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Representation of the Orient: A Postcolonial Perspective on Robert Greene's Selimus

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Headings

Abstract *Amidst a variety of cultural cum representational notions of individual or group identity, postcolonial studies attempt not only to explore and unfold how Eurocentric logos builds social realities but employs ways also to deconstruct the stereotypes. It provides theorists and critics with analytical methods to see how a fictional work supports or subverts a common paradigm based on Eurocentrism. The aim of this paper is to analyze Robert Greene's play Selimus and Western logos rules oriental discourse and how the Orient is (mis)represented. The study contends that the play under-study follows the traditional literary chain of ousting the Orient from the center either by making it suppressed or a satanic evil. In Selimus, for instance, the Turks, like other oriental races such as the Arabs, the Moors, the Persians and so on, are represented in the early modern writings as the "grand evil" whose infidelity is a threat to the Christian world.*

Key Words: Selimus, Orientalism, Oriental Discourse, Ottoman Turks, Occident/Orient Binary

Introduction

In the early modern period, the Ottoman Turks held their sway as a dominant power in the Eastern Mediterranean and much of Eastern Europe. By the seventeenth century, the lands that they possessed consisted of Istanbul, Greece, the Balkans, Hungary, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North African shore. They had made their way to Thrace and the Balkans before the conquest of Constantinople. Adrianople was made capital by Murad-I in 1369 after taking parts in Thrace. He overcame the Serbs in 1389 in Kosovo. In 1444 ottomans were victorious in Varna, which was followed by another victory at the second battle of Kosovo. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Mehmet II annexed Serbia(1454–1455) and took Morea from Venice (1458–1460). As Bernard Lewis remarks, the loss of Constantinople was, for most Europeans, a great historical disaster. It was a defeat of Christendom which has never been repaired(Lewis, 1953). Suleyman besieged Vienna in 1529 (without success), but his military and diplomatic strategies achieved a standoff with the Hapsburgs until Hungary, too, was annexed in 1541. The Turks took Cyprus in 1570, and a Christian fleet enjoyed a rare victory at Lepanto in 1571, but from 1575–1590, the Turk sultans were chiefly engaged in the east, notably in a prolonged and bitter war with Persia. The empire experienced the first assassination of a reigning sultan in the early seventeenth century, followed by a brief revival under Murad IV (reigned 1623–1640). But after Mehmed IV's unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683 and the defeat at Zenta, the treaty of Karlowitz(1699) effectively

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provided for the Ottoman Turks' withdrawal from Europe. The traces of the Ottoman dynasty ended only with the revolution of Kemal Ataturk in 1923 and the abolition of the Sultanate. However, during the early modern period, the reputation of the Turks was much more different than it was in its declining period. Early modern Europe viewed Ottoman Turks as masters of a sophisticated and well-administered empire.

Since the early modern times, Europe has placed itself at the central position and the rest of the world as 'peripheral' or 'other', particularly due to their linguistic and intellectual progress. The great Renaissance made Europe the center of attention and fountainhead of philosophical advancement. Europe, "especially Western Europe, has imagined itself politically, philosophically, and geographically at the center of the world"(Goffman, 2002, pp.4-5). This central position of Europe enabled it to lead from the front and establish its own literary and cultural canons. These were later on termed as the 'Eurocentric' canons. Not only this, but they also set philosophical and intellectual meta-narratives like those of empiricism and rationalism. The judgment, therefore, was primarily based on their own criteria, which were taken as an authority. As Goffman (2002) remarks, "Europeans and neo-Europeans in America and elsewhere have routinely judged art, literature, religion, statecraft, and technology according to their own authorities and criteria" (p.5).

