enforce the execution of the orders of the judge. Thus, again, the one person, who was best known among all families for his ability and material spirit, was again brought to the executive office of government with a salary.<sup>36</sup>

As is seen, unlike Namık Kemal, Ziya’s contract was made in case of a war among people. But there were also similarities, such as: Ziya Pasha’s contract was made between people and the administrator. But it is certain and a strict belief that first contract was made between people and the God before the creation of the world. Ziya Pasha also reverses this notion and creates an artificial contract between man and the “judge”.

What is interesting in Ziya Pasha’s theory is the description of the ruler as the paid servant of the community. Claiming such an argument means criticizing the very existence of the Sultan as the ruler. His status is decreased to a position of an officer appointed by the people with a payment, and the only way to preserve his status is to rule fairly. However according to Ottoman state understanding, the Sultan is a blessing of God for the community. The ruled are his flocks and they are given to him by God.

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<sup>36</sup> quoted from Mardin (2000, 341-342)

When the arguments of both Young Ottomans are analyzed carefully, the notion of the modern state theory can be found even though they try to stay loyal to Islamic thought. Just as, Namık Kemal insists on a modern state understanding when stating: “Never doubt that the state is neither the father, teacher, executor, nor the tutor of the people.”<sup>37</sup>

When they tried to legitimize their liberal standings towards the state concept, they emphasized on the purist form of the Islamic administration. They, once again sounds the glory of the Era of Happiness (*Asr-ı Saadet*) where the sovereignty belonged to God, and no rank or status made one superior over the others. The administrator is responsible to God for the happiness of each citizen of the community. Just as Caliph Omar states: “If a shepherd’s sheep dies in the Sinai desert, God asks its explanation from me”

There should be a state, but the existence of this state must be dedicated to the happiness of the citizens. According to the liberal tradition, the state should not interfere with the freedom of citizens. Every one is equal before the law. In its purist form, Islam accepts every one as equal in the application of the law of God. To be a ruler or rich does not lead to a preferential treatment. Even to be a ruler is a burden because he will be responsible not only for himself and family but also for every citizen of the city. Shortly, the undermining of the monarchies by the liberal tradition and the purist version of Islam provided the Young Ottomans with a means to reconcile both in their ideologies.

However their emphasis on this issue shakes the very philosophical foundation of the Islamic states, because from the time the control of the caliphate as an institution passed to the control of dynasties, they “reformed” Islam to legalize their sovereignty by reconciling it with their ancient philosophies of administration. In this respect, the Sultan was given a superior position over his subjects, and his

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<sup>37</sup> “Hiç şüphe edilmemek iktiza eder ki hükümet halkın ne babasıdır, ne hocasıdır, ne vasisidir, ne lalasıdır.” [quoted from Ülken 1966, 151]

position was enhanced with the dogma that he is the shadow of the God on earth. But, this dogma (the superiority of one over the others) is the main criticism point of the Young Ottomans. Just as Ali Suavi states:

There is no sovereign but God. There is no sovereign among people and no Sultan either. Namely no one has the right to execute, assault on others...namely no one is the slave of the Sultan. Yes there is a governor but he is not the Sultan but only a trustee<sup>38</sup>

Ali Suavi goes further and investigates (frankly denies) the legality of the caliphate institution. According to him there has never been such an institution, but it is the invention of so-called Islamic states:

Isn't it awkward to accept the Sultan as a Pope or Islamic state as the state of divinity?

Now on, we can bravely and unhesitatingly claim that no one, even if he is called caliph, imam, sultan, or whatever, is the successor of the Prophet. The claim 'The Sultan sits on the post' is a kind of illiterate expression and has no concrete proof. Even the first four successors (*Hulefa-yı Raşidin*) had never used the term caliph for themselves, how could the other snotties use it?<sup>39</sup>

Each of the leading Young Ottomans tried to decrease the status of the ruler to improve their arguments that the sovereignty belongs to all and everyone is equal. Anyone, whoever analyses the arguments of the Young Ottomans, probably cannot hold himself from thinking that what they had in their subconscious was the idea of a "Republican regime". They were loyal to the sultan in the beginning, and thought the Ottoman society was not ready for a Republic, but with the increasing inconsistency of Abdulaziz and the despotism of the *Bab-ı Ali*, they started to praise

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<sup>38</sup>“*Hakim ancak Allahu tealadır. İnsandan hiçbir ferd hakim değildir, insandan hiç fert sultan değildir. Yani kimsenin kimse üzerinde tasallut ve kahr ve tegallübe hakkı yoktur... Evet bir padişah vardır, lakin padişah emirdir, ecirdir, nazırdır.*” [quoted from Çelik (1994, 557)]

<sup>39</sup>“*Padişaha hakim-i ruhani Papa gibi bakmak ve hükümeti İslamiyeyi ahkamı ilahiy-i sırfa üzre müesses bir hükümet-i ruhaniye gibi müteala etmek abes kalmaz mı?*”  
*Artık kemal-i cesaretle ve bila-tereddüd hükmederiz ki halife, imam, padişah, hasılı her ne nam ve unvan ile olursa olsun hiç biri Peygamberimizin kaimmakamı veya vekili değildir. (Padişah Peygamber postunda oturuyor) makulî cahil sözüdür, bir asl-ı şerîye müstenid değildir. Riyasete geçtik de Peygambere vekalet manası Hulefayı Raşidin'in bile hatırlarına gelmedi: Nerede kaldı ki sonra gelen sümüklülere!*” [quoted from Danişmend (1942, 25)]

the Republican regime by using mostly allusion in their writings. For instance Namık Kemal states that: “It is a wrong belief among Europeans that the Monarchy is peculiar to the East while the Republican regime is for the West”<sup>40</sup>

However, sometimes, they cannot avoid expressing themselves by going beyond the allusions, and reveal what is in their subconscious. In these writings they, unhesitatingly, express that in proper conditions the best regime is the Republic:

Isn't it a must to confess that the people have right to demand Republic when it is approved that the sovereignty belongs to all? What does confession mean? Who can deny that right? Was not Islam a kind of Republic at the beginning?<sup>41</sup>

And Ziya Pasha argues:

In Republic, there is no sultan, emperor, Grand Vizier. The Sultan, the Emperor, The Grand Vizier... of the country is the people  
In Republic, no corvee is used for timber and rope needed for the dockyards.  
If administration needs them it pays for them.  
In Republic, the newspapers do not owe praise to the government, but have right to criticize it within the limits of law.  
In Republic, there is a National Assembly whose members are elected by the people of that country<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>“*Evellen: şurasını bilmek lazımdır ki “suver-i hükümetten Cumhuriyet, ve hükümet-i ba’z suretlerine dair efkar Garb’a mahsus olup, Şark mine’l evvvel ile’l-yevm hükümet-i vahid (monark) fikriyle yaşardı” diye Avrupa’da mevcut olan bahis yanlış bir meseledir. Şark’da mine-kadim bu efkar malumdur.*” [quoted from Kaplan (1974, 535)]

<sup>41</sup>“ *Halkın hakimiyete hakkı tasdik olunduğu surette cumhur yapmağa da istihkakı ‘itiraf olunmak lazım gelmez mi? Demek ne demek? O hakkı dünyada kim inkar edebilir? İslam ibtida-i zuhurunda bir nev-i cumhur değil miydi?’*” [Namık Kemal, Usul-u Meşveret Hakkında Mektuplar quoted from Aktaş (1936, 13)]

<sup>42</sup>“*İdare-i cumhuriyede padişah, imparator, sadrazam, hariciye nazırı falan yoktur. Memleketin padişahı, imparatoru, kralı, sadrazamı hep ahali-yi memleketidir. İdare-icumhuriye’de Tersane’ye lüzum olan kereste ve halat için ahali angarya kullanılamaz. Eğer idareye kereste ve halat lazımsa, parasını verir, ahali den satın alır. İdare-i cumhuriyede gazeteler hükümete müdahene etmeğe borçlu olmayıp hüküm-i kanun dairesinde her türlü ta’rize mezundurlar. İdare-i cumhuriyede bir Millet Meclisi olur. Bunun azasını ahali intihab eder.*” [ quoted from Kaplan (1974, 78-79)]

Shortly, it can be argued that, under proper conditions, the Young Ottomans would be the prior banner-holders of the Republic. In this respect the tone of the dreams of both Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha is interesting and important. In their writings both of them depicted the monarchy as dark and horrifying while freedom and Republic as bright; a prosperous and happy life is promised to the people under Republican regime.

