

A SPANISH GAZE:
VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ'S *ORIENTE* (1907)

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ABSTRACT

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There were many Anglo-Saxon travelers on the Ottoman lands however the Spaniards remained limited between 18th and 20th centuries. Vicente Blasco Ibañez was a Spanish traveler who visited Istanbul in 1907 and captured his experiences in a travel account named *Oriente* (Orient) which was published in the same year. This study explores the travel and travel account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez with regard to the image of the Turks. In order to understand Ibañez's account it is necessary to understand the 19th century Spanish travel writing literature, Spain and the relations between the Spanish and the Ottoman Empires at the turn of the 20th century. The present thesis proposes that Spain and Vicente Blasco Ibañez in particular were peculiar cases. Historically Spain had a different place among the European states as an empire and as a people which at certain points posed similarities to the Ottoman Empire. Vicente Blasco Ibañez's perspective on the Turks reveals that he was also different from other Spanish travelers who traveled to the 'Orient'. The present thesis argues that apart from the colorful life of Vicente Blasco Ibañez factors such as Spain's familiarity with Islam, Spain's position within Europe, the crisis of identity in 1898 and the Spanish Orientalism in relation to the crisis were influential in the formation of Blasco Ibañez's Spanish gaze. In this context, the study tries to analyze various images and the discourse in the travel account and identify their connection with writer's motivations.

ÖZET

BİR İSPANYOL BAKIŞ AÇISI: VICENTE BLASCO İBAÑEZ'İN *ORIENTE'Sİ* (1907)

Zeynep Çetrez

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Vicente Blasco Ibañez, İspanyol Oryantalizmi, 19. Yüzyıl İspanyol Seyahatnameleri, Türklük algısı

Osmanlı topraklarını 18. ve 20.yüzyıllar arasında ziyaret eden pek çok Anglo-Sakson kökenli seyyah olmakla beraber İspanyol seyyahların sayısı daha kısıtlı kalmıştır. Bu araştırma İspanyol Vicente Blasco Ibañez'in 1907'de İstanbul'a yaptığı seyahati ve aynı yıl yayınladığı *Oriente* isimli seyahatnamesini özellikle Türkleri algılayışı açısından incelemektedir. Vicente Blasco Ibañez'in seyahatnamesini inceleyebilmek için 19. yüzyıl İspanyol seyahat yazını, 19. yüzyıl bitimindeki İspanya'yı ve Osmanlı-İspanya ilişkilerini anlamak gerekmektedir. Bu tez İspanya'nın diğer Avrupa devletleri tarafından farklı algılanmasından ve Vicente Blasco Ibañez'in bulunduğu dönem içinde kendine özgü durumundan yola çıkmaktadır. İspanya tarihsel olarak diğer Avrupa İmparatorlukları ve halklarına göre farklı tecrübeler yaşamış ve bu tecrübeler bazı noktalarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile benzerlikler göstermektedir. Vicente Blasco Ibañez'in Türklere bakış açısı da onu doğuya seyahat eden diğer İspanyol seyyahlardan farklı bir yere koymaktadır. Bu çalışma, bu bakış açısının oluşmasında Vicente Blasco Ibañez'in renkli yaşantısı kadar İspanya'nın Müslüman kültür ile tanışıklığı, İspanya'nın Avrupa içindeki yeri, 1898 sonrasındaki kimlik bunalımı ile bununla ilintili olarak İspanyol Oryantalizminin de etkisi olduğunu savunmaktadır. Araştırma bu bağlamda, Vicente Blasco Ibañez'in seyahatnamesindeki çeşitli imge ve söylemleri analiz etmeye ve yazarın bakış açısına sebep olan etkenler ile bağlantısını incelemeye çalışmaktadır.

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The library of Instituto Cervantes deserves a special mention in this research. As most of the sources on the subject matter were in Spanish, they answered my endless demands. I would like to thank Ana Roca Gadea and her staff who did their utmost to provide the necessary sources through the network of Instituto Cervantes.

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

All translations from in this work are mine, unless otherwise noted.

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INTRODUCTION

The interest and publications about Spain remained limited in the Ottoman realm. The interest was generally geared towards the mythical Muslim Andalusia. Ziya Paşa translated Viardot's history of Andalusia into Turkish, *Endülüs Tarihi*, and published it in 1859 in four volumes. Later Namık Kemal wrote treatises about the Andalusian Empire. Abdülhak Hamid [Tarhan] wrote a play about it *Tarık yahud Endülüs Fethi* (published in Istanbul in 1879). More works were written and translated from French into Turkish in the first decades of the 20th century such as Chateaubriand's *The Adventures of the Last Abencerage*. Despite the existence of several works about the Muslim heritage in Andalusia, Yahya Kemal Beyatlı¹ was probably the one who popularized Spain in our mental maps at the beginning of 20th century. He captivated the exotic images of Andalusian Spain in his famous verse *Endülüs'te Raks* (Dance in Andalusia) that materialized the vision of Spain in the minds of many Turks even today: castanets, shawl, rose, "Ole!" In his articles he referred to the Muslim past of Spain as well as its modernization² in which he found parallels with the Ottoman history. One of the points Yahya Kemal found similar was the state of limbo both Turkey and Spain experienced with the change of regime.³ He sympathized with the plight of Andalusia in Moorish Spain and likened it to the situation of the disintegrated Ottoman Empire.⁴

Vicente Blasco Ibañez like Yahya Kemal was sympathizing with the rulers of a disintegrating empire as he visited Istanbul. He captured his thoughts and experiences in a travel account which is a witness of his time with all its vivid descriptions. Blasco Ibañez's journey on train began in Vichy and passed through Central Europe before he

¹ Mehmet Necati Kutlu, "Yahya Kemal'in Eserlerinde İspanya ve İspanyollar." *İspanya-Türkiye, 16. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Rekabet ve Dostluk*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006. 341-350. Yahya Kemal was one of the prominent poets of the early Republican era and served as a Turkish diplomat in Madrid between the years 1928-1932.(p.343)

² Yahya Kemal, *Eğil Dağlar: İstiklal Harbi yazıları* . Istanbul: Istanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 1966., p. 251

³ Ibid., p.49

⁴ Ibid., p.165

reached Istanbul in 1907. He was a prominent political and a literary figure in Spain at the turn of the 20th century. The turn of the century was a critical period for both the Ottoman and the Spanish Empires in the face of modernity. His account is not only instrumental to document the Ottoman Empire and its capital at the time – keeping in mind the limitations of the genre- but also important to understand the motivations behind his perceptions.

Despite their claim for subjectivity, travel accounts reveal many things about the mental map of the traveler as well as destination. When the narrator intends to represent a new culture, actually he/she is at the same time revealing about him/herself. The revelation is never only about the individual but is also indicative of a given period and a culture. In that respect although printed travel accounts are meant to be shared with the masses I still find something intimate in them.

The lure of the Orient attracted many travelers from Britain and France in the 19th century. The Spanish travelers to the Ottoman Empire remained limited which was probably related with the fact that diplomatic relations were established relatively later, at the end of the 18th century. Nonetheless for most of them the trip was not a pleasure cruise but rather a means to an end. David Spurr's analysis based on primarily British, French, and American fiction and non-fiction writings regarding India, Africa, and Latin America reveal a few of the rhetorical devices of the Western imperial discourse which are: persistent surveillance from a hierarchically superior eye; the right of appropriation and exploitation of native wealth; demonstrations of moral superiority, which involves a continual debasement of local customs; and the perception of the 'Other' as the site for cruelty, torture, and death.⁵ As Spurr mentioned, this imperial encounter produced a specific genre with an arrogant attitude and eventually a "made" Orient that hardly matched the reality. Although there were not as many Spanish officials visiting Istanbul, such was the experience of many.

⁵ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993, 1–12.

In various courses I had a chance to read travel accounts of the British, French, Spanish and the Ottomans from the 19th century. As result of my exchange experience in South America, I was interested in the Hispanic travel accounts. Last year I had a chance to read Spanish travel accounts from the 18th century which were among the first ones after the establishment of permanent ambassadorial relationships between the Ottomans and the Spanish. I thought that the 19th century Spanish travel accounts written mostly by diplomats and revolved around diplomatic relations until I read the account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez who was a writer and a politician among many other vocations. His account was different in comparison to the 19th century British and French travelers as well as his own compatriots.

Vicente Blasco Ibañez managed to convey a more personal look. He was not an official of the Spanish Empire which made it possible to articulate himself. Unlike his predecessors, his account did not pose the typical high-handed European look on the Ottomans. His account carries a hybrid character and combines the imagery of the Romantic literature as well as his observations. Thus despite its Orientalized look in some instances, Vicente Blasco Ibañez went beyond the prejudices and actually comprehended the Ottoman peculiarities in many cases. I wanted to understand the motive behind his effort and analyze his perception of the Turks.

His travel account was the output of several factors obviously. Some of this can be explained through the impact of the certain literary trends and his ambiguous but passionate nature. Apart from the colorful persona of Vicente Blasco Ibañez, I believe the development of this peculiar Spanish gaze towards the Turks, personified by Vicente Blasco Ibañez, was possible due to a number of elements. First of all, the historical development and geographical proximity of Spain with regard to the Muslim Moors was different among other European imperial powers. The Iberian Peninsula was the battle ground for religious, ethnic conflict and experienced the Muslim rule first hand as opposed to the other colonial powers. Secondly the Spanish imperial enterprise faced a turmoil at the end of the 19th century which posed challenges to the Spanish identity eventually. In connection with the crisis and the identity issue, like the Ottoman Empire, Spain was considered as the “Other” in Europe and was Orientalized by the major imperial powers of Western Europe as well as its own intellectuals. I should add that in my endeavor the colorful personality of Vicente Blasco Ibañez as a Valencian, an

tireless traveler, prolific novelist, screenwriter, journalist, orator, adventurer, political activist and a member of parliament, helped me to materialize him as opposed to the other Spanish travelers.

In order to deconstruct the account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez I referred to the literature on Orientalism. Edward Said's *Orientalism, Culture and Imperialism*, Timothy Mitchell's *Colonising Egypt* provided the initial analysis of the profile of the Anglo-Saxon travelers. I used the works of Reina Lewis, Jale Parla and Rana Kabbani to support certain features of my analysis such as the women and *the Tales of Thousand and One Nights*. While these works clarified the links between Vicente Blasco Ibañez and French Romantics, the special perspective which Blasco Ibañez appropriated, which I call the Spanish gaze, needs a further dimension. His observations and thoughts can only be fully understood through the help of the 19th century Spanish travel literature, politics and Spanish Orientalism. In that respect I referred mainly to the works of Pablo Martin Asuero, Gayle Nunley, Joaquin Cordoba, Victor Garcia de la Concha, Chantal Roussel-Zuazu, Juan Luis Alborg and Alda Blanco. The works of Gayle Nunley, Roger Benjamin, Bernabe Garcia Lopez and Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada were the pillars of my analysis with regard to the Orientalism in Spanish travelers and Vicente Blasco Ibañez in particular.

In the first chapter of my analysis, I would like to provide a backdrop on the Spanish travel literature on the Orient in particular. This will familiarize the reader with the dynamics behind the Spanish travel account genre. In the second chapter, I will discuss the relations between the Ottoman and the Spanish realms. I will try to give an outlook on the socio-historical scene of Spain after the crises and elaborate the life of Vicente Blasco Ibañez. In the third chapter, I will discuss the place of Vicente Blasco Ibañez's account within the Orientalist travel literature and try to explain the reasons behind his perception of the Turks.

CHAPTER 1- A SURVEY OF THE 19TH CENTURY SPANISH TRAVEL ACCOUNTS

1.1. Primary Sources and Secondary Readings

As part of my research I worked on the travel account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez namely *Oriente* (Orient). This narrative captured Blasco Ibañez's observations of the Ottoman capital in 1907. He printed his memoir regarding the capital city of the Ottoman Empire from the Sempere Editorial of Valencia in the same year. Some of its chapters appeared in newspapers such as *El Liberal* (The Liberal) of Madrid, *La Nacion* (The Nation) of Buenos Aires and *El Imparcial* (The Impartial) of Mexico.⁶ I formulated my thesis upon his travel account, however, apart from his account; his public speeches -both in the Spanish parliament and in his Argentinean tour- helped me to form an idea about his gaze towards the Turks. While I had access to his account both in Turkish and Spanish I need to note that the translation of the account in Turkish⁷ was a shortened and modified version of the original which only included part of Blasco Ibañez's journey within the confines of the Ottoman Empire. This thus limited the credibility of this source for me.

The problem was not only limited to the Turkish version of the account however it also had to do with the availability of the secondary sources about Spanish travel literature and Vicente Blasco Ibañez. The electronic medium increased my opportunity of access but I had to rely mostly upon the Spanish sources in order to have wider access regarding both the primary sources and secondary sources about the Spanish travel literature and the writer. Several biographical works with different focuses exist and I had access to those by Emilio Gasco Contell, Vicente Alos, Jean Loubes & Leon

⁶ Pablo Martin Asuero, *Viajeros Hispánicos en Estambul de la Cuestión de Oriente al Reencuentro con los Sefardies (1784-1918)*. Istanbul: Editorial Isis, 2005, p.45

⁷ Vicente Blasco Ibañez, *Fırtınadan Önce Şark İstanbul 1907*. Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007. The travel account in Turkish is named as *Fırtınadan Önce Şark İstanbul 1907* and was first published by Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları in 2006. The work was translated by Neyyire Gül Işık from Spanish to Turkish and includes an introduction also written by the translator.

Roca, Juan Luis Alborg. There are also articles about the novelist regarding the different facets of his life by Victor Garcia de la Concha, Alda Blanco, Katherine Reding, Paul Smith; and on his travel writing in particular by Pablo Martin Asuero, Ertuğrul Önalp, Juan Luis Alborg, and Federico Lara Peinado.

My research on the Spanish travel writings include *Scripted Geographies: Travel Writings by Nineteenth Century Spanish Authors* by Gayle Nunley which focuses on the travel accounts to the European and non-European worlds and analyses them within the Orientalist paradigm. This work was essential to understand the Spanish Orientalism. Likewise the Ph.D. dissertation of Chantel Roussel-Zouza in the department of Spanish literature in Texas Tech University (2005) provides a literary survey on the 19th century Spanish travel literature in an attempt to reveal evolution of different subgenres based on the content provided, intention of the author, as well as the reader in question. Similarly in *Historia de la Literatura Española del Siglo XIX(II)*, Victor Garcia de la Concha dedicated a chapter to this literary style which is useful in order to have a general grasp of the qualitative and quantitative development of the genre. Ertuğrul Önalp's presentation on *Spanish Travelers in the Orient and Their Perceptions of the Turks* delivered in the first symposium of "The Turkish and Western images in Travel Narratives" in 1985 is an introductory work in Turkish to the field from a literary perspective -yet again. From the year 1997 onwards Pablo Martin Asuero developed the same theme 2005 as he extended his research to the Hispanic travel writing (the travelers from the Spanish speaking realm) about Istanbul and the Sephardic Jews but limited it to the period of 1784 to 1918.⁸

The turn of the 21st century has been a fruitful period with respect to the research on Hispanic Oriental travel accounts (some of which were partially translated to Turkish). Many works were translated and published as either stand- alone works or

⁸ Ertuğrul Önalp, "İspanyol Roman Yazarı Vicente Blasco Ibañez'de Türk İmajı." *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005. 259-266. An earlier work about the image of the Turks in Vicente Blasco Ibañez's *Oriente* was published by Ertuğrul Önalp as part of the proceedings of the conference on "The Image of the Turks in the World" in 2005. This article however remains as a descriptive work about the travel impressions of Blasco Ibañez and provides a limited historical and cultural context so as to conceptualize the account and its author. It begins with his first impressions at the border in the Balkans and then proceeds to the statements of Vicente Blasco Ibañez about the Turks. There are references to the tolerance of the Ottomans based on the experience of Vicente Blasco Ibañez however there is no analysis of the background of Blasco Ibañez's views with reference to Spain's situation at the turn of the 20th century.

part of an anthology dedicated to the analyses of the genre. In this respect the analysis of Paulino Toledo Mansilla sheds a light on the travelers from Latin America along with the works of Mehmet Necati Kutlu on the two well-known historical personalities: General Francisco de Miranda and Rafael Nogales de Mendez. During my research the publications of La Sociedad Geográfica Española [Spanish Geographical Society] (June 2005) and the bimonthly journal of *Arbor* (March-April 2005) issue dedicated to the Spanish in the Middle East provided me both a framework; the former offered a spatial outline while the latter provided a chronological survey of the Spanish travelers in the Orient.⁹

1.2. 19th Century Spanish Travel Literature

It would not be possible to understand Vicente Blasco Ibañez without referring to the Spanish travel literature tradition and the Spanish world he grew into. Thus I surveyed the 19th century Spanish travel account literature to the Orient. Spanish travel literature similar to its other colonial counterparts produced many works. The travel writings include travels to different continents as part of the imperial enterprise of Spain.

In terms of geographical spatiality, the travels spanned over three continents: South America, Africa and Europe (including the Middle East.) In the 18th century there were intensive Spanish botanical explorations to the New World.¹⁰ Travels to the New World made up a big part of this genre after the “Discovery”. The travel texts of the Spanish about the Eastern Mediterranean are scarce and mostly belong to the last decades of the 19th century¹¹ the earliest of the travel accounts to the “Orient” can be traced back to as early as the 4th century A.D.¹² Historically speaking by the 19th century

⁹ Lily Litvak's *Geografías Mágicas: viajeros españoles del siglo XIX por países exóticos (1800-1913)* about the 19th century Spanish travel literature to the exotic lands is also one of the important researches about the field to which regrettably did not have access.

¹⁰ Victor G. De la Concha, "La Literatura Española de Viajes en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo." In *Historia de la Literatura del Siglo XIX (II)*, by Victor G. De la Concha, 800-822. Spain : Editorial Espasa, 1998, p.801

¹¹ Asuero, 2005, p.23

¹² Carlos Pascual, "Egeria, La Dama Peregrina." *Arbor Ciencia Pensamiento y Cultura*, 2005: 451-464. The earliest known Hispanic account belongs to a pilgrim called Egeria (between 381 and 384). She

the Spanish botanical expeditions to the New World lost their momentum. During the period between 1808 and 1830 the Spanish interest towards Black Africa emerged.¹³

Despite the variety of destinations and intentions there is a common denominator to these travel accounts: the methodology to observe and base hypothesis on observations.¹⁴ The traditions of a certain culture, flora and fauna of a certain land were recorded minutely as if it was part of an ethnographic survey.¹⁵ The effect of the social-Darwinian debates on the hierarchy of races also constituted a part of the travel text. The hierarchy of races and the position of the ‘primitive’ versus the ‘civilized’ (through science) were usually openly mentioned in the encounter with other cultures if not insinuated.¹⁶ Gayle Nunley in her analysis of the accounts points also to the fact that “[...] Spaniards of the time sought to define the place that they and their nation should occupy within and against both the cultures of Europe and those of Europe’s “exotic others.”¹⁷ and adds that “ While representing the European and Non-European experience and the position of traveler/narrator with regard to the idea of Europe, 19th century Spanish authors take on an essential European traveler identity.”¹⁸

This trend to “order” and “record” in order to keep the travel narrative scientific -quite often observed in French and British Orientalist travel accounts- was part of a different discussion in Spain. In Spain before the discussions of Positivism in mid 19th century, there was a big debate around the philosophical movement *Krausismo* [Krausism] based on the ideas of the German philosopher Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781-1832). His book *Urbild der Menschheit* (1811) was translated into Spanish and thoughts were naturalized by Julian Sanz del Rio and Fernando de Castro

depicts her journey to the sanctuaries in Palestine, Antioch, Edessa and Harran monasteries in Egypt, Sinai Peninsula, Syria. (p.452)

¹³ Concha, 1998 p.802

¹⁴ Ibid., p.803

¹⁵ Ibid, 1998 p.821

¹⁶ Ibid, 1998 pp.807-809.

¹⁷ Gayle Nunley, *Scripted Geographies: Travel Writings by Nineteenth-Century Spanish Authors*. Bucknell University Press, 2007, p. 20

¹⁸ Ibid p.124

and found supporters in the university spheres in the 1850s. The doctrine was about the progressive nature of man and emphasized the will of men as opposed to the will of God. It praised an individual ethic and was dedicated to perfect oneself - and thus humanity - all based on social harmony. In this view history itself was the evolution of humanity towards its perfection in time.¹⁹ With the development in sciences in the last quarter of the 19th century, Europe - from West to East - was very much influenced by the Positivist thought and Spain would be no exception.