The Europeans have defined the "East," mainly the Islamic world, as "orient," and the west, that is, Europe, the "occident." According to Said, the binary of Occident/Orient was propagated as a relation between superior and inferior, dominated and suppressed, advanced and backward and so on. Through social, ideological and cultural discourse and discursive practices, the west created and sustained the East and Islam as the inferior "other" for the West and Christianity. This practice is called the Orientalizing of the "Orient" by the west, and it has been mainly achieved by representations of Islam, the Orient, and the Oriental people in the Western world (Said, 1979, p.31). Orientalism, as Edward Said puts it, "derives from a particular closeness experienced between Britain and France and the Orient, which until the early nineteenth century had really meant only India and the Bible lands" (ibid, p.4). In fact, Said takes the late eighteenth century as the starting point of western Orientalist discourse and defines Orientalism "as a western-style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (ibid, p.3). So, according to said, it is possible to talk about two different periods of the western orientalist discourse: one covering the classical and medieval period up to the eighteenth century, which demonizes and misrepresents the east, and the other, arguably still in effect, which, in Said's words, dominates and restructures the Orient by an enormous "systematic discipline" (ibid.). Since the scope of this paper is limited to stereotypical representations of the Orient(the Ottoman Turks) in the early modern play *Selimus*, it will focus on the then encounters of the Turks and the English. Further, the paper also contends that the Orient (Turks) in the play under-study is represented in a stereotypical manner. They are not depicted as debased, worthless, inferior underlings but as grand "evil" – barbaric, oppressive and cruel. The writings of the playwrights and other fiction writers have succeeded a great deal in creating a Western outlook of viewing the Orient (Turks) in that way. The study is governed by the following research questions.

Research Questions

i. How is the 'Orient' (mis)represented in the play Selimus?
ii. In what ways is the Western discourse of Orient/Occident binary subverted or reinforced in the play?

Rationale

The aim of this research paper is to analyze the play understudy in postcolonial perspectives, particularly exploring how the conventionally established construction of occident/orient binary is informed by colonial discourse. Edward Said's phenomenal work Orientalism enables the researchers to develop a theoretical framework to glean out the ways through which this very binary is reinforced or subverted by the text. This

work is likely to give a new angle to this work, thereby enriching its scope and understanding. Being a representational work of early modern English drama, it will signpost to the then tradition of playwriting with regard to the Orient phenomenon. The study is likely to build a launching pad for researching similar issues from a New Historicist perspective.

Literature Review

The Play *"Selimus"*

Greene's *Selimus*, Emperor of the Turks, had the full title in 1594 printed edition as *The First Part of the Tragical Reign of Selimus*, *Sometime Emperor of the Turks*, and *grandfather to him that now reigneth*. Although the title indicates a sequel in which Selimus will appear in another play, there is no evidence that a second play was ever written. There is also no record of the author of the play *Selimus,* but it is generally agreed that it was written by Robert Greene around 1590 (Vitkus, 2000, pp. 16-18). The play centers around the main figure of the Ottoman prince Selimus. Selimus is presented as a callous man as he indulges in the acts of extreme violence, barbarity and cruelty as depicted in the play. Driven by the hunger for power, Selimus kills his brothers Acomat and Corkut and later dethrones and poisons his father Bajazet in order to get hold of the sole rulership of the empire. There is an incompatibility between the historical events in history books and those presented in the play. For instance, there is no historical evidence that Selimus either killed his father or poisoned him. However, since the Turks were stereotypically regarded as barbarous and greedy who could go to any extent for the gratification of their material lust, Greene depicts the same notwithstanding the historical falsity. In fact, these appear to have been intentionally inserted by the author to emphasize the point of Turkish "cruelty." As Emily C. Bartels in her essay "The Double Vision of the East: Imperialist Self-Construction in Marlowe's Tamburlaine, PartOne" (1992) points out that "The Turks, in contrast, were categorically demonized as barbaric infidels, whether despotic conquerors or demonic slaves" (Bartels,1992, p. 4). The first scene of the play opens with the lamenting of Bajazet about his late situation concerning the greed of Selimus and the future of the Ottoman Empire. In the same scene, through the words of Bajazet, the audience is prepared for an unmatched "tyrant," Selimus, whose "hands do itch to have the crown, And he will have it—or else pull down. Is he a prince? Ah no, he is a sea, Into which run nought but ambitious reaches, Seditious complots, murther, fraud, and hate." (Greene, 2000, pp.77-80). In fact, these characteristics, attributed to Selimus here, were part of the dominant religious and political discourse in which the stereotypical features of the Turks were represented in early modern England. Hence, in the second scene, Selimus does not prove his father wrong in the judgment of his son as he reveals his true intentions to SinamBassa. If Bajazet does not hand over the crown to Selimus, his "right hand is resolved/ To end the period with a fatal stab" (ibid, pp. 166-167).

