

**THE WESTERN IMAGE OF TURKS
FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO THE 21ST CENTURY:
THE MYTH OF ‘TERRIBLE TURK’
AND ‘LUSTFUL TURK’**

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Abstract

The Western image of Turks is identified with two distinctive stereotypes: 'Terrible Turk' and 'Lustful Turk.' These stereotypical images are deeply rooted in the history of the Ottoman Empire and its encounters with Christian Europe. Because of their fear of being dominated by Islam, European Christians defined the Turks as the wicked 'Other' against their perfect 'Self.' Since the beginning of Crusades, the Western image of Turks is associated with cruelty, barbarity, murderousness, immorality, and sexual perversion. These characteristics still appear in cinematic representations of Turks. In Western films such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Midnight Express*, the portrayals of Turks echo the stereotypes of 'terrible Turk' and 'lustful Turk.' This thesis argues that these stereotypes have transformed into a myth and continued to exist uniformly in Western contemporary cinema. The thesis attempts to ascertain the uniformity and consistency of the cinematic image of Turks and determine the associations between this image and the myths of 'terrible Turk' and 'lustful Turk.'

To achieve this goal, this thesis examines the trajectory of the Turkish image in Western discourse between the 11th and 21st centuries. The discourse analysis focuses on the Western writings, speeches, sermons, and literary texts, including the Crusade rhetoric, Renaissance humanist discourse, Early Modern English drama, and Orientalist travelogue. To establish the continuity of the Turkish stereotypes in Western discourse, the thesis also presents a critical analysis of Western contemporary cinema, including both American and European films. The methodology of the thesis is based on two main theoretical approaches: a) representational practices, which involve the concepts of Otherness, stereotypes, myth, narrative, discourse and intertextuality; and b) Orientalism. These concepts provide a better understanding for the mythical characteristics of the Turkish stereotype. The thesis also offers an exploratory look at the social media platforms and their possible impact on the Turkish image in the future.

Dedication

*To my children Selin and Timur, and to my husband Murat,
for being in my life.*

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INTRODUCTION

Fall of Constantinople (1453)

The enraged Turkish soldiers . . . gave no quarter. When they had massacred and there was no longer any resistance, they were intent on pillage and roamed through the town stealing, disrobing, pillaging, killing, raping, taking captive men, women, children, old men, young men, monks, priests, people of all sorts and conditions¹

Othello (1603)

*Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl.²*

Midnight Express (1978)

For a nation of pigs, it sure is funny you don't eat 'em. Jesus Christ forgave the bastards, but I can't. I hate you! I hate your nation! And I hate your people! And I fuck your sons and daughters because they're pigs. You're a pig, you're all pigs!³

¹ An anonymous eyewitness account during the fall of Constantinople, cited in *They Saw It Happen in Europe 1450-1600* (Routh, C.R.N; 1965).

² From *Othello* by William Shakespeare, Act 2, Scene 3.

³ The courtroom speech from the film, *Midnight Express* (1978).

The word *Turk* means a native or inhabitant of Turkey⁴, but more often than not, ‘Turk’ carries overtones of other meanings. The name ‘Turk’ is associated with cruelty, murder, barbarity, savagery, immorality and lust. These qualities are commonly found in Western texts whenever Turks are represented. In the chronicles of the First Crusade, Turks were characterized as the “creatures of Devil” and a “Godless race.”⁵ Following the fall of Constantinople to Turks in 1453, Pope Pius II commonly referred to the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II as “cruel and bloody butcher.”⁶ In 1536, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word ‘Turk’ was defined as “anyone behaving as a barbarian or savage.”⁷ At the end of the 16th century, Francis Bacon called the Turks “cruel people.”⁸ Seventeenth century historian, Richard Knolles, described the Turks as ‘cruel’, ‘ruthless’ and ‘voluptuous’ and named them as “the present terror of the world.”⁹ In the 18th century, Lord Byron wrote about the Turkish sexual vices and characterized the Turks as ‘fond of sodomy.’¹⁰ By the 19th century, Turks became known by two distinctive stereotypes: *Terrible Turk* and *Lustful Turk*. These stereotypical images have been so entrenched in Western discourse since the Middle Ages that they have become a myth which survived until the 21st century. It is the focus of this thesis to examine the trajectory of these images in Western discourse and determine how they turn into a myth.

The excerpts at the beginning of this thesis are taken from different genres that belong to different time periods. The Western texts of the Middle Ages and Renaissance offer ample amount of demonizing representations of Turks such as the aforementioned eyewitness account regarding the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople. The ‘cruelty’ and ‘barbarity’ of Turks are also frequently characterized in English drama during the Early Modern period. Shakespeare

⁴ *Oxford English Dictionary*. Retrieved November, 2015 from: www.oxforddictionaries.com.

⁵ These descriptions will be discussed extensively in Chapter 1 with specific source references.

⁶ See the descriptions of Pope Pius II regarding Mehmed II in *Creating East and West* by Nancy Bisaha (2006; p.148).

⁷ See the definition of ‘Turk’ in *1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West* by Roger Crowley (2005) p.243.

⁸ Cited in the book, *Orientalism and Islam* by Michael Curtis, (2009), p.33. Taken from Francis Bacon’s essay, *Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature* (1612) in the book, *The Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral, of Francis Bacon*.

⁹ For detailed descriptions of Richard Knolles, see the book by Michael Curtis, *Orientalism and Islam* (2009), p.46.

¹⁰ George Gordon Byron in *Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie Marchand (London: John Murray, 1973/1982), p.213.

describes Turks as ‘cruel’, ‘malignant’ and ‘barbarous’ in his play *Othello*. These negative stereotypical qualities of Turks continue to appear in contemporary Western cinema. In the popular film *Midnight Express* (1978), screenwriter Oliver Stone’s lead character refers the Turks as ‘a nation of pigs’. Even in recent films like *The Usual Suspects* (1995) and *Dracula Untold* (2014), Turkish characters embody the same stereotypical qualities such as cruelty, barbarity and immorality.¹¹ This stereotypical image of Turks has continued to exist since the Middle Ages until the 21st century and has become a myth in Western discourse as it has been promoted by the modern entertainment media constantly. In this thesis, I argue that the Western image of Turks as ‘cruel’ has become a ‘myth’ that is uniform, universal and constant, which thus transcends time. Therefore, my objective in this thesis is to determine the continuity and consistency of the stereotypical representations of Turks in Western discourse.

The main goal of this thesis is to ascertain that the Western writings, literature and cinema have created and perpetuated the myth of the Turkish ‘cruelty’ and ‘lustfulness.’ To achieve this, I will conduct a discourse analysis to examine the representations of Turks in Western writings, including Crusade rhetoric, Renaissance humanist discourse, literary texts, English drama, and Orientalist travelogue. I will also analyze the portrayals of Turks in contemporary Western cinema to assess the associations between the cinematic image of Turks and their past image in history. The aim of the discourse analysis is to determine how the Western images of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ emerged and transformed into a myth. In this thesis, I argue that these mythical images are the creation of the West which is defined as the Christian Europe for the time period between 11th until the end of the 19th century. From thereon, the West also involves the United States along with Europe. Beginning from the 20th century, my discourse analysis will concentrate on the image of Turks in Western contemporary cinema which includes both American and European films. As I primarily focus on the Western representation of Turks, my emphasis will be on the stereotypical characteristics of Turks while reviewing the selected texts and films. The discourse

¹¹ The analysis of the portrayals of Turks in these films and others will be presented in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

analysis will illustrate the associations between the Western image of Turks in history and the stereotype of Turks in Western contemporary cinema.

Beginning from the 11th century, Turks posed a threat for Christianity and eventually prompted the First Crusade. During the Renaissance, the Ottoman Empire represented the Islamic challenge for the Christian powers of Europe. The Renaissance image of Turks as ‘barbarians’ and ‘bloodthirsty savages’ can be explained by the Christian anxiety and horror in the face of the Ottoman military advance into Europe for five centuries. The European image of Turks was primarily shaped by the Christian fear of being dominated by Islam. Therefore, the oppositional discourse and the propaganda against the Ottoman threat produced the stereotypical image of the ‘terrible Turk.’ Later, the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of European colonialism altered the balance of power between Europe and the Turks. The European positional superiority, which is mentioned in Said’s seminal work *Orientalism* (1978), empowered Western travelers to enrich the stereotype of ‘terrible Turk’ with themes such as, despotism, indolence, backwardness, ignorance, sensuality and sexual vices. With Orientalist discourse, the image of the ‘lustful Turk’ was born. It is only natural to expect that these stereotypical images gradually fade or at least, evolve since the abolishment of the Ottoman Empire, followed by the establishment of the democratic Turkish Republic in 1923. However, these stereotypes continue to exist in the Western entertainment media, particularly, in Western contemporary cinema. As a result, these myths permeate into the Western popular culture.

According to Barthes (1957) “everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse” (p.109). He also suggests that *myth* should have a historical foundation and “it is therefore by no means confined to oral speech”, so it can be in any form (p.110). According to this premise, any form of media including cinema and films can convey myths. The National Book Award winner Mary Lee Settle (1992) has pointed out this fact in her book *Turkish Reflections*. Based on her experience of living in Turkey for three years during early 1970s, Settle criticizes the demeaning images of Turks propagated by Western filmmakers as follows:

I came back to a Eurocentric culture where Turkey is still an unknown country, or if it is known by those who have never been there and never known Turkish people, it is known only for its mistakes and its brutalities. The Turks I saw in *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Midnight Express* were ogrelike cartoon caricatures compared to the people I had known and lived among for three of the happiest years of my life (Settle, 1992, p. xii).

According to Settle (1992), “Turkey has the worst and most ill-drawn public image of almost any country” she has known (p. xi). The malignant public image that Settle is referring to is a ‘myth’ that is cast on Turks as a nation.

As will be argued in this thesis, Turks were branded by the mythical imagery of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ throughout history. Levi-Strauss (1955) claims that *myth* is everlasting as it represents the past and the present, as well as the future. Therefore, it is both historical and ahistorical (p.430). In his essay, *When Myth Becomes History*, Levi-Strauss (1979) also probes the question ‘where the myth ends and where the history starts’ (p.38). Therefore, it is not always easy to distinguish the factual history from the myths. The texts of the Christian Europeans and later the Western travelers enabled the construction of the ‘cruel Turk’ image in historical discourse as the events are often presented with the narrative of Turks’ inhumanity, cruelty and barbarity. For example, during the Greek revolution (1821-1829), Turks were condemned for their brutality and oppression regarding their treatment of Greeks (Wheatcroft, 1995; p.165). Until the 18th century, Greeks had coexisted with the Turks in the Ottoman Empire without any major disputes. The Ottoman Turks received very little credit for their long and unique tradition of religious tolerance (McCarthy, 1995; p.8). Instead, with the Greek nationalist movement, Turks were represented as the cruel oppressors of Greeks and accused of committing inhuman acts. The Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire began with the murder of Ottoman government officials and continued with an attack on the Turks of Morea in southern Greece (McCarthy, 1995; p.10). With their slogan, “Not a Turk shall remain in the Morea”¹² Greek guerrillas and villagers simply murdered every single Turk they found (McCarthy,

¹² Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (1995), p.165.

1995; p.10). However, the massacre of 15,000 Turkish men, women and children in Southern Greece in 1821 was ignored by the West.¹³

Likewise, during the infamous ‘Bulgarian atrocities of 1875, the sufferings and killings of Christians at the hands of the Ottoman Turks were widely publicized both in Europe and in the United States, but the equally atrocious murders of Muslims were ignored by the West.¹⁴ In 1876, when British politician William Ewart Gladstone, who served as prime minister four times, wrote his well-known pamphlet, *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*, he vilified the Turks by calling them an “anti-human specimen of humanity” not only because of their religion but because of their peculiar race:

Let me endeavor very briefly to sketch . . . what the Turkish race was and what it is. It is not a question of Mahometanism simply, but of Mahometanism compounded with the peculiar character of a race . . . They were, upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity. Wherever they went, a broad line of blood marked the track behind them; and as far as their dominion reached, civilization disappeared from view. They represented everywhere government by force, as opposed to government by law. For the guide of this life they had a relentless fatalism: for its reward hereafter, a sensual paradise.¹⁵

Gladstone’s characterization of Turks is reminiscent of the Western discursive narrative of ‘terrible Turk’ or ‘cruel Turk’ that has emerged during the Middle Ages, continued through the Renaissance and got reinforced by Orientalist writings. Itzkowitz (1996) suggests that the Western perception of Turks is formed during the Ottoman times when Turks were characterized as “vicious people driven by their religion and culture to acts of murder and wantonness” (p.34). He also notes that this preconceived image allowed the West to vilify the Turks, support the uprisings of the Ottoman minorities and facilitate their liberation efforts:

¹³ For details of how the West ignored the slaughter of Turks by the Greeks and other Christian groups, see Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (1995), p.164-166 and Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (1995), Chapters 1 & 8.

¹⁴ See Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (1995), p.59-108 and Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (1995), p.165.

¹⁵ William Ewart Gladstone from *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East* (NY: Lowell, Adam Wesson & Company, 1876), p.10.

To this outcry on behalf of the Bulgarians we need only add those strident voices raised on behalf of the Armenians, the Greeks, and even the Arabs . . . The Ottoman Empire was a multiethnic, multinational, multireligious, multilingual state. Once nationalism reared its head first in the Balkans and then elsewhere within the empire, pressures developed which the Ottomans could not contain. In the European part of the empire, ethnic or national groups filtered out of Ottoman control, often with the support of one or another European power, to become nation states (Itzkowitz, 1996; p.34-35).

For example, when Armenians revolted in 1890s to liberate themselves from the Ottoman Empire and used violence to secure an independent Armenia,¹⁶ the deaths of the Armenians as a result of the Ottoman response were considered as ‘ethnic cleansing’ or ‘genocide.’ The image of Turks as ‘cruel’ has reinforced the genocide claims and made the allegations indisputable.

Beginning from the late 1800s, the Ottoman Turks were facing the threat of colonial invasion and the nationalist movement, which prompted the minority revolts within the Empire. The events that occurred within the Ottoman Empire during the nationalist movement and the intrusion of Western imperial powers during the First World War will not be included in my discourse analysis. The purpose of my thesis is to determine the associations between the mythical representations of Turks in history until the late 18th century, along with the Orientalist travelogue in the 18th and 19th centuries, and the image of Turks in modern media. For the purposes of this thesis, I have maintained a focus on the representations of Turks before the First World War, as the mythical image of Turks had already been formed by then. Furthermore, the geopolitical, administrative and sociological conditions of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War era are complex and require a detailed historical and political analysis. Therefore, I will not focus on the geopolitical state of the Ottoman Empire during First World War. Particularly, I will avoid discussing the Armenian genocide issue politically or historically.

The exclusion of the political discourse about the Ottoman Empire during the First World War and the Armenian genocide may be considered as the

¹⁶ See Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Ottomans: Dissolving Images* (1995), p.165.

shortcomings of this thesis. My main concern has been the temporal nature of the discourse analysis in this thesis and the abundance of the material to be reviewed. Furthermore, by the time the nationalist movement started, the images of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ had already been established by the previous discourses of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Early Modern period, along with the Orientalist travelogue. I believe that analyzing the 19th century newspapers will be inessential to the main argument of the thesis. Therefore, due to the time constraints of this thesis, the political discourse and the Western newspapers of the 19th century will not be reviewed.

My challenge will be the analysis of the Orientalist travel accounts as they may involve themes of Ottoman despotism. The minority revolts within the Ottoman Empire were not only the result of Ottoman despotism, but also provoked by the Western imperial powers. For that reason, it will be extremely challenging to examine these events by conducting simply a discourse analysis, as there were other geopolitical reasons that need to be studied more closely. Therefore, I will try to keep the plots for the nationalist revolts separate from the representations of the Turks. In my opinion, the period when the Ottoman Empire became the ‘Eastern question’ during the First World War needs a more comprehensive examination, both historically and politically, rather than a discourse analysis. Consequently, the image of Turks as the “Eastern question”, which was discussed in Western newspapers and political texts, has been excluded from my discourse analysis.

My rationale for omitting the political discourse during this period is also personal. As I am more interested in the correlation between the modern media representations and the past discursive formations, I have chosen to investigate the image of Turks in Western contemporary cinema. I will also look into the possible effects of social media on the Western image of Turks. Also, considering my Turkish native roots, I have avoided examining the nationalist movements within the Ottoman Empire to remain impartial. I have deliberately evaded discussing the Armenian genocide, which is a significant part of the minority revolts during that time period, as I consider this issue ‘sensitive’ and prefer to leave it to historians. In this thesis, I aim to examine the Western image of Turks in history and assess the associations between this image and the depictions of Turks in Western

cinema. The main purpose of this thesis is to determine how the Western image of Turks became a myth. Therefore, I believe that the analysis of the Western discourse until the end of the 19th century Orientalist travel is adequate enough to determine the uniformity and consistency of the stereotypical image of Turks.

The consistency of the stereotypical Turkish image in Western discourse is primarily related to Eurocentric and ethnocentric representations of the East. According to Edward Said (1978) these representations constructed an imaginary ‘Orient’ and produced a ‘regime of truth’ which he calls Orientalism. In his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington (1996) also admits that the dichotomy of East and West is a myth created by the West (p.33). Therefore, the construction of East vs. West allows the categorization of societies as ‘Western’ and ‘Non-Western.’ For Stuart Hall (1992), ‘Western’ means the type of society “that is developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular, and modern” (p.277). The West marks the ‘difference’ from the rest and provides a standard for comparison (Hall, 1992). However, the Western perception is also biased because of the sense of superiority that the West has due to its colonial power. Hence, the historical discourse is constructed based on this preconceived distinction between the Western superiority and Eastern inferiority. Accordingly, the events in history are characterized differently depending on which part of the world it occurs, East or West.

There are some significant events in history that are represented differently due to the geographic location they took place. For example, the US atomic bomb that was used in Japan to end World War II is regarded as simply a ‘weapon of war’ or a ‘method of self-defense’ against the Japanese attacks. The number of people that were killed as a direct result of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is estimated to be more than 250,000.¹⁷ Additionally, thousands more died later due to illnesses or genetic disorders caused by the long-lasting effects of the radiation as a consequence of the atomic bomb. In Western discourse, the people who lost their lives because of the atomic bomb are usually referred as

¹⁷ See Mark Selden’s introduction, “The United States, Japan, and the Atomic Bomb” detailing the events that led to the atomic bomb and its aftermath in *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (2015), p.xi-xxxvi.

‘wartime casualties.’ The necessity of dropping the atomic bomb was later justified by both Harry Truman and Winston Churchill as “a means of saving lives.”¹⁸ They claimed that nearly a million American and British lives would have been lost if the atomic bomb had not been used.¹⁹ Later, this claim was disputed by scholars and considered as an exaggeration.²⁰ Nevertheless, the atomic bomb has neither altered the image of the West nor created long-standing stereotypes. On the other hand, the Western constructs of ‘terrible Turk’, ‘cruel Turk’ or ‘unspeakable Turk’ indicate a preconception that Ottoman Turks are, indisputably, capable of inhuman acts. I do not, in any way, suggest that Ottoman Turks are innocent, or incapable of murder, cruelty and rape. It needs to be emphasized that this thesis does not intend to refute the wrongdoings of the Ottoman Turks. It only aims to probe the origins of the long-standing stereotypical image of Turks.

It is also critical to underline that Turks are not the only Muslims who are demonized and stereotyped in Western discourse. Besides Turks, Western discourse offers ample amount of demeaning images and misrepresentations of Arabs. However, there are some nuances between the representations of Arabs and Turks, particularly in entertainment media. These nuances will be discussed in Chapter 5, as well as throughout the thesis, while examining the Western image of Turks in history, literature and media. In this thesis, the main goal is to find out the Western perception of Turks in history and its associations with the modern day media representations. My analysis of the representations of Turks in Western discourse will provide an understanding of how the long-standing stereotypes of the ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ emerged and endured.

When Turks are portrayed in entertainment media, these stereotypical attributes often resurface. Particularly in Western contemporary cinema, the depictions of Turks perpetuate these stereotypical images even further. As Levi-Strauss suggests ‘myth’ is everlasting, so is the myth of ‘Turk’ as cruel, murderous, immoral, violent and lustful. This thesis aims to examine the

¹⁸ See Mark Selden’s introduction, “The United States, Japan, and the Atomic Bomb” detailing the events that led to the atomic bomb and its aftermath in *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (2015), p.xi-xxxvi.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

emergence and trajectory of this myth. The main purpose of this study is to find out whether the Turkish image in Western discourse is uniform and consistent, or not. Therefore, in the following chapters I will conduct a discourse analysis to achieve this goal. In my discourse analysis, I will examine the representations of Turks in Western discourse from the 11th until the 21st century. My main focus will be the Crusade rhetoric, Renaissance humanist discourse, history books, Early Modern English drama, Orientalist travel accounts and Western contemporary cinema, including both American and European films. I have selected the texts based on their popularity and significance during each period under study. Some of these texts have continued to remain pivotal even in the 21st century, such as the English drama plays. I have also considered the impact of these texts in shaping the Western image of Turks. My criteria for the selection of the films are popularity, as well as critical acclaim. There may be some films in my analysis that have neither, but they are still analyzed due to their extreme stereotypical portrayals of Turks.

In Chapter 1, which is titled as *Methodology*, I will lay out the methodological approach that will be utilized throughout this thesis. My thesis offers a discourse analysis in which I examine the representations of Turks in a selected group of Western historical and literary texts, as well as in selected films from both American and European cinema. My discourse analysis is temporal and covers an extensive time span starting from the 11th century until the 21st century. Therefore, I use various theoretical concepts depending on the time periods and genres under study. The theoretical framework that will be applied to this thesis can be classified in two main groups: *representational practices* and *Orientalism*. The category of representational practices involves various topics that are relevant to the main argument of the thesis. These topics are: *Otherness*, *stereotypes*, *myth*, *narrative*, and *discourse*. While looking into what ‘discourse’ is, I will also introduce the concepts of ‘intertextuality’ and ‘historical discourse.’ The second major methodological approach will be Edward Said’s Orientalism which is relevant to the Western perception of Turks. In this section, I will briefly present what Orientalism means and how it will applied to this thesis.

Chapter 2 is titled as *The Image of Turks between the 11th and 16th Centuries*. This chapter will focus on the Western historiography regarding the

image of Turks during the time period under study. Beginning from the Middle Ages, European Christians had countless encounters with the Turks first during the Crusades as a major military force for the Islamic religion and later, during the Renaissance as the Ottoman Empire, the biggest Muslim empire looming large in Europe. To examine the Western perception of Turks during these encounters, I will review prominent texts from the Crusade rhetoric such as the chronicles and speeches. From the Renaissance, I will examine the humanist discourse including writings, sermons and speeches along with well-known history books and essays from the same period. The chronicles, religious sermons, Crusade rhetoric, humanist and history texts are selected based on their significance in shaping the perception of European Christians towards the Turks. They indicate how European Christians viewed the Turks based on the historical circumstances and the challenges within Europe. Also, the rivalry between Islam and Christianity during the Middle Ages and Renaissance will be reviewed to provide a better understanding of the ‘Otherness’ of Turks as well as Muslims. The aim of this chapter is to determine how Turks were viewed and described in the Western history texts, speeches and chronicles of this period. The emphasis will be on the history of the Ottoman Empire and the image of Ottoman Turks. Specifically, I will present a brief history of the Ottoman military advance into Europe and the reaction of European Christians to the growing Turkish threat. I will investigate not only how Turks were perceived as the Muslim ‘Other’ but also how they were represented as a Turkish race. The stereotypical features of Turks in Western texts and speeches during the time period will be analyzed. I will also attempt to determine how these stereotypical qualities are associated with images of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk.’

Chapter 3 is titled as *16th and 17th Century Literary Representations of Turks*. In this chapter, I will look into the European image of Turks during the 16th and 17th centuries. This chapter will focus on Western academic writings and literary texts during this period including treatises, history books, essays and English drama. The purpose of this chapter is to assess the continuity of the stereotypical qualities of the Turks in these texts. In particular, I will examine the image of Turks in popular English plays such as *Othello* by Shakespeare, *Tamburlaine* by Marlowe, *A Christian Turned Turk* by Daborne, and *Selimus* by

Greene. I will analyze the portrayals of Turks in these plays, particularly those of the Ottoman Sultans, and outline the stereotypical characteristics of Turks. The main aspects of Turkish portraits in these plays such as, cruelty, imperial fratricide, along with the concept of ‘Turning Turk’ will be discussed. I will seek to find out the associations between the dramatic portrayals of Turks and the Turkish image represented by the discourses during the Crusades and Renaissance. My intention is to apply the principles of Edward Said’s Orientalism while analyzing the Turkish image presented in the 16th and 17th century English drama. Although the period under study is a pre-colonial era, I will attempt to examine the dramatic portrayals of Turks in terms of Orientalist representations. My objective is to argue that Orientalism is a trans-historical discourse as it is manifested with the image of Turks in Early Modern English drama.

Chapter 4, which is titled as *The Western Image of Turks during 18th and 19 Centuries*, will focus on the European perception of Turks in Orientalist discourse. In this chapter, I will look into the representations of Turks in Western travel accounts, as well as other Orientalist writings within the same time period. This chapter aims to find out how the European colonial aspirations and the decline of the Ottoman Empire altered the European perception of Turks. My discourse analysis of the Orientalist travelogue and texts will illustrate the most common themes that were used to characterize Turks, such as *despotism, indolence, ignorance, harem, sodomy, sensuality and lust*. These themes will be discussed further and compared to the previous image of Turks, particularly when the Ottoman Empire was at its peak. I will analyze the representations of Turks in Western travel accounts within the context of European positional superiority as suggested by Edward Said’s Orientalism. This chapter is an attempt to determine to what extent the image of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ existed in the Orientalist representations. The discourse analysis of the Orientalist texts will also show the similarities and differences of the European image of Turks compared to that of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, as well as to the Turkish portraits in English drama.

Chapter 5 is titled as *The Image of Turks in Western Contemporary Cinema*. In this chapter, I will examine the representation of Turks in contemporary cinema to find out the associations between the cinematic image of

Turks and the European images of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk.’ The first section of this chapter will focus on the Turkish portrayals in Hollywood films. I will analyze a selected number of films, while having a closer look at the two of the most popular films: *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Midnight Express* (1978). These films deserve special attention because they are both critically acclaimed and commercially successful films, which enabled them to reach a larger audience worldwide. The analysis of Turks in *Lawrence of Arabia* will be two dimensional. First, I will assess the Orientalist approach in *Lawrence of Arabia* in general. Second, the portrayals of Turks in particular will be examined with regards to the Orientalist themes in the film. I will also discuss *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, T.E. Lawrence’s book that inspired the film and address the Orientalist characteristic of the book. In the analysis of *Midnight Express*, I will analyze the depictions of the Turkish portraits and also discuss Billy Hayes’s memoir that the film is based on. As *Midnight Express* is one of the most popular films that underscores the Turkish ‘cruelty’, I will also document the reaction to the film, as well as its implications for modern Turks and Turkey. In the second section, I will examine the Turkish portrayals in a selected number of films from European cinema. Although European films do not usually become as popular as their American counterparts due to smaller marketing budgets or fewer promotional resources, it is still essential to look into these films as European cinema also reflects the Western perception of Turks. In my analyses of both American and European films, I will focus on the female and male sexuality of the Turkish portrayals. The features of despotism, crime, murder, cruelty, sodomy, sexual aggression, and homosexuality that are attributed to the Turks in these films will also be discussed further. These qualities will be compared to the stereotypical images of Turks in the prior Western discourses, such as Crusade rhetoric, Renaissance humanist discourse, Early Modern English drama and Orientalist writings. I will attempt to assess whether the cinematic image of Turks reinforced the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk.’

Chapter 6, the last chapter of the thesis, is titled as *Western Perception of Turks in the New Millennium*. The purpose of this chapter is not to support the main argument of this thesis and therefore, the chapter will not focus on the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ or ‘lustful Turk.’ It is rather an exploratory chapter, which is

based on the assumption that the emergence and popularity of the social media will transform traditional media and thus, influence media images and perceptions. In this chapter, I will focus on the media image of Turks, particularly the image of Turks with regards to social media. This chapter aims to present a glimpse of the possible impact of social media on the prospective image of Turks. First, I will address the role of social media in real-time events, by focusing on the Arab Spring that began in 2010. The content and coverage of social media platforms during the protests and demonstrations of Arab Spring will be investigated. I will discuss the significance of social media platforms in terms of news coverage during the Arab Spring and their impact on the traditional news media. As a case study, I will select the Gezi Park Protests that occurred in the summer of 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey, which bear some similarities to the Arab Spring. I will analyze the role of the social media during the Gezi Park resistance and seek to assess its impact during the protests. To provide a better understanding, I will conduct a comparative analysis in which I examine the Western representation of Turks before and after the Gezi Park protests. The comparative analysis will be based on the news coverage of the selected prominent newspapers from both the US and European media, such as *The New York Times* (US), *The Wall Street Journal* (US), *The Guardian* (UK) and *Financial Times* (UK). Due to the language barrier and the time constraints, I was unable to choose any newspaper from other European countries, except for the French newspaper, *Le Monde*. I will attempt to analyze the representation of Turks in this newspaper too and try to evaluate the French perception. This chapter will be an exploratory attempt to address the possible impact of social media on the future image of Turks. As a new topic, there is limited amount of empirical research about the effect of social media. Therefore, it is not plausible to determine the actual impact of social media on the perception of Turks. However, I believe that this chapter will still make a contribution to the academic discussion on the social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. It will also provide a valuable assessment of the impact of social media on the traditional news media. This chapter will demonstrate the significance of the convergence of the social media with the traditional news media and introduce the possible implications of this convergence in the future. There is still more research to be done regarding the topic of social media. Therefore, this chapter poses more questions for future researchers.

CHAPTER 1

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this chapter is to introduce the theoretical concepts that will be used in this thesis to examine and analyze the representations of Turks in Western discourse. As indicated in the introduction, the focus of my discourse analysis will be the Western perception of Turks in history beginning from the Middle Ages until the 21st century. First, I will examine the Western representations of Turks beginning from the Crusades until the end of the 19th century by conducting a discourse analysis. This discourse analysis involves historiography, humanist writings, essays, speeches, literary texts, and drama that are most influential and popular during the period under study. For the discourse analysis, the selected literature includes Crusade rhetoric, Renaissance humanist discourse, Early Modern English drama and Orientalist travelogue. Second, I will attempt to determine the associations between the Western image of Turks in history and the representations of Turks in Western contemporary cinema, as well as new media. To achieve this, I will continue my discourse analysis by reviewing the popular films from both contemporary American and European cinema. I will also examine the impact of social media on Western perception of Turks by reviewing a selected number of current newspaper articles. Therefore, the breadth and depth of the literature and the extensive nature of the discourse analysis require multiple theoretical concepts to be applied. For that reason, my analysis will be based on various theoretical approaches depending on the epochs and genres. Overall, the theoretical concepts used can be categorized under two main titles: **representational practices** and **Orientalism**. The category of **representational practices** involves multiple concepts originated from social constructionist theory, linguistics, and semiotics. These are: *Otherness*, *stereotypes*, *myth*, *narrative*, *discourse*, and *intertextuality*. **Orientalism** is based on Edward Said's critique of the Orientalist discourse about the Middle East. Moving forward, I will demonstrate how these concepts can be applied to the analysis of Turkish image in Western discourse.

Representational Practices

Otherness

Throughout history, the encounters between Muslims and Christians have been turbulent. Beginning from medieval times, European Christians viewed Muslims as rivals and stigmatized them as the ‘Other’ and vice versa. For the purposes of this thesis, this chapter will focus on the Christian perception of the Muslims and examine the ‘Otherness’ of Turks in particular. As the biggest Islamic military power, Turks were the leading enemy for Christian Europe from the 13th until the 18th centuries, and thus, they were often perceived as the wicked ‘Other’ by the West. To better understand how Western perception of the Muslim ‘Other’ affects the way Turks were characterized, the concept of ‘Otherness’ needs to be probed. What exactly does ‘Other’ or ‘Otherness’ mean? Our perception of a person depends on what that other person represents to us, or in other words, what the other person means to us. As suggested by Stuart Hall (1997a), “Things don’t mean: we construct meaning, using representational systems – concepts and signs” (p.25). According to *social constructionist theory*, the things around us acquire meaning with our language system, in which we use signs or concepts to represent those things and thus ‘construct their meaning.’ The pioneer of the constructionist approach in language and representation, Ferdinand de Saussure, claims that meaning is ‘differentiation’ (Hall, 1997a; p.30). In other words, the meaning of an element is constructed by its differences from the *other*. These differences, whether they are racial, geographic, ethnic, economic or ideological, enable the affirmation of one’s own meaning, or simply, one’s own sense of *self*. Thus, stigmatization of the ‘other’ generates a classification of *us* and *them*, which helps define and secure one’s own positive identity. Simply put, the ‘Other’ helps affirm and preserve one’s own ‘Self.’

Until European colonialism of the 18th century, the rivalry between Islam and Christianity continued with countless military encounters, such as the Arab conquest of Spain, the Reconquista, the Crusades, the fall of Constantinople to Ottoman Turks, and the sieges of Vienna by the Ottoman Empire. The Islamic ‘Other’ threatened Christian Europe for almost a thousand years. During that

period, the contention between the two religions resulted in antagonism and misperceptions deeply embedded on each side. Faced with the threat of Arab conquests, and later the Ottoman military advance, European Christians became compelled to establish their own ‘Self’ identity in the form of a perfect Christian versus a wicked Muslim ‘Other.’ Frassetto and Blanks (1999) explain how constructing Muslims as the ‘Other’ helped define the Western identity and worldview:

the European view of the “other,” like the European view of the “self,” has since classical times revolved around an ever-changing historical set of circumstances. . . . By the eleventh century, when Western writers were finally beginning to form a notion of what it meant to be European, they found themselves confronted by a powerful and threatening Islam, which they by and large were neither able nor willing to understand. To be sure, there were other important elements that went into the construction of the Western identity: Europe was also the product of internal colonization and cultural assimilation. Yet the encounter with the Muslim “other” was elemental to the shaping of the Western worldview. This was especially true during those centuries that began with the Crusades and ended with the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire (Frassetto & Blanks, 1999, p.1).

