The Ottoman Turks in English Heroic Plays

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By

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TO MY SON EMİR,
with love.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREFACE

Recently much ink has been spilled on dramatic representations of the Turk, or Islam, in the early modern period. Following early modern scholarly activity on the representation of the Turk, recent scholarly re-evaluation pays attention to the Interregnum and Restoration England's perception of the Turk and Islam. In that sense, this book fills a gap in literary studies which has escaped the attention of earlier researchers, who ignored the rich variety of plays written in the Restoration period. Many texts on the representation of the Turk in heroic plays of the English Restoration period are waiting to be read with a more critical eye, due to their rich variety of dramatic forms and innovations, as well as their complex representations of the political, religious, and social concerns of 17th century England. Thus, this book uniquely focuses on the non-canonical, but innovative, heroic plays of the Restoration period, which dramatize Ottoman Turks, interrogating the extent to which 17th century heroic plays justify and perpetuate stereotypical representations in Western discourse. Hence, this book aims to reach a deeper reading of these texts than the present literature offers, analyzing Ottoman Turk stereotypes in the lesser-known Restoration heroic plays through direct references to the historical accounts which recorded these episodes, to see uniquely English additions in the process of reconstruction of heroic Ottoman episodes.

Appealing to undergraduates/graduates, researchers, and academicians in fields such as cultural studies, history, religion, the early modern period, and the English Restoration, this book offers an interdisciplinary approach to the representation of the Ottoman Turks in English heroic plays. Respectively, it examines William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* (1663), Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668), Henry Neville Payne's *The Siege of Constantinople* (1675), and Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676). Through this examination, this book asserts that these plays combine medieval European anti-Islamic polemic, crusading rhetoric, and early modern thought regarding the Turks, with the Restoration perception of the Turk displayed in heroic plays in the aftermath of the Restoration of 1660. In other words, these plays, which aim to display stereotypical images of 'the raging and expansionist Turk', 'the cruel Turk', 'the absolute Turk', and 'the sensual Turk', deeply rooted in Western history and ideology, evoke preconceived notions of the Turk

and Islam in the Restoration context. The common ground which the selected heroic plays share is that they all point to the significant impact of Ottoman-related themes, including expansionism and absolutism, Oriental despotism, familicide, polygamy, and sensual weakness, on Restoration England. In doing so, these heroic plays, which deal with the conquest of Rhodes, Sehzade Mustapha's death, the siege of Constantinople, and the campaign against Persia, primarily aim to reinforce the so-called cultural and religious *difference* between the Ottomans and the English, dramatizing Ottoman-related themes. In that sense, this book attempts to show that these historical episodes were reconstructed in the Restoration tradition of heroic plays, drawing upon medieval anti-Islamic polemic, crusading rhetoric, and early modern thought, concerning the Turks.

Furthermore, this book throws light on the most pressing political issues of 17th century England, including revolution, regicide, the Restoration, and the Exclusion Crisis, which were commented on through the guise of the Ottoman Turks in these heroic plays. That is, these plays provided the dramatists with an outlet through which they could deal with the political issues of the period in the presence of the King. In other words, the dramatists made political commentary on the turbulent political crises of the second half of the 17th century, including revolution, regicide, the Restoration and the Exclusion Crisis, in the guise of the Ottoman Turks, on the Restoration stage. In this respect, these Restoration dramatists aimed to warn the English politics of the 17th century through the guise of Ottoman sultans, and the historical episodes they reconstructed in their imaginations. Thus, filling the gap in literature on these plays, this book asserts that a comprehensive understanding of the representation of the Ottoman Turks in English Restoration drama requires a new perspective; and thus investigates different aspects of the interaction between the Ottomans and the English in the selected heroic plays.

INTRODUCTION

> "Our swords against proud Solyman we draw,
> his cursed prophet, and his sensual law."
> William Davenant, *The Siege of Rhodes, Part I*

When the curtain was raised on the first legitimate English stage following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Davenant's chorus uttered a call to arms against the "cursed prophet" of Islam, and the "sensual law" of the Ottoman sultan, invoking the conflict between Christendom and Islam beginning with jihad and crusade. *The Siege of Rhodes*, set amidst the imperial magnificence of the Ottoman Empire, managed to dazzle Restoration audiences through its display of the Ottoman court, Sultan Solyman's harem, and the parade of Eastern costumes. In the play, Sultan Solyman performed wearing a turban, and a Turkish vest, while Ianthe performed her part while veiled. The play's success in the mid-17th century showed that notions of the Turk and Islam took a central position in many aspects of English cultural life, and the Turk had become a powerful medium through which a remarkable variety of cultural anxieties and beliefs could be addressed. Taking into consideration this fact, this study seeks to analyze English cultural impressions or images of the Turk and Islam, in the aftermath of the Restoration of the monarchy, focusing on dramatic representations of the period.

