

BETWEEN BROTHERHOOD AND HOSTILITY: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS  
BETWEEN ARMENIAN AND TURKISH COMMUNITIES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE  
(1908–1914)



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İSTANBUL ŐEHİR UNIVERSITY

AUGUST 2016

BETWEEN BROTHERHOOD AND HOSTILITY: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS  
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EMPIRE (1908–1914)

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF  
İSTANBUL ŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

BY

SENA ŞEN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS  
IN  
CULTURAL STUDIES

AUGUST 2016

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## ABSTRACT

### BETWEEN BROTHERHOOD AND HOSTILITY: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN ARMENIAN AND TURKISH COMMUNITIES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE (1908-1914)

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August 2016, 95 Pages

The period between 1908 - 1914 offers a rich platform for the discussions on the relations of Armenians and Turks in the Ottoman Empire. The years, following the announcement of the constitution were bearing immense opportunities for two communities to encounter on cultural field. In addition to this, that was the last period before the outbreak of World War I and 1915. Besides those major incidents, there has been a number of relatively small-scale events which had been influential on the social relations of etho-religious elements of the empire; such as Adana Incidents of 1909, Balkan Wars as much as the discussions on the legal regulations. Considering the outcomes of these events, I aim to discuss two cases where two nations have encountered in this period. Firstly, Ahmet Şerif's travel notes with the title of *Anadolu'da Tanın* will be discussed. Those involves his observations on the Anatolian cities and districts in 1909-13. He puts special emphasis on the relations of Turks and Armenians in his notes. The second case is the literary translations of Armenian intellectuals, from Armenian to Turkish; *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes*, *Saliha Hanım*, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numumeleri*, and *Hayat Olduğu Gibi*. This thesis tries to present these two different cases where two communities encountered and they are discussed with their relation to Ottoman public sphere, which was expected to reflect the multiplicity of the empire, due to the fraternal discourse of the constitutional regime. The notions of fraternity, homeland and nationalism, as well as the theories related to these, are benefited to correlate, comprehend and explain these cases.

Keywords: Ottoman History, Armenian Literature, Turkish Literature, Constitutional Period, Translations, Inter-Ethnic Relations

## ÖZ

### KARDEŞ Mİ, DÜŞMAN MI?: OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞUNDA ERMENİ VE TÜRK UNSURLARIN KÜLTÜREL ALANDAKİ KARŞILAŞMALARI (1908-1914)

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Ağustos 2016, 95 Sayfa

1908-14 arası dönem Ermeni-Türk ilişkilerini tartışmak adına son derece geniş bir zemin sunmaktadır. İkinci Meşrutiyet'in ilanını takip eden yıllar sadece Ermeniler ve Türkler değil, imparatorluk içinde yaşayan tüm ulusların kültürel alanda karşılaşması açısından son derece elverişli bir dönemdi. Buna ek olarak, söz konusu dönem Birinci Dünya Savaşı ve 1915'in hemen öncesi olması sebebiyle de anlamlıdır. Tüm bunların yanı sıra, Balkan Savaşları, Adana Olayları ve yasal düzenlemeler hakkındaki tartışmalar da dönemi önemli kılan diğer faktörlerdir. Bu tezde, söz konusu gelişmelerin etkileri de göz önünde bulundurularak, iki ulusun kültürel alandaki kesişmelerini gösteren iki ayrı vakayı incelenmiştir. Öncelikli olarak Ahmet Şerif'in *Anadolu'da Tanin* başlıklı gezi yazılarından bahsedilmiştir. Bu yazılar, yazarın 1909-14 arasında Anadolu'nun çeşitli şehirlerine yaptığı gezilerdeki gözlemlerinden oluşmaktadır. Bu yazılarında unsurlar arasındaki ilişkilere özellikle yer vermesi sebebiyle bu tezde incelenmeye değer görülmüştür. İkinci olarak ise ilk defa olarak bu dönemde Ermeniceden Türkçeye yapılmış olan çeviriler tartışılmıştır. Bu eserler, Yervant Odyan'ın birbirinin devamı olan iki romanı, *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes* ve *Saliha Hanım*, Sarkis Srents'in tercümanlığını yaptığı *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri* ve Krikor Zohrab'ın *Hayat Olduğu Gibi* başlıklı hikaye kitabıdır. Bahsedilen vakalar Ermeni-Türk ilişkileri bağlamında yorumlanırken, söz konusu dönemde İkinci Meşrutiyetin "kardeşlik" söyleminin son derece etkili olması sebebiyle Osmanlı'da kamusal alan tartışmaları da bir ölçüde incelemeye dahil edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte iki vakayı birbiriyle ilişkilendirmek, anlamlandırmak ve açıklamak için kardeşlik, ortak vatan ve milliyetçilik kavramlarından ve ilgili teorilerden de faydalanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Osmanlı Tarihi, Ermeni Edebiyatı, Türk Edebiyatı, İkinci Meşrutiyet, Kültürel İlişkiler.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis advisor Assist. Prof. Mehmet Fatih Uslu, who motivated, supported and helped me throughout the whole process of writing this dissertation. Without his patience and guidance, I would never have been able to finish this study. I also would like to give special thanks to Assist. Prof. Irvin Cemil Schick for guiding and encouraging me. His intellectual support has been very meaningful and valuable in the writing process.

I also present my thanks to the rest of my thesis committee, Assoc. Prof. Abdülhamit Kırmızı and Assoc. Prof. Zeynep Uysal, for their challenging questions, comments and valuable suggestions. I am also grateful to other faculty members, with whom I had chance to take courses and discuss about my study.

My dear friend Hatice Nuriler have had many contributions to this thesis, from editing to intellectual suggestions. I would like to thank her for these contributions, her emotional support and patience. I also want to thank Yakoob Ahmad for spending his valuable time for helping me whenever I ask for. I should also thank my dear friend Buse Burcu Şayir, the witness of my whole academic career since the primary school, for her friendship and also her support for translations.

Lastly, my deepest gratitude goes to my family. My parents, Hülya Şen and Mehmet Şen always supported and motivated me, with their unconditional love and patience. Whenever I felt down, my brother, Serhat Şen and my nephew, little Timur were the ones who cheer me up. I want to thank İrina Şen, who supported me with her encouraging comments. I also would like to thank my dear sister, Zeynep Delâl Aktürk, whom I always regarded as a part of my family. It is to them I dedicate this study.



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Was the perception of citizenship in Ottoman Empire the same as ours? Did it depend on segregation? Who were “us” and “them”? What are the origins of those concepts? Considering the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual structure of the empire, these questions stand as the crucial points to approach the late Ottoman period.

The intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire began to seriously question the status of ethno-religious groups and the nature of identity and citizenship beginning with the modernization attempts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The emergence of nationalism and the beginning of the collapse of the empire were the main causes of this tendency. Various ideologies were adopted to prevent conflicts among different sections of the society. The political atmosphere undoubtedly affected relations among the different elements of Ottoman society. Studies on the inter-communal relations have specific importance to improve our knowledge about the cultural area and mutual public sphere of the empire. Various ethno-religious elements of Ottoman society have been addressed on their own, but the connections between them seem to be undervalued and under-examined, depending on my researches. Exploring this side of the field has a great importance in terms of understanding the complexity of the social dynamics of the period. I believe that this kind of studies will provide more information about the catastrophic events of those years, such as Adana and 1915 incidents, which are still matters of discussions today.

In this thesis, I will try to contribute to filling this gap to a certain extent by focusing on the cultural relations between Turks and Armenians in the Second Constitutional period. This period was the last period in which a common ground existed between these two nations. It offers a rich platform for discussions on the contacts of ethno-religious elements due to the liberalistic promises of the new regime. Also, this can be considered as the last period of pluralistic Ottoman society. The dominant discourse incorporated all those elements to the circle of “us” during the beginning phase. However, with the rise of Turkish nationalism, the limits of this circle narrowed to “Turks” and those who could be “Turkified.” This can be considered as the prelude to the promotion of the ideal citizen concept in the Republican Era.

In dealing with this period, it is not possible to represent each group, ideology, or cultural activity that took place during these years, both because of the language barrier and the limited scope of this thesis. Even if these circumstances were fulfilled, it would still be a problem to comprehend the complexity of the social connections of the period. For this reason, it is more rewarding to discuss the areas these ethno-religious groups have encountered, rather than analyzing each group separately. I have selected two cases: Ahmet Şerif's travel notes *Anadolu'da Tanın*, and the literary translations of Armenian intellectuals from Armenian to Turkish (*Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes*, *Saliha Hanım*, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri*, and *Hayat Olduğu Gibi*). While discussing these cases, I try to see in what kind of fields they came together or how they cooperated, if any; rather than represent the perspectives of Turks or Armenians about one another.

Although these two cases seem to be asymmetrical considering their respective genre and purpose, they complete each other in terms of the insights they offer into the cultural atmosphere of the Second Constitutional period. These are two rare examples which offers us to observe cultural connections of these nations. Several fields are applied while doing this research; such as the methods of discourse analysis, theories of cultural studies and sociology, as well as history and literature. Combining all these research methods, I try to submit how Armenians and Turks came together in cultural field. So the structural dissimilarity does not pose a problem, on the contrary, it enriches the research by allowing to see the encounters in two different fields.

This period has special importance on the inter-cultural relations, due to the rich cultural activities, but this was not the initial phase of Turk-Armenian cultural relations. Uslu's book, *Çatışma ve Müzakere: Osmanlı'da Türkçe ve Ermenice Dramatik Edebiyat* (Conflict and Negotiation: Armenian and Turkish Dramatic Literature in the Ottoman Empire) which triggered my interest on the Armenian - Turkish relations, introduces the dramatical literature as a mutual area for ethno-religious groups in late 19<sup>th</sup> century. He discusses the conflict and negotiation demonstrated by dramatical literary pieces of Muslims and Armenians in that period. According to this, conflict and negotiation are observed in those pieces on a genre-based level. Our discussions with him brought up further questions on the subject. If there is a debate of conflict and negotiation, it should have its reflections in previous decades. Especially the period before WW1 should be offering interesting connections, being the last years of Armenians and Turks living together right before 1915. So, as

to this thesis, I want to see these dynamics in a later period, after the Second Constitution. I will argue that the door of negotiation was open in the first years of the constitutional regime, whereas Balkan Wars (1912-13) and rising Turkish nationalism which peaked up right before the wars became a breaking point for that opportunity. Ahmet Şerif's travelogue will be mentioned as an indicative of that break, due to the discourse shift he adopted after 1912. The translations, on the other hand, will be discussed as an attempt to re-open that door.

With this analysis I am trying to find an answer to the question of "Is it possible to talk about a mutual cultural field for Turks and Armenians between 1908 and 1914?" In posing this question, I am fully aware of the fact that there is a great deal of literature waiting to be analyzed about the emergence of the plural cultural area and public sphere which have been possible with the cultural connections such as literature (Straus, 2014 and Cankara, 2014) and theatre (Uslu, 2015b) since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This time period is preferred in this thesis because of the conflicting and complicated environment of the post-constitution period. As these can be considered as the last years of pluralistic Ottoman society, I want to emphasize two conflicting notions that were highly influential on social relations during this period. These are the terms of fraternity and nationalism. Both of them have existed since the previous century, but the former was especially influential in the early phase of this era, and the latter rose to prominence towards its end. So, in the post-constitutional era, we observe the encounter between these two concepts. Still, the fact remains that these notions were not the only factors that affected inter-ethnic relations. There were a number of other subjects being discussed at both the political and social levels, such as military service, education, and the economy. I will address these briefly as well, but the main emphasis in this study will be on fraternity and nationalism, because they are the most inclusive (explanatory) terms to focus on while approaching the social dynamics of the post-constitutional period. Also, they are the key notions that emerge from the cases I have chosen for this study.

One of the most outstanding mottos of the Second Constitutional period was "liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice," which was derived from the French revolution and 1906 Iranian constitutional revolution (Campos, 1977, 34). Each component of this motto is directly related to the relations among religious and ethnic elements, but the notion of fraternity should be more influential on a daily basis and it is more relevant in dealing with the cultural connections among those elements

The idea of a brotherhood of Ottoman citizens was not a new term. It had been discussed since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in the context of the rise of Ottomanism. For example, Campos (1971) refers to a Christian intellectual from Beirut, Bustani, who addresses Turks, Arabs, Dursis, Jews, Armenians, and Protestants as brothers in 1860s (p. 87). So this approach was nothing new for the Second Constitutional era, but in this period it became much more popular than ever before. In these years, the unity among ethno-religious elements transformed into a kind of “theatrical brotherhood” (Campos, 1971, p. 94). It also became an important part of the rhetoric used in speeches in public squares, theatres, public meetings, etc.

Quoting the articles written in Palestine, Campos (1971) emphasizes the inclusiveness of the term “brotherhood” and concludes that the “Ottoman nation” was idealized as a family-like entity (p. 78). While a family shares a bond of kinship, the Ottoman nation was about “having been born of the revolution, literally through the constitution and through the bonds of imperial citizenship” (p. 78). The *vatan* (homeland) notion was important in that sense. Namık Kemal, known as “Vatan şairi” (the poet of the homeland) was a symbolic figure. His famous play *Vatan yahut Silistre* was performed in most of the centers of the empire. So, this term was one of the main components of the new Ottoman public sphere which was aimed to be established by the Ottomanists during those years.

Supporters of the revolution idealized a society in which everyone would come together as brothers in opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid II and in support of the revolution. Memories of the past were thus another important field of shared experience that served to bring people together. An Arabic newspaper declared that “as we were equal in oppression, so we were equal in demanding equality and the constitution . . . the oppression of tyranny was on the head of the Muslim and Christian, on the Turk and Arab and Armenian and Kurd and Albanian and Greek” (Campos, 1971, p.74). This positioning against the *ancien régime* was used as a part of the pluralistic discourse prevailing during the period, as will be elaborated on while analyzing Yervant Odyan’s novels in following chapters.

The perception of brotherhood was adopted to such an extent that it sometimes took precedence over religious rituals. After the announcement of the constitution, memorial ceremonies and prayers were held in Christian and Jewish churches as well as mosques. Moreover, members of different religions were buried in the same graveyard, which had previously been a very rare occurrence. It was a symbolic

preference for the CUP (The Committee of Union and Progress) leaders who regarded it as “a daring assertion that the law of patriotism and Ottomanism trumped religious law” (Campos, 1971, p. 80).

Besides all of this, there was another factor that was on the rise during this period: nationalism. It was influential for all the nations of the empire, beginning with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. This ideology idealized a society which was exact opposite of the aforementioned understanding of brotherhood. As will be mentioned later in a more detailed way, nationalism was not quite same in the Turkish and Armenian case. Armenians did not regard nationalism and Ottomanism as contradicting ideologies. For Turks, on the other hand, nationalism was a challenge to the latter. As Zafer Toprak (1997) states, all the elements but Turks regarded being Ottoman as something international (p. 12). When I say the rise of nationalism, I mean the rise of Turkish nationalism, because it had the major effect on the social relations. So, although this was a matter of debate for both Armenians and Turks for a long time before this era, what makes this period special is that it was when this ideology gained more importance for both nations, especially the Turkish side. It is very frequently said that the CUP was always close to a nationalist mentality, but acted strategically and kept the expression of nationalist sentiment to a minimum during the first phase of this period. As the circumstances changed as the result of politics and wars, they eventually adopted Turkism and declared it as the official ideology.

So, while brotherhood discourse was expected to initiate a mutual cultural area for both nations, rising nationalism challenged it. As history makes clear, the latter was the ultimately victorious. Still, there has to be some reflections of the “fraternity” discourse in the society. Looking at the history, it mostly tells about oppositions, conflicts, etc. This is not totally wrong; that period was full of conflicts, but there has to be some attempts to preserve or recreate a chance for reconciliation. The reason behind this assumption is the liberalistic and fraternal discourses of the Second Constitutional Period, which were adopted by CUP, as well as the opposers and the scholars of various etho-religious groups to a large extent. So in this thesis I try to see this side of the picture. But still, the impact of the conflict among these notions is impossible to ignore. *Anadolu'da Tanin* is a good source this conflict and confusion which appear as a result of this environment.

*Anadolu'da Tanin* displays a discourse shift about the inter-ethnic relations. In his notes, before 1912, Ahmet Şerif adopts a unionist approach, emphasizes the

cosmopolitan structure of Ottoman society, and draws an image of a country in harmony. The stress on the discourse of “fraternity” is felt in all the notes where he refers to Armenians and other non-Muslim nations. Their relations are described as “brotherly” (p. 14). Beyond that, the resemblance between nations is emphasized, especially in the notes of Adana province, where he traveled after the tragic incidents in 1909. However, in his only travel in 1913, he emphasizes “Turkishness” for the first time, while the emphasis on living together in harmony disappears. While there was not a single negative comment on the multi-ethnic structure of the districts in his previous notes, in his last travel he describes the social structure of the districts with terms like “*zıtlık*” (contrast), “*karma karmaşık*” (complicated), and “*uyuşmazlık*” (discrepancy) (p. 381, 395). Besides, the term “Turk” is used frequently, while it was barely mentioned in the first group of notes. He clearly favors Turks over the other groups, which was never apparent before. This paper will argue the ideological transformation of CUP, who seized control of the government at that time, was the main reason for this shift. As many historians claim, the project of Ottomanism transformed into a project to Turkify the society over the course of the period.

None of this was unique to the Ottoman case though. As Benedict Anderson states, European dynasties adopted “official nationalisms” to be able to deal with the multi-ethnic structure of their empires, which were under threat of the nationalist tendencies. In our case, Ottomanism was also a project to “stretch the short, tight skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire” (Anderson, 2006, p. 86). Anderson especially emphasizes the role of language, while forming a nation over all other nations. Turkish, as the official language of the empire, became a matter of debate in this period. These were from the beginning interpreted as signs of the Turkification of the nation. This was just an assumption at first. However, after the Balkan Wars and the increase of the Muslim population in the Anatolia due to the migrations from the provinces, the assumption turned into a reality. After this point, the ideal of the Ottoman nation narrowed to the mostly Muslim group. So, like most of the European dynasties, the “official nationalism” of the Ottoman Empire collapsed. *Anadolu’da Tanin* is a perfect case to observe this sudden transformation. So, if one divides the basic notions as positives and negatives, depending on their connotations for inter-ethnic relations, this travelogue displays the positive notions such as fratehernity and social harmony, as well as the negative ones, as nationalism and dissimilarities.

Similar notions will be discussed in the next chapter. The subjects of discussion are a number of literary works written/translated by Yervant Odyan (*Abdülhamit ve Sherlock Holmes* and *Saliha Hanım*), Diran Kalekyan (*Hayat Olduğu Gibi*), and Sarkis Srents (*Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri*). These works, as the only examples of translations from Armenian to Turkish until the period, provide us with crucial insights. Barring the discovery of new accounts in the archives, the only record of translation activity performed towards this end were the above-mentioned works. The translators' notes and comments about those also prove this presumption true.

What makes these three different works, each of which will be analyzed separately, especially important is the years when they were published. The fact that they were published in the post-1911 era, which has been previously referred to as the period when Turkish nationalism first arose, indicates that the relationship of the two parts is an intricate one. On one hand, in the case of Ahmet Şerif, there is a noticeable tendency to ignore non-Muslims in general and Armenians in particular, while on the other hand, the efforts of Armenian intellectuals towards advocating for their community is remarkable and is encouraged by some Turkish intellectuals. This can be read as an attempt to compensate for one side of the story that Ahmed Şerif choose to ignore in the post-1911 era.

In other words, the attitude of Ahmet Şerif about the pre-1911 period and the atmosphere he created displays the characteristics of imperial public sphere, which brings all the ethno-religious elements of the empire together. In his last travelogue after 1912, though, he refrained from emphasizing the pluralistic nature of the society and instead portrayed the structure of society with the assumption of Turks/Muslims being the major element, and rarely made reference to the rest of the society. So his discourse shifted from promoting togetherness, to isolating the society from non-Turk/Muslim elements. As will be discussed, this kind of publications a great influence in shaping the public sphere. Thus Ahmet Şerif's attitude can be interpreted as an effort to create a national public sphere.

The translations, which were published around the same time with Şerif's last trip, represent a counter-effort, instead highlighting the "togetherness" of the communities. So, as Ahmet Şerif's attitude against ethno-religious elements shifted and turned into a more nationalist one in the last notes of his travelogue, these translations emerged. I do not claim any direct relations among these two cases. The main point is that these translations can be read as a respondent to the rising nationalist



attitude which is mostly related with the outbreak of Balkan Wars. These writers and translators sought to continue the imperial public sphere which has been left aside as observed in Ahmet Şerif's case, through literary translations. .

However, I should note that the emphasis on brotherhood is not visible in the case of translations. I did not come across any terms related to “fraternity” or “brotherhood,” though the resemblance between the two nations is mentioned. “Unity,” the “Ottoman nation,” and similar expressions are used by writers and commentators, but the discourse of brotherhood seems to be absent. This should be interpreted as an indicator of how the components of constitutional discourse lost their influence over time, despite of the purpose of familiarizing in the translations. Unity and Ottoman nation are also components of that, but these terms are more general, while “brotherhood” has more specific connotations. So, if there is a kind of disintegration about the constitutional discourse, brotherhood is expected to be lost earlier than the former ones.

In order to properly interpret these books, I had to address the historical background of the period, as their connotations are inseparable from the political environment of the era. To be able to comprehend this environment, I benefited from the works of Zürcher, Ahmad, and Hanioglu as the main sources of history in creating a general political overview. Beside these, I referred to Matossian's works, mostly *Shattered Dreams of Revolution*, to get a better understanding of the social interactions made possible by the conditions of the post-constitutional period. Çetinkaya's research about boycotts and Toprak's work on national economy have contributed to my understanding of the economic dimensions of the period. In addition, Deringil's research on ideological symbols in the empire has helped me to place statements about the development of Ottoman visual culture on a sound basis.

Discussions on Ottomanism constitute a part of my study. There is a wealth of literature on this subject. The works mentioned above and also some others have been used to explain this notion. Kılıçdağı's M.A. and PhD theses have provided a lot of explanatory information. He explores the field from the Armenian perspective and explains the external and internal relations of the community. He discusses relations among Armenians in terms of political parties, institutions, and social classes, and also describes their connections with the government and other communities. His research has allowed me to better understand the Armenian community's perception of Ottomanism.

*Anadolu'da Tanin* is mentioned by a number of scholars but often only briefly. For example, Ahmad refers to the book in *The Young Turks and The Ottoman Nationalities* (p.18) but he does little more than introduce the writer. He does not offer any details about the book itself. Emiroğlu also mentions it, but he does not say anything more than Ahmad. As far as I see, the most detailed analysis about this book is Kılıçdağı's unpublished PhD thesis, *Socio-political Reflections and Expectations of the Ottoman Armenians After the 1908 Revolution: Between Hope and Despair*. He focuses on the writer's attitude about the Armenian community in Anatolia. He thus does something similar to what I do in this thesis. However he adopted a different approach and quoted some selected paragraphs related to the subject he emphasizes. This thesis takes it a step further and offers a discourse analysis, focusing to the shifts on the attitude of the author.

As to the translations, the situation is much the same as with *Anadolu'da Tanin*. The translations are mentioned by many scholars as rare examples of Armenian literature that were made accessible to the Turkish reader in the Ottoman Empire. However, I did not come across any detailed analysis about them. In most of the sources, one or another of them is mentioned individually. For example, Johan Strauss refers to *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numumeleri* and *Hayat Olduğu Gibi* as a part of cultural interactions (Strauss, 2014, pp. 40-41), but does not mention Oryan's novels. The most detailed information about *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes* and *Saliha Hanım* is in Üyepazarcı's book about the development of detective stories, *Korkmayınız Mister Sherlock Holmes*. So, most of the literature about these translations regards them as individual cases. Such analysis is helpful because of their different writers/translators, genres, and form, but I think there is something that creates a connection among them. What I want to do is to interpret them as a part of the same picture and point out the mutual mentality behind them.

I have also benefitted from Habermas's works on the notion of "public sphere" in my effort to more comprehensively comprehend the era. He constructs the concept of the "public sphere" based on the connections between the public and politics. The voice of the people as they discuss issues of public interest can be heard in the political arena and shapes the public sphere. The "Revolution" had promised this kind of atmosphere, and especially in the first years it partly delivered on this promise. Public meetings, the press, literary activities, and the theater were the medium through which public opinion was heard. At the theoretical level, Habermas' concept of the public

sphere has great explanatory value in terms of analyzing social relations and the public's involvement in politics. For this reason, I have chosen to incorporate it into this study.