Islam posed a threat for Christian Europe not only with its military aggression but also with its superior civilization. During the Middle Ages, Muslims were far ahead of their Christian rivals, offering fascinating advances in architecture, law, literature, philosophy, and in most cultural areas (Frassetto & Blanks, 1999). As Frassetto & Blanks (1999) suggest, it was not only from a military position, but also from the position of cultural weakness that Christian Europe developed negative images of Islam, some of which survive to the present day:

Thus the Western need to construct an image of the Muslim, of the “Other,” was a twofold process that came to dominate the premodern discourse concerning Islam. On the one hand, it created an image of the Saracen, Moor, and Turk that was wholly alien and wholly evil. . . . On the other hand, the creation of such a blatantly false stereotype enabled Western Christians to define themselves. Indeed, the Muslim became, in a sense, a photographic negative of the self-perception of an ideal Christian self-image, one that portrayed Europeans as brave, virtuous believers in the one true God and the one true faith. By debasing the image of their rivals, Western Christians were enhancing their own self-

images and trying to build self-confidence in the face of a more powerful and more culturally sophisticated enemy (Frassetto & Blanks, 1999; p.3).

For the West, the alterity of Muslims stems from the ethnic, cultural and most importantly, the religious difference. However, difference may be dangerous as it may be negative as well as positive. If the cultural, racial or ethnic differences become a reason to denigrate the 'other' as a basis for self-affirmation, then the concepts of 'us' and 'them' may turn into '**us vs. them**' and it may cause hostility towards the 'other.' Hall (1997b) emphasizes the consequences when differentiation of the 'Other' turns into animosity:

difference is ambivalent. It can be both positive and negative. It is both necessary for the production of meaning, the formation of language and culture, for social identities and a subjective sense of the self . . . at the same time it is threatening, a site of danger, of negative feelings, of splitting, hostility and aggression towards the 'Other' (Hall, 1997b, p.238).

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, European Christians perceived Muslims as the enemy of Christianity and viewed them as the evil 'Other', who was ready to destroy the Christian faith and annihilate Western civilization. The animosity between the two religions was heightened during both the age of Crusades and Renaissance. During this period, European Christians united in opposition to Muslims and had relentless military battles against both Seljuk Turks and Ottoman Turks, as well as Arabs, whom they called Saracens at the time. In 1453, when Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, they became the sole Muslim enemy of Western Christendom. The word Muslim, Saracen, Moor, or Turk were no longer used interchangeably (Levin, 2007; Tolan, 2002). From thereon, all the negative qualities once associated with Muslims, and many more, were attributed to Turks.

In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha (1994) discusses the construction of 'otherness' in colonial discourse. In the chapter *The Other Question* Bhabha suggests that construction of 'otherness' relies on the concept of 'fixity', which he describes as "the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference" (p.94). According to Bhabha, fixity results in "rigidity and an unchanging order" as well as "disorder,

degeneracy and daemonic repetition” and its discursive strategy is stereotyping (p.94). Once an ethnic group is victimized through stereotyping and becomes the ‘Other’, it is almost impossible to suggest that this ethnic group can change or differentiate. This is what Bhabha means by ‘rigidity’ and ‘unchanging order.’ Repetition of the stereotype ensures that it becomes a cliché and cannot be questioned. The concept of ‘fixity’ also manifests itself in Crusade rhetoric in the form of authoritative, degenerate and repetitive descriptions that are demonizing Muslims. The Crusade rhetoric represented Saracens, as well as Turks, as impious, corrupt and idolatrous pagans. The propaganda sermons by the Crusaders portrayed both Saracens and Turks as violent, wicked and cruel non-believers who captured, enslaved and tortured Christians (Housley, 2007; p.200 and Daniel, 1989; p.39-97). The fall of Constantinople, the last bastion of Western Christendom in the East, terrified Europeans and awakened the memories of the Crusades (Crowley, 2005). After Constantinople’s conquest by the Turks, the fear of Ottoman aggression caused European Christians to propagate the Crusade imagery in their writings and speeches when characterizing Turks. As a result, the Crusade depictions of Turks as infidel, immoral and evil endured in Renaissance humanist discourse too. This stereotypical image of Turks, which contrasts the perceived image of an ideal Christian, was further enhanced by Renaissance humanists as ‘barbarians’ or ‘rapists’, as will be demonstrated in selected humanist speeches and writings in Chapter 2. Hence, the stereotype of ‘terrible Turk’ was born and became something that has been used frequently in the Western discourse.

In his book *A Short History of Structural Linguistics*, Matthews (2003) refers to Saussure’s description of meaning. He suggests that ‘meaning’ is a matter of difference and “in the language system there are only differences” (p.19). Therefore, the marking of ‘difference’ is essential to the production of meaning and creating *binary opposition* is the simplest way for ‘marking of difference’ (Hall, 1997a, p.31). European Christians characterized Muslims in binary opposites, such as *pious/infidel*, *devout/idolatrous*, *good/evil*, *merciful/cruel* and *civilized/barbarous*, and defined their perfect self-image against the polar opposite of an ‘evil’ Muslim. Housley (2007) paraphrases Svetlana Loutchitskaja’s

explanation of how binary opposites served the construction of Muslim ‘otherness’ in Crusade rhetoric.

Svetlana Loutchitskaja has recently emphasized the extent to which early crusading sources set up an imposing range of good/evil opposites: *devotio/perfidia*, *milites Christi/inimici Christi*, and *fideles/infideles* or *increduli*. Arguably Saracen polytheism fit this pattern in two ways, both by acting as the “other” to Christian monotheism and by providing a wicked “other” for the cult of the saints (as cited by Housley, 2007; p. 197-198).

Turks were also characterized in binary opposites and viewed as the wicked ‘Other’ during the Crusades and Renaissance. However, biblical binary descriptions of Turks are more common in Crusade rhetoric than in Renaissance humanist discourse. Humanists usually characterized Turks as ‘barbarians’ and ‘bloodthirsty savages’ rather than using biblical binary oppositions. The underlying reason for this might have been their realization of Ottoman Turks as a superior military power. In a sense, describing the Ottomans in binary terms, such as good/evil and pious/infidel, would have also exposed the Christian military weakness against the Turks as in *weak/powerful*. For that reason, they often used stereotypes instead to alienate Ottoman Turks as the ‘Other’. Renaissance humanist discourse also initiated the stereotype of ‘Terrible Turk’, which eventually turned into a myth in the following decades. The myth of ‘Terrible Turk’ will be examined in detail in Chapters 2 and 3 consecutively.

Nevertheless, defining Muslims in binary terms served the purpose of Crusades well as it helped unifying the Christians against a common enemy. Stuart Hall (1997b) suggests that binary opposites such as *acceptable/unacceptable* produce stereotypes and thus, serve the purpose of ‘exclusion’ of the ‘Other’ (p.258). By defining Muslims with polar opposites, European Christians constructed them as the ‘enemies of faith’, which in return galvanized Europe for the Crusade movement against Islam. On the one hand, perceiving Islam as a ‘sham’ and regarding Muslims as ‘idolaters’ helped Christians enhance their self-image. The stereotypical image of the Muslims and Turks as the wicked ‘Other’ facilitated their exclusion, and therefore, helped justify the Crusades. On the other hand, stigmatizing Turks as the wicked ‘Other’ and stereotyping them as

‘barbarians’, ‘terrible Turk’ or ‘cruel Turk’ during the Renaissance enabled Christian Europe to unite and battle against the Ottoman Empire on many occasions. To better understand how ‘otherness’ generates stereotypes, a closer look at **stereotypes** as a ‘representational practice’ is needed.

Stereotypes

In this thesis, the concept of *stereotypes* is applied as a representational practice which signifies racial or cultural differentiation. Before moving on to discuss stereotypes in representation, the meaning of *stereotype* needs to be addressed. Other than representation, stereotypes can be defined in either ‘cultural’ or ‘psychoanalytical’ sense. In its current cultural sense, the word *stereotype* was first used by Walter Lippmann in his book *Public Opinion*. Lippmann (1922) referred to “the picture in our heads” to explain the way we perceive the world around us (p.9-34). He used the word *stereotype* to describe how we label other people, of whom we have limited or no acquaintance, by using preconceptions already formed in our minds. Lippmann explained it as follows:

The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception (Lippmann, 1922; p.88).

The psychoanalytical definition of stereotypes was put forward by Gilman (1985) who described them as “a crude set of mental representations of the world” (p.17). Stereotypes perpetuate a needed sense of difference between the ‘self’ and the ‘object,’ which becomes the ‘Other’ (p.18). According to Gilman, the main reason for creating stereotypes is the anxiety individuals feel towards the world around them, which generates the need for the ‘Self’ to control the ‘Other.’

The deep structure of the stereotype reappears in the adult as a response to anxiety, an anxiety having its roots in the potential disintegration of the mental representations the individual has created and internalized. . . . The objects exist, we interact with them, they respond to (or ignore) our demands upon them. But when we relate to them, we relate to them through the filter of our mental representation of the world. This representation centers around our sense of control. . . . When, however, the sense of order and control

undergoes stress, when doubt is cast on the self's ability to control the internalized world that it has created for itself, an anxiety appears... We project that anxiety onto the Other, externalizing our loss of control. The Other is thus stereotyped, labeled with a set of signs paralleling (or mirroring) our loss of control. The Other is invested with all of the qualities of the "bad" or the "good" (Gilman, 1985; p.19-20).

Keeping in mind Lippmann's cultural and Gilman's psychoanalytical viewpoints, the concept of *stereotype* will be used as a representational practice henceforth, which indicates 'racial' or 'cultural differentiation.' According to Stuart Hall (1997b), "stereotyping is a signifying practice that is central to the representation of racial difference" (p.257). To paraphrase, *stereotyping* is a representational practice that is often used for highlighting the cultural, ethnic, and racial difference. Although Hall's main concern is racial stereotyping in colonial discourse, he also looks at how stereotypes are generated by marking the 'differences' and fixing them permanently.

Stereotypes get hold of the few 'simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized' characteristics about a person, *reduce* everything about the person to those traits, *exaggerate* and *simplify* them, and *fix* them without change or development to eternity. . . . *stereotyping reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes difference* [author's italics] (Hall, 1997b; p.258).

Citing colonial discourse, Hall (1997b) underscores the *naturalization* of 'difference' in stereotyping. As a racialized regime of representation, colonial discourse reduces the cultures of black people to nature, or simply *naturalizes the difference*. If the differences between black and white people are 'cultural', then they are open to modification and change, but if they are 'natural', then they are permanent and fixed. Therefore, *naturalization* is a representational strategy designed to fix 'difference', and thus secure it forever (p.245). Similar to colonial discourse, in Crusade rhetoric too, European Christians characterized both Muslims and Turks as 'bloodthirsty savages' and believed that taking pleasure in 'murdering' Christians was in their nature. Later, European humanists described Ottoman Turks as 'barbarians' and portrayed them as natural born killers, pillagers, wanton rapists, and enemies of civilization. Some of these so-called 'natural' characteristics, such as being 'murderers' or 'rapists', have become fixed and have continued to emerge in early modern English drama, as well as modern day media

representations, such as the Turkish portrayals in popular films. From the portrayals of Turks in Shakespeare's *Othello* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, to the ones in films like *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Midnight Express* (1978), the negative characteristics of Turks are presented as natural and archetypal. The symbolic associations between the historical representations of Turks and their image in Early Modern English drama and Western contemporary cinema will be examined further in Chapters 3 and 5, respectively. In these chapters, both the stereotypical image of Turks from the selected English plays and Western films will be compared and contrasted with the mythical Turkish image.

Marking the 'difference' with stereotypical representations turns the 'other' into a misfit and enables his/her *exclusion*. The stigmatization of religious 'difference' between Muslims and European Christians produced stereotypical features such as immorality, infidelity, savagery, barbarity and brutality and allowed the dismissal of Islam as a 'sham'. As Bhabha (1994) puts it, stereotyping is not just a simplification, but "a false representation of a given reality" (p.107). When the 'other' is represented with stereotypical characteristics, whether they are physical, behavioral or moral, his/her exclusion becomes easier. Hall explains how 'splitting' results in 'exclusion' as follows:

stereotyping deploys a strategy of 'splitting.' It divides the normal and the acceptable from the abnormal and the unacceptable. It then *excludes* or *expels* everything which does not fit, which is different (Hall, 1997b; p.258).

Hall's description of *exclusion* through *splitting* in stereotyping may also be referred as 'binary opposition.' Human beings perceive the world in binary mode, which means that things are divided into two that are opposite to each other. By *splitting*, individuals categorize their world as 'acceptable/unacceptable' or 'normal/abnormal' and therefore, they include the 'acceptable/normal' whereas they exclude the 'unacceptable/abnormal.' Hall elaborates on the *exclusion* of the stereotype as follows:

Stereotyping . . . sets up a symbolic frontier between the 'normal' and the 'deviant', the 'normal' and the 'pathological', the 'acceptable' and the 'unacceptable', what 'belongs' and what does not or is 'Other', between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', Us and Them. It

facilitates the 'binding' or bonding together of all of *Us* who are 'normal' into one 'imagined community'; and it sends into symbolic exile all of *Them* – 'the Others' – who are in some way different – 'beyond the pale' (Hall, 1997b; p.258).

According to Hall's premise, marking 'difference' allows individuals to form symbolic boundaries because it helps them "close ranks, shore up culture and to stigmatize and expel anything which is defined as impure, abnormal" (Hall 1997b; p.237). Therefore, symbolic boundaries are central to all culture, as they "keep the categories pure, giving cultures their unique meaning and identity" (Hall 1997b; p.236). When faced with a rival religion, European Christians were intimidated and thus, they struggled to establish boundaries between the Islamic culture and their own. Stereotyping the Muslims as 'evil' helped them create the ideal Christian image, which is reflected in *good/evil* and *acceptable/ unacceptable* binary opposites. By representing Muslims in binary terms, European Christians excluded them as 'beyond the pale' and achieved a pure identity which enabled them to unite as a whole in fighting against Islam during the Crusades and onwards.

The role of stereotypes in forming a unity is also discussed by Richard Dyer (1993), who suggests that "the effectiveness of stereotypes resides in the way they invoke a consensus" (p.14). Stereotypes are not simply false images or distorted representations that are created to discriminate the 'Other.' The stereotype often represents a general agreement about a social group, which cannot be reached by all members of the society independently, simultaneously and in isolation, but rather comes from the *stereotype* itself (Dyer, 1993). The disposition of power among or within the social groups affects the general acceptance and agreement about stereotypes. Dyer points out the relationship between stereotypes and the disposition of power in society as follows:

The consensus invoked by stereotypes is more apparent than real; rather, stereotypes express particular definitions of reality, with concomitant evaluations, which in turn relate to the disposition of power within society. Who proposes the stereotype, who has the power to enforce it, is the crux of the matter (Dyer, 1993; p.14).

For example, analyzing the colonial discourse, Hall argues that ethnocentrism is a form of power over the 'Other' and inevitably, produces stereotypes. He explains the relationship of power and stereotyping as follows:

Power . . . in broader cultural and symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain 'regime of representation.' It includes the exercise of *symbolic power* through representational practices. Stereotyping is a key element in this exercise (Hall, 1997b; p.259)

To demonstrate how ethnocentrism and power over the 'Other' can create 'a regime of representation', Hall cites Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which will be discussed further in this chapter. According to Hall, it is essential to recognize that Orientalism represents a discourse generated by the Western colonial power and political domination. As a colonial discourse, Orientalism is based on ethnocentrism and depends on the notion that the West has power and control over the knowledge about the East. It is argued by Edward Said that Orientalist discourse has constructed the 'Other' with stereotypical and embellished imagery of the Orient, and thus, created the Western 'Self.' The otherness of the East is reinforced with the binary opposites. As a result of this Self/Other dichotomy and binary opposition, Orientalism has returned vulgar stereotypes that are culturally inferior, backward and corrupt, such as the stereotypes of Muslims and Arabs. The stereotype of Turks may also be included in the same category, as it is generated by the same representational practice through the Orientalist viewpoint. The stereotypical image of Turks, as the 'terrible Turk', exists not only in historiography, Christian theological texts, Renaissance humanist discourse, and Early Modern English drama, but also in Western contemporary cinema. The stereotypical image of Turks became trans-historical and the myth of 'terrible Turk' has continued to exist even in the modern day media images. To better understand the long-lasting stereotype of Turks, it is critical, first, to answer the questions what *myth* is and how it is related to *narrative* and *historical discourse*.

Myth, Narrative and Historical Discourse

After the fall of Constantinople to Turks and onwards, the stereotype of 'terrible Turk', which was characterized as someone who ate children alive, rapidly

became universal in the West (Wheatcroft, 1995; p,25). The phrases *terrible Turk* or *cruel Turk* epitomized Turks' negative qualities based on the perceptions of Christians had about them and became a *myth* in Western discourse. In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes (1957) suggests that "myth is a type of speech" which is chosen by history and cannot evolve from the nature of things (p.109-110). In other words, myth cannot be defined by its object or material as it must have a historical foundation. Levi-Strauss (1955) also defined myth as "a part of human speech", that does not lose its mythical value and remains "everlasting" (p.430). For both Barthes and Levi-Strauss, *myth* cannot simply be treated as language because it represents something more than that. Likewise, the phrases 'terrible Turk' or 'cruel Turk' do not signify just the 'cruelty' of a single Turk, but rather embody a whole set of negative characteristics that all Turks possess in the minds of European Christians, such as savagery, barbarity, violence, murderousness, brutality, infidelity, wickedness, immorality, corruptness, and sexual perversion. What 'Turk' signified for European Christians will be examined closely in the following chapters. Particularly, chapters 2, 3 and 4 will demonstrate that these negative qualities had been identified with Turks since the Middle Ages. The stereotypical representation of Turks in Western discourse has been repeated for so long and so often that, the phrase 'terrible Turk' became a myth that has continued even to the 21st century.

Barthes (1957) claims that "everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse" (p.109). He also suggests that *myth* should have a historical foundation and "it is therefore by no means confined to oral speech", so can be in any form.

It can consist of modes of writing or of representations; not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all these can serve as a support to mythical speech. . . . We shall therefore take *language, discourse, speech*, etc., to mean any significant unit or synthesis, whether verbal or visual: a photograph will be a kind of speech for us in the same way as a newspaper article; even objects will become speech, if they mean something (Barthes, 1957; p.110-111).

Based on Barthes's assertion of how myth is conveyed through discourse, the popular entertainment media, particularly contemporary cinema, may be

considered among the primary agents of myth. For example, the portrayals of Turks in the contemporary movies, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Midnight Express* (1978), and *Usual Suspects* (1995) are predominantly cruel, violent, corrupt, immoral, or degenerate. Needless to say, when portraying Muslims, stereotyping has often been the norm in Western cinema. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, orientalizing Muslims, particularly the Arabs, as ‘Other’ in films has been a common practice in Western cinema. However, Turkish portrayals in Western films have been distinctively uniform and constant, which set them apart from Arab characters that are nuanced and multifaceted at times. The uniformity and consistency of the Turkish stereotype in films originate from the trans-historical image of Turks that is being examined in this thesis. Chapter 5 will assess how the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ has become everlasting and universal, by looking into both American and European cinema and attempt to identify the associations between the past image of Turks in Western discourse and their current image in the entertainment media.

To answer the question how the Turkish image became a myth in Western discourse and popular culture, it is crucial to understand the basis and significance of *myth* in language. According to Saussure’s structuralist model, language is a social phenomenon because its source does not lie in nature or in the individual subject, but rather lies in society, in the shared culture, and in the language system (Hall, 1997a; p.32-33). Saussure’s distinction between *langue* and *parole* refer to the two characteristics of language. *Langue* is the social part of language which belongs to a revertible time, and *parole*, is the individual act of communication that is non-revertible (Hall, 1997a; Levi-Strauss, 1955). *Myth* on the other hand, signifies the third level in language. Levi-Strauss describes *myth* as the “third time referent”, a combination of the first two, which is ‘everlasting’:

We have just distinguished *langue* and *parole* by the different time referents which they use. Keeping this in mind, we may notice that myth uses a third referent which combines the properties of the first two. On the one hand, a myth always refers to events alleged to have taken place in time: before the world was created, or during its first stages – anyway long ago. But what gives the myth an operative value is that the specific pattern is everlasting; it explains the present and the past as well as the future (Levi-Strauss, 1955; p.430).

Therefore, myth represents a third time dimension, where the linguistic value of myth becomes distinct by being both historical and ahistorical. As a myth, the term ‘terrible Turk’ has preserved its signification in history and its mythical value, which has lasted to the 21st century. The preservation of this mythical value throughout history is best explained by Levi-Strauss’s words:

the mythical value of the myth remains preserved, even through the worst translation. Whatever our ignorance of the language and the culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader throughout the world. Its substance does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the story which it tells (Levi-Strauss, 1955; p.430).

Likewise, Barthes (1975) points out that *narrative* has the same quality of a myth and does not lose its essence when translated. He suggests that unlike a lyric poem, “narrative is *reducible* without fundamental damage” (p.269). According to Barthes, there is narrative in myth, as well as in fables, legend, tales, epics, tragedy, drama, comedy, movies, paintings, and even in history (p.237). Narrative can be interpreted at any time and by anyone, even from the opposite cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is ‘trans-historical’ and ‘transcultural.’ Barthes explains it as follows:

narrative starts with the very history of mankind; there is not, there has never been anywhere, any people without narrative; all classes, all human groups, have their stories . . . narrative remains largely unconcerned with good or bad literature. Like life itself, it is there, international, trans-historical, transcultural (Barthes, 1975; p.237).

In narrative, the storytelling always presents the question of ‘reality’ vs ‘imaginary’. White (1990) claims that when the distinction between real and imaginary events is imposed on the storyteller, storytelling becomes a problem. He goes on to suggest that ‘mythic narrative’ is not concerned with this distinction, as the storyteller is not obligated for keeping the ‘real’ separated from the ‘imaginary’:

What we wish to call mythic narrative is under no obligation to keep the two orders of events, real and imaginary, distinct from one another. Narrative becomes a problem when

we wish to give to real events the form of story. It is because real events do not offer themselves as stories that their narrativization is so difficult (White, 1990; p.3).

Therefore, *narrative* creates a challenge when it is about a real event versus an imaginary one. In that case, the nonnarrative representation or manner of speaking, such as in physical sciences, seems more appropriate than narrativization. It is also appropriate for historians to report the history of the world in nonnarrative form. However, as White (1990) suggests, history is told in both chronological order of real events and by narrativization, instead of nonnarrative form (p.5). The European Christian speeches and writings that followed the fall of Constantinople offer a great example for the narrativization of history. The people who managed to escape from the assault of the Ottoman Turks during the siege told horror stories about the Turkish atrocities, adding their own narrative to them. Although, the chroniclers who witnessed the events tried to give an accurate account of what happened, the embellished stories of the inhuman Turkish cruelties spread still by the refugees and envoys from the Christian outposts imperiled by the Ottoman victory (see Chapter 2). Even the Venetian Senate exaggerated the number of inhabitants killed during the attack to create a more dramatic effect (as cited in Chapter 2).

In his 1967 essay, *The Discourse of History*, Barthes challenges the distinction between ‘fictional discourse’ and ‘historical discourse’ and criticizes the historiography that favored a narrative representation of past events and processes (White, 1990; p.35):

Does the narration of past events, which, in our culture from the time of the Greeks onwards, has generally been subject to the sanction of historical “science”, bound to the unbending standard of the “real”, and justified by principles of “rational” exposition – does this form of narration really differ, in some specific trait, in some indubitably distinctive feature, from imaginary narration, as we find it in the epic, the novel, and the drama? (Barthes, 1967; p.7).

When posing his question, Barthes uses the words *science*, *real*, and *rational* within quotation marks to attack the professed objectivity of traditional historiography. What he finds paradoxical is that “narrative structure which was

originally developed within cauldron of fiction (in myths and the first epics) becomes at once the sign and proof of reality” (Barthes, 1967; p.18). White (1990) suggests that it is unrealistic to expect the real events to be represented as they were, because historical discourse was developed late in human history and was difficult to sustain in times of cultural breakdown, like in the Early Middle Ages (p.3). Thus, in traditional historiography, narrative becomes a problem, when the real events are told in the form of story.

However, for Levi-Strauss (1966) it was not narrative, but history itself was the problem. In his essay, *When Myth Becomes History*, Levi-Strauss (1979) probes the question ‘where the myth ends and where the history starts’ (p.38). He suggests that the stories in traditional historiography are so repetitive that the same type of event can be used several times to account for different happenings (p.40). He remarks:

What we discover by reading these books is that the opposition – the simple opposition between mythology and history which we are accustomed to make – is not at all a clear-cut one, and that there is an intermediary level. Mythology is static, we find the same mythical elements combined over and over again, but they are in a closed system . . . in contradiction with history, which is . . . an open system (Levi-Strauss, 1979; p.40).

In his book, *The Savage Mind*, Levi-Strauss (1966) recognizes history as a *diachronic* representation of events, but views it as a method of analysis “with no distinct object corresponding to it” (p. 262). He criticizes the historical knowledge provided by the historical method as “ahistorical” (p. 254). His remarks are as follows:

It offers not a concrete image of history but an abstract schema of men making history of such a kind that it can manifest itself in the trend of their lives as a synchronic totality. Its position in relation to history is therefore the same as that of primitives to the eternal past . . . history plays exactly the part of a myth (Levi-Strauss, 1966; p.254).

For Levi-Strauss, traditional, “narrative” historiography is nothing but the myth of modern, industrial, and imperialistic Western societies (White, 1990). Levi-Strauss continues as follows:

historical facts are no more *given* than any other. It is the historian, or the agent of history, who constitutes them by abstraction and as though under the threat of an infinite regress (Levi-Strauss, 1966; p.257).

What is true of the constitution of historical facts is no less so of their selection. . . . History is therefore never history, but history-for. It is partial in the sense of being biased even when it claims not to be, for it inevitably remains partial – that is, incomplete – and this is itself a form of partiality (Levi-Strauss, 1966; p.257).

By the same token, Barthes suggests that historical representations, even when they are less mythological, are based on referents that are ‘constituted’ rather than ‘found’ (White, 1990; p.35). Among other disciplines pretending to the status of scientificity, Barthes believes that the historical studies remain a victim of what he calls ‘the fallacy of referentiality’ (White, 1990; p.36). Simply, the historians refer to early writings, speeches and chronicles and cite preceding academic research and texts. This is also called *intertextuality*.

Discourse and Intertextuality

Intertextuality basically means each text exists in relation to other texts. The term was coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s and indicates the insertion of history into a text and of the text into history (Fairclough, 1993). Fairclough paraphrases Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality as follows:

By ‘the insertion of history into a text’, she means that the text absorbs in and is built out of texts from the past (texts being the major artifacts that constitute history). By ‘the insertion of the text into history’, she means that the text responds to, re-accentuates, and reworks past texts, and in so doing helps to make history and contributes to wider processes of change, as well as anticipating and trying to shape subsequent texts (Fairclough, 1993/2009; p.102).

In Western historical discourse, the early sources provide a narrative in which Turks, as well as Muslims, were characterized negatively and stigmatized as the ‘Other.’ Keeping in mind Kristeva’s assertion, the subsequent texts, regardless of genres, are also influenced and shaped by previous historical discourse. Intertextuality is a crucial concept not only in historical discourse, but in other

discourses as well. As suggested by Hall (1992), discourses are not closed systems as discourse draws on elements in other discourses, binding them into its own network of meanings. To underscore the impact of discourses, Hall examines the concepts of the 'West' versus the 'East' as an example. He suggests that the 'West' is not a geographical construct but rather a *historical* construct. He explains it as follows:

Our ideas of East and West have never been free of myth and fantasy, and even to this day they are not primarily ideas about place and geography. . . . the discourse of 'Europe' drew on the earlier discourse of 'Christendom', altering or translating its meaning. Traces of past discourses remain embedded in more recent discourses of 'the West' (Hall, 1992; p.276 & 292).

Here, the term *discourse* is not being used as a linguistic concept that stands for a coherent writing or speech. It is rather employed as a *system of representation*, a concept put forward by the French social theorist, Michel Foucault. By *discourse* Foucault means "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about", or simply, a way of representing "a particular kind of knowledge about a topic" (Hall, 1992; p.291). Foucault argues that discourse is not one statement, but rather consists of several statements that fit together and work together because any one statement implies a relation to all the others. He calls this pattern a *discursive formation*. Stuart Hall clarifies Foucault's notion of *discursive formation* and explains how knowledge is produced through discourse:

When statements about a topic are made within a particular discourse, the discourse makes it possible to construct the topic in a certain way. It also limits the other ways in which the topic can be constructed. . . . Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But it is itself produced by a practice: 'discursive practice' – the practice of producing meaning. Since all social practices entail meaning, all practices have a discursive aspect. So discourse enters into and influences all social practices (Hall, 1992; p. 291).

Based on Foucault's aforementioned premise, one may argue that the negative representations of Turks in Western discourse created a 'discursive practice' that constructed the negative image of the 'Turk.' The early encounters and rivalry of the European Christendom with Islam, and Europe's battle with Ottoman

aggression generated a discursive practice that often demonized Turks. As will be discussed in this thesis, the vilification of Turks in Western writings, texts and speeches continued until the end of the 19th century. Therefore, one may conclude that the image of ‘terrible Turk’ stemmed from this discursive practice and is solidified over time. Consequently, the negative qualities of the Turks became common knowledge.

Foucault scrutinized the production of knowledge and meaning through discourse, and he was more inclined to analyze the whole discursive formation to which a text or a practice belongs (Hall, 1997a; p.47). He was mainly concerned with the *power/knowledge* relationship and examined how knowledge could serve for the interest of a particular group or class (Hall, 1997a; p.47-51). Hall sheds light on Foucault’s stance on power/knowledge:

Foucault argues that statements about the social, political or moral world are rarely ever simply true or false; and ‘the facts’ do not enable us to decide definitively about their truth or falsehood, partly because ‘facts’ can be construed in different ways. The very language we use to describe the so-called facts interferes in this process of finally deciding what is true, and what false. . . . Indeed, it gives considerable weight to questions of power since it is power, rather than the facts about reality, which make things ‘true’ (Hall, 1992; p.292-293).

The demeaning narrative about the Turks in European Christian writings during the Crusade and Renaissance, as well as in the Early Modern English drama, produced an archive of knowledge. This knowledge helped the European Christians to unify and rally against the Ottoman Turks during countless battles in history. In other words, European Christians used this knowledge to construct an opposition by alterizing the Turks. On the other hand, Foucault’s viewpoint does not indicate that discourse simply mirrors the interests of a particular class, because he believes that the same discourse can be used by groups with different, even contradictory, class interests. However, Foucault maintains that discourse is not ideologically ‘neutral’ or ‘innocent’ (Hall, 1992; p.292-294). He claims that knowledge remains ‘true’ only within the time period, setting, and context of the discursive formation, which he refers as a *regime of truth* (Hall, 1997a; p.49). One of the best examples for Foucault’s ‘regime of truth’ concept is provided by Edward Said’s thesis of

Orientalism. In the following section, I will discuss Said's Orientalism and attempt to apply it as one of the theoretical methods for this thesis.

Orientalism

The concept of **Orientalism** was put forward by Edward Said, who remains one of the most important critics of Western discourse on the Middle East. In his groundbreaking book, *Orientalism*, Said (1978) argues that the dichotomy of 'East' and 'West' is simply generated by a 'regime of truth' which he calls Orientalism. He defines Orientalists and Orientalism as follows:

Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient – and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist – either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism (Said, 1978; p.2).

Inspired by Michel Foucault's aforementioned standpoint on the concept of *discourse/power/knowledge*, Said questions the works of Orientalists. He scrutinizes the distinction between 'East' and 'West' and accuses Orientalists of fostering misperceptions about the East by inventing a fictitious 'Orient.' He criticizes the scholarship of Oriental studies for being biased and for misrepresenting the East, particularly the Middle East. The key component of his argument is European colonialism, as well as subsequent American political domination, which he viewed as the reasons for the dichotomy of Western superiority versus Eastern inferiority in Orientalism. For Said, Orientalist discourse involves misconceptions, misrepresentations and a mistreatment of the Orient based on a conviction of Western superiority to justify Western imperialism. According to Said, the West has controlled and dominated the East with the authoritative and academic, yet imaginative and mythical knowledge produced by the scholarship of Oriental Studies of the Western academic institutions. He describes the institutionalized Orientalism as follows:

Taking the late eighteenth century as very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient –dealing

with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said, 1978; p.3).

Said (1978) views Orientalism as a *discursive formation* generated by the Western colonial powers after the 18th century to rationalize the domination of the Middle East. According to Said (1978), the academic discipline of Oriental Studies produced distorted imagery and subjective knowledge about the Middle East (p.2). The stereotypical representations and biased characterization of Muslims in Orientalist texts have been accepted and utilized as academic knowledge. In these texts, both Muslims and Arabs are often characterized as savage, primitive and backward people who are unable to sustain themselves and maintain their lands. For the Western colonial powers, the authoritative nature of these Orientalist writings justified the control of these lands, which are imaginatively described as the Orient. Consequently, Orientalist discourse offers the justification to demonize and exclude Arabs, and exploit their lands. Said (1978) argues that the ethnocentric knowledge provided by the Orientalist discourse has facilitated European political and colonial domination, and later the American imperialism, over the Middle East. Surely, there are scholars who have disputed Said's thesis of Orientalism. One of his leading opponents is Bernard Lewis (1994) who finds Said's argument too simplistic, confusing and idiosyncratic. Lewis suggests:

One of the most puzzling features of Mr. Said's *Orientalism* is precisely the idiosyncratic way, at once high-handed and inventive, in which he treats the facts on which it purports to be based. In his perception, the Orientalist was the agent and instrument of the imperialist, and his interest in knowledge was a source of power. . . . To sustain this interpretation, Mr. Said presents a revisionist view of the growth of Arabic studies in Britain and France, the growth of British and French power in the Arab lands, and the connection between the two (Lewis, 1994; p.109).

However, in this thesis, the concept of Orientalism will not be treated as an instrument of imperialism, but rather applied as a 'style of thought' which is also one of Said's definitions. Besides the academic discipline that emerged in the late 18th century, Said (1978) also defines Orientalism as a generic term that signifies the Western attitude towards the East since the Medieval times. Broadly, he

describes Orientalism as “a style of thought” that is based on the preconceived distinction between the ‘Orient’ and the ‘Occident’ (p.3). As previously mentioned in this chapter, European Christians perceived Muslims as the ‘Other’ and viewed them as the enemy. Since the Middle Ages, European Christians demonized and stigmatized Muslims in their writings so that they could feel superior versus what they perceived as an inferior religion (see Chapter 2 for a broader discussion). The marginalization of Muslims created a preconceived distinction between the West and the East. Said considers this distinction as ‘a style of thought’ that breeds Orientalism. Orientalist discourse has shaped the imagination of the Western world about the Orient since the Middle Ages. Therefore, Orientalism is a trans-historical discourse that includes not only academic texts, but also the writings of a wide array of Western authors, novelists, travel writers, poets, economists, and philosophers. Said elaborates on what Orientalism means as a ‘style of thought’ as follows:

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 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* [author’s italics] (Said, 1978; p.3).