The impact of the philosophical movements and literary trends was inevitable in the travel narrative. As Roussel-Zuazu confirms there was a tendency to use the genre as a medium to give information and keep the Spanish public informed of the developments abroad.²⁰ Thus as Asuero mentions there was an effort to keep the travel account as “scientific” as possible in order to continue the tradition of military/diplomatic reports.²¹

I would also like to note that although Vicente Blasco Ibañez’s journey to Istanbul takes place at the beginning of 20th century, it would be incorrect to consider his narrative out of the context of 19th century Spanish travel literature. Joaquin Cordoba mentions that by the beginning of the 20th century the real adventurer Spanish travelers like (Vicente Blasco Ibañez, Padre Ubach, Abadia de Montserrat) and the “glorious rediscovery of the villages, sceneries and cultures” were coming to an end.²² Besides that by 1907 Blasco Ibañez had already been travelling within the Mediterranean basin. As Juan Luis Alborg mentions he was a tireless traveler.²³ He had

¹⁹ Concha, 1998, p.35

²⁰ Chantel Roussel-Zuazu, *La Literatura De Viaje Española del Siglo XIX, Una Tipología*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Texas Tech University, 2005, p.32

²¹ Asuero, 2005 p.35

²² Joaquin M. Cordoba, "Presentacion Las Huellas Borradas." *Arbor Ciencia Pensamiento y Cultura*, 2005, pp. XXI, 865

²³ Juan L Alborg, *V. 5.3. Realismo y Naturalismo : la novela. De siglo a siglo : Armando Palacio Valdés - Vicente Blasco Ibañez*. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1999, p.958. Later Vicente Blasco Ibañez also travelled to the Americas where he would be met with great enthusiasm (due to the success of his best-seller *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*). In 1923 Blasco Ibañez would board on the British transatlantic Franconia departing from New York to tour around the world for six months.

travelled to France (1890-1891) and Italy (1896).²⁴ His travel to the Orient as a tourist was his third travel.

1.3. 19th Century Spanish Travelers

The development and expansion of the travel means made the Orient more available to the European traveler compared to the previous ages. The world had been growing smaller compared to the age of the first discoveries. More comfortable and newer travel means would be on offer to the weary travelers against a certain amount of money. Pablo Martin Asuero argues that the opening of the Suez Canal –which conduced the establishment of the first travel agency: Cook Agencies– the development of photography and the steam power contributed to the travel phenomena. The maritime lines between France and the major ports of the Eastern Mediterranean as well as the railway network that connected Salonika to Istanbul and the Orient Express made the Ottoman capital accessible to the Europeans.²⁵

Vicente Blasco Ibañez travelled to the Orient via railway, with the Orient Express, which was popular with the French travelers of the second half of 19th century. The proximity of Spain to France geographically and intellectually brought with it the mental luggage of Romanticism to the Spanish travel literature in 19th century.²⁶ Vicente Blasco Ibañez was aware of the French literary trends as a writer and admired Emile Zola.²⁷ Pablo Martin Asuero and other researchers note that France was quite influential in Spain politically and literary wise. Between 1840-1924 the works (including travel accounts and novels) of French Romantics such as Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Loti were already translated to Spanish and made at least ten impressions.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid, p. 958-959

²⁵ Asuero, 2005 p.24

²⁶ Ibid p.43

²⁷ Vicente Blasco Ibañez, *Oriente*. Spain: Nausicaã Edicion Electronica S.L., 2004.(first published in 1907)In *Oriente* when he mentions his views regarding the Turks he refers to the views of Alphonse de Lamartine. (p.95)

²⁸ Asuero, 2005 p.19, 49

As Victor Garcia de la Concha mentions in his work, the travel narration is about the relations between the world, traveler and the reader.²⁹ Thus at this stage it would be useful to describe these entities. Although the Ottoman lands received many travelers from Britain and France, the Spanish travelers were limited in number. The Spanish travelers were mostly officers (of the military, diplomacy), tradesmen, adventurers, or pilgrims.³⁰ Roussel-Zuazu also mentions that at the end of the 19th century travel is still a luxury for the average Spaniard and those who could travel were generally state officials who also felt a responsibility to report what they have seen.³¹ It was no surprise that the travelers that published their accounts in the 19th century (Spanish travels to the Orient) were mainly diplomats such as Adolfo de Mentaberry, Diego Coello and Antonio de Zayas.

Adolfo de Mentaberry was the vice-consul of the Spanish Embassy of Damascus in 1865 and became the first secretary of the Spanish Embassy in Istanbul in 1867. Pablo Martin Asuero notes his Romanticist style that alternated diplomacy between journalism and travel narrative.³² Diego de Coello had a slightly different career; he was a journalist, senator and a diplomat. He stayed in Istanbul between 1884 and 1886 as the Spanish Ambassador to the Sublime Porte.³³ Antonio de Zayas arrived in Istanbul in 1897 with an ambassadorial post that ranked lower than the previous two and stayed until 1898. At the same time he was a well-known Romantic poet of his time and was associated with the Machado brothers in the literary circles of Spain.³⁴ Among the mentioned travelers Vicente Blasco Ibañez was different with regard to his profession, intention and perceptions.

²⁹ Concha, 1998, p. 801

³⁰ Cordoba, 2005 p.XV

³¹ Roussel-Zuazu, 2005 p.31

³² Asuero, 2005 p.35

³³ Ibid., p. 36

³⁴ Ibid., p.37

1.4. 19th Century Readers

The reader for many of the accounts on the Orient can be considered as the Hispanic community at large. It is also important to note that a big part of the population in 1877 was illiterate and the literate were usually concentrated in the urban bourgeoisie populations. The schooling would accelerate at the turn of the 20th century which would increase the literacy rate and the thirst for different worlds.³⁵ Thus the readers of the accounts were usually made up of the elites of the society.³⁶ Those who could read would be reading newspapers to the others –similar to the Tanzimat tradition that Sukru Hanioglu mentions in his work.³⁷ While science was advancing and the every-day life in the urban centers was changing with rapid industrialization there was a resistance to modernization in certain parts of the country (such as Andalusia where the land related production was still prevalent).³⁸

The readers' familiarity -which I will deal in more depth in the next chapter-with the Ottoman Empire, is usually made up of the collective memory of the Moorish invasions (through oral tradition and written accounts), the Crusades and the Ottoman naval battles which do not assemble a much desired reputation. The turmoil caused by the political instability of the region since the Greek independence and the massacres of the Christians by the Muslim populations added to the animosity especially towards the Ottoman Empire which had slightly improved its image through the Crimean War.³⁹ Asuero also underlines the role of the wide-spread newspapers and illustrated magazines in the creation of the public image which hovered between the exotica (reinforced by the travel accounts) and the Balkan and Armenian massacres (reported by the newspapers printed in Madrid such as *La Ilustracion Española y Americana*, *La España*, *La Correspondencia Iberica*, *La Epoca* and *La America*.) The view of the

³⁵ In the meantime the Spanish Royal family was in a vigorous effort to “modernize” as part of this effort they asked the artists of the period to produce works towards the history of Spain. Roussel-Zuazu, 2005 p.29

³⁶ Roussel-Zuazu, 2005 p.29-30

³⁷ M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008, p.94

³⁸ Roussel-Zuazu, 2005 p.33

³⁹ Asuero, 2005 p.21-23

Spanish public was ambiguous as they sympathized with the Christian minorities however the values of the Restoration period (1874-1931) did not favor the support of nationalist factions in the face of the Cuban claim for independence.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Asuero, 2005 p. 24

CHAPTER 2-SETTING THE SCENE

In this chapter I will try to elaborate the realm that Vicente Blasco Ibañez lived and travelled. Spanish and Ottoman empires shared the confines of the Mediterranean and often clashed but moved into different trajectories only to be drawn back together in the 18th century. Firstly, I will attempt to outline the relations between the Spanish and the Ottoman Empires on the basis of diplomatic relations. My second point in this section will be on Spanish history. The end of the 19th century was one of the turning points for Spain in many ways and in order to understand the currents which influenced Vicente Blasco Ibañez, it is pertinent to understand the transformation that Spanish society was going through. My last focus will be on the writer himself: his life, political convictions and literary style in order to comprehend the motives behind his narrative.

2.1. The Course of Diplomatic Relations between Spanish and Ottoman Empires between 16th and 19th centuries

Volumes can be written with regard to the relations between the two empires and their different aspects however I will be concentrating on the development of the political relations between them as this will set the general frame on the perception of the Turks from an official point of view in the 19th century as well as indicating the interests behind the politics. Spanish and Ottoman Empires shared the extreme ends of a common sea; the Mediterranean. While at the beginning this posed no problem, as the competition for the trade routes increased the middle sea became a battlefield for the two empires. In the 16th century under the respective rulers, Sultan Süleyman and Carlos V, both empires aimed world hegemony under different pretexts but mostly for religion and eventually land.⁴¹ As Molly Greene mentions:

When two imperial fleets engaged with each other over the course of the 16th century it was typically an assault on a coastal or an insular fortress. [...] The Ottomans and the Spaniards fought each other for possession of

⁴¹ Paulino Toledo, "Osmanlı-İspanyol İmparatorluklarında Dünya İmparatorluğu Fikri, 16. Yüzyıl." *İspanya-Türkiye, 16. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Rekabet ve Dostluk*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006. 15-30. See more on the 16th century relations between the Spanish and Ottoman Empires please see Toledo's article. (p.17)

the best ports in the central and western Mediterranean, ports in which galleys could take refuge and take on supplies before emerging, refreshed, to confront the enemy once again.⁴²

The battles were not only between states but also were a reflection of the rivalry between Christianity and Islam in the Mediterranean. Both empires assumed the leadership of their religious realms. The Spanish Emperor who supported the alliances against the Protestants and the Turks was referred as the “Father of Christendom”.⁴³ Similarly the Ottoman Sultan claimed himself to be the shadow of Allah on Earth. Karakoç Sarkis’ *Külliyât-ı Kavânîn* indicates that there was an alliance between the French King and the Ottomans against the Spanish in 1553.⁴⁴ This competition also contributed to the creation of the image of the “Other” which would be embodied in the persona of the “Turk”. As these campaigns proved to be more costly other and other priorities for both empires⁴⁵, at the end of the 16th century the focus of the both empires would shift to other directions -for the Ottomans it was a campaign directed to the East and the Spanish it was the Atlantic adventure.⁴⁶

After the discovery of the New World, Spain became relatively powerful over other European states but a century later could not avoid retreats on the European fronts nor control the existing imperial space in 17th century.⁴⁷ Fradera notes the fact that, despite the loss of the territories, “the idea of an inevitable decline did not in any way

⁴² Molly Greene, "The Ottomans in the Mediterranean." In *The Early Modern Ottomans*, edited by Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman, pp. 104-116. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 110

⁴³ Özlem Kumrular, "V. Carlos'un Türkiye'deki İstihbarat Kaynakları." *I. İspanyol-Türk Tarih Günleri Toplantısı*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006. 31-42, p.36

⁴⁴ Karakoç Sarkis, *Külliyât-ı Kavânîn : Kavânîn ve Nizâmât ve Ferâmîn ve Bervât ve İrâdât-ı Seniyye ile Muâhedât ve Umûma ait Mukâvelâtı Muhtevidir. Volumes I-II (prepared by: M. Âkif Aydın and et al.)*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2006, Volume I p.5.

⁴⁵ Greene, 2007 p. 108

⁴⁶ Thierry Hentsch, *Imagining the Middle East*. Montreal, New York: Black Rose Books, 1992, p. 53

⁴⁷ Josep M. Fradera, "Spanish Imperial Decline Beyond Contemporary Assessments and Political Propaganda." Barcelona: Unpublished Conference Article, 2008, p.2. Hereby I would like to acknowledge the help of Professor Josep Fradera and also thank him for sharing his unpublished article with me.

form part of the mental structure of the Spaniards in the 18th century.” In fact as part of the set of projects for internal reform in Spain and its empire,⁴⁸ “Beginning with the accession of the Bourbons to the Spanish throne in 1700 there was an increasing awareness of the pressing need to devote sufficient financial resources and supreme effort to naval construction⁴⁹ and to the military industry in support of the policy of expansion in the Mediterranean, Atlantic and the Pacific.”⁵⁰ With the pragmatism of the new Foreign Minister Conde de Floridablanca, Spain pursued a rapprochement policy towards France, Portugal, Morocco and Ottoman Empire to neutralize the gains of Great Britain.⁵¹

As part of this policy, the treaty, which was agreed in 1782⁵², focused on the naval relations between the Ottoman and Spanish empires to secure the Spanish ships incessantly threatened by the North African piracy. Algiers, the foothold of the North African pirates and privateers, caused major damage for the Spanish in 1775 and 1784.⁵³ On the other hand Jeremy Black argues that the British protection and support of reforms in the Ottoman Empire served British interests in the Mediterranean to counteract the increasing Russians activity⁵⁴ and probably worried the Spanish Empire. With the rise of new powers such as France, Britain and Russia both Spanish and

⁴⁸ Fradera, 2008, p. 2

⁴⁹ Joan Alemany, *The Port of Barcelona a past, a future*. Spain: Lunweg Editores, 2002. In Spain during second half of 18th century new techniques and instruments were introduced such as the octant, sextant and chronometer in order to make exact calculations, locate geographical features, define nautical charts with precision. Telescopes, sounding lines and ship logs were used. First naval schools were set up. Shipwright techniques required more mastery due to growth in size and complexity of the fleets thus manuals were printed in effort to relay the knowledge. (p. 86)

⁵⁰ Jose Ignacio Gonzalez-Aller Hierro, *España En La Mar Una Historia Milenaria* . España: Lunweg Editores, 1998, p. 227

⁵¹ Ibid., p.226

⁵² In *Külliyât-ı Kavânîn* Karakoç Sarkis notes the agreement between Spain and the Ottoman Empire as “Musâlaha ve ticaret seyr-i sefâin hakkında İspanya ile mün’akid muâhedenâme”.(Karakoç Sarkis,2006, Volume I p.68) It is possible to find references to the agreement in *Târîh-i Cevdet* c.2 s.268 and *Mecmûa-i Muâhedât* c.1 s.212.

⁵³ Jeremy Black, "Avrupa Devletlerinin Savaş Alanı Akdeniz: 1700-1900." In *Tarih Boyunca Akdeniz Uygarlıkları*, by David Abulafia, pp 251-282. Istanbul: Oğlak Yayıncılık ve Reklamcılık Ltd., 2005, p. 252.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 257

Ottoman Empires were challenged and reduced to secondary economic and political powers in the 18th century. While Spain was dealing with its commercial rivals Britain, France and the Netherlands to protect its costly maritime empire and commercial interests in its colonial sphere, the Ottomans were dealing with the Russian, Safavid and Habsburg threats.⁵⁵The treaty was a reflection of the oscillating relations between the Ottomans and Spanish Empires, in the Mediterranean.⁵⁶It signified a partial relief⁵⁷and a mutual effort to protect their respective status quo in the European realm.

With this treaty the Spanish may have also aimed to establish their own niches in the Levantine ports of the Ottoman Empire which were dominated by the French in that period as Edhem Eldem points out in his article on the 18th century Ottoman rule in the Mediterranean⁵⁸. After some amendments from both sides, the treaty was promulgated on 14th of November 1784 after the ratification of Sultan Abdulhamid I in 1783.⁵⁹ The treaty can be considered as a non-aggression pact between the Spanish and the Ottomans subjects i.e. North Africa as well to facilitate commercial activity, provide safe passage to the Catholic pilgrims to Jerusalem, to mutually establish diplomatic missions. This treaty would eventually provide the Ottomans an ally in the face of the 1774 treaty and the expanding Russian army on land and the sea.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Hüseyin Serdar Tabakoğlu. "The Re-Establishment of Ottoman-Spanish Relations in 1782." *Turkish Studies*, 2007, pp.504-505

⁵⁶ Idris Bostan, *Beylikten İmparatorluğa Osmanlı Denizciliği*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006, p.121.

⁵⁷ For further details on the situation of the Spain's naval power in the Mediterranean in mid 18th century. John Julius Norwich, *The Middle Sea*. USA: Vintage Books , 2006, pp. 391, 399.

⁵⁸ Edhem Eldem, "Kontrolü Kaybetmek:18. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Doğu Akdeniz'de Osmanlı Varlığı." *Türkler ve Deniz*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2007. pp 63-78.Eldem bases his approximate figures on the study of Daniel Panzac's survey on the 18th century trade and navigation of the Ottoman Empire. Panzac uses figures based on the ambassadorial records.(p.64-65.)

⁵⁹ See Jose Maria Sanchez Molledo's article in the introduction of Federico Gravina's reprinted memoirs in Turkey. Federico Gravina, *İstanbul'un Anlatımı*. (translated by Yıldız Ersoy Canpolat) Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008, p.13.

⁶⁰ Asuero, 2005 p. 15

As part of the 1782 treaty the Ottomans agreed to send an Ottoman ambassador to Spain. Ahmed Vasıf Efendi⁶¹ would be the first Ottoman ambassador in the Spanish capital where he would stay for eight months.⁶² According to Aceituna's article, Vasıf Efendi and his retinue created quite an excitement in the Spanish cities.⁶³ He wrote an ambassadorial report called *İspanya Sefaretnâmesi* which was published and translated to French, Russian and Polish.⁶⁴ This work was about the cities he had been, the exchange of gifts, management of the Spanish state as was customary. He joined a hunt with the King of Spain visited the Escorial Palace and noted about the military exercises. He was taken to the Islamic buildings and also had a chance to see the collection of Islamic works in the monastery of the Escorial. In his account Ahmed Vasıf Efendi also points to the relations between Algeria and Spain from historical and diplomatic perspective.⁶⁵

The relations between the Spanish and the Ottomans would follow a quiet and cordial course in the most of the 19th century. Despite the Carlist Wars in the first half of the 19th century the Spanish interest in the Mediterranean was not lost and two mainly commercial treaties were signed between the two empires in 1827, and in 1840

⁶¹ Ahmed Vasıf Efendi (1730?-1806) was born in Baghdad. He was a chronicler, statesman, soldier and a diplomat in the mid 18th century. He was sent to Spain as part of an alliance against the Russians in the Mediterranean between 1787-1788. In Sultan Selim III's reign he became *ruzname-i evvel* (head of the treasury) and later *reisülküttab* (Foreign secretary) in 1805. As reisülküttab Ahmed Vasıf Efendi managed the complicated diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the French, British, Russians after the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt. İlgürel, Mücteba. "Vâsıf. Ahmed Vâsıf Efendi." In *İslâm ansiklopedisi: İslâm alemi tarih, coğrafya, etnografya ve biyografya lugati 13. cilt*, 214-217. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1997.

⁶² Antonio Jurado Aceituno, "18. Yüzyılda Bir Osmanlı Elçisinin İspanya'yı Ziyareti." *Tarih ve Toplum*, October 2001: 33-39.

⁶³ Ibid., p.35

⁶⁴ İlgürel, 1997, p.217

⁶⁵ Hadiye Tuncer, and Hüner Tuncer, *Osmanlı Diplomasisi ve Sefaretnâmeler*. Ankara: Ümit Yayıncılık, 1997, p.85-94. I have note that there were some errors in the transcription of Ahmed Vasıf Efendi's *İspanya Sefaretnâmesi* in *Osmanlı Diplomasisi ve Sefaretnâmeler*, with regard to the names of the places in Spain. In that respect Faik Reşit Unat's work provides more reliable information with regard to the locations although it does not offer the transcription of the sefaretnâme. Unat, Faik Reşit. *Osmanlı Sefirleri ve Sefaretnâmeleri*. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1987, p.144-147.

to facilitate trade and navigation in the Black Sea.⁶⁶The Crimean War would bring the two powers together. In 1853 Isabel II sent General Juan Prim-who would later assume political roles after the regime changed in 1868- to support its allies.⁶⁷ In 1862 there are two further treaties on navigation and customs regulations.⁶⁸ It was a period when Spain did not bring to the table any land claims or political pressures. This era continued until the Eastern Question started to interest the Spanish in the last two decades of 19th century -with regard to the Suez Canal as the waterway provided access to a Spanish colony overseas: the Philippines. The issue of a naval base in the Red Sea produced a conflict with the Ottomans but would not render any military action on either side.⁶⁹ Subsequently two treaties were signed with the Spanish and Prussia, Austrian-Hungarian Empire, France, Britain, Italy, The Netherlands and Russia respectively in 1885 and 1887.⁷⁰The Ottoman Empire would not make the headlines in Spain until the constitutional revolution initiated by the Committee of Union and Progress in 1908.⁷¹

⁶⁶ According to *Külliyyât-ı Kavânîn* the treaty signed between Spain and the Ottomans in 1827 appears in records as “Karadenizde icra kılınacak seyr-i sefâin hakkında İspanya ile mün’akid mukavelenâme” and the one in 1840 as “Ticaret ve seyr-i sefâin hakkında İspanya ile mün’akid ticaret ve seyr-i sefâin muâhedenâmesi”. (Karakoç Sarkis, 2006, Volume I pp.107, 175). It is possible to find them respectively in *Mecmûa-ı Muâhedât* c.I s.223, s. 225.