The first chapter consists of two parts. It will begin with a historical overview of the period, mostly focusing on the political issues related to inter-ethnic relations. The second part will be about the formation of the public sphere and multi-ethnic relations on a cultural level. The next chapter offers a discourse analysis of *Anadolu'da Tanin*. The notes will be analyzed under a number of categories, including social harmony and education. These categories are formed considering the main emphasizes of the writer. The last chapter is about the connections in the literary sphere, and will begin by offering an overview of the modern literatures of the empire and their common grounds. After this part, each book will be analyzed individually. Their common points and possible (or intended) contributions to inter-ethnic relations will be mentioned.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF THE POST-  
CONSTITUTIONAL ERA (1908–14): CULTURAL ACTIVITIES OF TURKS  
AND ARMENIANS**

With the announcement of the constitution, an immense joy and relief was observed throughout the empire, including Macedonia, Asia, and Istanbul. All kinds of people, Muslims, Jews, Christians, from various backgrounds were celebrating each other, creating the atmosphere of fraternity. There was an unsaid hope among them that everything is going to be better from that time on (Zürcher, 1995, 140). During the first days of the “new era” of liberty, one of the most emphasized notion was fraternity among the ethnic and religious elements of the Empire. In the brochures and the calls for the celebrations, “Ottoman brothers” was the commonly used address form. This kind of atmosphere had never been experienced till that moment, and never would be in the following years. The literary and non-literary works of those years point out that most of the intellectuals of all ethnic groups supported this atmosphere. Some of them maintained their hope about the constitutional regime up to the end, like Diran Kelekyan. He expressed his praises to the revolution even in his last article in *Sabah* newspaper, which was published the day after he was arrested on 24 April 1915. The article was written for the memorial day of the martyrs of 1908 revolution. He summarized the importance of the revolution and while doing that he called the Ottoman country as “the homeland of our national existence.” Moreover, he emphasized his faith to constitutional regime, stating his belief that “the outcomes of their (martyrs) sacrifice will be eternal” (Kelekyan, 2015). On the other hand, for some people, including the prominent Turkish writers like Ömer Seyfettin and Mehmet Akif (Ersoy), this mood in the society was nothing more than a dream or an unrealistic tale. Apparently, the second group was right. The course of events did not appear in a positive direction considering the notion of “Ottoman brotherhood”. In the six years period between the announcement of the constitution and World War I, political and social incidents affected each other and social solidarity gave way to a more nationalistic attitude and segregation

This chapter aims to present a historical framework about the 1908 constitution and the following years until the outbreak of WWI. As mentioned before and will be

pointed out repeatedly, this short period of time was a breaking point for the Empire, from many aspects. They were struggling with wars. Especially the Balkan Wars and the battle of Tripoli had a major influence on the country both politically and socially. The wars ended up with the loss of most of the lands. This change on borders caused migration, especially in Anatolian lands. Accordingly, the population faced a drastic transformation. In this kind of situation, it was inevitable to experience some alterity in the cultural relations among the ethno-religious elements.

Firstly, I will give a brief summary of the political and military developments of the period. Beyond doubt, those incidents affected the public sphere, which improved very much after the 1908 constitution. This new era of “fraternity” made it possible to reconstruct a common public area. So I will give a brief overview and historical development of the public sphere in the Ottoman Empire, until WWI. The concept of public sphere is two-fold. One is the political and the other is literary. The products or the outcomes of those are observed in political issues and government as much as the press, the theaters, the literature, etc. In the next chapters of this thesis, I will focus on two different cases; one is about a newspaper article series and the other is about the literary activities. Therefore, here, I want to focus on the press and literary activities of the elements of the Empire, mostly emphasizing those of Armenians and Turks to make the arguments of the next chapters more clear, since they cannot be discussed without taking the atmosphere and political backgrounds of the writers/translators into consideration.

This chapter will consist of two parts. The first one is about political developments, which are to be discussed mainly focusing on the impacts on ethno-religious elements and social relations and also rise of Turkish nationalism, which is directly linked to the main purpose of this thesis. In the next part, there will be an overview of the historical development of the Ottoman public sphere and the three important components of it: press, literature and theater.

## **2.1. A Political Overview of the Period**

The CUP had been tested in the political area, continuously, after the announcement of the constitution. They did not take the government in hand or depose the sultan they were opposing for a long time. So the new parliament was opened while the sultan was still Abdülhamid II. During the elections, the CUP adopted an inclusive

policy for all the ethno-religious elements. So although the committee almost fully consisted of Muslims, especially Turks, they were trying to gain the support of other nationalities. Eventually, the Turks possessed a bit more than the half of the chairs in the parliament. (Zürcher, 1995, p. 142) However, the method of representation has been a matter of debate between the CUP and the ethno-religious groups. The system of universal representation adopted by the CUP was thought to be in benefit of Muslims, especially Turks. They offered to apply a quota in order to be represented more fairly. There was even a threat of boycott of election by those groups. This demand was not accepted, but still, non-Turk elements were represented by nearly the half of the parliament. (Hanioglu, 2008, p. 152.) The 288 deputies consisted of 147 Turk, 60 Arab, 27 Albanian, 26 Greek, 14 Armenian, 10 Slav and 4 Jewish representatives (Ahmad, 1971, p. 53). It should be noted that the new regulations of the CUP in the early phase of the constitutional period was mostly well received by the Armenian community. For instance, about the matter of elections, mentioned above, Armenians were pleased with the way it was conducted, unlike the Greeks, who objected to the elections more than any group. (Ahmad, 2014, p. 12)

One of the most outstanding events of the post-constitution years was definitely the 31 March incident. The CUP was being protested by conservative religious groups. The leading group of the protests was the *İttihad-ı Muhammedi* Association. They were against a union under the name of Ottoman identity. The only union for this group was uniting under the name of Islam. This was the main reason behind their disagreement with both the CUP and *Osmanlı Ahrar Fırkası*, another political party which was in favor of Ottomanism. (Ahmad, 1971, p. 69) They had some requests from the new government, and there had been some incidents and protests, following the rejection of their requests. A few months later a bigger protest was organized by *Derviş Vahdeti*, the head of *İttihad-ı Muhammedi*. In the beginning they became successful. Most of the CUP members escaped from Istanbul and the request of the protestors were accepted. Although the CUP was banished from Istanbul, they were still powerful in the provinces. On 15<sup>th</sup> April 1909, they initiated a military operation against the “rebels”. The *Hareket Ordusu* occupied İstanbul in 24<sup>th</sup> April and quelled the continuance of the riot. *Derviş Vahdeti* and his followers got hanged, Sultan Abdülhamid was deposed and his younger brother Mehmet Reşat became the sultan. (Zürcher, 1995, p. 146.)

This incident can be considered as one of the first signs of the displeasure and disappointment after the constitution. In the following days, another problem occurred in Adana province. Following the 31 March incident, there had been a massacre against Armenian population in the area. In fact, there were two attacks; the first one was in 14-16 April, and the second one was 25-27 April. The events did not occur only in Adana, but spread to the cities and villages of other provinces. (Şekeryan, 2015, p. 7) The initiative factors and the results of these events will be discussed in the third chapter, in relation with Ahmet Şerif's notes about the region.

After those events, the CUP decided to consolidate the constitutional structure. Some articles of the basic law were changed in order to establish a proper constitutional and parliamentary system. In the following months, some other laws were accepted, such as the new regulations on the press. The law about the military service obligated all Ottoman men, including both Muslims and non-Muslims, to join the army. (Zürcher, 1995, p. 149) When Mahmut Şevket Paşa announced that 25% of the army would be Christian soldiers, this was mostly well received by the Christian community, especially Armenians. Ahmad stated that this pleasure was because they thought that this service would "provide them with a measure of protections that they had not enjoyed before." The bigger objection was held after the debate on taxes. The Military Service Exemption Tax Law had applied to non-Muslim communities who were not serving in army. After the regulation on military service, non-Muslim deputies objected to the tax. (Ahmad, 2014, p. 13) Even though there were some contradictions between Muslim and non-Muslim deputies, those debates in the parliament were a positive step towards a more democratic society, protecting the imperial structure.

1910 was a year when the empire faced some serious revolts from the provinces. However, those did not appear all of a sudden. Beginning with 19<sup>th</sup> century, many problems occurred in those areas. What makes these significant is the impact of them on the CUP. The committee was ideologically claiming to represent all the elements. Continuation of the rebellions in the provinces like Macedonia disappointed the committee deeply. (Zürcher, 1995, p. 155) Beginning with 1910, there were many serious revolts, like Albania and Yemen. These continued until 1913, the end of the Balkan Wars. At the same time the empire was struggling with the invasion of Tripoli by the Italians. This invasion concluded with defeat of the Ottoman Empire. Balkan states took courage from the political and military weakness of the empire, so this was followed by the Balkan Wars. During this period, the CUP staged a coup against the

government and succeeded. This coup is known as *Bab-ı Ali Baskını*. After these events, the CUP became more dominant in the parliament and dominated domestic policies, until 1918. (Zürcher, 1995, pp. 163-164)

The CUP's policies after 1913, contradicted those of the previous years. They adopted decentralization, which used to be a matter of debate between them and Prince Sabahattin's group. Another important transformation was their positioning towards Turkish nationalism. It was not a new issue; the root of Turkish nationalism is in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and there had been a tendency to this ideology among the committee. However, they preferred not to put it forward and adopted Ottomanist discourse. After the loss of many lands in the Balkan provinces, the committee abandoned the inclusivist policy. The migrations from the Balkan provinces had a great contribution to this shift.

As to the new policies of the CUP after Balkan Wars, one may speak of a major shift from Ottomanism to nationalism. They encouraged Turkish nationalist organizations and used every means available to support them. The most important among these organizations was the *Müdafa-i Milliye Cemiyeti*. Also a big part of the economic reforms was to keep the Ottoman economy from foreigners and Ottoman Christians. (Zürcher, 1995, p. 179)

The impacts of political dynamics were felt deeply in the economy. The most obvious case to see who was included under the roof of the Ottoman nation in practice is commerce. The post-1908 era was a period in which Muslims were being efficient in this area. The Islamist magazines had significant influence on the popularity of this discourse. It was mostly based on the dichotomy of "us and them". The non-Muslim population, slowly but certainly, were placed in the opposite side. This situation was creating a contradiction with the Ottomanist discourse. So while the discourse of solidarity and brotherhood were being promoted by the CUP, the society was experiencing a kind of confusion about the notions of "us" and "them". The confusion of the people on this issue is best observed in the case of boycotts.

Çetinkaya's (2015) work on the case of boycotts is an eye-opener, especially to observe the economical reflections of Muslim and non-Muslim relations. There was a boycott rush after 1908, and it was mostly due to the conflicts between Greece. Initially, the target of the boycotts was only Greece. However, as WWI approached, they were aimed at all non-Muslim citizens, with the influence of the Balkan Wars. The discourse and the project of the national economy was initially advising for the



development of the all Ottoman citizens. So it was designed as a unionist approach which included all the elements, and targeted the foreign countries. Then, as the years pass, it was re-defined as a project for the development and progress of Turkish/Muslim groups. Beginning with 1909, and especially after 1910, the economical presence of non-Muslims drew attention and this put them into the target position of this political and economic movement. As the movement expanded, and turned into a more organized one and as the anger towards non-Muslims increased due to political incidents, non-Muslim merchants were influenced negatively by the boycotts. As the Balkan Wars emerged the negative influence increased even more. The loss of lands in the Balkan province and being defeated by their former citizens were a shock for the Ottomans. The number of Muslim merchants increased due to the migrations, and this contributed to the rise of Turkish/Muslim nationalism. As opposed to the fraternal discourse of 1908, in 1913 thousands of declarations were encouraging Turks/Muslims to support each other. (Çetinkaya, 2015 pp. 22-29) Besides, it is known that these boycotts were supported by the government from the beginning to the last phase (p. 168). Actually the Greeks were the main targets of those movements, except the Armenian boycotts in 1914. But they are significant because they reveal the rise of nationalist discourse, considering the change of the addressee of the boycotts.

As one can see, the political and military atmosphere of the post-revolution years took effect on the dynamics among ethnic groups. This eventually led to the rise of nationalist tendencies on each groups. The emergence of Turkish nationalism is more significant in terms of this thesis. This is because it had a major effect on the inter-ethnic relations. Also, the distinction between nationalism and Ottomanism is sharper in the Turkish context, and this makes the tension even serious.

These two concepts had different connotations than Turks, especially for Armenians. Some historians like Zürcher state that in the minds of the Turkish political actors, these ideologies could be found side by side. A Young Turk who was supporting Ottomanism could be a Pan-Turkist at heart and a religious Muslim at the same time (p. 187). This was possible ideally, but the course of events points out a totally different situation. The general discourse in the literature signals a total contradiction. Akçura's early article "Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset" was one of the first indicators of the strict lines between them. Also, one may see this kind of polarization in both historical and literary resources. 1913 has always been referred to as the year of the collapse of Ottomanist ideology and rise of Turkish nationalism. Besides, the literary

works of nationalist writers points out a similar case, i.e. Ömer Seyfettin. So the emergence of the Turkish nationalism is to be discussed in the following part, due to the critical importance it has.

## **2.2 The Emerge of Turkish Nationalism after the Announcement of the Constitution**

An important characteristic of the revolution is that the majority of the actors were Turks and a small group was Muslim Albanians. There was almost no direct contribution by Christians. The main reason for this was their role in military service. The participants of the 1908 coup were soldiers, and non-Muslims were not part of this service. This may be interpreted as the main reason why the Young Turk movement shifted from a cosmopolitan structure to a more Islamist and Turkish nationalist one during this period.

Having mentioned this ideological alteration of the CUP, I want to give a brief overview of the modernization process of the empire, which is the base of the ideological arguments of the period. Beginning with the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the empire, especially the intelligentsia and politicians, had been adopting some notions which were the products of the modernization. As a result of this kind of transformation, many arguments emerged. Even the modernization itself was a matter of debate. Some western-oriented intellectuals, like Abdullah Cevdet, were arguing that Ottoman civilization should be abandoned and European methods should be adopted instead. On the other hand, some of the religious groups strictly objected this kind of reformation. The majority had been arguing to adopt the “useful” parts of European civilization. But this approach brought about another problem; how could European methods and Muslim Ottoman civilization be combined? Was it possible to modernize the empire while preserving its foundations? (Zürcher, 1995, p. 187) These arguments continued until the end of the Empire. Even today one can observe the reflections of in political discussions.

Some ideologies became popular in certain periods as a result of these debates on the modernization of the Empire. For instance, in the Abdülhamid era, pan-Islamism was interpreted as the best solution to protect the Empire. However, with the Young Turk revolution, Ottomanism was adopted as the official ideology. According to that, all the citizens of the empire, regardless of their ethnicity, religion or language,

would be equal in law. They believed that this would turn the peoples of the country into loyal citizens and, thus, that would solve the problems. However, this hope collapsed with the following events. The wars and socio-political transformations put an end to Ottomanism. In fact, those were not the only reason. With the notion of *ittihad-ı anasır* (union of the elements) they were on one hand referring to cosmopolitan Ottomanism, but on the other hand put forward Turks as *millet- hakime* (dominant nation). (Findley, 2011, p. 201) So, the CUP was not in favor of this ideology sincerely, but it was the only way in that position. For some scholars like Zürcher, the CUP's perception of Ottomanism was almost like Turkification of the ethnic elements. (Zürcher, 1995, p. 188) But others like Carter Findley argue that the regulations of the period after the Balkan Wars were not for Turkification, but for centralization and systemization. (Findley, 201) In any case, the new attitude of the CUP contributed to the decline of Ottomanism and the rise of Turkish nationalism.

The period between 1908 and 1914 is especially important for the development of Turkish nationalism. In 1908 the empire still had lands in Europe (Macedonia), Africa (Tripoli) and Asia (Anatolia and Arab lands). Considering the map of 1914, it lost its last province in Africa and the most of its lands in Europe. The events of this six-year period influenced the identity of "Turks" in many ways. The circumstances of the wars (Tripoli and Balkan Wars, the revolts of Albania and Yemen) had become a burden mostly for Anatolian Turks. (Georgeon, p. 26). These conditions had negative impacts on the popular ideologies of the period. The dream of Ottomanism had been demolished, pan-Islamism had weakened with the rise of Arab nationalism and the revolt of Albania, and lastly, Westernism has started to decline due to the policies of European countries (Georgeon, p. 26).

Hanioğlu's statements about the policies of post-revolutionary period are much more radical. He states that "the relative freedom of the first years after 1908 did not resolve existing tensions; on the contrary, it aggravated them. CUP's policies only made things worse." In this sense, the cancellation of the privileges of the ethnic groups, which were a matter of debate since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, centralization campaign and the discourse of Ottoman identity, which requires to be placed above other ethnic or religious identities, were the major cause of the failure of CUP. (2008, p. 166) In the following years, with the rise of Turkish nationalism in both cultural area (the activities of Ziya Gökalp, Ömer Seyfettin, etc. and nationalist literature emerging from magazines like *Genç Kalemler*) and in official discourse, caused the

decline of Ottomanist ideology. So the notion of Ottomanism moved away from the ideals of the “revolution” and gained a more Turkist properties. Hanioglu compares this transformation to the previous Sultan Abdülhamid’s reinterpretation of Ottomanism, dominating the Muslim subjects, and states “the CUP’s new Ottomanism now attocated a dominant role to its Turks” (2008, p. 188).

The emergence of these transformation was giving signals ever since the preparation phase of 1908 revolution, from other aspects as well. . One of them was the CUP’s aforementioned attitude towards nationalism. Another signal was the unintended positive effects of the new constitutional regime on this ideology. Although the rising ideology of the revolution was Ottomanism, the new regulations contributed to the nationalisms of the empire in two ways; firstly, after the 1908 constitution, the Russian Turks entered the country and this contributed to Turkish nationalism. Their struggle against both Russians and pan-Slavism created a sense of nation and in their perception the nation was referring to the union of Turkic people and their social and religious modernization (Georgeon, 2009, p. 25). On the other hand, the liberty of the days following the re-announcement of the *Kanun-i Esasi* had been beneficial for the other groups in the empire, especially the ones with a strong sense of nationalism; i.e. Greeks, Armenians, Albanians and Arabs. Freedom of the press and the new parliament give them an opportunity to establish cultural associations and, thus, express their nationalist ideas (p.26).

### **2.3. The 1908 Constitution and Armenians**

The announcement of the constitution caused major changes for other ethnic groups as well, especially for Armenian community. In Der Matossian’s term, it created a micro-revolution for the dynamics of power of the Ottoman Armenians. They internalized the revolution more than the other *millet*s, because the major themes of it directly reflected in the Armenian context. They created “their own *ancien régime* and their own victory.” The *ancien régime* in the Armenian context is the Armenian Patriarch.

In the post-revolutionary period the center of power shifted from the patriarch to the Armenian National Assembly (ANA). The atmosphere of the post-revolutionary period paved the way for Armenian political parties to return to the empire. They turned into political groups rather than revolutionary groups. Thus, the reinstatement

of the Armenian National Constitution and the Armenian National Assembly was realized. ANA “included members of Armenian political parties (Dashnaks, Ramgavar and Hunchak), Armenian members of Ottoman parliament and representatives of different Armenian societies.” (Matossian, 2012 p.195) The multiplicity among its members made ANA the center for Armenian policies. One of the most important outcomes of the reopening of this assembly is about the dynamics of power. Similar to the changes in the government and dethronement of Sultan Abdülhamid, Armenian patriarch Maghakia Ormanian was dismissed in this period. Not only him, but also “in many parts of the provinces, local prelates were dismissed by the local Armenian population.” ANA became the center of Armenian policy making. This shift in the center of power indicates the decline of the influence of religion on Armenians and the rise of national tendencies. Besides, ANA functioned as a mini-parliament and discouraged partisanship and promoted loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. (Matossian, 2012, pp. 192-194)

However, the opening of the assembly does not mean that there were no political conflicts among the Armenians. The Hunchaks and Ramgavars were critical of the Dashnak’s policy. Dashnaks were in close relations with the CUP. This was the major cause of the conflict. The Adana incident in 1909 made the relations worse. Dashnak continued their relations with the CUP and this augmented the hostility among the parties. There were other reasons, for sure, but above all, the root of the rivalry was about the power and leadership. Besides, this kind of tension already existed in the diaspora as well.

#### **2.4. The New Form of the Ottoman Public Sphere**

Political developments are indeed important for a better understanding of the period. However, they do not represent the whole story. As Karakışla states, general history writing prefers not to mention society, but to tell about the “büyükler” (in meaning, macro events). However, society has become more and more important for the political situation of the Empire, beginning with the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. “The spread of education, the massification and institutionalization of media, the getting of communities into the society during 19<sup>th</sup> century are the factors conveying daily, local and sectoral matters of various people from different social milieu into public issues and politicizing thereof.” (Çetinkaya, 2009, p.15). Especially after the 1908

constitution, the impact of the society on political issues increased considerably. “After 1908, every citizen would have a word to say and a way to lead. So, ‘Doing politics’ caused another issue: participation to the power. At the first stage, the change made no sense because Abdulhamit had not been toppled from his throne yet. But the power lost its magic and people became aware that the power is something belonging to them.” (p. 15)

These changes in the role of the society were possible due to the development of the public sphere in the empire. The cultural atmosphere of the post-constitutional period is related to the rising importance of the public. According to Habermas, the *public sphere* is “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed.” (Habermas, 1974, p.49) So the appearance of the public sphere is directly related to the public’s connection to politics. This is why Habermas calls public sphere as “a sphere which mediates between society and state.” (p. 50)

Habermas mostly focuses on the status of the “public” in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and makes a distinction considering the transformations of the society from feudal to bourgeois. According to this, the modern “bourgeois public sphere” is completely different from the “representative publicness” of the pre-modern period. The role of visibility is the main cause of this distinction. The “representative public” does not show up as a public sphere, but in fact is more like a symbol of status. (Habermas, 2010, p. 65) The emergence of associations and organizations, as well as technological developments about press activities, have shaped this new form of public by making “public opinion” possible. In Habermas’s words, “citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion-that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions-about matters of general interest. In a large public body this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who receive it” (Habermas, 1974, p. 49). He refers to newspapers, magazines, television and radio as the means of creating the public sphere. Schick (1999) and Anderson (2006) point out the role of texts and media in the construction of identity, as well. While Anderson discusses the role of print capitalism on the construction of national identities, Schick mostly emphasizes the relation of place and identity and how it is spread through those texts and means of media (pp. 19-40). These are related to the formation of the public sphere in a society. The Ottoman Empire was no exception to these facts. The emergence of the public sphere has been the basis of identity-related issues in the

society such as race-based nationalism and Ottomanism. In that sense, the press, literature and theater have special importance, especially in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

With the announcement of the constitution, the cultural activities in society which had dramatically decreased after the 1890s, revived. The press, literature and theater were the outstanding fields in this period. The number of newspapers and magazines increased astoundingly, novels and the plays in the theater halls flourished. Although the most important reason behind this “boom” was the atmosphere of freedom following the discourse of liberty, the involvement of the public in the politics—namely the development of the public sphere—even more actively than in the previous years contributed to that. However, it is not historically true to claim this period as the first phase of the Ottoman public sphere. The formation of the public sphere in the Ottoman Empire can be dated back to the pre-modern era. For instance, Matossian’s interpretation on the *waqfs* is significant at this point. He mentions *waqfs* as an important element of the pre-modern public sphere which did not exist in the European context. (Matossian, 2012, p. 190) So, in this sense, the Ottoman public sphere was not shaped in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but just has gained a modern form. Hence, while mentioning the public sphere in the pre-constitutional period, I will refer to “modern public sphere” and begin with the 19<sup>th</sup>-century reforms.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Ottoman Empire experienced a great transformation in terms of the definition of “being an empire”. The hierarchical structure among the “superior” and “inferior” nations collapsed. Before this period, the common ground of the writers of different groups to communicate and discuss about their works was rather limited. The emergence of Ottoman identity and the adoption of the concept of “empire” allowed for a more effective common ground for them. These kinds of connections made it possible to experience a wide and shared public sphere (Altuğ, 2014, p. 71) Due to these aspects of late-Ottoman society, the notion of public sphere is highly important for a better understanding of inter-ethnic relations. The historical development of the new perception of state and society in the Ottoman context are also worthy of discussion.