Said argues that the simplistic and distorted image of the East has been fostered in the minds of Westerners for centuries by writers like Aeschylus, Dante, Ariosto, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Tasso, Cervantes, Hugo, Flaubert, and Nerval, who have helped create myths about the Orient. What these writers and many others have done is that they have based their poems, novels, social descriptions, political accounts and cultural representations on a preconceived distinction between the East and the West. Simply put, their knowledge, beliefs and perceptions about the East reflect a Western construct, which they call the ‘Orient.’

Orient is not an inert fact of nature. It is not merely *there*, just as the Occident itself is not just *there* either. . . . men make their own history, what they can know is what they have

made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities – to say nothing of historical entities – such locales, regions, geographical sectors as ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ are man-made. Therefore, as much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other (Said, 1978; p.5).

Said (1978) particularly criticizes the biased and fictitious representations of the Middle East in Orientalism as they have led to prejudices about Islam and Muslims (p.6). In essence, he has been critical of the Western attitude towards Muslims, particularly towards Arabs, and suggests that the friction between Christians and Muslims has been constructed mainly through the Western discourse, which involves a wide array of Orientalist literature:

The Christian concept of Islam was integral and self-sufficient. Islam became an image... whose function was not so much to represent Islam in itself as to represent it for the medieval Christian. . . . This 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 (Said, 1978; p.60-61).

As discussed previously, European Christians had perceived the Muslims as the ‘Other’ since the Middle Ages. The knowledge produced by the Western discourse, including the Crusade rhetoric, chronicles, sermons, humanist discourse, and the literary texts of both the Renaissance and the Early Modern period, has enabled the West to construct a cultural opposite as ‘the East’ and thus, the West constructed its superior ‘Self.’ The distinction between the West and the East, particularly the Middle East, has been fostered by the Western writings for centuries. As discussed before, Foucault’s notion of *discursive formation* indicates that the Western discourse has supplied a biased archival knowledge which has promoted the misrepresentations about the Middle East and Islamic cultures. Also, the Western writers have continued to cite and refer to the works of this archive. Therefore, due to *intertextuality*, the distorted imagery of Muslims and the Middle East has lasted even to the 21st century. Said (1978) argues the same point regarding Orientalist writings, as they constantly refer to each other showing that Orientalism is *actually* ‘an archive of information’:

collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism. The unity of the large ensemble of texts . . . frequently refer to each other: Orientalism is after all a system for citing works and authors (Said, 1978; p.23).

In a sense Orientalism was a library or archive of information commonly and, in some of its aspects, unanimously held. What bound the archive together was a family of ideas and unifying set of values proven in various ways to be effective. These ideas explained the behavior of Orientals; they supplied Orientals with mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics (Said, 1978; p.42).

Edward Said (1978) accuses Orientalism of creating binary opposites such as *inferior/superior*, *backward/civilized*, and *weak/strong* to characterize the East (Orient) versus the West (Occident). He stated that the difference between East and West is not as 'radical' as it is suggested by the Orientalist viewpoint. However, the cultural distinction conceived by Orientalism generated hostility, rejection and even aggression. As a result, the exclusion of the Muslims as the 'Other' has created the division between the West and the Islamic cultures and thus, constructed the concept of '*Us vs. Them.*' Said explains it as follows:

Orientalism can also express the strength of the West and the Orient's weakness – as seen by the West. Such strength and such weakness are as intrinsic to Orientalism as they are to any view that divides the world into large general divisions, entities that coexist in a state of tension produced by what is believed to be a radical difference. For that is the main intellectual issue raised by Orientalism. Can one divide human reality, as indeed human reality seems to be genuinely divided, into clearly different cultures, histories, traditions, societies, even races, and survive the consequences humanly? By surviving the consequences humanly, I mean to ask whether there is any way of avoiding the hostility expressed by the division, say, of men onto "us" (Westerners) and "they" (Orientals) (Said, 1978; p.45).

According to Said (1978), "Orientalism carries within it the stamp of a problematic European attitude towards Islam" (p.74). He claims that the term 'Orient' in Orientalist discourse signifies more than a geographic territory in the Near or Far East. It rather stands for the Islamic East, which may be viewed as 'militant':

When the term Orient was not simply a synonym for the Asiatic East as a whole, or taken as generally denoting the distant and exotic, it was most rigorously understood as applying to the Islamic Orient. This ‘militant’ Orient came to stand for what Henri Baudet has called “the Asiatic tidal wave.” Certainly this was the case in Europe through the middle of the eighteenth century (Said, 1978; p.75).

Said considers Ottoman Turks as a significant part of the so-called ‘militant’ Orient and as one of the main reasons for Islam to symbolize fear, violence and destruction for Europe and European Christendom. His remarks are as follows:

Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was lasting trauma. Until the end of the seventeenth 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 (Said, 1978; p.59-60).

Said’s reference of “demonic, hordes of hated barbarians” corresponds to the representations of the Ottoman Turks in Western discourse. As will be examined in the following chapters, Turks were often characterized as cruel, violent barbarians, which yielded the stereotypical imagery of the ‘terrible Turk’ or the ‘cruel Turk.’ The military advance of the Ottoman Turks into Europe, which lasted more than four centuries, terrified European Christians. The perception of Islam as ‘militant’ was intensified due to the military victories of the Ottoman Empire at its peak during the 15th and 16th centuries. Ottoman Turks were most superior against Europe during those years, while they continued to pose a threat until the end of the 17th century as the Ottoman Empire was the biggest Islamic Empire that lasted more than six hundred years. For that reason, the myths and representations that are presented by the Orientalists about the Orient are mostly inspired by the social, cultural and organizational structures, as well as the rulers, of the Ottoman Empire. Orientalist discourse and its representations of Turks will be examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

However, as the Ottoman Empire was one of the biggest political and military forces during the 15th and 16th centuries, extending its territories from Eastern Europe to the Middle East and North Africa, the dichotomy of Western

superiority against the inferior East was highly unlikely. The presumed positional superiority of the Christian Europe as the ‘colonizer’ over the lands in the Middle East, Mediterranean, and the Balkans did not exist due to the military power and domination of the Ottoman Empire. When examining the Western discourse between the 15th and 17th centuries, it is not plausible to apply the ethnocentric approach that is based on the concept of ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’ in Orientalism. On the other hand, Said’s generic definition of Orientalism as a ‘style of thought’ is essential to this thesis. Therefore, when analyzing the representations of Ottoman Turks in Western discourse, Orientalism will be applied accordingly. Orientalism is not only a European colonial fantasy of the 18th and 19th centuries, but also a system of knowledge and practice since antiquity. Said views Orientalism as a trans-historical discourse that has been available since Medieval times. He maintains that Orientalists have systematically provided a distorted body of knowledge about the Middle East, which has infiltrated into Western consciousness and general culture. It is this aspect of Orientalism that I will utilize in the thesis:

Orientalism, therefore, is not an airy European fantasy about the Orient, but a created body of theory and practice in which, for many generations, there has been a considerable material investment. Continued investment made Orientalism, as a system of knowledge about the Orient, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness, just as that same investment multiplies – indeed, made truly productive – the statements proliferating out from Orientalism onto the general culture (Said, 1978; p.6).

Orientalism as a ‘style of thought’ is critically relevant to this thesis as it indicates not only a colonial discourse but also a trans-historical discourse. My discourse analysis is temporal, as I will examine the image of the Turks starting from the Middle Ages until the 21st century. Therefore, Orientalism will be applied as a trans-historical discourse to my argument in this thesis. Orientalism is enriched with a broad selection of texts, dramas, novels, and poems, representing the characters, myths, imagery, and fantasies about the Orient. This repertoire also offers a variety of representations about the Turks due to their long-term military encounters with Christian Europe. Said underscores the trans-historical quality of

Orientalism and explains how ancient Western texts provide a source for the Orientalist discourse after the 18th century. His remarks are as follows:

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 (Said, 1978; p.63).

In addition to the temporal aspect, Orientalism is also crucial to this thesis because it involves most of the elements cited in the *representational practices* discussed earlier, such as *otherness*, *stereotypes*, *myth*, *narrative* and *intertextuality*. The misrepresentations and distorted imagery of Islamic cultures and the Middle East in Orientalist writings originate from the stigmatization of Muslims by European Christians for centuries. These images have produced stereotypes, myths and narratives that have been widely accepted and commonly used. Therefore, Orientalism has returned vulgar stereotypes that are culturally inferior, backward and corrupt, such as the stereotypes of Muslims, Arabs and Turks. The myths, stereotypes, and imagery offered by Orientalism permeate into the general knowledge and continue to have an effect on current Western discourse including literary texts, contemporary cinema, popular media, and even the children's books and cartoons in the 21st century. Said (1997) elaborates this point in his book, *Covering Islam*:

there was the longstanding attitude to Islam, the Arabs, and the Orient in general that I have been calling Orientalism. For whether one looked at . . . critically acclaimed fiction . . . or at grade-school history textbooks, comic strips, television serials, films, and cartoons, the iconography of Islam was uniform, was uniformly ubiquitous, and drew its material from the same time-honored view of Islam: hence the frequent caricatures of Muslims as oil suppliers, as terrorists, and more recently, as bloodthirsty mobs (Said, 1997, p.6).

While the Western representations of Turks are symbolically associated with Muslims, their stereotypical image in the popular media may also be related to the repertoire of writings merely about Turks. According to Foucault (1972), texts always draw upon and transform other contemporary and historically prior texts. Due to *intertextuality*, the media stereotype of Turks may be a product of a mythologized Turkish image throughout history. Therefore, the past discourse of Turks being the ‘terrible’ or ‘cruel’ Turk is embedded in the most recent image of the Turks as the ‘villain’ in the western cinema. Said (1978) makes a similar observation about the stereotypes of Muslims in the modern mass media:

One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films and all the media’s resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of the “the mysterious Orient” (Said, 1978, p.26).

Raymond Williams defines culture as the texts and practices whose principal function is to signify, to produce or to be the occasion for the production of meaning, which is also synonymous with *signifying (representational) practices* (Storey, 2009; p.2). According to Williams, culture refers to “the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity” (p.2). The signifying (representational) practices and artistic activity he refers to is the collection of poetry, novel, ballet, opera, fine art, pop music, and films. Said (1978) points out how Orientalist artistic activity and representational practices create myths about the Orient. He argues that that the simplistic and embellished image of the East has been fostered in the minds of Westerners for centuries by Western writers who helped create myths about the Orient. What these writers have done is that they have based their poems, novels, social descriptions, political accounts and cultural representations on an essential distinction between the East and the West. When distortions, misrepresentations and exaggerations reach the masses through cultural texts, artistic activity or popular culture, they convey the myths too. The Orientalist viewpoint continues to influence the depictions of Turks and Muslims in the entertainment media, particularly cinema. However, the stereotypical image of the Turk represents more than a villain in films. The ‘terrible Turk’ embodies the

history, narrative and myth behind the image. In this thesis, I will investigate the emergence, transformation and trajectory of this myth and its associations with the current image of Turks and modern Turkey.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMAGE OF TURKS BETWEEN THE 11th AND 16th CENTURIES: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Representation of Turks during the Crusades

The encounters between Christians and the Turks began when the Seljuk Turks conquered Anatolia (a.k.a Asia Minor) in the 11th century and continued until the Western imperialism's endeavor to take over the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century. Turks threatened Western Christendom for more than six centuries since the beginning of the first Crusade. European Christians perceived Turks as 'cruel' and 'wicked' and characterized them as such in their writings and speeches, particularly during the 15th and 16th centuries when the Ottoman Empire was at the peak of its power. To answer the question why Turks were perceived as the wicked 'Other' and stereotyped by the West as 'cruel', I will present a review of the Crusade history and examine the representations of Turks in Crusade rhetoric simultaneously.

The Seljuk Turks and the First Crusade

Negative representations of Turks in Western discourse go back as early as the 11th century when the attacks on Western Christendom by the Seljuk Turks prompted the military campaign for the First Crusade. Before examining the image of Turks in the Crusade rhetoric, first, a closer look at the Seljuk Turks and how they were involved in the Crusades is needed. The Seljuk Turks were a nomadic people from Central Asia who had converted to Islam and flourished as Muslim military mercenaries (Payne, 1990; p.25). From the 11th century onwards, Turks provided the majority of Muslim rulers and soldiers, and were considered the leaders of Islamic military expansion towards the Western Christendom (Coles, 1968; p14). In 1071, Seljuk Turks defeated Byzantine forces at the Battle of Manzikert and poured into the undefended provinces of Anatolia occupying Nicea, less than a hundred miles from Constantinople (Payne, 1990; Madden, 2006). Christendom was shaken by the Turkish invasions as Anatolia was lost to the

Turks and the Byzantine Empire had lost the sources of its great wealth (Payne, 1990). Since the Eastern Mediterranean was taken over by the Arabs in the seventh century, Christians had been permitted to visit the Holy Land. That changed when Seljuk Turks swept into the region conquering Persia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine and capturing Jerusalem (Payne, 1990; Madden 2006). After their conquest of Jerusalem, many of the Turks were amazed to find Christian churches and monasteries flourishing in Muslim lands. Therefore, they destroyed the churches, murdered the clergy and seized the pilgrims (Madden, 2006). Christians could no longer be assured that they could travel to Jerusalem without being arrested or sold into slavery or ill-treated in other ways (Payne, 1990). When the Turks impeded the Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Byzantine emperor, Alexius Comnenus, asked Pope Urban II for help in the early 1090s.

On November 27th of 1095, at the Council of Clermont, Pope Urban II gave a speech to initiate the first Crusade against the Seljuk Turks (Madden, 2006; p.8 and Payne, 1990; p.33). Pope Urban's speech incited a vast amount of Western texts that offered demeaning images of Turks for a long time. As Bisaha (2006) demonstrates in her book, *Creating East and West*, this speech is considered as the cornerstone of crusade preaching and propaganda. Although there is no existing original account of Pope Urban's speech, there are several versions,²¹ all of which are written by the chroniclers of the time. According to these chroniclers, Pope Urban's speech described the dire sufferings, enslavement, pillage, cruelty, rape, torture, evisceration, slaughter and beheadings²² that Christians were subjected to by the Turks. Among these chroniclers, Robert the Monk's account of Pope Urban's speech has been the most recognized (Sweetenham, 2006; p.42). In his account, Robert the Monk referred the Turks as "a race from the kingdom of

²¹ There are five accounts of Pope Urban's speech. Four of them written by the chroniclers who are considered credible and one of them is the Gesta version which is 'anonymous.' See August C. Krey's *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eye-Witnesses and Participants* (Princeton University Press, 1921) and Dana C. Munro's "The Speech of Pope Urban II at Clermont, 1095" *The American Historical Review* 11(2), 231-242.

²² See the five accounts of Pope Urban's Speech. Source: *Medieval Sourcebook*. Retrieved from: Center of Medieval Studies at Fordham University, The Jesuit University of New York, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>.

Persians”²³ because they had conquered Persia and characterized them as a “cursed race, alienated from God”²⁴ who profaned God’s sanctuaries. The speech describes the Turks as a Godless race and details the violent acts they committed during the attacks:

From the confines of Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople a horrible tale has gone forth and very frequently has been brought to our ears, namely, that a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire; it has led away a part of the captives into its own country, and a part it has destroyed by cruel tortures; it has either entirely destroyed the churches of God or appropriated them for the rites of its own religion.²⁵

The speech goes on to provide the most vivid depictions of Turks’ brutality, such as their torture, rape and murder of Christians. Pope Urban II characterizes Turks as Godless murderers who take pleasure in killing innocent Christians. His depictions fit into Stuart Hall’s (1997b) concept of ‘naturalization of difference’, when the racial difference presented as ‘natural’ and ‘fixed.’ Turks are characterized as natural born killers who enjoy torture, violence and murder.

They [Turks] destroy the altars, after having defiled them with their uncleanness. They circumcise the Christians, and the blood of the circumcision they either spread upon the altars or pour into the vases of the baptismal font. When they wish to torture people by a base death, they perforate their navels, and dragging forth the extremity of the intestines, bind it to a stake; then with flogging they lead the victim around until the viscera having gushed forth the victim falls prostrate upon the ground. Others they bind to a post and pierce with arrows. Others they compel to extend their necks and then, attacking them with

²³ From Robert the Monk’s account of the speech. Source: *Medieval Sourcebook*. Retrieved from: Center of Medieval Studies at Fordham University, The Jesuit University of New York, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>.

²⁴ From Robert the Monk’s account of the speech. Source: *Medieval Sourcebook*. Retrieved from: Center of Medieval Studies at Fordham University, The Jesuit University of New York, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>.

²⁵ From Robert the Monk’s account of the speech. Source: *Medieval Sourcebook*. Retrieved from: Center of Medieval Studies at Fordham University, The Jesuit University of New York, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>.

naked swords, attempt to cut through the neck with a single blow. What shall I say of the abominable rape of the women? To speak of it is worse than to be silent.²⁶

Although the images of evisceration, circumcision, and rape appear to have been exaggerated, Pope Urban's speech filled crusaders with expectations of finding bloodthirsty, godless savages who enjoyed torturing and killing defenseless Christians and desecrating their shrines (Bisaha 2006; p.15).

The deliberately embellished portrayal of Turks served as wartime propaganda in order to galvanize and mobilize Christians to destroy the Muslim enemy. As John Tolan (2002) explains in his book *Saracens*, for Christians "the goal is to inspire hatred for the 'oppressors' and (as wartime propagandists have long known) there is little better way to do so than to accuse the enemy of murder and rape" (p.93). As suggested by Stuart Hall (1997b), when the ethnic or religious difference becomes a reason for denigrating and demonizing the 'Other', it may create hostility against the 'Other.' Many historians view the characterization of Turkish assaults on Christian pilgrims as inflated. For example, in *The Crusades*, British historian Jonathan Riley-Smith (2005) suggests that Pope Urban painted a lurid picture of life under Muslim rule and exaggerated the threat posed to Constantinople by the Turks because their advance had already dwindled in 1092 (p.7). He also claims that the chroniclers' versions of the speech may be distorted and may not be trusted, because they were written after the crusaders' liberation of Jerusalem in July 1099 (Riley-Smith, 1993; p.15).

The chroniclers wrote their versions of Urban's speech several years after the actual speech took place, either from memory or with the help of eyewitness accounts. Among the four credible chroniclers, only Robert the Monk claimed to have been present at the meeting where Pope Urban II gave his speech (Runciman, 2005). In *The First Crusade*, Runciman (2005) claims, "each wrote his chronicle a few years later and colored his account in the light of subsequent events" (p.42). As discussed in the preceding chapter, narrative becomes a problem in historical discourse and it is unrealistic to expect the real events to be represented as they

²⁶ From Robert the Monk's account of the speech. Source: *Medieval Sourcebook*. Retrieved from: Center of Medieval Studies at Fordham University, The Jesuit University of New York, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/urban2-5vers.html>.

were, particularly in the Middle Ages (White, 1990; p.3). White explains this as follows:

The historian's dissertation was an interpretation of what he took to be the true story, while his narration was a representation of what he took to be the real story. A given historical discourse might be factually accurate and as veracious in its narrative aspect as the evidence permitted and still be assessed as mistaken, invalid, or inadequate in its dissertative aspect. The facts might be truthfully set forth, and the interpretation of them misguided [or vice versa] (White, 1990; p.28).

Hence, it is highly likely that the chroniclers might have written the Pope's speech with their own narrative afterwards and embellished it with the spirit of Crusading propaganda. Therefore, the exaggerated depictions of Turks (Muslims) slaughtering, torturing and raping Christians might have served as a justification for the Crusades. As Munro (1931) puts it, "at first, the tales of atrocities were fully credited and undoubtedly had a great influence in inciting many to take the Cross" (p.331).

It has also been suggested that Robert the Monk's version of Pope Urban's speech echoed the letter of Byzantine Emperor Alexius to the Count of Flanders in 1093, written even before the Council of Clermont (see Munro, 1931; Sweetenham, 2006). Both accounts encourage the Christians to come to the East to save Jerusalem from the Turks and there are many similarities in the descriptions of the assaults on Christians by the Turks. In his letter, Alexius described the atrocities that the Turks were alleged to commit against the Christians:

The enemy has the habit of circumcising young Christians and Christian babies above baptismal font. In derision of the Christ they let the blood flow into the font. Then they are forced to urinate in the font. . . . Those who refuse to do so are tortured and put to death. They carry off noble matrons and their daughters and abuse them like animals. . . . Then, too, the Turks shamelessly commit the sin of sodomy on our men of all ages and all ranks . . . and, O misery, something that has never been seen or heard before, on bishops (Payne, 1990; p.28).

Munro (1931) suggests that the letter by Alexius was used as an *excitatorium* to arouse the Christians to take the Cross against the infidels (p.331). He goes on to

explain: “It was a more brutal age than ours, and the atrocities which are alleged to have been committed were highly spiced to suit the spirit of the time” (p.331). During the Crusades, the purpose of sermons and speeches by prominent Christian leaders was to portray Muslims as the ‘enemy of Christianity’ and motivate Christians to fight against this ultimate enemy. Simply, Crusade rhetoric was the war propaganda of the time. Therefore, the exaggerated representations of Turks in the Crusade texts served the purpose of Christian propaganda in unifying the European Christians against a common enemy: Muslims.

The demonization of Turks in Crusade rhetoric appears as a part of the strategy to stigmatize Muslims. It was not only the Turks but also other Muslim groups were vilified constantly. Previous literature regarding the relationship between the East and the West shows that the West constructed Muslims as the ‘Other’ and viewed Islam as a threat to Western civilization (e.g. Daniel, 1960; Said, 1978; Southern, 1962). During the Middle Ages, Christian Europe achieved its cultural and religious unity through the Crusades by constructing the Muslims as the wicked ‘Other.’ For the same purpose, Turks were described as pagans, infidels, murderers, rapists and sodomites and constructed as the ‘enemy’ along with Saracens. These attributes originate from the biblical themes as non-Christians were all considered as non-believers, infidels and pagans at the time. Furthermore, violence, murder, sodomy and rape were also associated with Muslims to create an ideal Christian image as the polar opposite of the Muslim ‘Other.’ To discern the image of Turks in Western discourse, a closer look at the Western perception of Muslims before the Crusades is needed.

Muslims as the “Other” during the Middle Ages

In *Western Views of Islam*, Richard W. Southern (1962) noted that “the existence of Islam was the most far-reaching problem in the medieval Christendom” (p.3). Before the First Crusade, Western authors knew virtually nothing about Islam as a religion and considered Muslims as a large number of enemies threatening Christendom from every direction (Southern, 1962; p.14). To explain the unknown, they turned to the Bible as the only intellectual tool of the early Middle Ages (p.15). Christians viewed Islam through a filter of the Bible and they defined Muslims with already existing Christian categories. In *Saracens*,

Tolan (2002) demonstrates how Muslims were characterized in Christian writings during the Middle Ages. According to Tolan (2002), Christian authors portrayed Muslims “as a divinely sent punishment, as pagan idolaters, as Christian heretics, as followers of Satan, or as devotees of Antichrist” (p.4). When alluding to Muslims, Medieval Christians often used ethnic terms such as ‘Arab,’ ‘Saracen,’ or ‘Ishmaelite’ but they did not use the terms ‘Muslim’ or ‘Islam’ (Tolan, 2002). Likewise, the chroniclers of the First Crusade commonly referred to their Muslim adversaries as ‘Saracens’ and associated them with ‘paganism’ (Housley, 2007; Tolan, 1999 & 2002). The perception of Saracen as “idolatrous pagan” or “polytheist” has its origins from the early Middle Ages. As Tolan (2002) suggests “for many Western Europeans throughout the Middle Ages, Saracens were pagans, pagans were Saracens: the two words become interchangeable” (p.128). Tolan (1999) explains how Crusade chroniclers placed the crusading movement in the context of the ancient struggle between Christianity and paganism.

Earlier writers described Muslims as pagans, at times basing their descriptions on biblical or Roman descriptions of pre-Muslim Arabs. Only at the turn of the twelfth century, however, is this supposed “paganism” described in vivid detail, its fictive contours clearly delineated. The epic descriptions of battles against the Saracens demanded a vivid and colorful enemy, one against whom war was justified and victory was glorious. Fighting against pagans, crusaders could claim to be wreaking vengeance for the pagans’ crucifixion of Christ and their usurpation of His city; when they fell in battle, they could claim the mantle of martyrdom. The fight against paganism had a long history, one in which Christianity was sure to emerge victorious (Tolan, 1999; p.98).

Therefore, the Christian stigmatization of Muslims as ‘idolatrous pagans’ served as a tool for crusading propaganda and helped mobilize Christians to fight against Muslims, who wanted to destroy Christianity.

In both learned and popular Christian writings, the image of the ‘Saracen’ appeared as a “polytheist, heretic, or enemy of the faith” or as “idolaters who practiced perverse rites and blasphemed the Christian God” and in some cases, as “Anti-Christ” (Tolan 1999; p.84). For example, in the *Chanson de Roland*, the most popular of the surviving *chansons de geste* from the Middle Ages, Saracens manifest numerous negative traits other than being merely ‘non-Christians’ and ‘idolaters’, such as being involved in trickery, treachery and cowardly acts, and

fighting for the wrong reasons like land, wealth and women (Moran Cruz, 1999; p.56). This potent image of the ‘Saracens’ formed the foundation for Pope Urban and other crusade preachers to galvanize Christians for crusading against ‘idolatrous pagans’ (Housley, 2007; p.198). The characterization of Muslims in general, and Turks in particular, in these propaganda sermons bolstered the negative image of Muslims as greedy, violent, repulsive, wicked and cruel people who captured, enslaved, and tortured Christians (Housley, 2007; Daniel, 1989). Some of these notions were taking shape before the crusades, but the call for the First Crusade seems to have had the greatest impact on their formation (Bisaha, 2006 p.14-15). In particular, the inflated language and the disturbing imagery used in Pope Urban’s speech influenced the European Christian attitude towards Muslims and Islam significantly, as it instigated the whole crusading movement. While the reported accounts of Pope Urban’s speech may differ in their expressions, there is a remarkable agreement on the main subjects that he discussed (Munro, 1906). Basically, Islam was presented as a sham religion, founded upon violence and unrestrained lust and the only way to deal with such people was to annihilate them (Bisaha, 2006; p.15). Because the Christian fear of Islam was reinforced by the clergy with distortions and misrepresentations, Crusading sources almost never feature Islam as a genuine religion (Housley, 2007).

Perceptions of Muslim polytheism and antagonism toward Christians were not the only factors in the crusading movement. Bisaha (2006) suggests that European Christians had goals of their own to possess the Holy Land, a place that belonged to them in their view, and Islam was perceived as an obstacle to expand the Christian faith, influence, territory, and wealth. Due to the growing sense of cultural and religious unity in the West during the High Middle Ages, Western Christians defined themselves by presenting Muslims in opposite and inaccurate terms (Bisaha, 2006). By fostering a contrasting image of Muslims and also demeaning Islam, Europeans helped create their own self-image as a perceived ideal Christian society. Norman Daniel (1989) elaborates this issue as follows:

Christian misconception of Islam was fitted into the main body of knowledge and opinion in which European society found expression, in such a way as to typify the enemy as the

converse of the ideal Christian society – not of course actual Christian society (Daniel, 1989; p.54).

European Christians often depicted Muslims in binary opposites to construct their own ‘Self’ as a superior society, while delineating the Muslims as the ‘Other.’ For example, Christianity was the religion of love, truth and chastity whereas Islam was founded on violence, deception and lust (Daniel, 1989). In the aforementioned letter by the Byzantine Emperor Alexius, these negative qualities are used to describe the acts committed by the Turks against the Christians. In the letter, the narrative of Turks, raping and sodomizing innocent Christian females and males of all ages, as well as bishops, was strongly emphasized. Narratives like these, harbored in the Crusade rhetoric, fostered the notion that lust, perversion, sexual aggression and sodomy are fixations only Muslims and Turks enjoy. Originated from the Crusade rhetoric, the ‘lustful’ characteristic of Turks has continued to exist in Western discourse, particularly in 18th century Orientalist texts and travelogues. Orientalist depictions of Turks as sensual, lewd, debauch, licentious, and sodomite generated a stereotype that is known as the ‘Lustful Turk.’ The representations of Turkish sexuality and the Western perception of Turks as ‘lustful’ in the Orientalist discourse will be examined in Chapter 4.

The Turk as the “Devil” in Crusade Propaganda

Degrading the image of Muslims helped Western Christians enhance their own self-images as compassionate and decent people who were righteous believers in one true God and one true faith (Blanks & Frassetto, 1999). In contrast, Muslims were perceived as the pagan enemy who was “a deformed mirror image of the righteous crusader, devoted to the Devil rather than God” (Tolan, 1999; p.110). As Muslims, Turks were depicted as the ‘enemies of faith’, ‘Antichrist’ and in some cases, as ‘idolaters committed to Devil’. After the crusaders took back Jerusalem, Raymond d’Aguilers, a chronicler of the First Crusade, describes the damage and insult caused by the Turks in the city, and accuses Turks of re-enacting the passion of torturing Christ and of ridiculing Christianity (Tolan, 1999; p.106). Riley-Smith (1993) emphasizes how European Christians perceived the Turks as the “servants of the Devil” despite their admiration towards them as skillful warriors:

if only the Turks had adhered to the Christian faith, it would not have been possible to find stronger or braver or more skillful warriors. But this was exceptional. The norm was invective. The Muslims were said to be barbarians depraved in their morals and deficient in their faith. . . . They were enemies of God, Christ and Christianity; so they were servants of the Devil and their places of worship were devilish (Riley-Smith, 1993; p.111).

Carol Sweetenham (2006) documents how Western Christians considered Turks as “diabolical” and “sons of Devil” by summarizing Robert the Monk’s perception of Turks in his chronicles of the First Crusade, *Historia Iherosolimitana*:

If God’s will is that the Crusaders should be victorious, the Turks by definition are the creatures of the devil, destined to be defeated as a race alien to God. So the Turks are represented as a mirror image of the Crusaders, with Mahommed as a less powerful version of Jesus and the Caliph as the Pope. Robert is quite clear that the Turks are, by definition as the enemies of the Crusaders, literally diabolical: the diabolical legion and sons of the Devil. In a piece of heavy symbolism they slaughter a priest in the middle of Mass. In contrast to the certainties of God’s power, they rely on divination, spells and astrology (Sweetenham, 2006; p.56).

Contrary to the image of Turks as the creatures of the ‘devil’, Christians viewed themselves as “servants, champions or warriors of God or Christ” (Riley-Smith, 1993; p.111). European Christians continued to define Turks in terms of binary opposites, such as *good vs. evil* or *pious vs. infidel*, and characterized them in biblical terms such as anti-Christ, enemy of Christianity, infidel, pagan idolater, evil or Devil. The European Christian perception of Turks continued to remain negative until the Dynasty of the Seljuk Turks ended. The Turkish image even became worse after the Ottoman Turks began their reign and imperiled the Christian Europe with their military advance for centuries. Before looking into the Turkish image after the 13th century, it is essential to address the rise of the Ottoman Turks and their advance into Europe.

The Rise of the Ottoman Turks

In 1243, Mongols defeated the Seljuk Turks causing the Seljuk rule to decline and then shatter into an array of petty emirates (Madden 2006). From the ashes of this chaos, a new Turkish dynasty called the ‘Ottomans’ emerged, and the Ottoman Empire was founded (Madden, 2006; Lewis, 2001). Osman, the ruler of

the Ottoman Turks, extended his authority over a significant part of north-western Asia Minor (Anatolia), as far as the Aegean Sea, the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea, until his death in 1326 (Riley-Smith, 2005; p.270). In time, with a disciplined army and effective governance, the Ottoman state began to expand rapidly. Turks took Nicea in 1331, conquered the lands across the Bosphorus from Constantinople in 1338 and occupied Gallipoli in 1354. By 1360, Ottoman rule stretched from western Thrace to Ankara. With the leadership of Sultan Murad I, Ottoman Turks took most of Bulgaria and Serbian Macedonia as a result of the intense military campaigns into Europe. The Turks achieved the dominance of Balkans with the battle of Kosovo in 1389, during which Sultan Murad I was assassinated (Riley-Smith, 2005; p.270).

The battle of Kosovo was an Ottoman victory, but, in the immediate aftermath of the battle, the Serbs and Bosnians believed that they had broken Ottoman power because Sultan Murad was killed. The Chancellor of Florence, Coluccio Salutati, defined the outcome of the battle as a divinely granted, glorious victory against Sultan Murad I and identified him as the ‘Anti-Christ’ (Bisaha, 2006; p.22). His following response shows that humanists still found the Crusading rhetoric and propaganda appealing and continued to use it against Turks:

arrogantly mad and madly arrogant Mohammed-worshipper, Murad, who had taken the empire of the Phrygians or Turks by force and planned to destroy Christianity and the name of our dear Savior from the face of the earth, and – if he could – to erase it from the book of the living (Bisaha, 2006; p.22).

While forming an offensive alliance against the Ottoman Turks, Venetians and Genoese also referred to Sultan Murad I as the “son of unrighteousness and evil, and enemy of the Holy Cross” and accused him of “attempting so grievously to attack the Christian race” (Kinross, 1979; p.55). Although Western Christians described Sultan Murad I as the enemy of Christianity, he was a ruler of outstanding political wisdom and religious tolerance. According to Kinross (1979), Sultan Murad I achieved ruling the conquered Christian territories under Islam with little social and economic disruption. Kinross (1979) explains Sultan Murad’s success as follows:

In his estimate of the character of his subjects and enemies, whether Greek or Slav, Murad showed keen psychological discernment. Strictly Muslim as he was in his religious beliefs, he nonetheless handled the 'infidel' Christians of his new empire with a tolerance striking in its contrast with the attitude of their own fellow Christians of the Latin persuasion. He countenanced Christians and, apart from the Janissaries, enforced no conversions to Islam. The Orthodox Patriarch himself testified in a letter to the Pope in 1385 that the Sultan left to his Church complete liberty of action (Kinross, 1979; p.59).

Despite the Ottomans' pragmatic governance, Christian misrepresentations of Sultan Murad and Turks indicate that European Christians had a lack of interest in learning about Ottoman Turks. Instead, they preferred to depict the Turks in stark Crusading terms as an absolute enemy of all Christians rather than rulers who were, in some ways, no worse than the Balkan Christian elite had been (Bisaha, 2006; p.23). Simply put, they continued to use the Crusade propaganda rhetoric and define the Turks as the wicked 'Other.'