⁶⁷ Asuero, 2005, p. 18-20

⁶⁸ In Karakoç Sarkis’ *Külliyyât-ı Kavânîn* the two treaties are referred as “İspanya devletiyle mün’akid ticaret seyr-i sefâin muâhedenâmesi” and “İspanya ile mün’akid gümrük tarifesi” (Karakoç Sarkis, 2006, Volume I pp.350, 352) References to the first one can be found in *Mecmûa-ı Muâhedât* c.I s.230. In 1870 there was a further treaty about foreigners’ property administration within the Ottoman territories also signed by other major European powers.(Karakoç Sarkis, 2006, Volume I pp.428, 490)

⁶⁹ Sinan Kunalp, "Kızıldeniz'de bir İspanyol Üssü Kurma Teşebbüsü ve Osmanlı Tepkisi 1885-1887." *İspanya-Türkiye, 16. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Rekabet ve Dostluk*. İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006. 255-260.

⁷⁰ In *Külliyyât-ı Kavânîn* the two treaties are referred as “Süveyş kanalında serbestî-i seyr-i sefâin mesâili için Devlet-i aliyye, Almanya, Avusturya, Macaristan, İspanya, Fransa, İngiltere, İtalya, Felemenk ve Rusya murahhaslarından mürekkeben Paris’te mün’akid konferans protokol ve zabıtnâmeleri” made in 1885 and “Süveyş kanalında serbestî-i seyr-i sefâin mesâili için Devlet-i aliyye, Almanya, Avusturya, Macaristan, İspanya, Fransa, İngiltere, İtalya, Felemenk ve Rusya beyinde Dersaadet’te mün’akid muâhedenâme.” Signed in 1888. (Karakoç Sarkis, 2006, Volume II p.718, p.776)

⁷¹ Asuero, 2005, p.285

2.2. An overview of Spain at the turn of the 20th century

2.2.1. The “Disaster”

In order to understand the motivations of Vicente Blasco Ibañez, I would like to take closer look at the Spanish society at the turn of the century. This was the period when Vicente Blasco Ibañez was actively producing as a politician and a writer and started to get himself a name in public. Spain lost majority of its overseas colonies in the first decades of the 19th century. The remaining overseas colonies Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines were now in the sphere of influence of the United States of America. The independence movement in Cuba was gaining strength. As a result of the war against the United States between 1895-1898, in the spring of 1898 Spain lost its only remaining prestigious overseas colonies Cuba (also known as the “Pearl of the Antilles”), Philippines and Puerto Rico to the United States after the destruction of its entire Atlantic fleet. As part of the aftermath of the defeat in Cuba, Spain was also obliged to pay compensation.⁷² Spain was failing to contain and control the rising nationalist and indigenous movements. This was considered as one of the turning points for the Spanish Empire. Not only did they were bereaved of their last colonies but they were also humbled by this relatively new state. The war was already creating a lot of criticism among the Spanish intellectuals but this time they were asking for solutions.⁷³ In his article about Spanish society and politics before and after the “Disaster” of 1898, Octavio Ruiz argues that the military defeat of Spain at the hands of the United States in July 1898 had been a reference point in the collective memory of the Spaniards and it went beyond its military, economic⁷⁴, colonial and political consequences. In this way

⁷² Raymond Carr, *Modern Spain 1875-1980*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.47

⁷³ The need to adapt to the ideological and technological currents of Europe bothered the minds of some of the Spanish intellectuals in late 18th century, just as it would in the Ottoman realm

⁷⁴ Octavio Ruiz, "Spain on the threshold of a new century: society and politics before and after the disaster of 1898." In *Spain and the Mediterranean since 1898*, by Raanan Rein ed., 7-27. London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1999, p.20. Ruiz argues that the loss of Cuba had not caused as much damage to the Spanish treasury as the independence of the Central and South American colonies in the early decades of the 19th century because by that time Spain already geared its economy towards Europe whilst Cuban economy drifted into the American sphere of influence.

the defeat was used as part of the rhetorical device to transform and change the Spanish political system at the end of the 19th century.⁷⁵

Colonies not only were areas of raw material or trade but also political domains. At the beginning of the 19th century until the incident in 1898, Spanish Empire with her reach on America, Pacific and initial penetration in Africa, was just like its counterparts in Europe.⁷⁶ 19th century Spain is often described as a backward agrarian society with unstable politics political and economical structures. Despite the loss of the overseas colonial possessions in 1898, however, Spain was not in a decadent stage as argued by some historians. David Ringrose argues that it was still similar to the other European countries in terms of politics and economy.⁷⁷ In that respect Christopher Schmidt-Nowara mentions, the destruction of the Spanish Empire in 1898 was not a regression but rather the finale of its violent transition to Modernity.⁷⁸ The loss not only disturbed Spain's imperial integrity but also destroyed the commercial networks which also led to the intensification of the tension between the autonomous regions and the center.⁷⁹

The loss of Spain's last overseas colonial possessions in a period when the British, German, French and the Italians were expanding towards Asia and Africa caused a national problem in racial terms apart from the political and economical instability.⁸⁰ Social Darwinism and the hierarchy of races dictated that in order to have a claim about 'civilization' and 'progress', a nation had to be 'superior' to others -not only in the present but also in time and space. Hence the loss of the colonies meant for Spain the loss of 'civilization' and the possibility of being subjugated to 'superior'

⁷⁵ Ruiz, 1999 p.7

⁷⁶ Josep M Fradera, "La Política colonial española del siglo XIX : (una reflexión sobre los precedentes de la crisis de fin de siglo)." *Revista de Occidente*, March 1, 1998: 183-199. (p.183)

⁷⁷ David Ringrose, *Spain, Europe and the "Spanish Miracle" 1700-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.329.

⁷⁸ Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "Imperio y Crisis Colonial." In *Mas se Perdio en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo*, by Juan Pan-Montojo, 31-90. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998, p.86.

⁷⁹ Fernando Garcia de Cortazar, *España 1900 de 1898 a 1923*. Madrid: Silex, 1995, p.11

⁸⁰ Jose Alvarez Junco, "La Nacion en Duda." In *Mas se Perdio en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo*, by Juan Pan-Montojo, 405-476. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998, p.456

empires.⁸¹ It converted into a debate around the intellectual circles where the solution was discussed. The solution, to wake up the sleeping nation was sought in a vigorous effort to build the Spanish identity through historiography.⁸² Some of the intellectuals interpreted the problem: “If Spain was the problem Europe was the solution”. Thus “Europe was the new savior within the metaphor of modernization.”⁸³ After the loss of the overseas colonies in 1898, Spain would not return to the colonial scene until the partition of Africa in the first decade of 20th century. This had already started with the Spanish interest in Morocco which is historically and geographically within the proximity of Spain.⁸⁴ At the beginning of the 20th century Morocco had been perceived by Spain as the compensation of the colonial disaster in the 1898.⁸⁵

Raanan Rein argues that “the Disaster of 1898 had far-reaching repercussions on Spanish political system” and adds that “it helped undermine the constitutional monarchy, which functioned as the basis of a peaceful rotation of power between two dominant parties. [...] The loss of Cuba, which had been the main market for Catalan industry, also sharpened Catalan criticism of Madrid and accelerated the development of Catalan nationalism.[...] It also had long-term consequences for the position of Spain in the international system. The loss of the Caribbean islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico (in addition to Spain’s defeat in the Philippines) meant the loss of vestiges of the Spanish Empire in the New World.[...] From that time on, Spain focused its attention on the European arena, particularly the Mediterranean basin.⁸⁶ But as the saying goes, desperate times require desperate measures. It is after this period that many institutional

⁸¹ Junco, Jose Alvarez, 1998 p.459

⁸² Ibid., pp.456-459

⁸³ Ibid., pp.456-459

⁸⁴ After the Moroccan campaign in 1860, the Africanists advocated that Morocco should be approached based on the “civilizing mission” of Spain and from her own sovereign footholds in the north of Morocco thus maintain the sovereignty and integrity of Moroccan Empire against the expanding European forces. (Jover Zamora, Gomez-Ferrer, & Fusi Aizpurua, 2001 p. 434-435).

⁸⁵ Spanish Protectorate of Morocco (part of Morocco) was established under the colonial rule by the Spanish Empire with the Treaty of Fez in 1912 to end in 1956. (Jover Zamora, Gomez-Ferrer, & Fusi Aizpurua, 2001 p. 453)

⁸⁶ Raanan, Rein, "Introduction." In *Spain and the Mediterranean since 1898*, by Raanan Rein ed., 1-6. London; Portland: Frank Cass, 1999, p. 1

changes occurred until the end of the first two decades of the 20th century. One of these many changes was in the colonial policy which obliged Spain to hang onto the Equatorial Guinea, the only substantial piece of land in Africa and extend its reach to Morocco -like many other colonizing European powers. Spanish presence in Morocco was necessary to enjoy any measure of prestige and influence in the international sphere according to the rulers of Spain in the first third of 20th century.

The loss was a national tragedy left a mark on its intellectuals, too. Generation of '98⁸⁷ was made up of names such as Miguel de Unamuno, Pia de Baroja, Antonio Machado and other artists with certain outlooks at the 1898 incident and solutions for a way out of it. Banus sets forth that the writers of Generation of '98 grouped around the idea that Castilla was the core of Spain which had realized the Atlantic vocation and must live in its own misery.⁸⁸ This defeat and loss exacerbated the conflicts in the political scene; the regional separation demands were also intensifying, demonstrations of the laborers increased. The irony of the glory of the Golden Age and the "Disaster" was used by many writers of the period in the soul searching. The writers of the Generation of '98 would not give up questioning and searching for solutions.⁸⁹ The solution for some was "Modernization" for many of the intellectuals including Unamuno, Azorin, it would be the "Spanish spirit".⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Enrique Banus, "Between Atlantic and Mediterranean: Spain's Imagological Antagonisms." *Representations of the "Other/s" in the Mediterranean World and Their Impact on the Region*. Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2005. 13-40. It was one of these writers - Azorin - who invented this appellation for a group of writers who were preoccupied with the imperial losses and were interested in discovering the essence of Spain later. (Banus, 2005 p.20)

⁸⁸ Enrique Banus concludes from the evidences in the literary works of these writers such as Antonio Machado, Pio Baroja, Miguel de Unamuno that it was now time for hard work without any fruit, time of decadence, solitude, melancholy, silence, nostalgia, monotony: Castilla was exhausted after a glorious past and so it was time to discover the inner history.(Ibid., p.21-22)

⁸⁹ Gül Işık, *İspanya: Bir Başka Avrupa*. Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1991, p.155

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.159

2.2.2. Regenerationism

With the crisis of 1898, Spain was trying to “regenerate” itself in every way with a new vision: to wake up the “sleeping nation” so as to construct a new Spanish identity (overruling the regional national projects of the Catalans, Basques, Valencians and Galicians), aided with the economy so that such a crisis is never to be experienced in Spain again.⁹¹ The crisis of 1898, in any case, did not reveal anything new, but rather pointed up some deficit which made the need for “regeneration” particularly urgent.”⁹² After 1898, there was a lot of discussion around the opportunity for reconstruction particularly with an authoritarian attitude. These discussions however sometimes contained a note of anti-clerical, anti-liberal, anti-parliamentary sentiments as well.

Juan Pan-Montojo notes that, at the end of the 19th century Europe was coming to terms with international conflict, de-ruralization, growing cities, industrialization, new social identities, reproduction of pockets of misery; all elements of a transformation that was occurring at the same beat around Western Europe.⁹³ This period also witnessed an expansion in the intellectual life i.e. increasing literary and scientific production, schooling of the masses, and development of the middle class. Positivism and nationalism was having an impact on the intellectuals around the continent, and the masses were rediscovered.⁹⁴ Spain was not out of this realm and thus was going through a similar phase. Until 1914, Spain experienced a moderate growth in economy.⁹⁵ The population showed a growing trend due to the decrease in death rates⁹⁶ while a great number of people migrated to the Americas for better prospects of life.⁹⁷

⁹¹ Juan, Pan-Montojo, "Introducción. 98 o fin de siglo?" In *Mas se Perdio en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo*, by Juan Pan-Montojo ed., 9-28. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1998, pp.27-28

⁹² Ruiz, 1999, p. 18

⁹³ Pan-Montojo, 1998 pp.19-23

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.19-22

⁹⁵ Jover Zamora, Jose Maria, Guadalupe Gomez-Ferrer, and Juan Pablo Fusi Aizpurua. *España: Sociedad, Política y Civilización (siglos XIX- XX)*. Barcelona: Debate, 2001, p.467.

⁹⁶ Ibid. p.467

⁹⁷ Octavio Ruiz makes a reference to the high rate of illiteracy and the low rate of schooling at the turn of the 20th century. He refers to the fact that there was no secondary school for girls until 1910 by relating

The modern techniques applied in the cultivable lands proved to be successful. Industrial sector based in the Basque region was also growing.⁹⁸ The working class lived and worked under meager conditions but the right to join associations made a gradual difference in their plight. In opposition to the working class; the nobility still maintained its position, the bourgeoisie circles were gravitating towards industrialization, and there was a clergy that was closely engaged with the bourgeoisie and the military.⁹⁹ Octavio Ruiz adds that the church exercised total control over public welfare matters and established strong presence in primary education system at the end of the 19th century.¹⁰⁰ The inflated number of soldiers in the army after the 1898 crisis, would not delay in finding itself new niches: new colonial ambitions and political involvement (i.e. military interventions).¹⁰¹ These relations would be setting the scene for Spanish politics in the turn of the century.

During the Regenerationism, Spanish political scene would not settle. The Carlists, Republicans, Anarchists, and Socialists who were also divided among each other, represented different interest groups. The struggle between the parliament, monarchy, and the army proved to be a source of instability between 1898-1909.¹⁰² Apart from different parties, and ideological movements there were also peripheral regionalisms (Catalans, Basques, Galicians and Valencians). These regional nationalism movements were gaining momentum with the central political instability.¹⁰³ Partly influenced by the loss of Cuba and partly owing to the trade revenues Catalan nationalism had the strongest voice besides the Basque nationalism. The ‘Disaster’ made it possible for the Catalan movement to gain a political identity. Despite its political claims Catalan nationalism remained a regional movement that failed to

to the life of one of the female education reformers --Gloria Giner de los Rios-- however does not clarify the sources of his statistical data.(1999, p.8)

⁹⁸ Jover Zamora, Gomez-Ferrer, & Fusi Aizpurua, 2001 pp.471-475

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.473-474

¹⁰⁰ Ruiz, 1999 p.10

¹⁰¹ Jover Zamora, Gomez-Ferrer, & Fusi Aizpurua, 2001 pp. 485-492

¹⁰² Carr, 2001, p. 47-60

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp.61-70

receive the social support it needed.¹⁰⁴ In the search for legitimacy the movements at the regional and national level would come to a halt with the military coup d'état in 1923 by Primo de Rivera, signifying the failure of the Spanish Republicanism as well as the Liberalism.¹⁰⁵ As Ruiz expresses “the crisis led to the collapse of the regime and the monarchy and later to the social and political bankruptcy.”¹⁰⁶ It was not only the struggle between the tradition and modernity, monarchy and parliament or intellectuals versus the Catholic Church but also between center and different regions that would shape the Spanish history. Işık claims that as a result of the oscillations between different actors in the political scene there were two Restoration periods, two Regencies, two civil wars and two dictatorships in the history of Spain.¹⁰⁷

Regenerationism in its essence and aims resembles Tanzimat period of the Ottoman Empire. Tabakoğlu points to the similar phases that both of the empires were going through in the 18th century:

[...] the Ottomans and the Spanish Empires, the Great Powers of once, lost their status as the primary actors at the same time. They were no longer the well respected and glorious empires of the 16th century. They could not follow the technological and financial advance of the North European states and they were accused of being culturally unable to advance in terms of the capitalist development. Furthermore, both the Ottoman and Spanish Empires would face military aggression from the Napoléonic France in the beginning of the 19th century.¹⁰⁸

Both Regenerationism and Tanzimat sought to reorder the existing system and were also projects to modernize. Establishment of modern schools, military reforms and industrialization movements would be arising as urgencies in this period. Similar to the Tanzimat intellectuals some of the Spanish intellectuals who embraced the new movements such as French radicalism and British new liberalism went to France to study and came back influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution

¹⁰⁴ Ruiz, 1999, p.25

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p.25

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p.26

¹⁰⁷ Işık, 1991, p.141

¹⁰⁸ Tabakoğlu, 2007, p.520-521

afrenchados ('frenchified') with a yearning to modernize the country through science- a much needed political vehicle in Spain at the time.¹⁰⁹ Economically both empires staggered to keep up with their debts while the Ottoman Empire was financing wars in the face of declining state revenues,¹¹⁰ "the heavy debts accumulated during the last wars of the old regime burdened the public sector throughout the nineteenth century, when about one third of public resources was constantly devoted to paying interest on government bonds" in Spain.¹¹¹ Politically

in the first half of the 19th century Spain was lingering between competing visions of continuing the absolutist old regime and the transition to constitutional monarchy and capitalist property relations. A moderate regime that resembled the constitutional monarchies of the mid 19th century European countries was aspired and the economic reforms of the 1830s started to change the old regime.¹¹²

Similarly in the Ottoman Empire there were experimentations with the parliament and constitution.¹¹³ In both states there were considerable efforts to reform the bureaucratic, administrative and military institutions to regain their self-confidence through a new identity outlined by a top-down modernization process.

2.2.3. Formation of a Spanish Identity and Spanish Image

There are several breaking points in the Spanish history that contributed to the formation of a Spanish identity and consequently to the creation of the unique image of the Spanish. The fragmented rule and the presence of a multi-ethnic community over the Iberian Peninsula were replaced gradually by a rule in the hands of a single house and enforcement of a single religion –Catholicism- after the *Reconquista*. As Gül Işık elaborates with *Reconquista*, Spanish Empire appropriates a new identity made up of Church, State, and God as opposed to the Islamic and Moorish identity that lasted for

¹⁰⁹ Ruiz, 1999, p.24

¹¹⁰ Hanioglu 2008 p.19-20

¹¹¹ Jose Alvarez-Junco, "The Formation of Spanish Identity and Its Adaptation to the Age of Nations." *History & Memory Volume 14, Number 1/2, Fall 2002*, p.23

¹¹² Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "La España Ultramarina: Colonialism and Nation-building in Nineteenth-century Spain." *European History Quarterly*, 2004, No: 34, p.196

¹¹³ Hanioglu 2008, pp.110-112

800 years.¹¹⁴ The dilemma in the Spanish identity was sometimes referred as the “link between Christianity and Islam” and sometimes it was expressed as the *Maurofilia*¹¹⁵ or as an interruption in the evolution process of the Spanish but nonetheless the Islamic heritage was never refused.¹¹⁶ These all contributed to the hybrid character of the Spanish identity and it was the very response to the Islamic culture that shaped this identity. As Işık describes from the 16th century onwards the history of Spain was made up of the conflict between the singularity and plurality, center and periphery, and the state ideology versus the heterodoxies.¹¹⁷

After the discovery, Spain became the proud benefactor of Europe that “discovered, proselytized and civilized” a great part of the known world.¹¹⁸ The wealth pouring into the country was extracted from the natives of the new continent at a cost - *la leyenda negra* [the dark legend] - and reinforced the “cruel” and “fanatic” Spanish image in Europe in the ages to come. The conquest in other words did not really help bond Spain with Europe but rather caused her to approach Europe and cautiously and was often in conflict with France and Britain. With the house of Bourbons in rule, Spain realized the need to adapt to the pace of Europe in Enlightenment i.e. to “Europeanize”.¹¹⁹ In the 18th century there were considerable efforts to reach the pace of the Enlightened Europe. The need to adapt to the ideological and technological currents of Europe bothered the minds of some of the Spanish intellectuals in late 18th century, just as it would in the Tanzimat Ottoman realm a century later. In his work “Moroccan Letters”, Jose Cadalso illustrated the idiosyncrasy of the change in Spain:

As for each nobleman who gets dressed up according to the advice of his hairdresser and tailor there are a hundred thousand Spanish men who have not changed their customary outfit a bit. For each Spaniard who is

¹¹⁴ Işık, 1991, p.68

¹¹⁵ It is the admiration towards the Moors and their culture. (Ibid., p. 69)

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.73

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.75

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.87

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p.103

flexible about religion there are a million Spanish men who would gird themselves with their swords.¹²⁰

It was not only the struggle between the tradition-modernity, monarchy- parliament, intellectuals and the Catholic Church but also between center and different regions that would shape the history and perception of the Spanish. Işık claims that as a result of the oscillations between different actors there were two Restoration periods, two Regencies, two civil wars and two dictatorships in the history of Spain.¹²¹

The identity formation of Spain impacted the way it was perceived by other European states. In her work about the barbaric images of Spain in 18th century British travel writing Ana Hontanilla indicates that

as the idea of civilization emphasized the movement towards political, economic, and scientific progress, demanding an accumulation of spiritual, technical, economic, and political values in the evolution of a nation, not all countries, and particularly not the Iberian countries, matched up with eighteenth century British standards of commercial and political reforms. Therefore, the location of Spain as a civilized country became extremely problematic.¹²²

The 18th century travel accounts underline certain characteristics of the Spanish which in 19th century becomes associated with the image of exotic Spain. One of those designated 18th century officers forced to stay in Spain was John Armstrong, an engineer who in the beginning of 1738 was stationed in the Balearic Island of Minorca, located in the Mediterranean Sea.¹²³ In Armstrong's account the Spaniards appeared as "the naïve *savage*, ignorant of the value of their own wealth and giving it away for trifles of little worth" and Armstrong declared that "there was no degree of superstition

¹²⁰ Işık, 1991, p.135. Besides Cadalso, Mariano Jose de Larra is another witness of this period. He believed that Spain represented the second Rome and was at a critical turning point between the past and the future and defended that Spain was a democratic country. In many instances when he was writing from Madrid he lost hope in the Spanish public and committed suicide in 1836. (p.141-142) Lara's disappointment could be compared to the account of the military officer in the post WWI period Turkey of the novel *Yaban* by Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu.