The Orient (Turks) in Early Modern Plays

The words "Turk", "Ottomans", "Turks", and "Ottoman Turks" will be used interchangeably throughout the paper. The Turk, and more generally the Muslim Orient, was the subject of study and re□ection of scholars and intellectuals of the English Renaissance. For Elizabethan drama, the Oriental theme was encouraged by the availability of sources on the Orient. From travel narratives to the works of historians and geographers, the movement of study and writing about the Orient provided a wide and rich variety of sources to the Elizabethan playwrights. It is not easy to imagine whether the Turks were aware that they would be changing the future of the world when they conquered Constantinople in 1453. We do know, however, that this event and its aftermath had such an impact on the European concept of the Turk that consequently, the word "Turk" came to cover Islam. In other words, the west in general and England, in particular, started to see Islam as only one of the constituent elements molded within the broader concept of the "Turk". In fact, the correspondence between Sultan Murad III and Queen Elizabeth I that was included in the two versions of Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Voyages and Navigations of the English Nation* point to a concept of the Ottoman Turk who is treated as a respected equal rather than an inferior "other"

(Burton, 2000, pp-130-131). The conventional way of referring to the oriental races was based on the feelings of superiority on the part of the west. The Orient was made to look inferior and lacking in human qualities. Despite the fact that the Turks were strong, and their power rather than their race provided they respect that Burton refers to; still, the Western attitude is marked by the feelings of superiority in terms of placing them at the higher human pedestal and showing them as mostly inhuman. In fact, for the English people in the early modern period, stereotypical features of the Turks included "aggression, lust, suspicion, murderous conspiracy, sudden cruelty masquerading as justice, merciless violence rather than 'Christian charity,' wrathful vengeance instead of turning the other cheek" (Vitkus, 2000, p. 2).

A discourse was floated and later on deeply embedded in social fabric of the Western society as well as the mindset that "demonized" the Turks. Islam was associated and identified with the Turks. These representations or rather misrepresentations were carried out not only by discursive practices and preaching but also by teaching through history books and literary productions. Edward Said terms it a 'rigorous picture' of the Islamic faith. This kind of "rigorous Christian picture of Islam was intensified in innumerable ways, including – during the Middle Ages and early Renaissance – a large variety of poetry, learned controversy, and popular superstition" as well as stage representations (Said, 1979, p. 61).

The Orient factor in general and the Ottoman Turk phenomenon, in particular, were not alien concepts for modern Europe. As a matter of fact, they were given a voice, through Western discourse, in many early modern works. Early modern representations of the Ottoman, its sultans and Turks, in general, were presented in such a manner, especially through drama, that it made it felt as if it was newly introduced to the European public. The tacit implication behind this was the fact that the extensive number of plays that focused on the Turkish material and the playwright's consecutive productions on the theme. It is taken for granted that the associations of Europe with the Turks can be traced back to the times of crusades. However, little was known about the Ottoman. The parallel progress of Elizabethan drama and the rise of the ottoman empire led to a sort of intensified relation between the two. These ultimately helped the representation of this relation to becoming more acknowledged and popular. But these representations, having no objective foundations, were mostly allusions misrepresenting and demeaning the Ottomans. With the burgeoning popularity of the Turkish Orient in the wake of the expansion of the empire, the representations of the Turks and associated religion, that is, Islam, were also on the rise in Europe. The political power of the Turks was really threatening. Christian monarchs in Europe were apprehensive of the dangers posed by the Turkish empire between the 15th and 18th centuries. Notwithstanding the fact that Europeans were the emerging colonizers, they still were sensing the danger looming from the Turkish borders. While they were "establishing their first permanent colonies in the World", the Christian monarchs were, at the same time, "facing a threat at the home of being colonized by the Ottoman Turks" (Vitkus, 2000, pp. 6-7). One important thing to reiterate is the fact that Turks were actually strengthened by their religious faith (Islam); psychologically, they were having an upper-hand and were inculcating fear in the west. They were, of course, not simply an imaginary 'evil' but the part of Islamic power that was a danger for both their religion as well as their existence. English audience had internalized this belief, and as a result, the Orient was treated in a taken-it-for-granted way as aggressive, violent, barbaric and inhuman. The Orient in general and the Ottoman Turk, in particular, was the most popular subject of literature during the early modern English period. The appearance of 47 plays dealing with the oriental issues between the years 1579 and 1642 testifies to this. LouisWann (1915) divides this period into four main groups, in which the second group, extending from 1586 to 1611, is clearly the most significant one since 32 plays out of 47 were written in this period (pp.424-426). The fascination with the Ottoman Empire led even the significant English playwrights of the period such as Marlowe, Greene, Peele, Dekkerand Shakespeare to write plays dealing with the Ottoman Turk and Islam. Wann (1915) claims that the popularity of the plays dealing with Oriental themes was on the rise due to the growing interest shown by the Elizabethan audience. The representation of the Orient on the Elizabethan stage is also linked with the flourishing travel literature that increased the interest in and fascination with the Eastern world.