A careful eye can also grasp some revolutionary notions in the writings of each Young Ottomans. Except for Ali Suavi, even though they said they were against any coup d'état attempt, they sometimes used some provocative words. For instance in Namık Kemal's play, *Gülnehal*, the dialog between the servant of Muhtar Bey, Zülfikar, who arrange a flight for his master and Muhtar Bey, who is jailed as a result of a fake allegation, and decided to kill his half-brother who is responsible for this allegation, is interesting:

Zülfikar – My Lord, murdering is not a punishment for the cruel, a state cannot be saved by killing a man! My Lord, people are fed of and want to get rid of the trouble.

Muhtar Bey – If they want why do they not do it? Why are three hundred thousand men trembling from a man like the insane who is afraid of his own shadow?<sup>43</sup>

Ali Suavi, as the most active member of the Young Ottomans, uses clearer words:

O people! How long are you still going to believe that a Mahdi shall appear and save you?  
....do you think that emirs, who are in charge and who are free of question and responsibility, will abandon what profits they draw out of you and begin favor you?<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Zülfikar – Zalime katillikle ceza olunmaz. Beyim, bir adam öldürülmekle bir memleket kurtulmaz! Efendim, halk canından bizar olmuş, halk üzerindeki belanın defini istiyor. Muhtar Bey – İstiyor da niçin def etmiyor? Niçin üç yüz bin kişi, gölgesinden korkan deliler gibi, bir adamdan titriyor! Benim neme lazım?"* [Namık Kemal, quoted from Kaplan (1974, 422)]

<sup>44</sup> quoted from Mardin (2000, 378)

Lastly, the Young Ottomans have things to say for the officials of the Ottoman Empire. It is clear that they are against the slave system which contradicts their strongest claim that everyone is equal. As is noted above, the Sultan as being only the governor of the state does not have the right to have slaves. The Young Ottomans demanded that the officials, in modern sense, serve the citizens of the country with the reason. Besides their main aim must not be the satisfaction of the Sultan's demand but the satisfaction of the era's and people's need.

In this respect they accept the officials as the servant of people:

Just as the official is the servant not the tutor of the people, the criteria for his appointment should be talent, not his sect or identity. [Namık Kemal, , İmtizac-ı Akvam; quoted from Kaplan (1974, 214)]

The second part of the sentence reveals another, different standing of the Young Ottomans. When they propose to change the criteria for appointment, they are also changing the main condition of Islam which describes the one who is to be obeyed. In Islam, the Muslims are ordered to obey to the one who is also a Muslim. In this respect, a non-Muslim governor, attorney...etc. is totally out of a Muslim's mind.

The main evaluations are saved for the last chapter (conclusion), but the below arguments for Ali Suavi and Namık Kemal, respectively, will give clear indications about their impact on the following generations:

This creature from fire (Ali Suavi) dreamed about secularism during theocratic era, republic during the Monarchic era, Turkish nationalism in the era of Ottomanism, he tried to interpret them and lastly died while trying to realize them.<sup>45</sup>

The dominant thesis of that Era was theocratic and monarchic. Kemal stated an antithesis, against monarchy with the idea of freedom and against

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<sup>45</sup> "...bu ateşten mahluk (Ali Suavi) Teokrasi devrinde Laiklik, Mutlakiyet devrinde, Cumhuriyet ve Osmanlılık devrinde Türklük ve Türkçülük rüyaları görmüş, bu rüyalarını tabire çalışmış ve nihayet gene bu rüyalar uğrunda şehit olmuştur." ( Danişmend 1942, 5)

theocracy with the idea of motherland, which will reach to a synthesis with the foundation of the Turkish Republic.<sup>46</sup>

In this chapter we tried to reveal the efforts of the Young Ottomans for the transformation of the mentality of the Ottoman subjects. This projected transformation encompassed both the subjects as individuals, and the Ottoman state apparatus (including the Sultan and the officials). There was a clear tendency towards the modernization of the state administration. In the following chapter we will try to go a step further and discuss their thoughts on the social stratification of the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>46</sup> “O devirde henüz Türk cemiyetinde şekil bakımından konulmuş olan tez monarşik ve teokratik mahiyetteki idare idi. Kemal hürriyet fikri ile monarşiye, vatan fikri ile de teokratik idareye karşı bir antitez vazetmiş böylece, ancak istiklal harbinden sonra kati bir sentez haline gelebilen demokratik cereyana şuurunu vermiş oluyordu.” (Karatay 1941, 11)



## **CHAPTER 5. THE SOCIETY (or THE COMMUNITY)**

In this chapter two concepts will be emphasized; these are secularism and nationalism. It is necessary to point out that the Young Ottomans brought new and radical ideas onto the agenda of the Ottoman intellectual circles. It is debatable whether they could make the ordinary people hear their voice but one of the functions of the intellectuals in a society is their ability to name and describe the changes effecting the social structures and life. The Young Ottomans might not drag the people to the political arena as easily as they expected but they drew the picture of a man who is trying to understand what is going on and reflected the panic and flurry of a man who is trying to take necessary measures against the changing conditions which effect every segment of his life.

In this respect they felt that something must be done very urgently and, by reserving the basic institutions of the state and society, some adaptations must be brought from the West for the problems which could not answered by the present intellectual milieu. At this point it has to be said that, by way of their encyclopedic and superficial knowledge, they could well understand that Western progress owed much to the abolition of the hegemony of the religious institutions on intellectual thinking. However what they could not realize was that the same process in an Islamic state and society mean the depreciation of the values and institutions which they tried to preserve.

Another important notion in Western progress is the invention of the nationalism. It began as a project in almost every country. The modern state had to be involved by the people who speak the official language, have a motherland vision and sympathy to their country men. The scope of the modern state had to be wider than the traditional state regarding the masses which will be motivated for the prosperity of the nation and the state. If modernism would be the case for the Ottoman Empire a re-imagination of the people as a nation was to be expected. The Young Ottomans envisaged this thought and tried to motivate the subjects of the

Empire gather under the flag of the Ottoman state. However such a tendency, inevitably, was a threat for the *millet* system which was regarded to be the guarantee of the harmony and stability of the Empire.

In this chapter secularism and nationalism will be the challenging ideas focused on.

### **Secularism:**

Secularism was the attempt to turn the attentions of the people to this world. It was the program of bringing back the ideal and the Truth to this world. It has been a project to rescue humanity from the yoke of religion and dogma with the light of reason and knowledge; shortly being more this-worldly in social and individual level.