¹²¹ Işık, 1991, p.141

¹²² Hontanilla, Ana. "Images of Barbaric Spain in Eighteenth-Century British Travel Writing." *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture Volume 37*, 2008, pp.120-121

¹²³ It is interesting to see similar comments in the account of Ahmed Vasıf Efendi. He refers to the Spanish as stingy, bad-tempered, rude, brutal, indolent people with superstitions. (Tuncer & Tuncer, 1997, from the transcription of *İspanya Sefaretnâmesi*, p.87-92)

into which these people have not been led, since after all the religious practices of the Spaniards do not differ a great deal from those of the Moors".¹²⁴ In the 16th century the Spanish monarchy could be portrayed as the confident ruler and disseminator of Christian values and eventually the sole guardian of political stability within Europe. In the 18th century, however, the perception of the Spanish Empire shifted from that of a Christian monarchy to oriental and barbarian despotism. Especially the exaggerated chronicles around the arbitrariness of the Spanish Inquisition enriched the old stereotype of the backwardness and cruelty of the Spanish character.

The examination of Spain's territory, of economic resources, social life, and religious practices constructed through a cultural distance favored demonstrations of Britain's moral superiority and the expression of its right to appropriate and exploit the natives' wealth. Travel writers' continual debasement of local customs, and their perception of the "Other" as a site for cruelty, torture, and death, presented sufficiently morbid material to entertain their readers and also offered a justification for British righteousness, exploitation, and economic dominance. All of these perceptions further confirmed –and validated– Spain's supposed inferiority and isolation in regard to the rest of Europe. [...] most Europeans have often placed Spain beyond the pale of central European civilization due to the persistence of its backwards social, economic, and religious behavior; the vestiges of Moorish culture; and particular aspects of the country's landscape.¹²⁵

In the 19th century travel to Spain was still a travel in time where one could feel the pre-modern society with a feeling of nostalgia. Lundström points out to the stereotypical French view of the Spanish that can be traced through the travelogues on Spain that was enhanced through the images of Moorish heritage (Andalucía, Alhambra, and Granada), gypsies, and landscapes.¹²⁶ Spanish image of the 18th century was undergoing a slight change. With the Napoleonic wars, Spain maintained its exotic character but the cruelty related with the Inquisition and the Black Legend left its place to a more passionate, heroic profile through the writings of writers such as Lord Byron, Victor Hugo, Mérimée.¹²⁷ Alvarez-Junco argues that

¹²⁴ Ibid., 2008, pp.123, 127

¹²⁵ Hontanilla, 2008, pp.136-137

¹²⁶ Marie-Sofie Lundström, "A Romantic in Spain: The Finnish Nineteenth-Century Painter Albert Edelfelt's Andalusian Dream." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* Vol. 27 No. 3, August 2006, pp.334-6

¹²⁷ Alvarez-Junco, Fall 2002, p. 18

to Romantic writers, first influenced by the Spanish performance against the Napoleonic armies, the Iberian country continued to be backward, cruel and dangerous, but those features were the result of the intense passions and sincere beliefs of its people. The old conquistadors, inquisitors and idle noblemen were now converted into *guerrilleros*, (warriors), bandits, bullfighters, Carlist friars, proud beggars; no less cruel or fanatical than their predecessors, but they led to a positive, instead of negative, evaluation of the “national soul”: Spain was a fascinating country, one of the few “pure” and “authentic” peoples of Europe, characterized by its bravery, pride, dignity, religiosity. What had really happened was a shift in the moral values and internal demands of European society.¹²⁸

The existence of a different cultures and elements of the exoticism attracted foreign crowds. Spain was not a part of the Grand Tour made by the young aristocrats in the 18th century but was becoming a popular destination at the beginning of the 19th century. There were no English guide-books to Spain until “Hand-book for Travelers in Spain” was published by an Englishman Richard Ford in 1845. The guide-book described the country, its cities, the natives, their manners as well as antiquities, religion, legends, fine arts, gastronomy and history with scenic illustrations painted by the author himself.¹²⁹ Like the Baedeker guide-book about Istanbul, this book also gathered certain images of Spain which were Don Quixote, the bull-fights, the diversity of the panorama and Spanish people (“rude agricultural Gallician, the industrious manufacturing artisan of Barcelona, the gay and voluptuous Andalucian”...“nomad habits of Spaniards and their backward agriculture”).¹³⁰

The Orientalization of Spain was not only made by the outsiders but from within, too. As Enrique Banus points out in the 19th century it was fashionable in Europe and so was it in Spain and adds that since the 18th century it had been a tradition to talk about “two Spains”. In literary themes, the most representative images of Spain were probably Don Juan, Don Quixote, Philip II and Carmen –all in contradiction with

¹²⁸ Alvarez-Junco, Fall 2002, p.19

¹²⁹ E. W. Gilbert, "Richard Ford and His 'Hand-book for Travellers in Spain'." *The Geographical Journal*, 1945, p.147-149

¹³⁰ Gilbert, 1945, p.148-19

each other.¹³¹ These images were related with exoticism, Orientalism¹³², the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and these perceptions changed over time.¹³³ Banus sets forth that the writers of the co-called *Generation of '98* were discovering Castilla-which they identified with the essence of Spain- in their poems, travel books and essays. The writers of Generation of '98 grouped around the idea that Castilla was the core of Spain that had realized the Atlantic vocation and must live in its own misery.¹³⁴ At the turn of the century Castilla, the inner Spain, appears as the condensation of the identity. In the Mediterranean sphere there were a renaissance of regional themes and regional literatures through regional languages or dialects e.g. the Catalanian *Renaixença*. Great novels of the period were associated with certain regions i.e. Vicente Blasco Ibañez with Valencia.¹³⁵ These were the seeds of nationalism. Mediterranean and Castilla were often in contrast with each other from the vantage point of different regional writers i.e. renewing Catalonia versus Castilla that rejects European progress.¹³⁶ It would not be before the Generation of 27 at the beginning of the 1920s that Andalusia would appear

¹³¹ Banus, 2005, p.13

¹³² Enrique Banus claims that exotic gypsy femme fatale Carmen corresponds to one of the Romantic visions of Spain under the influence of Romanticism which Johann Gottfried Herder described as the survival of a particular fusion of cultures, which he summarizes under the term "Orientalism". Romantic wave of exoticism looked at Spain as an exotic culture. Carmen is exotic; Carmen is "oriental". (Ibid., p.15)

¹³³ Don Quixote was the embodiment of Spanish religious fanaticism in the French enlightenment and represented the purity of the Spanish essence in the German Romantic Period. (Ibid., p.13) He specifies that "for the European Enlightenment, Spain was the dark country, the reign of the obscure Catholicism of which the Inquisition was the prototype. It was the country that had not broken with medieval tradition." With the rise of inner freedom [Gedankenfreiheit] as a new value, it was the "dark, inhumane against the rights of the individual, catholic –this was the enlightened view of Spain.(ibid. p.15) While certain images can be associated with the Mediterranean that is oriental, there is also an Atlantic dimension which is linked with the *Leyenda Negra* [Dark Legend] regarding the colonialism.

¹³⁴ Enrique Banus concludes from the evidences in the literary works of these writers such as Antonio Machado, Pio Baroja, Miguel de Unamuno that it was now time for hard work without any fruit, time of decadence, solitude, melancholy, silence, nostalgia, monotony: Castilla was exhausted after a glorious past and so it was time to discover the inner history.(Ibid p.21-22)

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.23

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.25. Here Gabriel de Miro's and Azorin's observations reveal the conflict between the two regions for there are also socio-economical reasons.

as the core of the Spain with its exoticism, Orientalism, and vivacity as opposed to Castilla.¹³⁷

2.3. Life of Vicente Blasco Ibañez

Vicente Blasco Ibañez was born in 1867 in a middle-class neighborhood in one of the important ports of the Mediterranean, Valencia. His father was a tradesman and mother was a housewife.¹³⁸ When he was one year old, Spain was going through a turning point in its history. The monarchy was toppled and in 1873 the first Federal Republic was established only to last for eleven months.¹³⁹ There was a six-year long revolution after the monarchy was taken down in 1868, at the end of which the Bourbons would return to the throne. Bourbon monarchy was restored to the throne with the help of General Martinez Campos in 1874. Alfonso XII would share the throne with the parliament as part of the parliamentary monarchy established in 1874 which would be called the “Restoration”. This political system would last well into the 1920s, until the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in 1923.¹⁴⁰

A conservative constitution with a wide scope of consensus was the most significant feature of the new political structure and was enacted in June 1876. The presence of individual rights it resembled the democratic constitution of 1869.¹⁴¹ The new regime was a constitutional monarchy that was shared between the monarch and the two-chamber parliament. This period was characterized by the bi-party system that supported the liberal principles that lived side by side with the constitutional monarchy. *Caciques* (local notables) were sending their own representatives to the parliament in Madrid which led to the underrepresentation of the working classes. The “Disaster” overseas exacerbated their situation. Although the Republican experience was short-lived, the republican ideals were accepted by a group of intellectuals who were

¹³⁷ Banus, 2005, p.26-27

¹³⁸ Emilio Gasco-Contell, "Genio y Figura de Vicente Blasco Ibañez." In *Obras Selectas / Vicente Blasco Ibañez*, by Vicente Blasco Ibañez, 9-182. Barcelona: RBA, 2007, p.9-12

¹³⁹ Carr, 2001, p.2

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., pp.ix,x

¹⁴¹ Ruiz, 1999 p.11-12

influenced by the movements in France. Republicans were divided, too. During his university years Vicente Blasco Ibañez, a radical himself, identified with the Republicans and joined their demonstrations especially towards the Church which they blamed with putting the public in lull. He began to write for the weekly paper *La Bandera Federal* (The Federal Flag) which defended a socialist republic and advocated anti-clericalism.¹⁴² Church together with the army was seen as the barriers against modernization.¹⁴³ Blasco Ibañez's novels and articles were also getting more publicity. His main political argument, which would be called *Blasquismo* (Blascoism), was about a federal Spain made up of autonomous units such as Valencia that would also be free from the influence of clergy. Ibañez finished the law school in 1888 by the time which he was indicted of two crimes against the government lead by the Conservative party leader Canovas, obliged him to go in exile to Paris between 1890-1891 (and five years later to Italy)¹⁴⁴. He was now a popular writer. Upon his return from exile he would return to politics and become the leader of the Republicans in Valencia. In 1894 he started to run a newspaper called *El Pueblo* (The People) and at the same time started to publish his famous novel *Arroz y Tartana* (Rice and Horse Carriage).¹⁴⁵ He criticized the inequalities of the Valencian society with a very harsh language.¹⁴⁶In this novel he was under the influence of Zola whom he admired.

When the "Disaster" occurred in 1898, Vicente Blasco Ibañez was thirty-one years old. This incident not only secured him a respectable place in the eyes of society as a novelist with the success of *La Barraca* (The Cabin) but also helped him to be elected as a deputy to the parliament in Madrid.¹⁴⁷ The novel had a social cause and

¹⁴² Manuel Perez-Ledesma, "La Sociedad Española, la Guerra y la Derrota." In *Mas se Perdio en Cuba. España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo*, by Juan Pan-Montojo, 91-149. Madrid: Alianza Editoria, 1998, p. 106

¹⁴³ Asuero, 2005 p.225

¹⁴⁴ Alborg, 1999, p. 958

¹⁴⁵ Vicente Alos, *Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, biografía política*. Valencia: Diputació de València: Instotució Alfons el Magnànim, 1999, p.54-60

¹⁴⁶ Alborg, 1999, p.21

¹⁴⁷ Jean-Noel Loubes, and Leon Roca, *Vicente Blasco Ibáñez diputado y novelista : estudio e ilustración de su vida política*. Toulouse: Iberie Recherche, 1972, , p.15-16

portrayed the conditions of the working class in Valencia. He would produce his first works around his hometown and its dwellers in their natural settings with all its troubles and would become to be known as the “Spanish Zola” thereafter.¹⁴⁸ At the turn of the century a different series of Naturalist novels would follow his Valencian works whose theme would be the rebelling against the system such as *La Catedral* (The Cathedral), *La Horda* (The Horde).

Vicente Blasco Ibañez was an agitator that could unite the crowds under the Republican cause but he was yearning for a more long-term scheme in politics.¹⁴⁹ He believed in the establishment of modern political parties and hoped that with the “Disaster” the monarchy would be ousted. His hope did not come true in his lifetime and neither his efforts to found a Republican Valencia. The current status quo with the monarchy was keeping him from that. He was elected five times to the parliament and even when he resigned from the profession his thoughts were kept alive. In 1905 he was re-elected as a deputy once again.¹⁵⁰ The political scene was getting tense and after an attempt of assassination Vicente Blasco Ibañez resigned and moved to Madrid. His ambivalence about politics would manifest itself: he would come forward as a deputy and he would be re-elected yet again in 1907. This time he would not return to Valencia and the political scene would bring him nothing but disappointment. Thus he would return to his art.

In the meantime he started to travel and in 1907 he visited the Ottoman capital of Istanbul which at the time would not receive a big recognition in the press. Upon his return he published his novel *Sangre y Arena* (Blood and Arena) in 1908 which he would put on the screen later. A year later he hit the road again to give lectures in South America where he would settle to found two colonies in Argentina. The two colonies due to the precarious economical conditions would not last long and in the eve of the World War I, Vicente Blasco Ibañez would return to Paris disillusioned.¹⁵¹ When the

¹⁴⁸ Alborg, 1999, p.761-762

¹⁴⁹ Gasco-Contell, 2007, p.42-43

¹⁵⁰ Alos, 1999, p.399

¹⁵¹ Gasco-Contell, 2007, pp.90-108

war broke out he visited the fronts, worked for the Allies as a supporter and at the same time started to publish *Historia de la Guerra Europea* (History of the European War).¹⁵²

In the second decade of the 20th century he would be even more popularized when his novels would be out on silver screen. *Sangre y Arena* (Blood and Arena) would be succeeded by *Los Cuatro Jinetes del Apocalypsis* or better known as *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* in English. Both works had been a success. He would gain more fame when the latter work was translated into English and became a bestseller.¹⁵³ In 1919 he went to the United States to give lectures and in 1923 he began a tour around the world.¹⁵⁴ It was the same year that the first dictatorship was established in Spain by General Primo de Rivera. Blasco Ibañez protested and resisted the regime but unfortunately did not get to see the Second Republic that would be founded only three years after his death in 1931.¹⁵⁵

2.3.1. Political Stance of Vicente Blasco Ibañez

Among all the vocations he professed, Vicente Blasco Ibañez was first and foremost known as a politician and novelist. His Republican struggle defined his life and influenced his writing to a great extent. His struggle was especially concerned with the regionalist movements which were in the construction of a Spanish identity were repressed during different regimes that Vicente Blasco Ibañez experienced. Spanish Republican movement defamed by the previous Republican experiences, attracted intellectuals of the period among which were Alejandro Lerroux, Vicente Blasco Ibañez, Pi y Margall. Victor Garcia de la Concha sees a symbiosis between Blasco Ibañez's novels, political speeches, and journalism. His radical Republican ideals were

¹⁵² Concha, 1998 p.739

¹⁵³ Famous movie star Valentino starred in the movie. Gasco-Contell, 2007, p.145-7. This adaptation of the novel by Spanish author Vicente Blasco Ibanez was the most spectacular film of the year, costing a staggering \$800,000 and utilizing more than 12,000 extras. Evoking the horrors of war, the film depicts the loves and intrigues of an Argentine patriarch, Julio, and other members of his family. Keller, Gary. "The first decades: Types of characters." *Bilingual Review*, May-December 1993, Vol. 18 Issue 2/3: 37, 33.

¹⁵⁴ Federico Lara-Peinado, "Vicente Blasco Ibañez(1867-1928): Viaje por Oriente y Egipto." *Arbor Ciencia Pensamiento y Cultura*, 2005: 869-892. P.877

¹⁵⁵ Gasco-Contell, 2007, p.175-180

fed from the socialist movements. The article "Ibañez and Spanish Republicanism" printed right after the Second Republic in 1933 by Kercheville and Hale outlined his views on monarchy, army and the Church. Blasco Ibañez disdained the Church for several reasons; the damage on scientific thought initiated by Santo Oficio, expulsion of the Jews, and Church's involvement to bring back the Habsburg monarchy. He blamed the monarchy to have brought inefficiency, corruption and claims that they enriched themselves at the expense of their people. Blasco Ibañez attacked the army due to its size and inefficiency.¹⁵⁶ His attitude against the war in Cuba and in the face of the "Disaster" separated him from the intellectual circle of the Generation of '98.¹⁵⁷ Paul Smith notes that Blasco Ibañez's political stance and literary success overshadowed his other traits: "[...] enormous vanity, unrestrained self-advertisement, frequent intolerance of the others' religious beliefs, as well as a strong streak of avarice."¹⁵⁸ Likewise Victor Ouimette differentiates between the two intellectuals of the early 20th century Spain namely Vicente Blasco Ibañez and Miguel de Unamuno in the way that Blasco Ibañez considered himself to be a Spanish Victor Hugo where as Miguel de Unamuno conceived his role as a gift used it to awaken the crowds.¹⁵⁹

2.3.2. Vicente Blasco Ibañez's Ambiguous Views

Despite their radicalism and Romantic charm, there were incongruities in some of Ibañez's views. During my research I found his thoughts on colonialism, Jews and the Orient in particular to be ambiguous. Alda Blanco exemplifies this with his approach during the 1898 crisis. Vicente Blasco Ibañez was against the colonial war as his articles between 1895-1898 also demonstrated. He criticized the Spanish colonial enterprise and demanded a fair treatment in the colonies instead of the racial colonial policies implemented by the Spanish ruling class. Blanco adds that Blasco Ibañez was an admirer of the colonial authority that the British established and maintained in its

¹⁵⁶ F.M Kercheville, and Raymond Hale, "Ibañez and Spanish Republicanism." *The Modern Language Journal*, 1933: 342-348. (p. 345-347)

¹⁵⁷ Concha, 1998 p.763

¹⁵⁸ Paul Smith, "Review of Vicente Blasco Ibañez, Diputado y Novelista (estudio e ilustracion de su vida politica) by Jean-Noel Loubes and Jose Luis Leon Roca." *Hispanic Review*, 1975, p. 335

¹⁵⁹ Ouimette, Victor. "Unamuno, Blasco Ibañez and España con Honra." *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, October 1976, Vol:53 Issue4, p.318

dominions which he thought Spanish lacked.¹⁶⁰ He was against the imperialism of the countries like the United States of America but also approved Spain's colonialism.¹⁶¹

My research showed that his ambiguity is not limited to the colonial attitudes but also towards the Jews. His first depiction of an encounter with a Jew was in Galata to exchange his money.¹⁶² In this part of the account he referred to the deceitful nature of the Jews -with whom at the end of his narrative he would sympathize with.¹⁶³ While Paul Smith¹⁶⁴ mentions that the writer's views oscillated between anti-Semitism (through the characters in his early novels and articles) and a mild pro-Semitism throughout his life,¹⁶⁵ Pablo Martin Asuero ascribes this behavior to the Spanish travelers at large who were under the heavy influence of the French Romantic literature.¹⁶⁶

His view on the Orient also contained some inconsistencies. As Alda Blanco mentions in 1896 he published an article where he would openly make the connection between Spain and Turkey with the title: *La Turquía Española* (The Spanish Turkey). In this article he mentioned that he did not want to Spain share the fate of Turkey as a result of the Cuban War. According to Blasco Ibañez, Spain was "Turkey of the West" and a "moribund nation" which he argued, placed Spain in a vulnerable position among the European power. He associated being colonized with the countries of the East.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁰ Alda, Blanco, "El Fin del Imperio Español y la Generacion del 98: Nuevas Aproximaciones." *Hispanic Research Journal*, 2003, p.12

¹⁶¹ Vicente Blasco Ibañez, *Discursos Literarios*. Valencia: Prometeo, 1966. Apparently Vicente Blasco Ibañez resented the perception of the Spanish and colonialism by other European nations. He mentioned in different lectures that the Spanish did contribute to the development of humanity as opposed to the commonly held views. He called this as a "Hispano-phobic campaign" which he claimed to have begun at the time of Louis XIV. (pp. 58-66)

¹⁶² Ibañez, 2004 p. 110

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 239

¹⁶⁴ Paul Smith surveyed writer's works over a thirty-year period.