In fact, "the history of the Turks was a perfectly 'safe' subject in every European book-market in the sixteenth century. TheOttoman Empire was the mightiest in the world, and interest in the doings of the Turks was naturally intense (ibid, p. 430)".It appears, in Wann's study, that histories, written during the early modern period, generally were the sources consulted by playwrights who took as their subject matter the ottoman Turks (ibid, p.432). The playwrights, in the majority of the cases, represented both the events and characters as they found them in these sources. But, how reliable were these sources? Wasn't history biased and distorted? Were historians objective in their approach through and through? Did the historians record the events and people as accurately as possible by following certain scientific methods? Obviously not, as Louis Wann explains:

> Needless to say, history was not then written in the scientific spirit. Each historian copied from his predecessor, with or without acknowledgement, and felt compunction in coloring the narrative to increase its interest, or in mingling legend with fact, with the result that his successor honestly accepted the whole fact and so transmitted it to his successor with his own embellishments. (434)

The reproduction and depiction of the historical events and people in the early modern plays, then, are mostly reflections of previous works that are themselves reflections of even earlier works. This naturally creates a lack of objectivity in the handling of the events and the oriental characters in plays as well as in other types of works. And it is on the cards that the subjectivity of the historians must have been there, particularly at the time when the Orient could not know the Western language and could not state its position in a foreign language. Wann's argument finds its echoes in Edward Said's *Orientalism,* where the latter claims that:

> Every writer on the Orient (and this is true even of Homer) assumes some Orientalprecedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies. Additionally, each work on the Orient affiliates itself with other works, with audiences, with institutions, with the Orient itself. The ensemble of relationships between works, audiences and some particular aspects of the Orient, therefore, constitutes an analyzable formation for example, that of philological studies, of anthologies of extracts from Oriental literature, of travel books, of Oriental fantasies-whose presence in time, in discourse in institutions(schools, libraries, foreign services) gives it strength and authority. (20)

Said has, of course, a point in these statements. The writers of histories are more or less the carriers of historical traditions. They quote and re-quote what the others have already said. So the approach of a historian is basically based on the production and reproduction of events. The sources he or she consults during the writing enterprise, it is very likely that the details are bound up with the prevalent discourses of those times. When it comes to the Orient, especially the Turks, the point is certainly relevant. The literary writers trying their hands at historical subjects are bound to follow the events as they are cited by the historians. Wann (1915) finds an excuse for the playwrights of the early modern period for misrepresenting the Ottoman Turks: "if Elizabethan dramatists erred in presenting false pictures of history or life, the blame was not theirs but that of the historians they followed" (p.438). This points towards the inability of the playwrights to dig through the historical discourses to bring the truths to the forefront. They are compelled to refer to historical 'facts', and these 'facts' are chiefly daubed with subjective bias. The Western historical discourses of the Orient and Islam are bound to show a negative and distorted image of these entities, and literary writers would capitalize on the same (mis)representations.