The history of the relationship between Christendom and Islam has been marked largely by mutual misunderstanding, which resulted from cultural images, through which one viewed and judged the other.[1] Within the context of this conflict between Christendom and Islam, Norman Daniel points out, that "[b]y misapprehension and misrepresentation, an idea of the beliefs and practices of one society can pass into the accepted myths of another society in a form so distorted that its relation to the original facts is sometimes barely discernible."[2] In other words, the European image of the Muslim world was based on misapprehension and

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[1] A. Blake Denton, "The Medieval Canon and the Renaissance Image of the Turk: A Brief Historiography of Pre-Modern European Conceptions of the Muslim World," *Madison Historical Review* Vol. 12, Article 5. (2015): 1.

[2] Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1962), 2.

misrepresentation, exacerbated by cultural impressions. According to Lewis, for the Muslims, "Christianity was an abrogated religion, which its followers absurdly insisted on retaining, instead of accepting God's final word", while the Christians regarded Islam as a deviant form of Christian faith, as a 'heresy' or 'a false doctrine'.[3] This long and unfinished rivalry for the role of world religion between Christendom and Islam was expressed, and confirmed, or modified, by the subsequent relationship between the two.

The religious aspect of this relationship between Western civilization and the Muslim world shaped the frameworks in which the European Christians expressed their animosity towards Muslims, and united them, as "Islam was reckoned the greatest enemy of the Christian Church."[4] Since the Islamic conquest of Spain in 711 AD, the Christians led an intermittent war of conquest to recapture Christian lands which had been under Islamic domination for about 800 years. With the advent of crusades against the Seljuk Turks in the 11th century, much of the ideology of *Reconquista* was transmitted via the context of crusading.[5] Following the Seljuk Turks' decline, a more powerful Islamic Empire appeared, extending its territories from Eastern Europe to the Middle East and North Africa. The Ottomans created a world power extending over three continents, inhabited by very different races, and they enjoyed a rich and diverse culture, vast lands and resources, and a flourishing economy.[6] The Ottoman conquests in south-eastern Europe, followed by a rapid Ottoman expansion into the heart of Europe, affirmed the Ottoman omnipresence in the world, and led many European states to acknowledge Ottoman superiority. By 1600, Christian European states including Spain, France, Italy, and Germany, were forced to accept the Ottoman Empire as a military, commercial, and diplomatic force. Meanwhile, English relations with the Ottomans were established nearly a hundred years after the establishment of relations between the Turks and other European states. Although the English did not have any diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the conquest of Constantinople, the economic developments of the 16th century led the English to establish a mercantile relationship with the Ottomans. An especially lucrative Mediterranean trade tempted the

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[3] Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 7.

[4] Daniel, *Islam and the West,* 2.

[5] Öz Öktem, "The Representation of the Muslim Woman in Early Modern English Drama" (PhD diss., Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2013), 10.

[6] Lewis, *Islam and the West*, 8.

Englishmen, who sought their fortune between English ports and Mediterranean destinations, including Ottoman Ports. In this respect, it should be noted that the superiority of Islamic power, which was in possession of vast resources and extensive territories, led the Europeans to establish friendly relations with the Ottomans.[7]

The intensified commercial and cultural contact with the Ottomans in the multicultural Mediterranean was accompanied by an explosion of all kinds of printed materials about the Ottoman Empire, and the idea of 'the Turk'. Since the Turk was not only the 'Other' or a commerce partner, but also a threat penetrating into Europe day by day, European interest increased greatly. In the 16th century alone, more than three thousand texts dealing with the Turk appeared in Europe; and this number was greater for the 17th century.[8] Most of these materials were official reports and records, historical accounts, travelogues written by merchants, or the personal letters of ambassadors and diplomats. According to Daniel, the presentation of the image of the Turk in early modern texts was widely derived from conceptions of Islam held in medieval Europe, which regarded Islam as an inherently violent religion, and the prophet Mohammed as a devious and sexually promiscuous religious leader.[9] These conceptions, well rooted in European consciousness, were forged during the early modern period. Similarly, Robert Schwoebel notes that the early modern image of the Turk was widely influenced by medieval conceptions of Islam, and he maintains that, "[e]ven under the pressure of momentous change [Europeans] clung tenaciously to established categories and adapted a large body of new information to the forms of thought and expression developed in the anti-Moslem and crusading literature of the Middle Ages."[10] The anti-Islamic polemic that reached back at least as far as the 7th century, as mentioned by Burton, was projected forward onto the Ottomans, constructing the Turk as, "amoral barbarian, inhuman scourge, and even anti-Christ…"[11] Nancy Bisaha extends this argument innovatively, adapting classical sources to the conflict between the Europeans and the Turks. Bisaha clearly acknowledges medieval influences on Renaissance humanist discourse; however, she further argues that the judgment of the

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[7] Öktem, "The Representation of the Muslim Woman," 23.

[8] Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning Islam and English Drama 1579-1624* (Cranbury: Rosemont Publishing, 2005), 22.

[9] Daniel, *Islam and the West,* 274-276.

[10] Robert Schwoebel, *The Shadow of the Crescent: The Renaissance Image of the Turk, 1453-1517* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), ix-x.

[11] Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 23.