At this point it is helpful to mention the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ottoman reforms, in which the notions of public opinion and mass politics corresponded in the society. These notions can be observed in the society beginning with the era of Mahmud II. His travels across the territories of the empire can be considered as the first signs of taking the public seriously in a political sense. The change of the government’s perception of the

public, which begin in the reign of Mahmud II, points out a transformation in power relations and also opens a new means of communication between the ruler and ruled. Another development, in connection with those happenings, is the publishing of *Takvim-i Vekai*, the first official newspaper, in 1831. The main purpose of the newspaper was similar to the travels of the sultan: making the sultan visible to the public and transforming the popular perception of ruling elites in people's minds. It aimed to create a collective identity in the society. The most important indicator this purpose is the multilingual aspect of the newspaper. The original language was Ottoman Turkish, but there were Arabian, Persian, Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian and French versions as well. For sure, the main reason behind this was to be understood clearly. The simplification of the language of the Turkish version is another indicator of this concern. (Cengiz Kırılı, 2009) These developments can be interpreted as precautions for controlling the society, but on the other hand, these are also signs of accepting the public as a political entity.

After the approaches of Mahmut II, the notions of public opinion and public sphere were observed in Ottoman society more clearly. However, the process of the formation of the public sphere in the Ottoman Empire was not parallel to the European context. As opposed to the expectations of Eurocentric interpretations, the development of the public sphere in the empire “had a different background, and different factors affected it than in the European milieu.” (Matossian, 2012, p. 190) Habermas states that the formation of the public sphere in Europe was the result of two factors: the emergence of periodicals, in which literary criticisms were being made, and the new centers of socialization like coffee houses and halls. Literary and artistic discussions in these areas gained more political characteristics over time. Those discussions got so strong that the public sphere turned into a kind of authority over the state. (Öztürk, 2005, p. 97) However, it is not possible to observe this kind of consecutive development in the Ottoman context. The emergence of a reader population in communication with each other and the politicization of that population occurred at the same time. (Uslu, 2015, p. 15)

## **2.5. Press Activities**

The publications of the late 19th century had a great significance in the development of the public sphere in the Ottoman Empire. Although it was mostly



limited to the intelligentsia due to the rate of literacy, this new emerging area paved the way for the different groups in the society to participate in critical discussions, mostly but not only on politics. They were surely aware of the power of this area. One of the prominent figures of the period, Namık Kemal, states that “The newspaper makes the whole country a forum for friendly discussion. It is such a forum that although it may be difficult to hear everybody’s wishes, it is surely easy to make people hear your wishes.” (Özön, 1938, p. 227) To be heard by the people would soon turn into a means for shaping the society for the Ottoman intellectuals but still, the modern public sphere, shaped by mostly publications, provided a common area. Again, Namık Kemal expresses this atmosphere as follows: “Twenty years ago, not more than five hundred people would read a newspaper published. Now, however, that newspaper is passed from hand to hand among at least, fifteen thousand people...For the last ten years, the number of our women reading newspapers has increased by 100%. Shopkeepers, butlers in İstanbul, they all read the newspaper or at least listen to it when it is read.” (Yıldız, 2008, p. 50) These statements are important not only for showing the perception of Ottoman intelligentsia on publications, but also for showing that the audience of the newspaper was not limited to the literate population. So the literary public sphere is much broader than the circulation numbers of the publications.

As stated earlier, the diversity of media organs and activities is one of the main outcomes, or maybe the reason of this kind of public sphere. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century was the starting point of these, but the 1908 revolution and the following years had a major importance in the history of the Ottoman press. To be able to get a better understanding of this period, the history of the Ottoman press should be considered. As mentioned in II. Mahmut’s case, the ruling elite of the empire was aware of the existence of newspapers in Europe since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. However, this was not more than a political interest. The first Ottoman newspaper did not appear for almost a century. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Greek revolt and the new form of public emerging in Europe played an important role on the publication of the first official newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi*. Ten years later, the second official newspaper, *Ceride-i Havadis* was published. In the 1860s the Turkish press started to gain independence from the government, with the publishing of private newspapers like *Tercüman-ı Ahval* (1860), *Tasvir-i Efkar* (1862) and *Muhbir* (1866). This new era in the Turkish press has a significant role in the history of press because with these newspapers political discussions, including criticism of the government, began to take place in the press.

This kind of development signals the emergence of “public opinion,” in Habermas’s term. Public opinion creates a public sphere, which, in this sense, is a political public sphere. According to Habermas, the political public sphere occurs “when the public discussion deals with objects connected to the activity of the state” (Habermas, 1974 p. 49). In this sense the 1860’s can be considered as the period that the modern Turkish public sphere was completed, due to the existence of critical publications. Şinasi’s statement published in *Tercüman-ı Ahval* (1860) is remarkable to observe this environment: “The people serving as a soldier for the nation and obeying the rules of state, has to right to say its own opinion about government whether it is good or not” (Sevengil, 2015, p. 558). As Sevengil stated, this was the first example of such statements, claiming a right for the citizens to criticize the government.

On the other hand, public spheres had already existed in the other ethnic groups of the empire since the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. So there were multiple public spheres rather than a unique, inclusive one. At this point, I want to emphasize again that this multiplicity constitutes the basis of this thesis. General attitudes adopted while dealing with the Ottoman culture and public areas mostly depend on nationalist categorization and either considering it as a monolithic entity or disregarding the non-Turk/non-Muslim elements. Being aware that the existence of multiple groups with their individual social sphere, this thesis aims to see the possible junctions among them.

Returning to the subject, the publications which included political criticisms did not last long. With the reign of Abdülhamid II, there were many restrictions on the press. At this period the journalistic activities of both ethnic groups and opponents moved to European cities and Egypt. (Matossian, 2012, 191.)<sup>1</sup> There is not a clear information about the publications of these people. There are some claims about the number of those publishing, which vary between 68 and 153. Of those, 60% were in Turkish, 14% were published both in Turkish and one other language, and 20% were in other languages. (Kocabaşoğlu, 2010, pp. 5-6.) In the Ottoman capital, the number of daily newspapers was not more than 4, and the number of the other serial publishing

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed information about the discussions on the relation between public sphere and autonomus governments, see: Doğan Çetinkaya, “1908 Devriminde Kamusal Alan ve Kitle Siyasetinde Dönüşüm” *İ. Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, No: 38 (Mart 2008) and Nadir Özbek, “Philanthropic Activity, Ottoman Patriotism and the Hamidian Regime 1876-;1909,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1, 2005.

was around 12, including *Servet-i Fünun*, *Musavver Terakki*, *Çocuklara Mahsus Gazete* and *Ziraat Gazetesi*. (ibid, p.7)

Following the period after the reinstatement of the constitution in July 1908, the situation was quite opposite. “After the Young Turk revolution of 1908, this exilic public sphere was transformed into a homeland public sphere. The revolution allowed for an immediate boom in serial publications of different ethnic groups in the Empire.” (Matossian, 2012, 191.) The Ottoman population, including traders, Muslims, Christian, Armenians, Turks, and Greeks, began celebrating the announcement of the constitution. This atmosphere of enthusiasm spread to press activities as well. The new regime led to an immediate boom in Ottoman publications, especially for serial ones. This new era in the Ottoman print world may be associated with the period after the French revolution. In the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid, publishing was not suppressed or blocked but tightly controlled with censorship. When the revolution took place, the censorship was abolished, so almost limitless press activities began. In the first year after July 1908, almost 200 periodicals were published in Istanbul (Matossian, 192).

The Ottoman official yearbook for 1909 lists 97 publishers active in Istanbul and that list is not complete. Another source compares the approximately 103 Turkish language gazettes published in the twenty-eight years between 1879 and 1907 with 204 new gazettes published in a single year immediately following the revolution. While the new government struggled with the logistics of effecting deputies for the assembly (meclis), the press mobilized to ensure that its newfound license would not be rescinded. It went to work challenging the primary symbols of autocracy, the sultan and the concrete manifestation of his oppressive regime, the Press Law. (Palmira Brummet, 2000, Pp. 3-4)

However, these numbers declined dramatically after the 31 March incident. In 1910, the number of newspapers and magazines in all languages was 48, 12 of which were in Turkish. Following this, events like the 1913 Ottoman coup d'état and some assassinations contributed to this decline and the numbers of publications returned to their pre-July 1908 levels. But still, this two-year period (from 1908 to the 31 March incident in 1910) caused a “press boom” which was influential for the future of the Empire. “The year following the July 1908 revolution was an interregnum both in terms of freedom of press and in terms of the functioning of a new Ottoman regime. The limits of both has yet to be tested. The Ottoman press, (...) had a field day after

the revolution. (...) For Ottoman journalists, 1908 was a year of euphoria and of disillusionment.” (Palmira Brumment, 2000. P.3)

The press of the ethnic groups was highly active after July 1908. Some of the magazines and newspapers which stopped publishing due to the restrictions in the previous years continued their activities, such as Karekine Efendi Boyadjian’s *Arevelk* and *Puzantion*. There were new ones as well. *Azadamard* was one of the important new newspapers during this period. It was the mouthpiece of ARF (Armenian Revolutionary Federation). Another important Armenian newspaper was *Jamanak*. It is still being published in Istanbul by the grand grandson of the founder Missak Kotchounian. Also there were other literary magazines like *Mehian* (1914) and *La Patrie* (1908). (Strauss, 46-48)

The humor magazines were also important among the literatures of ethnic groups. Greek and Armenian humor literatures produced many works in this period. The most interesting among them are the multilingual ones, of which M. Nesib and Aram Andonyan’s *Hokkabaz* and Yorgaki Ephimiades’s *Ciddiyet-Eilikrineira* are prominent examples. Ephimiades’s magazine was published in Armenian, Greek, French and Turkish at the same time, and it is especially interesting with the claim of reuniting all the nations with “gülme kardeşliği” (brotherhood of laughter). (Strauss, 49)

As seen in the memoirs of the prominent figures of Turkish press, like Hüseyin Cahit and Ahmet İhsan, the “publication boom” of the Turkish press began with hesitations. In the first day after the announcement of the constitution, the writers of the outstanding newspapers published their articles with some precautions, just in case. This was because of the fear that the news about the constitution might be just rumors. (Kocabaşoğlu, 2010, p.4) When they were convinced about the situation, the first steps of the new Ottoman press began. Two days after the announcement, on 26 July 1908, Ahmet İhsan started to publish the first daily newspaper of the period besides *Servet-i Fünun* magazine. A few days later, Tevfik Fikret, Hüseyin Kazım and Hüseyin Cahit published *Tanin* newspaper, which later turned into the mouthpiece of the CUP. In the following month, the humor magazine *Karagöz*, the daily newspaper of Izmir *Köylü*, and the important Islamist newspaper *Sırat-i Müstakim* were published. This continued for a couple of years, and in this period of time the Turkish press experienced an extremely productive phase. However, this phase did not last long. Due to the aforementioned political incidents, the CUP imposed restrictions on press activities.

This attitude contradicted the promises of the “revolution”. The outcomes of the CUP’s ideological transformation were highly influential on the discourse adopted by the Turkish press, which will be mentioned in detail on the following chapters.

## 2.6. Literature

The atmosphere of freedom and the dynamism of the press activities affected art and literature. It was an era of productivity for the cultural activities of all ethnic groups of the society. Since the content of this thesis is limited to Turks and Armenians, the emphasis will be on those groups, but I think it will be useful to go through the cultural activities of the society in general, in order to understand the cultural atmosphere of the period.

Beginning with the Tanzimat period, Istanbul was an important cultural center for all ethnic groups in the empire. For the Greeks, although Athens was the major center, Istanbul still had a significant importance for most writers and poets. Strauss states that the literary activities of the Jewish population were not in the same direction with the other groups because of the language issue. Still, there were important Ottoman-Jewish writers, such as the writer of *Beyoğlu Esrarı* (1896) Jacques Loria, and the first Jewish poets of Turkish language, Avram Naon and Isak Ferera. For the Armenians, Istanbul had a more important place in terms of modern literary activities. As an example of cultural relations, the translations of Mihran M. Boyadjian can be mentioned. He translated the works of Shakespeare to Turkish. So, beginning with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, there were important contributions to Turkish language and literature by non-Muslim intellectuals. (Strauss, 2014, p. 43) As mentioned above, after the 1890s many intellectuals left the empire due to the policies of Sultan Abdülhamid’s regime. After the 1908 revolution, most of them returned and continued their literary works.

The augmentation of the cultural connections among Muslim Turks and non-Muslim groups was remarkable for this period. There were many articles about Turkish literature and translations from Turkish in Greek and Jewish magazines. However, these kinds of approaches were observed more among Armenians. Turkish literature was given a place in Armenian schoolbooks and magazines. (Strauss, pp. 49-50) On the other hand, there was not much reference about the publications of the other elements in Turkish sources. This may be related to the continuation of the superior-

inferior relations which was mentioned in the section on “New form of the Ottoman Public Sphere.”

To be able to have a better understanding of the Armenian culture and literature, their historical progress should be considered. Armenian culture developed dramatically during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This era is usually called the Armenian Renaissance. The educational reforms had great influence over this development. With the help of some institutions and individuals, Armenian schools were opened in Europe, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire, India and some other places. In most of the schools there were printing presses and this contributed to the development of the Armenian press. Many translations were being made from Western sources. Folkloric and ethnographic pieces were distributed to the Armenian society and among them the theater had a specific role. The first professional Armenian theater was found in Istanbul in 1861. Armenian literature experienced a great progress as well. Western influence was dominant among the literary works of the period. At the end of the period, most of the Western literary genres were used by the Armenian writers. Important Armenian writers contributed to this, such as Mıgırdıç Beşiktaşlıyan, H. Baronyan, Bedros Turyan, Srpuhi Düsap, Dikran Gamsaragan and Krikor Zohrab. In addition to those, Armeno-Turkish (Turkish with Armenian script) had a great importance for the Armenian renaissance. Beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Armeno-Turkish language was used by Catholic and Protestant missionaries. After the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, many works of European writers were translated into Armeno-Turkish. This tradition continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but was limited to religious literature. (Bardakjiyan, 2013, pp. 120-125)

In the Abdülhamid era, the literary activities of Armenians in the empire diminished strikingly. After the Young Turk revolution, those activities revived. Armenian literary publishing shared in the boom in the Ottoman press and new literary magazines were published. Literary meetings were held to discuss the new Armenian literary pieces. Bardakjiyan states that Armenian literature finally achieved a qualified audience and solid background. This was made possible by literary criticisms and historical research in the period. (Bardakjiyan, pp. 177-179)

The researchers of the Turkish literature in the Second Constitutional period mostly preferred to analyze the ideological position of authors. The ideologies of nationalism, Ottomanism, Westernism and Islamism constituted the base of this classification. This kind of classification narrowed down the area by forcing the writers

and their works into certain borders. Thus, it becomes harder to see the “grey” areas which may allow us to realize possible connections within both the ideologies and the literatures of different groups. Nevertheless, the influence of those ideologies on the literature of the period is undeniable.

Political developments had a great influence on the writers of the period. Osman Gündüz (2013) states that the confusion brought by the 1908 revolution was reflected in literary production. The novels of those years were important in quantity, but not quality. So the literary activities were similar to that of press and journalism. (p. 35)

There were many new writers emerging with the “literary boom”, in addition to the old ones. Some writers of the *Servet-i Fünun* literature were still producing, but not very effectively. Nationalist writers were the most dominant group, especially after 1911, when literary magazines with nationalist tendencies were published. The main themes of the novels were liberalism, idealism, modernization, and feminism, similar to the previous period. (Gündüz, 2013, p. 18) The politicization of the literature brought the decline of the success that was achieved in *Servet-i Fünun* novels. Similar to the aforementioned activities of the press, the literature gained more and more nationalist characteristics, parallel to the politics. But there were still some writers with Ottomanist tendencies like Süleyman Nazif, Abdullah Cevdet and Şahabettin Süleyman, who will be mentioned in detail later on.

## 2.7. Theater

In this period, theater served as a bridge for society and political discussions. In fact theater was just a part of the visual culture, which emerged with the modern era, and it was not a new issue for the Second Constitutional period. The abovementioned reforms that were made on the image of “sultan” during the reign of Mahmud II may be considered as the first step of this kind of understanding. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, visibility, performance and ceremony were highly important. Especially the visibility of the sultan was a symbol of modernity. (Deringil, 1993, p. 38) The outcomes of this were observed in placing the portrait of the sultan in official buildings until the reign of Abdülhamid. In this later period, he did not want his portraits or to be visible to the public—most probably due to security issues—and the symbolism was continued with indirect symbols. (Deringil, 2009, p. 53) Besides

these, the emergence of modern ceremonies was also important to observe this culture. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, the sultan was seen outside of the palace only on very special occasions, like *Cuma Selamlığı* and the visits to *Hırka-i Saadet*. Those were conducted as big ceremonies. Despite sultan's unwillingness to be seen by the public, the emphasis on the visual appearance of those ceremonies reveals the fact that the visual culture settled in the society. Although theater was an integral part of this culture, it did not have much function due to the censorship during the reign of Abdülhamid II. The political function of theater was observed only after the announcement of the constitution in 1908. In the previous era, a myth of the sultan was created with some symbols and ceremonies (Deringil, p. 91). From 1908 on, a similar attempt to create a myth was observed, but this time the methods were manifold and it was not focusing on the sultan himself, but on the new regime and ideology. On this point, theater was an integral means to create the myth of new era.

Theater, as an important result and also a component of this era of visibility, had served as a common ground for Armenians and Turks since the very first phases of Ottoman theater. However, until the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the interest of Muslims towards theater was limited. This was mostly due to the limited connections with European culture. On the other hand, Armenians had a deeply rooted tradition of theater, beginning with the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they took forward the theatrical activities with the help of their close relation with European theater and were the pioneer of the Ottoman theater, especially in the second half of the century. (Uslu, 2015, pp. 38-41) Beginning with the 1840's, the Armenian intellectuals paved the way for the popularization of the theater. After this period, multilingual plays of Armenian theaters were observed in the empire, especially in big cities like Istanbul and Izmir. (51-57) With the establishment of the theater of Agop Vartovyan, the multilingual phase of Ottoman theater was officially initiated. Realizing the political potential of it, Turkish/Muslim intellectuals began to be present in the field, like Namık Kemal, Şemseddin Sami and Ali Bey. (61) By the end of the 1880's, the theatrical activities decreased dramatically, mostly due to censorship and other political developments.

The announcement of the constitution gave rise to a huge revival of the Ottoman theater. After the censorship was abolished, there was a "boom" in theatrical activities, much the same as in the press and literary field. In fact, the popularity of this field was even more dramatic. The most important reason behind this was the fact that theater could reach a wider audience. The rate of literacy prevented the press and



literature from reaching the masses, despite the oral readings in places like coffee houses. Theater did not have this kind of necessity, so it was easier for the people to participate. Parallel to this, theater was a golden opportunity for political ideas to be submitted to the masses. As indicated above, the public sphere, which is directly related with the people's involvement in politics, was used as a tool to influence the political opinion of the public. Theater was the most important means of this attempt. The playwrights and the politicians of the period used this field to shape the masses. Many amateur play writers emerged with this kind of intentions. As a result of this, the number of plays written and staged increased notably.

It should be noted that in this period the number of Turkish playwrights and performers increased as well. Moreover, it may be claimed that the domination of Armenians in the field decreased. Considering the casting and the writers of the plays, it is remarkable that both Armenian and Turkish names are observed in most of the lists.

There were three theater groups in the last years of the reign of II. Abdülhamid: Minakyan's Osmanlı Dram Kumpanyası (Ottoman Drama Company), performers of improvisational theater, and Ahmet Fehim. Those were performing in various cities, mostly Istanbul. Most of the performers were Armenians, in the first days of the post-constitutional era. The number of Turkish performers increased with the new regime. (Refik Ahmet Sevengil, 2015, p. 558) The casting of the plays consisted of mostly Armenians and Turks. There were performers from other nationalities, but they were very limited. <sup>2</sup> (Sevengil, 583) So, theater continued to constitute a common area especially for Armenian and Turkish people in the sector, even more effectively than in the previous period.

A good example of how theater constituted a common ground for the two groups is Mehmet İhsan's play, titled *Ermeni Mazlumları yahut Fedakar bir Türk Zabiti* (Armenian Victims; or, a Self-Sacrificing Turkish Officer). In 1895, the revolt of some Armenian groups resulted in their violent suppression by the government. This event caused some groups to hate Sultan Abdülhamid. Mehmet İhsan's play was written after the 1908 constitution, with an attitude of supporting the Armenians

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed information about the castings see; Fefik Ahmet Sevengil, "Meşrutiyet Dönemi Tiyatrosu", *Türk Tiyatrosu Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Alfa, 2015), pp. 557-800. Metin And, "Tiyatro Adamları ve Oyuncular", *Meşrutiyet Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu*, (Ankara: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 1971), p. 27.

against the previous government. (And, 1983, p. 334) This is just one example of how the opposition towards the *ancien regime* and theater made Armenians and Turks come together at some point. Generally, the plots of the plays consisted mostly of politics, criticism of the *ancien regime*, praising the homeland, etc. Especially in the first years after the announcement of the constitution, theaters were important means of reflecting the anger towards the previous regime and the joy of the new era. (And, 1983, p. 269) Considering the fact that the audiences from various ethnic and religious groups were coming together in the theater halls to watch the same play, it is not surprising to see that the theater functioned as a tool for shaping the public opinion of the masses.

The six years after the announcement of the constitution were an extremely complicated period to deal with. The military and political incidents were very dense and drastic. The new regime was welcomed joyfully but the following events overshadowed that atmosphere. Even so, the second constitutional period is remembered as the era of immense press activities, literary productivity and liberty. The inter-ethnic relations increased, especially in the first two years. This gave a chance to the peoples of the empire become acquainted with each other. Unfortunately, I cannot say that this chance was used properly. Although they became closer in the political area with the regulations of the parliament, their cultural relations remained limited. In terms of Armenian-Turkish relations, this period was the last years before the incidents of 1915, and so in a sense was the last years of living in the same empire. Even though the interactions were not as great as expected, there were some attempts to introduce Muslims/Turks and Armenians to each other. In the following chapters, I will give some examples of these efforts. These connections are important to get a better understanding of the period, because the national history writing of both nations prefers ignoring the connections among these groups in the last decades of Ottoman Empire.

## CHAPTER 3

### A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *ANADOLU'DA TANİN*

Anatolia, as a territory, is usually attributed to Turks, and Turkish nationalism has been adopting it since the last years of the Ottoman Empire. A new form of Turkish nationalism emerged around 1915, which took its source from Anatolia. From this period on, Anatolia has been host to some form of nationalist discourse. The main focus of this chapter will be Ahmet Şerif's *Anadolu'da Tanin*, which consists of the travel notes he wrote about Anatolian territory between 1909 and 1913 that were published in *Tanin* every four or five days. The emphasis will be on the discourse the writer adopted while reflecting on the cities and districts he traveled to. So there will be a discourse analysis on the notes, presenting the shifts and differences in his attitude about the ethno-religious elements and relations among them.

Considering the changes of Ahmet Şerif's attitudes, which will be presented later on, I think it is essential to begin with the discussions on identity, nationalism and the political significance of Anatolia, because these are the major determinant factors that affected the discourse of the writer.

Just as identity is not an objective and constant concept, but rather recreated and narrated over and over again depending on the people and the time, it is not isolated from the place where it is formed either. Time, place and written materials (narrations, newspapers, articles, and even commercials) compose the required ground for an identity to arise. About the role of place on identity construction, Schick states that "The construction of identity, then, is at the same time the construction of a network of places –some tagged 'here', others 'there'- ...." So, while building an identity upon a geographical land or a place, the essential question is what is included in the cultural context of this "place," or "here", and what is discarded as part of "there". As stated above, another element of this construction is texts, as the material practice of building an identity and perpetuating its existence. Many people acquire their geographical knowledge from books, magazines, newspapers, movies, television and so forth (Schick, 1999, pp. 19-40), so our sense of identity, which is related to a certain territory, is created through the filter of texts and other media.

I preferred to begin by mentioning some essential elements of identity construction, because all of them are related to the emergence of Anatolian identity, which constitutes the focal point of this chapter. The majority of current studies on

Anatolia state that the emphasis on Anatolia started around 1913-15 (Atabay, 2002). As opposed to Ziya Gökalp's mode of Turkish nationalism, which included all of Central Asia and the history related to it as a "place" to belong, a group of intellectuals came up with a new kind of nationalism that narrowed this "place" to the boundaries of Anatolia.

There are many studies on the emergence of Anatolian nationalism<sup>3</sup>, but I did not come across any research on the perception of Anatolia before Turkish nationalism adopted it. The fact that Anatolia had been a host to many nations and religions for thousands of years proves that this kind of limitation is very problematic. Beginning with the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the various elements of the empire began to be separated for different reasons. With the republican period, Anatolia mostly lost its cosmopolitan structure. So the period from 1908 to WWI is especially important as the last years of a cosmopolitan Anatolia. In addressing Armenian-Turk relations in these years right before the emergence of Anatolian nationalism, discussing the terms of nationalism and Anatolia is inevitable.

