

Abstract

This doctoral dissertation takes a new comparative and political-historical perspective on orientalism in early modern European literature. It claims that there is not just one orientalism – or one orientalist discourse – but several, distinctive orientalisms and that these should be understood in a macro-historical context defined by 1) the military and political superiority of the Islamic world, i.e. the Ottoman Empire, in the 16th and the 17th centuries and 2) the early nation-state formations in Europe. Focalizing on prose fiction and plays from the three strongest states in early modern Europe – Spain, France, and England – I argue that orientalism reflects the historical connection between *a new global situation* defined by the appearance of the Ottomans on the world stage as an expansive superpower, and *a new national situation* characterized by the dissolution of feudalism and the strengthening of royal power. So while Spain, France and England are in the process of becoming nation-states they also begin to engage in cross-cultural exchanges with the Islamic cultures in Turkey and North Africa. In Spain, the Islamic culture is present within the territorial boundaries of the budding nation in the form of the Moors, who became Castilian subjects in 1492.

Preceded by an introduction and two chapters discussing the methodological principles and the relevant scholarly contributions to the field, the study is divided into three parts, each devoted to the contextualization and interpretation of one of the three forms of orientalism which the dissertation identifies, examines, and compares: the *pastoral* (Spain), the *political* (France) and the *mercantile* (England) orientalism. Each orientalism is seen in the light of the following three micro-contexts: 1) the dominant *structure* in the country's relationship with the Islamic cultures (the Ottomans or the Moors/the Moriscos); 2) the *institution* or *organization* which constituted one of the main driving forces in the country's development towards political unity, cultural homogeneity, and economic growth; 3) the conflict between *obedience* and *independence* which characterizes the early modern subject's relation to the political order in the new monarchical state.

The *pastoral* orientalism, which corresponds to the so-called maurophilic tradition in the 16th century and the 17th century Spanish literature, is thus studied in relation to the Catholic church's attempts to convert the Moors and assimilate them as “new Christians” (Moriscos) into the political and cultural order of Castille while simultaneously rechristening the Iberian population of “old Christians”. In opposition to the widespread interpretation of the maurophilic tradition as a literature of dissent, I argue that the generic tales of cross-cultural friendship and of sympathetic Moors who voluntarily convert to Christianity, are *romances* formed by the ancient idea of the Christian pastorate which originated in the Gospels and was later developed by the Church Fathers. In the 16th century Spain, the Christian pastorate was exercised by a group of priests and cardinals who rejected the idea of

forced conversion as they believed that the church could only gain the infidel's soul through cross-cultural understanding, moral guiding, and by teaching the Christian faith in the Arabic language. With the morisco expulsion 1609-1614 a new political, ecclesiastical, and cultural situation emerged and in post-expulsion works like *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, second part (1615), and *El Príncipe Constante* (1624) the wishful tales of voluntary conversion are replaced by Moors who are either doomed to North African exile or to eternal damnation.

The *political* orientalism in French literature and theater may at first glance look like mere projections of national conflicts on Ottoman politics. However, the French saw the Ottomans both as a threatening picture and as a role model. France was allied to the Ottomans in 1535, and the French were some of the most well-informed Europeans when it came to Ottoman history, culture, and politics – surpassed only by the Venetians. Thus, the Ottomans came to play a central role in the political thinking which accompanied the troubled consolidation of absolutism in France. While some feared that the French monarchy was evolving into “France-Turquia”, i.e., a political order of tyrants and slaves, the proponents of absolutism regarded the souverain who ruled with absolute power – like the Ottoman sultan – as a political necessity if the civil wars and uprisings should be stopped. The many Turkish tragedies, which were performed on the early modern stages, seem to have sided with the opponents of absolutism given the fact that they more often than not portray the ottoman sultans as cruel tyrants who murder their submissive slaves in extreme acts of aggressive self-affirmation. This second part of the dissertation thus traces and discusses a general development in the theatrical representations of the Turkish sultan from that of the cruel, self-asserting tyrant in the 16th century to the rational, efficient, and ‘disembodied’ sultan Murad IV in Racine’s *Bajazet* from 1672. Along the way, I also examine the political orientalism from the perspective of prose fiction reading Madeleine de Scudéry’s novel *Ibrahim ou L’illustre Bassa* (1644) in relation to Pierre-Daniel Huet’s later theory of the novel’s oriental origins from *Traité de l’origine des romans* (1669).

Whereas the pastoral orientalism is linked to the Catholic Church, the political orientalism to absolutism or sovereignty, the *mercantile* orientalism in early modern English theater reflects the foundation and development of the trading companies under Queen Elizabeth and King James I. As *The Levant Company* and *The East India Company* send their employees, sailors, and merchants to distant places like Tunis, Alexandria, Smyrna, Aleppo, and Goa from which they returned with raw silk, currants, nutmeg, spices, carpets etc., the theatres in London examined the cultural, moral, and economic effects of the cross-cultural exchanges with the infidels prompted by the overseas trade. The many Turko-Barbary plays from the latter half of the 16th century and the first decades of the 17th century express both fascination and moral contempt for the merchants engaged in overseas trade and

thus these plays echoed the widespread and very negative view of the mercantile class as greedy, disloyal peoples building personal fortunes without contributing to the commonwealth. Status inconsistency personified in the character of the poor sailor who “turns Turk” to improve his life situation is also a prominent feature of the mercantile orientalism. Tragedies like *The Jew of Malta* and *A Christian Turned Turk* presents the international circulation of goods as a network in which new opportunities for social mobility and economic gain arose for the benefit of people without status, honor, and faith. *The Renegado* – a prudent defense of the overseas trade – the international marketplace is staged as the liberal counterpart to the despotic economy, i.e., as a space where everyone can indulge in consumption, enjoyment, and beguiling encounters across cultural and sexual boundaries.

In the concluding part of the dissertation, the three orientalisms are being compared with regard to their distinctive relation to the Islamic cultures and their different views on Muslims (Moors and Turks). It is thus argued that the pastoral orientalism relates to Islam by *assimilation*, that the political orientalism relates to Islam by *reflection* and, finally, that the mercantile orientalism is based on *interaction*.