Turk was not solely based on religious difference, but on cultural and political aspects as well, adding the notion of 'the new barbarian' to the early modern image of the Turk.[12]

The early modern texts dealing with the Turk, including official reports, historical accounts, and travelogues, clearly drew on medieval European images. According to Amanda Wunder, "16th century traveling antiquarians both built on, and complicated – but ultimately failed to topple – the stereotypical rendering of the Turk as a barbaric warrior, which was prevalent in Europe at the time."[13] In other words, these reports, accounts, and travelogues were expected to be based on actual encounters with the Turks; however they widely derived from common medieval European images of Islam. These official reports, historical accounts and travelogues proved to be a lasting source of fascination for early modern playwrights who produced dramatic representations of the Turk, drawing on conventional stereotypes recorded in these texts. At the center of these texts, "The 'Great Turk', as the sultan was known, was often figured as a ranting autocrat who slaughtered his siblings upon taking the throne, only to luxuriate in the decadent splendor of the seraglio."[14] In these figurations, the Turks were frequently associated with barbarity, oriental despotism, and sensual weakness, functioning as the counter identity for European Christians. In this respect, the Turk was a popular theme which fascinated English dramatists who reproduced the image of the Turk in their dramatic representations. Louis Wann draws attention to the English fascination with the Turk, and states that 47 plays staged Islamic themes and characters in the period between 1579 and 1642, and 31 of these plays dealt especially with the Ottoman Turks and their history.[15] Wann's "The Orient in Elizabethan Drama" (1915) is regarded as the starting point for scholarly research on the representation of 'the Other' in early modern English literature. Samuel Chew's *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and Britain during the Renaissance* (1926) came a decade later. Wann's research deals especially with the Islamic Other, focusing on the extent of the presence of Muslims in English literature, and the Western perception of Islam. Brandon Beck's *From the*

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[12] Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 8-9, 43-44.

[13] Amanda Wunder, "Western Travelers, Eastern Antiquities, and the Image of the Turk in Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Early Modern History* 7, No. 1/2 (2003): 92-93.

[14] Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 23.

[15] Louis Wann, "The Orient in Elizabethan Drama," *Modern Philology 12*, No. 7 (1915): 439.

Rising of the Sun: English Images of the Ottoman Empire (1987) and Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (1995) also focus on the Islamic Other on the English stage.[16]

Recently, in his *Islam and Britain, 1558-1685* (1998), and *Turks Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (1999), Nabil Matar sheds light on the English representations of Islam and the Turk, challenging Edward Said's simple dichotomy of the West and the East. According to Said's *Orientalism* (1978), the West and the East have been contrasted and have complemented each other since antiquity, and the distinction between the West and the East was based on the 'positional superiority' of the West.[17] However, it can be misleading to apply Said's assertion of Western superiority over the East to the period before the 18th century, since power relations in the 16th and 17th centuries were the opposite of those in the 18th century and onwards. In other words, until the 18th century, the European powers were subordinated to Islamic power, and "the relationship was one of anxiety and awe on the part of Europeans."[18] Thus, Matar concludes that it can be misleading to apply the Orientalist point of view to the period before the 18th century, since the English could not assert possession or domination in their relations with the Muslims.[19] Especially after 2000, Daniel Vitkus, Gerald Maclean, Jonathan Burton, Linda McJannet and Matthew Dimmock, turned attention to Islamic superiority before the 18th century, analyzing all aspects of the representations of the Turk in the period. These influential researches not only challenge Said's simple binarism of the superior West and inferior East, but also shift attention to the representation of the Turks in some less-known early modern plays. Especially in his *Turning Turk, English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean* (2003), Vitkus emphasizes Ottoman economic superiority in Mediterranean trade, and states that it can be misleading to apply Said's postcolonial theory to analyze the early modern English representation of Islam, since England was not "a conquering,

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[16] Seda Erkoç, "Repercussions of a Murder: The Death of Sehzade Mustafa on the Early Modern English Stage," (PhD diss., Central European Society, 2008), 3-4.

[17] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 2, 7.

[18] Daniel J. Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe," in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other,* ed. David R. Blanks and Michael Frassetto (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 209-210.

[19] Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1556-1685* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 11.

colonizing power" until the Union in 1707.[20] Rather, as Gerald Maclean argues in his *Looking East: English Writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800* (2007), the English were a relatively unimportant nation bent on competing with Spain for New World riches, and the feeling that the English experienced in their relations with the Ottomans was 'imperial envy.' In other words, Ottoman superiority aroused complex and ambivalent attitudes of fear and desire for early modern Englishmen. That is, they were fascinated with the power of the Islamic Empire, while at the same time, they were anxious about conversion to Islam, or the phenomenon of 'turning Turk'. According to Vitkus, early modern representations of Islam, as in later Western discourses, demonized Islamic people to produce "imaginary resolutions of real anxieties about Islamic wealth and might", in order to overshadow the "Christian West's inferiority complex."[21] Therefore, dramatization of the deformed Islamic image in early modern stage productions does not justify Western superiority, but instead its fear of its militarily, economically, and culturally superior Islamic rival.