When we look at the printed press and literary pieces of these years, they seem to be drawing another picture about Anatolian identity. In Bekir Fahri's (2012) novel *Jönler*, which was published right after the proclamation of the constitution, the emphasis on Anatolia arises as a common place to build up a relationship between Armenian and Muslim/Turkish characters (p. 75). The article of Emine Semiye "To My Anatolian Sisters" corresponds to this kind of understanding, as well. As is clear in the article, this address is referring to all women in the empire, both Muslim and non-Muslim. This inclusivist attitude is visible in her charity works, political choice and other articles, too (Demirdirek, 2013). This is not the case, however, in her literary pieces, but I will not discuss this. So Anatolia, as a "place", is a good example of what kind of process identity is, and how it transforms. A term which was being used for all the citizens in the empire, regardless of ethnicity or religion, turned into a tool of Turkish nationalism in a period of only five or six years.

This period is important for two related reasons. Firstly, this is the last period of cosmopolitan Anatolia, so it is the last chance to observe the relations among people of different religions. Secondly, there was a sharp transformation about the status of non-Muslims elements within this extremely short period of time. The notion of

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<sup>3</sup> Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi*, "İttihat ve Terakki'nin Göç ve İskan Politikası (1913-1918)", Mithat Atabay, in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*. Üngör, Making of Modern Turkey etc.

religion is important because of the fact that after WWI, and until the republican period, all the elements were somehow subjected to a kind of assimilation. Muslim migrants/minorities were seen “as assimilable raw material” and non-Muslims were labeled as “unturkifiable” (Üngör, 2011, pp. 171-172). Although some aspects of this statement are questionable, but the truth is that Muslim minorities were seen as “us” and non-Muslim ones were “they”. So Muslims stayed where they were but non-Muslims left or were sent away in various manners. This difference made me curious about the relations between the elements of various religions on these last years of living together. I preferred analyzing them as Muslims and non-Muslims, or more specifically as Armenians and Turks. The classification could be made on the relations among Christians of different churches or Christians and Jews, or among the different ethnicities, but the Turks and Armenians were the majority groups at the time and this kind of grouping would give a broader picture of the period.

Although it is not correct to generalize the whole period with a few examples, I think these are important for questioning the existing perception of Anatolia. *Anadolu'da Tanin*, which will be analyzed in this chapter, also draws a similar picture about Anatolia. I chose this book of travel notes for various reasons. First of all, it tells the story of the exact period this thesis is dealing with. Its author traveled Anatolia between 1909 and 1914, and his attitude of the areas (i.e. Adana) and the historical events (i.e. Balkan Wars) offers an overview of the perception of “Anatolia”, “non-Muslims”, “nation” and other contradictive issues.

*Anadolu'da Tanin* has significant importance for a couple of reasons. First of all, as far as I see, there are no other travel records about the cities of the empire as compulsive as this one. Also, these notes were published in *Tanin*, which was, in Ahmad’s words, the unofficial mouthpiece of the CUP. It was established on 1 August 1908 by Hüseyin Cahit Yalçın, Tevfik Fikret and Hüzeyin Kazım Kadri, right after the announcement of the constitution. It claimed to be an independent newspaper, as Yalçın states in his memoirs. (Mutluay, 2000, pp. 44-45) However, the declarations of the committee were published in *Tanin* for some period. This fact and Yalçın’s close relation with the CUP gave the impression that it was the mouthpiece of the committee. This impression, which Yalçın created by promoting the CUP in his articles, was so effective that Tevfik Fikret and Hüseyin Kazım left *Tanin*. So it was not just any newspaper, but a media organ which was associated with the committee behind the

construction of the new regime and also influential on the government through the end of the period.

I would like to present a detailed biography of the author and analyze the travelogue correlatively, but as Mehmet Çetin Börekçi, the editor of the latest edition of *Anadolu'da Tanin*, states, we have so little information about Ahmet Şerif that at first Börekçi thought that it was just a pseudonym. Soon, his tombstone was found and the truth about him became known, in a sense. According to Börekçi, he was born in 1883 and died in 1927. Nevertheless, our information about him is limited to his articles in *Tanin*. It is known that he wrote other articles and even on behalf of Hüseyin Cahit, the owner and editor of *Tanin*. He also participated in the Balkan Wars as a war reporter. But the actual reason behind his importance is his travel notes, published in *Tanin*. Even on his tombstone, his name was written as “*Anadolu'da Tanin, Ahmet Şerif*”.

One assumption I can make about the writer is that he had close links with the CUP. Writing in *Tanin* is one reason, but there is stronger evidence in the notes. During his trip to the Black Sea and eastern Anatolia regions in 1911, some members of the CUP joined him and he mentions the conferences of these members in different districts. Those were: Mehmet Cavid, one of the grant holders of *Tanin* and a leading politician and member of the CUP; Mustafa Necip, a prominent unionist; and Ömer Naci, another member of the CUP. This was stated by Faroz Ahmad too, as follows; “in June 1911, the Unionists decided to send a delegation led by Mehmet Cavid to Anatolia to celebrate the third anniversary of the constitution.” (2008, p. 318) This fact can be considered as a proof that those notes and travels were approved and encouraged by the CUP. In addition to this, Ahmet Şerif wrote three articles about eastern Anatolia, titled “Duygunun ve Görünüşün Yanılması”. The main purpose was to answer the accusations of Armenian newspapers about the security problems of Armenians in that region. He firstly narrates the accusations against Mehmet Cavit and the CUP, and then stands up for them, while accepting the deficiencies of the government. In my opinion, these facts are enough to assume that his relation to the committee was beyond just writing in their unofficial media organ.

Ahmet Şerif's travel notes were published in *Tanin* newspaper between 1909 and 1914. These notes were collected into book in 1326 (1911) under the title of *Anadolu'da Tanin*. He continued to travel and publish his notes after that time, but the rest of the letters was not included in the book later on. Mehmet Çetin Börekçi re-

published them in 1977 with the same content and in 1995 by including the rest of the notes. *Tanin* was directly associated with the İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Committee of Union and Progress), and the committee's desire to get to know Anatolia and reorganize it was the starting point of these travels. The owner and the editor of *Tanin*, Hüseyin Cahit, played an important role in this decision and he wrote about the importance of Anatolia in one of his articles, called "Taşralarda", one year before Ahmet Şerif (p. XVII).

Although these travel notes are mentioned in several articles and some of them make references to how the relations of different elements were expressed by Ahmet Şerif, there is no comprehensive study about them. The main aim of this chapter is to analyze these notes/letters, emphasizing how the Armenians and other non-Muslim elements were described, and to see if there was a notable change in the attitude during these years, depending on the fluctuations in social and political conditions.

Ahmet Şerif traveled to Anatolia five times in different years. His first route, in 1909, took him mainly through the western part of this region: Bursa, Balıkesir, Kütahya, Isparta, and Konya. In this part of his travels, he wrote 16 different letters for the newspaper, each of them is about a different district. The second part of his travels was to the cities of Eskişehir and Ankara. He wrote 10 letters in this period of his journey, one of which is not particularly about a certain district, but a warning to Anatolian deputies in the parliament. The third trip, in 1910-1911, was to the southern parts of Anatolia: Mersin, Adana, and Konya. 28 letters from this trip were published in the newspaper; three of them were not about a district but rather advice or warning notes for the government. After this trip, he wrote three letters about his observations on certain parts of Istanbul, but I will not mention this one for two reasons. First, Istanbul is not in the content of this chapter. Secondly, there is no direct reference to inter-ethnic relations<sup>4</sup>.

In the same year, 1911, he went to the Black Sea and eastern Anatolia regions, and wrote 25 letters. This is the one in which some members of the CUP joined him. The notes of this trip are the last ones to display a positive attitude about Armenians

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<sup>4</sup> And also, it should be noted that, the travel notes of Ahmet Şerif was titled according to the location. For example, his notes from the region of Syria was published as "Suriye'de *Tanin*" (*Tanin* in Syria) – which is included in the second volume, *Anadolu'da Tanin II*- and the ones from İstanbul was titled "İstanbul'da *Tanin*" (*Tanin* in İstanbul). (Albek, 2013) So only the ones that is titled "Anadolu'da *Tanin*" (*Tanin* in Anatolia) are included in this thesis.

and other non-Muslim elements. After this trip, he took a break for almost two years. I assume that this was because of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars in 1912.

His last trip was to Adapazarı and Bolu, in 1913-1914. In these letters, he gives more details on each subject, like education, people, municipality, etc. While the first four trips were similar in terms of both his attitude towards different elements and the problems he emphasized, in the last one he adopts a different position and his attitude change into a more nationalist one. This is most probably due to the effect of the Balkan Wars.

I will analyze these notes by dividing them into two major categories. The emergence of the Balkan Wars in 1912-13 will be the determinant factor. The writer's attitude towards non-Muslims shifts sharply in the letters of the last trip, which takes place right after the wars. This shift makes it impossible to analyze all of the notes together, since the manner and the subject change completely.

Lastly, I should note that the writer usually does not make clear distinctions for Armenians in particular. His statements are generally shaped by religion, but not ethnicity. He usually regards non-Muslim groups as a whole and divides the people of the districts into two: Muslims and non-Muslims, as long as there is not a specific case for a certain ethnic group, such as the Adana incidents<sup>5</sup>. So, I will focus on representation of Armenians, as much as I can, but due to those preferences of the writer, it may not be possible to draw a clear line between Armenians and other non-Muslim groups.

### **3.1. Ahmet Şerif's Travel Notes Between 1909-1911**

During this period, Ahmet Şerif made four trips to different parts of Anatolia and wrote 79 letters for the *Tanin* newspaper. In 45 of those letters, he mentions non-Muslim people (most of whom were Armenians) and relations. In each letter he makes reference to them with more or less similar subjects/themes. Education, comparison with Muslims (in terms of education, intellectuality and organization) and social harmony among different elements constitutes the main topics. In addition to these, I will add another topic depending on the letters of third trip (Mersin, Adana, Konya),

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<sup>5</sup> This can be regarded as a kind of essentialism, but considering the social structure of the Ottoman society, this may have more complicated aspects.



because of the Adana incidents. I think the relations under the influence of those events had a totally different characteristic and should be analyzed in a totally different context.

### 3.1.1. Social Harmony

The harmony among different elements is one of the main topics of Ahmet Şerif's travel notes between 1909 and 1911. As indicated before, the letters were written over a five years period between 1909 and 1914, but the ones after the Balkan Wars (Adapazarı-Bolu travels) had significantly different characteristics in terms of the relations of Turks and other elements. The topic of social harmony is brought out so many times that it is inevitable to seek a political advantage out of it, especially if one considers the political connotations of the notion of "brotherhood" in the post-constitutional context.

Those statements about social harmony can be analyzed by dividing them into different categories. I will firstly describe what kind of harmony he is talking about, and what the characteristics and outcomes he emphasizes are. He describes some factors against this harmony as well, so I will mention them as the next step.

In most of the districts where Muslims and non-Muslims live together, he usually underlined the fact that different elements of the empire were living in harmony. Some letters points out the problems occurring among them, but, as will be discussed later, they are all attributed to external factors.

In most of the letters, this harmony is expressed along with the notion of brotherhood. As indicated in the letter from Ünye, good relations among different groups was the most positive part of his observations about Anatolia. In this letter of Ünye, the positive relations between Muslims and Armenians were particularly emphasized. Ahmet Şerif expresses his contentment by means of this situation as follows: "These kinds of things take away the sorrow caused by some observations and fills one's heart with hopes for the future."<sup>6</sup> The notion of brotherhood was also emphasized in three districts apart from Ünye. Two of them, Sındırgı (31 July, 1909) and Gümüşhane (written in Van, 22 August 1911), were similar to Ünye according to the writer. As for the İskenderun letter, these words were cited as the words of a local

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<sup>6</sup> "Bu durumlar, bazı gözlemlerin insana zorunlu olarak verdiği üzüntüyü ortadan kaldırıyor ve kalbi, gelecek hakkında ümitlerle dolduruyor" P. 283

Armenian. Ahmet Şerif went into a shop and began a conversation with an Armenian man. He quoted him, in reference to the Adana incidents, as follows: “He said, it is unbelievable what just happened. No one could imagine things would be like this. We do not understand what happened or why. Both here and the surrounding villages, Muslims and Armenians had been in a brotherly relationship all along. (...) If an Armenian had a wedding, more than half of the guests would be Muslim, and vice versa.”<sup>7</sup> As seen in this quote, the emphasis on good relations and the notion of fraternity is corroborated by the words of an Armenian. The aforementioned relations were defined in such a good state that in Karaman, the Muslims, who were unable to get on with other Muslims, were described as having much better relationship with Christians. Ahmet Şerif expressed the confusion he experienced with these words: “I saw to my sorrow that the Muslims are unable to unite here, which is the case for other districts as well. Oddly enough, these Muslims, who are unable to get on with each other, have good relationships with Christians.”<sup>8</sup>

The emphasis on brotherhood seems to be an important one, for it was expressed by many others during the celebration of constitution. Matossian describes it as one of the major ideals of the revolution. (2014, p. 2) He states that the calls for the celebrations were made with the addresses like “dear brothers”. The motto of the French revolution—“freedom, equality, fraternity” —had an impact on this, because according to Matossian, “CUP members received the attendees (of a festivity) who were wearing badges on their chest that read “freedom, equality and fraternity”. (2014, p. 29) He also points out this effect in his following statements. (p.49)

Another factor that completes this picture of harmony is the resemblance of different elements. It is stated that culture, clothing and life styles are similar in most of the places and it is impossible to distinguish Muslims and non-Muslims from one another from the way they look. These resemblances were mentioned in five different letters. As stated in the notes of Adana, Muslims and Christians had merged into each other and had adopted the same customs and the same language. (Ahmet Şerif, 1999, p. 121) Similarly, in the letter of Bahçe, which is in within the boundaries of Osmaniye

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<sup>7</sup> “İnanılmayacak şeyler, dedi. Böyle işlerin olacağı kimsenin aklına gelmezdi. Ne oldu, nasıl oldu, anlayamadık. Gerek burada ve gerek civardaki dört-beş köyde bulunan İslamlarla Ermeniler öteden beri kardeş gibi geçiniyorlardı. (...) Ermeni düğün yapsa, davetlilerin yarısı İslamlar, onların düğününde yarından çoğunu Ermeniler meydana getirirdi.P. 140

<sup>8</sup> “Diğer yerlerde de üzüntüyle gördüm ki, İslamlar arasındaki birleşememe burada da vardır. Tuhaftır ki, birbirleriyle geçinemeyen islamlar, Hıristiyanlarla daha iyi anlaşılıyorlar.” P. 223

today, it is impossible to distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims because they are all the same with clothing, language and traditions. Ahmet Şerif considered these positive relations as the main reason why there were no saddening incidents happened in Feke during the Adana incidents. In the notes from the Armenian village of Varzan, dated 23 August 1911, he stated that the resemblance was such that Armenian women were veiled just like the Muslim ones. (p. 326) Moreover, in the notes of Bayburt, he stated that Armenian women were more religious in terms of veiling. (p.331)

He uses some anecdotes from his trip to reflect the harmony and good relations. One of the most remarkable of them is the one from the beginning of his journey to Mersin, Adana, and Konya. He was in a ferry going to the harbor of Mersin. While expressing his observations on the passengers, he drew attention to the contrast among the first class and deck passengers. He pictured how the low-status passengers, who were exposed to the rudeness of the crew, were trying to help each other as follows: “But the passenger did not deny the sympathy, they did not receive from the crew, to each other. One Muslim was giving his seat to a priest and a rough Turkish man was providing a shelter to the Greek women who were out in the cold.”<sup>9</sup> It is notable that these types of helping each other that are mentioned by the author take place between the different elements. This was most probably a conscious preference of him, as in the other letters. However, it is also remarkable that in both situations, the helpless ones are the non-Muslim subjects. Yet, as there is no direct reference to being dominant group (*millet-i hakime*) in the other letters, except the ones after 1912, I will consider this part as an exception.

As indicated here, the positive relations among different elements are considered as a part of the ideal social order. But besides that, there are some parts that point out the negative outcomes of these close relations. The notes of Haçin, written on the 20 of March, 1910, he mentions syphilis, which was very widespread at the time. He states that one of the reasons that syphilis became widespread was the close relations among Muslims and Armenians. “The villager, Mehmet, who runs an errand in Haçin, stays in his Armenian friend Artin’s house. And when Artin goes to village, he stays in Mehmet’s house. This is common. This kind of relations between Muslims

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<sup>9</sup> “Fakat, mürettebatın esirgediği merhamet ve yardımı, yolcular birbirinden esirgemiyordu. Yersiz kalan bir rahibe kendi yerini veren bir İslam, açıkta kalmış Rum kadınlarına barınacak bir kenar temin eden, kaba saba bir Türk görülüyordu.” P. 110

and Armenians is something to be proud of, but unfortunately, it is also one of the facts that makes the spread of the syphilis easier.”<sup>10</sup>

Besides those, he mentioned some facts that break the harmony, as well. The most important ones are external factors and media, in his perception. In the notes of Mihaliç, one of the first districts of his travels, he stated that Greeks were complainant of Mahmut Şefket Paşa’s attitude towards the patriarch. The writer took a defensive position at this point and stated that the issue had emerged as a result of the “troublemaker” Greek newspapers and the Pasha had no intention of acting like that. A similar reaction against non-Muslim media is visible in his three articles, titled “Duygunun ve Görünüşün Yanılması” which were published during the travels, in September 1911. In the notes that referred to the Adana incidents, he described provocations and rumors as the main reason for the chaos. As in his “Bayburt’ta Ermeniler ve İslamlar, Şehir Hayatı” (City Life, Armenians and Muslims in Bayburt), another aspect of the issue was suggested. While arguing that a conflict is not likely to occur between Armenians and Muslims, he states that, the conflicts can emerge only between the villagers and the landlords who take advantage of their labor. He expressed his contentedness for not witnessing any conflict between elements as follows; “...now that I understand the rumors are imaginary and exaggerations and the conflict occurs not between elements but between social classes, I am so glad that the resource of struggle is like this.”<sup>11</sup> So, again, the positive relations among elements were considered as pleasing by the writer.

### 3.1.2 Education

Education is the one of the main themes that constitutes the references of Ahmet Şerif to the non-Muslim (mostly Christian) population. He mentioned this issue in 17 different letters. Almost each time he wrote about the schools of one district, he did not leave out the Greek and Armenian schools, if there were any. So the emphasis on education was very strong. This was probably due to the Unionist policies on the

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<sup>10</sup> “Bir iş için Haçin’e gelen köylü Mehmet, doğru dostunun, Artin’in evine iner ve bir-iki gün onda misafir kalır. Aynı şekilde Artin köye gidince Mehmet’e misafir olur. Bu geneldir. İşte aslında vatanın iki değerli unsuru olan İslamlar ve Ermeniler arasında iftihar edilecek bu ilişki tarzı burada felaketin sebebi oluyor, frenginin yayılmasını kolaylaştırıyor.” P. 184

<sup>11</sup> “...şimdi anlıyorum ki, o söylentiler ve yayılan dedikodular, hayal ürünü ve abartmadır, anlaşmazlık, unsurlardan değil, sınıflardan çıkıyor ve ben, mücadelenin kaynağının böyle tayininden çok memnunum.” P. 331

education issue. In the Hamidian Era, the schools continued to be shaped according to religious/ethnic diversities. Unionists thought that it was not useful to discriminate against citizens according to race and religion, especially in terms of education. (Kerimoğlu, 2007, p. 133) To realize the ideal of Ottomanism, it was necessary to unite them with language, starting from their primary education. Realizing the importance of education for the survival of the empire, they tried to “Ottomanize” all the schools by suggesting Turkish as the official language of education and removing the anti-Ottomanist subjects from the curriculum. (p. 134) So education was one of the main goals of the Unionists after the proclamation of the constitution. Ahmet Şerif’s attitude towards education supports the assumption that he and his writings are related to the CUP and so, this attitude is a result of this relation.

According to his letters, in almost every city and district, the schools of non-Muslim population were in much better condition than Muslim schools. Most of the time, he mentioned them in comparison with Muslim schools. So I will leave the comparisons on education to the end and firstly mention the conditions of the non-Muslim schools and education systems as described in Ahmet Şerif’s letters.

As mentioned above, he wrote about the theme of education in 17 different letters. Since his criteria of for evaluating education were more or less the same, instead of analyzing them one by one, I will pick some remarkable ones as representative.

In his trip to Eskişehir, he began his visits with an Armenian school. The Armenian community had established the school by raising money. In Ahmet Şerif’s words, “Our precious citizens established this school by fund raising 5-6 hundred liras.” (p. 56) (His address form should be noted. Instead of saying “Armenian citizens” or “Armenian community”, he says “aziz vatandaşlarımız”, which means “our precious citizens”.) In the next paragraph, he expressed his appreciation as follows; “Our citizens did not seek help from the government and raised 500-600 liras together, with a noteworthy solidarity. So they were able to provide any type of education as they wanted to their children. I do not know what to tell other than appreciation<sup>12</sup>” (p. 57). This kind of admiration for the non-Muslim schools are visible in most of the letters.

The general impression on the non-Muslim schools is positive (almost perfect in most districts), however he sometimes criticized them for some certain issues. For

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<sup>12</sup> “... bu konuda hükümetin yardımını beklemeyen vatandaşlarımız, aralarında tebrike değer bir birlik ve teşebbüsle, beş-altı yüz lira toplayıvermişler ve bugün, çocuklarını, istedikleri gibi okutuyorlar. Buna, takdirden başka, ne ile karşılık verilebilir?”

example in Nallıhan, he stated that the Armenian school was in good condition. They taught Turkish grammar even better than the other schools; but on the other hand, the other courses like geography were not taught in Turkish. He expressed his opinion as follows; “But I do not think that these children of homeland are not being taught the terminology of geography, names of countries and continents, mathematical terms and others in Turkish. Because these precious citizens can speak Turkish as much as we do. I guess it will be more beneficial and easier if they use Turkish in the classrooms.” (p. 89) He advised them to place more emphasis on giving the courses in Turkish. This letter was written in 1909. So, considering the general attitude of the writer in the letters of this year, attributing this emphasis on the Turkish language to nationalism will not be an accurate inference. It is more likely to be a reflection of the Ottomanist ideology. As will be discussed separately in the next parts, he sees education as the major factor of unity among different elements of the empire. Since any language is not specifically indicated in the letter, I assume that the courses were taught in Armenian. As seen in the quote above, he thinks that teaching in Turkish will provide convenience for them. The reason behind the convenience factor should be the ease of connection with other citizens (unsur), it will provide. So, in my opinion, this emphasis on Turkish language serves not for nationalism, but for the unity factor. At least this is reason on the surface.

In the same direction as Ahmet Şerif’s expressions, there were some discussions on language in the parliament. The CUP included in its electoral program that the official language of all elementary schools should be Turkish. In his article in *Tanin*, Hüseyin Cahit criticized the multilingual educational system of non-Muslims for not pursuing Ottoman unity. (Matossian, 2014, p. 103) So this makes it clearer that Ahmet Şerif is following the ideology of the CUP.

Another criticism on the education system of non-Muslims is about sending their children to the schools of foreign countries. When he is explaining the condition of schools and education system in Tarsus, he states that non-Muslim children are in the schools of American missionaries and French Catholics. He expresses his apprehension as follows; “The children of non-Muslim citizens goes to the schools of American missionaries and French Catholics, and being cultured in those. It does not take a lot of wisdom to guess that the children who are trained in these establishments with known purposes and ideologies will not be in favor of Ottomanism.”<sup>13</sup> (p. 127)

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<sup>13</sup> Müslüman olmayan vatandaşların çocukları, Amerika misyonerlerinin, Fransa katoliklerinin okullarına devam ediyorlar, buralarda okuyorlar, terbiye ediliyorlar. Kuruluş amaçları, fikir ve

Similar to the language issue, his main concern is about unity/Ottomanism. He thinks that those schools damage the harmony among the citizens.

Although he criticizes the foreign and missionary schools, it was a fact that the best education was given in those ones. Osman Köker points out the importance of missionary institutions for Armenians. He gives the example of Merzifon Anadolu Koleji, which was established in 1886. He states that the school was so successful and helpful that they were having students not only from Merzifon, but also from the nearby cities like Trabzon and Ankara (Köker, 2011).

