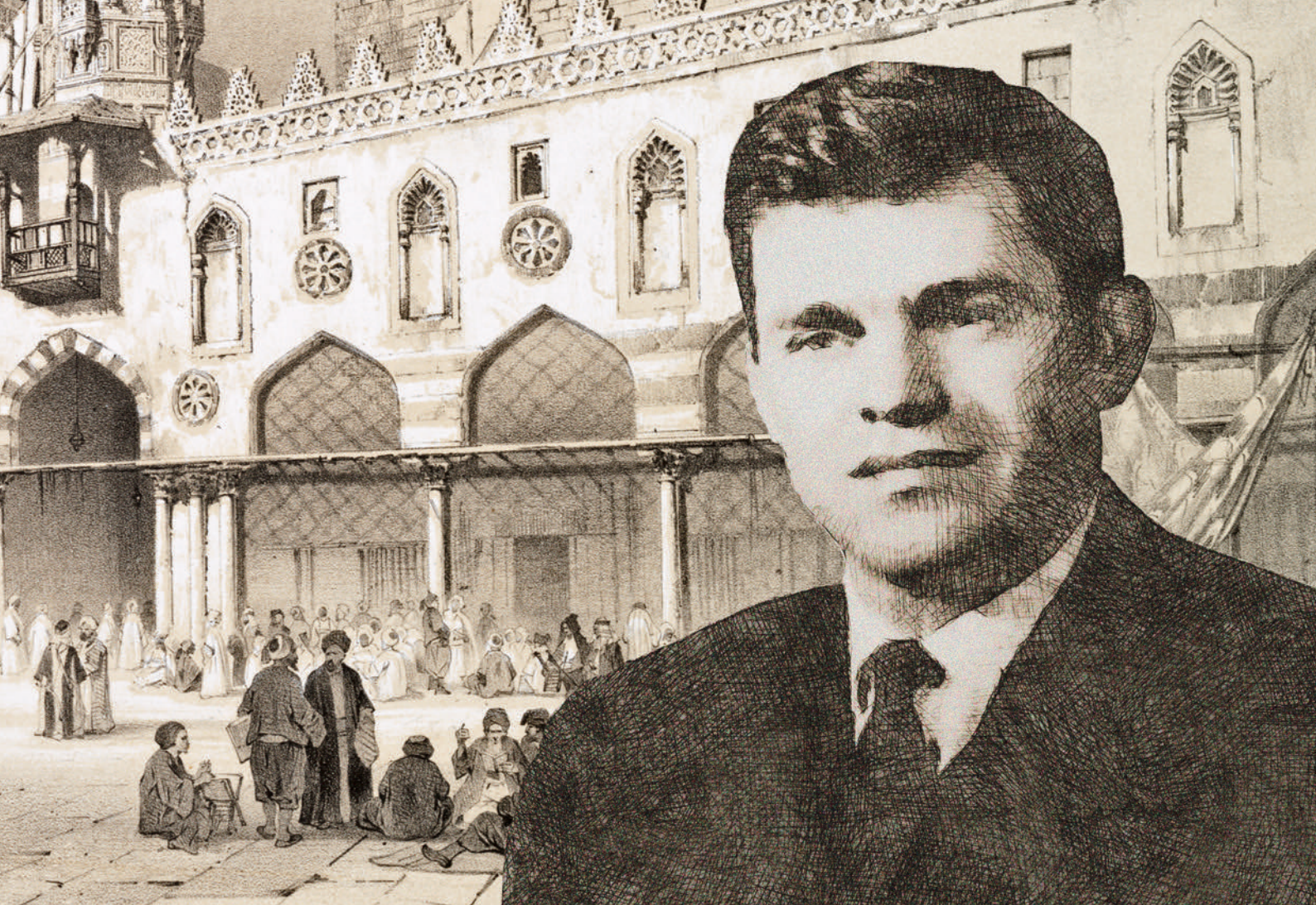




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Dr. AHMED SMAJLOVIĆ I ORIJENTALIZAM

Dr AHMED SMAJLOVIĆ AND ORIENTALISM

Abstract

This work is dedicated to the character and work of Dr Ahmed Smajlović with a focus on his attitude towards *Orientalism*. The intention is to examine an extent of influence of Orientalism on Arab thought and literature according to dr Smajlović. It is an attempt to outline Dr Smajlović's profile of *Orientalists* and an Arab thinkers - similarities and differences between them as well as to make an assessment of his attitude toward *Orientalism* both in the West and the Arab world. This paper aims to present the contribution of dr Smajlović's comprehension of Western *Orientalism* in the context of an Arab-Islamic culture and tradition.

Key words: *childhood, youth, student age, official activism, Orientalism, Orientalists, modern Arab thinkers, literature, Islamic culture and civilization*

Dr AHMED SMAJLOVIĆ AND ORIENTALISM

Introduction

I have long intended to express my respect for the life and work of Dr Ahmed Smajlović, for several reasons: **First**, I felt the need to become more familiar with the character and work of a man who indirectly influenced my place of birth. Namely, my father^{▼1} was lucky enough to study at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo (1974-1978) at a time when Dr Smajlović had completed his many years of studies at that very university.^{▼2}

Second, although I did not have the opportunity to meet Dr Smajlović personally, my father had a love and respect for him, through the story of his character and work and his great contribution to the development and progress of the Islamic Community in our country. Therefore, I wish to emphasize that this article was written largely through counsel, stories and all kinds of help from my father, who guided me and pointed out some details of the character and work of Dr Smajlović, which are not available in the public literature. Also, the fact that the mother of Dr Smajlović, Aiša-hanuma, was killed in Bratunac in 1992 together with her daughters Halima and Eneza by the Serbian soldiers and that the remains of his mother have not been found even to this day, cannot leave anyone indifferent. Hence, my choice of this topic became more and more important as a debt to Dr Smajlović, whom the Merciful Allah called to Himself in August 1988 before the genocide in Srebrenica.

Third, students, friends and colleagues of Dr Smajlović were left with a good record of his biography. However, one account of his life through four recognizable periods was missing: a) childhood; b) youth; c) student years; and d) the era of the official activism of Dr Smajlović. I tried to make up for that shortcoming as much as possible in this paper.

^{▼1} My father is Mustafa Cerić, the Grand Mufti of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1993-2012.

^{▼2} Professor Džemal ef. Salihsahić from the village of Veliko Čajno near Visoko, a cousin and neighbour of my father, wrote a letter of recommendation to Dr Smajlović to take care of my father at Al-Azhar. That letter greatly helped him not only to adapt to student life in Cairo, but also later when Dr Smajlović assumed positions of authority in the Islamic Community. After completing his studies (1974), Dr Smajlović handed up the apartment where he lived in the centre of Cairo, the Abdulkhāliq Tharwat street, to his nephew, the late Mesud Hafizović, and after he finished his studies, Dr Smajlović entrusted that apartment to my father. For this reason, Dr Smajlović used to say that the three of them were brothers. Due to this relationship, a decree to my father followed in 1981 from Dr Smajlović, then the President of the Eldership of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, to succeed Imam Ćamil Avdić in Chicago. Thus, fate wanted me born in Chicago in September 1981.

Fourth, although the bibliography of Dr Smajlović is vast, it seems necessary to single out his capital work: *Falsafat al-istishrāq wa atharuhā fī al-adab al-‘arabī al-mu‘āṣir* (779 pages), which, to our sincere delight, was translated into Bosnian by Dr Mehmed Kico (718 pages). The work represents an encyclopaedic undertaking, which requires serious reading and comprehension because it contains extensive material with important information on the relationship between East and West, or rather, the relationship between the West and the Arab-Islamic world. The selected subject in the very title of the work is no less important today than it was at the time of Dr Smajlović. Also, through this work, we tried to show the most important points of the relationship between *Orientalism* and *Orientalists* towards Arab-Islamic culture and civilization according to Dr Smajlović. We are aware that this is just a drop in a sea of data and analysis offered by Dr Smajlović that we should read, understood and analyse.

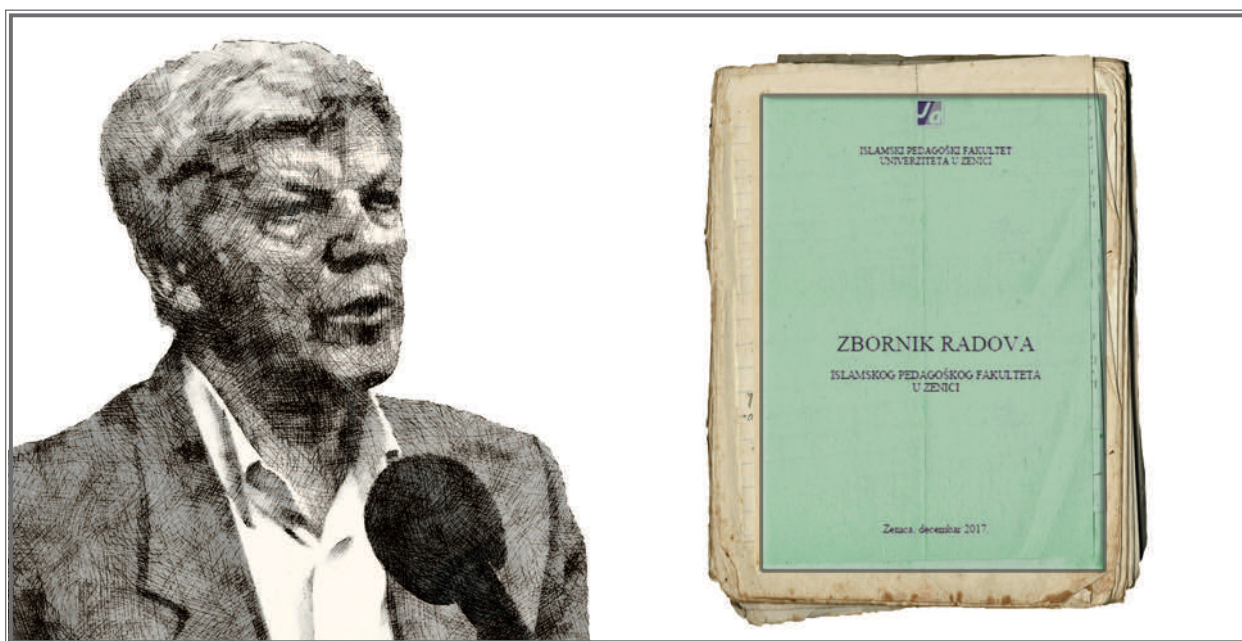


ILLUSTRATION ~ Kico, Mehmed and Beglerović, Samir. „Review of the book "Oriental Philosophy and its Impact on Modern Arabic Literature" by Ahmed Smajlović. *Collection of papers*, Faculty of Islamic Pedagogy, University of Zenica, 2017. (Archive of Akšamija)

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Kico, Mehmed i Beglerović, Samir. Prikaz knjige „Filozofija orijentalistike i njezin utjecaj na modernu arapsku književnost“ autora Ahmeda Smajlovića. *Zbornik radova*, Islamski pedagoški fakultet Univerziteta u Zenici 2017.