¹⁶⁵ Paul Smith, "Blasco Ibañez and the Theme of the Jews." *Hispania*, 1973: 282-294. (p.291-293)

¹⁶⁶ Asuero, 2005 p. 90-91. Pablo Martin Asuero also notes that Vicente Blasco Ibañez took part in the establishment of Alianza Hispano-Israelita (Hispano-Israeli Alliance) in 1910.(p.209)

¹⁶⁷ Blanco, 2003 p.p.13

These may have been the effect of the fast transition that Spain was going through or it may well be a part of his versatile character.

2.3.3. Literary Persona of Vicente Blasco Ibañez

From a literary perspective Vicente Blasco Ibañez was well-known both in and outside the Hispanic sphere due to the success of his novels and films some of which gained a world-wide fame. The power of the screen actually placed him in front of his colleagues. Although Ibañez was contemporaries with the Generation of '98 due to the change in course of his views he was not considered among them. He was one of the prominent representatives of Naturalism in Spanish literature. Naturalism was very suitable to write about the social themes he preferred to write.¹⁶⁸ To speak up for the under-represented was already a part of his political mission. Thus the inequalities and the plight of the people of his hometown unfolded in front of the reader's eyes in his Valencian novels. He probably owed his description ability that he demonstrated in his visit to Istanbul to this genre. Despite his descriptive skills his literary skills received criticism of being highly indoctrinated with little intellectual basis.¹⁶⁹ In one of his interviews Vicente Blasco Ibañez states that a novelist creates reality the way he sees fit to his nature and [...] should have an imagination like a camera. He added that he himself wrote novels as he perceived this as a necessity and he was proud of being the least literate writer.¹⁷⁰ His novels, like his travel account, were both a testament of their time and means to convey his message.

Vicente Blasco Ibañez was an adventurer *par excellence*. He was known as a radical defender of the Republican ideals which he did not see being accomplished in his lifetime. This disappointment may in a way have motivated him to produce some of his best literary works. Despite their ambiguity at some points, I believe it is important to understand his political convictions and literary style in order to unravel his approach in *Oriente*. Vicente Blasco Ibañez witnessed the establishment of a democratic constitution, Carlist wars, the First Republic, rule of the Liberals, decay of the two-part

¹⁶⁸ Concha, 1998 p. 762

¹⁶⁹ Betoret-Paris, Eduardo. "El Caso Blasco Ibañez." *Hispania*, 1969, p.97

¹⁷⁰ Gasco-Contell 2007, pp.74-79

system, World War I, independence wars in the Balkans, military junta, labor struggles, dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in his lifetime.¹⁷¹ At the turn of the 20th century, the ever-changing socio-political environment of the empire was certainly influential in shaping the horizon of the Spanish society well as Vicente Blasco Ibañez.

¹⁷¹ Carr, 2001, p.ix-x

CHAPTER 3-A SPANISH GAZE: VICENTE BLASCO IBAÑEZ'S ORIENT

In this chapter I would like to explore the place of Vicente Blasco Ibañez's *Oriente* within the Orientalist travel literature. I will try to analyse this through the images and thoughts that Vicente Blasco Ibañez chose to share with the reader. Considering the extent of the Orientalist travel literature I will keep my analysis limited to his representation of the "Turks". In dealing with a Spanish traveler, the East takes on a different meaning. Where does the Orient really begin? The answer as you will see in this chapter will depend on the perception of the beholder. The perception of the Orient and Turks in particular changed over the ages, too. Vicente Blasco Ibañez like any writer was a product of his epoch politically and culturally. His account reveals many different images from the transforming Ottoman Empire and is thus valuable but is also in some ways different from the prevalent Orientalist travel literature that Edward Said or Pablo Martín Asuero analyzed. When he traveled to the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century like many other Spanish travelers he was under the influence of the 19th century French Romantics. Córdoba argues that the Spanish travelers were unlike the French Romantics in the sense that the Orient for the Spanish was "the closest Other"¹⁷² given to its historical and geographical position. For that reason, like the Ottoman Empire, it has been the object of Orientalism. On the other hand the imperial crisis of the Spanish Empire, its defeat and new colonial ambitions also positioned the discourse of the author in a different place.

3.1. The Orient and Oriental Travel

The "Orient" is a complicated category. It is in itself is a large geographical category stretching from the Near East to the Far East-apart from its cultural implications. In the travel accounts 'Orient' usually has a relativistic character. It includes many distinct countries under one sole denomination i.e. the "Other" defined by the West. The changing scope of the Orient throughout the ages and different

¹⁷² Córdoba, 2005 p. 866

cultures makes it problematic to define the Orient. Lisa Lowe mentions the ambiguity of the term itself¹⁷³:

In many eighteenth century texts, the Orient signifies Turkey, The Levant and the Arabian Peninsula known as the Middle East. In nineteenth century literature, the notion of the orient additionally refers to North Africa, and, in the twentieth century, more often to Central and Southeast Asia.

In search of the origins of the Orient it would be useful to refer to A. L. Macfie's *Orientalism*. The word had been in use since 14th century usually to denote a certain direction, a specific location¹⁷⁴. In 1755, Dr. Samuel Johnson in his Dictionary of the English Language defined the word Orient as "1. Rising of the sun. 2. Eastern, Oriental. 3. Bright, shining, glittering, gaudy, sparkling." and the word Oriental as "Eastern, an inhabitant of the eastern parts of the world."¹⁷⁵ With regard to the definitions Macfie also adds a geographical note to clarify the span of the "Orient". He mentions the tripartite division of the world as Europe, Asia and Libya (later to be known as Africa) between 9th and 5th centuries BC.

Within the context of this research, in the discussion of geography, Edward Said's comments about the volatile state of the Middle East points to the roots of the issue:

It is quite often to hear high officials in Washington and elsewhere speak of changing the map of the Middle East, as if ancient societies and myriad peoples can be shaken up like so many peanuts in a jar. But this has often happened with the "Orient," that semi-mythical construct which since Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in the late 18th century has been made and remade countless times by power acting through an expedient form of knowledge to assert that this is the Orient's nature and we must deal with it accordingly.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Lisa Lowe, "Rereadings in Orientalism: Oriental Inventions and Inventions of the Orient in Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes"." *Cultural Critique*, 1990: 115-143. (p.118)

¹⁷⁴ A.L. Macfie, *Orientalism*. Great Britain: Pearson Education, 2002, p. 20. Macfie mentions that in 1612, Brerewood, in *Languages and Religion*, referred to a diocese of the Orient, which then contained Syria, Palestine, Cilicia and parts of Mesopotamia and Arabia.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.20

¹⁷⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 2003(first published in 1978), p. xiii

The Romantic writers of the 19th century contributed to the creation of the semi-mythical Orient through their travels and works. As Edward Said mentions especially the British and French had a long tradition of “coming to terms with the Orient based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience” i.e. Orientalism.¹⁷⁷ Said defines Orientalism- which I shall be using as the basis of my analysis- as “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient”¹⁷⁸. This designation however was not only geographical but also moral and cultural, too.¹⁷⁹ Due to its “man-made” nature, there were as many “Orients” as its writers, as Jale Parla states in her work *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik*.¹⁸⁰

In the 19th century as Edward Said notes that scarcely a corner of life was untouched by the facts of empire; the economies were hungry for overseas markets, raw materials, cheap labor, and hugely profitable land, and defense and foreign policy establishments were more and more committed to the maintenance of vast tracts of distant territory and large numbers of subjugated peoples. It is a known fact for many 19th century British and French officers and thus played an inestimable role in the shaping of the economy, political, social and imagination of the respective societies.¹⁸¹

Oriental travel is certainly not a new phenomenon at the beginning of the 20th century. Historically the Fertile Crescent and beyond had been the crossroad of many migrations and trade routes. The collection of travel experiences on written medium is thus an equally old tradition. Oriental travel takes on a new dimension with expanding colonization of the Middle East, Far East and Africa by the European powers in the 19th century. The travelers mainly from Britain and France tried to record their experiences of the colonial projects. The difference that these accounts reveal from its predecessors though is related with the portrayal of the East and the imposition of a European order

¹⁷⁷ Said, 2003, p.1

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.3

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.31

¹⁸⁰ Jale Parla, *Efendilik, Şarkiyatçılık, Kölelik*. Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985, pp. 14-15. Parla identifies a certain point once the Romantic rhetoric lost its functionality; it led to the destruction of the aura of the myth of the Orient which she defined it as the Turkish myth.

¹⁸¹ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage, 1994, pp.7-8

rather than an effort to comprehend a new realm. In this way the colonizing powers can rationalize the need for “European order and authority” to fix the “irrational, backward, disordered East”.¹⁸²

3.2. An Overview of the Orientalist Travel Literature

This is by no means a summary of the genre however I would like to outline a few “essentialist” characteristics of the genre which I shall be revisiting with the travel account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez. As Dirks states colonialism itself was a cultural project and colonial knowledge both enabled colonial conquest and was produced by it.¹⁸³ Orient was the “Other” of Europe and all that Europe was not i.e. it was irrational, chaotic, crowded, fanatical, and brutal. Timothy Mitchell defines the Orientalist reality as essentialism, otherness and absence.¹⁸⁴ The problem with the travel writings was the effort “to set up the Orient as if it was a picture thus occurred a confusion between the reality and the representation.”¹⁸⁵

In order to set the frame for the prevalent travel literature that influenced Vicente Blasco Ibañez, I would like to refer to some of the characteristics of the 19th century Anglo-Saxon travel literature. Rana Kabbani draws the attention to two characteristics of the European travel narratives about the Orient historically: Orient is considered as a “bed of lust and was shaped with the violence that had been inherited from the forefathers of the Orientals”.¹⁸⁶ These two images were usually coupled with each other in the descriptions. In this way the image of the “wealthy Orient” became affiliated with excessive luxury, lust and indolence.¹⁸⁷ During the 18th century the genre was composed

¹⁸² Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*. Berkeley Los Angeles London: University of California Press, 1991, p.166

¹⁸³ Nicholas B. Dirks, "Introduction: Colonialism and Culture ." In *Colonialism and culture*, by editor. Nicholas B. Dirks, 1-26. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p.3

¹⁸⁴ Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order." In *Colonialism and Culture*, by editor. Nicholas B. Dirks, 289-318. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p. 289

¹⁸⁵ Ibid p. 305

¹⁸⁶ Rana Kabbani, *Avrupa'nın Doğu İmajı*. Istanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 1986, pp.27-28

¹⁸⁷ Throughout the ages the description of the harem was one of the essential elements of the travel narrative and was copied from the previous ones so as to perpetrate sexuality and despotism. Ibid p. 27-28.

of anecdotes, but in the 19th century there were other schemes behind this look.¹⁸⁸ These fore-mentioned images¹⁸⁹ had been in circulation since the Middle Ages but in the 19th century they engendered an urge for anthropological observation and structure under the Orientalist discourse for colonial supremacy.¹⁹⁰

The Tales of Thousand and One Night was one of the mediums that fostered these images. The imagery set forth by the Tales of Thousand and One Nights (or commonly known as Arabian Nights) transcended time and space. The “wealthy Orient” image created by these tales endured in the mental maps of the Europeans in the 19th century. This imagery that contained despotic, lustful men, mysterious veiled subordinated women in an affluent harem was popularized with the Romantic works.¹⁹¹ As Edward Said mentions, the veils for the Oriental travelers such as, Gerard de Nerval, concealed a deep, rich fund of female sexuality.¹⁹² The tales were not only about the gender or power relations but also with the repressed Victorian sexuality¹⁹³ and in many accounts the eroticized female and male bodies were quite explicitly described. Apart from the lustful and despotic man, there were certain types of women that are created such as the unfaithful (and lustful) Oriental wife versus the pious mothers in the 19th century travel accounts. Travelers like Richard Burton would argue that the nature of the Orient contained sexuality and the lustful women.¹⁹⁴

Reina Lewis adds that “the mythic sexualised polygamous harem was the pivot of a well-established Western fantasy of Oriental depravity, which was both proof of the Oriental’s inferiority and source of much pleasurable and envious contemplation.”¹⁹⁵ As

¹⁸⁸ Kabbani, 1986, p. 15

¹⁸⁹ The Saracens, Turks, Moors, Jews and the Black people were all in the category of scoundrels and villains in the Elizabethan era as Kabbani mentions.(Ibid., p.30)

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 17

¹⁹¹ Ibid., pp.41-42

¹⁹² Said, 2003, p.182

¹⁹³ Ibid., p.60

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 64-66

¹⁹⁵ Reina Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*. London, New York: Tauris, 2004, p.98

Lewis mentions in her research by 1880s polygamy was already restricted to elite and traditional families. Reina Lewis mentions that the “harem system in particular and the status of the women in general had, since the Tanzimat Reforms of the nineteenth century(1839-1876) become a central issue in the fight against the sultanate and subsequent national liberation struggle.”¹⁹⁶ Harem literature in the 19th century literary corpus not only sold well and fed the desires for information about distant lands but also was the domains of the imperial and nationalism struggles.

As Rana Kabbani mentioned above, similar to the harem, innate brutality was a popular theme of Orientalization, It was common to portray the Ottoman sultans as brutal, despotic or arbitrary. Early modern Europeans associated the Turks with tyranny which they admired and feared at the same time.¹⁹⁷ For them “Turkish tyranny not only reflected the arbitrariness and unlawfulness of its ruler but also indicated the oppression of its Christian subjects”.¹⁹⁸ While this rule was condemned as unlawful, impious and unjust in the 16th century debates in Europe, in the 17th century this image was depicted as an unlawful, arbitrary, cruel, absolute rule but also legitimate at the same time. Thus it did not only imply a terrifying experience, oppression in an exotic socio-political system but also the legitimacy and the sustainability of the empire. Asli Cirakman states that “the concept of despotism was redefined as inherently oriental in the 18th century and employed to depict the corruption and backwardness of the Ottoman government.”¹⁹⁹ In his well-known work *The Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu²⁰⁰ linked despotism not only to a political system but also a particular climate and society –the

¹⁹⁶ Lewis, 2004, p.101

¹⁹⁷ Asli Cirakman, "From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment's Unenlightened Image of the Turks." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2001, p.50. Early modern Europeans such as Francis Bacon criticized the Ottoman tyranny while appreciated the absoluteness of the ruler and loyalty of his subjects. This view has been shared by some of the travelers such as an English consul at Smyrna, Sir Paul Rycaut. Earlier Ogier Ghislain Busbecq appraised the meritocracy in the state affairs.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p.53

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.49-55

²⁰⁰ Montesquieu’s *Lettres Persanes* is a revealing work about the French perception of the major Empires in the 18th century. Lisa Lowe refers to Montesquieu’s comparison between the Spaniards and the Ottomans in terms of their self-pride. With this comparison Montesquieu materializes the French criticism about Spanish racial pride and colonial ambitions. (Lowe, 1990 p.125-126)

East-- which he also associated with obedience and fear.²⁰¹ In this way he contributed to the creation of the Oriental despotism and distanced the East and the West which were to be repeated and reproduced in the travel accounts of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Besides the image of the wealth, another image was associated with decay, chaos, crowd and the filth of the Orient²⁰² that failed to meet the expectations set forth in the Romantic prose of the 19th century. This stirred a feeling of disappointment in the eyes of the travelers. Both Jale Parla and Edward Said mention the disappointment of the 19th century travelers. The disappointment – a common topic of Romanticism as “the betrayed dream” as Edward Said identifies in *Orientalism*- here is related to the fact that the experience²⁰³ in modern Orient is not at all like the texts.²⁰⁴ Often the travelers to the Ottoman territory would be disappointed by the gap between what he had read and seen in reality.

The *Tales of Thousand and One Nights* was one of the many references used in the reconstruction of the so-called Orient by the Western literary and artistic circles in the 19th and 20th centuries. The writings of the French Orientalists such as Lamartine, Loti, Nerval and Flaubert in the form of travel accounts or novels – which created an imaginary Orient-, excited the crowds in the West. As Edward Said and Pablo Martin Asuero suggest the travel writings constituted a large collection that was available to the masses through printing by 20th century France, Britain and Spain. As Edward Said mentions there is a big colonial game behind the political and literary scenes. He associates the emergence of “novel” as a genre within this specific context and argues that society and literary culture can only be understood and studied together.²⁰⁵ The account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez is not an exception.

²⁰¹ Cirakman, 2001 p. 56

²⁰² Kabbani, 1986, p.154-156

²⁰³ Rana Kabbani underlines the fact that once the Ottoman Empire went into decline, it was no longer a threat for Europe and the Orient lost its place in the European imagination. The fear of the “unknown” Orient left its place to disdain of the “familiar” Orient. (*Ibid.*, p. 164)

²⁰⁴ Said, 2003 p.100

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.27

3.3. Image of the Turks in the Spanish Texts

Before moving on to the account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez, I would like to first provide an outlook on the perceptions associated with the Turks from various Spanish sources in history between the 15th and 19th centuries. Apart from the Orientalist literature, Vicente Blasco Ibañez was also familiar with these images as he refers to them in his account. These images are from chronicles, travel accounts, accounts of the captives and thus illustrate the imagery that the word Turk provokes.