In some of his letters, he mentions Muslim and non-Muslim children being educated in the same school. When he writes about the schools in Ayaş, on 22 November 1909, he states that the school of Jewish citizens is much better than the Muslim schools, so some “wise” Muslims sends their children to Jewish school. (p. 72) In a similar way, in Silifke, there are some non-Muslim students in the *rüşdiyye*, which is junior high school for Muslim students. (p.201) Due to the direct influence on the unity and harmony among citizens, he puts particular emphasis on the places where Muslim and non-Muslim students are having education in the same school. At some districts, like Haçin and Van (Varzan Armenian village) he talks about some kind of Ottoman school projects. In the letter from Haçin, he complains that Armenian children have to go to foreign schools, because of the fact that they do not have an “Ottoman school”. As stated in the same letter, there is a plan of establishing an orphanage and a school called “Mekteb-i Osmani” by the government. He emphasizes the importance of this school as follows; “An Armenian children finds the doors of foreign schools wide open, while he cannot see any Ottoman school. The common sense of Ottomanism and homeland should be planted in especially the young brains, who are the people of future. The orphanage that is about to be opened in Haçin and the project of “Mekteb-i Osmani” (Ottoman School) should be considered as investments of future.”<sup>14</sup> (p. 189) He comments on another school project in Varzan as; “Establishing this kind of school in the village will be very beneficial, certainly.

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emelleri bilinen bu kuruluşlardan çıkacak, yetişecek vatan evlatlarının Osmanlılıkla ne kadar ilgileri olacağını anlamak için çok düşünmeye gerek yoktur.”

<sup>14</sup> Bir Ermeni yavrusu, okumak için yabancı okulların kapılarını açık bulduğu halde,(...) Osmanlı bir okul bulamıyor. ...Osmanlılık, vatan ortak duyguları, özellikle, yarının adamları olan bugünkü genç beyinlere aşılmalıdır. Haçin’de hükümet tarafından açılmak üzere bulunan yetimhane ile, kurulması düşünüldüğü işitilen “Mekteb-i Osmani”, gelecek için atılmış bir adım olarak kabul edilse uygun olur

With this school Muslim and Armenian children will be together and a lot of benefits will be received both financially and morally”<sup>15</sup> (p. 327).

### 3.1.3. Comparisons

The advanced position of non-Muslim schools prompts the writer to make a comparison with the schools of Muslim citizens. In almost every part he mentions the non-Muslim education system and the conditions of their schools. He concludes the topic with the state of non-Muslim schools in comparison with others. In each case, the outcome of these comparisons is that the Muslim schools are much more backwards than the others. For example, he depicts the *rüşdiyye* (Ottoman junior high school) in Sivrihisar as follows. “*Rüşdiyye* School [Ottoman Educational Institution] is under administration of a headmaster who is over seventy years old, said to have had a teaching career of over 35 years and to put his mouth to your ear in order to make you hear his talk, and of a friend of him who is sick in the head.” “Children are busy with hustling and playing each other. (...) There is no sensitivity to protect hygiene and health here.” (p. 104) The next paragraph is about *ibtidai* (primary school) and his statements are more or less the same. On the other hand, the Armenian school is depicted in quite the opposite way; “On the other hand, if you visit Armenian School in Sivrihisar, you will see entirely different view. A newly-built structure being split into many classrooms, a gentle headmaster, four or five teachers being occupied with lessons. Afterwards, students studying in silence would be in sight” (p. 104).<sup>16</sup> This picture can be observed in almost every letter that refers to education, with only a few exceptions.

The reaction of the writer on the difference in education level is twofold. Most of the time he states his appreciations and holds them up as an example for the Muslim citizens as in the letter from Nallıhan;

As well as I take it my duty to congratulate my beloved Armenian citizens who give of themselves to learn and do their best, it is my sacred duty to remind the

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<sup>15</sup> Bu köyde böyle bir kurumun açılması elbette büyük faydalara sebep olur. İslam ve Ermeni çocukları bir arada bulunurlar ve bundan maddi olduğu kadar, manevi faydalar elde edilmiş olur.”

<sup>16</sup> “Diğer taraftan, yine bu Sivrihisar’da, Ermeni okuluna giderseniz, büsbütün başka bir manzara karşınızda bulursunuz. Yeni yapılmış, birçok dersanelere bölünmüş bir bina, nazik bir müdür, sınıflarda dersle uğraşan dört-beş genç öğretmen. Sonra, bir sessizlik içinde çalışan öğrenci görülüyor.”



Muslim people sleeping, going round in circles and gawping at the government to awake from their deep sleep of unawareness, to follow suit of their fellow citizens, to feel their humanity and to remember it is the time to fight for the sake of humanity. (p. 85) <sup>17</sup>

Another comparison in the letter of Gilindir is as follows;

Christians make all kind of sacrifices to educate their children. They go to schools which are deemed as regular education. You cannot see a Christian child wandering in the streets. They work hard in silence and prepare for future as soon as possible. On the other side, Muslims are materially and spiritually moving dead bodies (...). Their children go to rough buildings as school, in these buildings their intelligence lies fallow, their health gets worsen. (p. 206)<sup>18</sup>.

On one hand, as seen in these quotes, he admires and appreciates them. But on the other hand, sometimes he expresses his sadness about the difference between the education levels of the citizens. This situation has two negative connotations, as appeared in the statements of the writer. The first and most important one is that the intellectual gap between different elements prevents them from getting united and damages the harmony. He states this situation in the letter from Sivrihisar explicitly as follows;

As long as the yawning gap between the various constituents living in Turkey becomes larger and larger in terms of idea and opinion discipline, I am unable to understand that how unity and equality would be developed. With a view to see the difference, it is enough to visit and observe the schools connecting with various constituents even in the most remote places. Unlike the Turks and Muslims insisting on their ignorance and illiterateness, Christians are persistent to work hard and to prepare their child for future. At this point, a social threat rises for those dealing with future of their hometown For instance, one day the

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<sup>17</sup> "... çalışan, öğrenmek için ellerinden gelen fedakarlığa katlanan aziz Ermeni vatandaşlarımı tebrik; nasıl görev ise, uyuyan, yerinde sayan, ağızlarını açarak hükümete bakan İslam halka da hemşerilerini taklid etmelerini, artık o derin gaflet uykusundan uyanmalarını, insanlıklarını duymalarını, insanlık davasında bulunmak zamanının geldiğini hatırlatmayı, daha kutsal bir görev bilirim."

<sup>18</sup> "Hıristiyanlar çocuklarını okutmak için her türlü fedakarlığa katlanmaktan çekinmiyorlar. Kendilerinin düzenli denebilecek bir okulları vardır. (...) Hıristiyan çocuklarından birini sokakta göremezsiniz. Onlar kendi kendilerine sessiz sedasız çalışmakta, mümkün olduğu kadar geleceğe hazırlanmaktadırlar. İslamlar ise maddeten ve manen birer hareket eden ölüdürler. (...) Çocukları her gün okul diye kaba bir binaya gidip gelirler; burada zekaları söner, sağlık durumları bozulur.

army will be constituted of every son of the country.<sup>19</sup> I wonder if that state of affair will be able to wake us (Muslims) up! (p. 104-105).<sup>20</sup>

He concludes this statement, explaining that on the occasion of a state of war Artin and Yorgi (representing Christian citizens) will be pre-trained for basic missions, but Mehmet (representing Muslim citizens) will need a few months to get ready, which creates an uneven situation.

The other negative outcome of this educational gap is Muslims falling behind. As indicated before, Ahmet Şerif's general attitude is towards emphasizing unity. So generally, he does not show any sign of affinity to Muslim citizens in his comments. But about some subjects, he chooses sides, like in the parts about the education gap between different elements. In some, he expresses his apprehension on the education gap without mentioning the unity factor, but solely emphasizing his worries about Muslims falling behind non-Muslims. On 16 March 1910, he writes a letter from Feke, in which he gives wide coverage to the education issue and a comparison of different schools in the district. It is stated that there are three schools in Feke: Muslim, Armenian and Protestant. His first visit is to the Muslim school and the situation is not different from most of the other places. There is a small and dirty building, an ignorant teacher and poorly educated students. Then he visits Armenian-Protestant school. The building is not in good condition, but better than the previous one. Students are well-educated. Ahmet Şerif states that "...our children are one step ahead of and more well-mannered than them."<sup>21</sup> (The I-other situation is remarkable, I guess) His last visit is to the Armenian school and it is no different from the Protestant school. His last words on the education system of Feke are slightly out of his generally objective position: "I confess that I left down heatedly from the school. Because, I saw with my own eyes that how nebbish Muslims in Ottomans, particularly the Turks, are and how uninspiredly and insufficiently the children to build tomorrows are educated therein"

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<sup>19</sup> From all ethnicities and religions, he means.

<sup>20</sup> Türkiye'de yaşayan çeşitli unsurlar arasında fikir ve düşünce terbiyesi bakımından derin uçurum büyüyerek devam ettikçe birliğin ve eşitliğin nasıl kurulacağına bir türlü aklım ermiyor. Bu farkı anlamak için en küçük, hücre bir köşedeki çeşitli unsurlara mensub okulları gezmek ve görmek yeterlidir. İslamlar ve Türkler, cahilliklerinde ne kadar ısrarlı iseler, Hıristiyan vatandaşlar çalışmakta, özellikle gelecek için çocuklarını hazırlamakta o kadar inatçı. Burada memleketin geleceğine ilgileri olanları ciddi endişelere düşürecek bir toplumsal tehlike başlıyor. Mesela yarın, ordu bütün vatan evlatlarından meydana gelecek, tabii, hukuken eşitlik görevinde de eşitliği doğuracaktır. Bilmem acaba o vakit karşısında bulunacağımız oldu bitti bizi uyandırabilecek mi?

<sup>21</sup> "...Türkçe'de çocuklar bizim okuldakilerden pek ileridirler ve onlardan çok terbiyelidirler."

(p. 181).<sup>22</sup> In his letter from Sivrihisar, he considers Artin and Yorgi as a part of the army, which is important for being integrated as equal citizens. But on the other hand, in this letter from Feke, he refers to Muslim children as the “future-making generation”; moreover, here, it is not the education gap between them that makes him upset, but Muslims falling behind them. In the introduction of *Anadolu’da Tanin* (1977), Mehmet Çetin Börekçi describes the attitude of Ahmet Şerif as inconsistent. He says this referring to his positioning toward public, in general (p. XIII). As one can see in these quotes, the ambiguous position of the writer can be observed for non-Muslim population as well.

The comparisons are not limited to education. He contrasts Muslim and non-Muslim citizen on various aspects. At some point he urges Muslims to imitate the others. In the letter from Nallıhan, he expresses this three times in only one page. Right after describing the conditions of Muslim schools (ibtidai and rüşdiyye), he states that “The result we must derive from the comparison between the schools about which I pointed out their present-day bad and run-down situation and Armenian Schools is that we need rules for movement and a strike for encouragement.”<sup>23</sup> On the same page, he repeats this statement, adding on his admiration. The life style difference between them seems to be such an important issue for Ahmet Şerif that he repeats his comparisons over and over again in the next letters. In the letter from Samsun (written in Trabzon, July 1911) he states that “Contrary to inaction of Muslims, Christians are in constant action. So they can get pleasure out of life. I do not ensure whether it is necessary or not to fill the gap arising out of differences between constituents generating the Ottoman people and to create a sense of competition between them and to be sure about the future by balancing between them”(p. 258).<sup>24</sup> (This is the first time he makes mention of competition.)

Following up the education issue, one of the major comparison is on the intellectual level. In several letters, he states that Christian citizens are ahead of

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<sup>22</sup> “Okuldan üzgün olarak çıktığımı itiraf ederim. Çünkü, bu ziyaret Osmanlılar içinde İslamların, özellikle Türklerin, ne kadar biçare kaldıklarını pek iyi gösteriyor ve geleceği yapacak neslin de ne kadar sönük bir halde yetiştirildiğini ibret olarak şekilde gösteriyordu.”

<sup>23</sup> “Bugünkü perişan durumlarını söylediğim okullar ile Ermeni okullarını karşılaştırmadan çıkarılacak sonuç, bize hareket için kural, teşvik için bir darbe olmalıdır.”

<sup>24</sup> “İslamların hareketsizliğine karşılık, Hristiyanlar devamlı harekete halindedir. Bu sayede hayatın zevklerinden daha fazla tad alırlar. Osmanlılığı meydana getiren unsurlar arasındaki bu esas farkların açtığı uçurumu doldurmak, onların arasında gerçek anlamda bir rekabet duygusu uyandırmak, denge kurarak gelecekte emin olmak, bilmem ki lazım mıdır?”

Muslims both mentality and intellectuality. This situation is specifically indicated in three letters: Kirmasti (12 July 1909), Karaman (25 April 1910) and Gümüşhane (22 August 1911, written in Van). Three letter is not enough quantity to generalize this fact, but he states it as a common situation in other districts as well; “Our Christian citizens are one step ahead in terms of thinking. The difference between Christians and Muslims begins with their private life and family life, then becomes more remarkable in time. It is an undeniable fact that as well as other places, Christians live more happily and comfortably, and they are ahead of Muslims in terms of thinking and enterprise here” (p. 222).<sup>25</sup> Living happier and more comfortable life is based on mostly education level, but it has some other connotations in other aspects as well.

Almost none of the comparisons he makes before the Balkan Wars (1912-13), involve any negative comment about the non-Muslim population. Another aspect that is emphasized is being hard-working in many ways. Education is one level of this, and he continues with praising the organization level, as well. In the letter about Bayburt (written in Van, 24th August 1911), he admits that he got used to seeing a great difference in terms of life style between Muslims and non-Muslims. According to his observations, in almost every cities and trade centers, the most hard-working and enterprising ones are Christians. The cleanest, most beautiful and organized streets and houses belong to them (p. 330). His letter from Samsun (written in Trabzon, July, 1911) supports this argument, both for trade and neighborhood issues. He points out that in Samsun the majority of merchants are Christians, similar to the rest of the cities (p. 256). (But this city does not seem to be the most proper one to make this kind of comparison, because right before this sentence, it is stated that the majority of the population in Samsun is Armenian, so Muslim and Greek people are in the minority.) In the same letter, he compares and contrasts Christian and Muslim neighborhoods. “Houses in Islamic neighborhood are mostly built contradictory to health regulations. They are intertwined. (...) Laziness, complete indifference to life is a prominent quality of Muslims. On the contrary, when entered to a Christian neighborhood, one’s

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<sup>25</sup> “Hıristiyan vatandaşlarımız, düşünce alanında da daha ileridirler. İslamlarla Hristiyanlar arasındaki bu fark özel hayattan, aile hayatından başlıyor ve gittikçe bütün açıklığıyla dikkate çarpıyor. Bunun için diğer yerlerde olduğu gibi burada da, Hristiyan vatandaşlarımız düşünce ve teşebbüs bakımından İslamlardan ileri buldukları, daha rahat ve mutlu yaşadıkları inkar edilemez bir gerçektir.”

heart feels relief. Perfectly built houses, which are standing as proofs for their owners' care for life and their good nature, and clean and broad streets are seen.“(p. 257).<sup>26</sup> Until here, we see that the writer's attitude towards non-Muslim groups is very positive. It will not be chronological but I want to continue with the letters of Adana province, because the Adana incident gives them a specific importance. His positive attitude continues but has some special characteristics due to the nature of events that took place one year before his visit.

### **3.1.4. A Tour to a Special Region: Adana-Mersin-Konya**

The writer's unity-supporter position continues, or even gets stronger, in the notes of his Adana-Mersin-Konya tour in 1910-11. In this part of his travels, he points out the issues of education, schools and resemblance and harmony among people, as in the previous ones; but the main subject is the Adana incident that occurred one year before his visit. Ahmet Şerif's observations and attitude in this chapter says a lot about this incident, but before detailing that, I think it will be better to note some explanations about the historical facts.

These events are extremely complicated and contradictive. As almost every issue related to the Armenian question. The 1909 Adana incident is subjected to many debates in the modern history of the Ottoman Empire. Even the title attributed the those events alters: the government calls it “iğtişaş” (chaos), local representatives of the government say “vaka” (incident), for most of the Armenian sources it was “facia” (disaster) and “katliam” (massacre) for the missionary and foreign resources. (Toksöz, 2011, p. 153) Briefly, it was a series of events that coincided with the 31 March incident (which was against the Constitution regime) and ended in the death of thousands of people, the majority of whom were Armenian.

The question of “What was the reason behind these events?” is not easy to answer. Many researchers have proposed different answers. There are some contradicting theories on the starting point of those. It is accepted that they started with the killing of two men, but one group claims that they were Armenian, and the other

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<sup>26</sup> “İslam mahallesindeki evler çoğunlukla sağlık kurallarına aykırı bir şekilde yapılmıştır. Birbirinin içine girmiştir. (...) Tembellik, hayata karşı tam ilgisizlik, İslamların meydana çıkarıcı sıfatıdır. Buna karşılık, Hıristiyan Mahallesine girince kalp bir ferahlık duyar. Mükemmel yapılmış, sahiplerinin hayatla ilgili olduklarına ve güzel huylarına delil olan evler, temiz ve geniş sokaklar görülür.”

says they were Turks. So the conflict arises from the very beginning. When it comes to the real reason, the contradiction becomes even more complicated. One side says it was because of Armenians' threats toward Muslims, dreams of reestablishing the Cilicia kingdom and arming. The opposite view tells another story and says it was because of violence of Turks (Muslims) against Armenians by the provocation of Bağdadizade Abdülkadir. (Toksöz, 2011) Some scholars accuse the CUP for tolerating the events for the purpose of destroying "the Armenian economic infrastructure in Adana to curb any future political and economic development in the area." (Matossian, 2014, p. 164) Some others deny the involvement of the CUP and blame the Armenians for acting upon the conspiracy to establish an Armenian kingdom in Cilicia. (p. 164) These conflicting views can be seen in the reports and memoirs on the events.<sup>27</sup> The discussion of the reasons behind these incidents lies beyond the scope of this thesis, so they will not be analyzed in detail.

The counterrevolution and the CUP's reaction against it created a huge shift in the perception of the non-Turkish elements of the empire. Matossian describes this as follows; "For the Armenians, (...) the Counter revolution became a turning point that shoot their thrust in the Young Turks and the ideals of revolution by demonstrating the incompetency and insincerity of the new regime." (Matossian, 2014, pp. 6-7) For some of the Arabs, it paved the way for nationalism. As for the Jews, it was a warning that "Young Turks would not tolerate the national aspirations of any group." (pp. 6-7) In fact, these assumptions were not completely wrong because "for the Young Turks themselves, this period demonstrated the vulnerabilities of a constitutional regime and convinced them that granting too much freedom to ethnic groups under the rubric of constitutionalism would undermine their attempts to secure the empire's stability and its territorial integrity. The major result of these shifts among the Young Turks was a serious violation of the spirit of constitutionalism and an increased hostility in the attitude of the dominant towards the non-dominant groups (p. 7). This violation and the transformation within the ideology of the CUP influenced the travel notes of Ahmet Şerif a few years later, after the Balkan Wars, which will be discussed on the following parts.

Ahmet Şerif appears to be taking sides with the Armenians in these events. He defines them as shame and dishonor for the Muslim side as follows; "In Örfiyye, the

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<sup>27</sup> A comparison of the reports written by Hagop Babikyan (in *1909 Adana Katliamı: Üç Rapor*) and Mehmet Asaf (*1909 Adana Ermeni Olayları ve Anıları*) reveals this.

part where Armenians lived is today a shame and black stain for the district. This district, with all the shames, was also involved in the case and a number of men were killed here, too. Let us say, they fired their guns and we shot back at them. But, what about putting their houses on fire or plundering their belongings?”(p. 135)<sup>28</sup> As seen in this example and in many others, like Tarsus (p. 124) and Hassa (p. 144), the writer describes the atmosphere without hiding or exaggerating anything.

He considers the current situation of the government as responsible as much as the ignorance of the people and calls for help from the government, as seen in the notes of Tarsus; “Today, the state of the Armenian neighborhood as an orphan is like a bleeding wound for Tarsus. Only the merciful hands of a fair and dutiful government can heal this.”<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that this kind of attitude of *Tanin*, in general, provoked a reaction from some others like Mehmet Asaf (1982), who was a governor of Adana province at that time. He criticizes the *Tanin* newspaper in his memoirs for solely blaming Turkish Muslims as the criminals behind the incident.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to this, he gives place to the observations and opinions of some local Armenians. One example was already given in previous pages: the Armenian man in the shop says “Things have changed today, the love and getting on well that is the result of all these long years and all these strong reasons has turned into hostility. They started to act against us, they joined to the mixed people that came from outside. They fired their guns to us.” “After the events, Muslims started to admit their faults and began to talk and meet again as they had done before. (...) It is as if these are not those men. Among them there were people who protected Armenians, hid them in their houses and defended them”<sup>31</sup>(p. 140). In these words, one can see the complaint mixed with sympathy, which is the general atmosphere Ahmet Şerif tries to create. In the notes of Bahçe, where the worst part of the incident took place, he does not leave out the positive accounts of Armenians concerning Muslims;(14) “Although Muslims act discreetly, Armenians are ready to narrate what happened with all the details and

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<sup>28</sup> “Örfiyye’de Ermenilerin oturdukları kısım, bugün kaza için bir ayıp, bir lekedir. Bütün ayıplarıyla beraber burası da olaylara katılmış, burada da birçok adamlar öldürülmüştür. Haydi onlar silah attılar, biz de karşılık verdik denilsin. Fakat evleri yakmak, eşyayı yağma etmek acaba nereden icap etti?”

<sup>29</sup> “Bugün, yetim bir durumda olan Ermeni mahallesinin durumu, Tarsus için kanayan bir yaradır. Bunu, ancak, adaletli, vazife sever bir hükümetin müşfik elleri sarabilir.”

<sup>31</sup> “Bugün işler değişti, bunca uzun senelerin, bu kadar kuvvetli sebeplerin meydana getirdiği sevgi ve iyi geçinmek, düşmanlığa dönüştü. Aleyhimize harekete başladılar, dışarıdan gelen karmaşık halka katıldılar. Bize Kurşun attılar.” “olaylardan sonar İslamlar kusurlarını itiraf etmeye, yine eskisi gibi görüşüp konuşmaya başladılar. (...) Sanki bunlar o adamlar değiller. Bununlar birlikte onların arasında Ermenileri koruyanlar, evlerinde saklayanlar, savunanlar vardı.”

rumors. However, it is worthy of note that some of them not finding Muslims guilty, attribute the guilt to other sides”<sup>32</sup>(p. 161).

After this kind of big event, surely it is not possible that all the Armenians were this optimistic, but apparently Ahmet Şerif preferred not to include the negative expressions of Armenians for a reason. Almost all of the firsthand expressions are ones that do not blame Muslims but instead emphasize brotherhood. On the other hand, he does not hesitate to include his own opinions about who was to blame or to judge the Muslim people who participated in the incidents. As evidence for his use of the expressions like shame and dishonor, mentioned above, he says these to express the victimization of Armenians; “There is a reality that is needed to be explained here: Although Muslims attacked from all directions, destroyed and devastated the places, Armenians stepping back, were only doing with defense.”<sup>33</sup> Emphasizing the defensive position of Armenians, and blaming the Muslim side, which he claims to be belong to, he appears to be a supporter of unity rather than separatism.

Ahmet Şerif’s and *Tanin*’s attitude should be evaluated in relation to the reflections of the incidents in the press of the period. According to Bedross Der Matosian, the public sphere, created by the newspapers like *İtidal*, played an important role on the growth of the incidents. İhsan Fikri, İsmail Sefa and Burhan Nuri wrote in *İtidal* about the “aims” of Armenians and argued that “Armenians, like Turks, had been oppressed for thirty three years by the despotic regime. Then they united with the Turks and applauded their “holy revolution.” However, Sefa argued that Armenians soon began preparing themselves for the ensuing uprising by stockpiling weapons. According to Sefa, once the Armenians possessed weapons, their rhetoric changed.” (Matossian, 2011, p. 162) This kind of argument created a public sphere that provoked the Muslims. So Ahmet Şerif’s attitude, also *Tanin*’s in general, could be an attempt to create a public sphere in the opposite direction. His preferences on the expressions and his positive attitude towards non-Muslim groups can be interpreted as an attempt to promote unity and eliminate of separatism.

In addition to this, his aforementioned emphasis on brotherhood and friendship among the different elements of Adana is mentioned in the Armenian sources as well.

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<sup>32</sup> “İslamlar ağzı sıkı davrandığı halde Ermeniler olan şeyleri bütün ayrıntılarıyla ve rivayetleri ile hikaye için hazır bulunuyorlar. Fakat, fikkate değer ki, içlerinden bazıları, İslamları kabahatli saymayarak, kusuru başka taraflara bağlıyorlar.”

<sup>33</sup> “Burada açıklanması gereken bir gerçek var: İslamlar her yöne saldırdıkları, yıktıkları ve yaktıkları halde, Ermeniler öteye beriye kapanarak, çekilerek yalnız savunma ile yetinmişlerdir.”