Crusade of Nicopolis

Sultan Murad's son Beyazid (a.k.a Bayezid) sustained the military campaigns to expand the borders of the Ottoman Empire. He continued to conquer the Balkans by taking the rest of Bulgaria and invading the Peloponnese (Riley Smith, 2005; p.270). Beyazid's military success and the threat he posed against Hungary alarmed Christian Western Europe, and thus, revived the old crusading spirit. Madden (2006) describes the circumstances in which Western Christians found themselves and the urgency for another crusade:

The rise of the Ottoman Turks and their successful campaigns to the West drastically changed the stakes in the crusading movement. It was no longer faraway Palestine that was in danger but Western Europe itself. Crusaders had always seen themselves as fighting a defensive war, defending the Christians in the East, Jerusalem, or the faith. Now they were called on to defend themselves. Henceforth, crusades were no longer wars to expand Christendom but desperate attempts to slow the advance of Islam. Crusading had become a matter of simple survival (Madden, 2006; p.195).

In 1396, King Sigismund of Hungary gathered an enthusiastic army of Christian warriors and marched to Nicopolis, an Ottoman fortress on the Bulgarian

side of the Danube. Sultan Beyazid crushed the crusading army and thousands of knights and their leaders were slaughtered on the battlefield (Shaw, 1976; p.33). The stunning victory of the Ottoman Turks against the Crusade of Nicopolis was devastating and agonizing for Western Europe. As a result of this victory, Hungary lay virtually defenseless before the Ottoman armies and beyond that, the German Empire was in peril. For the first time, Europeans began to consider seriously what life would be like under Turkish occupation and prophecies circulated that all of Europe would be conquered by the Turks. For Western Europeans, the failed Crusade of Nicopolis represented a tremendous psychological blow to the crusading ideal, as the Turks proved superior to Hungarians as well as to French and Burgundian knights (Bisaha, 2006). It also attested the unity and vigor of the Ottoman Turks at a time when European Christians were experiencing a long and frustrating papal schism (Bisaha, 2006).

Because Ottoman military and social organization were perceived superior, the reactions from the humanists were different than their previous crusading polemic. For example, unlike his previous language, Salutati praised the Turks this time as highly trained warriors with incredible skills, strength, and perseverance. He expressed his admiration for the Ottoman military system as follows:

It is astonishing how the leaders cultivate their men in the art of war; ten or twelve year-old boys are seized for military service. Through hunting and labors they inure and harden them, and through running, leaping and this daily training and experience they become vigorous. . . . They are so well trained that they live contentedly with only one set of clothing and on bread alone. Remarkably tolerant of cold and heat, they endure rain and snow without complaint (Bisaha, 2006; p.56).

Salutati's statement regarding the seizure of young boys for military service is a reference to the Ottoman practice of *devshirme*, during which young boys were recruited from the subject Christian territories. These boys were converted to Islam, educated about the faith, taught the language, and trained to be soldiers by the Ottomans. On the completion of their education and training, they joined an elite fighting force called the *janissaries* (Bisaha, 2006; Kinross, 1979). Remarkably, Salutati did not criticize the enforced conversion of Christian boys to Islam by the Ottoman Turks. According to Bisaha (2006), Salutati applauded the

success of Turks despite the compulsory nature of the practice and judged them by the outcome rather than the methods of their system, regardless of its exploitation of Christians.

Salutati's admiration for the Ottoman military organization caused him to fear the Ottoman might more. He described the Turks as "a fierce and determined people whose advance represents a grave threat to Europe" (Bisaha, 2006; p.56). He articulated his apprehension towards Turks as follows:

The Turks are an extremely ferocious race of men with great expectations. Do not ignore what I mention here. They trust and believe that they will erase the name of Christ throughout the world and they say that it is in their fates to devastate Italy until they reach the city divided by a river, which they interpret as Rome, and they will consume everything by fire and sword (Bisaha, 2006; p.56).

These two somewhat inconsistent positions indicate that humanists, like Salutati, began viewing the Ottoman Turks as more advanced and powerful than the Europeans, while still portraying them as the 'savage enemy' that intends to destroy Western Christendom.

Nevertheless, Salutati's praise of the Ottoman Turks did not resonate much with the humanists of the early 15th century. Although Western Europeans acknowledged the Ottoman Turks as a highly developed civilization due to their advanced agricultural, military, and political organization, they were still antagonized by the Turks' perceived 'savagery'. Therefore, humanist perceptions of the Turks tended to be harsh, as they equated Turks' savagery with the 'barbarism' of the ancient Goths who ravaged Rome (Bisaha, 2006). However, the term *barbarian* was not fully applied to Turks until after 1444, when the Ottoman Turks had a major victory against the crusading army in Varna.

Crusade of Varna

After the Mongol invasion of Anatolia in 1402, it took Ottoman Turks some time to end their destructive civil war and overcome their disarray. In 1421, Sultan Murad II took control of the resurgence, solidified his power over the Ottoman Empire and the Ottoman Turks re-emerged as a threat to Europe once

again. Murad II began a massive attack against Constantinople, as he was determined to crush the Byzantine Empire once and for all (Madden, 2006). The Byzantine emperor had no other choice but to ask for military assistance from the West. Because the Great Schism finally ended in Europe, a single pope could gather the forces of the West to come to the rescue of Byzantium (Madden, 2006). After the call of Pope Eugenius IV for a Crusade against the Ottoman Turks in 1443, the states in Eastern Europe, where the Turkish threat was most dire, responded with a major crusading army. In 1444, the Crusade against the Ottoman Turks ended in humiliating defeat in Varna, when Murad II trounced the Crusade army.

After the Crusade of Varna, humanists began using the term 'barbarian' when referring to the Turks. For example, Venetian humanist and statesman Bernardo Giustiniani used the term in 1452, when he urged Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III to lead Christians in Crusade against the "barbarians" (as cited in Bisaha, 2006; p.60). While European humanists started to associate Turks with 'barbarism', they viewed themselves as "the true heirs of antique civilization" and cast the Turks in the role of barbarians resembling "the counterpart of old foes of Greece and Rome" (Schwoebel, 1965; p.164). As Housley (2007) emphasizes, "The Turk was vilified not just as the enemy of faith but also as the barbarian at the gate" (p.205). Nevertheless, these early uses of the term "barbarian" did not reach the level of a discourse on the Turks until the Fall of Constantinople, which brought the end of the Byzantine Empire and became a catastrophic event for the Western Christendom. After the conquest of Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire became the biggest menace for Christians lurking alongside Europe. As the last Christian bastion in the East was captured by the Ottoman Turks, European Christians began focusing on the Turks as their biggest enemy. The European characterization of Turks transformed into a more individualized image. They were first portrayed as the 'barbarians' and later, came to be known as the 'terrible Turk.'

The Renaissance Image of the Turks

The Fall of Constantinople

The Ottoman victory against the Crusade of Varna paved the way for the final onslaught on the Byzantine Empire. The new Ottoman sultan, Mehmed II, was determined to make Constantinople his capital. On May 29, 1453, Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople after a two-months siege. Sultan Mehmed II allowed his soldiers three days of pillage and the Turks poured into the city, looting, enslaving and slaughtering the Christians on their way. The siege and the pillage of the city by the Turks had been well documented by many chroniclers at the time, such as Nicolo Barbaro, Kritovoulos, Chalcondyles, Sphrantzes, and Michael Doukas, some of whom had witnessed the plunder and the killings firsthand (as cited in Babinger, 1992; Kinross, 1979; Runciman, 1990; Wheatcroft, 1995). The characterizations of Turks in these chronicles were not much different to those in the Crusade chronicles. For example, in his detailed account of the siege of Constantinople, Nicolo Barbaro refers to the Turks as “pagans” and “enemies of Christian faith” when describing the Turkish attack:

The wretched people in the city felt themselves to have been taken already, and decided to sound the tocsin through the whole city, and sounded it at all the posts on the walls, all crying at the top of their voices, “Mercy! Mercy! God send help from Heaven to this Empire of Constantine, so that a pagan people may not rule over the Empire!” All through the city all the women were on their knees, and all the men too, praying most earnestly and devotedly to our omnipotent God and His Mother Madonna Saint Mary, with all the sainted men and women of the celestial hierarchy, to grant us victory over this pagan race, these wicked Turks, enemies of the Christian faith.²⁷

Turks were also described as ‘bloodthirsty savages’ and ‘rapists’, almost identical to the characterizations in the Crusade rhetoric. In his chronicle, Kritovoulos wrote in detail about the killings and sufferings of the Christians, as well as the sack of the city by the Turks:

²⁷ Nicolo Barbaro, *Diary of the Siege of Constantinople 1453*, trans. John Melville-Jones (New York, 1969).

When they [Turks] had had enough of murder, and the City was reduced to slavery, some of the troops turned to the mansions of the mighty, by bands and companies and divisions, for plunder and spoil. Others went to the robbing of churches, and others dispersed to the simple homes of the common people, stealing, robbing, plundering, killing, insulting, taking and enslaving men, women, and children, old and young, priests, monks - in short, every age and class. Other women, sleeping in their beds, had to endure nightmares. Men with swords, their hands bloodstained with murder, breathing outrage, speaking out murder indiscriminate, flushed with all the worst things . . . like wild and ferocious beasts, leaped into the houses, driving them out mercilessly, dragging, rending, forcing, hauling them disgracefully into the public highways, insulting them and doing every evil thing.²⁸

Allegations of the Turks' cruelty focused not only on slaughter, but also on sexual violence. In his book, *The Ottomans*, Wheatcroft (1995) recounts the sexual assaults, as well as the enslavement and killings that Christians were subjected to by the Turks:

The Turks battered down the doors, and enslaved those at prayer. The very young and very old were killed on the spot, because they had no value in the slave market. Men were roped together, and many of the younger women were knotted in groups of two or three by their long hair, or with their girdles. Byzantine eyewitnesses told how young girls and boys were raped on altar tables, and the great church echoed with their screams (as cited in Wheatcroft, 1995, p. 22).

In his book *1453*, Crowley (2005) suggests that the fall of Constantinople awakened deep memories of the Crusades for Europeans. The descriptions of killings, violence, rape, torture and destruction by the Turks are similar to the imagery reported in the accounts of the Crusades. According to Hankins (1995), traditional crusading literature drew upon a rich treasure of negative stereotypes regarding Islam and Muslims (p.119). As discussed previously, Ottoman Turks were characterized negatively and demonized as the Islamic enemy in Crusade rhetoric, which has similarities with the earlier image of the Saracens. However, after the fall of Constantinople, Turks were no longer associated with Saracens. The word *Turk* replaced the word *Saracen* as the generic term for a Muslim and

²⁸ Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. Charles T. Riggs (Princeton University Press, 1954).

became synonymous with the ‘Muslim enemy’ who sought to destroy Western Christendom (Crowley, 2005).

The fall of Constantinople was a catastrophic event for Western Christendom as the city had been the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire for centuries. When Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople, Europeans responded with shock, outrage, and fear. The horror stories about the slaughter, rape, and enslavement of Christians were spread to the whole Europe. Circulating Western accounts depicting the sack of the city as one of the bloodiest and most inhumane acts of history fed already existent anxiety. The Venetian Senate exaggerated tales of casualties by reporting that all inhabitants over the age of six had been slaughtered (Bisaha, 2006; Schwoebel, 1969). Extensive research by Schwoebel (1969) in *The Shadow of the Crescent* illustrates the embellished tales of not only slaughter, but also rape and sexual violence the people of Constantinople had to suffer. Schwoebel (1969) suggests that the terrifying accounts of Ottoman atrocities spread by the refugees and envoys from the Christian outposts, gravely imperiled by the Turkish victory, further played upon the fears of Western Christians. According to Schwoebel (1969), “Western chroniclers repeated the tales of Turkish atrocities with meticulous pains, tirelessly described the inhuman cruelties practiced by the Turks and attributed every conceivable crime to the enemies of the faith” (p.12). European humanists cultivated an evil image of the Turks in European imagination by retelling embellished tales of not only slaughter and enslavement, but also rape and sexual violence that the people of Constantinople had to suffer (Bisaha, 2006).

Furthermore, in many accounts, the leader of the Turks, Sultan Mehmed II, was portrayed as ‘sinful’, ‘murderous,’ and ‘vile’. For example, chronicler Chastellain called Mehmed II “the cruel enemy of God, a new Mohammed, violator of the Cross and the church, despiser of God’s law, and prince of the army of Satan” (as cited in Schwoebel, 1969; p.12). In his letter asking for assistance, the Grandmaster of Rhodes, Jean de Lastic, also characterized the leader of the Turks, Sultan Mehmed II, as a ‘bloodthirsty savage’:

The Grand Turk . . . was a wild beast who practiced every manner of cruelty and impiety upon Christians; and daily his savagery waxed greater. His thirst for human blood was insatiable and so uncontrollable that he had personally joined in the carnage. He allowed human bodies, naked and decapitated, to be left in the streets to be eaten by dogs (Schwoebel, 1969, p.8).

Upon receiving the news of Constantinople's fall, the humanist diplomat and future Pope, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II), brought high drama to tales of the siege in some of the most eloquent and emotional laments to be composed (Bisaha, 2006). Aenas paints a lurid image of Turks and their leader as wanton 'rapists':

What utter slaughter in the imperial city would I relate, virgins having been prostituted, boys made to submit as women, nuns raped, and all sort of monks and women treated wickedly? . . . Those who were present say that the foul leader of the Turks, or to speak more aptly, the most repulsive beast, raped on the high altar of Hagia Sophia, before everyone's eyes, the most noble, royal maiden, and her young brother, and then ordered them killed (Bisaha 2006; p.63).

It is possible that Mehmed II took captives of both sexes into his seraglio, and those who were unwilling to accept his advances might face severe penalties. However, the accounts that describe the Sultan beheading the Greek Emperor and killing the members of the noble family after personally violating them are not conceivable (see Babinger, 1992; Runciman, 1990; Schwoebel, 1969). Bisaha (2006) calls the story about the Sultan publicly violating scions of the royal family on the high altar of Hagia Sophia "apocryphal" because the Greek emperor was unmarried and childless (p. 63). The stories about Sultan Mehmed's sexual aggression became myths that were used repeatedly in Western writings, which later involved other Ottoman Sultans too. The sexual aggression of the Ottoman Sultans became a recurring theme used by the Western writers, particularly of the Early Modern English drama. The representations of Turkish sexuality continued to exist in Orientalist travel accounts in different forms such as homosexuality and sodomy, as well as sexual aggression. These images even resurface in Western contemporary cinema, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Sultan Mehmed II became known as the “Conqueror” after his triumphant conquest of Byzantium. European Christians were terribly intimidated by the Sultan because he was determined to advance into Europe and conquer new territories. Ottoman Turks were threatening European borders as no Muslim Empire had done for several centuries. European Christians were terrified that Ottoman Turks would conquer the world for Islam and bring the end of Western civilization. Turks appeared virtually unstoppable to the West and the Turkish advance generated a great concern in Europe. Right after the fall of Constantinople, the European response of shock, outrage and fear disappeared and European Christians hastened to organize a crusade against the Turks. The papacy as well as many scholars and humanists started crusading propaganda. However, as Hankins (1995) suggests, tapping the religious militancy of Christendom was not sufficient to launch a war against the Turks and overcome the Turkish threat. The new conditions required the Crusade against the Turks to be placed in a new ideological context with effective diplomacy and rhetoric. This is where European humanists came in and assumed the role of war-advocates against the Turks, by exploiting the untapped sources of fear, hatred, and military enthusiasm (Hankins, 1995). Therefore, they engaged in a zealous propaganda and used crusading rhetoric to revive the spirit of a Crusade against the Turks (Bisaha, 1999; Bisaha, 2006; Babinger, 1992; Schwoebel, 1969).

The inspiration for Renaissance humanists to promote a Crusade against the Turks came not from the medieval times only, but rather from classical literature (Bisaha, 1999 & 2006; Hankins, 1995). While humanists described the Turks with the medieval Muslim stereotypes such as cruel, perverted, deceitful, filthy, and tools of the Devil, they also added new demeaning attributes using classical genres. Hankins (1995) suggests that humanists preferred to cultivate the classical Latin and ancient Roman genres rather than writing crusading sermons with a clerical viewpoint. The loss of Byzantium meant many different things to humanists. It represented the end of a great and glorious empire, a major blow to Christendom, and the loss of a rich heritage of art, architecture, and scholarship (Bisaha 1999). Many humanists equated the siege to the 5th sack of Rome (Bisaha, 1999 & 2006). Bisaha (1999) indicates that “a new secular vision of the Turks and crusade began to compete with, and, in some places, replace the rhetoric of Holy war” (p.186).

With this new vision, Europeans began defining the Turks not only as “enemies of the faith” but also as the new *barbarians*.

The Turk as ‘Barbarian’ in Humanist Discourse

With the fall of Constantinople in 1453, European humanists compared the Turks to the rampaging Goths, Vandals, and Lombards who were blamed for the destruction of ancient Rome (Bisaha, 1999; p.188). The news about the sack of the city by the Turks devastated European humanists, as they were horrified that all the glory of Greece was extinguished by the Turks. For example, Florentine humanist Leonardo Bruni wrote about the barbarian invasion of Rome during the 4th and 5th centuries by the Goths and Vandals, who sacked and looted the city and destroyed most of the books (Bisaha, 2006). By invoking the images of barbarians and lost texts, Bruni compared ancient Rome and its barbaric adversaries to contemporary Greece and its new-style ‘barbarians’, the Turks (Bisaha, 2006). Venetian humanist Quirini described the destruction of Greek books and architecture during the sack of Constantinople, while characterizing the Turks as the savage enemies of Greek learning, art and culture. He also associated the Turks’ animosity towards Greek civilization by portraying them as ‘barbarians’ who lived a slanderous way of life:

Thus in our miserable time an ancient, noble and rich city, once the capital of the Roman Empire, mistress of all the Orient, has been captured by most savage barbarians, sacked for three days, and has come into wretched servitude, the worst of all evils. . . . Add to this the fact that all these wicked deeds were done by most savage barbarians, for not only has a royal city been captured, temples devastated and holy places polluted, but an entire race has been overcome the name of Greece is blotted out. Over a hundred and twenty thousand volumes were destroyed, as I learn from Cardinal Isidore of Kiev. Thus both the language and literature of the Greeks discovered, increased and perfected with so much time, labor and effort, has perished, alas! . . . That literature has perished which illuminated all the globe, which gave us the laws of salvation, holy philosophy and the other good arts by which human life is embellished. . . . A rude and barbarous race, living according to no fixed laws or customs, but unfettered, nomadic, willful this race, filled with treachery and fraud, shamefully and ignominiously tramples underfoot a Christian people (Hankins, 1995; p.122).

Quirini’s remarks indicate that the Turks are perceived as an inferior race that is cruel, barbarous, vulgar, and corrupt. These qualities are viewed as the natural

characteristics of the Turkish race and thus, ‘naturalization of racial difference’ makes it easier to stereotype Turks as the ‘barbarians’ and exclude them altogether as the ‘enemy’ (see Hall, 1997b).

Among the most influential voices, Greek humanist Cardinal Bessarion wrote persistently for demanding Christian unity and promoting a crusade against the Turks. A collection of his orations and writings, titled *Orationes and Principes Christianos Contra Turcos (Orations and Letters to Christian Princes Against the Turks)*, was printed in 1471 and created a lot of interest reaching a surprising number of readers (Hankins, 1995; Bisaha 2006). Cardinal Bessarion was one of the first who defined the Turks in classical terms by using the discourse of ‘barbarism’ (Bisaha, 2006; Schwoebel, 1969). After Constantinople had fallen, he wrote the following letter to the Doge of Venice and lamented the loss of Western culture, while referring the Ottoman Turks as ‘barbarians’:

Wretched me! I cannot write this without the most profound sorrow. A city [Constantinople] which was flourishing, with such a great empire, so many illustrious men, such very famous and ancient families, so prosperous, the head of all Greece, the splendour and glory of the East, the school of the best arts, the refuge of all good things, has been captured, despoiled, ravaged, and completely sacked by the most inhuman barbarians and the most savage enemies of the Christian faith, by the fiercest of wild beasts. The public treasure has been consumed, private wealth has been destroyed, the temples have been stripped of gold, silver, jewels, the relics of the saints and other most precious ornaments.²⁹

The way Cardinal Bessarion characterizes Turks as ‘barbarians’ underscores their ‘otherness’ as the ‘enemy’ of Western civilization and of Christianity. Turks are not only ‘bloodthirsty murderers’ as described in Crusade rhetoric, but also the ‘barbarians’ who want to destroy the Western civilization and annihilate Christian faith.

Aeneas Silvius (Pope Pius II), on the other hand, grieved about the plunder of Constantinople and the destruction of books. He famously expressed his dismay

²⁹ From the letter of Cardinal Bessarion to the Doge of Venice, July 13, 1453 in *Portable Renaissance Reader* (Ross & McLaughlin, Eds., 1977), p. 71.

as: “How many names of great authors have now perished?” (Schwoebel, 1969; p.9). He called the ravaged Greek civilization “a second death of Homer and Plato” (Runciman, 1990; Schwoebel, 1969). His lament for the fall of Constantinople is well known and is expressed as follows:

O famous Greece, behold now thy end! Who does not grieve for you? There remained up to this day in Constantinople a remembrance of your ancient wisdom, and no Latin was considered adequately learned unless he spent time studying in Constantinople, as though it were the home of letters. . . . It was from thence we received Plato, from thence that the works of Aristotle, Demosthenes, Xenophon, Thucydides, Basil, Dionysius, Origen and many others were made manifest to the Latin peoples in our time, and we had hoped to receive many more in the future. But now that the Turks have won and possess all that Greek power once held, I believe Greek letters are finished. . . . It will all now be very different under the rule of the Turks, the most savage of men, the enemies of good customs and good letters (Hankins, 1995; p.122).

Devastated by the loss of Byzantium, Aeneas Silvius was more passionate about the Turks than many of his contemporaries and devoted much of his clerical career, as Bishop of Siena and Trieste and especially as Pope Pius II (1458-64), to promoting crusade (Bisaha, 2006). He wrote several letters mourning the death of Greek culture by the Turks and the return of barbarism, which received wide distribution in several printed editions (Bisaha, 2006; Hankins, 1995).

Humanism’s fascination to associate the Turks with ‘barbarism’ represented a major shift in the European perception of Islam in general and Turks in particular. In earlier crusading texts, the term ‘barbarian’ had been used to signify ‘racial difference’ rather than hostility toward civilized values and culture (Housley, 2007; p.205). Housley (2007) suggests that this new feature of the term ‘barbarian’ contained a “distinctive racial element” rather than signifying merely a religious identity and thus, making the demonization of Turks different from the Saracens (p.205). Housley explains it further as follows:

earlier denigration of the ‘Saracen’ was based on religious identity; conversion would end the conflict. The Turk was an enemy of faith, but he was also a barbarian; this quality was perceived as genetic, its roots residing in the Turks’ origins as steppe dwellers, the Scythians (Housley, 2007; p.206).

The Turks' barbarism is described as a genetic quality which fits into Stuart Hall's (1997b) concept of 'naturalization.' When the negative qualities of the 'Other' are characterized as genetic or 'natural', it becomes easier to alienate that race or ethnic group based on their alterity. Ethnic and racial connotations of the word 'barbarian' is evident in the works of Aeneas Silvius and Francesco Filelfo, who sought to trace the origins of the Turkish people back to ancient times. Francesco Filelfo spoke about the Turks in derogatory terms, insulting them as Sycythian descendants, and portraying them as uncivilized, inhuman and filthy:

Who does not know that the Turks are fugitive slaves and shepherds of Sycythians, who descended from the prisons of the vast and inhospitable Caucasus Mountains into Persia and Media to practice banditry. They made their homes in no set place, except the bogs and the frightening hiding places of woods (Bisaha, 2006; p.77).

The more humble the men who inflict it, the more humiliating is the indignity— if, indeed, the Turks should be called men and not some sort of completely unrestrained and savage beasts, since they have nothing of humanity in themselves beyond a human form, and that deformed and depraved on account of the disgusting filthiness of their shameful habits (Meserve, 2008; p.67).

In his *Cosmographia*, Aeneas Silvius attempted to prove that Turks were descendants of Sycythians, and described them in starker terms as “a fierce and ignominious people, fornicators, engaging in all manner of lewdness and frequenters of brothels, who ate detestable things: the flesh of mares, wolves, vultures, and what is even more horrifying, aborted human fetuses” (Bisaha, 2006; p.76). Embellished descriptions of the flesh eaten by the Scythians and their wild sexual habits helped to complete the image of both the Turks and their ancestors as perverse and immoral, as well as backward (Bisaha 1999; p.194).

In the years after 1453, the word *barbarian* became synonymous with *Turk* (Bisaha, 1999). Schwoebel (1965) suggests that “as *barbari* the Turks were regarded as cruel, of savage habits, and the enemies of culture, of which the Italians were the self-appointed protectors” (p.164). Bisaha (1999) states that “despite the achievements of the Ottoman military, the prestige of the Sultan's court, and the efficiency of the Ottoman Empire, European humanists chose to

paint the Turks as an uncivilized, arbitrary race of nomads” (p.193). Therefore, as a nomadic people, Turks were barbarians and they were warlike, violent, unstable, and untrustworthy (Hankins, 1995). For European humanists, the destruction of books and works of art was not the only act of barbarity committed by the Turks in Constantinople. As discussed earlier, reports of unrestrained slaughter, rape, violence and enslavement also horrified humanists. For example, Cardinal Bessarion vividly depicted the atrocities Turks committed against the Christians in his aforementioned letter to the Doge of Venice. As a reminder, his remarks are as follows:

Men have been butchered like cattle, women abducted, virgins ravished, and children snatched from the arms of their parents. If any survived so great a slaughter, they have been enslaved in chains so that they might be ransomed for a price, or subjected to every kind of torture, or reduced to the most humiliating servitude.³⁰

As suggested by Bisaha (1999), Turks probably behaved no worse than most captors of their time, Christian or Muslim. However, like most Westerners, humanists too believed even the most sensationalized reports of violence and savagery that came their way. For example, philosopher and physician Niccolò Tignosi taunted the name ‘Turk’ by saying “they are not *teuceri* [Turks] but rather *truces* [butchers]” (Bisaha, 1999; p.192). In *The Ottoman State*, Karpas (1974) claims that after the loss of Constantinople to Ottoman Turks, “the ensuing fear that the Turks would attack the West and destroy Christianity was the most powerful stimulus conditioning the formation of the Western image about Turks” (p.3). For that reason, the image of Turks in Western discourse became synonymous with ‘barbarity and cruelty’ during the age of Renaissance. The stereotypes of the *Cruel Turk* and the *Terrible Turk* were already forming in European imaginations. As the Ottoman military advance continued to threaten Christian Europe, these stereotypes became more frequent and inherent in Western discourse. Looking closer at the trajectory of the Ottoman peril after the Fall of Constantinople will provide a better understanding of how these stereotypes become entrenched.

³⁰ From the letter of Cardinal Bessarion to the Doge of Venice, July 13, 1453 in *Portable Renaissance Reader*, (Ross & McLaughlin, Eds., 1977), p. 71.

The Ottoman Peril

Following his conquest of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed continued his advance into Europe and marched to Serbia in 1456, but Ottomans were defeated by the armed forces of Serbs, Hungarians and the European Crusaders and failed to capture the city of Belgrade. Still, Mehmed succeeded to invade the rest of Serbia by 1459 and thus, marked the beginning of the Turkish rule in Serbia which lasted for nearly five centuries. In 1458, Sultan Mehmed subjugated Greece and established the Ottoman rule over the whole Greek peninsula by 1460. Mehmed also conquered the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463 and subjugated Albania in 1478. In 1480, Sultan Mehmed invaded Italy and captured Otranto. He intended to capture Rome to fulfill his dream of reuniting the Roman Empire, and ruling over both East and West as one sovereignty. However, Sultan Mehmed failed to materialize his dream and withdrew his forces from Italy. After an unsuccessful attack on Rhodes, Mehmed died due to a chronic illness in 1481.

Almost two centuries after Mehmed's death, Venetian historian and diplomat, Giovanni Sagredo, wrote: "It was fortunate for Christendom and for Italy that death checked the fierce and indomitable barbarian" (Babinger, 1992; p.408). Kinross (1979) asserts the relief that the Western Christendom had from Mehmed's death and states that "the West could breathe again, freed from fear of the East, and to remain free from its threats for forty years to come" (p.157). After Mehmed the Conqueror's death, his two sons could not follow their father's footsteps as they were engaged in a fierce battle for the throne. Once Bayezid II (a.k.a Beyazid) took over the throne, he continued to increase the size of the Ottoman fleet and forced Lepanto to surrender, while capturing Modon, Koron, and Navarino at the same time (Clot, 2012). Also, Ottoman Turks were advancing by land and devastating the Venetian possessions. At the end of 1502, Venetians became compelled to sign a humiliating peace treaty marking the Ottoman Empire as a major power in the Mediterranean.

Sultan Selim, who was the grandson of Mehmed the Conqueror, forcefully took over the throne and ruled the Ottoman Empire from 1512 to 1520. Unlike his predecessors, Sultan Selim did not advance into Europe, but significantly expanded

the Ottoman sovereignty eastward into Asia and the Middle East (Kinross, 1979; p.166-167). In 1514, Selim marched into Iran and defeated Shah Ismail, the leader of the Safavid Empire, at the Battle of Chaldiran (Kinross, 1979; p.167). Then he turned his armed forces on to the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt, defeating Mamluks both at the Battle of Marj Dabiq in 1516 and at the Battle of Ridanieh in 1517 (Kinross, 1979; p.170). With Selim's victories Ottomans annexed the entire Mamluk Sultanate, from Syria to Palestine, and from the Arabian Peninsula to Egypt itself. Selim's dominance over the Mamluk Sultanate provided Ottomans with the control of the Muslim holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and Sultan Selim claimed the title of Caliph, the head of Islam (Kinross, 1979; p.170). Thereafter, all succeeding Ottoman Sultans were considered as the head of the Islamic religion and accordingly, Turkish military advance was viewed as a quest to spread Islam.

During his brief reign, Sultan Selim came to be known as "the Grim" for his cold-bloodedness and cruelty. Selim not only had his two brothers strangled, but also over-extended the fratricidal principle and had his five orphan nephews killed (Kinross, 1979). Stories of Selim's impulsive brutalities and his scant regard for human life became infamous. One of Selim's earliest public actions was to kill a provincial governor with his own sword, who had asked for a revenue increase. The lives and careers of his Grand Vezirs were inclined to be brief, as Selim had seven of them beheaded, along with numerous other officials and generals (Kinross, 1979). The phrase "Mayest thou be Selim's Vezir" came to be used in Turkish parlance as implying the curse "Strike you dead!" (Kinross, 1979; p.171). Selim's cruelty, fratricidal actions and merciless character probably inspired many English playwrights during the Early Modern period, as their depictions of Ottoman Sultans often possessed similar stereotypical qualities. As a great warrior, Selim balanced his imperial conquests in Islamic Asia with those of his predecessors in Christian Europe. Until his death in 1520, Selim doubled the extent of the Ottoman Empire in less than a decade, covering lands from the banks of Danube to those of Nile, and from the coasts of the Adriatic to those of the Indian Ocean (Kinross, 1979). Sultan Selim left a well-organized and much extended empire to his son, Suleiman. Nevertheless, the world was yet to see the zenith of the Ottoman Empire until Suleiman inherited the throne and became the new Sultan in 1520.

The 'Grand Turk'

The sixteenth century was the age of three powerful monarchs in Europe; Charles V of the Habsburg empire, Francis I of the House of Valois in France, and Henry VIII of the Tudors in England. Sultan Suleiman became the fourth monarch, who would soon be an integral element in the Christian balance of power while accomplishing many glories in the Islamic East. When Suleiman succeeded to the Ottoman throne, the rulers of Western Europe were terrified with the prospect of a more powerful and fearful version of his father. They perceived the *Grand Turk*, "Signor Turco" to the Venetians, as the "powerful and formidable enemy" of Christendom (Kinross, p.197). At the court of King Henry VIII, Cardinal Wolsey said to Venetian ambassador: "This Sultan Suleiman is twenty-five years old and has good judgment; it is to be feared he will act like his father" (Kinross, 1979; p.197). Also, in a letter to his ambassador, the Doge of Venice wrote: "The Sultan is young, very powerful, and extremely hostile to the Christian race" (Kinross, 1979; p.197). The sixteenth century was to see the greatest of all Ottoman Sultans, Suleiman I, known to the world at large as "Suleiman the Magnificent," and to his own people as "Suleiman the Lawgiver."

Sultan Suleiman's first objective was to conquer Belgrade, the gateway to the countries around the Danube, and to avenge the defeat of Mehmed II. In 1521, Suleiman took Belgrade and massacred most of the Hungarians. After the fall of Belgrade, one of the major strongholds of Eastern Europe and 'gateway to Hungary', Christian powers were filled with fear and anxiety for the future (Clot, 2012). Thirty years later, Ghiselin de Busbecq, Austrian ambassador to Istanbul, wrote about the Ottoman victory in Belgrade as follows:

These events should have taught the Christian princes to strengthen their fortifications and fortresses if they did not wish to perish. The Turkish armies are like powerful rivers swelled by rain which cause infinite destruction when they find ways of undermining the dikes which hold them back and rush into the breach . . . Thus the Turks, when they have broken through the barriers which contain them, unleash waves of devastation beyond comprehension (Clot, 2012; p.39).

Sultan Suleiman captured the island of Rhodes in 1523 and expelled the Knights of St. John (a.k.a Knights Hospitallers). In 1526, Suleiman resumed his military campaign into Eastern Europe and defeated King Louis of Hungary at the Battle of Mohacs. At the battle, King Louis was killed, the cavalry was decimated, thousands of Hungarian noblemen beheaded, and Mohacs was burned and scorched by the Ottoman soldiers. To the Hungarians, the battle is still known as “the Destruction of Mohacs” and described as the “tomb of the Hungarian nation” to this day (Kinross, 1979; p.187). Ottoman Turks burnt Buda to the ground and ravaged the whole country (Clot, 2012). The Ottoman victory in Mohacs had a big impact in Europe, as Europeans did not expect the Turks to penetrate so deeply into Central Europe, advance to Buda and capture Hungary. Conquering Hungary was not enough for Suleiman, as he had his eye on the most cherished European prize of all, Vienna.