In the beginning it is useful to remember the thoughts of the Young Ottomans about the Caliphate. First of all, according to them the state should be for the protection of the basic individual rights. The political and social rights of the citizens should be secured and the state should let everyone enjoy their rights. In addition to this, they, especially Namık Kemal, did not accept any right (*hukuk*) other than individual rights. If his social contract theory is remembered, he accepts that the community or the state as the collection of the individuals who have freedom. Such a collection does not mean a different legal body. At this very point there is a critical position held by the Young Ottomans that because the caliphate is the successor of the Prophet and responsible for the continuation of the divine order, he has to have a legal standpoint of his own. Namely disclaiming the legacy of any institution or structure other than the individual implies a rejection of the ultimate authority of the Caliphate. Even if they did not say explicitly, their ideas bear the arguments that there is no Islamic society or state either.

Let's be clearer. In Islam the notion of community is very important; it is supposed by Islam that the ideal society is the community of the Muslims which shows the glory of the divine order on earth. There is some worship which Muslims must perform with or in the community; for instance the *Cuma pray*, *zekat* (almsgiving), even pilgrimage. The *ummet* does not refer to the addition of single Muslims but to the community. Yes, there is a rule which expresses that everyone is responsible for his own act, but this does not mean the individualism as understood by the West. The individual can earn heaven as soon as he satisfies the need of his family, relatives, community, etc, help the poor and the needy, etc.

State is somehow debatable, because some Islamic philosophers claim that the state itself does not have to be a state of Islam as soon as it lets the believers worship freely, while others insists on the state's role as the representative and banner-holder of the divinity. However the Young Ottomans insist on the continuation of the Ottoman Empire as the representative of Islam. But as is seen above, there are contradictions in their thoughts. They omit that the state and religion are believed as two inseparable brothers (*din –u devlet*) the disappearance of the one means the demise of the other for the Ottoman understanding.

While Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha, unintentionally, undermined the Caliphate and Islamic state and society, Ali Suavi did it openly. As is stated in the previous chapter, he is neither the opponent nor the proponent of the demise of the Caliphate, because for him there had never been such an institution for the Muslims (Danişmend 1942, 25). He believes that the caliphate is an invention of the Eastern monarchies to legalize their existence and continuity.

When the Caliphate and the Islamic state “reality” are disclaimed then the law, moving side by side with these institutions, is opened to the criticism automatically. The *Sheria* had always been the basic law for the Islamic states, although they composed it with their traditional laws (*örf, adet*). In these orders the dogmas imposed by these channels have priority against reason. Although Islam

addresses the people who have reason, the belief must be approved by the hearth (*kalp-gönül*). In this atmosphere, the reason has a limit and is insufficient to understand the Truth wholly. The doors of the Truth are opened according to rank determined by the sincerity of the belief of the Muslims. The Prophets are the ones who are allowed to know more, the others' ability to know comes after them<sup>47</sup>. Shortly, ordinary men can not know the result of his decision completely; they have to obey the discretion of God who knows the good and bad for the people. As a result, the human is deprived of comprehending the world.

However, as is stated in the previous chapter, and will be stated in the following chapter in detail, the Young Ottomans believed that the human can attain the knowledge of natural law with his reason. To make the long story short, they argued that in the administration of the state reason must be used instead of traditional beliefs. The science and technology must be the essence of the decisions taken by the state: "The essence of the political science is not the *Sheria* but Geography, Economics and Morality."<sup>48</sup>

It is very clear that they demand the *Sheria* be constrained within the private sphere. Namık Kemal and Ziya Pasha insist on the application of the *Sheria* but it must be stated that what they want is the reformed form of *Sheria*. Just as in the letter, which was sent by Mustafa Fazıl Pasha to the Sultan, some clear messages are given about the issue:

But my Lord, you, of course, know better than me that the religion and sect address to the soul and promise us the moral blessings; it is clear that what limits and determines the law of the nations is not the religion or sect. If religion does not keep its position as the Truth, namely, interferes to worldly affairs, it will destroy all and itself also.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> In this respect Mirach is the revelation or presentation of the Truth for the Prophet by God

<sup>48</sup> "İlmi siyasetin esası Şeriat değil, Coğrafya, İktisat ve Ahlaktır." [Ali Suavi quoted from Danişmend (1942, 24)]

<sup>49</sup> "Ancak Padişahım Efendim, Zat-ı şahaneniz benden ra'na bilirsiniz ki, din ve mezhep ruha hükmeder ve bize ni'am-ı uhreviye vaad eder; şu kadar ki milletlerin hukukunu tahdid ve tayin eden

Or Ali Suavi states:

Reform in alphabet is a good reform (*emr-i hasane*). In such subjects it is better not to mention *bid' at*. Because *bid' at* means to propose what does not exist in religious terminology. Issues, such as this, are about the worldly affairs, not the affairs of the divinity. We have to change and reorganize our worldly affairs according to our needs.<sup>50</sup>

...otherwise, what we call the political science is not a thing donated with miracles and extraordinary powers which cannot be attained with reason.<sup>51</sup>

If a comparison was made among the Young Ottomans to determine which one was the most radical, the winner would be, unhesitatingly, Ali Suavi. His zealot character (as named by Şerif Mardin) shaped the tone of his writings. In addition to his thought about the Caliphate and the secular state administration, he is also the one who argued that worship can be performed in Turkish. To voice this idea is extremely controversial even today he insists on the usage of Turkish in worships by quoting the arguments of leading Islamic philosophers and leaders. According to him the verses can be translated into Turkish, the *hutbe*, in *Cuma* prayer, can be addressed in Turkish and the prayer can be performed in Turkish.<sup>52</sup>

It should not be assumed that Islam ordered that Arabic is the language of the religion because *Quran* was sent in Arabic. It is not true; just as is not he (İmam-ı Azam Ebu Hanife) the one who announced a fatwa for the non-Arabs to use their own languages while praying?<sup>53</sup>

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*din ve mezhep değildir. Din hakayık-ı ezeliye makamında durup kalmazsa, yani umur-ı dünyeviyeye dahi müdahale ederse, cümleyi itlaf eder, kendisi dahi telef olur.* [Mustafa Fazıl Pahsa quoted from Kaplan (1974, 10)]

<sup>50</sup> “*İslah-ı hat emr-i hasenedir. Böyle meselelerde bidat tabiri karıştırılmasa iyi olur. Çünkü bidat istilah-ı şerde dinde olmayan bir şeyi peyda etmek demektir. Böyle hat gibi meseleler ise umur-ı diniyyeden olmayıp, umur-ı dünyeviyemizdendir. Umur-ı dünyeviyemizi iktiza-yı mesalihe göre tebdil ve tagyirde muhtarız.*” [Ali Suavi quoted from Kaplan (1974, 521)]

<sup>51</sup> “*Yoksa ilm-i siyaset dediğimiz insanların aklı ermeyeceği avaid-i fevkalade üzre mucizat ile tertip olunmuş gibi bir şey değildir.*” [Ali Suavi quoted from Kaplan (1974, 530)]

<sup>52</sup> which means the verses can be read in Turkish while praying.

<sup>53</sup> “*Sakin zannolunmasın ki fil’asl Arabi olan şu lisanın amme-i İslama lisan olmasına Kur’anın Arabi oluşu ve adem-i tercemesi cebretmiştir. İşte bu da böyle değildir; zira (İmam-ı Azam Ebu Hanife) değil midir ki Arap olmayanlar için Kur’anı kendi lisanına terceme ile namazda bu tercemeyi okumağa fetva verdi?*” [Ali Suavi quoted from Danişmend (1942, 34)]

So if this is the case, why are our people forced to read Arabic version of the commentary on Quran like Khadi Celaleyn and Ebu-suud? How will we mean this? Do you say it is tradition? Do you say, because they do not have a Turkish version of the commentary on Quran, they read the Arabic version? It is wrong, because there are Turkish versions.<sup>54</sup>

What all above meant for the people of the Ottoman Empire is clear. The mentality shaped by morality and religion was forced to change; the social structure shaped according to traditions was shaken. The mentality, proposed by the Young Ottomans, leads the hesitation for the people about the things which they know and believe as the truth.