For example, Garabet Çalyan's report, written in November 1909, includes that kind of expression. He points out the sincerity, trust, unity, and brotherhood among them and calls Muslims and non-Muslims as the sons of the same lands (aynı vatanın evladı). (Şekeryan, 2015, pp. 43-45) However, this does not make invalid the assumption that Ahmet Şerif's attitude was on purpose. This only proves its connectedness to reality.

Despite of the bitterness of the incidents, he mentions the good relations of Muslims and Armenians. Similarities, harmony and cultural resemblances are expressed with the same tone in the letters of other cities. In the notes of Bahçe, he states that they were so closed to each other that, if it was not for the outer facts, these people would not even think of hurting each other and says "It is not possible to distinguish the Muslim and Christian around here, particularly among the villagers. Their clothes, the language they speak are all one. (...) Also, their way of living, views and percepts are not much different. The same things make them upset or pleased."<sup>34</sup>(p. 159) More or less the same statements are written for Mersin as well. (p. 189) In the notes of Sis, he states that Muslims and Armenians stayed together during the events and that is why there was no big damage in this district. (p. 177)

In some letters, he especially points out the areas where Muslims protected the Armenians. However, it should be noted that this help and protection was two kinds; some were sincere, and some had ulterior motives. In Erzin, he states that "In the incident, even if the people attacking from outside wanted to kill some Armenians who had come to Erzin for trade, the Muslim people in Erzin protected them against attackers; and thus no one was killed or houses weren't burned."<sup>35</sup> (p. 137) On the other hand, as in the case of Islahiye, the landlord protects the migrant Armenians for his own profit, because if they die, his shops would be useless and he would lose the workers whom he trusts. Ahmet Şerif states that "The landlord's looking after his interest means saving the lives of 90 refugees"<sup>36</sup>(p. 156). Even so, it is a truth that there was cooperation between Muslims and Armenians. The English vice-consul Doughty-Wylie, who was in Adana during the incident, tells about a similar atmosphere. He states that non all the Muslims were the same. Some of them were protecting and

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<sup>34</sup> "Buralarda, hele köylüler arasında, İslamla Hıristiyanı ayırt etmek mümkün değildir. Kıyafetleri dil, adetler hep birdir. (...) Onların yaşayışları, görüşleri ve anlayışları da pek farklı değildir. Kendilerini aynı şeyler üzer veya memnun eder."

<sup>35</sup> "Olayda dışarıdan hücum eden halk, Erzin'de bulunan, ticaret için gelmiş, beş on Ermeni'yi kesmek istemişlerse de, Erzin'in İslam halkı onları saldırganlara karşı korumuşlar, bunun için kimse öldürülmemiş, evler yakılmamıştır."

<sup>36</sup> ağanın çıkarını düşünmesi, doksan mültecinin hayatını kurtarmış oluyor, demektir."

helping the victims and a group of hodjas were trying to calm the people (Toksöz, 2011, p. 153).

So, Ahmet Şerif's positioning about the Adana incidents of 1909 is very pro-Armenian and away from nationalism and discrimination. This could be sincere or due to his loyalty to Ottomanism. The purpose could be solely expressing the situation in Anatolia or creating a public sphere that would help the CUP government. These are all possible, but the shift in his attitude towards non-Turks in his notes after the Balkan Wars makes this question more complicated.

### **3.2. The Letters After Balkan Wars**

As indicated before, Ahmet Şerif's attitude towards non-Muslim elements alters depending on the period the letters are written. Most of the letters were written before 1912, the beginning of the Balkan Wars. 37 letters out of 103 were written during war period and only 6 districts are mentioned; Adapazarı, Düzce, Bolu, Gerede and Çerkeş. Comparing the number of places he wrote more notes on these districts and this is because of the fact that he gives more details about each place. For the previous letters, he generally writes one note for each district, but in the last ones, he writes several letters for most of the places. For example he writes 8 letters for Adapazarı and 14 for Bolu. This is interesting because, as it is seen in the other letters, he generally mentions the relations among different groups even if he does not give many details about the other issues. Here, he talks about almost every detail. Yet, there are no direct references to those relations. This may be due to the migrations and changes in the population, but still, considering the emphasis on Turkishness and nationalism, this fact looks more intricate.

On the letters before the Balkan Wars, the attitude was more of a promoter of Ottomanism and unity among different elements, especially Muslims and non-Muslims, whereas in his last and only trip after the beginning of the wars, Ahmet Şerif's attitude changes radically, as mentioned above. As Dündar stated, from the beginning of the Second Constitutional period, a strongly effective nationalist ideology has started to have influence on the CUP through the arguments and writings of Ziya Gökalp and Yusuf Akçura. On the other hand, most of the participants were suspicious of this ideology. They remained distant to nationalism because it seemed to be risking Ottomanism and unity. (Dündar, 2008, p. 88)

However, with the beginning of the wars around 1912, Turkish nationalism started to be considered as the only solution. With the belief that the Turks were the real victim of the situation, the nationalist approach gained speed. As for Ahmet Şerif, in the notes of his only travel to Anatolia in 1913 his reference to Turks increased intensely. He used the terms “Turk” and “Türklük” (Turkishness) in the previous notes, as well. The number of those statements is around six in four travels. Yet almost all of them are stated to compare Turks with other groups, mostly Armenians, and praise the latter for the quality of life style they adopted. In the last trip, the number of references to these notions is around 25. It should be noted that he travelled to 85 districts and villages before the wars, whereas the number of places he went to after the wars is only 4. So the density of the term in the last part of the travelogue is obvious with the numbers. This increase should be interpreted as a reflection of his nationalist tendencies that came to light in that year. As to the references to Armenians, his attitude is the total opposite of the last one. He mentions Armenians around 90 times before the wars, whereas that number decreases to 11 in the last trip. 5 of those 11 references are in the tables that shows the population structure; so actually he makes 6 references to them with his own words. The proportions are not different for Greeks either.

In accordance with the numbers, his attitude also implies a shift in his perspective. First of all, the most explicit shift is related to his attitude for migrants from Balkans. In the first letter of the Adapazarı-Bolu travel, he points out the diversity among the people of Adapazarı, as he did in the previous travels and states that Adapazarı is the best location to make observations about different races and cultures living together. (348) According to the statement of the writer, the shire of İzmit, which includes Adapazarı, had been used as a storehouse for the migrants of Balkans. Until here, there is no difference from the previous attitude before the wars, referring to the multiethnic and multi-religious structure of the stated districts, but in the very next paragraph he makes a negative comment on this issue. “The effect of such disharmony of kinds with one another, this kind of population density to the life in the district is strongly felt.”<sup>37</sup> Considering the connotations of “disharmony” which is never mentioned in the previous group of notes, this “effect” is obviously not a positive one. He continues his words with problems in administration. So he is somehow expressing his discomfort with the diversity of the population. In the following letters, while

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<sup>37</sup> “Cinslerin böyle birbiriyle uygunsuzluğu, nüfusun bu şekilde yoğunlaşmasının kazanın genel hayatına etkisi şiddetle duyulur.”

comparing Düzce with Adapazarı, he interprets this diversity in a similar manner; “When compared with Adapazarı, Düzce is not much different from a village. However, the main common marks such as incompatibility of the kinds with one another, their adversity, the approach of the kinds to one another and their way of life keeps the districts in the same causes and effects”<sup>38</sup> (p.381). This could be interpreted as a reaction just for the environment created by the migration flow after the wars, but his voice is distinctly different for the local non-Turk and non-Muslim groups as well.

As indicated before, the emphasis on the notions of *Turk* and *Turkishness* is much more visible in these last notes. He refers to Turks as the main sufferer of the wars, despite of being the host population. This makes me think of whether the Armenians and Greeks came to this area with migration, or were they locals too. Ahmet Şerif’s way of describing the area is very confusing, by making the reader think of the stated districts as having consisted of only Turkish population for a long time. But it is stated by Raymond Kevorkian and Paul Paboudjiyan that “In Düzce, which is in the northwest of Bolu, lived 392 Armenians (52 houses). Their ancestors emigrated from the Ararat Plain in 1605 and they built Surp Astvadzadzin Church and then a school here. There was also a small rural community nearby in Cedid (Yenice) where Surp Harutyun Chapel existed.”<sup>39</sup> (Kevorkian and Paboudjiyan, 2012, p. 180) So actually there were Armenians living in those cities before the migrations and wars, but he, apparently, preferred not mentioning them on purpose. This information makes Ahmet Şerif’s attitude more interesting and questionable. Osman Köker, in his article titled “Tehcir Öncesinde Osmanlı Devleti’nde Ermeni Varlığı”, discusses the census of 1914, and states that there was a huge difference between the numbers of the official Ottoman census and that of the Armenian Church. He says the main reason behind this discrepancy is not clear but gives some hints by mentioning some towns where Armenians lived but that were never mentioned in the official census. One example in the census of 1907, in which the number of Armenians in Beykoz was recorded as zero, but it is a fact that there was an Armenian church (which is still there) and an Armenian association active there at that time. Similarly, in some towns where no

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<sup>38</sup> “Adapazarı’nın yanında Düzca’nın bir köyden farkı o kadar da çok değildir. Fakat, cinslerin birbirine uyumsuzluğu, zıtlığı, cinslerin birbirine karşı tutumu, hayat biçimi gibi esaslı ortak çizgiler, iki kazayı aynı sebepler ve sonuçlar içinde bulunduruyor.”

<sup>39</sup> “Bolu’nun kuzeybatısında yer alan Düzce’de 392 Ermeni ( 52 hane) yaşıyordu. Ataları 1605’te Ararat Ovası’ndan göç etmiş ve burada Surp Astvadzadzin Kilisesi’ni, daha sonra da bir okul inşa etmişlerdi. Civarda Surp Harutyun Şapeli’nin bulunduğu Cedid’e (Yenice) küçük bir kırsal topluluk da vardı”

Armenian was recorded for the census of 1914 there were many Armenian merchants and tradesmen according to commercial annuals. These facts make the statements of Ahmet Şerif more suspicious. If there was a tendency towards ignoring non-Muslim groups as seen in the censuses, the triggerers of that tendency could have had some influence over Ahmet Şerif as well. Clearly, there had been a rise in the number of Armenians and Greeks with the migration flows in the beginning of the century, but it is obvious that there were a certain number of people from those groups who had there for centuries, as well.

So, considering his attitude and how much emphasis he placed on the diversity of the population in his previous letters, one should ask this question; “Why did Ahmet Şerif preferred to ignore local non-Turk groups in his final trip?” I do not have a certain answer to that, but the rise of nationalism and the Young Turks’ newly adopted policies likely had an influence on this.

*Anadolu’da Tanin* is not unique, neither with its genre nor its ideological background, but it is the notes of the most extensive travels in Anatolia. This has led Sina Akşin to compare the writer to Evliya Çelebi. (Börekçi, Önsöz) It allows us to track the changes in the mentality of the Turkish/Muslim elite, i.e. CUP and *Tanin*. Nationalism was always an issue in the CUP, but it was kept unrevealed due to the circumstances. But as the Balkan Wars emerged and the French-derived unionist motto of “equality, liberty, fraternity” vanished—as seen in the elections of 1912 (Semiz, 2014)—Turkish nationalism reappeared with some specific aspects. The perceptions on nationalism like Ziya Gökalp’s or Yusuf Akçura’s, which described the homeland of Turks as Central Asia, challenged and other territories were adopted as “homeland” of Turks, rather than Central Asia. So at this point Anatolia emerged as a concept related to Turkish nationalism. This new perception of Anatolia was giving signals right before the emergence of Anatolian nationalism. *Anadolu’da Tanin* is one of the best works to observe this.

The notes before the Balkan wars (1909-11) look very much in favor of unity and harmony. No one can claim that the intention of both the writer and the newspaper—or the CUP, in a wider sense—were purely in favor of equality among various elements, because it is known that there was a nationalist root in the foundation of the CUP. But at least there was an aim towards provoking it, due to various reasons. But right after Balkan Wars these intentions seemed to vanish. The number of references to Turks and other groups, the differences in his attitude towards harmony

and the discourse he adopted in general all imply a drastic shift of perspective on the cosmopolitan structure of the empire. To what extent this was influential in the society is a question to be raised at this point. I tried to find some hints in relation to the newspaper in which it was published and the ideological positions of the contributors to *Tanin*. Beyond any doubt, Turkish nationalism was more influential than ever after 1911. Associations, magazines, newspapers and political discussions of the period all show this fact. I claim that the discourse shift in *Anadolu'da Tanin* is related with these. However, it would not be right to generalize this attitude to the whole period. The next chapter will show another side of the picture and present an attempt to rebuild the harmony among Turks and Armenians in the literary area.



## CHAPTER 4

### LITERARY TRANSLATIONS FROM ARMENIAN TO TURKISH DURING 2<sup>ND</sup> CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD

The language policies in the late Ottoman period determined the interactions among the ethno-religious elements in the empire. While Armenians were learning Turkish at school, Turks were not familiar with Armenian. This was because of the fact that Turkish was the official language. This situation was influential especially on the literary area. The literary works of Turkish writers were available to Armenians, while the opposite was not the case. Also, there were translations from Turkish to Armenian, while there were almost no translations from Armenian to Turkish. The announcement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> constitution was a turning point about these interactions. With the “limitless” freedom in press, enormous number of newspapers, magazines and books were published. In this kind of environment, the inter-communal relations were also improved, relatively. This was mostly due to the discourse of *fraternity* adopted as one of the mottos of the constitution. The freedom in the press eased the circulation of this discourse. During this period, there were some literary translations from Armenian to Turkish. These are important, as the only attempts to introduce Turkish readers to Armenian literature.

These translations were the outcome of the liberal atmosphere as well as the increasing literary activities during the period. They were also directly related to the improvement of the inter-group relations. As will be mentioned in detail, these relations were closer than ever before in this specific period. However, these did not appear all of a sudden with the constitution. Starting with the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were interactions between the literatures of the two languages at a certain level. Armeno-Turkish literature (Turkish texts written in Armenian letters) is one of the main “subfields” to discuss in that sense. These texts invite the researchers of Turkish literature for an alternative (and more accurate) perspective towards the field. In contrast to the classical Turkish literature historiography, research on Armeno-Turkish texts proposes a totally different story about the beginning of the modern Turkish literature. According to these, the first Turkish novel is not the *Taaşuk-ı Talat ve Fitnat* of Şemseddin Sami, but Vartan Paşa’s *Akabi Hikayesi*, which was written 20 years earlier than the former. *Akabi Hikayesi* was transliterated into Latin in 1991 by

the Austrian Turkologist Andreas Tietze. It is hard to say if it was because of this transliteration, but surely there has been an increase in interest on Ottoman-Armenian literature, beginning with the 1990's. Armenian texts have been translated to Turkish and so Turkish readers were introduced to Armenian literature. However, the period between the beginning of WWI and the 1990's can be considered as the years of denial. Only a few studies touched upon the existence of Armenians, either in literary field or as fictional characters in novels and short stories.

Köprülü's and Enginün's articles are worth mentioning here as examples of the attitude of classical Turkish literature researchers on the subject during the years of "denial". These were not only insufficient in terms of representing the inter-communal relations in literature but also suffered from a highly nationalist attitude which prevented them from approaching the field objectively. Köprülü's article (1966) is titled "Türk Edebiyatının Ermeni Edebiyatı Üzerindeki Etkileri" (The Influences of Turkish Literature on Armenian Literature) and as is seen even in the title, there is a claim of superiority rather than an analysis of Armenian literature. Enginün's work (1992) is titled *Mukayeseli Edebiyat*, but the main emphasis is on the representation of foreigners in Turkish novels and stories. In the article about the foreigners in Ömer Seyfettin's stories, he includes Armenian characters under the heading of "Azınlıklar" (Minorities). She states her awareness about the fact that they are not foreigners but elements of the empire, but she preferred including Armenian to the content of the article since they revolted against the state. So these important theorists of the classical Turkish literature considered Armenian literature, writers and citizens as the "other" and constructed their comparative studies based on this consideration. In addition to those, Mignon refers to Metin And's (1972), Muallim Cevdet's (1924) and Turgut Kut's (1985) papers as well. (Mignon, 2014) Armeno-Turkish texts were marginalized not only by Turkish literary historiographies but also by Armenian researchers as well, since "they were written either in the language or the script of the 'national other'." (Cankara, 2014, p. 54).

The denial phase of Turkish literary historiography has weakened relatively since the 1990s. Andreas Tietze's transliteration led the way in 1991. After that time, academic and semi-academic works started to be written. İnci Enginün, M. Kayahan Özgül and Oğuz Kartalkaya's papers were criticized by Mignon for some aspects like "deemphasizing", "placing into a kind of literary ghetto" and misinterpreting the historical realities. However, Mignon also indicated that these articles were important



for implying a change in the discourse of Turkish literature research in terms of non-Muslim Turkish literature. Other than those, there are some theses written in some certain universities, contributions of publishers like Aras and Belge and also some other books like Pars Tuğlacı's *Ermeni Edebiyatından Seçkiler*. The number of studies in this short period of time, comparing to the previous decades, implies the extent of the "in the dark" areas in the field. (Mignon, 2009, pp. 191-192)

One of the important works on this field is Uslu's book, which was also mentioned in the introduction part. As stated above, the inter-communal interactions in the literary field dates back to the very first years of modern Ottoman literature in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although these are the only examples of Armenian to Turkish literary translations, there were other indicators of dialogue among elements in the literary area. Uslu argues that the 19<sup>th</sup> century dramatic-literary area offered a potential common ground for Muslims, Armenians and other groups to get to know each other. He analyzes this field in three genres; melodrama, historical drama and comedy. In that sense, melodramas and historical dramas were under the influence of nationalist tendencies and political tensions. Comedies offered the opportunity of social negotiation and dialogue. So these translations should be interpreted as an attempt aiming at an opportunity for reconciliation similar to that offered by the comedies he refers to. One aspect which differentiates these cases is the fact that the translations were published with especially this intention by the contributors, while the comedies, Uslu pointed out, were offering negotiation as a consequence of the nature of the genre because, "...in those plays it is negotiation that plays the crucial role as the dynamics of the narrative flow, rather than conflict"(Uslu, 2015b, p.218). This is why the translations should be regarded as a project, since they were challenging the atmosphere of their period. Still, intentionally or unintentionally, these two different genres, which were produced in different periods in the Ottoman Empire, signal the possibility of dialogue among Turks and Armenians.

While regarding them as a project, the period in which these translations were published is also important. Owing to the abolition of the restrictions on the press, there was "a literary boom" (Uslu, 2015a, p. 195) and that lead to the publication of great numbers of literary pieces both in Turkish and Armenian. Because of this, the main interactions took place during this period. To have a better understanding of the importance of these specific years, it is essential to consider the sociopolitical environment of the period which was discussed in detail in chapter two. To recall that

part, right after the constitution, the discussions about the issues like equal citizenship, a common public sphere, military service for non-Muslims and the language of education were all on the agenda. The CUP acted on the side of Ottomanism and so they tried to build equality among the communities. This approach of the first years changed throughout the period. Events like the 31 March incident, Adana incident, Balkan Wars and lastly WWI had positive and negative effects on the attitude of the committee about the minorities. In the end, they adopted Turkish nationalism and 1915 was the end of discussions on inter-communal relations. Still, the years between 1908 and 1914 were a period that involved the most discussions about the rights of the minorities and equality among communities.

Taking this atmosphere into consideration, this chapter will be aiming to see the transitions of different elements in the empire in the literary area. To do that, I will be examining the literary translations from Armenian to Turkish between the announcement of the constitution and the beginning of WWI. The books that are the objects of analysis here are Yervant Odyan's novels, *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes* (1911) and its sequel *Saliha Hanım* (1912), Krikor Zohrab's *Hayat Olduğu Gibi*, which was translated by Diran Kelekyan (1913) and *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri*, (1913) which consists of various short stories of Armenian writers and was translated by Sarkis Srents. The main and common significance of these books is they seem to be the only translations from Armenian in this very critical period, which renders their position very unique. There had been translations from Turkish to Armenian and interactions had taken place, as mentioned above, but these are the only examples of a parallel trend from the Armenian side.

In this chapter, I do not claim to summarize the literary atmosphere as a whole. These translations are important to show that there were still some areas of ideological diversity in terms of relations between the various elements of the empire during the years in which nationalism was on the rise in many fields. I argue that these translations aimed to refresh the semi-constituted multi-ethnic public sphere in the early constitutional era.

Although the main argument to discuss about the novels of Odyan and the story books translated by Kelekyan and Srents are basically the same, there will be some differences in the method of analyzing them. While analyzing the story books, there will be more reference to the background of writers and translators, and also to their critiques and prefaces. This kind of approach is not possible for Odyan's novels, at

least not as much. Considering this and the contexts those books require while analyzing, these three translations are to be approached as three different cases.

#### 4.1. Unity around a Mutual Evil Figure: The Case of Yervant Odyan

The first years after the constitution had a celebratory atmosphere and Ottomanism as well as the unity discourse was influential on a social level. Odyan's novels seem to be under the influence of this environment. I stated in the first chapter that Ahmet Şerif's emphasis on the notion of brotherhood was connected to the motto of the Constitution celebrations; "freedom, equality, fraternity and justice". Speaking of Odyan's novels, it may not be possible to observe this notion directly, but one may speak of a purpose of unifying the different elements in opposition to the previous authority or to make them remember "the euphoria of the revolution", in Mattosian's terms. There is much evidence to think of it as a part of a project for reuniting Turks and Armenians around this theme. In the preface of the book, Odyan's statements include some expressions supporting this argument:

In this story, the bravery and sacrifices of a lady called Saliha Hanım, who has the brave souls of patriotic heroes sacrificing their lives for freedom in this unfortunate time and the brave souls of particularly all honorable Muslim women, is put forth and depicted and thus it is proper for all Ottomans to consider it.

(...)

The writer of this novel (...) is Yervant Odyan Effendi who is the lead writer of the "Arevelk" Newspaper, and we are quite hopeful that he would get the attention he deserves.<sup>40</sup> (pp. 13)

The stress on Ottoman identity is remarkable. Also the writer, as an Armenian, praises Muslim women and presents this to all Ottoman citizens. So, taking notice of his identity and attitude in the preface, he gives signals of his intention and target audience. These are every literate Ottoman citizen in this case,

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<sup>40</sup> "İşbu hikayede devr-i menhusda hürriyet uğruna canlarını feda eden vatanperver kahramanların ve hususiyle bütün muhadderat-ı İslamiyenin ervah-ı kahramanlarını vücudunda tecessüm ettiren Saliha Hanım nam hanımın cesaret ve fedakarlıkları izhar ve tasvir edilmekte olduğundan bütün Osmanlılar tarafından mütaalası sezadır. (...)

İşbu romanın müellifi (...) "Arevelk" gazetesi sermuharriri Yervant Odyan Efendi olup bilcümle Osmanlı vatandaşlarımız tarafından mazhar-ı rağet olacağına ümidimiz berkemaldir."

considering the number of languages the book was translated into. In the Armenian version of the novel, it is stated that *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes* was translated into four different languages, which were spoken in the empire. The same applies to *Saliha Hanım*, as well. This gives the impression that these novels were written as part of a project.

Having mentioned the translation, I should note that there is some uncertainty on this notion in Turkish academia, especially for *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes*. Pars Turğlacı (1992) states that the novel was translated into Greek and Turkish but in the preface of the Armenian version, it is stated that it was published in Turkish, Greek, French and Albanian, in addition to Armenian. Besides that there are also some arguments on whether it was translated to or originally written in Turkish. Erol Üyepazarıcı (2008) states that it was published in Turkish by Odyan (p. 279). Moreover, its sequel, *Saliha Hanım*, was written in Armenian—probably due to the incompetency of the writer about Turkish—and translated by Süleyman Tevfik. There is no certain information on this, but as far as can be understood from his memoirs, his Turkish was not very good. (Odyan, 2009)

Although there are some uncertain aspects about the translation process and I cannot reach all editions, depending on the Armenian version I can clearly state that it was translated into five different languages spoken in the empire. When this information is considered together with the sociopolitical environment of the period, it is inevitable to think of these novels as a part of a project to break the despair after the events following the first years of the constitution, such as wars and massacres.