Theoretical Framework

Orientalism, for Said, is not purely an academic field. It is a kind of discourse that propagates expectant ways of seeing the east (p. 2-3). Elaborating on power/knowledge node by Foucault, Said also refers to it as a corporate institution that advances ways of controlling the east through constructing knowledge about it (p.3). East as it is materialized in the Western mind, culture and politics is the result of the Western system of representation rather than some eastern reality (p. 22). And representations, recognizes Said, are only representations (p. 21) as language is always immersed in ideology, culture and political setting of "representer" (p. 273). Said's concerns are representation, more representation and their place within discourse. Orientalists' representations, for Said, belong to a discursive domain that is configured for them not only by subject matter but also by shared tradition and history. Thus the representation of the east is meaningful by being consistent with stereotypes that were customary within *the discours*e of Orientalism (1978, p. 273). In construing Orientalists' texts, Said notices that writers are incapable of liberating themselves from constraints that Orientalism puts on them (p. 43). Therefore, throughout the ages, Orientalists have produced certain regular characteristics of the east in their works.

Said asserts that east was conceived in Western imagination through the lenses of stereotype_ a term coined by Lippmann. Stereotypes are images in the head. They are also processes whereby the mind squeezes the complexity of the world into a small and understandable form (Lippmann, 1922, p. 3-7). Said (1978) argues, perhaps on the same principle that stereotype renders non-Western world graspable to the west (p. 61, 66). Orientalists use several discursive techniques to construct mental images of Orientals: generalizations, descriptions, use of copula 'is', typecast characterization etc. Said has discussed the type characterization of 'Oriental' (p. 230)in detail. A type usually has a specific character that offers the onlooker an epithet (p. 119). Western scholars always describe non-Western people in generalized terms. The geographical difference leads to the construction of types, such as "the Asiatic and the African" (p. 120). In addition, Said asserts that if a single character appears, it stands for a whole class because of its "discursive confinement" (p. 66). For centuries, Islam has constantly been misunderstood by the West as Said (1981) asserts, "Islam represents not only a formidable competitor but also a late-coming challenge to Christianity" (p. 4). In one way or the other, Muslim countries have always remained a hurdle in the way of Western domination of non-Western regions. Since the time of the Crusades, Islamic regions such as Arab and Ottoman had many military confrontations with Europe and were quite successful in terrorizing Europe (Said, 1978, p. 73-74). This centuries-long political history is working behind the images of Muslims, and an impression of being combatant is built in relation to their portrayals.

Orientalists usually portrayed Muslims in relation to violence and bloodshed; for instance, Arabs were associated with rivalry and warfare (Said, 1978, p. 48, 287). Muslims were represented as superstitious and anti-modern (Said, p. 61). The position of Muslim women is never acceptable to the west. Turks were described as having *Harems* which shows them as morally corrupt and sexually aberrant (Said, p. 190). Thus Orientalist's discourse has constructed Islam as an antithesis of Western civilization. Orientalism is over, but the influences of its discursive structures are still visible in today's Western discourse on Islam. It has achieved a kind of neo-Orientalist status. Some new labels are added to the old archive of images of Muslims, for instance, fundamentalist (After Iranian Revolution, 1978–79 and Rushdie Affair) ("fundamentalism," 2012), and terrorists (After 9/11). Characteristics of Islam are similar to old stereotypes of it. Seen through Western eyes, Islam is still a jingoistic religion, so Muslim the 'ideal enemy' of the middle ages, has now been named as Islamic fundamentalist (Amir, 1998, p. 45). There again, fundamentalism is very hard on women, it does not allow freedom of speech, and time and again, Islamic Sharia has been related to violence. In short, it is still medieval and barbaric and poles apart of the secular, liberal, humane west.