Following early modern scholarly activity on the representation of the Other, recent scholarly re-evaluation of the Turks and Islam turns attention to the Interregnum, and Restoration England's perception of the Other. Critics like Byron Smith, Bridget Orr, and Matthew Birchwood indicate that the relationship between the Ottoman Turks and Restoration England was influenced primarily by the political dynamics of the period. In *Islam in English Literature* (1939), Smith argues that the English literature of the Restoration period was free from the anxiety of Turkish aggression over Europe. In parallel with this altered attitude towards the Ottomans, the dramatization of Muslim Turk characters was "decorative."[22] In her *Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714* (2001), Orr argues that the context of Restoration drama was shaped by English imperial ambitions, and the theater "became an instrument of empire."[23] Orr maintains that between 1660 and 1714, at least 40 plays set in Asia or the Levant appeared on the London stage. They were almost all serious heroic plays or tragedies that showed how the Eastern empires were torn apart by civil strife, harem intrigues, oriental despotism, and conflict with European

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[20] Daniel J. Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 6.
[21] Vitkus, "Early Modern Orientalism," 210.
[22] Byron Porter Smith, *Islam in English Literature*, 2nd ed. (New York: Caravan Books, 1939), 37
[23] Bridget Orr, *Empire on the English Stage 1660-1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 27.

states.[24] Essentially, representation of the East on the Restoration stage aimed to display the difference of the Other in order to contribute to the formation of imperial English identity. In his *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689* (2005), Nabil Matar traces the relationship between Restoration drama and Restoration England's imperial ambitions, following maritime victories in the second half of the 17th century.[25] In his *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640-1685* (2007), Matthew Birchwood argues that in the period under study, "the idea of Islam was a volatile mixture of longstanding anxieties, centered upon the Ottoman Empire as a spiritual and military threat, combined with esteem for its cultural and imperial achievements."[26] Furthermore, Birchwood argues that the East was transfigured by "the lens of English politics" upon the "religious and political anxieties at home."[27] In other words, mid-17th century drama was intentionally drawn to Islamic subjects and settings in order to reflect England's political and religious anxieties, including revolution, regicide, the Restoration, and the Exclusion Crisis. Susan J. Owen remarks on this phenomenon as follows:

> These texts were closely and ferociously engaged with their times. Of course they are written within the dominant discourse of their times, which they in turn employ and embody, but the playwrights also, successfully or unsuccessfully, wrench these discourses to their purpose.[28]

According to Owen, the playwrights reflected the period's political and religious concerns, in which they produced their plays. In that sense, this study aims to analyze the representation of the Other on the Restoration stage, focusing on the Ottoman Turks. It is certain that, despite the efforts of recent scholars, many texts on the representation of the Other are waiting to be read with a more critical eye. Earlier critics ignored the rich variety of plays written in the Restoration period, focusing almost exclusively on the comedies of manners, written by Dryden, Congreve, Wycherly, and Etherege. Deborah Payne Fisk asserts that, although "the witty language of Restoration comedies was thought to be its jewel", it is important to realize the heterogeneity of Restoration theatre; its rich

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[24] Orr, *Empire on the English Stage*, 61.

[25] Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689* (Gainesville: Florida University Press, 2005), 133.

[26] Matthew Birchwood, *Staging Islam in England: Drama and Culture, 1640-1685* (Cambridge: DS Brewer, 2007), 184.

[27] Birchwood, *Staging Islam*, 5,8.

[28] Susan J. Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 21-22.

variety of dramatic forms and innovations as well as its complex representations of political and social events appealed to people from all walks of life.[29] Therefore, this study focuses on the non-canonical, but innovative, heroic plays of the Restoration period which especially dramatized the Ottoman Turks and Ottoman history. Hence, this study tries to reach a deeper understanding of William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* (1663), Roger Boyle's *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1668), Henry Neville Payne's *The Siege of Constantinople* (1675), and Elkanah Settle's *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1676) than the present literature offers. In analyzing Ottoman Turk stereotypes in these less-known Restoration heroic plays, this study asserts that the Restoration image of the Turk was widely influenced by medieval anti-Islamic polemic, crusading rhetoric, and early modern literature regarding the Turks.

To achieve the end just mentioned, this study will primarily use many theoretical concepts, especially with reference to Stuart Hall's statements on *representation* in cultural studies, Michel Foucault's premises on *discourse/knowledge/power*, and Edward Said's groundbreaking study *Orientalism*. The concept of representation has an important place in cultural studies, since it is an essential part of the production of meaning. In Hall's terms, it produces meaning with the help of language, signs, and images, which stand for, or represent things.[30] With the help of language, representation systematically produces the meaning of concepts in our minds; correlation of the things (objects, people, events) with these concepts enables a meaningful interpretation of the world within a system. Hall argues that, "the relation between things, concepts and signs lies at the heart of the production of meaning in language. The process which links these three elements together is what we call 'representation.'"[31] That is to say, the relationship between things in the world, and concepts in our minds and signs (words, sounds, images) which produce meaning in language, also produces representation. Representation of meaning works through three approaches: the reflective, the intentional, and the constructivist. In the reflective approach, language intends to reflect the truth, since true meaning is thought to lie in the real world. In the intentional approach, the speaker/author intends to impose his or her unique meaning on the world through language. That is, the meaning is

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[29]Deborah Payne Fisk, *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), xvi.

[30] Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 15-18.