The Siege of Vienna (1529)

According to Wheatcroft (2008), Sultan Suleiman’s secret objective was to take the city of Vienna as the political and symbolic importance would be immense, equal to Mehmed II taking Constantinople in 1453 (p. 46). On May 10, 1529 Suleiman left Istanbul with his army and began marching to Vienna. The Turkish military advance into the heart of Europe caused grave anxiety and fear. Kinross (1979) quotes a German folksong, which was popular during that time, to demonstrate how Europeans were intimidated by the Turks and their leader, Sultan Suleiman:

From Hungary he’s soon away,
In Austria by break of day,
Bavaria is just at hand,
From there he’ll reach another land,
Soon to the Rhine perhaps he’ll come. (Kinross, 1979; p.189)

The Turkish army reached Vienna on 27 September, 1529, and Sultan Suleiman besieged the city for two months but had to pull back into Hungary due to the endless heavy rain. Because of the severe weather conditions, the first Ottoman attempt to capture Vienna failed but “the nightmare fear of Turkish invasion remained throughout the years of the Counter-Reformation” (Palmer, 1994; p.9).

Palmer articulates how Europeans began living with anxiety after the Turkish siege:

After 1529 Austrian prelates, alarmed by Suleiman's deep incursion into Catholic Christendom, insisted that the parochial clergy of Central Europe should establish a warning system, the *Türkenglocken*, a peal of bells which would alert the soldiery to the coming of the Turks and summon the Catholic faithful to pray for deliverance from Islam (Palmer, 1994; p.9).

Sultan Suleiman expanded the borders of the Ottoman Empire to its farthest, enriched its wealth to the highest and delivered the biggest progress in law, art, and architecture. Europeans both feared and admired the power of the Ottomans Turks during his reign and rightfully called him the 'Grand Turk.' After Sultan Suleiman's death in 1566, "the qualities of kingship shown by the sultans deteriorated rapidly" (Palmer, 1994; p.6). None of the Sultans succeeding Suleiman matched his leadership qualities, military abilities and his wisdom. In 1683, Ottoman Turks attempted to capture Vienna again but the Ottoman troops were forced to retreat and their commander fled the battlefield. The scattering of the Ottoman soldiers was one of the great turning points in the history of the Ottoman Empire as Europeans realized that the Ottoman military was weak. It signaled the decline of the Ottoman Empire and assured Europeans that they did not need to fear the legendary 'Grand Turk' anymore.

The historiography of the Ottoman Turks reviewed so far shows that the rise and the expansion of the Ottoman Empire took place until the first half of the 17th century. Within the century following Sultan Suleiman's death, the Ottomans continued their military campaigns towards Europe and captured many posts in Mediterranean such as Cyprus and Crete. However, the mid of the 17th century marks the stagnation period of the Ottoman Empire, which brought its decline henceforth and eventually, its dismemberment in 1922 when the Republic of Turkey was founded. The European perception of Turks during the rise of the Ottoman Empire was often negative. In the Crusade rhetoric, Turks were represented as 'the enemy of Christianity' and perceived as the wicked 'Other' until the middle of the 15th century. With the capture of Constantinople from the

Byzantine Empire, Turks were not only the evil ‘Other’, but also became the bloodthirsty ‘barbarians’ who were willing to destroy Western civilization and annihilate Christianity. The humanists often underlined the savagery, barbarity, cruelty and immorality of the Turks. During the Renaissance, the stereotypical image of Ottoman Turks as the ‘terrible Turk’ was solidified. However, after Sultan Suleiman’s accession to throne in 1520, European Christians began viewing Turks not only as the ‘terrible Turk’, but also as one of the biggest political and military powers in Europe. The Ottoman Empire caused admiration and envy along with fear and anxiety. To have a better understanding of this paradoxical image of Turks, I will examine the representation of Turks in Western writings during the 16th and 17th centuries in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

16th AND 17th CENTURY LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF TURKS

In his prominent book, *The Crescent and the Rose*, Samuel Chew (1937) describes the unremitting Turkish threat to Europe for centuries: “In the fourteenth century a cloud arose in the East and from the fifteenth till far into the seventeenth the Ottoman peril hung over Europe” (p.100). After their conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Ottoman Turks continued their military advance into Europe. As illustrated in the preceding chapter, the looming Ottoman threat next to Christian Europe bolstered the image of the Turks as ‘barbarians’, ‘infidels’ and the ‘cruel enemy.’ Although humanists still sought to revive the century-old conceptions of ‘Christian unity’ and tried to portray Turks as the ‘common enemy’ that threatens Christendom, they could not succeed, because Europe was suffering from a religious divide within Christianity. Except for some orthodox humanists, who continued to portray Turks as ‘infidels’ or ‘barbarians’, most humanists began to recognize that the crusade propaganda rhetoric to defend Christianity against the Turks would fail. Therefore, throughout the 16th century, humanists began abandoning the inflamed Crusade rhetoric and the image of Turks as ‘religious foe’ or ‘evil Muslim’ gradually began to fade. Instead, it was replaced with the recognition of the Ottoman Empire as a sheer political and military force (Cirakman, 2001). Although, Christians were still terrified that Turks would conquer Europe and impose Islam, they also envied and admired Ottoman religious unity, administration and military. Western authors started to focus on the culture, religion and organization of the Ottoman Empire as an imminent threat to Europe.

As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, the Turkish advance into Europe was the most daunting during the 16th century when the Ottoman Empire was at its peak in terms of military strength, organization and wealth. The continuous Turkish military victories prompted Western writers to investigate the ‘Turk’ in a serious, calm and inquisitive manner. Western humanists, scholars and writers often wrote about Ottoman military success in various textual forms, such as treatises, history books, political pamphlets, and state-papers. Furthermore, popular

playwrights, dramatists, poets and novelists were also inspired by the Ottoman peril and incorporated Turks in their writings. In *The Crescent and the Rose*, Samuel Chew (1937) draws attention to the popularity of the English drama involving Ottoman Turks. He suggests that portrayals of Ottoman Turks and their encroachments upon Christian Europe were the epicenter of many plays in Tudor England and were available on the London theater stage to “a man of average education and intelligence” (p.103). Aptly, in this chapter, I will examine the representations of Ottoman Turks in Western writings of the 16th and 17th centuries. As these representations were prevalent in both non-fictional and fictional texts, I will attempt to divide them in two separate categories. In the first category, I will examine the European perception of Turks in historical texts, treatises and essays. In the second category, I will look into the image of Turks in Early Modern English drama. Both the historical texts and English plays are selected based on their significance and popularity during the 16th and 17th centuries. For example, the treatises were written by statesmen, diplomats, historians, humanists and political scholars, such as Erasmus, Martin Luther, and Richard Knolles, who affected the Christian perception of Turks. On the other hand, the selected plays are written by popular English playwrights such as Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Goffe, who influenced the European audience with their characterizations of Turks in their plays and fostered a stereotypical Turkish image in the minds of European Christians.

The Image of Turks in Western Historical Texts, Treatises, and Essays

During the 16th and early 17th centuries, Ottoman encroachments upon Europe were the single major threat filling the minds and hearts of Europeans almost anywhere. Due to consecutive Ottoman military successes, Europeans began perceiving the Turks with mixed feelings of anxiety, distress, fear and admiration. These mixed feelings caused Europeans to look at the Ottoman administration and culture more closely. Towards the end of the 16th century, there was an increasing European interest and curiosity about the Ottoman Empire and

society, particularly its history, government, customs, manners and religion (Cirakman, 2002). Military discipline and organization was the leading issue that drew the European attention the most.

The Excellence of Turkish Military Discipline

Western writers were obsessed with the looming Turkish menace, so they often wrote about Ottoman military strength. Many writers concluded that the Ottoman Turks' tremendous ability of warfare and military discipline were the main reasons behind their success and found these characteristics admirable. For example, Sebastian Munster, a German scholar and cosmographer, was one of the first authors to write about the military characteristics of the Ottoman Turks in his book, *Cosmographia*, published in 1544. According to Munster, although Turks were 'cruel' people, they were also to be admired in many respects, such as their 'soldiership'. Munster writes, "Nothing is more marvelous about the Turk than their speed in action, constancy in danger and obedience towards their empire" (as cited in McLean, 2007; p.255). He praised the Turkish army and described them as "honest, without indecency, given neither to sedition nor to rioting, they hope not for revelry, but merely to kill or be killed for the Empire" (as cited in McLean, 2007; p.255). French ambassador René de Lucinge undertook the question of how to wage a successful war against the Turks in his treatise, *The Beginning, Continuance and Decay of Estates*, published in 1606. He praised the obedience and exemplary discipline of the Ottoman military in his following remarks:

What need I speak of obedience, nurse of order observed among them: since it was never seen that the Turks ever lost battle through disorder, much less left off pursuing any attempt for their soldiers mutinies. Whereas almost all the battles we have bid them, had not been lost but by the mere disorder and disobedience of our men (as cited in Cirakman, 2002; p.79).

As Chew (1937) suggests, "It is not surprising that this formidable fighting-machine is again and again pointed to by Christian publicists as a principal cause of Turkish success" (p.106).

Italian political thinker and diplomat Giovanni Botero emphasizes the military abilities of the Ottoman Turks in his popular treatise, *The Travellers Breviat*. The treatise, which was translated into English in 1601, ascribes the might of the Ottoman Empire partly to the discords of Christendom, and partly to the excellence of the Turkish army. Botero's observations about the virtues of the Ottoman military and the resources of the Ottoman Empire are as follows:

The Great Turk possesses three instruments with which to terrify the whole world: multitudes of men, an incorruptible military discipline, and an infinite store of corn and other provisions. Added to these are the thrift, patience, and endurance of a soldiery accustomed to a hard diet and the severest conditions of life . . . They do not fear death because they believe that their destiny is inevitably written on their foreheads . . . The picture presented in this treatise of the power, organization, discipline, and resources of the Ottoman Empire is formidable indeed (as cited in Chew, 1937; p.110).

The military organization and martial discipline of the Turks were also underscored in *Short Treatise upon the Turkes Chronicles* (1546), which was translated by Peter Ashton into English from Paulo Giovio's *Comentario de le cose de Turchi* (1532) (see Chew, 1937; Ingram, 2009). In the book, the last section titled "The Array and Discipline of the Turkish Warfare" points out the military methods of the Turks and provides advice on how to use the Christian armies against them (McJannet, 2006). At the time, Christian Europe did not have a standing army, but rather depended on emergency or volunteer recruits, who were mostly ill-trained and resentful, with poor discipline and with no unity (Chew, 1937). In contrast, the Ottoman Turks' regular professional army, recruited from their subject populations, was regarded with awe and admiration due to its discipline and organization (Chew, 1937). Giovio underscores this lack of unity and discipline against the Turkish army and concludes that there might be hope to defeat the Turks only if the Christian princes are unified. He states:

if the Christian princes were so wholly of one mind and consent, that at the first rumour of the Turks coming they would assemble and gather together power and strength of men able to resist and withstand him. But certes we can scant trust that this shall happen (as cited in Raman, 2011; p.80).

Western writers often criticized the lack of unity among Christian princes and contrasted the European monarchical structure to that of the Ottoman Empire. The religious unity of the Ottoman Turks and the united structure of their Empire were frequently admired.

The Virtue of Turkish Unity

In the treatises and historiographies of the 16th and 17th centuries, the religious devotion and unity of the Turks were often cited as the reason for their military success and enduring Empire. For example, in *Cosmographia* (1544), Sebastian Munster contrasted the religious division in Europe to the religious unity of Turks. He cited “the failure of Christian princes, riven by internal discord, to oppose the Turk” and “the consequent despoiling and servitude of conquered Christians” as the reasons for the Christian disarray (McLean, 2007; p.255). While Munster degraded the prophet of Muslims, Muhammad, as “prince of all impiety and superstition”, he acclaimed the austerity and the devoutness of the Turks, and also the discipline of the Turkish soldier (McLean, 2007; p.255). Fulke Greville, who was an Elizabethan dramatist, poet and statesman, believed that although the religion of Islam was “mere collusion and deceit”, Turks prevailed upon the Christians because they were “first in unity” whereas Christians were “divided stood, in schism and sect, among themselves” (cited in Chew, 1937; p.109). In *A Treatise of Monarchy* (1670), Greville points out the disadvantage that Christians had against the Ottoman Turks and underscores their religious unity as opposed to the discord among Christians:

For whatsoever odds in man or beast
Between the Christian and the Turk there be,
By delicacy, hardness, industry or rest,
Our fatal discord or their unity;
Yet we that thus on disadvantage stand,
Stand fast, because he makes his wars by land (cited in Chew, 1937; p. 116).

Samuel Chew (1937) suggests that it had been painful for the West to acknowledge “the unity of Islam” and to “contrast the divisions and seditious of Christendom” (p.108). He also goes on to assert that this unity was the “major cause of Turkish victories.”

The unity of the Ottoman monarchial structure was also the envy of European powers and intrigued many writers, such as the Italian diplomat and political theorist, Niccolò Machiavelli. In his political treatise, *The Prince* (1532), Machiavelli cites the Ottoman Empire as one of the best examples of a monarchy. Machiavelli admires the Ottoman government, as it is entirely ruled by the Sultan, who divides the country into districts that are administered by the appointed governors³¹. The Sultan could change and replace these governors anytime at his pleasure. Because all the administrators and subjects are dependent on the Sultan, Machiavelli finds it too hard to corrupt the Turks and conquer the state of the Ottoman Empire. He warns the European leaders about attacking the Ottoman Turks:

Therefore, whoever attacks the Turks must realize that he will find them united, and he should base his hopes more on his own strength than on others' lack of unity.³²

Many 16th century European historians and political thinkers like Giovo, Machiavelli, Botero, and Lucinge, considered the Turks to have many virtues compared to the Christians. These virtues include “discipline, loyalty, justice and absolute authority through which their nation became durable, united and mighty” (Cirakman, 2002; p.79). Despite the praise, admiration and envy of some writers, Turks continued to remain as the Muslim enemy of the Europeans. However, they were no longer the single evil force that the Christians had to unite against, as papal schism divided the Christians and destroyed the sense of unity in Europe.

Turks as the ‘Scourge of God’ and the ‘Rod of God’s Wrath’

Between the years 1512 and 1517, Pope Leo X pursued a Holy War to stop the Ottoman advance into Europe and encouraged Europeans to unite against the Turks (Clot, 2012). However, European Christian unity that emerged during the Crusades ended with the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Church lost its ideological hegemony in Europe due to the permanent division within Latin Christendom. Unlike in the Crusade rhetoric, Turks were no longer perceived as

³¹ *The Prince and Other Writings*, edited and translated by Wayne A. Rebhorn (NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003), p.19.

³² Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince and Other Writings*, Edited and translated by Wayne A. Rebhorn (NY: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2003), p.20.

the ‘common enemy’ that unified Christian Europe. Instead, both Catholics and Protestants began viewing them differently depending on their religious conflict. Protestants perceived the Turks as ‘a scourge sent by God’ to punish Roman papal pride and Christians for their sins (Levin, 2007). On the other hand, Roman Catholics associated Islam with Lutherans and believed that Satan worked for the Turks by stirring up the hatred of heretics against the true Church (Chew, 1937). Veinstein summarizes the sentiment towards Turks, both in Europe and the Islamic World, as follows:

In their reciprocal imprecations, Catholics and Protestants used the Turk as the standard of ignominy . . . The Protestants accused the pope and his entourage of being more vile, debauched, and dangerous than the Turks. And to discredit the Protestants, the Catholics could do no better than to discern their ‘resemblances’ to the Turks (Tolan, Veinstein & Laurens, 2013; p.169).

Martin Luther, the iconic figure of the Protestant Reformation, was among the first to suggest that Turks were the ‘scourge of God’ to chasten Christians for their sins (Levin, 2007). Luther believed that Turks were sent by God as agents of the Biblical apocalypse to destroy the Antichrist, whom he viewed to be the papacy and the Roman Church. Martin Luther rejected the idea of a crusade against the Turks, because he was convinced that it was God’s plan to use the Turks as a means to punish a doctrinally corrupt and morally lax Christendom (Francisco, 2007). With his *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517, Luther defended his notion as, “To fight against the Turk is the same as resisting God, who visits our sin upon us with this rod” (Henrich & Boyce, 1996; p.252). In his book, *On War against the Turks* (1529), Luther used similar language describing the Turks as “the rod of God’s wrath” through which “God is punishing the world” (Henrich & Boyce, 1996). After the first Siege of Vienna by the Ottoman army in 1529, Luther became increasingly worried about the Islamization of Europe in general and Germany in particular. Thus, he revised his earlier position and began supporting a war against the Turks. Later, Luther continued to advocate fighting against the Turks in his following writings, such as in his preface for George of Hungary’s *Treatise on the Mores, Customs, and Perfidy of the Turks*, and in his 1541 work titled *Admonition to Prayer against the Turks* (Tolan, Laurens & Veinstein, 2013).

Similar to Luther, other thinkers of the Reformation also maintained their distance from a Holy War against the Turks at the time. For example, Dutch humanist Erasmus was against the war in the name of pacifism. In 1530, he wrote a short treatise entitled *De bello Turcico*, in which he suggested that Christians were a greater threat to their tarnished faith than an external enemy like the Turks (Dimmock, 2005; Bisaha, 2006). By explicitly linking renewed Ottoman incursions into Hungary and the Baltic States with Christian depravity, Erasmus railed against those Christians who “have conducted themselves like Turks”, whose “Turkish vices: avarice, ambition, power-lust” prompted them to become “more ruthless towards their own people than the enemy” (Dimmock, 2005; p.21). He advocated unity among the dynastic courts of Europe and promoted the notion of “pan-European peace and an era of prosperity” (Dimmock, 2005; p.21). Erasmus urged Europeans to aim for the conversion of Turks by demonstrating the exemplary morality of Christianity (Francisco, 2007; p.50). Following the first Siege of Vienna by the Ottomans, Erasmus condoned a defensive war against the Turks as long as it was led by secular officials in the right spirit, as he was troubled with the negative stereotyping of the Turks by the ignorant, who forgot that Turks were human beings too (Francisco, 2007; p.50). As Dimmock (2005) suggests the main concern for Erasmus was not the Ottoman military threat, but rather using Turks as a means to underscore Christendom’s “inertia and religious decay” (p.21). Even though Erasmus was determined to expose the religious corruption among the Christians, Turks were still the biggest enemy that Europe had to face. The Ottoman military aggression and the Islamic expansion were unstoppable. Ottoman Turks were perceived as the ‘present terror of the world.’

The Present Terror of the World

In his book, *Islam and the West*, Bernard Lewis (1994) suggests that one of the predominant recurring themes in a variety of Western literature about Turks is “the deep and ever present fear of the Turks as an intruder and a menace to Christendom” (p.79). The anxiety and the fear Europeans felt towards the Turks is best reflected in the phrase “the present terror of the world” which was coined by British historian Richard Knolles in his seminal book, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603). On the first page of his book, Knolles indicates the European anxiety and admiration towards the Turks as follows:

THE glorious Empire of the Turkes, the present terrour of the world, hath amongst other things nothing in it more wonderfull or strange, than the poore beginning of itselfe; so small and obscure, as that it is not well knowne unto themselves, or agreed upon even among the best writers of their histories, from whence this barbarous nation that now so triumpheth over the best part of the world [author's capitals]³³

Knolles also writes about the reign of each Ottoman Sultan and illustrates their cruelty, while describing the atrocities Turkish armies commit during the attacks on European cities. For example, during Sultan Suleiman's attack on Vienna, Knolles depicts the assault by the Turkish soldiers as follows:

The poore people not knowing where to hide themselves from the furie of their enemies, nor of whom to crave helpe, fled as men and women dismaied, carrying with them their beloved children, the unfortunat pledges of their love, and what else they could, as things saved out of the middest of the fire. For whatsoever fell into the enemies hand, was lost without recure: the old men were slaine, the young men led away into captivitie, women ravished before their husbands faces, and afterwards slaine with their children, young infants were ript out of their mothers wombs, and others taken from their breasts were cut in pieces, or else thrust upon sharpe stakes, yeelding up againe that breath which they had but a little before received; with many other incredible cruelties, which were then by the mercilesse enemie committed [author's spelling].³⁴

Richard Knolles' book was the first British chronicle written about the history, military and political organization of the Ottoman Empire. Although Knolles never visited the Ottoman Empire, he wrote about Turks by relying extensively on the literature of travel, mission, diplomacy, and scholarship available by the previous authors (Lewis, 1994). Many contemporary scholars consider *Generall Historie of Turkes* as a Christian historiography that reflects the perceptions and concerns of Christian Europe with regards to Ottoman Empire and the Islamic religion (Lewis, 1994; Senlen, 2005). The British historian Edward Gibbon made a similar criticism and described the book as "a partial and verbose compilation from Latin writers" (cited in Chew, 1937; p.112). However, the book became very popular and influential at the time, because it was published in English instead of Latin, which made it available not only to the sophisticated

³³ Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (London, 1603), p.1.

³⁴ Richard Knolles, *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (London, 1603), p.610.

reader but also to the general reading public (Senlen, 2005). During the 17th century, Knolles' book had a great impact on the Europeans and provided them with a source of knowledge about the life, religion, military and government of the Ottoman Turks. The book also inspired dramatists to write about the Ottoman Sultans and motivated them to use embellished characteristics and imagery while portraying the Turks.

The historical texts, treatises, and essays reviewed so far show that Europeans had mixed feelings towards the Ottoman Turks during the 16th and 17th centuries. They admired and envied the success of the Ottoman administration, organization and the military discipline as well as the bravery and fortitude of the Turkish soldier. On the other hand, Turks were characterized as cruel, violent, murderous, and merciless, which is a continuation of the stereotypical Turkish image that was dominant in the preceding Western discourse. The stereotype of Turks as 'cruel' is also manifested in the literary texts of the period under study. During the 16th and 17th centuries, many European playwrights, poets and novelists were inspired by the military success of the Ottoman Empire and incorporated the Turks in their writings. Although there is an ample amount of literary texts and a variety of genres produced during this period, my research will be merely limited to the English drama only due to the time constraint and the massive amount of literature. Another reason for this limitation is that English drama was very popular during the period under study, when the English theater stage became a place for the writers, inspired by current events, to show their artistic creativity to the public. Furthermore, the popularity of the English drama continued following the 16th and 17th centuries, due to the global dominance of the British Empire with colonialism. Even in the 21st century, Early Modern English plays are still highly regarded as classic pieces and taught at schools. Therefore, in the second half of the chapter, I will examine the representations of the Turks in a selected number of English plays written during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The Image of Turks in English Drama

Background

The Ottoman attack on Vienna in 1529 shocked the Europeans, who realized that no army could slow down Sultan Suleiman's progress. Although the Ottoman Turks failed to capture Vienna, Europe's fear of the Turkish peril was reinforced by the power of the Ottoman military. Under the leadership of Sultan Suleiman, the Ottoman Empire became an important factor in the affairs of the West during the 16th century, not only militarily but also politically. By 1600, all the leading states of Christian Europe, such as Spain, France, Italy and Germany, were forced to consider Ottomans as a military, commercial and a diplomatic force (Woodhead, 1987; Matar, 1998). English interest in Turks and Turkish matters developed later than for its European counterparts and became significant only during the closing decades of the 16th century. This delay was mainly because England had been beyond the periphery of the Turkish menace geographically and besides, it had no share in the Mediterranean trade (Burian, 1952; Matar, 1998). As a Protestant nation isolated from a predominantly Catholic Europe, England would welcome any ally to support its own position within a hostile Christian world, especially after Elizabeth's excommunication by the Pope in 1570 (Schmuck, 2006). For those reasons, Queen Elizabeth fostered amicable relations with the Ottoman Empire, as well as with the kingdom of Morocco, despite the conflict between Christians and Muslims. She became the first English monarch to cooperate openly with Muslims, allowing her subjects to trade and interact with them without any prosecution for dealing with 'infidels' (Matar, 1999).

The Anglo-Ottoman trade, sponsored by Queen Elizabeth, flourished during the last decades of the 16th century (Matar, 1999; MacLean, 2007). Recent research shows that English people interacted extensively with Muslims of both the Ottoman Empire and the kingdom of Morocco during the 16th and 17th centuries (See Matar, 1998 & 1999; MacLean, 2007). As a result, most English plays written between 1580s until 1650s involved both Turks and Moors. Matar (1999) suggests that for English people, "the Turks and Moors were men and women they had known, not in fantasy and fiction, but with whom they had worked and lived,

sometimes hating them yet sometimes accepting and admiring them” (p.6). However, they were also perceived as the Muslim ‘Other’ and viewed as a threat to Europe. Hence, the characterization of Turks and Moors in most English plays during the period under study reflected the fear, anxiety, and disdain towards Muslims, rather than the actual relationships English people had with these people. Most of the Turkish and Moorish depictions in English drama echoed the violence and cruelty of Muslims described by the age-old anti-Islamic tales in the West. In the literary representations, there was no clear distinction between Moors and Turks except for their ethnicity (Barbour, 2003; Schmuck, 2006; Vitkus, 1997). Although, the words ‘Moor’ and ‘Turk’ represented the people of Morocco and Ottoman Empire respectively, they were rather used to signify a generalized Islamic “Other” (Vitkus, 1997). Therefore, the Western stereotype of ‘evil Muslim’ continued to exist in the form of Turkish or Moorish characters during the Early Modern English drama.

Matar (1999) sheds light on how English writers sustained the Western stereotype of the ‘evil Muslim’ and thus, maintained the early modern image of the Islamic ‘Other’.

They established in their popular and widely read works the stereotype of the Muslim – a stereotype that was presented and re-presented in numerous plays and pageants, and that gained wider appeal and permanence . . . The ‘Turk’ was cruel and tyrannical, deviant and deceiving; the ‘Moor’ was sexually overdriven and emotionally uncontrollable, vengeful, and religiously superstitious. The Muslim was all that an Englishman and a Christian was not: he was the Other with whom there could only be holy war (Matar, 1999; p.13).

Based on Matar’s remarks, in English drama, the ‘Turk’ represents cruelty, tyranny, deviance, corruption and immorality which are qualities associated with Turks only rather than all Muslims. In most plays, the Turkish portrayals are reminiscent of the Ottoman military aggression that terrified Europe. Turks are frequently depicted as the villains whose characteristics match the stereotype of the ‘terrible Turk.’ To clarify how the image of ‘terrible Turk’ is distinguished in English drama compared to the portrayals of Moors, I will examine the portrayals of Turks in a selected number of popular English plays during the period under

study. These plays were chosen based on their distinct Turkish portraits that show stereotypical characteristics frequently attributed to Turks.

The ‘Turk’ in Early Modern English Drama

Jonathan Burton (2005) notes that between 1579 and 1624 over sixty dramatic works featured Islamic themes, characters, or settings in English literature (p.28). The theatrical representations of Turks and Moors became predominant on the theater stage when the Ottoman Empire was expanding rapidly and when Islamic power was posing a sustained threat to Christian Europe (Vitkus, 2000). However, Turkish characters as the ‘bogeymen’ or ‘villains’ became more popular in theater because of the looming Ottoman military threat. For English people, the Ottoman military advance into Europe was the biggest difference between Turks and other Islamic cultures. There was an obsession about the Ottoman Turks and a greater curiosity about the invincible Ottoman state, mainly because of fear (Woodhead, 1987). As Vitkus (2000) aptly puts it, “For London theatergoers, the Turk was not an imaginary bogey, and the Turk plays . . . are not simply fantasies about fictional demons lurking at the edges of the civilized world” (p.3). Surely, the Turks in English drama during the 16th and 17th were not only fictional villains, but rather symbolized a genuine threat for Christian Europe and represented an anxious interest in Islamic power.

Many English playwrights of the same period often wrote about the Ottoman might, wealth and aggression while depicting Turks as murderous, treacherous and cruel. For example, Shakespeare’s *Othello* (1604) draws on anxieties about Ottoman Turks, and the play is set in a world that is inhabited by ‘Turks’ who loom in the distance as an imminent threat waiting to attack the Venice’s last outpost, Cyprus (Schmuck, 2006; Vitkus, 1997). Likewise, Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine* (1588-89) plays rely on “an immovable stereotype of the raging and expansionist Turk” (Burton, 2000; p.125). Other examples for the Ottoman might, wealth, aggression and cruelty are *Battle of Alcazar* (1588) written by George Peele, *Turkish Mahomet and Hyren the Fair Greek* (1594) attributed to George Peele, *The Jew of Malta* (1589-90) by Christopher Marlowe, *Soliman and Perseda* (1590) attributed to Thomas Kyd, *Selimus Emperor of the Turks* (1594) attributed to Robert Greene, *Mustapha*

(1608) by Fulke Greville, *The Turk* (1610) by John Mason, *A Christian Turned Turk* (1612) by Robert Daborne, *The Courageous Turk* (1618) and *The Raging Turk* (1613-18) by Thomas Goffe, *The Renegado* (1623-24) by Philip Massinger, *The Famous Tragedy of Osmond the Great Turk* (1657) by Lodowick Carlell, *The Tragedy of Mustapha, Son of Solymon the Magnificent* (1665) by Roger Boyle (a.k.a Earl of Orrery), *The Siege of Constantinople* (1675) by Henry Neville Payne, and *Ibrahim the Illustrious Bassa* (1677) by Elkonah Settle (see Erkan, 2010; Senlen, 2006; Vitkus, 2000).

The aforementioned English plays, and many unmentioned others, involve Turks either as villains or as a military menace ready to attack Christian lands. In his detailed study, Wann (1915) suggests that Turkish characters appear in English drama more frequently than any other oriental race and demonstrates that Turks are mostly represented as “valiant, proud-spirited, and cruel” (p.440). With his more recent research, titled *Three Turk Plays* (2000) and *Turning Turk* (2003), Vitkus also documents that Turks are often portrayed as immoral, sinful, evil, treacherous, lustful and cruel in English plays during the period under study. For example, in Massinger’s *The Renegado*, the Turkish viceroy of Tunis (Tunisia), Asambeg, is portrayed as cruel, lustful and tyrannous.³⁵ In Mason’s *The Turk*, the villain named Mulleases, who is the agent of the ‘Grand Turk’, is portrayed as proud, cruel, lascivious and treacherous. Jowitt (2002) refers to this character as “the dominant stage stereotype of the Turk” (p.414). In Shakespeare’s *Othello*, the ‘Turk’ is presented as a conception rather than a specific portrait. When Othello ‘turns Turk’ he betrays his love, decries the Christian state of Venice and becomes a representative of the Venetian’s greatest foe, “the malignant Turk” (Vitkus, 2000; p.2). In these plays, the ‘Turk’ represents all the negative qualities that indicate a binary opposition. For example, when Othello turns Turks, he becomes a polar opposite of his old himself. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, the binary opposite of an ideal Christian becomes a Turk, who possesses the ‘unacceptable’ virtues vs. the ‘acceptable’ ones.

³⁵ Philip Massinger, *The Renegado*. In Daniel J. Vitkus (Ed.), *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p.241-356.

According to Vitkus (2000), English plays “offered numerous descriptions of the ‘Great Turk’ and his court”, particularly during the 17th century (p.9). The writings about the Ottoman culture and religion, as well as the Ottoman rulers, increased dramatically during the same period. Most of the Turkish characters in plays were inspired by the Ottoman sultans or rulers, such as governors or pashas, who are generally represented as merciless, cruel, tyrannical and lascivious. For example, Peele’s *Turkish Mahomet and Hyren the Fair Greek* is inspired from Sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, and his real-life love interest Irene. In the play, the Turkish ruler, Mahomet, falls in love with a Greek named Hyren, but kills her in order to prove that his duties are more important than his love and thus, regains his control over the Janissaries (Senlen, 2006). His slaying of Hyren is presented as “a supreme example of Stoic temperance” which helped him restrain his passion (Slotkin, 2009; p.226). Likewise, Goffe’s *The Courageous Turk* dramatizes the life and death of the Ottoman Sultan Murad I. In the play, Amurath is deceived into a murderous rage, beheads his true love, Eumorphe, and embarks on a military campaign (Slotkin, 2009). Amurath’s love for Eumorphe is described as “intemperate lust” whereas, his beheading of his love is characterized as a “supreme example of temperate behavior” and “manly government” (Slotkin, 2009; p.229). In both plays, the Turkish sultans struggle with their passion for amorous lust, murder and war. While the Turk is often characterized stereotypically as cruel, murderous, tyrannical and lustful in English drama, his ‘cruelty’ emerges as the most distinctive attribute. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the image of Turks as ‘barbarians’ was predominant in Renaissance humanist rhetoric. With the inspiration of prior Crusade propaganda rhetoric and exaggerated war stories, Turks continued to be described as the evil Muslim, enemy of Christianity, bloodthirsty savages, murderers and deviants. All of these attributes morphed into the stereotype of the ‘terrible Turk.’ In Early Modern English drama, following the ages of Crusades and Renaissance, the ‘cruelty’ of the Turks seems to be their most significant feature. In other words, the representation of the ‘cruel Turk’ in Early Modern English drama encapsulates all the qualities of the ‘terrible Turk’ image that was predominant in the preceding European discourse. Both terms began to be used interchangeably after the Early Modern period.

The Cruel Turk

Patrides (1963) suggests that the most frequent stereotype of the Islamic ‘Other’ found in European writings is the “bloody and cruel Turk” (p.130). Congruently, in Early Modern English drama, the utmost stereotypical feature of the Turk appears to be his ‘cruelty’, as most of the plays involve Turkish characters who are violent, with intense rage and passion for killing. For example, Amurath in Goffe’s *The Courageous Turk* is represented as a passionate warrior who takes pleasure in killing. During the military campaign, Amurath’s sadistic violence is displayed with his repeated desire to drink Christian blood (Slotkin, 2009). When he is offered the severed heads of Christians, Amurath responds:

O how it glads me thus to pash their braines,
To rend their lockes, to teare these Infidels! (3.2.23-4)³⁶

Slotkin (2009) refers to Amurath, the ‘Turk’ as “the stock character of English drama” (p.233). Moreover, the play represents the stereotype of the Turk not only as an “inhuman figure”, but also an actual “cultural ideal” that even human Turkish characters aspire to (p.233). The Turkish aspiration to be like Amurath indicates that Turks’ desire for ‘cruelty’ is in their nature.

In Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great (Part I and II)* plays, an English audience witnessed for the first time an Ottoman Sultan being portrayed on the public stage. Both plays are very significant as they exemplify the ‘cruel Turk’ or the ‘raging Turk’ as the Islamic ‘Other’. The story is loosely based on the historical events of Ottoman Sultan Beyazid’s capture by the Mongol leader, Tamerlane (a.k.a Timur ‘the lame’). In the play, the emperor of the Turks, Bajazeth, is disparaged and ridiculed by Tamburlaine while being kept in a cage. Enduring too much humiliation, Bajazeth finally commits suicide by hitting his head on the metal bars of the cage. He is represented as a ‘raging and expansionist Turk’, although his character appears to be more multidimensional later in the play (Burton, 2000; McJannet, 2006). According to Burton (2000), “Sultan Bajazeth enters the play as an ardent confirmation of Europe’s anti-Turkish, anti-Islamic

³⁶ Thomas Goffe, *The Courageous Turke, or, Amurath the First A tragedie* (London, 1632). Retrieved from University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A01836.0001.001>

fears and stereotypes” (p.141). In his first speech, with a bombastic tone, Bajazeth reminds Tamburlaine and others of his great power and of the ‘invincible’ Ottoman army. He boasts:

You know our army is invincible:
As many circumcised Turks we have,
And warlike bands of Christians renied,
As hath the ocean or the Terrene sea
Small drops of water, when the moon begins
To join in one her semi-circled horns (I:3.1.7-12)³⁷

Bajazeth’s reference, “small drops of water when the moon begins,” is interpreted as an army as numerous as the drops of ocean water at high tide and “semi-circled horns” represent the crescent of Islam. Both symbolic descriptions confirm the European fears of Ottoman military and Islam. In Part I of the play, unhistorically, Tamburlaine remains as the protector of Christendom, while Bajazeth is characterized, in contrast, as the Turkish Antichrist (Burton, 2000). Although Tamerlane in real life is also Muslim and defines himself as the ‘sword of Islam’, in the play, Tamburlaine’s victory against the Ottoman army and his humiliation of the Ottoman sultan exhibit a projection of European aspiration at the time. Marlowe’s portrayal of Tamburlaine appears to be more compassionate and humane than Bajazeth. Marlowe indicates this difference when Tamburlaine talks about defeating the Turks and freeing the Christian slaves.

I that am termed the scourge and wrath of God,
The only fear and terror of the world,
Will first subdue the Turk and then enlarge
Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves (I:3.3.46-58)³⁸

Chew (1937) argues that European prejudice against the Turks led Marlowe to portray the Sultan as “insolently boastful” before the battle and “impotently raging” when a prisoner (p.472). By showing Tamburlaine battling the ‘raging

³⁷ Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part I* (London, 1590). In Brian Gibbons (Ed.), *Christopher Marlowe Four Plays* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), p.1-98.

³⁸ Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine the Great, Part I* (London, 1590). In Brian Gibbons (Ed.), *Christopher Marlowe Four Plays* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), p.1-98.

Turk', both Tamburlaine plays illustrate the fascination and anxiety the European Christians felt about the Ottoman Turks. In both *Tamburlaine Part I* and *Part II*, Bajazeth is characterized as the 'villain', even against Tamburlaine who is also Muslim. When the portrayals of these two Muslim warriors are compared, Bajazeth's 'cruelty' is clearly emphasized for the audience, whereas Tamburlaine is depicted more sympathetic. Even though European Christians perceive both of these leaders as the 'evil' Muslim at the time, the Ottoman Sultan's 'cruelty' surpasses his image as an Islamic 'Other' in Marlowe's play. Based on Bajazeth's portrayal, one may argue that the 'cruelty' of the Turks appears more terrifying for Europeans than the fear of being ruled by Islam. Therefore, it confirms that the image of the 'cruel Turk' is more intimidating in the minds of Europeans than the alterity of Muslims.

Imperial Fratricide

In some plays, Turkish cruelty is presented in the form of fratricide, when Ottoman sultans kill their brothers for the purpose of taking over the throne. For example, Greene's *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks*, which is inspired by the life of Sultan Selim I, depicts the extreme cruelty of Turks as Selimus kills his family members. The play narrates the events during Selim's accession to the Ottoman throne, although its historical accuracy is disputed. In the play, Selimus poisons his own father Bajezet and murders his two older brothers, Acomat and Corcut, in order to become the ruler of the Ottoman Empire. The portrayal of Selimus is an extremely sensationalized version of the actual sultan. According to Vitkus (2000), Selimus is depicted as "a monster and a caricature, a prodigy of egotism without compassion" (p.19). He calls the play "a study in monomaniacal cruelty, revealing a merciless Machiavel at work" (p.19). Hadfield (2003) describes the portrayal of Selimus as "proud, ambitious and ruthless in his pursuit of power and personal gain" (p.11). In the play, Selimus never hesitates to commit fratricide, massacre, and even parricide, to achieve his goal of accession to the Ottoman throne. His portrayal is reminiscent of Sultan Selim's actual reputation as 'Selim the Grim.'

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, historically, Sultan Selim killed his own brothers, as well as his nephews, to gain the throne, but he was not responsible for his father's death. Like the other Ottoman sultans before him,

Selim also followed the code of fratricide in order to acquire the sovereignty. Imperial fratricide in the Ottoman dynasty started when Sultan Murad I was killed during the battle of Kossovo in 1389. His eldest son Beyazid I was instantly declared as his successor on the battlefield, as the Turks needed a leader for the ongoing war. However, due to the ambiguity over his succession, Beyazid was pressured to kill his younger brother. Thus, Beyazid initiated the practice of 'imperial fratricide' which became a permanent procedure in the history of the Ottoman dynasty (Kinross, 1979). Kinross (1979) sheds light on the implementation of this inflexible imperial practice within the Ottoman Empire:

From now onward, at the outset of each reign, they were to follow this inflexible practice, thus safeguarding in their own inhuman fashion the principles of their indivisible sovereignty – and thus indeed helping to ensure through the centuries the unbroken survival of their dynasty (Kinross, 1979; p.61).

In his book, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, Daniel Goffman (2002) observes a vital distinction between the Ottoman Empire and the other European monarchies and links the long-term success of the Ottoman domination to the practice of imperial fratricide:

In the Ottoman case, no favorite legally existed until the succession actually occurred. In other words, all sons were groomed for the throne; all sons were expected to be capable to assume it even though only one would do so. The Ottoman choice to retain this particular element from their central Asian past while throwing off so many others was another example of genius (or luck), for by so doing the dynasty considerably improved its chances for an extended line of competent rulers (Goffman, 2002; p.38).

Turkish sultans were known in the West as great warriors and conquerors, but they were also famous for killing the other members of their nuclear family and for executing their trusted advisors (Vitkus, 2000). For that reason, many of the Early Modern plays depict the Ottoman sultan and his court as cruel, murderous, and irrational. Vitkus (2000) explains how Ottoman fratricide helped the European Christians bolster the image of the 'cruel Turk' and thus, continue to promote the anti-Islamic polemic.

the actions of the Turkish royal family gave the anti-Islamic polemicists of Western Europe plenty of material to confirm their preconceived notions of oriental despotism. The Great Turk became a European bogey partly on the strength of a dynastic track record of executions, poisonings, strangulations, and general familicide (Vitkus, 2000; p.21).

It is critical to emphasize here that ‘fratricide’ or any form of ‘familicide’ are by no means acceptable practices. However, it was a common practice in the Ottoman Empire and was viewed as acceptable within the Ottoman monarchical traditions. For the Ottoman Turks, ‘the law of fratricide’ sustained a robust monarchy and maintained a powerful Empire without interruptions due to the succession of the most powerful heir. However, for the Europeans it was yet another deplorable characteristic that defined the Turks as ‘inhuman’ and ‘evil.’ The descriptions of fratricide in English drama reinforce the alterity of the Turks, which is implicit in binary opposites such as good/evil and human/inhuman.

Turning Turk

During the 16th and 17th centuries, many English plays involve Christian characters who convert to Islam, which is commonly known as “turning Turk”. The most popular ones are Shakespeare’s *Othello, the Moor of Venice*, Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turk*, and Philip Massinger’s *The Renegado*. Among these plays, *Othello* is noteworthy, because although the main character is a Moor who is a general in the Venetian army, literary critics frequently related him to ‘Turks’. In the play, although no Ottoman characters take the stage, the Turks are defined as a looming threat that is about to attack Cyprus, but the Turkish invasion is averted for the time being. However, the plot continues to display Turkish aggression, which is exemplified by the behaviors of the Christian soldiers. When Othello's lieutenant Cassio starts a fight, Othello asks:

Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which heaven has forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame put by this barbarous brawl!” (2.3.158–60)³⁹

³⁹ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moore of Venice* (London, 1622). Retrieved from University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A11992.0001.001>

Othello implies that Christian soldiers act like Turks because their fight is ‘barbarous.’ These behaviors are deemed unacceptable and can only be expected from Turks. Regarding the aforementioned scene, Bergeron (2010) describes the state of ‘turning Turk’ as “a nightmare envisioned by Christians, a mark of contemptible behavior” (p.267). Vitkus (1997) views this particular scene as the conversion of Christian order into Islamic violence. According to Vitkus (2000), ‘turning Turk’ epitomizes in general “the incorporation of the Turks’ stereotypical features” such as “aggression, lust, suspicion, murderous conspiracy, sudden cruelty masquerading as justice, merciless violence rather than ‘Christian charity’, wrathful vengeance instead of turning the other cheek” (p.2). Othello grows jealous, vengeful, and cruel under the influence of Iago, the antagonist, and was taken over by his passions (Slotkin, 2009). When Othello betrays his state and murders his love, Desdemona, he ‘turns Turk’. Barbarous action now characterizes Othello, changing him, at least metaphorically, from Christian to Turk (Bergeron, 2010). In other words, he is converted into the European stereotype of “malignant Turk” (Vitkus, 2000). Othello stabs himself as “a final effort to punish himself for his reversion to such an identity” (Vitkus, 2000; p.2).

And say besides that in Aleppo once,
 Where a malignant and a turbaned Turk
 Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
 I took by th’ throat the circumcised dog
 And smote him thus [He stabs himself] (5.2.348-52)⁴⁰

Othello’s conversion reflects the anxiety of European Christians, particularly of English people, in the face of Ottoman Turks’ ability to convert Christians to Islam. For Christians, ‘turning Turk’ means “yielding to all of the depravity associated with Islam” (Burton, 2005; p.97). MacLean (2007) claims that “‘Turk’ referred to any Muslim but . . . the word could also be pejoratively applied to anyone who portrayed contradictory or violent or tyrannically patriarchal characteristics” and suggests that Shakespeare’s use of the term in *Othello* is an illuminating example (p.8). For English Protestants, however, it was not only about the fear of being converted to Islam, but also about being placed in a state of

⁴⁰ William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moore of Venice* (London, 1622). Retrieved from University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, <http://name.umdl.umich.edu/A11992.0001.001>

damnation by the Turks. Given the example of Shakespeare's *Othello*, Vitkus (2003) explains the fear of English Protestants about religious conversion during the early 17th century England:

The tragedy of Othello is a drama of conversion, in particular a conversion to certain forms of faithlessness deeply feared by Shakespeare's audience. . . . the English also had reason to feel trepidation about the imperial power of the Ottoman Turks, who were conquering and colonizing Christian territories in Europe and the Mediterranean. English Protestant texts, both popular and learned, conflated the political/external and the demonic/internal enemies, associating both the Pope and the Ottoman sultan with Satan or the Antichrist. According to Protestant ideology, the Devil, the Pope, and the Turk all desired to 'convert' good Protestant souls to a state of damnation (Vitkus, 2003; p.77).

Daborne's play, *A Christian Turned Turk*, focuses on becoming an actual 'Turk' and reveals the anxiety about the act of 'turning Turk.' The story is inspired by a real-life pirate named John Ward who becomes a Turk by converting to Islam and marrying a Turkish woman. While the play exposes the fear about pirates during that period, it also highlights the Christian unease about those who 'turn Turk' (Bergeron, 2010). At the time, Turkish pirates were interfering with the international trade in Mediterranean where the Ottoman Empire was asserting itself militarily and economically. Due to the temptation of lucrative employment, Christian sailors joined the Barbary Corsairs, which was a group of pirates or privateers that worked for the Ottoman Turks along the ports of Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers, also known as the Barbary Coast. Vitkus (1997) explains what it meant for the European Christians to 'turn Turk' and become Muslim pirates:

Again we see that "Turks" are not necessarily from Turkey proper – anyone who "turns Turk" and joins the Muslim pirates is associated with a group that is imagined as radically heterogeneous and, at the same time, united in evil (Vitkus, 1997; p.165).

When Ward 'turns Turk', he adopts many of the stereotypical features of Turks such as, tyranny, cruelty, wealth, luxury, oriental despotism, sensual and sexual vices (Vitkus, 2000). Moreover, the religious conversion ceremony is staged in the play as an anti-Islamic fantasy and a scare tactic to discourage potential converts, rather than an accurate depiction of a religious ritual (Vitkus, 2000). In order to marginalize and stigmatize the Turks, the act of 'turning Turk' along with the

circumcision ceremony were often sensationalized in English drama, particularly during the 17th century. The playwrights overdramatized the scenes of conversion either due to their own fear or for the purpose of intimidation tactics, as ‘turning Turk’ was a cultural paranoia for European Christians. For Christians, ‘turning Turk’ not only signified becoming a wicked Muslim, but also represented becoming a Turk, who embodies the worst qualities that a person can have. Therefore, the ‘Turk’ epitomizes the ultimate polar opposite of a good Christian.

Turkish ‘Otherness’ and Orientalism in English Drama

As Barbour (2003) aptly observes “the Turk was England’s primary eastern object of fear and fantasy” during the Early Modern period (p.15). The production of English literary texts relating to Turks and the Ottoman Empire reached its highest point during the late 16th and early 17th centuries (Dimmock, 2005). The religious division within Christianity and the Ottoman incursions into Europe, as well as the rapid establishment of the printing press, galvanized the Western writers to produce a vast amount of material. English playwrights used the ‘Turk’ to incite the audience about the current political events, international relations, England’s enemies, and also to demonstrate the imminent threat posed by the Ottoman Turks, who continue to advance into Europe, conquering, capturing and converting. Although the representations of Turks in English writings were mostly demeaning, and stereotypical, there was also a sentiment of admiration and envy for Turkish power and supremacy. Vitkus (2003) suggests that ‘Turk’ represented “a disturbingly illusive and unstable identity”, which “could produce anxiety as well as admiration” (p.16). Dimmock (2005) claims: “the portrayal of the ‘Turk’ on the stage had achieved an articulacy and a variety that would perhaps be repeated, but would not be superseded” (p.6). He also argues that the construct of the ‘Turk’ occupied a whole range of associations that fundamentally question critical assumptions of a single defining notion of ‘otherness’ (as cited in MacLean, 2007; p.7). Schmuck (2006) claims that the term ‘Turk’, during the 16th and 17th centuries, was perceived as a template that did not only refer to an ethnic identity, but also to a set of specific characteristics alike. In most plays, the ‘Turk’ is depicted as a conflicted and unreliable character whom European Christians would not and should not aspire to. Despite its fluidity, ambiguity and inconstancy,

the concept of Turk was a “powerful ideological construct” (Schmuck, 2006; p.5) in Early Modern English drama.

In recent years, scholars such as Nabil Matar, Richmond Barbour, Daniel Vitkus, and Jonathan Burton have frequently examined the alterity of Turks in Early Modern English drama. Among these studies, the significance of Nabil Matar’s two books, *Islam in Britain* and *Turks, Moors and Englishmen*, can hardly be overestimated. Matar’s pioneering research examines the nature and range of early modern English attitudes towards Islam and the Ottoman Empire by surveying the accounts of travel writers, historians, theologians, playwrights and poets, as well as the archival documents. As MacLean (2007) emphasizes, Matar’s research goes far beyond “the mere cataloguing and summarizing of literary texts”, as he has looked into the actual Anglo-Muslim relations and encounters in the multicultural Mediterranean. Matar (1999) has found out that in the actual interaction between Muslims and English people, “there were social engagements marked by ambivalence and reciprocity, attraction and repulsion, but there was no violence” (p.40). For English people, “Mediterranean and Islamic alterity comprised many divergent identities, and these were defined by an overlapping set of identity categories, including race, religion, somatic difference, sexuality and political affiliation” (Vitkus, 2003; p.8). However, the literary representations of Muslims in general, and Turks in particular, often appear as negative, stereotypical, and demonizing. Besides being a “fluid, illusive, conflicted and unstable” character in English drama, the ‘Turk’ was always someone that the Christians should not be, or simply, the ‘binary opposite’. If English people behaved in ways deemed inappropriate, they could be called a ‘Turk’. Particularly, someone who betrayed certain qualities, behaving unreliable or arrogantly proud deserved to be called ‘Turk’ (MacLean, 2007). McJannet (2006) cites the negative descriptions that are associated with the Ottoman Turks in the 16th and 17th centuries:

Pejorative epithets associated with the Ottomans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries included “bloody,” “cruel,” and “barbarous.” Turks were compared to forces of nature (whirlwinds or floods) or beasts (wolves, vipers, boars) and depicted in bestial terms such as “unbridled” or “swarming.” Their rule was described as “tyranny” or a “yoke” (McJannet, 2006; p.16).

Chronologically, although the Early Modern dramatic representations of Turks appear before 18th century European colonialism, they can still be considered Orientalist. As has been indicated, the main themes of these representations are backwardness, barbaric cruelty, licentious eroticism, despotism and treachery, which epitomize the Oriental ‘Otherness’ in Edward Said’s thesis of Orientalism. According to Said (1978), the preconceived distinction between East and West has been created based on a binary opposition that creates an ultimate ‘Other.’ In his book, *Orientalism*, he refers to these opposites as the ‘Orient’ and the ‘Occident.’ Said (1978) claims: “the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (p.1). He also describes the Orientalist stereotypical characteristics about the East and the Eastern people as follows:

one of the important developments in nineteenth-century Orientalism was the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient – its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness – into a separate and unchallenged coherence; thus for a writer to use the word Oriental was a reference for the reader sufficient to identify a specific body of information about the Orient (Said, 1978; p.205).

In the paragraph above, as much as Said refers to 19th century Orientalism which he views as a “deliberate discourse” to justify Western colonialism, he also argues that the distinction between East and West go back as early as the Middle Ages. Said (1978) suggests: “the Orient, and in particular the Near Orient, became known in the West as its great complementary opposite since antiquity” (p.58). According to Said, Muslims were frequently defined as the contrasting image of the European Christian in Western writings since the Middle Ages. Citing Norman Daniel’s work, *Islam and the West*, Said notes that Muslims and Islam came to represent a certain image for the Christian Europe during the Middle Ages and Renaissance:

The Christian concept of Islam was integral and self-sufficient. Islam became an image . . . whose function was not so much to represent Islam in itself as to represent it for the medieval Christian. . . . This rigorous Christian picture of Islam was intensified in innumerable ways, including – during Middle Ages and early Renaissance – a large variety of poetry, learned controversy, and popular superstition (Said, 1978; p.60-61).

Briefly, Said (1978) suggests that Orientalism is a trans-historical discourse, promoted by the Western writings, which represents Muslims as the ‘Other’ and constructs an imagined ‘Orient’.

However, some critics have challenged Said’s premise of a broad and persistent cultural binary that is trans-historical. They have disputed Said’s application of Orientalism to the encounters between Christian Europeans and Muslims during the Early Modern period. For example, in *Turning Turk*, Vitkus (2003) argues that Said’s analysis cannot be applied to the discourses of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, as it would be a “fallacy of back formation” (p.11). Vitkus discusses Orientalism’s limitations on going back to antiquity:

The chief limitations of Said’s Orientalism include its theoretical rigidity . . . and its attempt to extend the historical limits of orientalism to include two thousand years of Western culture, from Homer to the present, arguing that during those two millennia every textual and imaginary construction of the nonwestern world to the East was an orientalist construction (Vitkus, 2003; p.11).

Vitkus (2003) goes on to suggest that the ‘binary model’ proposed in Orientalism fails to take into consideration the mobility, interactivity, and variety of identity positions that emerge in texts about cross-cultural encounters in Early Modern Europe. Vitkus (2003) claims that Said’s postcolonial theory “must be deployed with caution, if at all,” as a theoretical framework to analyze the Early Modern representations of Islamic and Mediterranean alterities (p.11). Also, Nabil Matar (1998) notes that English writers, in their Early Modern relations with Muslims, did not express either the authority of possessiveness or the security of domination that is suggested by Edward Said in *Orientalism*. Regarding Said’s thesis of Orientalism, Matar’s remarks are as follows:

Said focused his argument on the post Napoleonic experience of Europe, and he did not touch on the Renaissance encounter between England (nor the rest of Europe) and the Muslims: for only after the Ottoman Empire began its military and intellectual decline in the eighteenth century did Europeans proceed to draw, paint, poeticize and imagine the Muslims the way they liked. Only then did the lands of Islam become material for orientalist “construction” and for continental and British colonization (Matar, 1998; p.11).

Matar (1998) also argues that Britain did not enjoy military or industrial power over Islamic countries during the period under study. Instead, it was the Ottoman Empire that had the “positional superiority” Said deems essential for Orientalism (see Said, 1978; p.7). He continues as follows:

it was not England but the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that was pushing into Europe, conquering Rhodes and Crete, attacking Spanish, French, Dutch, English, and Scottish trading fleets, landing upon our coasts, impoverishing that part of the kingdom near the Channel and enslaving thousands of men and women, many of whom converted to Islam. Muslims did not see themselves in a subservient position to Christendom, let alone to England (Matar, 1998; p.12).

According to Matar (1998) the binary opposition of ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’ cannot be maintained for the English encounters with Turks. While the Spanish, Portuguese, English and Dutch ships began exploring and colonizing the foreign lands in the New World, Ottoman Turks were rapidly conquering the European territories. By the beginning of the 17th century, Europeans were both ‘colonizers’ and ‘colonized.’ Therefore, Matar (1998) claims that it would be a mistake to adopt the post-colonial discourse of “constructing” Muslims and apply it on Early Modern English drama and travelogue (p.12).

Despite their objections about Orientalism’s application to the Early Modern period English drama, both Vitkus and Matar acknowledge that the representations of Turks in English writings were demeaning and stereotypical. Both scholars bring different perspectives for the practice of demonizing Turks in English drama. According to Vitkus (2003), ‘fear’ was the main reason for the vilification of Turks in writings, because the English people faced the threat of being enslaved and converted to Islam by the Turks. He points out:

the English faced the problem of their own people – men, women, and children – being captured and enslaved by “Turkish” privateers operating in the Mediterranean and the northeastern Atlantic. This crisis led English writers of the early modern period to produce demonizing representations of “the Turk,” not from the perspective of cultural domination but from the fear of being conquered, captured, and converted (Vitikus, 2003; p.78).

Vitkus (2000) also notes that the facts about Turks and Ottoman culture are distorted by malicious fantasies fostered by English drama and literature. On the other hand, Matar (1998) suggests that it was the ‘allure of Islam’ that motivated the English writers to confront it. For most English people, conversion to Islam, or ‘turning Turk’, represented social and political power. Matar explains this as:

Thousands of European Christians converted to Islam in the Renaissance and the seventeenth century, either because their poor social conditions forced them toward such a choice, or because they sought to identify with a powerful empire. . . . The Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries represented a higher civilization than Christendom and offered opportunities to numerous Christians who sought employment and advancement (Matar, 1998; p.15).

Simply put, the allure of conversion was so great that considerable efforts had to be made by the English writers to demonize Turks and those who ‘turn Turk.’ Matar (1999) argues that dramatic literature was largely responsible for creating anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim stereotypes among the English people. He goes on to suggest that the alterity of Muslims and Turks was created within literary and theological contexts, because in government documents, prisoners’ depositions, and commercial exchanges, it is unlikely to find the extent of stereotyping that the audience is accustomed to see on the stage. Therefore, “it was plays, masques, pageants, and other similar sources” that developed the discourse about ‘Turkish Otherness’ in the British culture (Matar, 1999; p.13). As a result, the portrayals like Bejazeth of *Tamburlaine* and Amurath of *The Courageous Turk* became the literary representations of the ‘Turk’ and defined the construct of ‘Turkish Otherness’ during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Based on the recent research reviewed so far, I argue that Said’s Orientalism can still be applied to the period under study, because the demeaning and stereotypical dramatic representations of Turks upholds Said’s literary criticism in *Orientalism*. Concurring with Matar’s (1998) above premise, the historical background of the Ottoman Turks in this thesis also shows that the Ottoman Empire was one of the imperial powers, especially between the 15th and 17th centuries. Therefore, English people lacked the ‘positional superiority’ against

the Ottoman Turks and their lands were out of British colonial reach during this time period. Although Europeans embarked on colonizing American and Asian lands, the Ottoman Empire was the dominating military force both in the Mediterranean and Middle East, and therefore it was not likely for the Europeans to invade and colonize the Ottoman territories. Hence, they began marginalizing, demonizing and stigmatizing the Turks to obscure the European weakness and vulnerability against the Ottoman Empire. Matar (1999) too acknowledges this by stating: “Precisely because Muslims were beyond colonial reach, Britons began to demonize, polarize, and alterize them” (p.12). Particularly, due to the religious dispute within the European Christians, English people were more vulnerable than the rest of Europe as they were isolated being Protestants. Also, by vilifying Turks, English writers aimed to create a sense of united European hostility and alienation towards the Ottomans. As discussed in Chapter 1, Stuart Hall (1997b) suggests that defining the ‘Other’ in *binary opposites* produces a stereotype which can be alienated and excluded easily. In the case of Christian Europeans, defining the stereotype of Turk in binary opposites also helped them foster a sense of unity against the Turks and reinforce the willpower to eliminate the enemy.

Whether it is the fear of being captured and converted or the allure of Islam, or the desire to create a sense of unity, English writers made considerable efforts to paint the Turks as malicious, immoral and cruel. Although Europe did not have ‘positional superiority’ or ‘authority’ over the Ottoman Empire, European writers still tried to contain the Turks, in one way or another, by representing them as the cultural and ideological opposites. The Early Modern image of Turks has been produced by a ‘style of thought’ which alterized the ‘Turk’ consciously or subconsciously. Therefore, the literary representations of Turks can still be examined within the context of Orientalism. Said (1978) defines the general meaning of Orientalism as a “style of thought” which transcends colonialism or any positional superiority. Early Modern English literature represents precisely this ‘style of thought’ that fits within the premise of Said’s Orientalism. Said explains what he means by describing Orientalism as a ‘style of thought.’

Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the Orient” and “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 of elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, “mind,” destiny, and so on (Said, 1978; p.2).

Based on Said’s generalized definition of Orientalism, I argue that English writers were driven by the prior religious and humanist discourse, as well as the existing circumstances, and acted on their preconceived distinction when characterizing Turks in their writings. As a result, Turks were represented in negative terms, mostly as binary opposites, and stigmatized as the ‘Other’ in early modern English literature. When reading such representations, Said suggests that it is not difficult to detect the pre-conceived distinction writers have towards the Orient. He insists that it is crucial to look at the social and historical circumstances at the time, as the representations do not always reflect the reality:

My analysis of the Orientalist text therefore places emphasis on the evidence, which is by no means invisible, for such representations *as representations*, not as “natural” depictions of the Orient. This evidence is found just as prominently in the so-called truthful text (histories, philological analyses, political treatises) as in the avowedly artistic (i.e. openly imaginative) text. The things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, *not* the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original [author’s italics and parentheses] (Said, 1978; p.21).

While the characterizations of Muslims and Turks in English literature appear to be ‘binary opposites’, they were just representations to contain, control and construct the ‘truth’. These representations simplified the multicultural and complex world, which they claimed to be portraying, by distortions and misconceptions. The demonization of Turks, Muslims and the religion of Islam in Early Modern English drama demonstrates Europe’s effort to control the Islamic power led by the Ottoman Empire. In particular, English writers used demeaning representations to contain the fear, fascination and admiration felt towards the Turks, as well as the appeal of ‘turning Turk.’ MacLean (2007) characterizes the pre-colonial English attitudes towards the Ottoman Empire as a dominant discursive formation caused by “imperial envy” (p.20). He introduces the concept of ‘imperial envy’ as follows:

During the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, at least, English writers . . . never forgot that they were dealing with an empire that controlled a great deal of Eastern Europe and a third of the known world, not a backward, vulnerable and somehow ‘orientalized’ space waiting to be conquered and controlled. Where imperial discourses might be expected to produce empowered imperial subjects constituting themselves at the expense of colonized subalterns, the situation proves to be more complex in the case of English views of the Ottomans. Instead of any simple desire for domination, we will find instead a restructuring of desire, knowledge and power: imperial envy.

According to MacLean (2007), the English national imagination was greatly stimulated and challenged by everything that was known about the Ottomans such as their religion and manners, as well as their social and cultural life. MacLean (2007) also argues that Early Modern English writers framed an imaginary Anglo-Ottoman relation that complicates our understanding of both Orientalism and the emergent culture of British imperialism (p.20). Therefore, both cultural factors and commercial interests influenced the ideas, images and clichés produced by the English writers about the religion, culture, society and empire of the Turks, who came to be known as ‘cruel Turks.’ As Said (1978) suggests, “the European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient” (p.60). I suggest this was the case in English literature during the 16th and 17th century England.

Said (1978) also views Orientalism as a trans-historical discourse starting from the antiquity. Likewise, as discussed in the previous chapter, the demonization of Turks began even before the 16th century, when Seljuk Turks invaded Jerusalem and prompted the First Crusade in the 11th century. European Christians stigmatized Turks by characterizing them as barbarians, bloodthirsty murderers and infidels who were corrupt, evil and immoral. These negative representations originated from the anti-Islamic polemic during the Middle Ages and became predominant, particularly after the Ottoman victories during the Crusades and the fall of Constantinople to Turks in 1453. Early Modern literary representations of Turks were also inherited from the medieval religious polemic, Crusade rhetoric, and Renaissance humanist discourse. Based on the literature review in this chapter, one may conclude that the image of Turk has a historical

continuity, as the demeaning images about Turks in Early Modern literature are similar to those of the preceding anti-Islamic and anti-Turk discourse. Therefore, the stereotypical image of Turks as ‘cruel’ remained uniform as Turks were frequently represented as such in Early Modern European writings, as well as in English drama.

The continuity and uniformity of the European image of Turks indicates that the myth of the ‘cruel Turk’ or ‘terrible Turk’ is consistent with Said’s assertion of Orientalism being a ‘trans-historical discourse’. Like Orientalism, Early Modern English writings about the Turks also benefited from ‘intertextuality’, which indicates borrowing from and referring to the previous literature. Said (1978) notes that the Western writings frequently refer to each other and suggests that “Orientalism is after all a system for citing works and authors” (p.23). As discussed in this chapter, Europeans did not have the ‘positional superiority’ against the Ottoman Empire during the period under study. However, European literary representations were still demeaning despite the lack of the colonial aspirations towards the Ottoman lands. My discourse analysis indicates that the discursive formation about the Turks is still Orientalist despite the absence of European ‘positional superiority’ against the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, I argue that the European perception of Turks is Orientalist because the image of ‘terrible Turk’ continues as a ‘style of thought’ during the 16th and 17th century Western discourse.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the notion of ‘Turk’ became central to the definition of Europe’s self. Both the internal and external threats to the unity and existence of Christendom created the need to define the ‘Turk’ in such terms that the image of Turk may either be justifiable or demeaning, depending on the political, religious, or ideological allegiance. The alterity of the Turks provided European Christians with the means to construct their self-image as opposed to a threatening ‘Other’ that had superior military and political power, as well as religious unity. The ‘cruel Turk’ encapsulated the threat to European ‘self’ and motivated both England and the rest of Europe to strive for more opportunities, explore other lands, and become superior. Towards the end of the 17th century, European monarchs began capitalizing on their efforts and spreading to other

lands. Therefore, the turn of the 18th century marked the beginning of European colonialism, domination and supremacy. European colonialism and ethnocentrism brought the emergence of Orientalism as a discursive formation. In the next chapter, I will examine the image of Turk in the Orientalist discourse and look into Western travel accounts in the 18th and 19th centuries.

CHAPTER 4

THE WESTERN IMAGE OF TURKS DURING THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES: ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE

Background

The signs of weakness within the Ottoman Empire became visible when the Turkish fleet was horribly defeated by the Crusading forces in the battle of Lepanto in 1571. The Christian victory against the Ottoman Empire brought tremendous joy and relief to Europe. Pope Pius V was thrilled with the news of the European victory and praised the Crusading forces of the Holy League led by Don Jon: “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John” (Kinross, 1979; p.271). However, when Ottoman Turks rebuilt their fleet in just six months after Lepanto, the Christian allies were discouraged and avoided any confrontation with them. The revival of the Ottoman sea power in such a short time precipitated the peace treaty in which Venice formally ceded Cyprus. Despite the loss of Cyprus, Lepanto remained a Christian victory for Europeans in the moral and psychological sense. Kinross (1979) stresses the significance of Europe’s victory against the Ottoman Turks as follows:

The Turk, who held Europe in thrall since his capture of Constantinople more than a century earlier, was for the first time seen not to be invincible. A legend was exploded, and the Christians breathed more freely (Kinross, 1979; p.272).

Lepanto was a turning point in terms of Turkish prestige, but the Ottoman Empire still remained powerful with its unsurpassed material resources, unimpaired military skills, revived sea power and formidable armed forces (Kinross, 1979). Ottoman Turks kept expanding towards East by moving into the Persian territory. With the treaty of Constantinople in 1590, the Ottoman Empire seized Azerbaijan, Georgia and the northwest of Iran.

However, the beginning of the 17th century signaled the stagnation of the strongest Islamic Empire due to decadence, corruption, depriving economic resources, increased population, a series of incompetent sultans, intrigues in the

imperial harem and Seraglio for the accession of heirs, and most importantly, disorder among the Janissaries, the Sultan's armed forces. The Janissaries began to present a serious threat to the Ottoman Empire as they were becoming a burden because of their greed and indiscipline (Kinross, 1979). Contrary to their reputation as brave and skilled soldiers, they began displaying ineptitude and cowardice in the battlefield and failing as the Empire's armed forces. On the other hand, the same Janissaries were developing into a subversive force at home, gaining power within the Ottoman government. Meanwhile, the situation in the Ottoman capital looked grim as the sultans presiding over the dynasty were incredibly inept. The Ottoman Empire was slowly nearing its end "as one inadequate Sultan followed another, each at the mercy of his corrupt Seraglio, they came to be a dominant power and a focus of sedition" (Kinross, 1979; p.292). In 1622, the Janissaries revolted against the Ottoman sultan, Osman II, put him in jail, and executed him in his jail cell the next day. Until that moment, imperial fratricide was a common practice, but the murder of a sultan in the hands of his soldiery was unprecedented. The magnitude of this incident was grave as "the first act of regicide to taint the annals of the Ottoman Empire" (Kinross, 1979; p.295). At the time, the British ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, suggested "the precedent of king-killing and its attendant blood bath signaled the end of Ottoman hegemony" and referred to the Ottoman Empire as "incurably sick" (Birchwood, 2007; p.24).