In addition to this information about the novel, I want to give a short summary of the plot and point out the major themes the novel is constructed on. Although this novel is known as a detective novel, the political aspects of it seem to dominate. The title misleads the reader as if the main characters are Abdülhamid and Sherlock Holmes, but they are actually a group of people under the leadership of Saliha Hanım, who are acting against the regime of Abdülhamid the Second, who is at the center of the plot. The plot can be divided into two parts. The first part is more like a detective story. Three people were killed in a mansion near the Bosphorus. Their valuable belongings were untouched and there were some signs on the bodies. After the bodies were identified, the newspapers were censored because the victims were the spies of Abdülhamid. Murders continued in various parts of Istanbul. Police began to investigate the crimes and when they were about to catch the murderers, four suspects

escaped with the help of a journalist. After this point, the novel focuses on more political issues. Odyan gives irrelevant shameful details about Abdülhamid and the people around him. Üyepazarıcı interprets these parts as the outpouring of the hatred of the writer against Abdülhamid. It is ironic that the appearance of the famous fictional detective whose name is on the title of the book occurs only in the second part of the plot, where the detective aspect is considerably limited. Abdülhamid asks Sherlock Holmes to solve some murder case in Istanbul. As a fan of Doyle's novels, Abdülhamid regards Holmes as the only one to solve those murders of his spies. He suspects that this fiction character could have originated from a real person, and eventually explores the idea that the inspiration of the character comes from Mc Clain, who worked for the British secret service before and lives in Scotland with his wife and children. As Mc Clain comes to Istanbul he solves the murders very quickly and suddenly finds himself in the middle of the group which tries to overthrow Abdülhamid. After this point the detective aspect of the novel decreases and the story becomes more political. Odyan express his criticism against the Abdülhamid regime, and this becomes more apparent after Mc Clain decides to help this committee. As he begins feeling sympathy to this group, Mc Clain's position changes from special detective to a political figure. All this happens in the first quarter of the book. After this point we do not see Sherlock Holmes until the last page and the story turns into the adventures of the committee who are fighting with the despotism of Abdülhamid. The story ends with the celebration of the announcement of the constitution. Saliha Hanım and the committee were successful and managed to realize their goals. So, the last scene of the novel reflects the joy after the Constitution with a very positive atmosphere.

As Bardakçıyan states in reference to *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes*, Odyan employs typical elements like action, detective and curiosity to attract the reader just for emphasizing the multi-ethnic opposition against Abdülhamid. This is not the only novel that uses this theme. In *Madniçi* (Traitor) published in 1922, there is a group of Armenians who act for the same purposes as the secret society in *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes*. (Bardakçıyan, 2013, p. 198)

The plot of *Saliha Hanım* is the same as *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes*. It begins with some mysterious crimes, this time arson, and ends with the joyful scene of the celebrations of the new regime, just as in the first novel. Apparently, he received positive comments on the political aspect of the first one, so rather than another Sherlock Holmes novel, he decided to write a novel that only consists of the adventures

of the committee of Saliha Hanım against Sultan Abdülhamid, because those are almost the same in their thematic aspects. So, it does not seem necessary to give detail about *Saliha Hanım*, since it is not very different from *Abdülhamid ve Sherlock Holmes*.

As for the novels of Odyan, it can be said that two major themes are distinctively dominant; satirizing the *ancien régime* with the character of Abdülhamid, and emphasizing the joy of the 1908 constitution. In my opinion, this is the product of the attempt to re-create through literary means the public sphere that became possible after the constitution. These themes were instrumental in Turkish literature and they were a sort of symbol of the constitutional atmosphere.

When the political relations among Armenian and Turkish parties are taken into consideration, the employment of these themes is not surprising. An important Armenian party, Tashnaksudyun, was in a close relationship with the CUP, both before and after the announcement of the constitution. They worked together for the realization of the “revolution”. Both parties had their own reasons for this alliance. Avagyan and Minassian claim that *Tashnaksudyun* chose the CUP instead of Prince Sabahattin because they held the real power and they were the only option to solve the problems of Armenians. On the other hand, the CUP was cooperating with Tashnak to prevent the Armenian parties from uniting, and by doing so strengthened its own position. (Avagyan and Minassian, 2005, pp. 36-38) Not only Tashnak, but also other Armenian parties supported the CUP’s attempt for the constitution. One of the Hnchak’s leaders, Sabahgulian, stated that “since the constitution was declared they left their revolutionary position and started to work for the development of the country.”(Kılıçdağı, 2014, p. 27) Similarly, the Armenian constitutional *Ramgavar* party was founded on 31 November 1908, right after the announcement of the constitution and announced that their main objective was to make the Armenian people understand the essence of the constitution, improve their knowledge about the rights and liberty that come with it and ensure that they try to serve both for their own community and the (Ottoman) homeland. (Avagyan and Minassian, 2005, pp. 45-46) Although the parties adopted ideologies different both from each other and from the CUP, they united around the French-Iranian derived motto and collaborated against the Hamidian regime. During the period, some events became influential on those relations. The 31 March events had a positive effect on Christian political leaders’ perceptions of the CUP, especially CUP-Tashnak relations. The threat of the revival

of the *ancien regime* made them unite against that “common evil” once again. Tashnak made the first call to stop the conflicts between political parties and groups and to unite. The CUP and Tashnak made some meetings and decided to act together. Although Tashnak was one step forward in this cooperation, Hnchak also participated. However, the Adana incidents broke the bond with other parties like Hnchak but Tashnak remained in its position near the CUP. Nevertheless, after those events there were some debates in the party. A group objected to continuing the cooperation but the majority supported the cooperation as necessary for the interests of the Armenian community. So they continued the alliance. (Kılıçdağı, 2014, p. 43) Kılıçdağı states that “most of the Armenians, especially but not only *Tashnak* circles, evaluated Adana massacres as “Abdulhamid’s last intrigue” (p. 41). So despite the conflicts with the CUP, Tashnaksudyun and others found a way out, and it was through opposition to Abdülhamid.

In this kind of environment, Odyan wrote two novels in which Abdülhamid was caricaturized as a purely evil character. As indicated before, the novels were constructed on two major themes, satirizing the *ancien regime* and praising the constitution. These were the main themes for the political environment of the period, especially in terms of fraternity and Ottomanism. Considering the first years of the Constitution, this environment was influential on Turkish literature as well, but in the following period starting with 1910-11, those themes gave way to disappointment about the new political environment and nationalist tendencies became more visible. To establish a better understanding of the employment of those themes in Turkish literature, I want to refer to Murat Koç’s and Osman Gündüz’s research about the Turkish novels of 2<sup>nd</sup> Constitution period.

Considering the poems and stories of the most prominent figure of the Turkish nationalist literature, Ömer Seyfettin, this theme can be observed. Murat Koç states that the first story he wrote after the constitution was titled “İki Mebus”. He pictures the future in 30 years and expresses his hopeful thoughts about the future. In addition to this, he wrote some poems about the joy of constitution. In “Müekkile-i Hürriyete” he considers 10 July as a festival. Another poem, “Temmuz,” was written with similar feelings. But this atmosphere did not last long in his works. When the later stories and poems are read, it can be observed that this positive attitude towards the constitution disappears. (Koç, 2008, p. 122). This can be applied to the other writers of the period. The negative connotations of the constitution and the disappointment are observed in

many novels, especially after 1910-11. Halide Edip's *Seviye Talip* (1910), Mehmet Celal's *Kuşdilinde* (1910) and many other can be mentioned here. On the other hand, the themes like the joy of the constitution and satirizing the *ancien regime* were less used after 1910-11. (Koç, (2005) and Gündüz, (2013)

So these themes gained strength after the announcement of the constitution, but this popularity started to decline over the following years. Odyan wrote his novels in 1911 and 1912. Therefore Odyan's novels should be interpreted as an attempt to revive those themes of 1908. In my opinion, this is the product of the attempt to re-create the public sphere that became possible after the constitution through literary means. These themes were instrumental in Turkish literature and they were a sort of symbol of the constitutional atmosphere.

This brings us to the main argument on the case of Odyan. His novels may have been part of a project to create a public sphere around Ottomanism and those themes were chosen deliberately because with the announcement of the constitution, there was apparently the purpose of uniting the elements in the empire with the slogan of "equality, fraternity, liberty and justice." This solidarity was possible only under two dynamics which constituted a common ground for them; first the Abdülhamid regime, which was the common "evil", and the second was Ottomanism, which was the only political ideology that could possibly hold the various ethno-religious elements together.

While claiming the brotherhood notion to be one of the major issues being discussed, I do not argue that it reflected the society in general. This kind of argument that contains all the population is beyond the scope of this thesis. The inference I can come up with is that Odyan, as many other intellectuals in the period, regarded those common points as a sort of connector for two communities. Although he did not make any direct reference to it, he was aware of the political connotations of the brotherhood notion and tried to bring it into forefront over again. So, Odyan's novels seem to be a part of a project to create an inter-ethnic public sphere around the themes of "evil *ancien regime*" and "joyful atmosphere of constitution". They can be interpreted as an attempt to make the people of two communities remember their common points, which occurred with the constitution.



#### 4.2. A Symbol of the Modern Ottoman Citizen: Krikor Zohrab and *Hayat Olduğu Gibi*

Another important translation was Krikor Zohrab's *Hayat Olduğu Gibi*. It consists of the short stories of Zohrab, published in various newspapers. It was published in its original language in 1911. Diran Kelekyan translated it in 1913, and published it in the Ahmet İhsan ve Şürekası publishing house. In this part, the main emphasis will be on the writer and the translator. Kelekyan intended to introduce Armenian literature and Zohrab to the Turkish reader. I will discuss the reason of this preference and the importance of Kelekyan in the period as a mediator figure.

In *Hayat Olduğu Gibi*, Zohrab tells the stories of Armenian modernization. He was describing himself as “morally conservative”, but at the same time as a supporter of modernity. This kind of position is reminiscent of the debate among Muslim intellectuals on the moral aspects of Westernization since the Tanzimat period. In some of the stories he goes beyond the morality of his period. For example, in the story titled “Avdet” he tells the love story of Krikor and Makrik. Their relationship was built on love and pleasure, but not marriage. Another considerable aspect is the role of women in a relationship. The emphasis on the harmony among the couple is revolutionary for a patriarchal society. (Eseyan, 2010, p. 34) In “Kilise Avlusunda”, he narrates the dynamics in the Armenian community on the issues of secularity, modernity and East-West contradictions. “Poturlu” includes issues like the education of women and contradictions between urban and rural. The most important aspect of the stories is expressing the daily life of Armenians. As indicated in previous chapters, there were many issues that the Armenian community dealt with. There were many problems with the government and other groups in the society, although the atmosphere of solidarity was being emphasized intensely. However, Zohrab did not make any reference to those kinds of issues. Zohrab's literary identity is the reason behind this. He usually wrote about daily life rather than political issues. Maybe this was his way of relaxing and moving away from politics. So Zohrab as a writer was not a random choice for the intention of familiarizing two nations. The main themes of the stories also serve for this purpose. During those years the role of women, secularity, modernity, Westernization and morality were discussed by Turkish intellectuals as well. Just like the case of Odyan, in which he was proposing Ottomansim and opposition to the previous regime as a common point, they may have seen the potential of uniting the

two nations around the mutual problems they were dealing with, and published those in Turkish with that intention.

Not only Zohrab's literary identity, but also his political position was related to this preference. He was a strong defender of Ottomanism. There is a lot to say about his ideological stance, but before discussing that, I want to give a short summary of his biography. Krikor Zohrab (1861-1915) was a prominent figure in both the Armenian community and the Ottoman parliament. He was a deputy, a writer, a journalist and a lawyer at the same time. He was born in 1861 in Üsküdar. He studied law in the *Darülfünun*. His first writings were published in *Lirakir* newspaper in 1878. After graduating from university, he published a literary magazine, *Yergrakunt*. In 1892, he started publishing *Masis* magazine with Hırant Asadur and Dikran Gamsaragan. That same year, the magazine was closed and was not published again until Sibil (Zabel Asadur), Hırand Asadur and Zohrab decided to re-publish it in 1898. He went to Paris, as many of the intellectuals did during the Hamidian period, and returned with the proclamation of the constitution in 1908. His political career began with the new parliament. He began writing in *Azadamard* in 1909. (Koptaş, 2005, pp. 74-84)

After the constitution, his position was central in the CUP, Ahrar and Taşnaksudyun (Koptaş, 2009, pp. 70-75). This puts him in a uniting status among the other political figures of the period. Koptaş states that besides his liberal and Ottomanist position, he had worries for the Armenian community. These were the determinant factors of his political position. (Koptaş, 2008.)

Zohrab was an important figure due to the values he represented in Ottoman society. He symbolized the ideal modern Ottoman citizen. On one hand he was supporting Armenian nationalism, and on the other hand he emphasized the importance of the Ottoman identity. This notion is important to observe how Armenian nationalism and Ottomanism were combined in the worldview of Armenians in late Ottoman society. In one of his articles dated 28 November 1911, he said; "I can say that I have spent all my life analyzing Ottoman laws. I believe that the salvation of the Armenian nation, is in the salvation of Ottomanism."<sup>41</sup> The Ottomanist attitude adopted in those words is observed in his other speeches and writings. For instance, one year before this article, he expressed his criticism toward the state about the policies on Albania and Macedonia as follows; "If the Government really remains loyal to the statement and

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<sup>41</sup>"Diyebilirim ki, bütün ömrüm Osmanlı yasalarını incelemekle geçmiştir. İnanıyorum ki, Ermeniliğin kurtuluşu, Osmanlılığın kurtuluşundadır."

sees exactly all the elements as Ottoman without being influenced by the individual events and approaches them with justice, foreign intrigues will have no effect, and our situation in Macedonia gains strength.”<sup>42</sup> So, again he thinks that the solution is Ottomanism and builds up the criticism on this issue.

Zohrab’s Ottomanism was built on the ideal of living in a society composed of equal and free citizens. Although the perception of “millet-i hakime” (dominant community) had been less influential since the Tanzimat, it continued to exist at a social level. In Zohrab’s perception, Ottomanism should not be the standardizing of the citizens. On the contrary, it should protect the multilingual and multicultural structure, aiming to promote their loyalty to Ottoman lands. In his point of view, Ottomanism should protect the rights of all the citizens. This kind of approach was especially important in a period when the CUP began to adopt nationalist values. He was aware of this, and tried to emphasize the fact that Armenians, Kurds, Turks, Albanians, etc. were inseparable parts of Ottoman identity. (Koptaş, 2008)

He was so good at Turkish that he was known as the best “orator” of the Ottoman parliament. During his speeches, he not only referred to the problems of Armenians, but also pointed out the problems of Ottoman society and the modernization of the state.

Although he was well known as a political figure throughout the country, his literary identity was known only by a limited number of people. Naturally, the main reason was language. Arşag Alboyacıyan states that 1913 was the year his literary pieces were appreciated and translated to Turkish. (Zohrab, 2001, p. 170) *Hayat Olduğu Gibi* was one of them. Another one is Sarkis Srents’s translations in *Servet-i Fünun*, which will be mentioned later in this chapter. From that year on he was known as a writer too, by Turks.

Specifying the aforementioned fact, the plots of the stories have no direct relation to Ottoman identity or the fraternal atmosphere that was aimed to be created at some point. Yet, Zohrab as a political figure makes this translation significant. In my opinion, the purpose was introducing Armenian daily life and literature to the Turkish reader, but beyond that Krikor Zohrab was introduced as an exemplary character with his mediator position.

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<sup>42</sup> “Eğer hükümet, beyanlarına gerçekten de sadık kalır, münferit olaylardan etkilenmeden, bütün unsurları kesinlikle birer Osmanlı olarak görür ve onlara adaletle yaklaşırsa, dış entrikaların hiçbir etkisi olmaz ve Makedonya’da durumumuz sağlamlaşır.”

While discussing Zohrab's position in the society as translator, it is also necessary to mention Diran Kelekyan, since his political position was not different from that of Zohrab. He was a journalist, a writer and a professor in the Darülfünun. He is most well-known for his career as the editor of the *Sabah* newspaper. (İzrail, 2013a, p. 525) His political position is a highly complicated story. Around 1890, he became close to the Hınçak group, but it did not last long. He went to Paris in 1894 due to policies of Abdülhamid, and returned in 1898. After this, he became close to Abdülhamid. Izrail states that before returning to Istanbul, he had already been sending some reports to Abdülhamid. (p. 526) During this period, his relations with the government seem to have been highly close. He became a part of the *Sabah* newspaper at the direction of the sultan. He was getting some other official positions and rewards, as well. He had a reputation as the "most devoted man to the Sultan".

In 1904, he was the private secretary of Ahmet Celaleddin Paşa, who had been in conflict with Abdülhamid. During this period, he got close to the ideology of Prens Sabahattin. According to him, Turks needed to change their minds in terms of being the dominant group and accept being equal, in all areas. (p. 529)

Kelekyan was an Armenian nationalist, considering his membership to the Hınçak party. Zafer Toprak attributes this to his passion for the French Revolution. (Toprak, 1989, p. 5) The anecdote from one of Kelekyan's students, which Toprak quotes, gives some clue about his position between Ottomanism and Armenian nationalism. It is stated that despite being an Armenian nationalist, he encouraged his students for the *millet* (Ottoman nation) and had some statements on behalf of Turkishness. (Toprak, 1989, p. 1)

This dual position points out the diversity in the Ottoman society, in terms of nationalism and Ottomanism, as well. As stated above, the reflection of those ideologies was different for each group in the empire. The original ideology of Meşrutiyet seems to have been adopted by Armenians more than Turks, especially after the Balkan wars. As indicated while referring to Odyan, the number of literary works using pro-Young Turk and anti-Abdülhamid ideas seems to have decreased, but Odyan used it in a considerably later period. Parallel to this, the other intellectuals seem to have continued expressing these conflicts. Kelekyan is one of them.

On 25 April 1915, an article of his was published in *Sabah* about the memorial day of the "martyrs of freedom", i.e. constitution. (Kelekyan, 1915) The date of the article is significant because he was arrested for exile on 24 April, and it was probably

his last article in *Sabah* before the events resulting in death of many Armenian intellectuals, including him. This article all by itself points out his commitment to Ottoman society. In addition to this, he participated in the protest against the Balkan revolt in 1912. He promoted the war both in his articles and speeches, and expressed that the Ottoman Empire should use this chance to realize its goals in the Balkans. (İzrail, 2013b, p. 26) Kılıçdağı states in his thesis that Ottomanism was prominent in the Armenian newspapers he analyzed, with two factors; wars and elections. The Ottomanist discourse rose with wars “because such threats placed under risk the security and stability of Ottoman politics, and accordingly the reformation of the country in a safe, peaceful, and democratic manner. Therefore, the Armenians made calls to all communities of the Empire to cooperate for the protection of the borders since this would be the way to also protect the revolution and the constitution.” (2014, p. 195) He emphasizes that when Italy attacked Tripoli in 1911, “the commentators in the Anatolian Armenian press responded to this attack by again emphasizing the importance of harmony and cooperation of the Ottoman communities to be able to resist such offences.” (p. 196) So, the reaction of Kelekyan can be considered in a similar context.

Considering his career, he was one of the mediator figures of the period, just like Zohrab. His Turkish was very fluent. He was translating from Armenian to Turkish and vice versa for the newspapers. His attempt to translate Zohrab’s book is quite important. It was one of the few meeting points for Armenian- and Turkish-speaking communities, especially in the field of literature. Kelekyan was very much aware of this. In the preface of the translation, he states how important this translation was. He points out the role of literature in the improvement of the inter-communal relations as follows; “In the time when we are sometimes curious about even the literature of countries that are far away such as Japan and China as well as the European nations, being unaware of the literature of the elements of the Ottoman such as Armenian, Greek and Bulgarian naturally causes unfamiliarity; getting to know each other among the elements becomes possible by being entirely aware of social and cultural occasions, there is no doubt that in our time literature is one of the major ways to introduce a nation in terms of culture.”<sup>43</sup> (p.13) Although the interest in the literatures of various

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<sup>43</sup> “Avrupa milletlerinden başka, Japonya ve Çin gibi memalik-i baide edebiyatına bile ara sıra merak ettiğimiz şu zamanda, Ermeni, Rum, Bulgar gibi anasır-ı Osmaniye’nin edebiyat-ı hazırasına adem-i vukuf tabiidir ki yabancılık tevlid eder; anasır arasında tanışmak, bilcümle ahval-i içtimaiye ve

nations and countries was rising day by day, there were still a kind of unfamiliarity among the elements of the Ottoman Empire. For Kelekyan, this was a major problem and needed to be taken care of as soon as possible. So he translated this book with this kind of mentality. Certainly, Zohrab was not a random preference for this “project”. While there were more successful Armenian writers, choosing Zohrab was likely related to his political position. In the later paragraphs of the same text, Kelekyan states that starting with the announcement of the constitution, there were many translations from Turkish to Armenian. On the other hand, there were no translations to Turkish and he perceived this as a mistake. So this book was published to correct that.

To summarize, I should state that *Hayat Olduğu Gibi* should be considered as an attempt not only to introduce Armenian literature, but also a figure like Zohrab and the daily struggles of a community. Regarding the main themes of the stories, they problematize more or less the same issues with Turkish literature. The existence of this translation implies an effort to unite the two communities by showing that they have similar concerns.

Considering the notions that were discussed in the introduction and first chapter, the argument about this book becomes stronger. The discourse of fraternity, harmony among citizens and being a part of Ottoman nation was the ideal of the constitutional regime at the beginning. However the emphasis on these decreased through the end of the period. The date of the translations coincides with the emergence of Turkish nationalism, which blocked the way for social reconciliation to a large extent. So Kelekyan’s translation as well as the other two cases discussed in this chapter should be interpreted as a precaution against the rupture of inter-ethnic relations.

#### **4.3. A Belated Effort: *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri***

Between November 1912 and March 1913 fourteen short stories written by eight Armenian writers were published in the *Servet-i Fünun* magazine. The magazine had been in print since 1891, and had published many literary translations from various languages like French, English and Russian. What gives these short stories significance? Because these were the only translations from Armenian to Turkish in

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medeniyyeye vukufıya olur; şüphe yok ki zamanımızda bir kavmi tanıtacak halat-ı medeniyyenin başlıcalarından bir edebiyattır (...)

*Servet-i Fünun* and, most probably, in any Turkish publication of the period. So this should be regarded as an attempt to introduce Armenian literature to Turkish readers. In the following months, the translator, Sarkis Srents, collected the short stories into a book, including four letters from the four famous writers. (Preface, p. 14) Just like *Hayat Olduğu Gibi, Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri* was published by the Ahmet İhsan ve Şürekası printing house, which was also the head office of the *Servet-i Fünun* magazine.

The stories in the book describe the daily life of Armenians. Most of them take place around Istanbul. The adventures of a thief and the miseries of a poor maid, a *hamal* and even a street dog are narrated. Some of them focus on more abstract concepts like Zartaryan's "Yedi Ozanlar" and Avedik İsağhyan's "Buddha". In addition to the stories, Srents included the biographies of the writers and four commentary letters from important Armenian and Turkish intellectuals of the period.

Similar to the previously discussed books, *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri* is one of the rare examples of this kind of interaction in the literary area between the Armenian and Turkish press. I prefer perceiving these translations as a project to unite the two communities in the literary area, and Sarkis Srents as the initiator of it. The writers of the commentary letters included in the book should be counted as the other actors of this project. So this "project" is especially important to get an alternative perspective on the inter-communal relations in the period. To have a better understanding of this, I think the political and social background of those actors should be considered.

Sarkis Srents (Sarkis Hovhannes Kılıçyan) got his primary education in Tekirdağ and continued in Nice College, in the pedagogy department. When he was a student his teachers encouraged him to change his surname to "Srents" which is Armenian version of the Turkish-derived name "Kılıçyan". During the 1890's he participated in the Hay Heğapokhagan Taşnaksudyun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation). After returning from France, he continued his life as a teacher in Tekirdağ, Edirne and Malkara, until the proclamation of the Second Constitution in 1908. He lived in Istanbul after 1909 as a teacher. Between 1914 and 1915 he served as a deputy for a short period. He escaped from arrest in 1915 and lived in Konya for a few years. He returned to Istanbul in 1918 and lived there most of his life and died in 1955, in Bucharest. (Srents, 2013, pp. 7-9)

During his time in Istanbul between 1913 and 1915, while he was translating the *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri*, his translations from Turkish to Armenian were also being published in the *Azadamard* newspaper. He was translating important articles in the newspaper to Ottoman Turkish, writing about situation of Turkey and publishing some articles under the pseudonym “Dzerugi” (old man). (p. 9)

His career as a translator put him in the position of mediator between Armenian and Turkish readers. Translations from Armenian to Turkish were especially important. As mentioned before, the Armenians in the empire were familiar with Turkish, though it is hard to say how much they read Turkish publishing. This was mostly due to the language policies in the schools. However, the Turkish population did not understand Armenian. So these kinds of translations were the only chance for them to get to know Armenian literature. Srents can be considered as Armenian nationalist, with reference to his participation in Tashnaksudyun. However, he believed in the importance of *fraternity* between the communities. This implies his position in-between Armenian nationalism and Ottomanism. Nesim Ovadya İzrail (2013b, p. ?) claims that Srents regarded literature as an important agent for connecting Turkish and Armenian societies. İzrail did not give reference to any of his works, and Srents did not add any preface to the book in his own words. Nevertheless, this is not unsurprising considering his effort for translations and the theme of the reviews he included.