Fifth, personally I may not have been as aware at first as I am now of how indebted the Bosniak people are to Dr Smajlović, especially the Islamic Community, with his knowledge and wisdom at a time when it was necessary to have the courage to hear the voice of Islam in the mountainous Balkans. Therefore, I am grateful to all who supported me write this paper by giving me the opportunity to give back in kind to the man who influenced my destiny not only in Chicago, but also in Sarajevo.

Life and Work of Dr Ahmed Smajlović

Dr Smajlović did not leave any formal record of his childhood, youth, student days and years of official activity, nor did he want anyone to write his biography during his lifetime. Only after his early death, his students, acquaintances, and friends spoke about his life and work through scientific meetings and round tables. It has long been acknowledged that there are serious deficiencies and problems related to the biography of the '*uulamā*' (Muslim scholars). In part, this essay is an aggregate of stories and official reports that emerge in the Bosnian language historical literature and archives, considering the personal interactions between multiple individuals, their personal and professional aims, accomplishments, as well as their various beliefs and customs. Among the scientific gatherings, I would single out the "Scientific Conference" on the topic: *The Muslim Scholars of Srebrenica and Their Role in The Spiritual and Social Life of Bosniaks*. This conference was held in Srebrenica on July 6, 2021, organized by the "Institute for Social and Religious Research" under the Mufti of Tuzla.^{▼3} In the summary of his report, Muharem Omerdić said, among other things that Ahmed Smajlović:

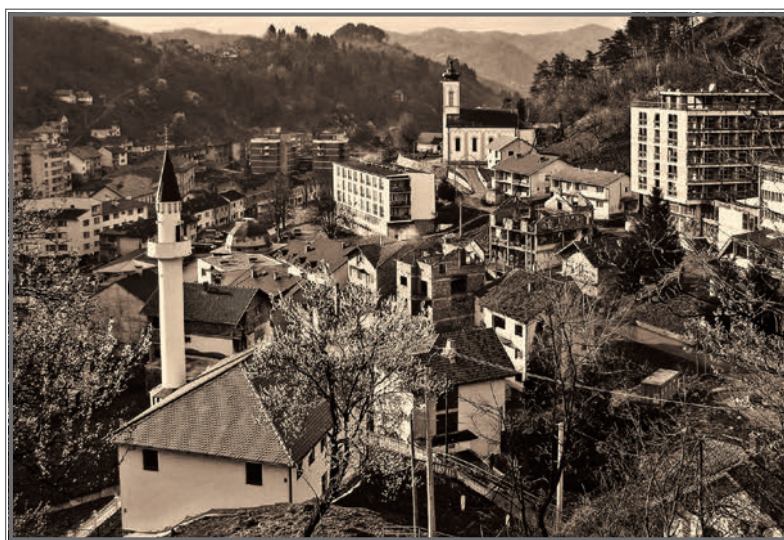


ILLUSTRATION – The central part of Srebrenica, the 20th century. (Archive of Akšamija)

ILUSTRACIJA – Centralni dio Srebrenice, 20. stoljeće. (Arhiv Akšamija)

^{▼3} See: „*The Muslim Scholars of Srebrenica and Their Role in The Spiritual and Social Life of Bosniaks*“, *Collection of Papers*, Tuzla/Srebrenica, 2022. A notable report on the biography and more detailed bibliography of Dr Smajlović was presented at this conference by his close and faithful associate Muharem ef. Omerdić under the title: "Professor Dr Ahmed Smajlović (1938-1988): "World Renowned Muslim Scholar", p. 151-188. See: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2a-hUKEwjS6YXvipeAAxWuiP0HHd2IAqkQFnoECA0QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Filmijja.ba%2F2021%2F07%2F08%2Fu-srebrenici-odrza-na-naucna-konferencija-alimi-srebrenice-i-njihova-uloga-u-duhovnom-i-drustvenom-zivotu-bosnjaka%2F&usg=AOvVaw2hOkCoke-2jQzHO-yDW7fj&opi=89978449>. Last accessed: 18.07.2023.

[...] served as the Chief of Staff of the Cabinet of the Grand Mufti, was is the president of the Eldership of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, was a lecturer at the Gaza Husrev-bey Madrasa and a professor at the Faculty of Islamic Theology in Sarajevo; he was affirmed as a representative of Bosnian Muslims, a member of numerous international scientific Islamic institutions, a participant and speaker at numerous scientific meetings around the world; an extraordinary speaker, orator and preacher in Bosnian and Arabic; it is appreciated that with his staidness, demeanour and attitude he left a deep impression of a strong and authoritative personality and religious leader. ▼⁴

From the special academic memories of Dr Smajlović, we should single out the memory on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his death under the title "Dr Ahmed Smajlović, Life and Work" organized by the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo on December 23, 2008.⁵ At this gathering, thirty papers were submitted on the biography and corpus of Dr Smajlović, attended by Grand Mufti Dr Mustafa Cerić, who on that occasion said, among other things:

[...] It was always expected from Dr Ahmed Smajlović to remain fresh and interesting in his lectures; to change the Islamic Community from the inside from top to bottom; to expand the presence of the Islamic Community in public life; to stand firm and upright before the Communist authorities; to spread the truth about the position of Muslims in the former Yugoslavia in the world and to fulfil almost every unfulfilled desire of Muslims because Dr Ahmed Smajlović was different from everyone in the Islamic Community at that time with his appearance, intelligence and courage. ▼⁶



ILLUSTRATION ~ Dr Ahmed ef. Smajlović during the awarding of diplomas for successful completion of schooling at the Gazi Husrev-bey's madrasa.
ILUSTRACIJA ~ Dr. Ahmed ef. Smajlović prilikom dodjele diploma za uspješno okončano školovanje na Gazi Husrev-begovoj medresi.

▼⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

▼⁵ See: *Collection of Papers*, year XXVIII, 2009, No. 13, on the occasion of the 20th Annivry of the Death of Dr Ahmed Smajlović (1938-1988). See: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewiipcbJ1pCAAxVBgP0HHc46BdsQF-noECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.islamskazajednica.ba%2Findex.php%2Fmina-vijesti-arhiva%2F5559-fin-dr-ahmed-smajlovi-ivot-i-djelo&usg=AOvVaw3e-BkVOllaklGos_TPm6-4&opi=89978449. Last accessed: 18.07.2023.

▼⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Of particular importance is the testimony about the life and work of Dr. Smajlović from his lifelong companion, comrade and friend from the Cairo days, Dr Jusuf Ramić, who dedicated a kind of tribute to him in the magazine *Znakovi vremena* under the title *Life and work of Professor Dr Ahmed Smajlović*.^{▼7} Here, Dr Ramić reveals that Ahmed Smajlović:

[...] in his short life published over 250 works, original and translated, on various Islamic topics, several translations of brochures and books in Bosnian and Arabic.^{▼8}

Based on these testimonies, the five-decade life (1938-1988) and work of Dr Ahmed Smajlović, can be divided into four recognizable age periods: (1) childhood; (2) youth; (3) student age; and (4) age of official activity.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Dr Ahmed ef. Smajlović in the White Mosque with other congregations in the area of Srebrenica.
ILUSTRACIJA ~ Dr. Ahmed ef. Smajlović u Bijeloj džamiji sa ostalim džematlijama na području Srebrenice.

▼7 See: *Signs of the Time*, Sarajevo, spring-summer 2007, Vol. 10, double issue, 35/36, p. 10-18. See: https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewjtlW6j-H_AhXkQvEDHTLSAaoQFnoECAwQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ibn-sina.net%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2008%2F05%2F010_JUSUF_RAMIC.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1LaEaK0BAomdYGccp14IAB&opi=89978449. Last accessed: 18.07.2023. Compare - Bušatlić, Ismet: „Bibliography of the Published Work of Ahmed Smajlović“. *Islamic thought*, X, 116, 1988.

▼8 *Ibid.*, p. 15.



ILLUSTRATION ~ After finishing the four-year school in the local community of Krnjići, near Srebrenica, Alije-efendi's father sent him to further education, and a little later he decided to travel far away. (Archive of Akšamija)

Childhood

born in the village of Tokoljaci^{▼9} near Srebrenica between the two world wars in 1938, Ahmed, the son of Alija-efendija^{▼10} and Aiša-hanuma, did not have a luxurious childhood. As a seventh child, he could not even dream that one day his star would shine in the sky of Cairo. It can be assumed, however, that Ahmed's father Alija-efendija, an imam and registrar in Bratunac, was happy to witness his son's good fortune in his later years and saw him leap into a bright future in his mission as an imam and a Muslim scholar, to which he dedicated his life. Hence, as soon as he finished his four-year education in the local community of Krnjići^{▼11} near Srebrenica, in 1950 Alija-efendija sent his son Ahmed to the eight-year schooling of the Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa in Sarajevo. Unfortunately, Alija-efendija did not live to see his son's graduation. He moved to the Hereafter a year earlier in 1957, before his son Ahmed finished the eight-year education of the Gazi Husrev Bey Madrasa in Sarajevo in the 1958/59 school year.