[31] Hall, *Representation*, 19.

intentional depending on the producer. In the constructivist approach, it is acknowledged that the meaning in language cannot be produced by mere things or individual users, but by concepts and signs. In other words, we construct meaning through concepts and signs; that is, meaning cannot be conveyed through the material world, but through the language system we are using to represent our concepts.[32]

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's premises have greatly influenced the social constructionist view of language and representation. For the purposes of this analysis, rather than his great contribution to modern linguistics, Saussure's general view of representation in cultural fields has held great importance. Saussure notes that, "Language is a system of signs," so "the production of meaning depends on language."[33] According to Saussure, there is the *form* and the *concept*: the first element, the *signifier*, and the second element the *signified*. Put simply, the thing we hear or read or see is the *signifier*, it correlates with the *signified*, and the *sign* is the union of them. Both *signifier* and *signified* are required for the production of meaning, but the relationship between them constructs representation. The first principle of Saussure's theory of language is that "there is no natural or inevitable link between the signifier and the signified."[34] In other words, the relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified* is arbitrary; then, that there is no universal fixed meaning. In short, the meaning is subject to change. This principle leads us to another important point of Saussure's theory of language: "both signifier and signified are purely relational or differential entities."[35] Occasionally, what signifies is the *difference* between the signs, rather than the essence of them, so *difference* plays a crucial role in the process of meaning production within language, and the basic way that leads us to mark *difference* is the binary opposition. That is, as stated by Hall, the *difference* between the signs defined in relation to another's direct opposite, as in night/day, produces meaning of the words or concepts.[36] Moreover, these concepts are not autonomous entities, but operate with other concepts within a system, and they are defined by their relationships with each other.[37] According to Saussure, rather than the essence of ideas/concepts, it is the *difference* which enables them to carry meaning. Taking Saussure's

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[32] Hall, *Representation*, 24-25.

[33] Jonathan D. Culler, *Saussure* (London: Fontana/Collins, 1976), 19.

[34] Culler, *Saussure*, 19.

[35] Culler, *Saussure*, 23.

[36] Hall, *Representation*, 31.

[37] Culler, *Saussure*, 24.

premises on *difference* into consideration, this study aims to demonstrate that the processes of comparison and categorization based on a system of *difference* played a vital role in the formation of Western identity. The national cultures, as emphasized by Hall, acquire their sense of identity by comparison with other cultures and difference from them.[38] As a system of representation, the discourse asserts this *difference* and divides the world into a simple dichotomy of the West/the East. This system of representation reduces this dichotomy to a unified and homogenous structure, posing the West as superior and the East as inferior within it. Simply put, the representation of the world as divided according to the dichotomy of the West/the East, is an outcome of Europe's representation of itself in relation to non-European cultures, based on *difference*. Especially during the period of exploration (1430-1498) and the period of early contact, conquest, settlement, and colonization (1492-1502), when Europe explored the African coast and Columbus discovered the New World, the idea of the West/the East was formed.[39] According to Roberts, these early conquests paved the way for the West to establish domination over the rest, providing knowledge and power.[40] More importantly, early conquests provided Western European countries with an idea of unique civilization despite many internal differences. That is, in the construction of the collective idea of the West, Islamic challenge played a remarkably important role. As Roberts argues, Christianity was central to the idea of 'the West', since the concepts of 'Europe' and 'Christendom' were virtually identical. According to him, what makes European civilization distinct and unique in the eye of the Westerner was essentially Christianity. The encounter with the Muslim world during the two periods stated above, especially the religious difference, promoted a growing sense of superiority and internal cohesion which Roberts calls a "Eurocentric view of the world."[41] The 'Eurocentric' world view or the idea of the West formed discourses in which Europe began to describe the *difference* between Western and non-Western societies during the course of Western expansion into the East.

A *discourse* simply means "a coherent or rational body of speech or writing; a speech or sermon" in language; however, in an identity formation context, *discourse* is, "a group of statements which provide a language for

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[38] Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," in *Formations of Modernity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Gieben Bram (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 188.
[39] Hall, "The West and the Rest," 190.
[40] J. M. Roberts, *The Triumph of the West* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1985), 194.
[41] Roberts, *The Triumph*, 202.

talking about, i.e., a way of representing, a particular kind of knowledge about a topic."[42] Michael Foucault uses the word 'representation' in a narrower sense, since the point that concerns him is the production of knowledge through *discourse*, rather than just meaning through language. As Foucault puts it, "relations of power, not relations of meaning" are his main concern.[43] According to Foucault, a *discourse* consists of several statements intertwining with each other to form a 'discursive formation'. In Foucault's terms, "statements different in form, and dispersed in time, form a group if they refer to one and the same object."[44] As noted by Foucault, the statements made within a particular discourse, mean something, and are true within a specific historical context and historical period. In other words, the knowledge produced by discourse differs from context to context and period to period, with no necessary continuity between them.[45] To put it another way, the statements in a *discourse* provide specific knowledge about a topic, and more importantly, a way of representing. Now, Foucault's discussion of *discourse/knowledge* provides a context in which the relations between the West and the East will be clarified.