The reviews were written by Abdullah Cevdet, Harutyun Şahrigyan, Süleyman Nazif and Şahabettin Süleyman. They basically consisted of some commentaries about the stories after they were published in *Servet-i Fünun* and Srents included them in *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri*. As far as understood from their form and the manner, they were written as letters to Srents. He translated and published Şahabettin Süleyman’s and Abdullah Cevdet’s letters in the *Azadamard* newspaper, which was one of the most important Armenian media organs. There were two main themes in the letters; the unawareness of the Turkish population about Armenian literature and the hope that these stories would strengthen the bond between the two communities, which are very similar to the themes and fundamental motives of the previously mentioned translations.

The three Turkish writers, who were prominent figures of the period in the intellectual sphere, stated that they had been unaware of Armenian literature before reading those stories. The title of the book also implies this situation. “Numune” means



“sample”, which is small part or quantity intended to express what the whole is like. So the title preference was also made with this intention of introducing Armenian literature.

By all appearances, those samples made perfect sense, at least for some intellectuals. Süleyman Nazif’s letter begins with these words; "I will not be able to confess without blush as an Ottoman Turk and a son of this land: Until you translate and publish examples from the Armenian Literature in *Servet-i Fünun*, like many people of my race, I, was unaware of the Armenian Literature.”<sup>44</sup> (p. 21). About the writers of the stories, Süleyman Nazif especially emphasizes Krikor Zohrab. He admits that he had known Zohrab as a politician before, but that he had been unaware of his literary identity. This is quite interesting because Süleyman Nazif was active in both the political and literary areas; Zohrab was popular in both areas too. So either Süleyman Nazif was exaggerating, or they had really limited mutual grounds at that time. The former is more unlikely, because the owners of the other letters make similar statements. Şehabettin Süleyman concludes his words with “You led us to an unknown new world, which has always been nearby without us realizing it. It is necessary to shake hands with you and kiss your hands for this.”<sup>45</sup> Just like Süleyman Nazif, Şehabettin Süleyman was also a writer and a member of a political party, the Osmanlı Demokrat Fırkası. So this is very strange that they did not have any knowledge, or interest, about the literature of this nation nearby them.

All three Turkish writers had an Ottomanist background. In Süleyman Nazif’s point of view, the only way for the survival of the state was adopting Ottomanism. Starting with the 1908 constitution, he expressed his opinion via various mediums, and this created opposition with the Turkists. In an article dated 1909, he stated that the Ottoman Empire gained its strength from the elements of these lands (Anatolia) and highlighted the majority of Christian soldiers in the army during the invasion of Wien and Tabriz.<sup>46</sup> (Gür, 1992, p. 345) He repeated these kinds of statements in various articles in the same year. He represented his opinion of the people in the empire as

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<sup>44</sup> “Bir Osmanlı Türkü ve bu toprağın evladı sıfatıyla yüzüm kızarmadan itiraf edemeyeceğim: Siz, *Servet-i Fünun*’da Ermeni Edebiyatı’ndan numuneler çevirip yayınlayana kadar, ben, birçok ırkdaşım gibi, Ermeni Edebiyatı’ndan habersizdim”

<sup>45</sup> “Siz bize, yanımızda olmkala beraber bilinmeyen bir dünya açtınız. Bunun için ellerinizi sıkamak, öpmek lazımdır.”

<sup>46</sup> “Devr-i istilamızda Osmanı bayrağını Viyana ve Tebriz surlarının piş ü balasına temevvüç ettiren güzide askerlerimiz, yeniçerilerimiz ekseriyetle Hristiyan evladından müteşekkil idi.” (“İstiklal-i Osmani”, *Yeni Gazete*, nr. 159, 28 Kanun-ı Sani 1325/1909)

follows; “We, Ottomans are composed of different nations and elements and a single body.”<sup>47</sup> (Gür, 1992, p. 347)

These expressions are from the newspapers and magazines of 1909. It is repeatedly stated in this thesis that the ideological transformations in the period between 1908 and 1914 were highly complicated and unsteady. So, one should not try to estimate the political positioning of a figure by his expressions in only one year. Instead, it is required to try to see the possible alterations through the period. In *Makale ve Mektuplarına Göre Süleyman Nazif*, Muhammed Gür states that Süleyman Nazif’s Ottomanist attitude continues in the articles of 1911. In his article titled “Ebedi Bir Ahenk”, published in *Tanin*, he stated that “I am among those who believe that there needs to be a sincere connection to put an end to the race and sect controversy among the different elements that compose Ottoman Empire.”<sup>48</sup> (Gür, 1992, p. 351) His debate with Turkists continued in 1912. He regarded the pursuit of national unity in Turkist ideology as imaginary and inconsistent. (p. 351) It is stated by Gür that with the start of the Balkan Wars, his position was inclined slightly to a more Islamist one, but the Ottomanist discourse continued, although not as strong as it used to be. In 1913, he faced another debate on language with Turkists, and indicated the differences between other Turkic nations, such as Mongolians and Tatars. He said there was a special nationality they have, and it was Ottoman (Gür, 1992, p. 355).

Abdullah Cevdet adopted a similar mentality. Although he was one of the founders of the CUP, he fell out with them. He established the *Osmanlı Demokrat Fırkası*. In the house regulations of the party, the first article consisted of the protection of all Ottoman elements, regardless of ethnicity and religion. (Kaya, 2011, p.115). Therefore, it is easy to claim that Abdullah Cevdet was also an Ottomanist. Another point to promote this argument is his articles before and after 1908. In one of them, dated 1907, he says, “Citizens! Turkey belongs to Turks. The citizens in Turkey definitely have the same rights and liberty. No element, for example Armenian to Turk, Turk to Arab or Arab to Albanian has a supremacy over the other.”<sup>49</sup> (Hanioglu, p. 217) Hanioglu states that his Ottomanist position remained until the *mütareke* years.

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<sup>47</sup> Biz Osmanlılar, akvam ve anasır-ı muhtelifeden müteşekkil ve yek vücut bir heyetiz.”

<sup>48</sup> “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunu terkib eden anasır-ı muhtelif arasında ırk ü mezhep ihtilafatını müebbeden iskat edebilecek bir irtibat-ı samimiyyenin vücub-ı vücuduna iman edenlerdenim.”

<sup>49</sup> “Vatandaşlar! Türkiye Türkiyalıdır. Türkiye vatandaşları katıyyen aynı hukuk ve hürriyete maliktir. Hiçbir unsurun mesela Ermeninin Türk’e, Türk’ün Arab’a, Arab’ın Arnavud’a hiçbir tefazülü yoktur.”

(p. 315) He was also a supporter of the preservation of the dissimilarities among elements, and opposed to the Ottomanists, who argued that the union of the elements required the union of culture, religion and language as follows; “The assumption that using a single language, applying a single law and using a single treat for the unity of the elements in empires that are composed of different elements is false. The unity of elements means in the unity of interests.”<sup>50</sup>(Hanioglu, p. 317)

Şahabettin Süleyman was firstly interested in politics after the announcement of the constitution. He opposed the CUP and became a member of the *Osmanlı Demokrat Fırkası*. As mentioned while giving information on Abdullah Cevdet, this party was in favor of Ottomanism.

This implies that all three Turkish intellectuals adopted similar positions about the situation of the elements of the empire. So while discussing the complexity of ideological positions about inter-ethnic relations, it is not categorized as rising Turkish nationalism and the reactions of only Armenians to it. Surely the main actors are Armenian writers and translators, but these Turkish intellectuals represent that the intentions of them corresponded with at least someone from the Turkish side. This fact is also visible in *Takriz* letters, not only them but also the letter of Harutyun Şahrigyan. They state their expectations for the peace among the elements and hopes that this kind of translations will construct good relations between them. Especially Abdullah Cevdet and Şehabettin Süleyman emphasized this.

Abdullah Cevdet begins his letter with a quote from Emerson; “Who understands me, becomes mine, a possession for all time.” He adds, “Beni seven beni anlar, sevmek için anlamak lazımdır” (Who loves me, understands me. To understand is essential for love.) He regards literature as a means for the communities to understand each other and states his wishes that these translations will make it possible to understand “Armenian citizens” and built closer relationships. In the last part, he tries to prevent a possible rivalry and advises Turkish youth to read them without giving way to greed or pride.

Harutyun Şahrigyan refers to the same quote of Emerson and states only if the Turkish nation has a pure version of nationalism will they be able to understand the Armenian nation and thus give them the right to live. He expresses his expectation that

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<sup>50</sup> Muhtelif unsurlardan müteşekkil imparatorluklarda bu unsurların ittihadı yolu münferid bir lisanın, münferid bir kanunun, münferid bir tarz-ı muamelenin isti'mal ve tatbiki olduğu zehabı, zehab-ı batıldır... Tevhid-i anasır, tevhid-i menafiden ibarettir.”

these translations will serve this purpose and the two nations will work together. These expressions display the difference between the understanding of nationalism by the Turks and Armenians.

While he lays emphasis on nationalism and almost claims that it is the only way for Turks to understand Armenians better, the Turkish writers Abdullah Cevdet, Süleyman Nazif and Şahabettin Süleyman never make reference to that. Considering the three books mentioned in this thesis, the Ottomanist attitude is observed for most of the writers, including the translators and the Takriz writers. However, nationalism is only observed in Armenians. This implies a diversity about the perceptions of Turks and Armenians on the notions of nationalism and Ottomanism. On this point, it is required to mention Armenian nationalism during that period. Kılıçdağı discusses this issue in his PhD thesis, *Socio-Political Reflections and Expectations of the Ottoman Armenians After the 1908 Revolution: Between Hope and Despair*. He states that being Armenian and Ottoman at the same time is not a contradiction. “One did not have to sacrifice his Armenianness to be Ottoman; he could be both *simultaneously and equally*.” (p. 210) After the CUP’s attempt to make Turkish mandatory in schools and public offices, an Armenian deputy Vartkes Serengulian stated; “(w)e are Ottomans not Turks. The official language is Turkish. Therefore, an Armenian speaks Turkish in his official affairs. But he does not forget his Armenianness and the Armenian language. If we want to develop national sovereignty in the constitutional regime we should recognize the right of every [ethnic] element”. (Avagyan and Minassian, 2005, pp. 55, 56. ) So these translations correspond to the argument of Kılıçdağı, implying diversity among the communities on the notions of nationality and Ottomanism.

The initial sentences of Şahabettin Süleyman are on the unpleasant events that had occurred in the previous years and which affected multi-ethnic relations, thanking Srents for trying to make the two communities familiar again. He stated that he regarded Armenians as more close to himself than Arabs, despite the religion, because of their common culture, language, habits, etc. In his point of view, this book served the Ottoman nation by creating a bridge between two communities. After this introduction, he referred to the stories of Zartaryan and Zabel Asadur. He stated that Zartaryan was a source of pride for all Eastern nations. By these stories, an artistic boundary with Armenian nation is created, in addition to innate and traditional boundaries, as he states.

Not only appreciations but also some criticisms were included in the letters. In the last part of his letter Süleyman Nazif criticizes Sarkis Srents for not giving detailed information about the historical and current phases of Armenian literature. By the questions like “Who and what has carried your language throughout the floods in all those centuries? And what are the gifts of all these centuries to the language? Have you got people like Fuzuli, Nef’i, Veysi or Nergisi?”<sup>51</sup> He directs his curiosity about the correlations between the two literatures. He suggests that if there is an intention of completing this “beauty” he has to present this kind of information. Şahrigyan also criticizes him for not including the 19<sup>th</sup>-century writers. According to him, that could help “Turkish citizens” to have a better understanding of what kind of a national spirit created these masterpieces.

The emphasis on notions like common motherland, unity, fraternity and intimacy among two nations is remarkable. After presenting his appreciations to Srents, Süleyman Nazif states that “... I am of the opinion that today there is a rich and rooted Armenian Literature. I feel proud for my country” (p. 22)<sup>52</sup>. Şahabettin Süleyman thanks Srents for uniting the two Ottoman communities and regards this kind of approach as a duty for the country. Harutyun Şahrigyan also emphasizes their common motherland, and expresses his wishes for this translations to serve the unity and fraternity among Turks and Armenians.

The emphasis on the notion of motherland and shared country is reminiscent of the discussions in the introduction and chapter three about the similar concepts. It was stated that in the first years of the constitution, the motherland notion was a part of the discourse of solidarity. Bekir Fahri’s emphasis in *Jönler* and Emine Semiye’s articles “Anadolulu Kız Kardeşlerime” were stated as the examples of the usage of Anatolia as a common motherland for all nations. However, as indicated while discussing *Anadolu’da Tanin*, acceptance of Armenians and other non-Muslim elements as *hemşehri* (countrymen) had disappeared, at least in Ahmet Şerif’s perception. So the emphasis these intellectuals made about motherland has specific importance for contradicting the atmosphere *Anadolu’da Tanin* offered and bringing out that notion.

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<sup>51</sup> “Dilinizi asırların selleri arasında kimler ve neler taşıdı? Ve bu dile asırların hediyeleri nelerdir? Fuzuli’niz, Nef’i’niz, Veysi’niz, Nergisi’niz oldu mu?”

<sup>52</sup> “...kani oldum ki bugün tamamıyla teessüs etmiş zengin bir Ermeni edebiyatı vardır. Vatanım adına iftihar ederim.”

The translator, the writers, the commentary letters and the magazine it was published in are each individually important. All actors of this “project book” imply an alternative way of understanding of the period. This translation made many interactions possible. The most important one is the correlative translations in *Azadamard* and *Servet-i Fünun*. This is most probably the one and only ground where the press and the writers of the two communities came together.

The short stories do not contain any reference to the politics or any contradictive subjects, but mostly mention daily issues, as in *Hayat Olduğu Gibi*. This preference indicates a purpose of contributing to the normalization of the relations among two nations. What confirms this argument is the preference of the writers included in the book. Krikor Zohrab is already mentioned as a mediator figure for the Ottoman society. The other writers are not very different from him. For example, Rupen Zartaryan was translating Turkish stories and the poems of prominent figures of Turkish literature. İzrail (2014b) and Koptaş (*Agos*, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2008) interpret this attempt as an expression of his idea that the intellectuals of two communities should come together to construct a harmony among them.

Zabel Yeseyan is another writer to mention here. She was important in terms of her ideological positioning. She was emphasizing the importance of a common spirit among nations and social harmony. (Ekmekçioğlu and Bilal, 2006, pp. 216-218) She expresses her ideas on nationalism in *Yıkıntılar Arasında* in which she wrote about the Adana incidents as follows: “I would like my readers to know that my impressions are not softened by a certain political inclination or are furious with nationalistic prejudices (...) or fed with racial hatred. (...) So that it is remembered that words uttered in these pages are feelings (sometimes pain, sometimes anxiety, sometimes grief, sometimes despair) resulting from humane worries.”<sup>53</sup>(as cited in Ekmekçioğlu and Bilal, 2006, p. 189)”

Compared to Yeseyan and Zohrab, Zabel Asadur was closer to nationalist discourse. She founded the Nationalist Armenian Women Association (*Azkanıver Hayuhyats Ingerutyun*). The main purpose of the association was opening schools for Armenian girls in rural areas. It is stated that the reason behind this purpose was

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<sup>53</sup> “Okurlarım, izlenimlerimin ne belli bir siyasi eğilimle yumuşatıldığını, ne milliyetçi önyargılarla hiddetlendiğini (...) ne de ırkçı nefretle yoğrulduğunu bilmesini isterim. (...) Bu sayfalarda dillendirilenlerin yalnızca insani kaygılardan ileri gelen duygular, bazen acı, bazen kaygı, bazen keder, bazen ümitsizlik olduğunu hatırlansın diye...”

planting the sense of national identity in rural areas. (Ekmekçioğlu and Bilal, 2006, p. 10) However, her nationalism does not exclude the Ottoman Empire as a state. In one of her articles, titled “Milletperver Kadınlar” (Ekmekçioğlu and Bilal, 2006, p. 153), she expresses her sympathy for the constitutional regime and says “we are opening a new page of history with the protection of Constitution regime”.

So, most of the writers in this collection were from a similar ideological background. Their emphasis on unity and social harmony, as well as their inclination toward Ottomanism, corroborate my argument that this was a project book to build a bridge between two nations.

After the 1908 constitution, there was a remarkable increase in inter-communal interactions. I have analyzed the only three literary translations from Armenian to Turkish. Considering the number of publications and those interactions, I should admit that I was expecting to discover more interactions in the literary area. Still these books open another window into the constitutional period in terms of literature, social relations and ideologies.

Odyan’s novels were analyzed considering the themes that were used and the connotations of them. It was stated that Odyan’s novels were a part of a project to create an inter-ethnic public sphere around the themes of “evil *ancién regime*” and “joyful atmosphere of constitution”. Odyan’s case can be summarized as an attempt to make the people of two communities remember their common points, which occurred with the constitution. So it should be interpreted as an attempt to reunite them. Moreover, it was propagandizing the opposition against the *ancién regime*.

Speaking of the other two books, they are also an attempt to unite around something, but I think it is not an already existing theme as in Odyan’s. They are more like a result of a motive to explain the Armenian community to the Turkish reader, in order to create a medium for communication. Krikor Zohrab is an important figure of the period. He represents the ideal modern Ottoman citizen. As stated before, Zohrab was a prominent and famous character in the parliament, but his literary identity was not known by the Turkish reader. The preference of the translator implies an intention beyond introducing a literature, but introducing Zohrab. Kelekyan was also an important figure as a translator in terms of creating interactions between the communities. *Ermeni Edebiyatı Numuneleri* has similar aspects, as well. What makes it more interesting is the *takriz* letters and the connection it made possible between *Azadamard* and *Servet-i Fünun*.

As indicated before, the period after the constitution involves many social turning points. Beginning with the announcement of the constitution, there were many events that affected the relations among elements, including Adana incidents, Italy's invasion of Tripoli, the Balkan Wars, the start of WWI and eventually the incidents of 1915. In the previous chapter those transformations were analyzed from the perspective of a Turkish journalist who was close to the CUP. In this chapter, I tried to examine the other side of the story and see the perception of Ottomanism in the Armenian community. The books that are analyzed are unique in that they are the only translations from Armenian to Turkish in that period. This makes their position very important, because by analyzing them, I saw that there is not one single story about the Ottomanism-nationalism transformation, but different people from different ethnicities and ideologies had distinct perceptions on it. Strauss used the notion of terra incognita (undiscovered lands) to describe the situation of minority literature in Turkish perspective. These translations should be considered as an attempt to make Turkish readers discover those lands. (Strauss, 2014, p. 40)



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this thesis is to present an alternative perspective to the current history researches on the relations between Armenians and Turks in the period from the announcement of the Constitution in 1908 to 1914. With the outbreak of WWI in 1914, the empire faced drastic changes at both the political and the social level, like many other empires and nations at the time. The six-year period before these was an exceptional time in the history of the Ottoman Empire. The constitution promised a more democratic and peaceful country. The concept of the Ottoman nation was not something new at that time, but it began to be promoted more than ever. A new form of Ottoman public sphere was being formed around the discourse of brotherhood. Efforts were made to unite people from all ethnicities and religions under the title of the Ottoman nation. In this thesis, I have aimed to present how this environment was reflected in the cultural area with a focus on two specific cases.

I do not claim to have presented a general overview of the Ottoman cultural field. In accordance with the nature of empires, the Ottoman Empire was extremely rich in terms of cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages. This is one of the aspects that make the field interesting, but this plurality makes it incredibly complex as well. For this reason, I have chosen two examples which are just some pieces of the big picture.

These cases were analyzed with respective methods and the purpose of the thesis is clarified, but I want to answer some possible questions which may be directed to this research. First of all *Anadolu'da Tanin* and the translations seem to be unrelated both in terms of their genres and the purpose behind their publication. Nevertheless, they complete and correspond with each other when one considers the basic notions these texts are referring to. Both cases indicate a similar public area where Armenians and Turks came side by side. These cases constitute two distinct meeting areas which contribute to the mutual public sphere through the notions of fraternity, social harmony, resemblance, homeland/Anatolia. *Anadolu'da Tanin* is the only source I come across which depicts the social relations among ethno-religious elements to such an extent. The influence of the dominant discourse and the writer's connections with CUP can not be ignored, certainly. However, his letters constitute an area of encounter on their

own, as a contribution to the public sphere of the period. The translations, on the other hand, serves for a similar purpose as the first translation attempt from Armenian to Turkish.

In both cases the intended group is Turks, or rather Turkish speaking community. This fact also may bring about some questions. One of the points this situation may be associated with is the hierarchical positioning among the citizens. Muslim group have had superiority among the non-Muslims for a long time in Ottoman history. There have been attempts toward equality beginning with mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, but the latter was still in the minority and the influence of that hierarchy was still felt. This situation may bring out an imparity for the text-audience dynamics. *Anadolu'da Tanin* was written by a Turkish writer and addressed to Turkish speaking community. As for the translations, the addressed population is the same, but the producers (writers and translators) are Armenians. The answer to this situation is the fact that these cases were interpreted as the areas of encounter, rather than the texts of representation for Turks or Armenians, as stated in the introduction as well. Therefore this is about a matter beyond the argument of this thesis. Nevertheless, I think the reason behind this translation movement is related with these social dynamics. So in my opinion, this was an attempt of express and explain oneself on the eve of WW1 and 1915. Still, in order that this idea turn into an argument, it is necessary to look up the counterparts of these in Armenian.

During the writing process, one of the main difficulties I faced was how to classify social groups like Armenians and Turks or Muslims and non-Muslims. In other words, it was hard to differentiate between ethnic and religious groups. Initially, I decided to write about Muslim/non-Muslim relations. However, as the research progressed, I realized that the sides pictured in the cases I dealt with was basically Armenians and Turks. On the other hand, it was not very clear for each case. The translations were easier to handle. The writers and translators were Armenians and they regarded Turks as their audience. The case of *Anadolu'da Tanin* was more challenging. The writer clearly classifies people as “us” and “them,” as seen in chapter three. Despite the non-separatist attitude he adopted in the first group of notes, the “I-Other” relation was obvious in his tone. However, the question of who “us” and “them” were remained a blurred area. He generally regarded non-Muslims as a monolithic group, as long as there was not a specific situation concerning a particular ethnic group. The fact that in most of the areas he traveled the major “non-Turk” group was

Armenians, as seen in the censuses helped me to choose a position. Thus, I counted his general statements about non-Muslims as referring to Armenians so long as there was not any information to the contrary. I also put special emphasis on the parts that were directly about the Armenian community, such as the Adana incident, Armenian schools, etc.

There are very few sources available, especially in literary sphere that allow modern researchers to examine the connections that existed between Turks and Armenians a century ago. The issue of language is one of the basic reasons for this. Still, there are a number of sources which could contribute to this subject that I encountered but was unable to include in this thesis. One of them is Yorgaki Ephiminiades's magazine *Ciddiyet-Eilikrineira*. It was simultaneously published in Armenian, Greek, French, and Turkish. The purpose of the magazine was uniting those nations around humor, as stated by Strauss (2014, p.49). Due to the nature of humor, this magazine has the potential to offer important clues about the mutual values shared by all the various diverse groups of Ottoman society. Another source I want to mention here is *Orvan Mdadzumner* (Daily Reflections), which consists of Misak Koçunyan's articles published in the *Jamanak* newspaper from 1908 to 1913. It was published in Armenian by *Jamanak*, and it is about to be published in Turkish as well. I did not have the opportunity to write about these sources in this thesis but I believe they may help future researchers in the field.

I believe, these, and many possible sources waiting to be discovered in the archives will help us to gain a more objective perspective about the period. In this thesis I tried to propose some answer to the questions, such as; Is it possible to tell an alternative story about the late Ottoman society? How significantly did the Constitutional reforms impact the cultural sphere? Did they have any influence on the relations between Armenians and Turks? How did the rise of Turkish nationalism affect the "brotherhood" discourse which was very popular in the first phase of the period? These and other questions that I tried to answer in this thesis may contribute to the research in this field by helping to fill some of the gaps in our knowledge of the late Ottoman cultural field. However, much remains to be done in the exploration of this rich and varied field. Language has been a serious barrier for me. It is certain that the researchers who understand Armenian, Greek, Jewish, and other languages of the empire will come across many interesting connections among the different ethno-religious groups of the Ottoman Empire.

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