ILLUSTRATION ~ The village of Tokoljaci, near Srebrenica. Reconstruction after the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Selo Tokoljaci, kod Srebrenice. Obnova nakon agresije na Bosnu i Hercegovinu, 2022.

^{▼9} According to the population census from 1991, Tokoljaci had 104 households and 567 inhabitants. The story of the first returnee to Tokoljak after the Serbian genocide in Srebrenica, Murat Smajić (86), is interesting. He says: "At dawn we were woken up by roosters, and we used to break our fast in Ramadan by the single clock in the village, which was owned by the local imam Alija Smajlović". This was the father of Dr Ahmed Smajlović. The boy, Ahmed, son of Alija-efendija, spent his childhood in this environment and was preparing to seek education, even in China, even in Cairo.

^{▼10} Courtesy of the long-time mufti of Goražde, Hamed ef. Efendić and his wife Zakira, niece of Dr Ahmed Smajlović, we learned that Alija-efendija was married twice. With his first wife, he had two sons: Mustafa and Idriz, and with his second wife, Aiša, he had two sons: Mensur and Ahmed, and three daughters: Tahira, Halima and Eneza. Tahira, Zakira's mother, died young, while Ahmed's other two sisters, Halima and Eneza, were killed - martyred women in Bratunac in 1992, by Serbian Chetniks together with Ahmed's mother Aiša-hanuma, whose bones have not been found to this day.

^{▼11} According to the census of the number of households, the number of inhabitants and the area of local communities from 1991 in the territory of the municipality of Srebrenica, the local community of Krnjići for the village of Tokoljaci, where the boy Ahmed completed a four-year elementary education, had 421 households, 1674 inhabitants and an area of 29 km². See: <https://web.archive.org/web/20160303230059/http://srebrenica.gov.ba/index.php/modules-menu/mjesne-zajednice-srebrenice>. Last accessed: 18.07.2023. Today, after the Serbian genocide in Srebrenica, there is no trace of the school in Krnjići where Ahmed Smajlović completed his fourth year of elementary school.

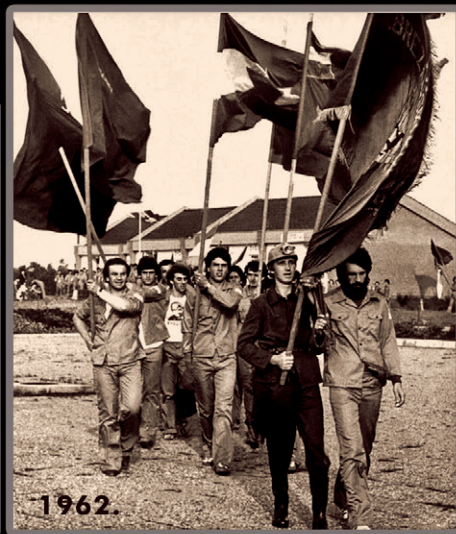


ILLUSTRATION ~ Participating in the general atmosphere of work actions on the reconstruction and construction of the homeland at the end of the 50s of the last century, seems to have passed the generation of youth Ahmed. (Archive of Akšamija)

Youth

Ahmed's youth begins with his departure from Tokoljac and his arrival in Sarajevo, when he was twelve years old. Moving from a small Bosnian village to a big city meant for Ahmed Smajlović the end of childhood carelessness and the beginning of youthful self-responsibility. It was the time of major renovations of educational institutions of the Islamic community in the old Yugoslavia after the First World War. The previous education system was worn out, and even the Austro-Hungarian model of the *Mekteb-i Nuwab* or the Judiciary Sharia School^{▼12} did not meet the basic needs of Muslims. This is why the Kuršumlija madrasa and Hanikah were merged into one madrasa in Sarajevo - the Gazi Husrev-bey madrasa. In the school year 1920/21. In the year 2010, students who were younger than 14 years old and who had completed four grades of elementary school were enrolled in the first grade of the Madrasa.^{▼13} In addition to religious subjects, secular subjects were also introduced: mother tongue, mathematics, geography, natural history, drawing and calligraphy. Later, in the older classes, the following subjects were introduced: history, physics, chemistry and hygiene.^{▼14}

It seems that in 1950 young Ahmed from the village of Tokoljaci, near Srebrenica, had no choice but to enroll in the eight-year-old Gazi Husrev-bey madrasa. For Ahmed, this meant enrolling in the first, four-year lower course, then the second, four-year higher course, for a total of eight years.^{▼15}

We know little about Ahmed's Madrasa or Sarajevo youth days except that he was an excellent student with good behaviour. As already mentioned, he graduated from the eight-year-old Gazi Husrev Bey madrasa in the 1958/59 school year, after which he was called to serve his military service in the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) in Ljubljana. As one rarely did, soldier Ahmed studied law in Ljubljana in parallel with his military service, so that by the end of his military service he had completed the first year of a law degree. After completing his

▼12 The *Maktab-i nuwab* or Sharia School for Judges lasted fifty years (1889-1937) during the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the fall of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy in 1918, the Sharia School for Judges had lost its significance. Attempts to reorganize it and bring it to the status of a faculty failed, so the Sharia High School was founded in Sarajevo in the school year 1918/19, as a transition path to the Higher School of Sharia and Theology, which replaced the Sharia School for Judges with the aim of the higher school receiving the status of a faculty, which it never received. See: Kahrman, Khadija: *Higher Sharia - Theological School*. El-Kalem, Sarajevo, 2018, p. 20-21.

▼13 Dizdar, Muhamed Emin. „Gazi Husrevbegova medresa“. *Spomenica Gazi Husrevbegove četiristo-godišnjice*. Sarajevo; 1932. 42-57 (53) str.

▼14 Traljić, Mahmud: "'Ālija' the higher level of Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa", *Gazette of the Supreme Islamic Eldership in SFRY*, 3/78, p. 255-267 (257).

▼15 About the eight-year Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa, see: Hadžić, Kasim: "Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa in Sarajevo (in the period from 1920 to the end of 1982)". *Annals of Gazi Husrev-bey's Library*, Sarajevo, 2017, 6(9-10), 263-280. Prof. Hadžić presents the history and achievements of Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa in Sarajevo, where he himself was a teacher for 11 years. This educational institution has been operating under the name *Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa since the school year 1920/21*, but it is essentially a continuation of the Hanikah founded in 1931 and Seldžukija, later Kuršumli-Madrasa founded in 1537. In the school year 1965/66, the eight-year education duration ceased and the education duration of the five-year Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa began.

military service, he continued his legal studies in Belgrade, where he completed his second year. However probably at the behest-recommendation of his father Alija-efendija, Ahmed from Tokoljac near Srebrenica, changed his life path by 1962 and left Belgrade, moving to Cairo at the Al-Azhar University together with Jusuf Ramić, Merzuk Vejzagić, Hamdija Jusufspahić and Salko Čanić. ▼¹⁶



ILLUSTRATION ~ Cities of further stay: Beograd and Cairo.

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Gradovi daljnjeg boravka: Beograd i Kairo

▼¹⁶ See: Omerdić, Muharem: "Prof. Dr. Ahmed Smajlović (1938-1988): World-renowned Muslim Scholar", *Alimi Srebrenice i njihova uloga u duhovnom i društvenom životu Bošnjaka*. Tuzla/Srebrenica: Institute for Social and Religious Research of the Majlis of the Islamic Community of Srebrenica, 2022, p. 151-188 (152).



ILLUSTRATION ~ Cairo atmosphere, a memory from Ahmed Smajlović's student days in the 1970s at Al-Azhar University.
(Archive of Akšamija)

Student years

With his brochure entitled "Bosniaks at Al-Azhar", Dr Ramić spared us a wider elaboration on the origin, development and importance of Al-Azhar for the Bosniak spiritual and intellectual *bypass* after the break with the spiritual and intellectual power supply in Istanbul.^{▼17} In a tangle of historical events, after centuries of connection, the entire Balkans, including Bosnia, were separated from Istanbul, where high level Bosnian Muslim Scholars were mostly educated. That break with Istanbul was quite traumatic for the Muslim spiritual and intellectual lungs. That is why Al-Azhar served as a *bypass* for breathing spiritual and intellectual air. This, of course, also meant a change of course in terms of education from the Ottoman-Turkish to the Arab-Islamic cultural circle.

Dr Smajlović and the others were not the first Bosniaks to get hold of Al-Azhar. They were preceded by Mehmed Potogija, Džemaluddin Čaušević and Ibrahim Zafranija^{▼18} during the Austro-Hungarian period. Between the two wars there were several generations of Bosniaks who studied in Egypt, among whom we single out Besim Korkut, Kasim Dobrača, Mehmed Handžić, Ahmed Smajlović,^{▼19} Husein Đozo and others.^{▼20}

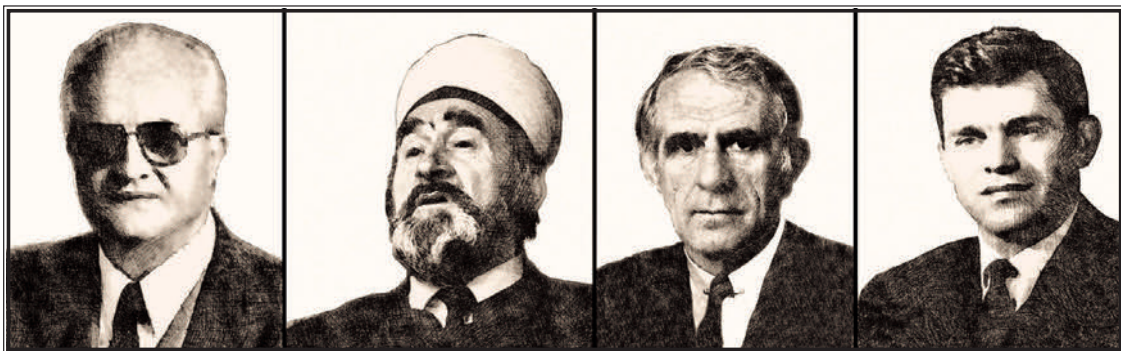


ILLUSTRATION ~ Representatives of the post-war generation of Bosniaks at Al-Azhar in Cairo: Merzuk Vejzagić, Hamdija Jusufspahić, dr. Jusuf Ramić and dr. Ahmed Smajlović. (Archive of Akšamija)

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Predstavnici poslijeratne generacije Bošnjaka na Al-Azhar u Kairu: Merzuk Vejzagić, Hamdija Jusufspahić, dr. Jusuf Ramić i dr. Ahmed Smajlović. (Arhiv Akšamija)

However, what is important to highlight here is the fact that Dr Smajlović and the others were the first post-war

^{▼17} Ramić, Jusuf: *Bosniaks at Al-Azhar*. Library of the Gazette of the Rijaset of the Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, New Series, Book 7, Sarajevo, 1997.