In the discourse of 'the West and the rest', it is easy to trace how the West behaves towards the rest. As stated above, European explorations and conquests contributed to the formation of the idea of the West whose construction was enabled by the idea of the East. These explorations enabled systematic explorers with knowledge/power which would lead to Western authority over rest of the world. Within this context, the discourse of 'the West and the rest' was produced by the Westerners, who positioned themselves as the subjects of this discourse.[46] Furthermore, a *discourse* is not a closed system, it incorporates elements of other discourses into its network of meaning. That is, as stated by Hall, "traces of past discourses remain embedded in more recent discourses of 'the West.'"[47] Reading the discourse of 'the West and the rest' as an open system, as Hall argues, this study argues that historical facts refer to early writings, speeches, and chronicles, and cite preceding academic research and texts, which is called

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[42] Hall, "The West and the Rest," 201.

[43] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972 - 1977*, Translated by C. Gordon and Others (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 114.

[44] Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, Translated by Alan Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 32.

[45] Hall, *Representation*, 46.

[46] Foucault, *The Archeology*, 95-96.

[47] Hall, "The West and the Rest," 202.

intertextuality. In other words, *intertextuality* means each text exists in relation to the other texts.[48] This term was coined by Julia Kristeva in order to indicate "the insertion of history into a text" and "the insertion of the text into history."[49] That is, the texts respond to, re-accentuate, and rework, past texts, and thus, shape subsequent texts. Kristeva's concept of *intertextuality* is employed by Hall in his discussion of the discourse of "the West and the rest." Keeping in mind Kristeva's assertion, the subsequent texts, regardless of genres, are also influenced and shaped by previous historical discourse. In this context, Foucault's notion of *discourse* and Kristeva's notion of *intertextuality* are interrelated with each other, and present an invaluable path for the analysis of Western representations of the Turks. Based on Foucault's aforementioned statements, this study asserts that Western discourse, in Hall's terms the discourse of 'the West and the rest', drawing on early writings, speeches, and chronicles, sustains stereotypical representations of the Turks within this discourse. In other words, the early relationship between Christendom and Islam, the rise of the Ottoman Empire as a world power, and the European anxiety about Turkish expansion into the heart of Europe, resulted in negative representations of the Turks in Western discourse, creating a 'discursive practice' which constructed the stereotypical Turk image.[50] Hence, negative representations of the Turks produced by Western discourse eventually became common knowledge. Then, how does discourse achieve this? According to Foucault, the *knowledge* produced by *discourse* constitutes a kind of *power*, and *knowledge* and *power* are directly related to each other; he defines this relationship as "a power-relation."[51] That is, discourses not only enable production of knowledge but also circulation of power; when discourses operate effectively in circulation of power, it is called a 'regime of truth' in which these statements make sense: "'Truth' is to be understood as a system of … circulation and operation of statements."[52] Since discourses operate in relation to power, power has the authority to enforce the truth of these statements. However, the thing which raises more concerns is whether a discourse organizes and regulates

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[48] Nevsal Olcen Tiryakioğlu, "The Western Image of Turks from the Middle Ages to the 21st Cnetury: The Myth of 'Terrible Turk' and 'Lustful Turk,'" (PhD diss., Nottingham Trent University, 2015), 32.
[49] Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press. 1993/2009), 102.
[50] Tiryakioğlu, "The Western Image of Turks," 33.
[51] Foucault, *Power/Knowledge,* 201.
[52] Foucault, *Power/Knowledge,* 133.

relations of power effectively, rather than whether it is true or false.[53] As Foucault puts it, 'Truth' is interrelated with circulation of power, which produces and sustains it. Foucault's notion of a 'regime of truth', provided by Edward Said's study of *Orientalism*, will be used as one of the bases for this study. Inspired by Foucault's aforementioned concepts of *discourse/knowledge/power*, Said examines the dichotomy of the West and the East, produced by a regime of truth that he calls *Orientalism*.

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said analyzes Western construction of the 'Orient' through various discourses and institutions. Said calls this discourse "Orientalism" and defines it thus: "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient…either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism."[54] Said draws attention to the construction of "the Orient" by "Orientalism", which needs to be examined as a discourse. Western discourse, as mentioned by Said, is a systematic discipline produced by European culture to reinforce the distinction between 'the West' and 'the East'. Said examines this distinction by questioning the work of Orientalists, and decrees that the Orient represents the "deepest and most recurring images of the Other." Thus, Orientalism invents a fictitious Orient by fostering misperceptions about the East.[55] Said examines the Orient's special place in European Western experience, and asserts that, "the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."[56] That is, the Orient is not merely a product of European imagination, but is a complementary part of European civilization. Orientalism which needs to be examined as a discourse, produces knowledge about the Orient, and positions it as the object of this knowledge within Orientalist discourse. The European disciplines, institutions, doctrines, and theses contribute to the production and perpetuation of the Orient and its scientific status. Although Orientalism repudiates the existence of the East, and regards it as a 'career' for Westerners, the East is real and present for the West through its history and tradition of thought. In other words, "the 'Orient' and the 'Occident' are man-made"; however 'the West' and 'the East' are facts reflecting

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[53] Hall, "The West and the Rest," 205.

[54] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 2.

[55] Said, *Orientalism,* 1.