### **Nationalism:**

Most of this section will be shaped by the thoughts of Namık Kemal about Turkish (even if he prefers to say Ottomanism) nationalism. He was a sincere Ottomanist, however his followers accept him as one of the founders of Turkish nationalism. In this part the dilemma of the Young Ottomans that they faced while they were trying to offer a nation building project, will be discussed but firstly it is necessary to understand the ideas of Namık Kemal about nationalism and the motherland (*Vatan*).

As is mentioned in the third chapter, the motherland meant for an Ottoman subject, the place where he was born. He was characterized by the people of another region according to his birthplace (*memleket*). He, also, felt himself as stranger outside of his own place. Turkish folk music is full of such feelings one feels when he is out of his town. However this was for the micro lives. In the big picture, for a Muslim, the world is divided into two sectors: one is the land of Islam (*dar-u'l Islam*) and the rest is the land of infidels (*dar-u'l Harp*). But the owner of both is God. What Muslims are expected to do is the Islamisation of the land of infidels.

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<sup>54</sup> “Hal böyle iken yine halkımızın camilerde medreselerde Kadı ve Celaleyn ve Ebusuud gibi Arabi Tefsir okumaları ne içindir? Buna ne mana vereceğiz? Görenek mi dersiniz? Bu görenek ne içindir derim? Türkçede tefsir yok onun için Arapçadan okuyorlar mı dersiniz? Yanlıştır. Zira Türkçe tefsirlerimiz var.” [Ali Suavi quoted from Kaplan (1974, 516)]

Namely, for a Muslim there cannot be a concrete, predetermined place which is encircled with boundaries. In Ottoman reality, like other Islamic states, first (micro) was for the subjects, the realization of the second one was transferred to the state by the Muslim subjects while delivering the suzerainty right.

In micro level, there was no need for sharing the same goals among neighbor villages or towns. Everyone was allowed to live on his own land and any interference was forbidden by the state. The borderline of the “motherland”, for those people, starts and finishes within their birthplace. Of course, such an understanding cannot be accepted by the modern nation state which Namık Kemal had in mind.

For this reason, he had to challenge both micro and macro understanding. In micro level, he tried to create a motherland vision for the subjects of the Empire. This was an attempt of enlargement which goes beyond the “motherland” vision of the traditional perspective. He offered a motherland which refers to the lands of the Ottoman Empire. He addressed all the people, disregarding their compartmental position, in millet system, to gather under the flag of the state and defend their motherland. The main tone of his plays and poems was the praise of the nation and motherland.

In the macro level, an opposite attempt was made by Namık Kemal which can be called the constraining attempt. According to this vision, the state is proposed to concentrate on the land and people within its borders. It has to improve the prosperity of the Ottoman nation. Namık Kemal tried to limit the tendency of the Ottoman administration, towards keeping the interest of the Muslims all around the world as the preserver of faith. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the Young Ottomans did not have any writings which criticized the assault of the Western countries against the Muslim lands. Ziya Pasha even appreciated the British Empire for her annexation of India thanks to her patience and effort in the way of progress.

[Hürriyet, N.40 quoted from Kaplan (1978, 101)]<sup>55</sup>. Besides, the state is, also, proposed to apply same law for the subjects irrespective of their religion and sect.

The subjects, now citizens, of the Empire were called to gather under the flag of the Ottoman Empire and work for the prosperity of their nation. The glory and harmony of the Ottoman society was praised by the Young Ottomans, namely a nation living in the motherland for the same goals.

Up to this point everything is proper for a classic nation building. Namely what they tried to do is Ottoman nationalism. But the ideas borrowed from the West and their confused consciousness did not let them create a nation and motherland on which all of the Ottoman millets desired to live. In Western nation states the centralization and modernization forced the people of the countries to use official language, sometimes believe official religion, and obey the rule of the central authority. When the Young Ottomans borrowed the idea of the Western thinkers about freedom, monarchy, nationalism and modernity, such applications would inevitably, come after. Of course these requirements intensified their confusion and while they tried to announce Ottomanism, they offered the Turkish as a common language and the Turks as the glorious.

If we turn back to the discussion mentioned at the beginning, the Young Ottomans realized the necessity of creating a nation from the communal structure of the Ottoman Empire. They accepted the national state model of the West as the ideal and tried to determine the main determinants of being a nation. In this respect, Ottomanism was a political nationalism project. It is absolutely an “imagined” nation<sup>56</sup> which was tried to be created by the Young Ottomans<sup>57</sup>. Because, as is

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<sup>55</sup> Ali Suavi’s criticism about the Khive Khanate should have to be stated but it should be remembered that the interest of Ali Suavi towards this country was about their nationality not religion.

<sup>56</sup> It was the expression used by Benedict Anderson; (1991)

<sup>57</sup> The same process had been seen in the Habsburg Empire. As an Empire including many ethnic communities, it tried to create a vision for its subject in the way of creating a nation.



stated in Chapter III, Ottomanism had never referred to an identity of any *millet* within the Empire. It was the identity of the rulers. Expanding the scope of this identity and making it the identity of the Ottoman people, firstly, required a change in its meaning. In fact, the goal of the rulers, for some time<sup>58</sup>, was to gather all of the subjects under the name of Ottoman. The Young Ottomans accepted the model of the *Tanzimat* and used the expression “*Osmanlı milleti*” to refer the citizens of the Ottoman Empire in their writings.

In the second step, a common language must be put aside for the citizens of the Empire in order that they could communicate with the state and other citizens. The classical Ottoman language was not suitable for this purpose. A more simple language should be used for official writings and education. There was an attempt for the name of using simple language before *Tanzimat*; it was in the first official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vakayi*, published under the reign of Mahmud II. The language used in this newspaper was, relatively, simpler.<sup>59</sup> Also the Young Ottomans tried to use a simple language in order to be able reach their readers easily. But this is not a simple marketing tactic, they insisted on the usage of a simple and common language for official writings, education and daily communication. They tried to integrate the subjects of the Empire both politically and socially.

However, their confused consciousness, mentioned above, and the peculiar situation of the Empire did not let them offer clear proposals. First of all, the identity of the Ottoman became very wide when it is used for the entire range of subject. Even the Turks hesitated to be named as Ottomans. To be clearer, the Young Ottomans were in lack of a subject which can be called Ottoman. However they needed one to build a nation so they emphasized the Turks to name the nation they

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<sup>58</sup> Beginning with the *Tanzimat*

<sup>59</sup> It should be stated that the newspaper was not published only in Turkish, but the copies in different languages of the communities of the Empire, such as Arabic, language of Armenians..etc. were also printed and circulated. This shows that , in that time, the Otoman state was far from a nation building project.

tried to create. “Among the Ottoman community Turks, thanks to their glorious talent, features and population, earn the prior status.”<sup>60</sup>

Their emphasis on Turks caused some hesitation about their Ottomanism vision. However apart from this, the ideology of nationalism among ethnic communities of the Empire revealed a different conclusion. Mutual emphasis on ethnic identity (even the real intention of the Young Ottomans was Ottomanism) accelerated the process.<sup>61</sup>

In conclusion we have to state, once again, that the Young Ottomans were sincere Ottomanist. The process described above was totally different from the ideal in their mind. They always worked for the unity of the Ottoman state and society. They did not intentionally emphasize Turks and Turkish in order to construct a Turkish nationalism. However their open-ended claims let the proponents of different ideologies of the following generations interpret them differently. Following two quotations are illuminative to show the repercussions of their thoughts on the following generations:

Kemal’s most important and glorious inheritance is the love of the motherland, it was once a moral love, and with the appearance of him it became this-worldly (Tarhan 1955, 105)

We commemorate him (Namık Kemal) because he is one of the first showing us the Western thought. He is the greatest ideologue of us. He is the precursor of the present. He is nationalist, patriot... (Gündüz 1955, 105)

Secularism and nationalism are two important concepts of modernization. They targeted the traditional state formations which depended on the religion (or traditions) and the glorification of the imperial center. The Ottoman Empire had always tried to avoid the disintegration of the harmony in the Empire that had rested

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<sup>60</sup> “Osmanlı camiası içinde gerek nüfus kalabalığı gerekse kabiliyetleri itibariyle birinci mevkide “vüsat-i havsa, itidal-i dem” tahammül ve sükunet gibi mümtaz meziyet ve sıfatlara malik bulunan Türklar işgal etmektedir.” [Namık Kemal quoted from Kaplan (1974,..229)]

<sup>61</sup> See Karpas (2001, 320)

on the *millet* system. The Young Ottomans also demanded the continuity of this order but the unavoidable consequences of their proposals<sup>62</sup> were in contradiction with the very basis of this idealized order. In this chapter we tried to discuss their proposals and their probable consequences. In the following chapter (which is the last chapter of the main body) the changes in the world view of the ordinary Ottoman man will be evaluated.

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<sup>62</sup> we should once again repeat that they are neither the initiator nor the sole cause of the destruction of the harmony mentioned

## CHAPTER 6. THE MENTALITY OF THE ORDINARY MAN

In this chapter the most elaborate dimension of the mentality transformation will be handled: the transformation of mentality of the ordinary man who felt the effects of the changing environment deeply, the deep effect of modernization in beliefs and perspective. His understanding of time, space, economics and this-world was forced to change. He had to find ways to survive under the new conditions. In this respect the deviation from the morality set by the traditional doctrines was most observed in this dimension. Namely, the mentality followed a different way to position itself in new conditions. Besides, because the morality of the traditional order did not disappear swiftly, the most dramatic bifurcation<sup>63</sup> emerged in the lives of the ordinary man; while he tried to or pretended to obey the traditional order, he adopted new rules in his life in order to continue his livelihood.

The thoughts of the Young Ottomans were, actually, the reflection of this dilemma in intellectual level; they were the voice of the Ottoman subjects who tried to redefine their position. In fact their emphasis on the concept of individual was an exit from this dilemma. The individual, enhanced with reason and ability to comprehend the law of nature, could show enough resistance to the difficulties of the new conditions. In this respect, their conception of individual is not only important at the political level; the economic dimension of it should be kept in mind. The enthusiastic and selfish human being has been the main actor of modernization process, and the Young Ottomans showed that they well understood the importance of this concept.

As is mentioned above, the individual is enhanced with reason and ability to understand the law of nature. Namık Kemal stated that the human dominates the world with reason. Because he has the ability to understand the law of nature and can attain the knowledge of the Truth with reason, he can dominate the world.<sup>64</sup> If

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<sup>63</sup> More dramatic than the bifurcation of Tanzimat as expressed by Berkes.

<sup>64</sup> See Hikmet-i Hukuk quoted from Kaplan (1974, 207)

this argument is analyzed carefully, it can be understood that it will lead to an understanding that the Truth belongs to this world, not to the eternal world as expressed by the Islamic doctrine. So the effort must be searching it in this world. Namely, like Protestant belief, the eternal happiness can be gained through this world.<sup>65</sup> Then isn't it reasonable to work for this world? The answer of Namık Kemal to this question is a clear "Yes":

Although human is a mortal being he has to work as if he is immortal. Otherwise, if everyone concentrates on only his time of existence in this world and everyone arranges his effort according this time, humanity can not last. There is a *kalenderane*<sup>66</sup> mentality which claims that everything is done by God only, labor and effort are all useless. Whereas, in this world the property is accumulated, and this occurs as a consequence of work. In order to guarantee the future, it should be earned twice but spent once.<sup>67</sup>

The achievement of such an understanding among Ottoman identities would need a big shift in their economic mentality. In every traditional society, subsistence-minded economic understanding had been dominant. In the Ottoman and the Islamic understanding, because the owner of the property is god and he gives *rızk* to his kuls according to measure he predetermined, the result of the endeavor can not be foreseen by anyone. In *tevekkül* understanding, the final decision is expected from God for the result of the human endeavor.

Besides, the accumulation was accepted as a bad habit by society; spending money for almsgiving, founding pious endowment, organizing feasts...etc. were the

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<sup>65</sup> In this respect, it is meaningful that Ali Suavi was called as "Protestant Suavi" by the İstanbul newspapers. (Atay 1954, 104)

<sup>66</sup> the expresion '*kalenderane*' used for the people who almost cut his material bonds with this world. They drink wine and establish loose connections with daily life. It can not be used for all members of heterodox beliefs in the Ottoman society. However Namık Kemal's tone implies that the expression also involves the orders who prefer an "ascetic" life style

<sup>67</sup> "*İnsan fani olduđu halde yine ebedi hayata mahzar olacak gibi çalışmalıdır. Yoksa herkes sayini müddeti hayatı nispetiyle tahdit ederse ömrü daimi olan insanıyet baka bulamaz. Bizde kalenderane bir zihniyet vardır; her ne yaparsa Allah yapar; emekler saiyler hep beyhudedir, diyorlar. Halbuki dünyada mal utlak olunur ne varsa hepsi çalışmak ile vücuda gelir. Müstakbeldeki hali emniyet altına almak iki kazanıp bir yemekle mümkün olur.*" [ Say, quoted from Özön, M. Nihat, (1938, 221)]

signs of welfare, not the money one holds. Shortly what is important for such societies was not production but consumption.

Such an atmosphere, normally, led to a bohemian life style which the Young Ottomans could not accept. The humble, passive human had to be turned into a furious and energetic one who has ideals about this world and one who is enthusiastic to have the richness of this-world. However, firstly, the human must be reminded that he has will to act and he can control his own action:

I do not care even if I am told that I have no freewill and what I know as freewill is only the result of some successive occasions. Since I definitely know I am free to write or not to write these lines when I get the pencil in my hand and do not feel any outside effect determining my intention about writing, I, of course, know I am free.<sup>68</sup>

Namely, the control of the human act is taken from God and given to human himself, so human is given two certificates by the Young Ottomans, first understanding that praises the labor for this world, second the freewill. Thanks to these two certificates human could be braver, reasonable, he could make analytic projections and will try to realize his very existence in this world. In fact what the Young Ottomans tried to do was imposing the Ottoman subjects self-confidence. They lamented the sluggish type imposed by the religious orders. In this respect, the basic characters of Namık Kemal's plays and novels are furious, energetic and self-confident.