^{▼18} *Ibid.*, p 31.

^{▼19} Ahmed Smajlovic, of the same name, was from the village of Kovačići near Visoko, who died in Cairo while studying at Al-Azhar. Even today, his relatives and villagers of Kovačići recount the sad news of Ahmed's death in Cairo. He is described as a very handsome and well-read Azharli, who was waiting like a frostbite sun to return from Al-Azhar to Visoko.

^{▼20} Ramić, Jusuf: *Bosniaks at Al-Azhar...*, p. 33.

(post-1945) generation of Bosniaks, who completed higher studies at the prestigious Al-Azhar Islamic University in Cairo. Whilst Merzuk Vejzagić, Hamdija Jusufspahić and Salko Čanić were satisfied with a faculty diploma, Dr Smajlović and Ramić extended their stay in Cairo in order to obtain their master's and doctorate degrees at Al-Azhar. Both were devoted to Arabic literature. Dr Ramić received his doctorate on the topic: *The Al-Muwayliḥī Family and its Influence in Literature*.^{▼21}

Unlike the period of childhood and youth, of which we have no records, student Ahmed Smajlović left a record of his first meeting with Cairo and thus gave us at least a little insight into his student experience in Cairo:

The first meeting with Cairo, Dr Smajlović writes, was on the night of October 21, 1962. In all its size and beauty, the city on the Nile left indelible impressions. It was the first meeting with Cairo, as well as with a pleasant man, a friend from Cairo. He was an official of the Ministry of Waqf. The work that needed to be done around the entrance was already completed. Everything was fine. All that remains is the journey from the airport to the student dormitory where we will be accommodated. Al-Azhar students from other countries live in this student town... Our arrival increased that number... Here there is a real colourfulness among the people... And yet it is all one... Thanks to the Qur'an and its principles, all this diversity is tied into one... Here is another connecting factor, the language of the Qur'an, the Arabic language. That is why a person has the impression that he is meeting his brother no matter where he is from; Japan, Malaysia, Turkey, Pakistan, Syria or Europe.^{▼22}

In such an atmosphere of intellectual acumen and enthusiasm, the student period of Dr Smajlović began at the *Faculty of Arabic Language and Literature at Al-Azhar University* in Cairo, which lasted twelve years (1962-1974). After his bachelor's degree (1967), he obtained his master's degree with the thesis: *ʿAbduhu and his influence on modern literature and the Renaissance* (1970). He defended his doctoral dissertation with the thesis: *Falsafat al-istiṣrāq wa atharuhā fī al-adabi al-ʿarabī al-muʿāṣir* ("Philosophy of Orientalism and its influence on contemporary Arabic literature") with the grade "sharaf" ("honourable") in 1974.^{▼23} The dissertation was published in Cairo in 1980 and reprinted in 1997.^{▼24} Like no one before him at Al-Azhar, Dr Smajlović invested the excess of his academic and intellectual energy in the promotion of Bosniak/Bosnian literature by translating into Arabic with Husayn Abdullatif two capital works of Bosnian literature during his studies in Cairo: *Dervish and Death* ("Darwīsh wa al-mawt") by Meša Selimović and the Bosnian ballad *Hasanaginica*.^{▼25}

▼21 See: *Usrat al-Muwayliḥī wa atharuhū fī al-adab al-ʿarabī*, doctoral dissertation defended by Dr. Jusuf Ramić at Al-Azhar, it was published in Cairo in 1980, 1997. Three printed copies of this dissertation and one manuscript copy can be found under the number 0-11431 in the Gazi Husrev-bey library in Sarajevo.

▼22 Ramić, Jusuf: *Bosniaks at Al-Azhar...*, p. 36.

▼23 Omerdić, Muharem: „Prof. Dr. Ahmed Smajlović (1938-1988): World-renowned Muslim Scholar” p. 152.

▼24 Smajlović, Ahmed: *Falsafat al-istiṣrāq wa atharuhā fī al-adabi al-ʿarabī al-muʿāṣir* (predgovor Mustafa Maḥmūd). Dār al-maʿārif, Cairo, 1980.

▼25 Smajlović, Ahmed: „Hasanaginica in Arabic”. *Takvim*, Sarajevo 1976/1396., p. 170-171. See a complete overview of the bibliography of Dr Ahmed Smajlović: Omerdić, Muharem: „Prof. Dr. Ahmed Smajlović (1938-1988): „World-renowned Muslim Scholar”, p. 165-187.

According to the testimonies of many students, who concurrently studied at Al-Azhar, Dr Ahmed Smajlović, as a student and scientific researcher, enjoyed a tremendous reputation both at Al-Azhar and in Egyptian society, especially among ulama and intellectuals, who had a critical attitude towards contemporary society not only in Egypt, but also towards the world at that time. Dr Smajlović was considered someone who was knowledgeable about the issues of the East and the West, and that is why his opinion was well received on many issues that the Muslim world was facing at the time. Dr Smajlović was aware of his role, so he used every opportunity to articulate his view. This will come to the fore especially when Dr Smajlović as a consequence of his student years or status, received the status of an official activist in Sarajevo for spreading his ideas in the homeland and the world.

As a student, Dr Smajlović had contact with the Yugoslav embassy in Cairo through his work at a supplementary school in the consulate. He was also a translator for high-ranking Yugoslav officials during their visit to Egypt, including Josip Broz Tito. Perhaps because of the trust he had with the Yugoslav authorities, Dr Smajlović felt free to establish contact with Muslim-Bosniak diaspora, such as Ismail Bali^{▼26} in Vienna and Imam Ćamil Avdić^{▼27} in Chicago, who was also an Azharli (al-Azhar graduate), which was not usually the case at the time and certainly not at all convenient. These contacts of his became recognizable when he returned to Sarajevo, where, after ten years, Imam Ćamil Avdić was allowed to, in 1977 attend the opening of the Islamic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo. These acts were a major step forward for the Islamic Community in opening communication with the Muslim communities in America and Australia. Two years after that, Imam Ćamil Avdić passed way in 1979.

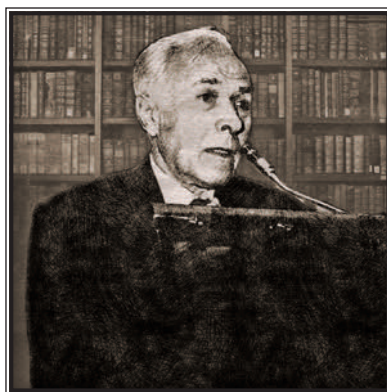


ILLUSTRATION / ILUSTRACIJA ~ Smail Balić (European Muslim-Bosniak emigration) / (evropska muslimansko-bošnjačka emigracija).

▼26 Professor Dr Smail Balić was born in 1920 in Mostar. He is one of the most important and oldest Bosniak intellectuals who lived and worked for many years in emigration. He taught at two Viennese universities. From 1983 to 1986 he worked within the Frankfurt Institute for the History of Arab-Islamic Sciences. Before the establishment of the Sarajevo Islamic Faculty of Theology in 1977, he was, along with Professor Tajib Okić, on the list for a member of the Teachers' Council, but the then Yugoslav (read Belgrade) government forbade it. Dr Balić died in Vienna in 2002.

▼27 Imam Camil Avdić was born in 1914 in Plana near Bileća. He graduated from the Gazi Husrev-bey Madrasa in Sarajevo in 1939, and then graduated from Al-Azhar University in Cairo. At the invitation of the Bosniak Association "Dzamiyetu-l-hajrija", which was founded in 1906. in Chicago, America, Imam Ćamil comes to Chicago from Cairo in 1954, where he organized the first Islamic Community in that city. As a great scholar and cosmopolitan, Imam Camil launched the initiative in 1974 for the construction of the "Islamic Cultural Center" in Northbrook, Greater Chicago. At the age of 65, Imam Camil moved to the Hereafter in 1979.

The age of official activism

dr Smajlović returned to his homeland at the end of 1974, where he was entrusted with the position of Chief of Staff of the Grand Mufti Sulejman Kemura. On January 19, 1975, Grand Mufti Kemura went to the Hereafter, and was succeeded as Grand Mufti by Naim ef. Hadžiabdić, who until then held the position of President of the Elders of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Without hesitation Grand Mufti Naim ef. Hadžiabdić entrusted Dr Ahmed Smajlović to succeed him as president of the Eldership of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the Islamic Community in Croatia and Slovenia was taken care of from Sarajevo before, with the arrival of Dr Smajlović at the head of the Eldership, care for Croatia and Slovenia was institutionalized in such a way that this care became official through the official title: Eldership of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. This enabled the president of the Eldership Dr Smajlović to expand and strengthen his activity outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in Croatia, or rather, in Zagreb, around the construction of the Zagreb Mosque, where the answer to the request for the construction of the Zagreb Mosque was awaited for more than seventy years. As a sign of gratitude for the great contribution in obtaining the construction permit and the actual construction of the Zagreb Mosque, initially the madrasa in the Zagreb mosque was named "Dr Ahmed Smajlović", and then "Islamic High School Dr Ahmed Smajlović", which was founded in the Croatian education system in 2000.