[56] Said, *Orientalism,* 2.

each other, although Orientalism demonstrates the comparatively greater strength of the Occident (British, French, American).[57]

The Orientalist discourse, which fosters misrepresentations and misconceptions of the Orient, not only complements European identity, but also provides a controlling and dominating mechanism over the Orient, through authoritative and academic, yet imaginative and mythical, knowledge, produced by the scholarship of Oriental Studies of Western academic institutions.[58] From the late 18th century, as pointed out by Said, "Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" makes statements about the Orient, authorizes views of it, and rules over it.[59] The subjective knowledge and distorted imagery of non-Western cultures in Orientalist discourse have been utilized as academic knowledge, reinforcing preconceived distinctions between the West and the East since antiquity. As a 'style of thought' Orientalism incorporates not only academic texts, but also the writings of Western authors, novelists, travel writers, poets, economists, and philosophers, as Said remarks:

> Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident." Thus, a very large number of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social description, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny and so on. This Orientalism can accommodate Aeschylus, and Victor Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx.[60]

Said argues that Western writers like Aeschylus, Dante, Ariosto, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Tasso, Cervantes, Hugo, Flaubert, and Nerval, fostered the simplistic and distorted image of the East that has contributed to the Orient myths. In other words, the preconceived distinction between the West and the East fostered in these writers' poems, novels, social descriptions, political accounts, and cultural representations, have served to the creation of the Orient myths. In this context, it is obvious that Orientalism, as a discourse, embodies traces of previous Western discourses that sustain a preconceived distinction between the

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[57] Said, *Orientalism,* 4.
[58] Tiryakioğlu, "The Western Image of Turks," 35.
[59] Said, *Orientalism,* 3.
[60] Said, *Orientalism,* 3.

West and the East. Said particularly criticizes the preconceived distinction between the West and the East that leads to distorted images of Muslims in Orientalist discourse, and argues that the "integral and self-sufficient" Christian imagery of Islam was produced by a large variety of poetry, learned controversy, and popular superstition.[61] In that sense, European Christians' perception of Muslims as the Other, produced by the Western discourse, including the crusade rhetoric, chronicles, sermons, humanist discourse, and the literary texts of the early modern period, enabled the West to construct the East as a cultural opposite and position itself as a superior Self. Thus, the Western discourse provided a prejudiced archival knowledge of Islam, as discussed before, through Foucault's notion of discursive formation. This biased archival knowledge, to which Western writers keep referring, promoted misrepresentations about Islamic cultures. Said draws attention to the intertextuality of Western writings that constantly refer to each other, and he defines Orientalism as "an archive of information" which allowed the Orientalists to regard the Orient as "a phenomenon of possessing regular characteristics."[62] In other words, Orientalist discourse provides the West with a cultural framework to represent non-Western cultures, reducing them to fixed homogenous characteristics. Moreover, although the difference between the West and the East is not as radical as is suggested by the Orientalist point of view, the division between the Islamic cultures and European Christendom has constructed "the strength of the West and the Orient's weakness – as seen by the West". Thus, this division fosters the hostility between 'us' (Westerners) and 'them' (Orientals).[63] In this context, similar to Hall's definition of the West as an ideological construct rather than a geographical one, Said defines the East as an ideological construct based on a simple dichotomy of the West and the East. According to Said, the East within Orientalist discourse cannot be regarded as mere signification of a geographic territory in the Near or Far East, generally denoted "the distant and exotic". Rather, the East stands for the Islamic East, or the 'militant' Orient'.[64] In other words, Orientalist discourse utilizes a collection of images and words to describe the Orient. By 'militant Orient', Said clearly refers to the 'Ottoman peril', as he remarks as follows:

> Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was lasting trauma.

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[61] Said, *Orientalism,* 60, 61.

[62] Said, *Orientalism,* 42.

[63] Said, *Orientalism,* 45.

[64] Said, *Orientalism,* 75.

> Until the end of the 17th century the 'Ottoman peril' lurked alongside
> Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant
> danger, and in time, European civilization incorporated that peril and its
> lore, its great events, figures, virtues, and vices, as something woven into
> the fabric of life.[65]

Said's reference to the 'Ottoman peril' corresponds to the military
dominance of the Ottoman Empire, and a constant Islamic threat for the
Europeans until the end of the 17th century. However, in the 16th and 17th
centuries, the Ottoman Empire was not only the military power of the
world, but was also superior to Europe in terms of economic and political
aspects. Extending its territories from Eastern Europe to the Middle East
and North Africa, the Ottoman Empire was the biggest Islamic Empire.
Thus, the Ottoman power and domination in the Middle East, the
Mediterranean, and the Balkans, disrupt the dichotomy of Western
superiority against Eastern inferiority until the end of the 17th century.
Although Said leaves the reader with the perception that, "Europe is
powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant,"[66] when examining
the Western discourse of Ottoman Turks between the 15th and 17th
centuries, it is not reasonable to apply the Eurocentric approach that is
based on Western superiority and Eastern inferiority. According to Homi
Bhabha, Said's model of fixity in the ideological construction of otherness
is a "historical and theoretical simplification."[67] To put it clearly, the
unhistorical and non-geographical approach of Said's *Orientalism* disregards
the historical realities of the Ottoman Empire as a world power between
the 15th and 17th centuries. In that sense, if Orientalism is, "a corporate
institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making
statements about it, authorizing views about it, describing it,"[68] this poses
some historical and theoretical questions for the Ottoman case. Esin
Akalın argues that, although Said's main focus is on the post-Napoleonic
period in which European powers began the process of imperialism and
colonization of the East, his overgeneralization of the Orient is
problematic, and his general claims, made through a rough historical
overview, are misleading.[69] Said's oversimplified characterization of the

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[65] Said, *Orientalism,* 59-60.