What do we have in our hand? Are not they totally a mind and a heart from a piece of meat and a few drops of blood? But what did we do with this mind and heart? What are we still doing? We gathered a few pieces of wood and built a ship, put some trees on it and attached a piece of linen to these trees. Thanks to these, we can travel all around the world and dominate the earth. Air brings what power it has; winds from that side uproots the trees,

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<sup>68</sup> “*bana istenildiği kadar sende fi-nefs-il emr ihtiyar yoktur. İhtiyar zannettiğin ahval birbirini takip ederek gelmekte olan bir takım esbabın netayicinden ibarettir denilsin dursun. Ben madem ki kalemi elime aldığım zaman şu satırları yazmakta veya yazmamakta muhtar olduğumu ilmel-yakin, aynel-yakin biliyordum ve bana yazmayı istemekte veya istememekte hariçten hiçbir sebebin tesir eylediğini göremiyorum, elbette kendimi muhtar bilirim.*” [Namık Kemal, Hukuk, quoted from Özön (1938, 63)]

collapses the hills to each others; air drags the sea, mixes the deep of the seas and reveals the stones of the bottom of the seas to the surface. It seems as if it will swallow everything on its way but we, still, challenge it with those trees and linen. We struggle again and again; wind gets tired but human does not. He demands another storm, another enemy to challenge.<sup>69</sup>

What is expressed in this quotation is the next phase of the human who takes the control of his action; fighting with the blockades on the way of progress. In western progress, first step was the emancipation of the human from the traditional and ancient bonds. He had been given an identity as an individual. Then the hegemony of the religion on knowledge abolished. Thanks to this achievement, the ordinary man (layman) realized the truth and forced the dogmas. Every progress increased the self-confidence of the humanity. Human with reason, as the main actor in this progress was praised and it is expressed that human can learn and know everything with reason. If he can learn and know he can also control and dominate it. Namely mental achievement should be completed with physical one. Shortly, the nature, which is both a laboratory and obstacle for the human progress should be controlled by humanity. As seen above, Namık Kemal does not draw a different picture. He praises the achievement of humanity against natural obstacles and labels nature as the enemy. “In the countries, called civilized, humanity almost totally dominates the nature.”<sup>70</sup>

As is well known, this domination has not been an innocent control. It bears exploitation which cannot be accepted by many Eastern belief systems. However

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<sup>69</sup> “Elimizde ne var? Ne olduğu bize meçhul bir akıl ile bir kaç lokma etten, birkaç damla kandan yapılmış bir gönül değil mi? Ya biz o akıl ile bu kalp ile neler yapmışız? Neler yapıyoruz? Birkaç tahtayı bir yere toplamışız, bir tekne haline koymuşuz, üzerine birkaç ağaç dikmişiz, kenarlarına birkaç arşın bez bağlamışız o sayede su gibi bulunduğumuz dünyanın dört yanını tutmuş, haya gibi oturduğumuz kürenin her tarafını ihata etmiş iki mehip kudretin ittifakına galip geliyoruz. Hava ne kadar kuvveti var ise meydana çıkarıyor, mesela şu taraftan esiyor, ağaçları kökünden söküyor, tepeleri birbirine çarpıyor, denizde ne kadar su varsa önüne katıyor; ona da kanaat etmiyor, deryanın ka'arını karıştırıyor, rast geldiği taşları toprakları su yüzüne çıkarıyor, bu tarafa doğru sürüyor. Önüne her ne tesadüf ederse yutacak gibi görünür, biz yine ağaç kırıklarıyla, o bez parçalarıyla karşısına, zıddına gidiyoruz. Uğraşıyoruz, uğraşıyoruz; rüzgar yoruluyor, şiddetinden kuvvetinden kalıyor, insan yine yorulmuyor, bir fırtına daha istiyor, çarpışacak bir düşman bekliyor.” [Namık Kemal, Akif Bey quoted from Kaplan (1974, 428)]

<sup>70</sup> “Memalik-i mütemeddine dediğimiz yerlerde tabiat-ı beşer bayağı tabiat-ı aleme tahakküm etmiş” [Namık Kemal, Terakki quoted from Kaplan (1974, 199)]

this domination has always been tried to be legalized by its addition to the welfare of humanity. Frankly, the Young Ottomans did not have time to discuss the negative effects of this domination. They dealt with the result much more than the process. They demanded modernization, individualization and welfare very urgently. Isn't it Islam that orders working? So the Ottomans must also work harder. Isn't it Islam that orders Muslim be powerful? So the state should set its order to progress...etc. If the answers of such questions are given superficially who can say that they must be "No"? Actually, no one. However a thorough analysis will reveal the reality that a dramatic shift was needed for the Ottomans to accept this process.

In fact, even the result would not attract the Ottomans because of the humble life style. Just as Namık Kemal, harshly, assaulted on this mentality.

Modesty, which means satisfaction with the things one earned as a result of sufficient labor, is attributed a different meaning. When one owns a cloak and a morsel, he felt himself as the owner of an inexhaustible treasury. Also it becomes a merit to rest in his residence without doing anything. As soon as these thoughts are dominant among people it is impossible to find any surplus rebounded from the amount spent from the livelihood of anyone or any stone building from one's ancestors.<sup>71</sup>

From a different perspective, this quotation summarizes the mentality of the Ottoman subjects. Because this world is the temporary residence of Muslims, extra effort is meaningless when one earns his livelihood. The buildings were also the reflection of this mentality, so they were very modest and feeble against time; timber and brick were the main materials of the buildings. Namely every object and atmosphere reminded people that this-world is temporal and extra effort is meaningless (even sin) which made people too much involved with worldly affairs.

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<sup>71</sup> "Elden gelen sa'yi fi'ile getirdikten sonra müyesser olan kışb ile iktifa demek olan kanaat başka manaya hamlolunmuş. Bir hırka ile bir lokma nasib oldu mu, bir kenz-i layüfnaya malikiyet zehabı hasıl olarak ten-perverlik peygulesinde yan gelip zevke bakmak sevap hükmünde tutuluyor...Halkta bu fikirler mevcut iken hemen hiç kimsenin çekmecesinde havayic-i zarurîyesini idare edecek miktardan ziyade ve belki o kadar para bulunabilmek ve hemen hiç kimseye ceddinden –tamir ihtiyacından vareste- bir kargir hane kalmak ihtimali yoktur." [Namık Kemal, Terakki quoted from Kaplan (1974, 201)]



Both *divan* and folk literature supported this mentality. Firstly, the subjects and objects of the *divan* literature were always abstract; the concrete issues were told with allusions and abstract metaphors. Besides the style of the literal works were accepted more important than the subject itself. The content was usually sacrificed for the sake of style. Second, both *divan* literature and folk literature dictated the mentality that extra effort for this world is meaningless. The *divan* literature did this by proposing extravagancy and excess entertainment. Joy, wine and luxury had been the main theme for this literature.

In folk literature there had been two main currents. The one, under the control of religious orders, used the modesty and proposed people be modest and content with what God gave them. The second currency was more “this worldly”, it expressed the joy of life, natural beauties and love as its main theme. However even this tendency had never been too much “this worldly”. People are recommended to enjoy this world because it is a temporary existence. It is, again, dominant in this type of folk literature that the effort devoted for this life is meaningless. Beside this, according to both currents, justice will be set in the judgment day; so it is wise to let the judgment to God prevail.

However, the Young Ottomans’ effort had been for this world. Because of this, they criticized the main style of the *divan* literature and claimed that the idea or meaning is the essence of the literature.<sup>72</sup>

In our literature the meaning is sacrificed for the style that contemplation becomes excessive. It is excessive that, sometimes, it is unclear if there is an idea given.<sup>73</sup>

The concept of time is also flu in both literature and lives of the people. What is important for the people was the time they live; past was only a memory, it was

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<sup>72</sup>See Namık Kemal, *Talim-i Edebiyat* quoted from Kaplan (1974, 381)

<sup>73</sup> “*Edebiyatımızda mana sanat uğruna feda oluna geldiğinden vüs’at-i tasavvur o derece ifrata varmıştır ki, bazı kere tahayyülde eb’ad-ı mutlaka dahiliye bile kanaat olunmaz.*” [Namık Kemal; *Lisan-ı Osmani’nin Edebiyatı Hakkında Bazı Mülâhazatı Şamildir*, quoted from Kaplan (1974, 186)]

remembered with stories and tales; the analysis of the past events were rare; it was even meaningless for the ordinary man. Future was unclear for the human because it can only be known to God, so making plans and projections on it meant interference of God's domain. However the modern man need to know what future may bring, and make forecasts about the future to make preparations for the probable consequences.