ILLUSTRATION – Plaque at the Islamic High School "Dr Ahmed Smajlović" in Zagreb. (Archive of Akšamija)
ILUSTRACIJA – Ploča na Islamskoj gimnaziji „Dr. Ahmeda Smajlovića“ u Zagrebu. (Arhiv Akšamija)

For the circumstances and conditions in which the Islamic Community worked and acted in the twilight of the former Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr Smajlović was a true vanguard, initiating previously unknown activities in the Islamic Community, which had far-reaching implications in initiating and articulating a new and different narrative about Islam and Muslims not only in our country, but also in the world. His lectures were attractive, educational and emotional so much so that no one could remain indifferent.

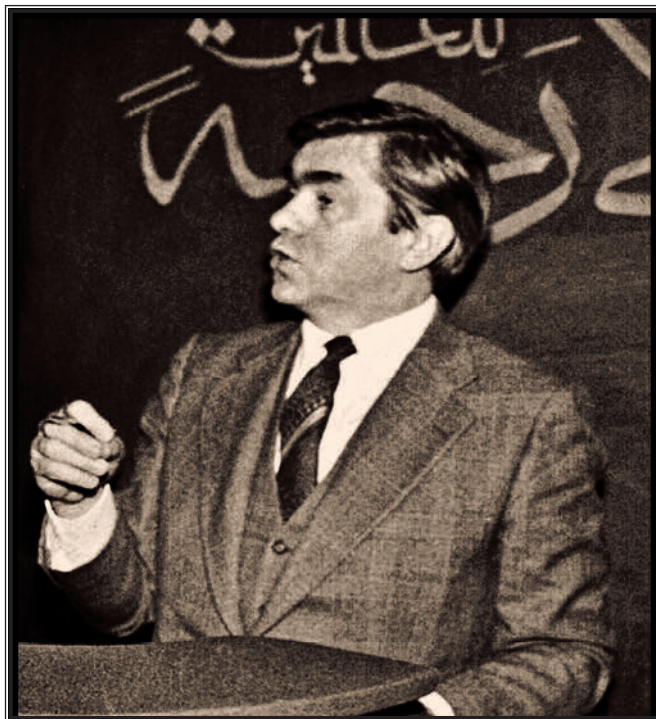


ILLUSTRATION ~ Dr Ahmed Smajlović at a lecture at the Islamic Theological Faculty in Sarajevo in 1980. (Archive of Akšamija)

ILUSTRACIJA - Dr. Ahmed Smajlović na predavanju u Islamskom teološkom fakultetu u Sarajevu 1980. godine.

The administrative work of the Islamic Community slowed down the scientific and research work of Dr Smajlović, but they enabled him to have an official or formal activism, which is normally characteristic of non-governmental and informal organizations. The unprecedented activism of Dr Smajlović through the Islamic Community could not have gone unnoticed both outside and inside the institution itself. The government tolerated the activism of Dr Ahmed until it realized that his reputation and influence among Muslims went beyond the usual scope of work and activities of the Islamic Community on the domestic and international scene. The testimony of Dr Jusuf Ramić on moving the boundaries of autonomy and agency of the institution under the baton of Dr Ahmed Smajlović is of great value:

[...] His (Dr Smajlović's) name is closely related to the creation and development of the Islamic Faculty of Theology in Sarajevo. He is one of the founders and the first dean of this faculty. He was the most active and busiest professor of the Faculty. An inspection of the Faculty's documentation shows that

by July 1, 1988, 55 students graduated from this Faculty, and almost half of our theologians graduated before Ahmed Smajlović. If we add to that that Dr Ahmed Smajlović was appointed 19 times as a member of the examination committee for graduation exams, it turns out that 40 students took the graduation exam before him, which in percentage is more than 72%. He taught Aqa'id and Islamic Philosophy at the Faculty. In the classes, he spoke about the relationship between Aqa'id and other scientific disciplines, about the tasks, definition, origin and historical development of Aqa'id.

As a member of many international institutions in Europe and Islamic countries, he participated in numerous conferences, symposia and expert consultations, where the competency and professionalism of his papers, discussions and the underlying axiomatic presuppositions, were all highly regarded. He is the initiator of the journal of *Islamska misao* (*Islamic Thought*), a journal for Islamic thought and practice. At one time, as the editor-in-chief of the newspapers *Preporod* (*Revival*) and *Islamska misao*, he influenced the quality of those newspapers, and he himself collaborated in them, thereby contributing to the enrichment of Islamic thought in public.



ILLUSTRATION ~ One of the participations of dr. Ahmed Smajlović on the international stage. (Archive of Akšamija)

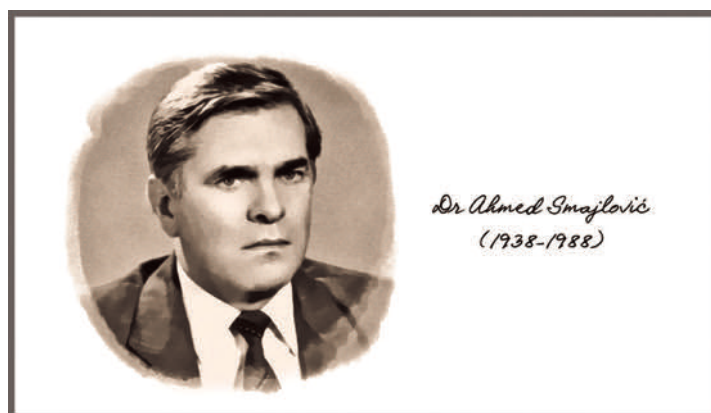
ILUSTRACIJA ~ Jedno od učešća dr. Ahmeda Smajlovića na međunarodnoj sceni. (Arhiv Akšamija)

During its years of publication, the journal of *Islamska misao* (*Islamic Thought*) managed to be up to the task. This journal justified its existence and satisfied with its quality. Through *Islamic Thought*, new knowledge was acquired and circulated. A greater number of Islamic thinkers were introduced. Unfortunately, *Islamic Thought* is no longer being published after the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ahmed Smajlović wrote in the Bosnian and Arabic languages and translate freely and fluently between each. He signed. He signed his works with his full name and surname. He wrote in our newspapers: *Preporod*, *Islamska misao*, *Takvim* and *Gazette VIS*. In his short life, Ahmed Smajlović

published over 250 works, original and translated, on various Islamic subjects, several translations of brochures and books in Bosnian and Arabic. ▼²⁸

Unfortunately, the authorities could no longer tolerate either the domestic or international activism of Dr Ahmed Smajlović through the official Islamic Community. They could not do anything until they pressed a rebellion of those inside the institution who were unhappy with the swelling activism of Dr Ahmed Smajlović. In 1985, in collaboration with the Communist Party authorities, the dismissal of the good doctor from the position of President of the Eldership of the Islamic Community was initiated. A few years after this dismissal, Dr Ahmed Smajlović passed to the Hereafter on August 11, 1988 at the age of fifty. He was buried in Sarajevo at the Bare cemetery in Sarajevo. ▼²⁹



The headstone of Ahmed Smajlović was written by hafiz Kamil Silajdžić in the Arabic language as follows:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
كل من عليها فان
ويبقى الفرد الصمد
والمرحوم الدكتور إسماعيلوفيتش الحاج احمد
رئيس المشيخة الإسلامية في بوسنة وهرسك
ولما بلغ أشده ارتحل إلى الأبد
المدرس في الجامعة الإسلامية
والمؤلف والواعظ وكثير ما وعد
وحسن الثواب عند ربه لا ينفد تاريخه في الدعاء إلى ربه بالأبجد
"أدخل الجنة يا لطيف عبدك أحمد"
1408هـ

▼²⁸ Ramić, Jusuf: *Život i djelo prof. dr. Ahmeda Smajlovića (1938. – 1988.)*, *Znakovi vremena*, Sarajevo, spring-summer 2007, vol. 10, double issue 35/36, p. 14-15.

▼²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The translation of the headstone from Bosnian to English:

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
All that is on earth is transitory,
only Master One remains.
Dr Marhum Hadji Ahmed Smajlović,
President of the Eldership of the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina,
as soon as he is girded with power, he moves into eternity.
Mudarris at the Faculty of Islamic Theology,
writer and preacher, he had much promise.
And the reward with Allah is immeasurable and most beautiful.
Its history is contained in a prayer addressed to Allah with abjad
"Bring your servant Ahmed into Paradise, Merciful Allah"
1408 / 1988*



ILLUSTRATION ~ Conceptual architectural design of the new "Cultural and Educational Center with gymnasium and student dormitory" in Folnegović's settlement, Zagreb. (Archive of Akšamija)

ILUSTRACIJA ~ Idejno arhitektonsko rješenje novog "Kulturno obrazovnog centra s gimnazijom i učeničkim domom" u Folnegovićevom naselju, Zagreb. (Arhiv Akšamija)



ILLUSTRATION – Johann Gustav Adolf Bauernfeind (Gustave Bauernfeind), *The Orient: Market in Jaffa*, 1887.