[66] Said, *Orientalism,* 57.

[67] Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse,"
Screen 24 (1983): 25

[68] Said, *Orientalism,* 3.

[69] Esin Akalın, "The Ottoman Phenomenon and Edward Said's Monolithic
Discourse on the Orient," in *Challenging the Boundaries,* ed. Işıl Baş and Donald
C. Freeman (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 114.

Orient, reinforcing "its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness"[70] and the simple binarism of the Orient and the Occident, have been challenged by some contemporary critics. Daniel Vitkus prominently challenges Said's simple construction of Orientalist discourse and remarks that it includes "theoretical rigidity" and "historical limits."[71] Put simply, it would be misleading to apply Said's simple binarism of the superior West and inferior East to two thousand years of Western culture, since before the 18th century, Western Christians were subordinated to Islamic power and wealth. Thus, Western Christian representations of Islam need to be more complex than Orientalism characteristically presents. Similarly, Nabil Matar argues that for the Europeans to have knowledge about Islam was not to maintain power over it, since Europe did not enjoy military or industrial power over Islamic countries during the period under study; instead it was the Ottoman Empire.[72] The Ottoman Empire, as argued by Vitkus and Matar, held a superior position to Europe which disrupts Said's monolithic discourse on the construction of the Orient, so it would be misleading to apply Said's monolithic discourse to the period under study. However, Vitkus and Matar acknowledge that representation of the Turks in Western discourse before the 18th century was produced through simplification and stereotyping as applied to the theoretical basis of this study. As Nabil Matar confirms, "simplification and stereotyping were the rules by which [the Europeans] represented Muslims"[73] although Europeans were subordinated to Islamic power. Vitkus argues that the fear of enslavement or conversion of the European Christians was the main reason for stereotyping the Turks. According to Vitkus, "demonizing representations of 'the Turk,'" were produced not as a result of European cultural domination, but of the fear of conversion.[74] In other words, thousands of European Christians converted to Islam in the 16th and 17th centuries which increased the stereotypical demonization of the Turks in Western writings. Ottoman Empire's might and glory during the 16th and 17th centuries tempted the Christians, who had poor social conditions in their lands, and offered them employment and advancement in Muslim lands.[75] To put it another way, the Ottoman Empire's superiority to

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[70] Said, *Orientalism,* 205.

[71] Vitkus, *Turning Turk*, 11.

[72] Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 12.

[73] Nabil Matar, *Turks, Moors and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 14.

[74] Vitkus, *Turning Turk,* 78.

[75] Matar, *Islam in Britain*, 15.

Europe, and anxiety about Islamic expansion during these centuries, were widely known reasons for stereotypical representations of the Muslim Turks.

The characterization of the Turks based on simple binary opposites draws upon, and transforms, other contemporary and historically prior texts fostering common Eastern stereotypes that are culturally inferior, backward, tyrant, and sexually perverted. In spite of the Ottoman Empire's superior position in the Ottoman/European binary opposite, the stereotypical representations of Muslim Turks in Western discourse are oversimplified and homogenous, reduced to certain negative characterization. In other words, as Said argues, Orientalists have systematically recorded a distorted image of the East, which has infiltrated into Western consciousness and general culture since antiquity.[76] In other words, the representation of the Ottoman Turks in a broad selection of Western writings, including dramas, novels, poems, and many others, are enriched by myths, imageries, and fantasies, about the Orient, and deeply rooted in history and ideology. That is, Orientalist discourse successfully reproduces the imageries and fantasies about the Orient by borrowing from, and folding within, earlier discourses, as Said remarks:

> In the depths of this Oriental stage stands a prodigious cultural repertoire whose individual items evoke a fabulously rich world: the Sphinx, Cleopatra, Eden, Troy, Sodom and Gomorrah, Astarte, Isis and Osiris, Sheba, Babylon, the Genii, the Magi, Nineveh, Prester John, Mahomet, and dozens more; settings, in some cases names only, half-imagined, half-known; monsters, devils, heroes; terrors, pleasures, desires. The European imagination was nourished extensively from this repertoire: between the Middle Ages and the 18th century such major authors as Aristo, Milton, Marlowe, Tasso, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and the authors of the Chanson de Roland and the Poema del Cid drew on the Orient's riches for their productions, in ways that sharpened the outlines of imagery, ideas, and figures populating it.[77]

The distorted imagery of Islamic cultures in Orientalist writings originates from many individual items associated with Islam or the East which nourished European imagination from the Middle Ages to the 18th century. Therefore, Orientalism which draws upon, and transforms, other contemporary and historically prior texts, has fostered common Eastern stereotypes that are culturally inferior, backward, cruel, and sensual. In other words, the cultural stereotyping of the Orient has been influenced by

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[76] Said, *Orientalism,* 6.

[77] Said, *Orientalism,* 63.