Servaintie states that in the Middle Ages there was not a clear distinction around the Turks, Moors, Arabs or the larger category, Muslims *per se*. He adds that according to the taxonomy made by La Boullaye Le Gouz in the 18th century, Turks have been classified between the Arabs and the Iranians with traits such as hospitability, tolerance, patience, courage, arrogance. The Spanish were likened to the Ottoman Turks as they were not capable of learning foreign languages, were loyal, kind among each other but were cruel towards other nations.²⁰⁶

In Spanish history the image of the Turks were shaped via different agents - pilgrims, spies, clergy, slaves, diplomats and the converts - throughout the ages. Eloy Martin Corrales defends the view that in the heyday of the fiercest hostility between 1453 and 1782, the Ottomans were vilified on the basis of their brutality and maltreatment towards the Christians under their rule. The strength of the Turks was proverbial: "*fuerte como un turco*" (strong like the Turk).²⁰⁷ The perception of the Spaniards of the Turks in the 16th century as had been reflected in some of the chronicles show a common pejorative approach towards the Turks. A chronicler, Vasco Diaz Tanco, even claimed the etymological origin of "Turk" (*Turco* in Spanish) was associated with 'torture' and actually many Spanish writers of the 16th and 17th centuries

²⁰⁶ Banus, 2005, p.52. See Alain Servantie, "Batılıların Gözünde Türk İmajının Geçirdiği Değişimler." *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004. 27-86. The myth around the Turkish state in the 16th and 17th centuries i.e. its arbitrariness, despotism, were used to strengthen Louis XIV's rule. Montesquie's remarks about the correlation between rule and climate are another dimension of this myth. (p.59)

²⁰⁷ Eloy Martin Corrales, "İspanya-Osmanlı İmparatorluğu İlişkileri 18.-19. Yüzyıllar." *İspanya-Türkiye, 16. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Rekabet ve Dostluk*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006. 235-254. The exercise of taxonomy in 19th century however carries a different character as there is an element to subjugate the lesser races under the hegemony of a European empire as a *mission civilisatrice*. (p. 236)

systematically associated the Turks with violence, maltreatment and cruelty.²⁰⁸ The image that was retained by many chroniclers of these periods the understanding that the Turks were a group of barbarians who owed their wealth to plunder and deceit as they did not know how to cultivate nor to trade and thus they would not last long.²⁰⁹ These perceptions had been shaped by the relations between the Habsburg Empire and Ottoman Empires.²¹⁰ In 16th and 17th centuries both empires confronted each other as the leaders of two religions and justify themselves with religion. The rule of the Great Turk - the Sultan who was the embodiment of state, military and religious power - was criticized in the Spanish resources as it was accused of being based on tyranny rather than law.²¹¹ Another image that accompanies tyranny is slavery i.e. everyone except the Great Turk was a slave (including the *devshirmes*) and would live so long as they served the sultan.²¹² Despite the facts of the period, in many Spanish chronicles of 16th and 17th centuries, it was usual to find a monolithic and unnecessarily large and corrupt Ottoman state led by a weakened monstrous sultan as Lanza mentions.²¹³ In the post-Inquisition age for many Spanish chroniclers, it was not possible to comprehend the existence of a multi-religious and multi-ethnic empire such as the Ottoman Empire and for that reason their arguments had been focused on religious and moral incongruity. On the other hand this mythical anti Islamic discourse was also a part of the Habsburg propaganda to aggregate the Christians of Europe under a Holy Alliance due to clashing political and

²⁰⁸ Fernando Fernandez Lanza, "Habsburg-Osmanlı Rekabeti Bağlamında 16.Yüzyılda İspanya'da Türk İmaji." *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004. 87-108.(p.88) Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas is one of the few writers who used different European sources and offered a less biased view about the origin of the Turks. This view claims the origin of the Turks to be from Scythians. (Ibid., p.89)

²⁰⁹ Ibid p.93

²¹⁰ Paulino Toledo, "Türkler ve Hıristiyanlar Arasında" Adlı Komedide Türk İmgesinin Biçimlenmesi." *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004, pp.267-282.It can be seen from the article of Paulino Toledo that these perceptions did not remain limited to Spain but it was also spread to the colonies in South America through propaganda tools such as plays. In the play "The Christians and The Turks", Toledo analyzes the representation of Turks within the competition between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs. This play was probably also instrumental in passing the grandeur and strength of the Habsburg Empire in Europe so as to instigate subjugation of the colonies in South America. (p.267-282)

²¹¹ Ibid., p.97

²¹² Lanza, 2004 p.98

²¹³ Ibid., 2004, p.100

economical interests in the Mediterranean.²¹⁴ As Anthony Sherley, a diplomat under Spanish service elaborates; The Spanish Empire is the sun and the Ottoman Empire is the moon the encounter of which alludes to an ominous solar eclipse.²¹⁵ The perception of the pre-conceived concept of arbitrariness and tyranny of the Sultan, bloody accessions to throne and the vicious military machine of the Ottoman state was the common recollection among the Spanish chroniclers and the statesmen like their counterparts on the European continent. After the enthronement of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent, “*El Gran Turco*” (The Great Turk) i.e. the Sultan, was often referred as “the blood-thirsty dog”²¹⁶ in Spanish and many other European official documents.²¹⁷ Özlem Kumrular argues that this image was not perpetrated solely by the European chroniclers but was constructed by the very Ottoman sultan through savagery, arrogance and splendor as part of the Ottoman policy of conquest.²¹⁸ Savagery ensured the takeover of many fortifications without any resistance in many instances²¹⁹ while the sultan and his viziers accentuated the grandeur of the Ottoman Empire in their communication and through military ceremonies on the battlefield, pompous ceremonies and ambassadorial receptions in the Seraglio.²²⁰

The treaty signed in 1782 was a turning point to mark the peaceful relations between the Spanish and the Ottoman Empires -until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The sea battles and piracy decreased substantially and in this way there was a

²¹⁴ Ibid., pp.100-101

²¹⁵ Özlem Kumrular, "Kanuni'nin Batı Siyasetinin Bir İzdüşümü olarak Türk İmajı." *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*. Istanbul: Kİtap Yayınevi, 2005. 109-128.(p.109)

²¹⁶ On the other hand in the 16th century the Ottomans referred to the non-Muslim enemy states as “swines”. (Ibid., p.111)

²¹⁷ Ibid., p.111

²¹⁸ Ibid., p.112

²¹⁹ The existence of regular bulletins called the “Avisos de Turco” (or “Avisos de Levante”) the European rulers could keep track of the route and pillage of the Turks as well as the ambassadors established at the reign of Charlemagne. In Germany the Church contributed to this network through publishing their anti-Turk bulletins “Türkenbüchlein”. (Ibid p. 118)

²²⁰ Kumrular, 2005, p.112-124.Vivid description of the chroniclers such as Paolo Giovio, Hieronimo Sempere, Prudencio de Sandoval capture both the hatred towards the much feared Ottoman military and appraisal of the wealth displayed in the battlefields.

gradual increase in direct trade and transportation -allowing the goods of South America to reach the Eastern markets- in the relatively peaceful middle sea. The Spaniards (such as Federico Gravina and Gabriel de Aristizabal) who were mostly state officers, visiting the city in the 18th century were usually impressed by the city and disappointed by the fanaticism, barbarity and indifference of the Turks.²²¹ Turks were described as Asians to differentiate them from the Arabs.²²² Corrales argues that with the loss of its colonies in South America, Spain approached the Ottoman Empire as a new market. He adds that the structure of the Ottoman Empire and the interventions of the major powers such as Great Britain and France also obliged Spain to pay close attention to the policies of the Ottomans.²²³ Spain's interest towards the Turks was probably related with the fact that Spain also found itself in a similar situation after the loss of its belongings in Europe with the Utrecht Treaty in 1714 and the independence of its colonies in South America in 1830s: the sick man. Despite age long religious antagonism between the two empires there was a rising sympathy among the Spanish Liberals towards the reforming Ottoman Empire amidst the 'Eastern Question'.²²⁴ In the second half of the 19th century, however, the sympathy left its place to disdain. The interruption of the reforms, the exaggerated brutality of Abdulhamit II regime and the contradicting colonial ambitions in North Africa signified in the eyes of many observers that the situation of the Ottomans was beyond remedy and thus it was bound to collapse soon. The developing regional movements in Spain focused specifically on the plight of the ethnic and Christian minorities and the Holy Lands as they identified themselves with their cause.²²⁵ Corrales notes that this period also witnessed a decline in the relations between the Spanish and the Ottoman Empires due to the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and

²²¹ Corrales, 2006 p. 236

²²² Asuero, 2005 p.213

²²³ Corrales, 2006 p.240. Eloy Martin Corrales exemplifies the sympathy towards the Ottoman policy regarding the Greek independence in 1821 in the reports of Fermin Caballero, V. Roger y Coma. More books and travel accounts on the Ottomans were being translated into Spanish. The analyses of the Catalan newspaper *Diario de Barcelona* between 1821 and 1831 revealed an increasing interest in the Ottomans and depicted their victimization by the Russians. This was an unusual trend in comparison to the other European powers.(Ibid., p.241-243)

²²⁴ Ibid, p. 243-244

²²⁵ Corrales, 2006 pp.245-6

employment of more steamships in transportation (of pilgrims, tradesmen and travelers) which replaced the much used Ottoman ports with their alternatives in the Eastern Mediterranean.²²⁶

The 19th century image of the Turks from the travel accounts posed differences with regard to the previous image of barbarity. The publicity of the Crimean War about the Turks was positive however the increase in the number of traveler probably also had an impact. Some travelers such as Adolfo de Mentaberry and Antonio de Zayas to some degree abide the 18th century travel accounts with regard to their views about the Turks the images²²⁷ under the influence of French Romanticism the Turks are portrayed as part of the Orient. Some of the characteristics that the travelers in general underline are exoticism, Turkish pride, dignity, loyalty, melancholy, indolence.²²⁸ This is related with the motivation of the travelers as well. Both men were employed by the Spanish state and shared more or less the official views. In his account, Mentaberry tries to classify the Turks according to their origin which was a common reflex of the period. Anatolia was part of his Romantic vision and adds that

[...] a pure Ottoman is a mixture; primitive Turk, high, brave, majestic and strong, fanatical, direct descendants of the conquerors, haughty, fighter, fanatic, full of dignity, royal and resigned, melancholic, solemn [...]. He is intelligent, indolent, oppressive, ignorant as a savage, rebel, and always prone to committing cruelties and devastations which constitute the biggest stains in the Ottoman history.²²⁹

Mentaberry believes that despite the reforms the Turks as people are in a state of barbarism and whose only contribution to the European culture had been the destruction of the Antiquity. In his account Mentaberry noted that there could be nothing in common with the Orientals in general as they can put their pleasures in front of all the

²²⁶ Corrales, 2006, p. 248

²²⁷ They underline the Asian character of the Turks and their primitiveness. (Asuero, 2005, p.219-220)

²²⁸ Ibid. pp.214-224

²²⁹ Adolfo de Mentaberry, *Viaje a Oriente De Madrid a Constantinopla*. Spain: Nausicaä, 2007, p.318. This work was first published in 1876.

interests of the humanity.²³⁰ Asuero argues that Adolfo de Mentaberry delimited Europe from Asia in an effort to create a homogenous Europe that excluded the Islamic element.²³¹

Antonio de Zayas's account *A Orillas del Bosforo* (At the Shores of the Bosphorus) was published in 1912 yet again offers a limited view of the empire. Zayas, who was in Istanbul between 1897 and 1898, referred to the religious fanaticism and blamed it for causing the backwardness of the Ottomans:²³²“The Ottoman fanaticism, in conclusion, is employed in a passive opposition but energetically and tenaciously to resist to all the innovation and progress.”²³³ Pablo Martin Asuero points to the Spanish diplomatic filter in his account which offered a picturesque portrait of the Ottoman court that only reflected the Spanish diplomatic opinion. He adds that Zayas failed to analyze the Ottoman society at the end of the 19th century and relied on stereotypes to lighten up his narrative.²³⁴

3.4. Vicente Blasco Ibañez's *Oriente*

3.4.1. Overview of the Account

3.4.1.1. Itinerary

Vicente Blasco Ibañez realized his journey in 1907 (August-November) and traveled through current day France, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Serbia, and Bulgaria before arriving at Istanbul.²³⁵ His journey was not prepared beforehand.²³⁶ He traveled to Vichy and Budapest and then decided to follow the route of the Orient

²³⁰ Mentaberry, 2007, p.299

²³¹ Asuero, 2005, p.218

²³² Ibid., p.224

²³³ Zayas y Beaumont, 1912 p.236

²³⁴ Asuero 2005, p.268

²³⁵ In the original version of the account, there are two sections. One of them is dedicated to the travel towards the East while the second section is about the Balkans and mainly Istanbul. The Turkish translation of the travel account omits the first section between France and Serbia and commences from the second section dedicated to the East i.e. from the Balkans.

²³⁶ Lara-Peinado, 2005 p. 869

Express which would take him to the Ottoman Istanbul- “the indispensable intermediary between the old and the present world”. He arrived at Sirkeci terminal station in August 1907. His descriptions are quite vivid and reflect the major lifestyle trends of his day across the European continent starting with the healing waters of Vichy to Constantinople, the Oriental capital of the Turks. The second part of the book on the East is almost entirely dedicated to the Ottoman Empire and its people. His account is not only determined by the locations he had seen but also thematically varies from the locations to people, traditions, its myths and realities.

In the first part of his account he referred to the cities on his way and their main attractions. He dedicated three chapters to Vichy which he describes as a city known for its waters, for its old people as well as its art scene. It is followed by Geneva, and Bern. He labeled Geneva as refuge for the Rousseau, Miguel Servet, Voltaire as well as the liberties and justice. He mentioned another Swiss city; Bern famous for its bears. Germany apparently did not have the same appeal. His next stop was the Austrian-Hungarian Empire which was associated with art and music in particular. Vienna was a significant marker in this journey to the East. In this section he gave a reference to the defeat of the Ottomans. Unlike Vienna, Budapest did not impress him artistically. Once the train enters into Belgrade, he considered himself to have truly entered the Oriental domain although Serbia by 1907 already was an independent state.

His views about the cities en route to Istanbul give an idea about his perception of different ‘civilizations’. His categorization follows certain features of the Orientalist discourse regarding the ‘civilized’ and the ‘uncivilized’ but not in the hard lines of a 19th century colonial officer. On his way to Istanbul from Vichy he visited some of the major urban centers of the 20th century. Among these cities are Geneva, Bern, Konstanz, Munich, Salzburg, Vienna, Budapest, and Belgrade. He described the Vichy as a city of the old and the music.²³⁷ On the other hand cities like Geneva and Vienna represented sophistication in ideals and culture. He associated Geneva with Jean-Jacques Rousseau - “free and just city”²³⁸- and Vienna with “elegance” (“like Paris after Spain”).²³⁹ Munich

²³⁷ Ibañez, 2004, pp.12-14

²³⁸ Ibid., p.26. “Esta ciudad liberal y clemente”

²³⁹ Ibid., p.65

for him was modern and had nothing original except for the beer and music.²⁴⁰ Vicente Blasco Ibañez says that “Austria is the dividing line between ‘Europe’ and Central Europe. To the East there are other people similar to us but of Asian origin [...] The last clash between East and West occurred on this land. The supreme Asian shove came this far”.²⁴¹ “The tomb of Gül Baba in Budapest was a sign that he is in the doors of the Orient.”²⁴² In Belgrade there was a reference to the brutality of the Turks with the “Tower of Skulls”.²⁴³

3.4.1.2. In Istanbul

He travelled on board of the Orient Express and once he arrived in Istanbul he stayed in the famous Pera Palace as was customary. The second part of his travel account belongs to his ‘Orient’. He started with the Balkans and then provides his views about the Turks²⁴⁴ in the second chapter. Third chapter sets the scene for his stay while the two chapters after that is dedicated to the Galata Bridge and the passersby i.e. the different components of the Ottoman capital. The following chapters are dedicated to the authority figures and palaces of the Ottoman Empire; namely the Grand Vizier, Yıldız Palace, Topkapı Palace, and the famous *Selamlık* (Friday Prayer Procession Ceremony) of Sultan Abdülhamid II. Like many travelers he was attracted to the religious sites and rituals. Thus his itinerary included two dervish lodges, Santa Sofia, Greek Patriarchate as well as a tour of the Bosphorus on the Night of Power (Kadir Gecesi). He dedicated a chapter to the Byzantine ruins within the old city walls and outside. Interestingly he devoted a chapter on the dogs of Istanbul. He shared his

²⁴⁰ Ibañez, 2004, p.50

²⁴¹ Ibid., pp.65-66. “Austria es la verdadera frontera de le Europa central... y “europea”Mas alla, hacia el Oriente, estan acampados pueblos que, aunque de aspecto semejante al nuestro, son de origen asiatico.[...] En esta tierra ha ocurrido el ultimo choque de Oriente y Occidente. Hasta aqui llevo el supremo empujon del Asia invasora [...]”

²⁴² Ibid., p.79. “Esta huella[la tumba de Gül Baba] de la dominacion turca me hace recordar que estoy ya en las puertas del Imperio de Oriente.”

²⁴³ Ibid., p.92. “Torre de lo Craneos”

²⁴⁴ I have note that Vicente Blasco Ibañez clearly distinguished the “Turks” from other Muslim ethnicities such as the Moroccans and Arabs. He also generally distinguished the “Turks” from the larger denomination of “Ottomans”.

observations and analyzed the state of the women and the eunuchs. Another social issue that he dedicated a chapter on was the freedom of faith.

During his stay in Istanbul, he was received by the Spanish Embassy in Istanbul although he did not have a diplomatic mission. During his travel, due to his connections he managed to meet the Grand Vizier Avlonyalı Ferit Pasha as well as the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Yuvakim II. He also had a chance to see old and the new palaces, then namely the Topkapı Palace and Yıldız Palace. His acceptance to the much talked about *Selamlık* [Friday Prayer Procession Ceremony] ceremony of Abdülhamid II was also another highlight in his account. He travels through time and space in his account.²⁴⁵ Not only does he tell about his observations but he also refers to their history. The chapter about Istanbul is an example of this. He acknowledged the diversity of the people in terms of religion and ethnic groups in many instances. It was a ‘chaotic’, ‘crowded’ city as he could see from the Galata Bridge²⁴⁶ just as Flaubert or Nerval would have imagined:

You won't find the crowd that you see on the Galata Bridge in the wide avenues of London nor on the boulevards of Paris. The wooden floor trembles under the wheels of carriages and the feet of thousands of passer-bys. The cries of this polyglot people, who speak at least five languages and some even know twelve languages, confuse and deafen. The carnival-like variety of costumes astonishes and dazzles.²⁴⁷

The backdrop of the narrative -Istanbul- has an inevitable contribution to this image making. Vicente Blasco Ibañez begins the section on Constantinople based on his observations of the trinity: Pera, Üsküdar and Istanbul which were among the main municipal districts. As Pablo Martín Asuero puts it; he recorded what he had seen quite

²⁴⁵ Pablo Martín Asuero, "Blasco Ibañez en Estambul." *Letras de Deusto*, 1997: 57-72.(p.62)

²⁴⁶ Ibañez, 2004 p.113

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.112. “No hay en las grandes calles de Londres ni en los bulevares de Paris lugar alguno como el Gran Puente[Puente de Galata]. La plataforma de madera tiembla bajo el rodar de los acruajes y el paso de millares de transeuntes. Aturde y ensordece el vocear de este pueblo poliglota, donde el que menos habla cinco idiomas y son mayoria los que poseen mas de doce. Asombra y deslumbra la carnavalesca variedad de los trajes.”

cinematographically.²⁴⁸ By the time Vicente Blasco visited Istanbul, the city was already been undergoing a vigorous urbanization movement initiated after the Crimean War. In the second half of the 19th century, the rapid urbanization changed the face of the city. He recognized that the major districts of the city such as Pera and Eyüp not only fostered different outlooks on life and modernization but also housed distinct styles of architecture according. Zeynep Celik describes the transformation as a conscious break with the Turkish–Islamic heritage and the establishment of a new set of European standards, institutions, and organizations introduced new buildings to conform to the requirements of a modern, western style life. She adds that “in their drive to modernize Istanbul, the Ottoman rulers sought to emulate the European scene.”²⁴⁹

Blasco Ibañez often compared the domes and palaces from the tales with the existing city texture itself. In the account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez the duality is not limited to the standing structures of the city but is extended to the cemeteries as well. Some of the cemeteries, the products of a different religious tradition, are inside the city and among the living as opposed to the Christian faith. The writer added that often times the cemeteries - except those intra-muros - were a site of leisure and trotted often by the people of the neighborhood.

Vicente Blasco Ibañez’s motivation to write this account is one of the factors that distinguish him from the other Spanish travelers. While he captured the sights, sounds and the traditions of the Ottoman capital and presented it through Romantic imagery, he also utilized his travel account as an operating theater of his thoughts regarding the colonizing powers, religion and politics. As Republican he refuted religion and European powers for their hypocrisy. This added a personal touch in comparison to the state views presented in the previous accounts of Mentaberry and Zayas. His stance towards politics and religion is openly manifested in his narrative and his account becomes a medium to reach the Spanish public. Ibañez believed that the Turks display a great pride in Islam and tolerance towards the non-Muslim population. He added that the Turks did not feel the need to do religious propaganda towards the non-Muslim community. He knew about the oppression of the Armenians and the

²⁴⁸ Asuero, 1997 p. 65

²⁴⁹ Celik, 1993, p. xiii

Armenian publications about the Hamidian regime however he normalized the violence on the Armenian population and says that it was not about religion but about the conflict of interests. Apart from the freedom of conviction, he was not very supportive about the other freedom causes. He actually criticized the minorities for abusing the Turks.²⁵⁰

His visit dates to the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II and is prior to the constitutional revolution of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1908. There was political unrest around the empire and protests against the rule of Abdulhamid II. Since the 18th century, the military, bureaucratic and social structure of the empire had been already undergoing a major transformation. His impression – often of confusion of the prevalent duality between the East and the West-- with regard to the city, its people and modernization taking place is materialized in his account in many instances. With an essentialist view he recognized the modernized Ottoman Empire but also added that inside each of them preserved their identity: “[...] on the outside they are European, but when they hear the voice of their prophet, they feel the spirit that they followed Mehmed II on his horse to Constantinople”²⁵¹

3.4.1.3. The Turks

Orientalism facilitates the recognition of the other i.e. the Orient. As Edward Said mentions in *Orientalism*, in the writing of the Enlightenment philosophers, historians, encyclopedists, and essayists there is a “character-as-designation appearing as the physiological-moral classification”²⁵² which has been repeating in the accounts of the travelers as well. In many occasions a particular association between the cruelty of the Sultan and the features of his face was formulated. The depictions of Ibañez about the Turks, contain a plethora of adjectives. While describing the Turks he did not subscribe to the depictions of his Spanish predecessors such as Adolfo de Mentaberry but rather portrayed an ambiguous picture. He dedicated a chapter to the Turks and the

²⁵⁰ Ibañez, 2004, p.97

²⁵¹ Ibid., p.105. “[...] europea exteriormente, pero cuando escucha la voz del Profeta, siente despertarse en ella la misma alma de los que llegaron tras el caballo de Mohamed II a la conquista de Constantinopla.”

²⁵² Said, 2003 p.119

European perception of the Turks. Ibañez generally followed the Orientalist convention in his descriptions. On the one hand he depicted a “noble savage”²⁵³ who is “kind-hearted”, ignited by injustice and disloyalty”, “quiet”, “kind”, “generous” on the other hand also “cruel”, “haughty”, “obtuse”, “melancholic”, “threatening”. In addition to these he also used physical imagery that he associated only when he was describing the Turks: “his peremptory and decisive looks control”, “has a hooked belligerent Turkish nose.” In this way the physical traits were used to materialize the age long stereotypes.