A Definition of *Orientalism*

Technically, the term *Orientalism* is derived from the Latin word *oriens* meaning "east", literally the place of sunrise, as opposed to the Latin word *occidens* meaning "west", the place of sunset. From its point of view, Europe defined the East from the West, i.e., the "Orient", as another and different exotic world, which does not belong to it, but towards which it has never been indifferent either politically, economically, culturally, or civilizationaly.^{▼30}

Technically, "*Orientalism*"^{▼31} is a Western scientific discipline that studies Middle Eastern languages, cultures, religions, and Middle Eastern societies in general. A person who studies the culture and language of the people of the Orient is called an "Orientalist". The first use of the word "**Orientalist**" in European languages dates back to 1630, when it was applied to a member of the Eastern or Greek Church. The word "Orientalist" first appeared in the English language around 1779, while the word "*Orientalism*" entered the dictionary of the French Academy *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* only in 1838.^{▼32}

Although as a scientific discipline it greatly contributed to the understanding of the Orient in the West, thanks to the American theorist of Palestinian origin Edward W. Said, Orientalism has been characterized in recent decades as one of the key concepts of the post-colonial hegemony of Europe, i.e., the West, over the East, especially over the Arab-Islamic East. Under the eponymous title "Orientalism", Edward Said published a book (1978), in which he objects in the most critical way that the basic idea of Western Orientalism is, in fact, the mastery and shaping of opinion based on the simultaneous political and cognitive power distribution between the West and the East. Because of this, Edward Said thinks that the West is eluding the real East and the possibility to objectively understand and accept the East as it

▼30 Given the fact that the author uses the designation for the East through the metonym "**Orient**", I kept it as such, with the fact that I am of the opinion that the designation/term "**Islamic world**" should be used. Namely, the Orient is an old-fashioned name for Asia, that is, the East in relation to Europe, and traditionally includes everything that belongs to the Eastern world. It is an antonym of the term West, which refers to the Western world. In English it is mostly a metonym for the continent of Asia, which is associated with it – which is loosely divided into Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, East Asia, and sometimes includes the Caucasus. Originally, the term *Orient* was used to refer only to the Middle East, but later its meaning developed and expanded to include Central Asia, Southwest Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Far East. Unlike the term Orient, the term *Islamic world* includes all those who adhere to the religious beliefs and laws of Islam or societies where Islam is practiced. In modern geopolitical terms, these terms refer to countries where Islam is widespread.

▼31 *Orientalism* or *Orientalists* refers to the scientific study of the East, primarily the Middle East. The main subject of study is Islam as the most widespread Middle Eastern religion, around which a strong civilization developed, present in every form of individual and collective life.

▼32 Smajlović, Ahmed: *Philosophy of Orientalism...*, p. 26.

is.^{▼33} Although he corrected some of his views in the book *Culture and Imperialism*, after the objections of some critics that he was too strict in his literary analysis of *Orientalism*, Edward Said's critique of *Orientalism* has maintained a near canonical status in academic circles both in the West and in the East.^{▼34}

Dr Smajlović had not insight into Edward Said's critique of *Orientalism*,^{▼35} but it can be said that his critique is somewhat different from Said's. Edward Said's criticism of Orientalism mainly deals with the popular and scientific literature, and the policy of the West towards the East; while the criticism of Dr Ahmed Smajlović was addressed not only to the West, but also to the East, especially Arab thinkers, who did not resist the negative influence of Western orientalist, who have in the background religious and cultural proselytism, as well as political, colonialist and Zionist hegemony.

In this regard, Dr Ahmed Smajlović emphasized that the age-old meeting of the East - Arabs and the West often had a struggle for the survival of both.^{▼36} This is why the idea of *Orientalistics* or *Orientalism* appeared in Europe as a science to understand the East, primarily Islamic civilization. Therefore, Dr Smajlović stressed:

[...] This is why the bearers of *Orientalism* tried to learn of the East, to enter deep into its horizons of thought through the study of its literature and culture. They have a methodology and goals that, judging from their works, translations and critical treatments, seem clear. In one way or another, Orientalists exert influence on the Arabic modern revival in general, and on contemporary Arabic literature in particular.

Starting from that point of view, it is necessary to study *Orientalism* in order to understand: **first** - its nature; **second** - its beginnings; **third** - its attitude towards colonialism, missionaries and Zionism; **fourth** - its interest in preserving the Arab-Islamic heritage; **fifth** and last - its philosophy, and all this before starting the study of its influence on contemporary Arabic literature.^{▼37}

Furthermore, Dr Smajlović underlines:

^{▼33} Said, Edward, *Orientalism*. Vintage Books Edition, 1979.

^{▼34} Said, Edward. *Culture & Imperialism*. Vantage Books, New York 1993. See: https://monoskop.org/images/f/f9/Said_Edward_Culture_and_Imperialism.pdf. Last accessed: 05.06.2023.

^{▼35} Edward Said's work *Orientalism* is not on the literature list of Dr Ahmed's Smajlović which indicates that it was not available to him.

^{▼36} Smajlović, Ahmed: *Philosophy of Orientalism...*, p. 23.

^{▼37} *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.

All quotes are translations of M. Kico, with the exception of the word „*istishrāq*“, which we translate to *Orientalism* as opposed to *Orientalistics* as explained in the footnote no. 29.

[...] *Orientalism* is a mental activity that played an important role in Arabic thought and Arabic literature in the classical period and in the modern era. In the classical period, *Orientalism* (re)took literature and arts from the Arabs, transferred them to the West, where a sudden cultural revival was achieved on their basis and the current progress, rise and flourishing was achieved. In the modern age, *Orientalism* took European thoughts, theories and views, based on Arab culture, in order to return them to the Arabs and thus strongly influenced their modern revival. It is precisely this other side of the phenomenon that I chose as the subject of my doctoral dissertation written under the title: *Falsafat al-istišrāq wa atharuhā fī al-adabi al-‘arabī al-mu‘āṣir* (*Philosophy of Orientalism and its influence on contemporary Arabic literature*). ▼³⁸

As a motive for choosing this topic, Dr Smajlović stated his European origin in the foreword, ▼³⁹ but also his belonging to the Islamic circle of civilization, which motivated him to study Orientalism in order to understand where the dangers lie, and on the basis of this, to prepare for the defence of the religious, ideological and moral Islamic values which all Muslims uphold. ▼⁴⁰ In a broad and in-depth elaboration of Orientalism, Dr Smajlović divided his work into three chapters: (1) *Orientalism and its interest in Arab-Islamic heritage*; (2) *Arabic literature between Orientalism and Arab scholars*; (3) *The influence of Orientalism on contemporary Arabic literature*.

Motives

The scope of this paper is limited and therefore it is not possible to deal in detail with each of these three indicated chapters, but it is possible to mention seven motifs of Orientalism, which Dr Smajlović elucidated in the second part of the first chapter, namely:

- Psychological motives, as a European or Western need for spiritual and intellectual development through familiarization with different cultures and civilizations in the East. ▼⁴¹
- Historical motifs, as a meeting of different worlds, which historically went through mutual enrichment with new knowledge or mutual conflict due to ideological, political and economic interests. ▼⁴²
- Economic motives, as a hegemonic desire to master the natural resources of Europe in the East, especially in the oil-rich Arab-Islamic world. ▼⁴³
- Ideological motives, which follow economic motives or vice versa, economic motives

▼³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

▼³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11-15.

▼⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.

▼⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42-44.

▼⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 44-46.

▼⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 47.

which follow ideological ones to the goal, which is the application of a kind of cultural and civilizational proselytism. ▼⁴⁴

- Religious motives, which Dr Smajlović considers it as one of the "main reasons why the West studied oriental languages in general, and the language of the source of Islam in particular". ▼⁴⁵
- Colonial motives, which Dr Smajlović marks it as "an important fulcrum of the connection between the West and the East, with the efforts of the former to dominate the latter, to destroy its strength, occupy its land and exploit its goods... the goals of the missionaries coincide with the preoccupation of the colonialists." ▼⁴⁶
- The scientific motive of *Orientalism*, as a movement and a separate discipline in the West, is for Dr Smajlović, the most convincing proof of the universality of the Islamic culture and civilization, which in its essence is inclusive and mediating in the sense of collecting, preserving and developing healthy and useful elements from all cultures and civilizations of the world, including Western civilization. They noticed this very well in the West, so they established *Orientalism* for the needs of their own cultural and civilizational heritage, but, as Dr Smajlović rightly observes, the *Orientalists*, with their scientific work and research, have greatly helped the strong intellectual revival of the Arab world in various ways, including in the way of Arab modern literature. ▼⁴⁷

Through these seven stated motifs of *Orientalism*, one can see the critical analysis of the philosophy of Dr Smajlović, which is not entirely negative. However, it is a warning in the sense that the Arab-Islamic world (especially the intelligentsia) must be alert and aware that behind "scientific" *Orientalism* there remain the hegemonic and colonialist goals of the West. In fact, this is not only about physical or geographical hegemony, but also spiritual and intellectual in the sense of appropriating the right to interpret Islamic culture and civilization itself, because, as the French *Orientalist* Maxime Robinson confidently says:

[...] This book was written with a great ambition to be of help to intellectuals in countries of the Muslim faith and civilization, helping them to understand their situation. Not that I consider myself superior, being a European, to the best of them in learning or intelligence. I claim no advantage of that kind. Only the circumstances allowed me to escape before them from certain social obstacles that hinder their understanding of their own problems. I was fortunate enough to be given free access to the knowledge of their myth-free past, and I endeavoured to get rid of the myths that stand in the way of understanding their present. I must add that I am in a position to speak up and say what they

▼⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 48-49.

▼⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

▼⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

▼⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 52-54.d

are often obliged to keep to themselves. It is a freedom that must be paid for, like all freedoms, but the price, in my case, is not excessive, and they, generally speaking, have to pay much more for it. ▼⁴⁸

Orientalists and Arab Thinkers

The second chapter of *the Philosophy of Orientalism* by Dr Smajlović is dedicated to the profile of Western Orientalists and Arab thinkers in the context of the origin, development and impact of Orientalism on the Arab mental-cultural and civilizational complex during the decadence of Arab-Islamic civilization and the efforts of Arab thinkers in the direction of cultural and civilizational revival (*Al-Nahdah*). From a large number of Arab classical and modern thinkers and Western classical and modern Orientalists, here we present two recognizable profiles of Orientalists and two profiles of Arab thinkers.

A Profile of Orientalists

After he pointed out, in the first chapter, the first initiators of learning the Arabic language and Arabic science and wisdom, such as the Frenchman Gerbert de Aurillac (999-1003), ▼⁴⁹ the Englishman Abelardus Bathensis (1070-1135), the Italian Gerardo da Cremona (1114-1187) and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) ▼⁵⁰ and the German Albertus Magnus (1193-1280), ▼⁵¹ who, based on their knowledge of the Arabic language and science, transmitted positive civilizational impulses to Europe and thus imprinted the Arab-Islamic influence on the overall development of European humanism and the Renaissance, Dr Ahmed Smajlović, in the third chapter, provides an example of the negative profile of the Orientalist in the character and work of the Englishman David Samuel Margoliouth. ▼⁵²

▼⁴⁸ Robinson, Maxime: *Islam and Capitalism*. University of Texas Press, Austin, 1981., (Foreword) p. vii.