Following the accession of Sultan Murad IV to the throne in 1623, monarchical authority was reinstated. Murad IV was determined to end the revolt of the Janissaries. He had all the ringleaders and traitors among the Janissaries executed. Sometimes, they were even killed on the streets with a sword or a bowstring and their corpses were thrown into the Bosphorus to be washed up on the shore for the others to see. He even rode among his subjects in disguise and killed suspicious ones with his own hands. Sultan Murad's brutal actions appear as a testament to the image of 'cruel Turk' that is frequently portrayed in the 17th century English drama as discussed in the preceding chapter. While Murad's cruelties became legendary, his tyrannical actions helped him crush the Janissary revolt and bring military anarchy to an end. He also regained the Ottoman dominions in the East with military campaigns and killed the incompetent

provincial officials. However, his iron rule did not last long, and he died in 1640 leaving the Ottoman Empire to await its decline.

The regeneration of the Ottoman Empire lapsed once more into disorder, decadence and decay. None of the succeeding Sultans could revive the previous glory and might of the Ottoman Empire. In 1683, the final Turkish attack on Vienna resulted in defeat and marked the beginning of an inevitable descent for the Ottoman Empire. The Treaty of Karlowitz signed in 1699 was a turning point in the history of the Ottoman Turks as they lost their domains in Central Europe. Following that, a series of unsuccessful military engagements and unfavorable treaties forced the Ottoman Empire to retreat from its Western domains. Ottoman Turks were no longer considered an aggressive, expanding power that the Christian Europe had known and feared for almost four centuries. On the Eastern border, the Ottoman Turks fought with the Safavids of Persia, as well as Russians, which is known as Russo-Turkish Wars that lasted intermittently between 1787-1829. Meanwhile, France was advancing into the Ottoman territories in North Africa, first invading Egypt and later, Tunisia and Algeria. Furthermore, the Greek War of Independence began in 1821. Ottoman Turks not only had to deal with the Western colonial powers and Russia, but also control the rising minorities within the borders of the Empire.

By the 1820s, the status of the Ottoman Empire became critical as it turned into *The Eastern Question* for the Western colonial powers because “the last bastion of oriental power was decrepit, incapable of reforming itself, and near to death” (Nash, 2005; p.11). Ottoman weakness prompted international instability among expanding imperialist powers. They were not only eager to get their share from the Ottoman lands, but also trying to prevent them from falling into the hands of rivals due to the stability of their colonies in the East (Quataert, 2005; p.5). Europeans were nervous about the end of the Ottoman Empire, as it would result in a power vacuum in the Middle East. For that reason, the ramifications of the Turkish collapse were only considered from the European point of view. Western historians were not concerned about the “Muslim nations who might have had an interest in the Ottoman Empire’s continuance as the last powerful standard bearer of Islam” (Nash, 2005; p.11). Instead, they became occupied with probing the

Ottoman failure, while questioning or criticizing the Oriental lifestyle, culture and, even the religion of Islam. For most Western writers and travelers, the Ottomans Turks were backward and incapable of progress (Cirakman, 2002; Turhan, 2003). As a result, the Western representations of Ottoman Turks were mostly condescending, disparaging and demeaning. On the other hand, it was not only Ottoman backwardness and weakness alone that generated Western feelings of contempt and disparagement. In their texts and representations, Western writers also sought to justify the actions of the Western imperialist powers. Turhan (2003) suggests that “the Ottoman Empire was an Eastern Other whose Otherness was always subject to qualification and change, and easily manipulated by writers for their own rhetorical and political purposes” (p.3). Therefore, the irreversible decline of the Ottoman dynasty brought about the positional superiority of the West, which dominates the 18th and 19th century Orientalist discourse. Kinross (1979) points out the inferiority of the Ottoman Empire and underscores the ‘positional superiority’ of the West:

Definitely there would be no return to the great days of the conquerors. By the European statesmen the inferiority of the Ottoman Empire to Europe and increasing dependence upon it was henceforward accepted as a political fact. Once and for all, the power of the West, with its rising nation-states, had outstripped the power of the East. The gap between them was to widen from now onward, not only in military standards, but in the pattern of economic and social development which underlay and conditioned them. Internally, the Ottoman Empire was, in modern terms, backward; its evolution, in the face of continuing decline, remained obstinately slow and indeed at periods deliberately static. Internationally its future was thus to be a matter of concern, no longer in military but increasingly in diplomatic terms (Kinross, 1979; p.357).

From the beginning of the 18th century until its dismemberment in 1923, the Ottoman Empire was no longer considered as a formidable enemy, nor was it viewed as a powerful military and political force. The European image of the Ottoman Empire as *the terror of the world* faded and the Ottoman Turks came to be known as the *sick man of Europe*.

Turkish Image in Orientalist Discourse

As documented in the previous chapter, European representations of Turks during the 16th and 17th centuries were driven by anxiety, terror and fear, mixed with the feelings of admiration, curiosity and fascination about the Ottoman Empire. However, beginning from the 18th century, the European image of Turks seems to invoke a certain contempt or even hatred, because the representations of Ottoman Turks are condescending and arrogant as they focus on the themes of decline and corruption of the empire (Cirakman, 2002). Nevertheless, there was still tremendous interest in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish culture and lifestyle. As documented by Schiffer (1982) in his book *Turkey Romanticized*, there were numerous books published about the Ottoman Empire and these books were frequently reviewed, which is a sign of interest, attention and curiosity. Just for the period between 1805 and 1825 alone, there were 46 extensive reviews of Near East travel books in the *Eclectic Review*, which indicates that “Ottoman Empire was a contemporary center of interest” (Schiffer, 1982; p.11). In most of these books, the characterizations of Turks show similarities and involve common themes, because certain aspects of Ottoman life appealed to Western people more than others. Western writers and travelers were particularly fixated on what they viewed as the bewildering characteristics of Turks such as, *indolence*, *ignorance*, *backwardness*, *lustfulness* and *despotism*. These characteristics were perceived as the main reasons for the decadence, decay, decline and ultimately, the fall of the Ottoman Empire. In this chapter, I will examine the representations of Turks in the Orientalist discourse to assess how the European image of Turks changed during the 18th and 19th centuries. I will attempt to determine the effects of European colonial superiority on the Western perception of Turks during a time when the Ottoman Empire lost its power. Also, I will assess the associations between the characteristics of the Turks in these writings and the Oriental imagery that has been common in Western discourse.

The Indolent Turk

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Western travelers to the Orient were stunned by the strange habits, routine rituals and laidback lifestyle of Middle

Eastern people. While travelling within the Ottoman Empire, they were particularly taken aback by the quiet and somber relaxation ritual of the Turkish men. The ritual of ‘relishing the moment’, which the Turks called *keyif*, involved resting, meditating, smoking pipe, and sipping coffee. Most of the Western travelers perceived this customary practice of relaxation as ‘indolence’ or ‘idleness’. This leisurely activity was very different from their own and they had difficulty understanding the Ottoman willingness and capacity to relax and be satisfied with small pleasures. In *Oriental Panorama*, Schiffer (1999) claims that these travelers became exasperated over quiescent Turks, so such an innocent habit of sitting motionless and doing nothing but smoking a pipe was perceived as a moral defect of the Turkish nation, and their repose was seen as ‘indolence’ (p.215). Charles Pertusier, French embassy official in Constantinople, views the Ottoman preference for ‘keyif’ as a form of complete inactivity:

The different nations that compose the Turkish, seem to place their happiness in repose, or, rather, in a state of complete inertia. The lord and the plebeian rest and smoke under a plantain, sipping a cup of coffee, or partaking of a dish of curdled milk (Schiffer, 1999; p.214)

Particularly for the English people, sitting and doing nothing at all was ‘indolence’, and it was unacceptable. It was against their work ethic and might even be considered as immoral. If Turks did not work, English people expected them to at least indulge in vigorous sports and manly exercises (Schiffer, 1999). In 1859, English author George Walter Thornbury observed a group of Turks relaxing in the shade of a plane tree and criticized them for not doing any sports:

They sit with the mind asleep, but the body and eyes open; this is what they call ‘taking kef,’ and they do it when we should be cricketing, partridge shooting, riding, or boating. It is the miserable amusement of a worn-out race . . . If they were driven back to get their bread by tilling the desert paradises of Asia Minor, these Turks might find less time for ‘taking kef,’ and more for honest work (Schiffer, 1999; p.215).

In Thornbury’s comments, similar to ‘barbarity’ and ‘cruelty’ that have been discussed in the preceding chapters as ‘natural’ Turkish qualities, indolence is also presented as a natural ethnic quality of a worn-out race. It is an indication of the

ethnocentric perception resulted from the preconceived superiority of Europeans. Contrary to the European admiration of the Ottoman military discipline and political organization previously, the image of Turks in Orientalist travel accounts reflects Turkish inferiority as a race.

Western travelers were not only bothered by the Turks' indolent relaxation ritual but also despised the Ottoman soldiers because of their indifference and cowardice. Although Ottoman Turks were once known and feared for their military skills and bravery, European travelers began observing sluggish and indifferent attitudes among the Turkish soldiers. Elias Habesci (a.k.a Alexander Gika), an ideologist of British supremacy, wrote about the cowardice and indolence of Ottoman soldiers while praising the Russians during the Russo-Turkish Wars between 1769-1771:

Neither soldiers nor officers any longer believe that they shall go to paradise, from being slain in the field of battle, and, therefore, they fly before the enemy; in the sea service in particular, one admiral excepted, they could hardly be brought to face the enemy . . . in their late war with the Russians – a nation as remarkable as their perfidy and ingratitude, as the present Turks are for their *indolence* and cowardice.⁴¹

According to Habesci, the reasons for the indolence of the Ottoman soldiers go back as far as the 17th century, when the degeneration of the Janissaries reached its height during the short reign of Sultan Ahmed II between 1691-1695:

The spirit of these troops (Janissaries), by this time, was broken, and they were so far degenerated, that no reliance could be placed upon their conduct in the field. Thus circumstanced, it is no wonder that the rest of the Turkish forces became *indolent* and effeminate. In fine, such was the confusion which prevailed in the Seraglio, that everything went wrong during this short reign.⁴²

Beginning from the late 17th century, Europeans despised the incompetence of the Ottoman Sultans and decried particularly their idleness and their indulgence in decadence. The inaptitude of the Ottoman military also prompted Europeans to

⁴¹ Elias Habesci, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire: Containing a more accurate and interesting account . . . of the Turks* (London, 1784), p.140.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.75.

insult and ridicule the Turkish soldiers whom they were once terrified of. Motivated by their colonial ambitions, Europeans used ‘indolence’ and ‘idleness’ as the cultural distinction to prove that Ottoman Turks deserved to be dominated by a superior power like Europe. As Said (1978) claims, Europeans had this assumption that the Orient was inferior and was “in need of corrective study by the West” (p.41). When Europe began seeing the Ottomans as ‘inferior’ rather than their ‘equal’ in terms of political and military power, Orientalist travelers began depicting the Turks as coward, indolent and idle caricatures in their accounts.

Schiffer (1982) puts forward three major theories offered by the English travelers as an explanation for the Turks’ *indolence*. According to Schiffer, the first theory is about Islam, the religion of Turks. Based on the teachings of their religion, Turks accept everything as predestined by God. The easy acceptance of Turks worked against industriousness and exertion, and thus led to their fatalism, apathy, and indolence. William Hunter, who traveled through the Ottoman Empire during the end of the 18th century, comments on the Turkish religious beliefs and exposes the Christian bias towards Turks:

The Turk regards every occurrence of his life with the same torpid indifference; and, being fully persuaded, that no exertion or prudence can prolong his happiness, or avert his destruction . . . nor the approach of danger . . . can awaken him from his lethargy. Grave and uncommunicative . . . he trifles away his life in the listlessness of negligent activity . . . as if entirely separated from the concerns of the world . . . he scarcely fulfills one duty . . . If he read the Koran a specified number of times, pray . . . five times a day, and conform to a few of the positive ordinances of his prophet . . . he imagines that he has discharged every obligation . . . and that . . . he has secured . . . the endless and voluptuous enjoyments of his ideal paradise.⁴³

British publisher John Reid, who traveled to Turkey at the beginning of the 19th century, also blames the Turks’ Muslim religion for their indifference and idleness. Reid views the Turks so inferior that he likens them to the primitive native people living in British colonies. With a sense of colonial superiority, Reid suggests that the Turks become as inhuman as the uncivilized tribes of Africa or New Zealand:

⁴³ William Hunter, *Travels through France, Turkey, and Hungary, to Vienna, in 1792* (London, 1803), p.58.

The Turks, after they conquered a rich and fertile country, abandoned in a great measure their predatory habits; preferring ease and idleness in the enjoyment of their conquests, they sat quietly down and smoked their pipes . . . the abandonment to habits of ease and idleness became more general, until it had seized upon every one, of whatever rank, professing the creed of Mahomet. This idle feeling of quietly sitting down, and allowing the events of world to pass along, believing that all that takes place was predestined, and could not have been changed by any act of the believer, is in exact consonance with the faith of the prophet; and with sloth, consequently, the Turks increased in apathy and indolence every generation, until, at the present day, they are farther sunk in the scale of humanity than the Hottentots of Africa, or the aborigines of New Zealand.⁴⁴

John Reid also praises the industrious Christians living in the Ottoman lands and characterizes them as the backbone of the Empire, while he disparages the Turks for being lazy. Reid's remarks are as follows:

To whom is Turkey indebted for her existence for the last few generations? Certainly not to the Turks, but to the Christians . . . who consequently were obliged to labour for the lords of the soil. Who have been the architects of the palace and the hovel? The Christians: they alone have been busy, while the Turks sat and smoked their pipes. The Christians alone have built the bridges and wells, and constructed the aqueducts; have attended to the supply of necessaries of life; have been the merchants, the shopkeepers, the mechanics, and the very existence, of the kingdom.⁴⁵

On the other hand, Habesci calls attention to Ramadan, the Muslim tradition of fasting. He claims that Ramadan is just another excuse for Turks to be lazy and idle and blames the Muslim religious holiday for Turkish indolence:

But it may readily be conceived, that the night is turned into day during the Ramadan, for the Turks, being of an *indolent* disposition, will not work when they do not eat, so that they sleep through the greatest part of the day.⁴⁶

Similar to the prior Western discourses discussed in the preceding chapters, the pattern of stigmatizing the Turks based on their racial and religious difference continues in the remarks of these Western travelers. They argued that Turks'

⁴⁴ John Reid, *Turkey and the Turks: Being the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1840), p.66.

⁴⁵ John Reid, *Turkey and the Turks: Being the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1840), p.67.

⁴⁶ Elias Habesci, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire: Containing a more accurate and interesting account . . . of the Turks* (London, 1784), p.95.

religious beliefs and practices were one of the main reasons for their indolence. Western Orientalist writers defined the Turks in polar opposites against the European Christians, such as *indolent/industrious*, *lazy/hardworking*, or *indifferent/concerned*. Therefore, Europeans viewed themselves entitled to colonize or invade the Ottoman Empire because Turks were too indifferent to defend themselves and too lazy to utilize the potential in their country. In contrast, Christians know how to build, develop, enrich and use them. The religious and ethnic distinction between the Turks and Christians justify the European colonial reach to the Ottoman Empire. Western travel writings reflect the European colonial mindset as the idleness of Turks is presented as a justification for exploiting the Ottoman lands, treasures and natural resources.

The second theory deems *despotism* as the reason for the Turks' indolence, because the Ottoman government took away all profits from the individuals and by doing so, extinguished the will of work among its population. Therefore, Turks became idle and sluggish without any motivation to work. Habesci (1784) claims that the major reason for the Ottoman Empire to near its end is "despotism on the part of rulers" combined with "cowardice and indolence on the part of people, uniting with superstition and voluptuousness" undermining its foundation (p.269). Lastly, the third theory suggests that financial tributes from all corners of the Ottoman Empire made labor unnecessary for the masters, and thus resulted in idleness (Schiffer, 1982; p.29). Among the three theories, 'despotism' is predominantly used in Oriental travel writing as the main reason for the Turks' presumed indolence and indifference (see Cirakman 2001 & 2002). For example, French military officer, Francois Baron de Tott blames the despotic Ottoman government for the laziness of the Turkish people because of the way Turks treat their property and environment. According to Tott, Turks neglect maintaining their houses and gardens, and ignore planting trees and enjoying surroundings because, "Under a despotic government, a man must enjoy the trees that he can find; he has not the time to see them grow up."⁴⁷ Despotism is a predominant theme in the European representations of Turks during the 18th and 19th centuries when the Orientalist travelers began viewing Oriental despotism as one of the reasons for the

⁴⁷ Francis Baron De Tott, *Memoirs of the Baron de Tott on the Turks and Tartars* (Dublin, 1785), vol.1, p.92.

indolence and ignorance of the Turks as well as one of the primary reasons for the inefficiency of the Ottoman Empire.

In addition, one of the most controversial theories known as the *climatic opposites* was put forward by Montesquieu, and also used by some other writers to assess the Ottoman Turks. Montesquieu argues that the moral and physiological characteristics of Eastern (Oriental) people are in contrast with those of Europeans due to their geographical origins and different climates. Schiffer paraphrases Montesquieu's concept of 'climatic opposites' as follows:

Cold climates . . . were bracing: they strengthened the bodily and moral nerves of the inhabitants: hence these were virtuous, frank, and courageous. In contrast, hot climates rendered the physiology of men delicate and weak: hence these were indolent of mind and body, given to vices and timorous (Schiffer, 1982; p. 27).

According to Montesquieu, for Europe and the East, binary opposites exist on the moral, social, and religious level. Europeans had courage and liberty, while Easterners had indolence, effeminacy, despotic governments and slavery. Therefore, while Europe was the seat of Christianity and progress, Eastern people had the religion of Islam that their climatic and spiritual indolence deserved (Schiffer, 1982; p.27). Although Montesquieu's climatic theory was disputed by British merchant Thomas Thornton and French philosopher Comte de Volney, they both admitted the existence of Oriental indolence. Volney attributed the Turkish indolence to the Ottoman governmental system and Islamic religion (Schiffer, 1982; p.28). He suggested that Turks became fatalistic due to their acceptance of the Islamic concept of predestination as Muslims would accept anything as the will of God (as cited in Curtis, 2009, p. 60). Likewise, Thornton suggested that social institutions, government, religion and domestic economy should be considered as the reasons for the indolence of Turks and the inefficiency of the Ottoman Empire (cited by Cunningham, 1993; p.77). Said refers to indolence or fatalism as one of the Orientalist clichés that defines the Middle Eastern people, such as Turks. He describes what an Oriental means through the lenses of ethnocentrism and eurocentrism:

An Oriental lives in the Orient, he lives a life of Oriental ease, in a state of Oriental despotism and sensuality, imbued with a feeling of Oriental fatalism (Said, 1978; p.102).

Overall, the indolence of Turks ultimately became a stereotypical feature that defines the Oriental ‘Other.’ In other words, the ‘indolence’ of Turks was viewed as “one of the most durable frequent, and ideologically loaded topoi of the Oriental description” (Schiffer, 1982; p.27). During the period when the Ottoman Empire weakened, Turkish ‘indolence’ was used as a justification for colonizing the Ottoman lands as Turks were perceived too lazy to utilize what they had. Turks’ indolence, inferiority and barbarous nature were not the only features that were emphasized by the European travelers. Their ‘ignorance’ and ‘backwardness’ were also predominantly represented in the Orientalist discourse.

Ignorance and Backwardness of Turks

Oriental travelers of the 18th century often wrote about the *ignorance* and *backwardness* of the Turks. They often contrast Ottoman Turks with the Greeks, particularly their willingness to progress, their interest in arts and sciences, as well as their moral characters. Turks are considered inherently ignorant and backward, unlike the Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire, who are industrious and progressive. For example, British politician, Charles Thompson suggests that Turks live a sluggish, indolent and inactive life, given the fact that they hardly cultivate their land. They are also indifferent towards travelling or arts and sciences, instead they pass time in their coffeehouses or in their harems. These strange habits can only be explained with reference to their inherent characteristics as a nation, because, although, “they live under the same heaven and possess the same countries the ancient Grecians did, they are far from being animated by the same spirit or endeavoring to imitate such noble examples.”⁴⁸ William Eton also shows his contempt towards Turks by referring to their ignorance and mistreatment of Greek science and arts, because the Turks “like barbarians, invaded Greece, and swept before them the mighty monuments of ancient science, and like barbarians, they hold their captives to present day, under the benumbing yoke of ignorance and

⁴⁸ Cited by Cirakman (2002; p.154). Source: Charles Thompson, *Travels of the Late Charles Thompson: Observations on France, Italy and Turkey in Europe* (London, 3rd edition: 1767) vol.3, p.75-76.

slavery.”⁴⁹ Eton makes an interesting comparison between the Turks and Romans, the two conquerors of Greece. He suggests that Turks did not make any progress after they conquered Greece as opposed to Romans, whose civilization advanced. Eton’s remarks are as follows:

Conquered Greece polished Rome, but the conquerors were Romans. Conquered Greece did not polish Turkey, for the conquerors were Turks. The insensibility of these barbarians is astonishing: living amid the effulgence of genius, they have not caught one spark; they gaze with unfeeling stupidity on the wonder and boast of art, on their glorious monuments . . . and then destroy them . . . where ignorance, tyranny, superstition and gross sensuality only dwell in sad and stupidly solemn pomp, or issuing out with savage fury, lay waste the country round, and imbrue their hands in the blood of the helpless, murdering without remorse those they have conquered.⁵⁰

The European image of Ottoman Turks as ‘barbarians’ prevalent during the Renaissance is also manifested in the Orientalist travelogue. The Western travelers suggested that Turks were ignorant about arts and science and also indifferent about protecting the artistic and cultural artifacts. Instead they chose to destroy them because of their savagery, barbarity and tyrannical government. Therefore, Turks continue to be the inferior barbarous race compared to Christians, who are much more civilized, progressive and sophisticated. Simply, the stereotypical image of Turks as ‘barbarous’ and ‘inferior’ continued to exist in Orientalist discourse.

In addition to the Turks’ indifference to arts and sciences, and their ill-treatment of cultural treasures, Western travelers were also concerned about the Turks’ sluggish trade practices. The Turks’ lack of knowledge in commerce, combined with their indolence, particularly disturbed Lady Craven who panned the Ottoman Turks for their ignorance and idleness in her travelogue, compiled of letters. In Craven’s assessment, due to Turks’ indolent and backward nature, the Ottoman Empire is reduced to being a ‘dead wall’ that separates England from India. She explains her point of view as follows:

⁴⁹ William Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1799, 2nd ed.), p.14.

⁵⁰ William Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1799, 2nd ed.), p.346

Perhaps sir, it is lucky for Europe that the Turks are idle and ignorant – the immense power that Empire might have, were it peopled by the industrious and ambitious, would make it the ministers of the world – at present, it only serves as a *dead wall* to intercept the commerce and battles which other powers might create upon one another.⁵¹

As Craven points out, the inactivity of the Turks is an obstruction of free trade, and disrupts the progress of other nations, particularly England. Therefore, Turks should be denied of the rightful possession of their domains. Furthermore, it is clear that the Turks misuse and squander the gifts of God and the treasures of mankind. Ottoman lack of respect for cultural and natural resources is another reason for other nations to deny Turks the monopolization of these treasures. According to Lady Craven, there is every justification to colonize Turkey (Cirakman, 2002; Turhan, 2003).

Though I have not been absolutely all over this peninsula, I think I am perfectly acquainted with it; and though it is a new acquaintance to me, I sincerely wish it to be peopled by the industrious, who may restore to it that commerce and opulence, which the natural productions of it demand from the hand of man. Can any rational being, dear Sir, see nature, without the least assistance from art, in all her grace and beauty, stretching out her liberal hand to industry, and not wish to do her justice? Yes, I confess, I wish to see a colony of honest English families here; establishing manufacturers, such as England produces, and returning the produce of this country to ours; establishing a fair and free trade from hence, and teaching industry and honesty to the insidious but oppressed Greeks, in their islands – waking the indolent Turk from his gilded slumbers, and carrying fair liberty in her swelling sails.⁵²

Therefore, Ottoman Turks deserve to be dominated by the Europeans because they did not appreciate arts and sciences, and also, lacked the skills for trade. The positional superiority of the West once again manifested in Craven's Eurocentric remarks. Like Lady Craven, the attempt of Orientalists to define the Ottoman Turks as ignorant, backward and lazy people who were incapable of managing and utilizing their own resources encouraged European colonial powers to intrude into the Ottoman Empire.

⁵¹ Lady Elizabeth Craven, *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople: In a series of letters . . . written in the year 1786* (London, 1789), p.206-207.

⁵² Lady Elizabeth Craven, *A Journey through the Crimea to Constantinople: In a series of letters . . . written in the year 1786* (London, 1789), p.188-189.

William Hunter felt nothing but pity, contempt and disgust towards Turks. Hunter viewed the Turks as the enemies of all improvements and claimed that their prejudice and ignorance could not be overcome. Hunter argues:

At present, they are enervated, a superstitious, an ignorant and a sluggish people; the bigotted slaves of a tyrannic government; declared enemy of arts and sciences; and the firm opposer of every useful institution. Too stupid to comprehend, or too proud to learn, or too infatuated to be convinced . . . and although they are surrounded on almost every side by civilized and enlightened nations, their attachment to opinions which are founded in folly, and upheld by prejudice, does not diminish.⁵³

Even Thomas Thornton, who admired the country of Turkey and defended the Ottoman civilization, criticized the Turkish education system. He was stunned by the lack of simple scientific knowledge and the nonexistence of basic scientific instruments in the Turkish education, as well as in the Ottoman navy.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the objects of Turkish study, the rhetoric and logic, the philosophy and metaphysics, of the dark ages, do in reality only remove men further from real knowledge. The instruments, without which the researches of the acutest natural philosopher would be imperfect, are either entirely unknown in Turkey, or only known as childish playthings, to excite the admiration of ignorance, or to gratify a vain curiosity. The telescope, microscope, the electrical machine, and other aids of science, are unknown as to their real uses. Even the compass is not universally employed in their navy, nor its common purposes thoroughly understood. Need it then be observed, that navigation, astronomy, geography, agriculture, chemistry, and all the arts, which have been, as it were, created anew since the grand discoveries of the two last centuries, are either unknown, or practised only according to a vicious and antiquated routine.⁵⁴

As demonstrated so far, Turks are predominantly described as barbaric, indolent, ignorant, and backward in the Orientalist travelogue. According to Said, these characteristics are commonly presented as Oriental or Islamic in 19th century Orientalist travel accounts. He suggests that anyone who comes across these descriptions would know their signification. His remarks are as follows:

⁵³ William Hunter, *Travels through France, Turkey, and Hungary, to Vienna, in 1792* (London, 1803), p.55.

⁵⁴ Thomas Thornton, *The Present State of Turkey* (London, 1807), p.13.

Now one of the important developments in nineteenth-century Orientalism was the distillation of essential ideas about the Orient – its sensuality, its tendency to despotism, its aberrant mentality, its habits of inaccuracy, its backwardness – into a separate and unchallenged coherence; thus for a writer to use the word *Oriental* was a reference for the reader sufficient to identify a specific body of information about the Orient (Said, 1978; p.205)

Another significant Turkish characteristic, which has been mentioned previously but not discussed thoroughly, is *despotism*. A closer look at the Ottoman despotism, which is commonly used in the Orientalist travel accounts, will provide a better understanding of the cliché ‘Oriental despotism’ and its association with the Turks.

Ottoman Despotism

By the early 18th century, the Ottoman Empire was often characterized as a despotic or ineffective government in Western writings. Most writers used the image of ‘Turk’ as a metaphor for archetypal *despotism* in both literary genres and political texts or speeches. They continued this practice throughout the 18th century and used Ottoman despotism not only to mark the Turkish ‘Otherness’ but also to benefit from it for their own rhetorical and political purposes. Regarding the manipulation of Ottoman despotism by the Enlightenment writers, Turhan (2003) suggests: “such despotism was sometimes used to defend Western ways and sometimes to condemn them, depending largely on the political needs of the writer” (p.3). For example, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), British statesman Edmund Burke uses the Ottoman Empire as a reference point for his comparison when commenting on the value of the French monarchy before the Revolution. In his comparison, he disparages Turks as barbarous and despotic people who do not value arts, science and trade.

To hear some men speak of the late monarchy of France, you would imagine that they were . . . describing the barbarous anarchic despotism of Turkey, where the finest countries in the most genial climates in the world are wasted by peace more than any countries have been worried by war; where arts are unknown, where manufactures languish, where

science is extinguished, where agriculture decays, where the human race itself melts away and perishes under the eye of the observer. Was this the case with France?⁵⁵

Cirakman (2001), on the other hand, argues that the concept of ‘Ottoman tyranny’ during the 16th and 17th centuries transformed into ‘despotism’ during the 18th century. In other words, ‘Ottoman despotism’ was redefined to represent the corruption and backwardness of the Ottoman government and became an Oriental characteristic, known as *Oriental despotism*, in the 18th century. Oriental despotism not only signifies the despotic Ottoman government, but also epitomizes the Eurocentric perception of the East (Cirakman, 2001; p.49).

When one looks at Western discourse concerning the Ottoman Turks as ‘oppressors’ of Christians, there is a striking contrast between the accounts of the 18th century compared to the previous centuries. Before the 18th century, Ottoman government was known for its toleration of religious minorities and the Ottomans Turks were admired for their peaceful coexistence within the different peoples of the Empire (Barkey, 2005). The Orientalist accounts of the 18th century portray the Ottoman Turks as the ‘oppressors’ who hate Christians and their religion (Cirakman, 2002). According to British diplomat Sir James Porter Christians were frequently subject to violence, fraud and rapine by the Turks because Turks despised them and their faith.

The real worth of *Pashawlycks*, or [provincial] governments are in proportion to the number of the Christian inhabitants; because the Pashaws may with them indulge all their lust, their zeal and avarice; tyrannize, harass, oppress, and suck their very vitals; from them they fear no complaints. But they cherish and spare those of their own religion: and they, when any Christian representations of a Pashaw’s misconduct reach the Porte, are sure evidence in his favour.⁵⁶

The depiction of Turks as *oppressors* became extremely common during the Greek War of Independence in 1820s and Turkish character was frequently demonized

⁵⁵ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France 1790*. In Langford, P., Mitchell, L.G. & Todd, W. B. (Eds.), *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke: Volume VIII, The French Revolution 1790-1794*. (1989, p.176).

⁵⁶ Sir James Porter, *Observations on the Religion, Law, Government, and Manners, of the Turks* (Dublin, 1768), Vol. I, p.12.

due to the European Philhellenic sentiment. During that time, “the Turk was seen as an oppressor of freedom, a cruel and bloody foe, an enemy of civilization, the epitome of barbarism” (Schiffer, 1999; p.240). The more travelers were concerned by the state of the oppressed Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, the more they emphasized the image of the ‘despotic’ Turk to show their support for the Greek independence. Sir William Eton suggested that if the Greeks were freed from the evil despotism of the Ottoman government, Greece will resurrect as the epicenter of civilization once again, excel with the talent of its remarkable people and take its place among the advanced nations, while becoming a reliable ally for Britain and Russia. He continues as follows:

Humanity itself is disgraced by the prolongation of Turkish despotism, and justice with an imperious voice demands the liberation of the oppressed Grecians, and their re-establishment in the seat of their heroic ancestors. But it is not only on the removal of existing evils that we have to speculate; we may contemplate with proud exultation the substitution of a new system of things, founded on principles more equally just and liberal. Who can look forward without animation to revival of learning, of arts and arms in Greece, when the iron yoke, under which she now bows, shall be broken? A Grecian state, the free and independent ally of Britain and Russia, will form a connecting link in the social bond of commerce; will be fitted, by the favourableness of its situation and the genius of its inhabitants, for bold and successful enterprize; and, in fine, will quickly attain a proud pre-eminence among nations.⁵⁷

However, some European travelers were perplexed by the difference between modern and ancient Greeks. They struggled to detect the traces of ancient civilization of the Grecians among the Greek peasants, bandits, fishermen and pirates living in the lands of the Ottoman Empire. Europeans had difficulty portraying the actual Greeks in Turkey as ‘heroes’ like they used to be. Because the Greeks were no longer the ancient heroes they once were, they had to be portrayed as “the Christian victims of Islamic oppression” (Turhan, 2003; p.38). According to Schiffer (1999), some writers argued that because “they had been living under the Ottoman Turks in a state tantamount slavery” this heavy “burden had crushed the moral fiber of the Greeks” (p.267). Baron de Tott, a passionate supporter of Montesquieu’s ‘climatic theory’, associated the state of the oppressed

⁵⁷ William Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1799, 2nd ed.), pp.448-449.

Greeks not only with the despotism of the Ottoman government, but also with the climate they were living in.

It is by considering, in this point of view, the descendants of Patroclus and Achilles, that one perceives that under the influence of the same climate, the despotism that has crushed the later Greeks . . . has marked them with the character of slavery . . .⁵⁸

According to Tott, ‘despotism’ is a psychological feature of the Turks. When this characteristic is combined with the climate Turks live in and their belief system, it reveals itself as a way of life and political regime. In addition to instigating a despotic society and government, Turks’ climate and religion also trigger their violent nature. As a result, Turks despise foreigners and foreign cultures so much that they prefer living in ignorance with their arrogant sense of pride. Tott argues:

If the climate which Turks inhabit relaxes their fibres, the despotism under which they groan transports them to violence. They are not unfrequently ferocious, their system of predestination adds to their fierceness; and the same prejudice that in a cold climate would have rendered them courageous, in a hot one produces nothing but fanaticism and rashness; the burning fever which elevates their brain, makes them despise everything that is not Turkish; and from that mode of reasoning with themselves, pride and ignorance are the natural result.⁵⁹

Western writers were so convinced about Turkish despotism that they sought to find excuses for the underdeveloped condition of the Greeks living in the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman despotism and oppression of minorities were perceived as the ‘norm’, because for the West, Turks were incapable of behaving in a non-barbaric way. The Western fanatic excitement for the Greek independence produced a caricature of the Turk, whose vices were so overrated that it turned into a “ferocious beast” (Schiffer, 1999). In reality, for the Western travelers, writing about the “oppression of the Greeks was more of a convenient means to vilify the Ottomans” rather than actually helping the Greeks for their independence (Turhan, 2003; p.38). Lady Craven even believes that “England would simply make a better

⁵⁸ Francis Baron De Tott, *Memoirs of the Baron de Tott on the Turks and Tartars* (Dublin, 1785), vol.1, p.5.