3.4.1.4. “Thousand and One Nights”

Vicente Blasco Ibañez referred to the “Thousand and One Nights Tales” on many occasions. He dedicated a chapter to his visit to the Topkapı Palace and names the chapter as “The heir of Thousand and One Nights.” He likened the Sultan and the palace to the tales but unfortunately the glamour of the palace is nowhere near. He associated certain architectural elements²⁵⁴, certain authority figures²⁵⁵, festivities²⁵⁶, illusion to the so-called Moorish Golden Age²⁵⁷ with the Thousand and One Night. The

²⁵³ Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism : Literary Encounters with the Orient* . London: New York: Tauris, 1996, p.xxvi. Ibañez appreciates the “noble oriental dignity” of the Turks. This echoes the 18th century the image of the Arab nomad as the “noble savage” which was introduced and reinforced by several travelers. The bedouin was portrayed as a noble savage because of his imaginary quest for freedom and purity in front of a make-believe pastoral landscape.

²⁵⁴ “domes with golden crescents which are constructions of Thousand and One Nights”(p.106). “[...] cupulas con medias lunas de oro cual una construccion de *Las mil y una noches*.”

²⁵⁵ Vicente Blasco Ibañez often mentions the Sultan and the Grand Vizier within the context of Thousand and One Nights, referring to the extent of their despotic rule, wealth and physical features. He also often refers to his disappointment as the appearance of the authority figures do not reveal their power as opposed to the tales.(Ibañez, 2004, pp. 120, 122) More reference to the Sultan’s wealth(jewels, arms, can be found on pages 165, 167, 170.)

²⁵⁶ He likens the banquets at Yıldız Palace to the festivities of Thousand and One Nights due to the golden plates and cutlery on the table-although he never saw one before.(Ibid., p.130)He exaggerates about the palace and mentions that Yıldız Palace covered up a space ten times Madrid and that it contained 50 pavillions inside.(Ibid., 128-130)

²⁵⁷ At the end of his travel to Istanbul he alludes to Spain in Moorish Golden Age by “the stories, to entertain the family at Saturday nights, which are buried treasures of legends, are always set in the distant Spain, a fantastic land where the elders tell the children with all their seriousness as we talk about Baghdad of the Thousand and One Nights.” (Ibid., p. 239). Los cuentos que entretienen la familia en las noches de sabado, leyendas enormes tesoros enterrados, tienen siempre por escenario la lejana España, pais fantastico del que hablan los patriarcas a los niños con grave misterio, como hablamos nosotros de Bagdad, la de *Las mil y una noches*.

Tales of Thousand and One Night emerged from the folkloric oral traditions of India, Persia, Iraq, Syria and Egypt. It had had many variations and was translated to French by a traveler to the Orient, Antoine Galland, between 1704-1838 and in this way was institutionalized.²⁵⁸ Joaquin Cordoba confirms this fact and adds a different dimension regarding the Spanish case: “When Galland published the Thousand and One Nights, translated for the first time into a European language (1704-1712), it evoked the typical Orientalist illusions in France. The majority of the tales were already known in Spain by 13th century.”²⁵⁹

3.4.1.5. The Women and the Eunuchs

When Vicente Blasco Ibañez referred to women he was aware of the dichotomy between the modern and the traditional thus mentions that while there was a circle that lived a Western way of life²⁶⁰, there were others who were under the subjugation of their husbands. In this dichotomy, one of them belonged to the affluent households and has access to the European realm. She is educated in the Western way and is knowledgeable about the Western art forms and speaks a European language.²⁶¹ The other type he depicted was the unapproachable, veiled, mysterious women about whom he had fantasized.²⁶² Similar to the other Orientalist themes he exaggerated about this, too. Also earlier anti-Islamic propaganda and the interpretation of Thousand and One Nights tales I mentioned above contributed to the construct of the Oriental woman. The so-called Oriental woman lived in a harem of three-hundred women, could communicate with the outside world through eunuchs, was a subordinate to the wishes of her master and would engage in intrigues to manipulate her master to bear him many children.²⁶³ Alain Servantie describes this as the penetration of the Western pornography into the Oriental

²⁵⁸ Kabbani, 1986, p.34-35

²⁵⁹ Cordoba, 2005 p.XVII

²⁶⁰ “The modern young Turkish men laugh at the old harem. Polygamy! What a useless habit of the past!” (Ibañez, 2004 p. 196) “Los turcos modernos y juvenes rien del viejo haren. “¡La poligamia! ¡Tonta inutilidad del pasado!”.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p.191-197

²⁶² He refers to unfaithful women having sexual relations with the eunuchs without worrying about their husbands. (Ibid., p.202)

²⁶³ Servantie, 2004, p.32-33

realm.²⁶⁴This imagery is built upon the assumption that life in the Orient revolves around sexuality. Many times this is a metaphor way of referring to the state of affairs in Europe in the Victorian age.²⁶⁵

Ibañez referred to the eunuchs in different parts of his account. He mentions the relationship of the eunuchs with the women and their place in harem. In one section of his work he gave a detailed description of the process of castration of the eunuchs and their trade around the Mediterranean basin.²⁶⁶ His descriptions portrayed a capricious hermaphrodite that was the only kind that had access to the men's and women's world and sometimes was the only medium to communicate with the outside world for the women. According to Servantie it is no coincidence that there are references to the eunuchs in the Orientalist travel accounts. He related this to the fact that the travelers usually were lonesome male travelers without any female company and used the eunuch as a metaphor of his impotence in the Orient and more so of the Victorian Puritanism of the 19th century. Circumcision constitutes a part of this eroticism and is often associated with the fear of being castrated just like the white eunuchs.²⁶⁷

3.4.1.6. Islamic Religious Buildings and Islam

As Pablo Martin Asuero mentions the influence of the French Romantics was great on the Spanish travelers thus his itinerary in Istanbul does not pose any difference than theirs. Ramadan provided a special opportunity to see the Muslims fasting. Vicente Blasco Ibañez paid a visit to different religious buildings most of which are related with Islam. The religious buildings and the rituals present a contact with the exotic. He visited the lodges of the “whirling” and “howling”²⁶⁸ dervishes i.e. the Mevlevis and

²⁶⁴ Servantie, 2004, p.35

²⁶⁵ Alain Servantie adds that until 1716 no French tradesman was allowed to bring their wife and family to the major ports of the Ottoman Empire which perhaps explains some of the wild imagination around sexuality in the Orient. Ibid., p.36

²⁶⁶ Ibañez, 2004 pp. 201-203

²⁶⁷ Servantie, 2004 pp.46-47

²⁶⁸ The term howling dervishes refers to the rituals of the Rukai dervishes and is used to describe the Rukai dervishes in the account.

Rufais. Similar to the French Romantics²⁶⁹, the location of the Rufai²⁷⁰ lodge, Eyüp, presented a timeless exotic neighborhood that maintained its Turkish character without the penetration of the European influence.²⁷¹ Freedom of faith was another important issue for Ibañez and he openly praised the Ottoman which is unusual in Spanish travel texts. His real concern though is related with his Republican view that rejected the predominant role of the Catholic Church in the political scene of Spain.

3.4.2. The Turks and Vicente Blasco Ibañez's Perception in *Oriente*:

In *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said points out that “each cultural work is a vision of a moment”²⁷² and thus should *Oriente* be considered. In dismantling the underpinnings of Blasco Ibañez's perception of the Turks, I limited my analysis to the traditions that he was familiar with i.e. the image bred by the local sources, the prevalent Oriental travel literature of the period. Unlike many Spanish travelers, Ibañez did not arrive in Istanbul as a state official on duty. Given the ambiguity and radicalism of Vicente Blasco Ibañez, in addition to the above traditions, and the circumstances in Spain at the turn of the century, Vicente Blasco Ibañez does not represent a conventional Spanish traveler of his time.²⁷³

I would like to refer to the travel account in order to highlight some of Vicente Blasco Ibañez's thoughts about the Turks. I have already provided some of his views and observations around the themes of Istanbul, women, modernization, Islam, non-Muslims, and the characterization of the Turks. As I have mentioned previously, in his descriptions about the Turks Ibañez reverted to certain elements of the Orientalist literature such as the “Thousand and One Nights”, “mysterious” “veiled” women, “a

²⁶⁹ As Pablo Martin Asuero mentions that French Romantics influenced the Spanish travelers so profoundly that these visitors would be writing about the same themes, visiting the places and the buildings that they had been.(p.43)

²⁷⁰ Ibañez associates fanaticism and brutality with that essence. He describes the Rufai rituals as part of the fanatical and implecable old Turkish spirit.(p.204)

²⁷¹ Ibid., p.104

²⁷² Said, 1994, p.79

²⁷³ Pablo Martin Asuero describes Ibañez's style as synthesizing the old images with those he actually observes, relegating the old ones as historical or literary. (Asuero, 2005 p.224).

hooked belligerent Turkish nose”, “cruelty”.²⁷⁴ Some of these were the very essentialist images that prevailed in the Spanish texts for centuries. Besides the repeated physical and character traits associated with the Turks, Blasco Ibañez also referred to the struggle of the Ottoman Empire in political scene at the turn of the 20th century. The chapter he dedicated to the Turks reveals a more detailed outlook on the Turks and especially their situation in the international arena. He began by declaring that:

According to an oft-repeated phrase, Turkey is the “great sick man” of Europe. The great powers, after having waylaid each other, do not dare to kill him and thus are awaiting his death in order to get their share out of the wealth. They are sitting in the sick man so that they get to know the secrets of the house and take advantage of it at the time of the plunder.²⁷⁵

This striking prelude about the Turks informs us about the writer’s standpoint towards the Turks as well as the ongoing colonial scramble. He did not feel embarrassed to articulate that he sympathized with the Turks and does not hold any animosity towards them. Ibañez added that the Turks’ only fault was to be the last invaders of Europe and which thus kept its memories alive. He -as if he himself did not revert to the Orientalist clichés in the account- criticized the widely held views about the Turks. In the face of the injustice done to the Turks, Vicente Blasco Ibañez was resentful towards Europe and declared that the Turks were kind-hearted, honest and hospitable. He joined Lamartine’s appraisal: “Among all the people of the vast empire the Turks are the first and the most honorable.”²⁷⁶ From what he had seen in Ramadan, Blasco Ibañez concluded that the “Turks are the most religious of all men, [...]do not bother to

²⁷⁴ Blasco Ibañez mentions Lamartine who probably inspired the travel itinerary to Istanbul and the affinity for the Turks. (Ibañez , 2004 p. 95)

²⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 95. “Turquia es el “gran enfermo” de Europa, segun una frase mil veces repetida, y los pueblos importantes que no osan asesinarlo, por cerrarse el paso unos a otrosi aguardan a que el enfermo se muera para repetirse sus bienes, procurando cada uno asistirle traidoramente en su dolencia, para familiarizarse con los secretos y costumbres de la casa y escoger con mas seguridad cuando llegue el momento de la rebatiña general.”

²⁷⁶ Ibid., pp.95-96

proselytize and do not know the fanaticism of the Moors of Africa.”²⁷⁷ There was also a need to clarify the origin of the Turks:

The Turks are not Asiatic just as we are not Latin although we are grouped under that denomination. [...] Turks of Central Asia, some of whom still live in the Mongolian territory today, are the brothers of the Turks who abandoned and left like a devouring wave to the West. The Asiatic Turks are of yellow race. The Turks of the Ottoman Empire, that we know today, are now Caucasians like us. The constant mixing of the races between the white and the jumbled vicissitudes of the war smelted and dispelled the original ethnic element.²⁷⁸

He observed the dichotomy of the ‘modern’ and the ‘traditional’ in all aspects of life and believes that the Turks maintain their true spirits. Sometimes what he saw did not match the Thousand and One Nights image of buildings, people or traditions. Despite all his ambiguities, his elaboration of the Turks in the account was radical in comparison to his predecessors. There is an effort in the narrative to rationalize the Turks. “The Turks have a disturbing appearance and are considered Turks only because of the fez they carry on their heads and pose many reasons to provoke fear...They are Europeans and Europeans are the worst kind in Turkey.”²⁷⁹

What made Vicente Blasco Ibañez’s look at the Turks different? Mary Louise Pratt notes that since the 18th century Western Europe considered itself to be the representative of the Mediterranean Antiquity and disseminator of the romantic projects of liberty, individualism and liberalism to the colonial periphery.²⁸⁰ As Edward Said and Timothy Mitchell explained in their works, traveler of the imperial enterprises in the 19th and early 20th century usually had a “White Man’s Burden” and often attempted to

²⁷⁷ Ibañez, 2004 p.210

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 98. “Los turcos de Asia central que aun existen en el territorio de los mongoles son hermanos de estos otros que les abandonaron para marchar hacia Occidente como una ola devodora. Los turcos asiaticos son de raza amarilla. Los turcos del Imperio otomanoi los que todos conocemos, son ya caucasicos como nosotros. Sus incesantes cruzamientoscon la raza blanca y los azares de la guerra con sus alborotadas mezcolanzas han fundido y hecho desaparecer el primitivo elemento etnico.”

²⁷⁹ Ibid p.118. “Esos turcos de aspecto inquitante que solo son turcos por el fez que llevan en la cabeza, inspiran miedo con sombrado motivo... Son europeos, y el europeo es lo peor de Turquia.”

²⁸⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial eyes : travel writing and transculturation* . London ; New York : Routledge, 1992, p.112

‘put things into order’ with a very prescriptive and presumptuous manner. Vicente Blasco Ibañez’s stance as a Spanish was different from these and his Spanish predecessors. This is related with several factors. In addition to his background, effects of different literary traditions, the past of Spain facilitated the contact with other faiths (especially Islam- often framed by the Romantic writers as the characteristic of the “Orient”²⁸¹) and ethnicities. Another factor is closely connected to the transformation of the existing socio-economic structures and Spanish identity after the imperial crisis. Thirdly, the experience of being the “Other” of Europe, like the Ottoman Empire, shaped Vicente Blasco Ibañez’s gaze towards the Turks.

Spain experienced Muslim rule for eight-hundred years thus was familiar with Islam. Joaquin Cordoba mentions prevalent in society such as the treasure of the Moors, or the castle of a Moorish princess. Joaquin Cordoba adds that

The Islamic and the Oriental were phenomena that lived together in the past and in the very vicinity of Spain. [...] this facilitated the rapprochement towards the Oriental, its understanding with a certain degree of intimacy and proximity but at the same time with a certain degree of spontaneous distancing from the topics and prejudices of the 19th and 20th century European colonialism.²⁸²

This resulted in special travel accounts that are calm and less Orientalized as opposed to the passionate Romantic narratives: far from nostalgia and the Orientalist passion. Pablo Martin Asuero adds that the coexistence of different religions and ethnicities in Spain prepared the travelers for what they were going to see in the Ottoman Empire.²⁸³

Regarding the Moorish past, Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada argues that:

For almost eight centuries, there was a continuous Muslim presence in the Iberian Peninsula, and that presence and the exchanges with Islam that it allowed shaped the way the territory developed through history; how it was created; how it presented itself and was perceived by others;

²⁸¹ Said, 2003, p.41

²⁸² Cordoba, 2005, p. XVI-XIV

²⁸³ Asuero, 2005, p.47

how it spoke; and how it related to its neighbors, both European and African.²⁸⁴

With the arrival of the Muslims on the peninsula in 711, there was a coexistence of three monotheistic religions. The Spanish would seek to describe the “Other” they have seen through the structures of the only “Other” they had known and lived²⁸⁵ together with.²⁸⁶ The effect of the Moors on the collective Spanish imagination would continue up until the 19th century. Tofiño-Quesada defends the view that once the European states started to perceive Spain as the “Other” largely because of its poverty and Muslim heritage, Spain became marginalized in the collective mind of the European imperial powers such as France and Britain. The loss of the overseas colonies compelled the Spanish intellectuals to rethink about their identity. There were different notions about what really made up the Spanish identity.²⁸⁷ Spain “rediscovered its Islamic past during the nineteenth century”²⁸⁸ and reverted to the Moorish character²⁸⁹ once it re-launched its colonial quest" in Africa namely in North Africa i.e. Morocco and the Equatorial Guinea.²⁹⁰ To match this new ambiguous ambition and announce to the leading powers of Europe, Spain used the theme of “Andalusia in the time of the Moors” in the Paris Exposition in 1900. The setting belonged to Andalusia under Muslim Moor rule

²⁸⁴ Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada, "Spanish Orientalism: Uses of the Past in Spain's Colonization in Africa." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 2003: 141-148. (p.141)

²⁸⁵ Gayle Nunley refers to a more biological factor to explain the proximity of Spain to the Moroccans which she describes as "... both by genetic inheritance and temperament modern day Spaniards possess a far higher degree of cultural kinship with North Africa than Europe." (Nunley, 2007 p.156)

²⁸⁶ "Cortés labeled the Mayan temples *mezquitas* [mosques], because that was his reference for an alien faith" (Tofiño-Quesada, 2003 p.142)

²⁸⁷ Visigothic, Catholic, Castilian, Medieval, Muslim (although only temporarily) Spain were among the many. (Ibid p.142)

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p.146. In two places in his travel account Vicente Blasco Ibañez refers to Andalucía. He likens the prayers from the minarets to the Andalusian songs called *saetas*. Towards the end of his account he mentions his last trip to Bursa names the city as the “Granada of the Turks” –probably in reference to its history as the capital city of the early Ottoman Empire. (Ibañez, 2004 p.239)

²⁸⁹ Ibañez , 2004, p.142. With the Moorish character, Spain ‘embraced’ Islam as well as the ‘common’ past and geographical proximity with the Moors of Morocco to reinforce the “innate African vocation” as opposed to the civilizing mission. (ibid p.143)

²⁹⁰ Tofiño-Quesada identifies the irony of the Spanish colonial discourse: “recognition that Spain wanted both to exploit its Islamic past (in the image of an innate African vocation) and to efface it (in the image of the Christian nation and its missionary ambitions).(Ibid., p.143)

however some things were not quite right: It depicted the Golden Age of the Moors²⁹¹ but was not fully representative of Islam or the Moors but displayed a more African character.²⁹²

While trying to decipher this Muslim city, Blasco Ibañez's immediate reference point was Andalusia of the Moors. This was may be part of a nostalgia that Joan Torres-Pou mentions.²⁹³ Blasco Ibañez likened the prayers from the minarets to the *saetas*²⁹⁴ of Andalusia. He referred to the Jews and their role in the city and called the Jews, which he saw on the bridge and the streets, as "compatriots" and their neighborhood "Spanish neighborhood."²⁹⁵ At the end of his journey he mentioned that he made an excursion to Bursa which he called as the "Turkish Granada"²⁹⁶ While Gabriel de Aristizabal (like the other Spanish officials) who visited Istanbul as the Rear Admiral of the Spanish Navy at the end of 18th century despised the Ottomans as he blamed them with obstructing the posterity of the works of Praxiteles, Lysippus with their barbarity,²⁹⁷ Blasco Ibañez noted that the fanaticism of the Byzantines was replaced with the superstitions of the Muslims.²⁹⁸ He did not feel at all intimidated or frustrated with the

²⁹¹ Gayle Nunley mentions that "Oriental" Spain was made up of Andalusia through the recreation of Medieval Moorish ambiance of Al-Andalus. (Nunley, 2007 p. 128)

²⁹² Roger Benjamin, "Andalusia in the Time of the Moors: Regret and Colonial Presence in Paris,1900." In *Edges of Empire Orientalism and Visual Culture*, Mary Roberts and Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones (eds.), 181-205. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp.192-201.This appropriation is related to what Edward Said identified in British and French perception of the Orient: they saw the Orient as a geographical, cultural and political entity over whose destiny they believed themselves to have traditional entitlement. (Said, *Orientalism*, 2003 p. 221)

²⁹³ "Spain both an object of rejection and recognition is a constant reason of nostalgia for the Spanish; nostalgia of an identity which could have been ours, but in a crucial moment of our history we sacrificed it at the cost of our decision to identify ourselves with Christianity and Europe." Joan Torres-Pou, "El Viaje a Oriente en la Literatura Femenina Española: Carmen de Burgos, Aurora Bertrana y Rosa Regas." *Neophilologus*, 2006: 39-51.(p.40)

²⁹⁴ *Saetas* are the short songs sung in religious ceremonies during the Holy Week in Andalusia.