Let's think freely. Does not the life of the people consist only of future?  
What is past? A death...What is present? It is a last breath.  
Both for individual and societies what is the benefit of the past events even they were full of glory and happiness? And what will be left for the future event even if the present is fine.<sup>74</sup>

Shortly the advantages of the modernization are always praised by the Young Ottomans. While doing this, they criticized the mentality of the traditional order which, for them, dragged people to laziness, sluggishness and unawareness about the civilization. In this respect Namık Kemal, in 'Medeniyet' article, compares two types of human, while one lives according to traditional order, the other enjoys the modernity:

...is the security of the man who is accustomed to eat dye-bread and sleep on the earth less comfortable than the man who eats delicious meals and sleeps in bed?...What is the superiority of the French woolen cloth over *aba* in case of warming the body?  
Civilization offers people millions of gold. Does gold increase appetite? Or does it lengthen life?  
Civilization offers palaces from marble. Do such building block the death? Or do they abolish illness?  
Civilization offers light in the streets at night. What is the benefit for the man wandering around on the street instead of spending time with his family after the sunset?  
Civilization offers ships and trains. Why does a man need to travel up to three hundred hours and stay five to ten days on seas, when it is enough for him to have a hut and two acres of land for his livelihood?

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<sup>74</sup> "Layıkıyla düşünülün insanın hayatı yalnız istikbalden ibaret değil midir? Mazi nedir? Bir mevt-i ebedi. Hal nedir, bir nefes-i va-pesin. Gerek fert için gerek cemiyet için mazi mesut imiş şanlı imiş, bu güne ne faydası görülür, hal rahat imiş, emin imiş yarına ne lütfu kalır?" [Namık Kemal; İstikbal, quoted from Özön (1938, 46)]

Civilization invented telegraph. Isn't it meaningless for the poor, who is even unaware about the situation of next room, to learn the incidences in America?...etc.

Such arguments are the signs of the man who is unaware about his nature and talent as a human. As is seen while the birthrate of the humans is equal to almost all creatures, there are more human than the creatures in number thanks to his ability creating civilization. Just as, it is obvious that the civilization is the guarantor of human life.

Apart from these, the new inventions, gained as a result of human labor and idea in this world, are clear proofs that human is not created to eat a piece of bread and sleep on earth. Just as, accepting civilization as meaningless means claiming a deficiency in the creation of human.

Yes stone building can not block the death and illness, but they can resist against fire and collapse.

Yes it is more proper for man to spend time with his family rather than wandering around on the streets at night, but thanks to the light provided by gasoline, the production and commerce can be active for an extra six to seven hours.

The people, traveling on ships and trains, bring the richness and beauty of the places all around the world to their citizens.

The civilization, using telegraph, can learn the incidences all over the world and benefit from the results of the incidences.

To claim 'That is enough for us, we have to content with it' or 'We inherited this from our ancestors, rest is *bid'at*, lessons, experiments, books, machines, progresses, inventions are all meaningless' and to live under the yoke of the infidels like Indians and Algerians are not wise thoughts for the humanity."

In conclusion, being uncivilized means dying before the pre-determined time.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> "çavdar ekmeği yemeğe ve toprak üzerinde yatmağa alışmış bir adamın karnını doyurmak ve uykusunu uyumakta gördüğü asayiş, nefis ta'amlar yemeğe ve yaldızlı karyolada yatmağa meluf olanların rahatından az mıdır? Vücudu ısıtmakta Fransız çuhasının adı abaya ne rüçhanı olabilir?"

"Medeniyet insanı milyonlarla altına malik edermiş. Altın iştihayı mı ziyadeleştirir? Hayat mı çoğaltır?"

"Medeniyet mermerden masnu' saraylar peyda edermiş. O kadar metin binalar ecele mi medhal bırakmaz? Hastalığı mı men eder?"

"Medeniyet geceleri sokakta gaz peyda edermiş. Allah'ın güneşi zail olduktan sonra insana göre akrabasının arasına girip de i'tilaf-ı aileden müstefid olmak gibi bir lezzeti terk ederek kahve kahve dolaşmakta ne ihtiyacı olabilir?"

"Medeniyet vapurlar, şimendiferler husule getirmiş. İkametine bir kulübe ve maişetine iki dönüm toprak kafi olan bir adamın üç yüz saatlik yerlere gitmeye ve beş on gün denizler içinde kalmaya ne ihtiyacı olabilir?"

"Medeniyet telgrafi icad eylemiş. Yani başındaki odada geçen ahvali bilmeyen biçareye göre Amerika'nın vukuatını öğrenmeye çalışmakta ne mana vardır? Keza ve keza."

Bu türlü mütaala insanın tabiat ve istidadından bütün bütün gaflet eseridir. Görüyoruz ki insan tevlid kuvvetinde, hemen kaffe\_i hayvanatın kafesinden birkaç bin kat ziyade bulunuyor; ve bu kesret sahra-yı vahşette değil, saadet-sera-yı medeniyette görülüyor. Bundan bilbedahe sabit olur ki medeniyet hayat-ı beşerin kafilidir."

"Bundan başka insanın sa'y ve fikir ile dünyada izhar ettiği bunca bedayı' öyle bir parça ekme yemek ve topraklarda yuvarlanıp uyumak için yaratılmış bir mahluk olmadığına bürhan-ı kafidir."

"Evet, kargir binalar ecele, hastalığa mukavemet etmez. Fakat, yanmaya, yıkılmaya karşı durur; letafet ve mamuriyetle birkaç karn evlada kalır."

Of course, it should be remembered that what Namık Kemal means as civilization is modernization. Because the lives of the Ottomans do not resemble the one who sleeps on earth. But he exaggerates the example to press his praise for modernization.

The Young Ottomans needed modernism very urgently. The Ottoman Empire should be as strong as the European states and the citizens of the Empire as prosperous as the Europeans. In this respect, the civilization, industrial and scientific methods of the Europeans should be applied in the Ottoman Empire.

Engineering has reached its zenith of expectations: through it, the continents are separated, seas are united and plots of earth are located in the midst of vast oceans and water found sandy in wastes.

Economics has given rise to the division of labor. A mediocre artisan is, in his field, ten times as able as an ancient master craftsman.

When will we start taking example?

What we have done does not amount more than a few superficial changes that newspapers and that through the efforts of the late Şinasi were able to bring about the literature.

We have not a single factory. How are arts and crafts to prosper in our country?

We have not been able to establish a single joint-stock company. Is this the way to advance trade?

Is there a single Ottoman Bank in existence? How do we propose to go about creating wealth? [Namık Kemal quoted from Mardin (2000, 406)]

According to Ali Suavi, basic reason why the Ottomans cannot industrialize is the guild reality. He states that the traditional training system hinders the artisans

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“Evet, geceleri işsiz bir adam için muttasıl ailesini terk edip de sokaklarda eğlence taharri etmekte bir letafet yoktur. Fakat gaz olan yerlerde ashab-ı sa’y u ticaret geceleri de altı yedi saat işyle veya alışverişiyle meşgul olur ve bu suretle ömrü üzerine bir ömür daha katar.”

“Şimendifer veya vapur ile birkaç yüz saatlik yerlere giden veya birkaç gün deniz üzerinde çalkalananlar ise marifetin bir keramet-i garibesiyile tayy-ı mekan etmiş veya postuyla sulardan geçmiş gibi cihanın ta öbür tarafına giderler, havayic-i hayati getirirler, vatandaşlarının ayağına isar ederler.”