▼⁴⁹ Reference to Pope Sylvester II, originally known as Gerbert of Aurillac. He supported and promoted the study of Moorish and Greco-Roman arithmetic, mathematics and astronomy, reintroducing to Europe the abacus and the armillary sphere, which Latin Europe had lost since the end of the Greco-Roman era. He is said to be the first in Europe to introduce a decimal number system using the Hindu-Arabic numeral system. According to the 12th-century historian William of Malmesbury, Gerbert got the idea for the abacus computing device from a Moorish scholar at Al-Qarawiyyin University, where he studied at the then only and oldest university in the world, founded in 857-859, while the oldest university in Europe was founded in Bologna, Italy, in 1088.

▼⁵⁰ It is important to emphasize that Thomas Aquinas is an Italian Dominican philosopher, theologian, church teacher, who was given the status of "saint" by the Catholic Church as one of the greatest Catholic theologians and philosophers, who was strongly influenced by Arab-Islamic spirituality and culture through Andalusia. and Averroism, a school of medieval philosophy based on the application of the works of the 12th-century Andalusian philosopher Averroes, more precisely Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), a commentator on Aristotle.

▼⁵¹ Smajlović, Ahmed: *Philosophy of Orientalism...*, p. 59-64.

▼⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 558. David Samuel Margoliouth, (1858-1940), is an English Orientalist. He was a professor of Arabic at Oxford (1889-1937). He was also an active preacher of the Church of England. He spent a lot of time traveling in the Middle East. Staying for a long time in Baghdad, Margoliouth had thought to himself that he knew Islam better than many learned Muslims. See also: "D.S. Margoliouth", *Mawsū'ah al-mustashriqīn*, d. Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, Dār al-'Ilm lilmalayīn, Beirut 1989, p. 379.

Namely, recognizing the beneficial methodological influence of *Orientalism* on Arabic literature through the Arab modern thinker and writer Ṭāhā Ḥusayn⁵³ who applied this influence in his treatment of the character and work of the classical Arab thinker and poet Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī,⁵⁴ Dr Ahmed Smajlović draws attention to D.S. Margoliuth, as "a different kind of influence of *Orientalism* on the development of Arab contemporary criticism."⁵⁵ According to Dr Smajlović, he was "the first one who considered that all pre-Islamic poetry is artificial."⁵⁶ and continues:

[...] There is no doubt that anyone who pays attention will be surprised by what D.S. Margoliuth claims. However, he is an Orientalist inclined to chauvinism, moreover, in it he was most advanced. This is clearly seen from his famous article *Foundations of Arabic Poetry* (*ṣūlu al-shʿiri al-ʿarabiyyi*), in which his chauvinism is quite clearly shown when he claims and bases his views on two things: **First** - doubts about the entire pre-Islamic poetry, i.e., that it was forged and compiled after the advent of Islam; **Second** - an attack on Islam, its dogma, the Prophet and the Revelation.⁵⁷

Since the *orientalist* D.S. Margoliuth did not leave Arab poetry and Arab-Islamic culture alone, neither did Dr Ahmed Smajlović leave D.S. Margoliuth alone; in fact, he had already severely criticized him:

[...] Those would be the thoughts of D.S. Margoliuth, his way of denigrating Arab heritage and denying their importance. We will not pressure him to accept everything that belongs to the tradition of the Arabs and the heritage from the pre-Islamic era, but we cannot avoid the stamp of chauvinism that can be seen in his every position presented for the purpose of persistently denying that heritage.

However, when it comes to D.S. Margoliuth and his direction, according to everything we could see, he tries to bring down everything. According to him, pre-Islamic tradition is unreliable and pre-Islamic poetry is Islamic in content, meaning, style and musicality, although every portrayal, conjuration, style, eloquence, clear expression, metaphor and poetics is an invention and product of the pre-Islamic era.

All in all, it was a shabby attempt to diminish the value of the Arabic language, its secrets, its timeless heritage from pre-Islamic poetry. However, what was the purpose of this? Of course, all for the purpose of reaching a very nefarious goal, which is an attack on the Qur'an, denying its merits

▼⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 558. Ṭāhā Ḥusayn (1889-1973) is a recognizable figure of the modernist movement in Egyptian literature whose writings in Arabic include novels, stories, criticism, and social and political essays. Outside of Egypt, he is best known for his autobiography *Al-Ayyām* ("The Days") in three volumes, 1929-67. It is the first modern Arabic literary work, which is appreciated in the West.

▼⁵⁴ See: *Ibid.*, p. 558. Abū al-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī (973-1057) was known for his Arab origin, for his virtuosity, for his originality and for his pessimism. He was blind like Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, which further united them in addition to their intellectual and literary similarity.

▼⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

▼⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

▼⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

among the Arabs and its value in the eyes of the whole world, because it leads people from darkness to light, leads them to the only correct path, such as reality proves that and history confirms it, which we also talked about earlier. ▼⁵⁸

From the above, we see that Dr Smajlović has a fairly balanced critique of the philosophy of Orientalism in a way that acknowledges and accepts the positive influence of some Orientalists, but also warns against some Orientalists, who had a negative impact on modern Arab thought, as well as their malicious goal. It is easy for simple minds to deride this pursuit, this line of inquiry, as a kind of naïve sentimentalism but that would be a shallow analysis. John Esposito's assessment of Orientalists is interesting:

[...] It became (the term Orientalists) associated with the romantic, exotic impulse of the European culture of the nineteenth century, under the influence of ethnocentrism and imperialism. Due to the negative connotations of this association, developed at the end of the twentieth century, scientists no longer use the term. ▼⁵⁹

Of course, it should always be remembered that between these two influential contrasts is a large number of objectively neutral Orientalists, who are not burdened by anything but the desire for accurate scientific truth about the Orient. Dr Smajlović observed the point objectively as follows:

[...] When it comes to influences at the level of methodology, Orientalism has managed to direct modern Arab scholars to the processing of manuscripts, the revival of heritage, to writing the history of literature, to intice them into taking an interest in their lexicology, to organize scientific research, to include all its scholars for research in their scientific fields, to delve into acculturation and enculturation processes and to recognize their place within world thought...

[...] Thus Arab modernists studied their literature according to the methodology of C. Brockelman, C.A. Nallina, R. Nicholson, R. Blacherea, H. Gibb, I. Kratchkovsky, G. von Grunebaum, A.G. Palacios, Ch. Adams, D.S. Margoliutha, G. Bergstrasser, J. Ribere, M.A. Palacios, I. Goldziher, A. Arbery and others, so that there was almost no one, not only an Arab but not an Islamic university, and not even an Arab researcher in Arab thought and civilization, that was not influenced by the aforementioned scholars and their methodology. ▼⁶⁰

▼⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 562.

▼⁵⁹ See: Esposito, J. John: „**Orientalists**“; *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. Oxford University Press, 2003., p. 239.

▼⁶⁰ Smajlović, Ahmed: *Philosophy of Orientalism...*, p. 563-564.



ILLUSTRATION ~ Ludwig Deutsch, *Arab Thinkers*. Paris 1901.

A Profile of Arab Thinkers

In a similar way as he indicated the positive and negative profile of Western Orientalists, who influenced modern Arabic literature and thought, Dr Smajlović underscored two different profiles of Arab thinkers in relation to Western Orientalism in the manner of one that is open and optimistic and the other that is closed and sceptical.

As an instance of the open profile of an Arab thinker, as we have already said, Dr Smajlović provided the example of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, who ignored Margoliuth's unfounded theses about the unoriginality of Arabic pre-Islamic poetry but – consciously or subconsciously – accepted and applied them in his controversial work entitled *Fī al-adab al-djāhilī* ("On Pre-Islamic Literature").^{▼61} That is why Dr Smajlović did not spare from criticism the great Arab-Egyptian thinker and writer.

[...] Despite that, says Dr Smajlović, such orientation (Margoliutha, o.a.) found its way in modern Arabic criticism and left its mark, because Ṭāhā Ḥusayn also applied it in his work *On Pre-Islamic Literature (Fī al-adab al-djāhilī)*. The work caused a great storm and drew the attention of researchers to the author and others like him.^{▼62}

Furthermore, Dr Smajlović states:

[...] Thus Orientalism was enabled to easily and effectively influence Arab modern criticism and its direction. Do we need more on this track than to visit the recognition of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn that Orientalism influenced his critical orientation as well as the orientation of others, starting "from the establishment of the Department of Literature at the University, to which distinguished Orientalist professors from Italy, France were invited and Germany," and Ṭāhā Ḥusayn belonged to that department and attended classes there.

And in this regard, he said:

[...] I did not even know about some types of lessons before, and I had not even heard of some methods in criticism. When it comes to a student, he should listen to what is good and what is bad from those lessons, master equally and to the same extent what is good and what is not good. Therefore, researchers of the history of literature are not obliged to master only linguistics and literature but must also have a good command of philosophy and theology. The history and phenomena related to certain regions in particular should be studied. In connection with language learning, the researcher of the history of literature is not enough to skilfully handle the dictionary and master the vocabulary

▼61 Ḥusayn, Ṭāhā. *Fī al-adab al-džāhilī*. Kairo: Dār al-ma'ārif bi miṣr, 1975.