Analysis of the Play

Right from the outset, we get the impression that Selimus is a Machiavellian, ready to commit patricide. When SinamBassa reminds him of the "revenging God" who would punish him for his sins after his death (ibid, pp.185-186), Selimus defies both God and religion, concluding that "An empire, Sinam, is so sweet a thing, As I could be a devil to be a king" (ibid, pp.203-204). According to Vitkus (2000), it was a commonplace thing in the early modern popular fiction and drama to represent Turks as unjust, tyrannical and lusty pagans associated with Satanism. The Ottoman Sultan Selimus, with his greedy lust for power, then becomes "a typical example of this kind of oriental despotism" (p.11).In the play, Bajazet, knowing his son Selimus' true intentions, refuses to give him a hearing, although out of fear, he agrees to give him "great Samandria, Bordering of Belgrade of Hungaria" as a gift. Selimus is not happy with Bajazet's answer and even gets angry with the idea of receiving Samandria because it is not fully Bajazet's yet. In fact, it is a problematic area, and Selimus thinks his father wants his death. Hence, he is determined that "Since it is so unnatural to me, I will prove as unnatural as he" (Greene, 2000, pp.24-25). Selimus uses both Bajazet's refusal to speak to him, and the implications find in the Samandria gift as a pretext to the war he has been planning against his father. The two armies fight at the battle near Chiurlu, and the Sultan is victorious, and Selim barely escapes promising revenge. It will not be long before he gets his chance for revenge. One of the other princes, Acomat, who also has a great lust for power, sends a messenger to his father to hand over the crown to himself. When he is refused, he attacks his nephew, Prince Mahomet, the Beylerbey of Natalia, the son of his deceased eldest brother Alemshae. Acomat kills both Mahomet and his sister Zonaraalongwith with 6000 citizens of Iconium. In addition to this, when Bajazet sends Aga as a messenger to persuade Acomat to lay down his arms, he pulls out Aga's eyes and cuts off his hands on the stage. This bloody act on the stage, which was one of the characteristics of the Senecan Tragedy, emphasized the cruelty of the Turkish villain who is capable of any crime whatsoever. It also shows the utmost barbarity and inhumanity lurking inside the Orient (Turks). They are never reluctant to go to such an extremity in their pursuits for power and wealth. This last deed in the play actually foreshadows both Acomat's doom and Selimus' revenge. Bajazet, extremely moved by his messenger's ill-treatment at the hands of Acomat, forgives Selimus, makes him the commander of janissaries and sends him to kill his brother. At this point, the audience is prepared for not only a fratricide but also filicide because, although Acomat is killed towards the end of the play by his brother Selimus, it was Bajazet who gave the order to Selimus. So, human relationships, mostly blood relations, are presented on more an instinctual level than human. They are presented as the carriers of feelings of possession, greed and lust for power and that Turks are ready to get hold of wealth and power even at the cost of the lives of their near and dear ones. Hardly the main character is left with some redeeming qualities. This points towards the writer's intention of generalizing the evils in the Turkish race.

Once Selimus becomes the commander of janissaries, he seizes the opportunity to first proclaim himself as the emperor of Turks and then plots his father's death. In accordance with, the anti-Semitic sentiment in the early modern period, the agent he uses for his plan to poison his father is a "cunning" Jew, called Abraham, who "will venture anything for gold" (ibid, p.100). So far, Selimus has proved his villainy, cruelty and Machiavellianism, which will continue throughout the play, as expected from a Muslim emperor. Now is the time to complete the demonization process by the refusal of religion and denial of faith. When all is set for the poisoning of his father and Abraham, the Jew, agrees to his plan, Selimus soliloquies:

So this is well: for I am none of those
That makes a conscience for killing a man.
For nothing is more hurtful to a prince
Then to be scrupulous and religious.
(ibid, pp.139-142)

Jonathan Dollimore(1989) claims that speeches like this one throughout the play contain a"fascinating discourse on atheism and one which takes up the debate on the ideological dimension of religion" (p.85). Nevertheless, it is not Christianity in this case on which serious doubts have been cast but Islam. Thus, an audience would more likely relate the atheism Dollimore talks about to Islam rather than their own religion Christianity. After all, Selimus is not a king of England but a Sultan of the Ottomans who are on the English stages as the despotic evil race – the race of Turks, Orient and above all, Muslims. At the funeral following his father's death, Selimus makes a show of grief to

"blinds subjects' eyes",
although his heart "cast in an iron mould,
Cannot admit the smallest dram of grief,
Yet that I may be thought to love him well,
I'll mourn show, though I rejoice indeed" (ibid.).