“Telgraf kullanan akvam, eğer eski dünyada ise yeni dünyada bulunan bir tabinin hazakatinden veya zuhur eden bir vak’anın tesiratından hayatlarına, büyük büyük faydalar görürler.”

“ <<Bize şu lazım, onunla kanaat etmeliyiz>>. Ve <<Pederlerimizden bunu gördük, onun haricinde ne varsa bid’attir. Dersler, talimler, kitaplar, makineler, terakkiler, icadlar ne işe yarar?>> diye Hintliler, Cezayirliiler gibi, ecanibin kahr ve galebesi altında hürriyete hiçbir suretle yakışır şeylerden değildir.”

“Hülâsa medeniyetsiz yaşamak, ecelsiz ölmek kabilindendir.” [Namık Kemal quoted from Kaplan (1974, 231-233)]

learn new inventions and adapt a different method which may cause his expulsion from the guild organization.

In fact the basic reason is the mentality of the traditional order which has been an obstacle for the state and people to accept and adopt the modern mentality. However, as is told at the beginning of this chapter, the individual, who is open to net effects of the industrial and commercial progress of the Western states in his daily life, had to accept some of them. His view about property and this-world shifted dramatically (Sayar 1986, 345). As a result of this shift:

The changed patterns of social stratification and acquisition of wealth, the modern educational system and other factors produced two seemingly conflicting results: first, they undermined the traditional social order and mobilized the masses in populist religious movements that appeared to advocate a return to older, but actually sought to accommodate change within a traditional Islamic social framework; second they participated in the rise of a new and increasingly individualistic middle class, with its own pragmatic values and modernist Islamic identity. The political impact of these reactions began to materialize in the 1860s in the Young Ottoman movement. (Karpat 2001, 181)

## CONCLUSION

The modernization of societies is not a simple replacement of institutions and interrelations. Every belief, institution, relation or whatever has deep roots in the history of societies. The Ottoman modernization should also be observed from this perspective. It is a multidimensional evolution that incorporated values and ideas of the traditional culture and history (Karpas 2001, 328). The traditional establishment of the Ottoman Empire had clear and deep inconsistencies with modernity like every traditional order. If the modernization option is chosen the traditional order must be out, because it requires a total change in the establishment of societies. The way of life promised by modernity excludes the institutions and beliefs of the past. The traditions survive only through their symbolic meanings.

However for the societies, living under the threat and assault of the European state and capitalism had no other choice. They have to modernize their state and societies in order to survive in new order. In the Ottoman Empire the threat was first understood by the state elites after withdrawals, but at the beginning the technology transfers seemed as the cure for the defeats in the military field. It was not a modernization project. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century new bureaucratic cadre brought the modernization of the state to the agenda. The members of the Young Ottomans flourished from this cadre.

When we look at the thoughts of the Young Ottomans, it can be seen how the evolution of the Ottoman modernization requires a profound and broad perspective. Despite their superficial analysis and explanations, the Young Ottomans felt obliged to deal with the multiple structures of Ottoman society. Like an encyclopedist, they brought reform proposals for state, economy, family, population, press, literature, local administration, etc. They needed urgent modernization of the Empire. They demanded rapid changes. They were patriot Muslims who wanted the continuity of both Ottoman Empire and its Islamic character.

In order to preserve the Empire they proposed that the governmental, administrative and financial techniques of the West be applied to the Empire (Mardin 2000, 404). They realized the incompatibility of the traditional order of the Empire with the realities of the modern world. However they wanted both the survival of the basic institutions of the Empire and Islam, and the modernization of Ottoman state and society. So they tried to reconcile the thesis of modernity with the Islamic doctrines and traditional teachings and understanding. In fact they searched the equivalent of the Western concepts in Islamic and traditional doctrines.<sup>76</sup> However it is important to note that such modernist arguments did not represent the view of Muslim teaching and tradition common among Ottoman Turks (Davison 1963, 67).<sup>77</sup> But they did not have time to consider such concerns. They brought the examples of applications of European countries and proposed the way to follow for the modernization of the Empire.

In this respect, they are the first Islamist thinkers. That is, they reformulated the content of the Islamic concepts as to fill them with modern notions. In fact what they did was the normal reflex of every intellectual of the non-European countries. In this study, there is not any hesitation about the sincerity of their belief, but we claim that while they tried to guarantee the survival of Islam and the basic institutions of the Empire, their proposals undermined the bases of the two pillars of society. Also we claim that this perspective is crucial to understand the philosophy of the Young Ottomans.

The modernization of the Ottoman Empire was, at the same time a mental transformation of every element of the Ottoman Empire. The understandings about every particular field of life had to be adapted to the new conditions. The role of the Young Ottomans in this process had been bringing new explanations and understanding for the changing conditions. In fact every adaptation and

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<sup>76</sup> icma with national assembly, labor with endeavor for this world, election of the first four caliphs with the democracy, biat with social contract...etc.

<sup>77</sup> Davison, Roderic (1963) p.67

understanding had brought the end of the Empire, because the traditional mentality of the Ottoman Empire contradicted with the mentality of the modernity. Every attempt to transform the mentality in favor of the latter meant the dissolution of the Empire. Of course the way to dissolution was neither opened solely by the Young Ottomans nor concluded by them. However their open-ended claims were used by different political currents in Turkish history; the modernists, nationalists, Islamists, etc. They found roots of their philosophies in their writings.

The revolutions are made by intellectuals. It is wrong to attribute the success of the reform in the Ottoman Empire only to the massacre in the Mountain of Resne and the harsh protest of Salonica and Serez. Namık Kemal pressed the hot stamp of love of freedom to the thoughts of the young generations with his pencil of fire<sup>78</sup>

In earlier times, their claims were voiced in the first parliament. Some members of the parliament used their thoughts to criticize the government (Karpaz 2006, 377).

In the Turkish Republic the interest towards the Young Ottomans were declared louder. Atatürk expressed his sympathy for Namık Kemal in a speech addressed to his friends<sup>79</sup>. In this modernist era the philosophy of the Young Ottomans was reevaluated and, sometimes, their effect was exaggerated. However this exaggeration is important to show the destination their thoughts could point.

As a result, the modernization attempts of the Young Ottomans were inherited by the future generations, and the ways they opened, made the activists of the later periods more radical and brave. The human type they drew has become the

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<sup>78</sup> “İnkılapları mütefekkirler yapar.. İnkılabı Osmaniye yalnız Resne dağlarında vukua gelen kıyamın, Selanik ve Serez’in şiddetli protestolarının tesirine atfetmek büyük gaflet olur... Namık Kemal ateşin kalemiyle gençlerin dimağında hürriyete aşk ve muhabbet hissini ikad ediyordu.” (Bedri Nuri 1955, 32)

<sup>79</sup> “Vatanın kurtuluşu ve istiklali için ölmeyi bugünkü nesle Namık Kemal öğretti. Harbiye senelerinde siyaset fikirleri baş gösterdi. Namık Kemal’den gelen sesin büyüüne kapılmıştık. Bu ses ruhumuzu şimşek gibi sarıyor, bu ses şimdiye dek okuduğum hiçbir sese benzemiyordu. Namık Kemal’in yiğit sesi önümde bambaşka bir ufku açılımasına yol açıyordu.” (Karaalioglu 2005 back page)



reality of many Muslims who tried to reconcile their beliefs with capitalist and modernist notions. It is not possible, even today, to state that the bifurcation has disappeared, but capitalism and modernism press their impact on the ancient beliefs of the Eastern societies.

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