▼62 *Ibid.*, p. 563.

nor to master what concerns the narrow specialty, which constitutes the structure, roundness and basis, but must, in addition, learn the basics of the classical language and its primary sources. ▼⁶³

In contrast to modern Arab supplicants like Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and others, who were open and receptive to the emerging influence of *Orientalism* and *Orientalists* on Arab modern thought, stood another group, who were closed, sceptical and extremely critical of Western *Orientalism* and *Orientalists* and their malicious and salacious speculations. They are described by Dr Smajlović as follows:

[...] Against that current, a number of great men of contemporary Arabic literature stood and stopped the oncoming torrent of that trend, which wanted to flood all the holy places, facts and truths that it found before it. ▼⁶⁴

From that "number of greats" it seems that Dr Smajlović preferred the one closest to him in terms of intellectual direction, which is Muḥamad al-Bahiyy. ▼⁶⁵ In fact, the entire work of Dr Ahmed Smajlović on the influence of the philosophy of Orientalism on Arab modern thought and literature demonstrated a critical attitude, which can be attributed to Dr Muḥammad al-Bahiyy. In fact, Dr Smajlović more or less adopted his view that the West followed many methods and goals in order to destroy the Islamic world and imposed its culture on the Arab-Islamic world, either through direct colonialism and *Orientalism*, or through the Arab national elite that was educated in the West and was inspired by Western social models, following Western conclusions, which aimed to challenge the originality of Islamic religious, cultural and civilizational thought. The idea of "European centralism" in the sense that it is Europeans or Westerners who have a monopoly on culture and civilization is subtly woven into all of this. These efforts of the West are, in fact, attacks on the Arab mind, the Arabic language, the Islamic faith and heritage. This line of thought holds that many Arab scholars, thinkers, and writers were educated by *Orientalists* and thus became dependent on their influence, thus transmitting their thoughts, theories, and opinions to the Arab-Islamic world. So, Dr Smajlović, like Muḥamad al-Bahiyya, considered it his duty to point out the influence of *Orientalism* as such on the entire Arab-Islamic thought, culture and literature so as to refute the false claims of *Orientalists*. It can be said that Dr Ahmed Smajlović fulfilled his duty very successfully and in that way obliged us Bosniaks to be grateful to him for that.

▼⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 556.

▼⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 563.

▼⁶⁵ Dr Muḥammad al-Bahiyy (1905-1982) was born in Egypt. He received his doctorate from the University of Hamburg, Germany, where he gained insight into Western philosophy, which enabled him to make comparisons with Islamic philosophy. He served as the Minister of Waqf of Egypt. He is considered one of the great thinkers of the modern era, who advocated Islamic religious revival in the way of returning to fundamental principles. He was a sharp critic of European colonialism and imperialism. His most important work is: *Al-fikr al-islāmiyy al-ḥadith wa ṣilatuhū bi al-isti'māri al-gharbiyyi* ("Modern Islamic Thought in Relation to Western Colonialism").



ILLUSTRATION ~ Moments of reflection of Dr Smajlović over the Qur'an... (Archive of Akšamija)

Dr Ahmed Smajlović as a Role Model

The last Prophet of Allah Muhammad, p.b.u.h., is the highest and greatest role model (*uswah ḥasanah*) for Muslims. ▼⁶⁶ After him, the role model⁶⁷ for Muslims are those whose role model is the Prophet, and that is first of all the *ulama* - Muslim scholars, who are the spiritual successors of God's prophets. ▼⁶⁸ Each generation of Muslims had role models in the Muslim *ulama*, who were aware of their role and responsibility in conveying the message of Islam, theoretically and practically. Of course, Bosniak Muslims also had their prominent role models in religion and morality from Hasan Kafiya Pruščak to the present. ▼⁶⁹ Dr Smajlović is one of the unquestionable role models. His model is that of his open soul, which had comfort and hope for everyone; the model is that of his clear mind, which fed the thirst of faith in the time of unbelief; his exemplary work is a role model, which encouraged others to work and act in favour of the common good; the model is that of his direct communication with the world, especially with the Muslim world, where he was a delight both as a guest and as a teacher. These are the testimonies of those I talked to, who knew him closely and worked with him. ▼⁷⁰

The exemplary presence of Dr Smajlović is particularly reflected in the fact of his ability to be noticed by his personality and attitude both in the domestic and international public as a relevant factor in shaping public opinion about Islamic culture and civilization, as well as the national culture and civilization of Bosniaks. This skill stems from his familiarity with secular and spiritual literature and is reflected in his authentic presentation to the Arab world of two epochal Bosnian literary works: *Hasanaginica* and *Derviš i smrt* (*Darwish and Death*).

Hence, after his return from Cairo, Dr Smajlović managed to establish, more than anyone in the Islamic Community before, the connection between the spiritual or religious and the secular community of Bosniaks, ▼⁷¹ which were unfairly distant from each other due to anti-religious propaganda during Communism. Religion,

▼⁶⁶ Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever has hope in Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah often. (*Al-Aḥzāb*, 21).

▼⁶⁷ A "role model" is a person who serves as an example of good qualities and right actions and deserves to be followed.

▼⁶⁸ Truly the 'ulamā' - Muslim scholars are the heirs of the prophets. The prophets did not leave dinars or dirhams as an inheritance, but only left knowledge, so whoever accepts it, received a large share of the inheritance. (Ahmed, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah and Darimi).

▼⁶⁹ Hasan Kafiya Pruščak (1544-1616) was a philosopher, theologian, biographer and historian during the Ottoman rule in Bosnia. He is the most important figure in the scientific, literary and intellectual life of Bosniaks. He stood out in the cultural and educational field and with his endowments, some of which still exist today. His literary work on the organization of the state and society was translated into French in 1824, and since then it has become interesting to many world scholars.

▼⁷⁰ I had heard these evaluations about Dr Smajlović first of all from my father, but also, reading the report on the character and work of Dr Smajlović from Dr Jusuf Ramić, his most faithful and longest traveling companion at Al-Azhar, as well as the report by Muharem Omerdić whereby I gained an impression of his exemplary role.

▼⁷¹ The notion of 'community' can be notoriously elusive and slippery, both fluid and porous, and even contested. Despite being integrated into European society for centuries and enjoying an ecumenical cosmopolitanism, the Muslims of the Balkans region have always preserved a distinct philosophy of autonomy and agency in their personal and communal identity.

churches and religious communities, especially the Islamic Community, in the former Yugoslavia were viewed with a certain suspicion in the sense that their holders – the hodjas, ▼⁷² priests were not up to the challenges of the modern scientific age, and therefore the secular community, which relies exclusively on material science, and therefore the spiritual or religious activity in secular society should be ignored and even prevented. With his appearance and words, Dr Smajlović most convincingly refuted the thesis of an Hodja's clumsiness and lack of knowledge, showing that the knowledge of spiritual people is not only equal to worldly knowledge, but can also be superior, because the spirit has an advantage over matter, just as the heart has an advantage over the mind in terms of feelings of love for every creature of God.

Bearing in mind the current situation in Bosnia, as well as the situation of the Muslim world, especially in Palestine,⁷³ I thought it important to remind the reader of the exceptional qualities of Dr Smajlović, who can be a role model for how to deal with challenges here and how to understand what is happening there for every person who has a shred of feeling for truth and justice. Formal and informal bearers of religious spirituality today are equal to bearers of a secular worldview, but they are not spared guilt if they compromise the freedom of their spirituality in the way of their moral inconsistency, which can be devastating for faith and the religious communities in public life. This biography highlights the necessity for a nuanced re-evaluation of the sources, customs and cultivated mentalities related to Bosnian intellectual history. Hence Dr Ahmed Smajlović is a role model, to whom the Islamic Community should pay attention and from whom it should draw its knowledge and experience in facing today's challenges, which are by no means easy.

Conclusion

Dr Smajlović was one of the most recognizable figures among Bosniaks-Muslims in the twentieth century through his thought and work in the field of understanding and presenting Islam not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also in the Balkans, Europe and the world, especially in the Arab world.

Dr Smajlović was a scientist and researcher, who did not accept the existing state of Islamic thought but sought adequate answers to modern challenges based on the Qur'an and Sunnah through deep analysis.

As a European, Dr Ahmed Smajlović was not a Europhobe, but he was critical of European colonial and

▼⁷² Completely unjustified, but the fact is that Bosniaks with a secular education somehow always looked at the hodjas/Imams - bearers of Islamic learning and upbringing in Bosnia as less knowledgeable in secular science and as such useless for serious and coherent conversation and cooperation. Dr Ahmed Smajlović, with his appearance and persuasive rhetoric, greatly changed the image of the Hodja in the worldly circle as a Bosniak.

▼⁷³ As I was writing this on the 39th day of Israel's bloody attack on Gaza, reports are stating that the Israeli army is killing Palestinian children in Gaza - one child every ten minutes. The total number of murdered children is already over 4,300. Thousands of children are injured. About 1,200 children are under the rubble. There is no prospect of stopping the genocide and paedocide in Gaza.

koji se može posmatrati i kao dug Zapada prema muslimanskom doprinosu razvoju evropskog humanizma i renesanse.

Pored svega i iznad svega, čitatelj disertacije o utjecaju filozofije orijentalizma na arapsko-islamski svijet dr. Smajlovića, koju je odbranio na Al-Azharu, ne može se oteti utisku da, zahvaljujući baš *orijentalizmu*, islamska kultura i civilizacija imaju status opće humanističke, tj. svjetske vrijednosti, koja se ne može zanemariti.

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imperialist pretensions towards the Arab-Islamic world through Orientalism, which sometimes turns into open Christian-missionary proselytism.

With all the objections to *Orientalism*, Dr Ahmed Smajlović nevertheless acknowledges the positive influence of *Orientalism*, which can also be seen as a debt owed by the West to the Muslim contribution to the development of European humanism and the Renaissance.

Besides and above all, upon reading Dr Smajlović's dissertation at Al-Azhar on the impact of the philosophy of *Orientalism* on the Arab-Islamic world, one cannot escape the impression that, due to *Orientalism*, Islamic culture and civilization have the status of general humanistic, i.e., of world value, which cannot be ignored.

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ILLUSTRATION ON NEXT PAGE ~ Johann Gustav Adolf Bauernfeind (Gustave Bauernfeind), The orient: Market in Jaffa, 1887.

ILUSTRACIJA NA SLJEDEĆOJ STRANICI ~ Johann Gustav Adolf Bauernfeind (Gustave Bauernfeind), Orijent: Tržnica u Jaffi, 1887.