²⁹⁵ Ibañez, 2004 p.111, 239

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.239. "compatriota", "barrio de los españoles"

²⁹⁷ Ricardo Gonzalez Castrillo, *El Viaje de Gabriel de Aristizabal a Constantinopla en 1784*. Madrid: Fundacion Universitaria Española, 1997, p.103

²⁹⁸ Ibañez, 2004 p.223

Turks, the chaos nor the crowds: “To go out on the street in Istanbul is the same as a street in Madrid. Every face reminds a name. [...] My dear friend Lopez... or dear Fernandez: enough of jokes! Take off the red hat, I recognized you!” and he added “In Istanbul there is nothing old left but even with its Muslim aspects it is beautiful.”²⁹⁹

Although E.C. Graf claims that one of the earliest interpellations of the ideology of early modern Spanish orientalism is Cervantes’ famous work *El Ingenioso Hidalgo don Quijote de la Mancha* with its deconstructed national and colonial period of Spanish history,³⁰⁰ Bernabe Lopez-Garcia dates it to the beginnings of Spanish Orientalism with the emergence of the Bourbon political interest in the Mediterranean and North Africa - baptised as Spain’s own domestic Orient³⁰¹ - in the 18th century. He further adds that as opposed to other Romantic movements, Spanish Romanticism finds its domestic Orient on its own land.³⁰² While Orientalism in Europe facilitated trade and politics from 18th century onwards, Spain with the political instability in the 19th century could not develop a policy towards North Africa. Lopez Garcia points to the parallel between the rising interest in Africa after the war between 1859 and 1860 and the establishment of Arabic Studies with the rise of Africanist movement in 1880 as well as the Royal Geographic Society, Spanish Association for the Exploration of Africa.³⁰³ These are also the same years when Spanish Orientalist painting was at its peak. Painters such as Mariano Fortuny y Marsal, Ricardo de Madrazo and Emilio Sala who captured the sights the Orient which focused mostly on Morocco due to its historical

²⁹⁹ Ibañez, 2004, pp.99, 103 “Ir por una calle de Constantinopla es casi lo mismo que por una calle de Madrid. Cada cara recuerda un nombre. A veces se duda al cruzar la mirada con los ojos de un transeunte, y se lleva la mano al sombrero para saludar. Se cree uno en Carnaval y dan ganas de decir : - Amigp Lopez... o amigo Fernandez:¡basta de broma! ¡Quitese el gorrito rojo, que le he conocido.!” “ Nada queda en Constantinopla del pasado; pero cuan hermosa es con su aspecto musulman!”

³⁰⁰Graf, E. C. "When an Arab Laughs in Toledo: Cervantes's Interpellation of Early Modern Spanish." *Diacritics Vol. 29, No. 2, Summer, 1999, p.72*

³⁰¹ Pablo Martin Asuero describes the Spanish perception of the Orient to span from Maghreb to Japan. Spanish Orientalists of the 19th century described the oriental cultures as Egyptians in Antiquity, Jewish, Arabic, African and Spanish. The Spaniards could access the Orient via crossing the Iberian Peninsula while as opposed to the French and the British.(Asuero, 2005 p.30-31)

³⁰² Bernabe Lopez-Garcia, "Arabismo y Orientalismo en España: Radiografía y Diagnostica de un Gremio Escaso y Apartadizo." *Awraq*, 1990, pp.6-7

³⁰³ Ibid p.16

and geographical proximity. Eduardo Dizy-Caso mentions that the images reflected from the Orientalist paintings were translated into the travel accounts.³⁰⁴

The preliminary note of the journal *Al-Andalus* in 1933 provides a closer look at the definition of Spanish *Arabismo* (Arabism), which was the earliest phase of the Orientalist studies in Spain, affirms the interest in its identity so as to “bridge” the people of North Africa and in particular Morocco with Spain along with France. Unlike other European powers Arabism for the Spanish was not a pure scientific curiosity or an imperial/mercantile fervor but it was an intimate necessity due to historical ties.³⁰⁵ Lopez-Garcia notes that modern Spanish Orientalism’s “Arabic” facet in 18th century began with the excavations of Alhambra palace by one of the Spanish Arabists Pascual de Gayangos who had been a ‘disciple’ of Silvestre de Sacy. The Spanish Arabists “had a task which other European Arabists did not have: they had to get the history of Al-Andalus incorporated into Spanish history, in this “history of the Arabs in Spain” had to become “the Arabic history of Spain”.³⁰⁶ It was necessary to enter into the myth of *Al-Andalus* (Andalucía) in order for Spaniards to feel proud of this part of their collective history. This interest would continue with the Romantics who distinctly from other European nations looked for inspiration in their domestic “Orient” i.e. Andalucía.³⁰⁷ Many of the Arabic studies departments were established in the 19th century. The diversion from Spanish Arabismo –which Bernabe Lopez Garcia considers it to be a peripheral Orientalism- towards *Africanismo*(Africanism) happened at the same time with the establishment of the Spanish protectorate and its failure in Morocco.³⁰⁸ Geoffrey Jensen and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara distinguish the Spanish colonial enterprise from its British and the French counterparts in the North Africa in

³⁰⁴ Dizy-Caso, Eduardo. *Los Orientalistas de la Escuela Española*. Paris: ACR Edition, 1997, p.14-17 and 10. There is also a trend to paint Spanish topics in the style of the Old Spanish Masters called *espanjolisme* which was popular in the 19th century France. See Lundström, Marie-Sofie. "A Romantic in Spain: The Finnish Nineteenth-Century Painter Albert Edelfelt's Andalusian Dream." *Journal of Intercultural Studies* Vol. 27 No. 3, August 2006, pp.332-334.

³⁰⁵ Lopez-Garcia, 1990, p.5

³⁰⁶ Rubiera-Mata, Maria Jesús, and Mikel de Epalza. "Al-Andalus: Between Myth and History." *History and Anthropology* Vol. 18, No. 3, September 2007, p.271

³⁰⁷ Lopez-Garcia, 1990, p.7

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1990, p.18

the 20th century and refer to the tolerance demonstrated by the Spanish to the Moroccans which did not instigate hatred towards the Spanish in the post-colonial era.³⁰⁹

At the beginning of the 20th century, Spanish Empire could not assume the role of the “emissary of European civilization” in the non-European lands due to the precarious state of Spain as a colonial power.³¹⁰ Vicente Blasco Ibañez, assumed a European traveler identity and claimed on the basis of race and modernization that the Turks were Europeans. He did not assume the colonial disparaging tone of the Anglo-Saxon travelers.³¹¹ Vicente Blasco Ibañez was well aware of the race for colonization between the empires and disdained the United States, Britain and France for it. This is manifested in his look towards the Turks and in his travel account in general. He established a relationship of victim and the victimized between the Ottoman Empire and great colonizing powers of the day. Often he referred to the colonizing powers in his account as “opportunists”, “wolves”, and “greedy” while the Ottomans were the “great sick man” and “soft bread”. According to Ibañez, the non-Muslim minorities was also complicating the situation of the Turks, as the Turks turned from “the landlord to a miserable tenant in his own land.”³¹² In the same way, due to the support the non-Muslim minorities received from these powers; Blasco Ibañez was not very supportive of their causes either.³¹³

Pablo Martin Asuero may clarify why Vicente Blasco Ibañez preferred to identify himself with the “Sick Man of Europe”. He notes that there were many similarities with the Spanish and the Ottoman Empires especially between the 18th and

³⁰⁹ See the articles of Geoffrey Jensen, "The Peculiarities of 'Spanish Morocco': Imperial Ideology and Economic Development." *Mediterranean Historical Review Vol. 20, No. 1*, June 2005, p.92-96 and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, "La España Ultramarina: Colonialism and Nation-building in Nineteenth-century Spain." *European History Quarterly No: 34*, 2004, p.209.

³¹⁰ Nunley, 2007 p.134

³¹¹ As Edward Said points out in his work *Culture and Imperialism* that the British and French imperial experience has a unique coherence and special cultural centrality compared to the Spanish, Russian or Austro-Hungarian experiences. (Said, 1994 p.xxv)

³¹² Ibañez, 2004 p.97. “De propietario pasa insensiblemente a ser misero arrendatario de la tierra que cultiva [...].”

³¹³ *Ibid.*, p.130-131

20th centuries in the path to ‘modernize’: “[...] both empires would go struggle to catch up with the Enlightenment, experience the hardships caused in the international arena, suffer the invasions of Napoleon, witness the independence of their dominions, experience constitutional government and republic.”³¹⁴ He adds that if the Ottomans were the “Sick Man of Europe” the Spanish were the “Sick Man of America”.³¹⁵ The loss of their dominions would oblige them both to revisit their policies and consider the adoption of the models of the affluent European states of their period against a conservative opposition. With the facilitation of travel on land and sea, both empires continued to receive many travelers. Despite the efforts to modernize the travel accounts reveal that the both lands evoked “Oriental” images in their mental maps-as part of the Romantic Orientalist travel genre.³¹⁶

As I have explained in the previous chapter for some European writers of the 19th century, Spain was the “Other” in Europe. Spain was referred as the borderline between civilization and barbarity as “Africa starts at the Pyrenees” - a popular French saying- encapsulated Spain’s circumstances: its marginalization with the loss of the overseas dominions in the age of colonization and association with the Moors.³¹⁷ In many works the Spaniards were attributed with mostly Oriental characteristics of exoticism. “Foreign travelers found in nineteenth century Spain an Orient *à la carte*: exotic enough to be interesting, but not so different as to be considered completely alien.”³¹⁸ Literary works such Carmen mirror the Orientalist discourse. Spain’s exotic image was generally revolving around Andalusia, gypsies and in many works Southern Spain was referred in reference to women and descriptions suggestive of an erotic Harem.³¹⁹ Adding to the ambiguity, Alfred Vigny called the Spaniards as the “Catholic

³¹⁴ Pablo Martin Asuero, "İspanya-Türkiye, 1700-1923." *İspanya-Türkiye, 16. Yüzyıldan 21. Yüzyıla Rekabet ve Dostluk*. Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2006. 261-274.(p.261)

³¹⁵ Ibid., p. 265

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 269

³¹⁷ Nunley, 2007 p. 137

³¹⁸ Tofiño-Quesada, 2003 p.142

³¹⁹ José F. Colmeiro, "Exorcising Exoticism: "Carmen" and the Construction of Oriental Spain ." *Comparative Literature*, 2002: 127-144.(pp. 132,136)

Turks” and Victor Hugo identified them as “half-African”.³²⁰ All of these descriptions reflected their European and Oriental characteristics i.e. “partly civilized yet exotic and dangerous.”³²¹ The cultural works on Spain as well as the travel accounts, Orientalized so as to convert Spain into a backward, exotic, mythical non-European space.³²²

While the image of the Ottomans, as different texts reveal, is based on quite essentialist and pejorative attributions, the Spanish Empire was not any different. Both were facing defamation campaigns by the colonizing powers in the 19th century. The Cuban War between Spain and the United States (1895-1898) turned into a media war. Allegations of cruelty and exploitation in Spain’s colonial enterprise in Cuba were added to the Black Legend literature which prevailed since the 15th century³²³ and was publicized to the world in the United States, Britain and France.³²⁴ With the massacres of the non-Muslim populations in the Balkans and in the East in last decades of 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was also facing protests. Vicente Blasco Ibañez expressed his indignation towards these campaigns and the imaginary conception around the Turks which he found unjust given their qualities. Blasco Ibañez likened the situation to that of Spain: “its truth [of the Turkish image] is equal to the thoughts of the elderly men in Holland or Netherlands about us; upon hearing the name of Spain they imagine that they will be taken to Inquisition if they make a simple mistake in their prayers [...]”³²⁵ He blamed Western Europe for setting their eyes on the remaining territories of

³²⁰ Colmeiro, 2002, p. 131

³²¹ Ibid., p. 137

³²² Ignacio Tofiño-Quesada mentions a paradox of the Spanish Orientalism: Spain which as part of its colonial character Orientalizes but is also Orientalized. Tofiño-Quesada, 2003 p.143

³²³ Jonathan Hart, *Empires and Colonies*. Cambridge : Polity, 2008, p.64. The Black Legend then was translated and extended by the French and the British in 16th century, due to a conflict over the colonies. Thus an anti-Spanish rhetoric arose. (p.73-5)

³²⁴ Ibid., p.187

³²⁵ Ibañez, 2004, p. 95. “Existe una concepcion imaginaria del turco es la que acepta el vulgo en toda Europa. Segun ella, el turco es un barbaro, sensual, capaz de las mayors ferocidades, que pasa la vida entre cabezas cortadas o escalavas que danzan desplegando sus voluptuosidad de odalisca. Con igual exactitud piensan sobre nosotros los viejos de Holanda o los Paisas Bajos, los cuales no puede oir hablar de España sin imaginarse un pais de implecables inquisidores, capaces de quemar por una simple errata en una oracion, y donde todos los ciudadanos somos duros e inexorable como el antiguo duque de Alba.”

the Ottoman Empire.³²⁶ Vicente Blasco Ibañez would be able to share his fury about what he called “Hispanophobia” generated by the French and the British a year and half later in Argentina.³²⁷ I interpret his views in the account as an amplification of his attitude towards the colonial game of Western Europe, identification with the precarious state of the Ottoman Empire as well as an outburst of his ambiguous passionate personality.

The exact motivations and circumstance of a traveler in an account can never be completely comprehended thus every account presents its own subjectivity to the reader. Vicente Blasco Ibañez was one of the few Spanish travelers to the Ottoman land at a crucial period of transformation. His prior knowledge of the Romantic travel literature as well as the stereotypes of the Turks prevalent in Spanish texts certainly helped him form an image. His visit to the Ottoman capital takes place within the first decade after the great colonial loss. This incident was one of the defining moments in the Spanish history in many ways. The combination of all this as a mental luggage may have led Blasco Ibañez to evaluate his experiences through a different lens. Vicente Blasco Ibañez was aware of the Ottoman idiosyncrasies and was among the few that sympathized with them. At the end of his journey back when his train derailed near Budapest and he had to walk to the station on foot, he wrote: “I am entering Europe, on foot, through the fields, taking my belongings on my shoulder, just like an eastern invader that was attracted to the splendors of the West centuries ago.”³²⁸

³²⁶ Ibañez, 2004, p.98

³²⁷ Ibañez, 1966, p.54-60

³²⁸ Ibañez, 2004, p.245. “Y así entro en la verdadera Europa, a pie, al través de los campos, llevando mi hatillo al hombro, lo mismo que un invasor oriental de hace siglos atraído por los esplendores de Occidente.”

CONCLUSION

The account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez not only sheds a light on the Ottoman Empire and its perception by a Spaniard in the first decade of the 20th century but also helps decipher the Spanish society and the mental underpinnings of the time. The travel account produced by Ibañez is neither the first nor the last of its kind. It is part of a genre that has been developing over the centuries. The travel account can be considered as a mere cultural work of a certain time as Edward Said says but it is also a part of a genre. Travel narratives of the colonial world constitute a genre that served to photograph a certain land or society while disseminating inevitably certain images and notions associated with it. In that respect it can be considered as a “vessel”. The restructuring efforts of the Oriental scholars of the 19th and 20th century made the genre (together with novels) not only the end product but also a means to an end.³²⁹

In his monumental work *Orientalism* Edward Said explains the process of “Orientalization” and its devices. Along with novels, the travel accounts contribute to the creation an imaginary Orient. He claims that this was a rather systematical effort on the side of the colonial officials, Oriental scholars. There were several elements to this man-made Orient. The description of the Orient was made up of essentialist elements (geography, character or climate) and was lacking order as Edward Said mentions. The colonial projects and the theory of racial hierarchy of peoples were in full bloom and eventually this process of colonization took the upper hand to organize the knowledge and to offer a methodology to ‘understand’ and ‘represent’ the Orient.

While it would not be correct to attribute a monolithic characteristic to the travel writing genre, institutionalization of some of the stereotypes was perpetrated by the genre and the travels to the Orient merit a special place. Although the notions about the Orient also changed over time, the stereotypes remained in the collective mind of Europe. Stuart Hall explains this as a classification of people according to a norm and

³²⁹ Said, 2003, p.193

constructing the excluded as “Other” which is essentialist and reductionist in nature.³³⁰ Such was elaboration of the Ottoman image in the eyes of the Europeans throughout the ages. The relation was not only depicted with brutality, barbarity, associated with a hegemonic power struggle of states and religions but also lustfulness excessive luxury-only to change with the political decline of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century.

The account of Vicente Blasco Ibañez is part of the genre in many ways but also exhibits peculiarities that can be associated with the particular situation of the Spanish state at the turn of the 20th century. By the middle of 19th century most of Spain’s colonies in Latin America declared their independence and by 1898 Spain lost its overseas colonies Cuba, Philippines and Puerto Rico to the United States. This was a disgrace for an empire that ‘discovered’ and ‘subdued’ the South American continent for over three hundred years. The “Disaster” had socio-economic consequences on the Empire. It did not only result in a tumultuous political period (where there would be experiments with monarchical, constitutional, republican and dictatorial rule between 1868 and 1923) but also left its mark on the intellectual spheres of the country. It is no surprise that the Spanish modernization in education started to take place in the middle of 19th century. The loss of the dominions meant the loss of resources and markets for the different regions of Spain specialized in certain industries. The regional movements gathered strength and ironically the Spanish identity was in the making.

Spanish identity in its modern sense was a new concept for a land that was historically made up of different entities. There were different ethnic groups that were not always in harmony with each other. Actually it would not be before the *Reconquista* that they would be united under the rule of one house. Despite the religious differences, the Spaniards did not hold grudges against the Moorish rule that lasted for approximately eight-hundred years before the *Reconquista*. This period for them signified -or was constructed as- the coexistence of different ethnic groups and religions (*la convivencia*) so much so that the Spanish government saw no harm in setting up the

³³⁰ Stuart Hall, "The Spectacle of the 'Other'." In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, by ed. Stuart Hall, 223-290. Glasgow: Sage Publications Ltd., 1997, pp.257-259.

Spanish pavilion in the form of Andalusia in the Time of the Moors in the 1900 Exposition in Paris.³³¹

As a result of my analysis of the travel account, I observed that Vicente Blasco Ibañez displayed an ambivalent approach which was differing in some ways from the British and French travel writing that Edward Said criticized. This could be related to the author's colorful personality as well as the conjuncture that Spain was in at the beginning of 20th century. While the French and the British invested in their colonies for the long term to keep them profitable, Said notes that the Spanish quest lasted shorter.³³² The colonial expansion of the European powers was not happening simultaneously thus as the British and the French were expanding their share, the Spanish tried to grasp a niche after the "Disaster". By 19th century Spain actually constituted a part of the 'Oriental' and exotic vision of Western Europe despite the fact that it chose to identify herself within Europe. In Blasco Ibañez's perception of the "Orient", the city and its people (ethnic groups, women, and sultan) have been Orientalized to a certain extent. Vicente Blasco Ibañez produced his "Orient" with the imagery of the Romantic stereotypes but also added his experience in Istanbul and mental luggage. The depictions of the people and the city reflect this influence of the Oriental travel literature however Vicente Blasco Ibañez rarely assumes the vanity of a high handed colonial officer when he passes judgment. He sympathized with the 'sick man of Europe' and notes at one point that without the fezzes he would have felt home.³³³ Spain's historical circumstances, historical heritage as well as the writer's passionate political and literary persona are all constituents of this Spanish gaze.

Last but not least this endeavor not only familiarized me with the Spanish travel literature and the 20th century Orientalist structures but brought back some childhood memories. Soon after I learned how to read and write I remember myself devouring the

³³¹ Benjamin, 2005 p.184-5. Roger Benjamin's article provides further information about the background of the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris and the Spanish delegation. I would like to argue that the choice of representation not only reflects a "constructed" sense of internal harmony but also a political decision to rationalize the late Spanish colonial ambitions. While Benjamin relates this to the competition between the Spanish and the French.

³³² Said, 1994, p.107

³³³ Ibañez, 2004, p.95, 99

volumes of *Tintin*. His adventures took me to continents I have never seen and introduced me to the ‘exotic’ cultures. As a first grader I was intrigued by his journeys without ever realizing the paradigm they were written in. I would recognize Hergé’s racist, pro-colonial characterizations much later. The ‘eccentricities’ -or rather the stereotypes- that made me laugh were the product of an enterprise colonized and rationalized it. Thus this study was also an unpleasant confrontation with the constructed images that I took for granted in my childhood.

As a final note I would like to comment on the shortcomings of my research and to suggest possible areas further research. While the British and French domains generated more research in proportion with the extent of their imperial reach and artistic production, Spanish Orientalism seems to be an area not much explored. My study is based on the narrative of Vicente Blasco Ibañez and presents a Spanish gaze over the Orient at the beginning of 20th century. He was also a well-known novelist of his time thus the survey could have been extended to his novels. The analysis could as well be broadened over the Spanish literary corpus to be able to fully grasp the idea of Spanish imperial enterprise. The combination of such an analysis with other forms of cultural expression such as painting and architecture will also yield a multi-dimensional study to better understand the mechanics of the Spanish society.

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