He is depicted as a heartless, inhuman creature closer to Satan than to human beings as, indeed, the stage direction implies. At the funeral, the audience is asked or told to imagine "the temple of Mahomet", representing mosque, which was commonly known to the English audience as "a temple, imagined as a shrine dedicated to the worship of the idol, Mahomet" (Vitkus,2000, p. 146).

In the early modern popular fiction and drama, Mahomet was shown as a deity who was "often made part of a heathen pantheon that also includes Apollin, Termagant, and other devilish idols" (ibid, p.9). Thus, Selimus, the Turkish emperor, is depicted as a worshipper of devil and his religion as Satanism. This, in fact, points to the western stereotyping and representation of the Turk as the embodiment of evil. "The stereotype of the devilish Mooror cruel Turk was sometimes employed to demonstrate the supposed iniquity of Islam and to portray Muslims as agents of Satan" (ibid, p.15). Throughout the play, Selimus continues to kill and massacre everyone, not sparing women and children who might have any relevance to the Ottoman crown. However, in scene 22, his paganism and Satanism is challenged, and he is invited to "true faith", that is, Christianity, by his very brother Corcut who, apparently, was converted to Christianity by some Christians on his disguised runaway from Selimus. The playwright's notion of Christianity as "true faith" is also imbued with religious prejudice. And this lacks historical accuracy as well. As a matter of fact, Corcut'sconversion of Christianity is not true in historical perspectives. Indeed, he ran away from his brother in disguised form together with his slave and hid in the caves waiting for a chance to escape abroad to Europe. They were discovered by some peasants and arrested. He was, then, strangled his sleep on the way to Busra. In the play, however, before Selimushas his brother strangled, Corcut prophesies that Selimus will meet his death in Chiurlusince he killed his father there. Corcut, as a "true Christian" does not fear death or cravefor pardon but warns Selimus that if he does not change his "greedy mind" his soul will be tortured in "dark hell". Corcut is then ready to give his saved soulto the Christian God: "Thou God of Christians,/ Receive my dying soul into thy hands"(Greene, 2000, pp.83-84). None of these, in fact, stir any emotions in Selimus, whose response to the death and dying speech of Corcut is:

What, is he dead? Then Selimus is safe
And hath no more corrivals in the crown.
For as for Acomat he soon shall see
His Persian aid cannot save him from me.
(ibid, p.85)

There is no sign of humanity or religiousness in Selimus, who, even after killing all his co-rivals in the crown and massacring many others, goes on to describe himself at the end of the play as a Basilisk and intends to invade all neighbouring countries. He likens himself to the legendary "ibis", a bird that was believed in popular legends to eat up poisonous snakes "but then lay eggs from which basilisks would hatch"(Vitkus,2000, p.147). He is the first "ibis" which removes the venomous snakes, Bajazet and Acomat, and then becomes the murderous basilisk.

Conclusion

Based on the textual analysis of the play *Selimus*, it is concluded that Robert Greene presents a reductive and exclusionist view of the Orient phenomenon. He is unable to break free from the Eurocentric discourse that has been built around the representation of the Orient by European scholars. The text reinforces the entrenched beliefs informed largely by the Western discourse, and the Occident/Orient binary is strengthened through the fictional portrayal of the two spaces. Typical images of Eastern people are in abundance, which, in large measure, are generalized and demonized. The orients have been described in terms of violence, barbarism and inferiority as compared to the accident. This is what impels Goffman (2002) to assert, "Western standards undoubtedly has obscured the nuances of Ottoman civilization"(pp.5-6). Hence, influenced by the earlier writings and the information provided by those historians, the play *Selimus* appears to be mirroring the general concept of the Turk and Islam in early modern England, which at the same time becomes itself a tool for the demonization of both Islam and the Turk. And it is this concept of the Turk that forms a great part of the thepre-eighteenth-century oriental discourse, which sees the Turk as the grand evil that must be destroyed rather than a weak race that must be "dominated, restructured" and finally controlled.

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