⁵⁹ Francis Baron De Tott, *Memoirs of the Baron de Tott on the Turks and Tartars* (Dublin, 1785), vol.1, p.6-7.

colonizer of Greece than the Ottomans” (Turhan, 2003; p.38). Western imperial powers were more concerned about colonizing the Ottoman lands than liberating the Christian minorities in the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman oppression of the minorities has been an ongoing theme in the Western representation of Turks, and still being frequently promoted in the modern popular media. The oppression of Greeks and Armenian people by the Ottoman Turks has been depicted in many contemporary films, which will be examined in the next chapter. Another prevalent Turkish feature in Orientalist discourse is ‘sensuality’. Turks are commonly depicted as ‘lustful or ‘lascivious’ in Orientalist accounts. Next, these characteristics will be explored in the context of Turkish female and male sexuality.

Harem and Lascivious Turkish Woman

The condition and appearance of Turkish women captivated the Western travelers, even before the 18th century. These travelers were interested in writing about the veils, costumes, behaviors and exotic beauty of Turkish women, while often speculating about their sensuality, and voluptuousness. Turkish women are often presented as lewd, promiscuous, and hypersexual in the Western travel accounts. For example, the British diplomat and historian Sir Paul Rycaut describes the Turkish women as “the most lascivious and immodest of all women” and suggests that they “excel in the most refined and ingenious subtilties [subtlety] to steal their pleasures” as the custom of segregating men from women heightens their desires (cited in Bohls, 1995; p.29). French traveler, Jean Dumont (a.k.a Baron de Carlscoon) portrays Turkish women as amorous and passionate. His remarks are as follows:

The Turkish women are the most charming creatures in the world: They seem to be made for love; their actions, gestures, discourse and looks are all amorous and admirably well fitted to kindle a soft and lasting passion. Since they have nothing else to do they make it their only business to please which they do successfully and in so natural and easy a manner.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Cited in Asli Cirakman (2002; p.50). The quote is taken from Jean Dumont, *A New Voyage to the Levant* (London, 1696), p.262.

Even though Dumont's representation of Turkish women seems relatively positive, it is actually degrading because he portrays them as servants whose only job is to satisfy male sexual appetite. British writer and traveler, Aaron Hill, views Turkish women as sexual predators and imagines what could happen if an ordinary man is surrounded by them.

So lascivious are their Inclinations, that if by the ingenuity of their Contrivances they can procure the Company of some Stranger in their Chamber, they claim unanimously an equal share of his Caresses, and proceed by Lots to the Enjoyment of his Person; nor can he permitted to leave them, till having exerted his utmost Vigour in the Embraces of the whole Company, he becomes incapable of further Service, and is dispatch'd with the Thanks and Presents of the oblig'd Family.⁶¹

In his 19th century travelogue, French writer Gustave Flaubert's descriptions of *Kuchuk Hanem* (meaning young lady in Turkish) are typically Oriental. Kuchuk Hanem is a Muslim woman who lived in Ottoman Egypt and worked as a dancer and courtesan to entertain men, especially the wealthy Western men. She represents excessive sexuality, promiscuity, and sensuality which are attributed to Muslims, as well as Turkish women. Said elaborates on the authoritarian Orientalist discourse and refers to Flaubert's depiction of her as a reflection of the Western dominance over the East.

She [Kuchuk Hanem] never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. *He* [Flaubert] spoke for and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was 'typically Oriental' (Said, 1978; p.6).

For the Western travelers, the most fascinating aspect of women in the Ottoman Empire was the *harem*, also known as *seraglio*, where the Ottoman Sultan kept countless beautiful women he captured or enslaved for his own pleasures. Other than the Ottoman Sultan himself, both the rich privileged men and the administrative elite of the Ottoman Empire, such as the governors, pashas and beys in the provinces, had harems in their private grounds. The 'imperial harem',

⁶¹ Cited in Elizabeth Bohls (1995; p.29). The quote is taken from Aaron Hill, *A Full and Just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1709).

as the biggest, richest, the most hierarchical and most popular of Ottoman harems, has become the stereotype for the Oriental harem, which is the epicenter of many sexual myths in Western writings. Harem comes from the Arabic word, *harām*, which means ‘forbidden’ and ‘sacred.’ Imperial harem was a sacred place for the Sultan’s wives and female relatives like his mother, sisters and daughters, as well as female slaves who were called concubines. No men were allowed into the harem except for eunuchs and the Sultan himself. Although no visitors were allowed into the harem, it has been the most popular theme of the Orientalist discourse as Western writers described the affairs within the harem using their imaginations and sexual fantasies. For example, Rycout comments on the sexual activities of Ottoman women and claims lesbianism is rampant in the harems. He states: “they die with amorous affections one to the other; especially the old Women court the young” (cited in Bohls, 1995; p.30). In her important work, *The Imperial Harem*, Leslie Peirce (1993) suggests that many works about the Ottoman Empire during the 16th and particularly 17th centuries involve descriptions of *harem*, which were written either by European travelers and ambassadors, or captives and renegades who had served in the Sultan’s palace.

The first detailed description of harem was written in the early 1600s by Ottaviano Bon, the Venetian representative in Istanbul. As the first-class diplomatic agent, he was instructed to send home reports about the Ottoman Court. Bon never entered the harem as it was forbidden for men other than the Sultan and eunuchs, who were castrated male servants. His descriptions of the harem mostly relied on his observations of the surrounding rooms in the Court (Penzer, 1936). Once, Bon also had an access to the *selamlık*, where the Sultan’s rooms were located next to the harem (Penzer, 1936; p.38). Bon’s reports were later translated by Robert Withers, as his own, and published without any acknowledgment in 1650 as *A Description of the Grand Signor’s Seraglio* (Penzer, 1936; Akalin 2001). In the book, Withers describes Turkish women as ‘deceptive, dishonest, and adulterous’ and continues:

And although the women may not be conversant with any other man than with their husbands, fathers, or brothers, and although they live in lodgings apart, by themselves, out of the sight of men, and go always abroad with their faces covered; yet many of them

being extraordinarily wanton, and very dishonest & lascivious, who taking the opportunity of their husband's absence, at the wars or in some long journey, under colour of going to the Baths, and being covered with all, go wither, and to whom they lust, knowing that the worst of it is be put away, if so be it should any time to be discovered.⁶²

Withers then goes on to elaborate on the sensuality of women in the harem and depicts a rather erotic image of the harem women and their sexual desires. He points out:

If they have a will to eat radishes, cucumbers, gourds, or such like meats, they are sent in unto them sliced, to deprive them of the means of playing wantons (cited in Bohls, 1995; p.30).

As suggested by Peirce (1993), these descriptions were usually “a mix of fact, hearsay, and fantasy” and therefore, “helped to sell books about the Ottomans and were therefore featured prominently” (p.114). The West has always been obsessed with the sexuality of Muslims and the harem is viewed as the prevalent symbol of Muslim sensuality (Peirce, 1993). The British traveler and physician Richard Madden describes the Turkish sensuality and the sexual dealings inside the harem as follows:

The orgies of the evening, in most harems, are conducted with all the levity of licentiousness . . . roars of laughter are to be heard in the adjoining houses; and . . . the gravity of the Turk during the day is only the exhaustion of his spirits from previous excitement (as cited in Schiffer, 1999; p.290).

In Oriental travel accounts, the harem represents Muslim ‘promiscuity’ as it is frequently described as a secluded part of the palace where the Sultan is surrounded by half-naked women and over-indulges in every conceivable kind of vice. For the West, the harem has typically represented sexual license and Oriental luxury, as well as confinement and oppression of women, which is also an indication of Ottoman ‘despotism.’ In Orientalist discourse, the harem is primarily characterized as an integral part of Islamic religion and it is considered as a theological component rather than a cultural one (MacLean & Matar, 2011). In

⁶² Cited by Asli Cirakman (2002; p.50). Source: Robert Withers, *A Description of Grans Signor's Seraglio or Turkish Emperour's Court* (London, 1650).

Western discourse, promiscuity, polygamy, sensuality and sexual vices are frequently attributed to Muslims and the Ottoman harem has become the symbol for all these concepts.

In her book, *Rethinking Orientalism*, Reina Lewis (2004) documents the representations of the harem described by both Western female travelers and Ottoman female writers that challenged the Oriental stereotypes. Lewis suggests that the characterizations of the harem by these women writers are not stereotypical, but rather “heterogeneous and contradictory” (p.13). The first Western female account of life inside the harem was written in 1717 by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who spent time in Constantinople during her husband’s ambassadorship to the Ottoman Empire. Her renowned *Embassy Letters* published in 1763 provides a much different account of the harem than the already prevalent Western representation of a place of sexual depravity and random cruelty (Lewis, 2004; p.13). In her letters, Montagu presents Ottoman women “as possessing freedoms not available to their European counterparts” (Lewis, 2004; p.13). However, Montagu’s descriptions of the harem did not alter the stereotypical image of the harem that has been predominant in Orientalist discourse, neither did Ottoman female writers’ insider accounts. Lewis explains this as follows:

By the time that Halide Edib, Zeyneb Hanim, Demetra Vaka Brown and Grace Ellison [Ottoman female writers] were writing in the early twentieth century, the West’s image of the secluded, polygamous Oriental had accrued the layers of myth, rumour and stereotype of a longstanding fascination. The vision of the harem as a sexualized realm of deviancy, cruelty and excess has animated some of the West’s best known examples of dominant Orientalism from fine art, to operas, to novels and popular literature (Lewis, 2004; p.96).

The main reason for these clichés to remain was the fictional novels and stories that became extremely popular. In addition to the travel accounts and memoirs, Western fantasies about the harem were even promoted further by these fictional stories and novels. One of the most popular ones, *Thousand and One Nights*, was published by the French Orientalist scholar Antoine Galland in twelve volumes during 1704-1717. It is a collection of manuscripts, folk tales and stories transcribed and translated by Galland from Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. Due to the European fascination with harem fantasies, Galland’s book, which is also

known as *Arabian Nights*, produced an unprecedented frenzy of excitement and became a phenomenon (Marzolph, 2004). Galland's collection was translated into English several times, some of which offered new editions, variations and extensions that generated an Oriental tale (Sallis, 1999). Among these translations, Richard Burton's version focused on "more erotic and crude passages" (Sallis, 1999; p.5). His translation was criticized for being "excessively literal . . . often giving rise to quaint and ugly effects" (Irwin, 1994; p.36). Burton was known for his interest in sex at the time, as his notes often concentrated on "curious sexual lore" (Irwin, 1994; p.33). Burton's translation helped enrich Europeans' erotic fantasies about the harem and false imagery about the Orient. The *Arabian Nights* created a literary sensation that affected mainstream European literature, particularly the writers of the Romantic movement, who were captivated by a mythical Orient that had no resemblance to any real Eastern place (Marzolph, 2004). Marzolph explains this imaginary world and how it inspires the writers by using Byron's term of 'poetic policy':

No attempt was ever made to describe urban scenes or depict social misery. Poverty was absent from this mythic Orient, its place taken by magical riches and sensual pleasures . . . This Orient gave writers a foil, an alternative world, a 'poetic policy,' as Byron put it (Marzolph, 2004; p.28).

With his literary criticism of Orientalist novels and travelogues, Edward Said (1978) explains what these kind of Oriental imagery and clichés mean to the Western readers as follows:

Oriental clichés: harems, princesses, princes, slaves, veils, dancing girls and boys, sherbets, ointments, and so on . . . the association is clearly made between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex . . . so the Orient was a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. Virtually no European writer who wrote on or traveled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself or herself from this quest (Said, 1978; p.190).

In Orientalist discourse, the representations of Ottoman imperial harem reveal a Western fantasy embellished with promiscuity, sensuality, sexual vices and lust. Western writers portrayed the women in the harem as caricatures, who live only for sexual pleasures but cannot satisfy their sexual appetite. In addition to Turkish

female sexuality, Western writers also probed into the sexuality of Turkish men, particularly focusing on the issues of ‘homosexuality’ and ‘sodomy.’ Turkish male sexuality will be analyzed next to have a better understanding of the stereotypical image of the ‘lustful Turk.’

The Lustful Turk

The excessive or perverted sexuality of the Turkish men was common knowledge in Western discourse even before the 18th century travelers and “the implication was that the Turks had more animality and less intellectual control over their instincts than Europeans” (Schiffer, 1999; p.253). For example, William Lithgow, traveler of the early 17th century, described the decadent sexual activities of Turkish men as follows:

They are extremely inclined to all sorts of lascivious luxury, and generally addicted, besides all their sensual and incestuous lusts, unto Sodomy, which they account as a dainty to digest all their other libidinous pleasures.⁶³

When the Turkish male sexuality is described in the Orientalist discourse, the main theme often appears to be *sodomy*. Lithgow’s observations about the Turkish male addiction to sodomy are also cited in Matar’s book, *Turks, Moors and Englishmen*. In Ottoman Morocco, Lithgow watched thousands of sodomitical boys wandering in the marketplace of Fez and “Moors buggering” them at midday, in the middle of the same marketplace, “without shame or punishment” (Matar, 1999; p.118). Another early 17th century traveler, Sir Henry Blount, wrote about ‘Catamites’ in the Ottoman Empire, while pointing out that sodomy was not considered a vice in Ottoman culture (cited in MacLean, 2004; p.149). These writers considered ‘sodomy’ as an exclusively Islamic sin and suggested that Muslims indulge in sodomy not only in the privacy of their bedroom, but also in the middle of marketplaces at midday. Likewise, other Western writers, travelers and captives who were eager to dehumanize and alterize the Turks and thus, render them as illegitimate viewed sodomy as the dividing line between the civilized Christians and the Ottoman Turks. In 1614, the British barber-surgeon William Davis

⁶³ Clifford E. Bosworth, *An Intrepid Scot: William Lithgow of Lanark’s Travels in the Ottoman Lands, North Africa and Central Europe, 1609-21*, (England, 2006), p.61.

suggested: “These Turks . . . they are altogether sodomites, and do all things contrary to a Christian” (as qtd in Matar, 1999; p.113). According to Matar, English writers used sodomy to represent the dividing line between the civilized Christians and uncivilized Muslims. The stereotype of ‘sodomitical Turk’ was created to mark the difference. Matar suggests:

Belonging to the former group signified normalcy, civility, and humanness, while sodomy signified barbarity. By predicating the barbarous on the sodomite, English writers created the stereotype of the Turk and the Moor (Matar, 1999; p.113).

Therefore, even before the 18th century, the construct of the Turk as ‘sodomite’ was well established in Western travel writings, indicating the European perception of Turkish ‘Otherness.’

Throughout the 18th century, the image of the ‘lustful Turk’, who has no morals and no limit to his sexual practices, became even more predominant. *Sodomy* was frequently seen as a typical characteristic of Turkish men. Western travelers viewed it as a widely accepted practice among Turks, even in public places, such as a Turkish bath. Lord Byron referred to the Turkish bath as the “marble paradise of sherbet and sodomy.”⁶⁴ He also wrote about the differences of sensual pleasures between Turks and English people, and underscored the image of Turkish man as a sexual demon fond of catamites. Lord Byron remarks:

I see not much difference between ourselves & the Turks, save that we have foreskins and they none . . . In England, the vices in fashion are whoring & drinking, in Turkey, Sodomy & smoking, we prefer a girl and a bottle, they a pipe and pathic.⁶⁵

It was even used as a justification for socioeconomic and demographic problems of the Ottoman Empire. According to William Eton, due to economic hardships created by the Ottoman despotism Turkish men hesitated to raise a family and preferred ‘sodomy’, which caused depopulation of the Ottoman Empire. He continues:

⁶⁴ George Gordon Byron in *Lord Byron: Selected Letters and Journals*, Ed. Leslie Marchand (London:John Murray, 1973/1982), p.213.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.36.

another cause of depopulation, the tyranny of the pashas who . . . impoverish the people, that they prevent marriages being so frequent as they are where there is less danger of being unable to maintain a family; and this gives rise to an abominable vice, which brings sterility with it, and when men are so degraded as to become habituated to it, they lose the natural instinct in man for the fair sex.⁶⁶

The Orientalist perception of Ottoman Turks as sodomites or pederasts (homosexuals who like young boys) became more common after Richard Burton's translation of *Arabian Nights* into English in 1885. In his translation, Burton's *Terminal Essay* refers to a geographical area named "Sotadic Zone" where these vices are permissible and are not considered as sin. In his book, *Exploring Turkish Cultures*, Laurence Raw cites Burton's comments as follows:

the whole of the so-called "Sotadic Zone" covering the whole of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia had been colonized by the "unspeakable Turk, a race of born pederasts." Evidently in the towns and cities of Anatolia "Le Vice [homosexuality] prevails more . . . than the villages, yet even these are infected (cited in Raw, 2011; p.241).

Western travelers like Burton often commented on the pervasiveness of Turkish pederasty and wrote about young boys being captured, enslaved, and sold to older men. These writers frequently suggested that sodomy and pederasty were not only acceptable, but also inherent among the elite of the Ottoman Empire (Matar, 1999). Therefore, sodomy was not only a perverted morality acceptable by Turks, but also represented a depraved political institution such as the Ottoman Empire, where homosexuality was institutionalized. However, there was sodomy in other societies, even in England too. Matar (1999) criticizes English writers for completely ignoring the existence of European homosexuality and sodomy in their writings, but consistently disparaging Muslims in general, and Turks in particular, for having these 'abominal vices.' He elaborates:

While homosexuality may have been either ignored by the general populace, or was so socially acceptable that it merited no mention by writers, it was repeatedly denounced in the Muslim context . . . The accounts therefore that describe Muslim sodomy are wide-ranging and appear in all genres – captivity accounts, drama, travel and, much less

⁶⁶ William Eton, *A Survey of the Turkish Empire* (London, 1799, 2nd ed.), p.275.

frequently and significantly, in government documents. Readers luxuriated in the degeneracy and deviance of the Muslims (Matar, 1999; p.114).

Furthermore, Matar (1999) claims that there are no texts in the 17th century England that place homosexuality in English cultural history, while nearly every text on the Muslim dominions refers to it, even if it is anecdotal and brief (p.126). English writers focused on these sexual concepts only if it involved Muslim or Turkish men, but never mentioned an incident that involved Englishmen.

Lastly, aside from the context of homosexuality and sodomy, the anonymous pornographic fiction, *The Lustful Turk* (a.k.a *Lascivious Scenes from a Harem*) published in 1828, also reinforced the myth of the sensual and licentious Turk in Western discourse. The novel is compiled of fictional letters written by an English woman named Emily, who is abducted by the pirates during her trip to India and taken to the harem of a Turk named Ali Dey. The book details all the sexual acts that take place between Emily, Ali Dey and the other women in the harem. The book combines abdominal vices, sexual violence and Orientalist harem fantasies all in one plot. Steven Marcus analyzes the sexual content in the book as follows:

The chief sexual fantasies represented in *The Lustful Turk* . . . have largely to do with the sexuality of domination, with that conception of male sexuality in which the aggressive and sadistic components almost exclusively prevail. Each of the separate stories is in this sense identical with the others. Each begins with a virgin, reluctant, proud, chaste, a young woman . . . She then undergoes a series of violent experiences, which ritually include beating, flogging, and defloration in the form of rape (Marcus, 2008; p.211)

The descriptions of sexual relationships between the Dey and his ladies include anal sex, sadistic pleasures, flagellation and rape. While offering harem fantasies and rendering sexual imagination, the book also embodies the stereotypical qualities of the Turks, such as cruelty, sexual aggression, perversion, lewdness and degeneracy, that have been prevalent in Western discourse since Middle Ages. Due to its popularity during the 19th century, *The Lustful Turk* was reprinted several times and it helped bolster the stereotype of ‘lustful Turk’ as defined by its title.

My brief examination of the 18th and 19th century Orientalist travel accounts indicate that Turks were often represented as indolent, backward, ignorant, despotic, and lustful by the Western travelers. The descriptions of Turkish indolence, ignorance, inferiority and backwardness in these accounts appear to be ethnocentric. As put forward by Said (1978), the clichés presented in the Orientalist discourse create a “system of truths” in which the representations about the people of Orient are “ethnocentric.” These representations are often used to reinforce the Western positional superiority against an inferior East. As the Ottoman Empire became a colonial prospect for Europe due its deteriorating condition, Western travelers focused on the Turks’ inability to govern and to administer the military, as well as to capitalize and utilize the resources in their country. Western writers used disparaging and demeaning imagery to characterize the Turks while they attempted to justify the opportunity for the colonization of the Ottoman Empire by the West. On the other hand, Ottoman despotism was viewed as one of the main reasons for the decline and decay of Empire. Based on the reviewed sources, it is probable to suggest that Oriental despotism is significantly associated with the Ottoman despotism in the Western travel accounts. Western travelers were also obsessed with the imperial harem, where polygamy, promiscuity, sensuality and sexual vices prevail. They often described the lascivious and promiscuous Turkish women without giving voice to them in their writings, indicating a Eurocentric superiority. The representations of Ottoman despotism and harem can still be found in the current popular media. Furthermore, in the travelogues, Turkish male sexuality is often defined by the representations of sodomy and homosexuality. The image of ‘lustful Turk’, which grew to be more widespread due to the pornographic novel with the same title, became a stereotype that has continued to exist even in modern media representations. This stereotypical image of ‘lustful Turk’ reinforced with the Turkish male sexual features of sodomy and homosexuality is still being promoted in many Western contemporary films. To better understand how these stereotypical characteristics of Turks in Orientalist travel accounts transformed into a Turkish stereotype in cinema, I will look into the representations of Turks in Western contemporary cinema in the next chapter. I will attempt to identify the associations between the cinematic characterizations of Turks and their stereotypical imagery in the Orientalist discourse.

CHAPTER 5

THE IMAGE OF TURKS IN WESTERN CONTEMPORARY CINEMA

The preceding chapters document the representations of Turks in Western discourse starting from the Crusades in the 11th century until the end of the 19th century when the Ottoman Empire neared its end. The literature review of the Western writings, including Crusades rhetoric, Renaissance humanist discourse, Early Modern English drama, and Orientalist travel accounts indicates that the European perception of Turks was primarily negative. Turks were frequently characterized as the ‘Other’ and represented stereotypically. The stereotypical features of Turks in the Western texts reviewed so far can be summarized with two phrases: ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk.’ In this thesis, I argue that these two stereotypical images also continue to exist in the Western contemporary cinema. I suggest that the Western perception of Turks has remained consistently negative as a continuation of the previous literature discussed so far and thus, generated cinematic images resembling the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk.’ In this chapter, I will examine the representations of Turks in Western cinema to determine the associations between these myths and the cinematic image of Turks. I will also investigate how the Western cinematic image of Turks has bolstered the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ and helped these images to survive into the 21st century. To achieve this goal, I will review a selected number of films involving Turkish portrayals in both the American and European contemporary cinema. First, it is essential to discuss the media representations of Turks as the Oriental ‘Other’ in order to distinguish the Turkish stereotype from the negative images of Muslims and Arabs which are also common in Western cinema.

The Media Image of Turks as the Oriental ‘Other’

The image of Turks in Western entertainment media has been consistently negative. It is highly unlikely to see a decent Turkish character or even a regular Turk who happens to be civil on the movie or TV screens. The cruel and corrupt Turk has been the norm whenever a Turkish portrait is presented in films or TV shows. Turks are characterized as cruel, violent, immoral, and lewd in most

popular films, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *Midnight Express* (1978), and *The Usual Suspects* (1995), as well as in many highly rated TV shows, such as *The West Wing*⁶⁷, and *24*⁶⁸. The demonization of Turks and Turkish culture by the popular media may be deemed emblematic of the deeply rooted Western attitude towards Muslim alterity. The demeaning images of Muslims in general, and Arabs in particular, have been quite common in Western media. Particularly in the US media, the vilification of Arabs and Muslims has become more frequent and customary since the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 (see Shaheen, 2008). However, long before the tragic events of September 11, negative portrayals of Muslims and Arabs, as well as Turks, had already existed in both the US and European media. For decades, scholars have intensely criticized the misrepresentations of Muslims and Arabs by the media. There has been ample amount of research about the distorted media images of Muslims, the biased media coverage of the Middle East, negative images of Arabs in US films and TV shows, as well as the misrepresentations of Arabs in history textbooks, literature, fiction novels, and popular culture (e.g. Gerges, 1997; Ghareeb, 1983; Kamalipour, 1997; Said, 1981; Shaheen, 2001 & 2008; Suleiman, 1999; Terry, 1985). Based on the previous research, one may argue that stereotypes of Muslims in the media stem from preconceived beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes by the West, which have been discussed in this thesis. Therefore, the misrepresentation of Muslims and Arabs in the entertainment media can be explained by the long-lasting Western tradition of stigmatizing Muslims and the Middle East. In other words, the Western popular media look at Muslims and the Middle East through an Orientalist lens.

Since Edward Said (1978) put forward the concept of ‘Orientalism’, it has been used to imply the Eurocentric exotic and biased representations of the East based on the ‘positional superiority’ of the West. When Said described ‘Orientalism’, he mainly referred to representations in academic writings, Western

⁶⁷ In “King Corn,” the 2005 episode of *The West Wing*, a young woman living in modern Turkey is convicted for having sex with her fiancée and is sentenced to execution for adultery. The beheading of the young woman is claimed to take place under the Islamic laws adopted by the Turkish government, which is not factually correct. No such laws exist in Turkey.

⁶⁸ In the 4th season of *24* (2005), a fictitious terrorist organization named ‘Turkish Crimson Jihad’ commits several terrorist attacks in the USA including blowing up a commuter train, kidnapping the daughter of the secretary of defense, breaching nuclear power plants, attempting to shoot down Air Force One, and even fire a nuclear warhead at Los Angeles.

travel literature, and novels as embodiments of Western ideology. However, he also suggests that mass media, such as television and films, have forced the Orientalist stereotypes into popular culture and “intensified the demonology of the mysterious Orient” (Said, 1978; p.26). The Orientalist stereotypes are so common in mass media that it is entrenched in popular culture and is mostly overlooked. Most of the popular media such as films, TV shows, magazines, comic books and the like, offer distorted images of the Middle Eastern people and the mysterious Orient. According to McAlister (2001), “Europeans and Americans have ‘seen’ an Orient that is the stuff of the children’s books and popular movies: a world of harems and magic lamps, mystery and decadence, irrationality and backwardness” (p.8). Western cinema has been one of the most influential entertainment media in propagating the Orientalist imagery. It inherited the narrative and visual traditions, as well as the cultural assumptions, on which Orientalism was based and filmmakers discovered how popular Orientalism could be (Bernstein & Studlar, 1997; p.3). Particularly, Hollywood films have often presented the Middle East and Islamic cultures to the audience through an Orientalist perspective, by using exotic esthetics.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Hollywood has been a significant influence on the Western perception of Muslims and the Middle East, because, in Orientalist sense, it has been “a site of representing the world abroad to US audiences” (Rosenblatt, 2009; p.61). Rosenblatt (2009) claims that Hollywood film industry exploited the Orient by transforming it into a commodity available for widespread visual consumption. Popular films such as, *The Sheik* (1921), *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), *The Son of Sheik* (1926), *Arabian Nights* (1942), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), and *Cleopatra* (1963)⁶⁹, epitomize the exotic Orientalist stereotypes about the Middle East. In these films, “the lands and cultures were depicted as beautiful, mysterious, and sexually alluring, while the inhabitants were barbaric, savage, and tyrannical” (Rosenblatt, 2009; p.61). However, since World War II, representations of the Middle East in Hollywood films have shifted from exotic Orientalist myths to more violent and vicious characterizations of Muslims. In *Covering Islam*, Edward Said (1981)

⁶⁹ Cited as examples of Orientalist films in Bernstein, M. & Studlar, G. (Eds). *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

points out “the old habit of exoticizing the Orient” no longer exists and “the romance and charm have now been completely eliminated” from the films (p.xxvii). He describes the new type of films as follows:

There is now; for example, a new wave of large scale feature films (one of them *True Lies*, Karabell reminds us, “had as its villains classic Arab terrorists, complete with glinty eyes and passionate desire to kill Americans”) [author’s parentheses] whose main purpose is to first demonize and dehumanize Muslims in order, second, to show an intrepid Western, usually American, hero killing them off (Said, 1981; p.xxvi).

In *Reel Bad Arabs*, Shaheen (2001) makes a similar observation suggesting that today’s Arab image on the screens is more ‘stereotypical’ than ever. He reminds his readers that the Arab Muslim has always been the cultural “other”, but Hollywood has made it worse by creating a distorted image of Arabs that look “different and threatening” (p.8).

Projected along racial and religious lines, the stereotypes are deeply ingrained in American cinema. . . . filmmakers have collectively indicted all Arabs as Public Enemy #1 – brutal, heartless, uncivilized, religious fanatics and money-mad cultural “others” bent on terrorizing civilized Westerners . . . Hollywood’s caricature of the Arab has prowled the silver screen. He is there to this day – repulsive and unrepresentative as ever (Shaheen, 2001; p.8).

When Muslims and Arabs are stereotyped and demonized constantly in American cinema, it is only natural to see the Turks lumped into the same group. Yet, Turks in films have their own unique set of characteristics besides the common qualities of the Muslim stereotype. Even though Turks are treated as the Oriental ‘Other’ in cinema, there is a peculiarity with the Turkish stereotype that sets it apart from the Arab image. In addition, there has been a uniformity and permanence in the Turkish cinematic image that neither Arabs nor other Muslims have embodied on the film screens. To better understand the uniformity of the Turkish stereotype, it is imperative to look at the distinction between the image of Arabs and Turks in Western cinema.

The Distinction between Arabs and Turks

The extent of Hollywood's ongoing vilification of Arabs is well documented by Jack Shaheen in both of his extensive works, *Reel Bad Arabs* (2001) and *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11* (2008). In these books, Shaheen criticizes American filmmakers for misrepresenting Arabs and Muslims and argues that Arabs remain the most maligned ethnic group in the history of Hollywood. Considering Hollywood's tradition of demonizing Arabs and other Muslim groups, why should one regard Turks differently? To answer this question, I shall again refer to Shaheen's work. Although Shaheen exposes the ongoing stereotyping of Arabs by Hollywood, he also acknowledges that the characterization of Arabs in films has improved lately, as Arab portrayals have become more "complex" and "even-handed" than in the past (Shaheen, 2008, p.35). Shaheen goes on to admit that several popular films offer more in-depth, nuanced and fair portrayals of Muslims and Arabs, characterizing them as descent, compassionate, regular human beings, and in some cases even as champions or victims. Some examples are, *The 13th Warrior* (1999), *Three Kings* (1999), *The Recruit* (2003), *Flightplan* (2005), *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), *Syriana* (2005), *Babel* (2006), *Rendition* (2007), *The Kite Runner* (2007), and *A Mighty Heart* (2007)⁷⁰. Lately, Hollywood producers, directors and screenwriters have become more sympathetic to the reactions of the Arab community in the US and therefore, they tend to create less offensive and biased Arab characters both in films and TV shows. Consequently, Muslim portraits become more nuanced and multifaceted in US films and TV series whereas the depictions of Turks remain constantly unfavorable and stereotypical. Unlike Arabs, the image of Turks in the US entertainment media has not improved. While more objective and impartial images of Muslims and Arabs emerge in Hollywood productions, the image of Turks in US films has continued to be uniform over the years. This chapter focuses on the negative stereotypical image of Turks in cinema and argues that Turkish portrayals have been consistently uniform without any nuance or improvement.

⁷⁰ The improvement in the representation of Arabs and Muslims are detailed in Chapter 3 of Jack Shaheen's book *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11*, (2008), p.35-43. For detailed description of Muslim and Arab portrayals in films, see Part 2 of the same book, p. 92-189.

In his book, *The Turk in America*, McCarthy (2010) makes the same argument and claims “despite great gains in cleansing film and television of overt prejudice, negative stereotypes of Turks have remained” (p.288). In films, Turks have often been depicted as ‘cruel’, ‘violent’, ‘murderous’, ‘treacherous’, ‘corrupt’, ‘sexually aggressive’ and ‘sexually perverted’. It is almost impossible to find a decent Turkish character in Hollywood films. Turks are frequently portrayed as the villain, the ruthless criminal, the evil official, the thug, the treacherous sidekick, the corrupt drug addict, the murderer, the rapist, the sexually deviant male or the promiscuous, lustful female.⁷¹ According to Burris (2008), filmmakers depict Turkey as “a merciless and monstrous land” and the Turk as “a threat to normality” at the expense of the Turkish nation (p.165). His argument regarding the ‘Otherness’ of the Turks in films is as follows:

From the earliest days of the silver screen, filmmakers have portrayed Turkish foreignness as the antithesis of normality. Because of its perceived “otherness,” the Turk is set up as a straw man whose way of life is seen as “different” beyond reconciliation (Burris, 2008, p.165).

From an Orientalist perspective, the cinematic image of a Turk is always equipped with negative moral and sometimes physical features, and is manifested as the binary opposite of the Western hero. The actions taken by the Turkish villain or antagonist are unacceptable, indecent, immoral, and repulsive as opposed to the Western protagonist’s righteous characteristics. Burris (2008) points out to this binary opposition in films and emphasizes how the Turkish image as the ‘Other’ is contrasted with the Western ‘Self’ and helps bolster the Western image. He suggests:

‘Turkish’ injustice is juxtaposed with ‘Western’ law and order; backwardness with sophistication; masculine oppression with gender equality; poverty with economic success; and Islam with Christianity. When these supposed Turkish differences are revealed as perverse and morally bankrupt, the collective identity of the audience is confirmed and strengthened (Burris, 2008; p.165).

⁷¹ The stereotypical portrayals of Turks in Western films are documented in “Sultans of Silver Screen: The Turk in Reactionary Cinema” by Gregory Burris (2008), *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 35(4), 164-173.

Therefore, as the ‘polar opposite’ of the Western hero, the Turkish character always appears to be inferior and reprehensible. The inferiority of the East versus the superiority of the West is recognized, once again, through the Turkish portrayals in films. Even though Hollywood may be motivated by an Orientalist mindset when depicting Turks, it is still puzzling to see uniformity, homogeneity and consistency only in the Turkish stereotype, whereas Arab and Muslim portrayals are increasingly evolving and becoming more multidimensional. In this thesis, I argue that the stereotypical image of Turks in films is not only a product of prior discourses discussed so far in this thesis, but also a continuation of the *Terrible Turk* myth. Besides the “positional superiority” suggested by Edward Said in *Orientalism*, the historical image of Turks inspired filmmakers to create an image that reminds us the myth of the ‘terrible Turk’ which has been discussed in the previous chapters. To better understand the uniformity of the Turkish stereotypical image in Western cinema and its associations with the myth of the ‘Terrible Turk’, a closer look at the Turkish portrayals in films is needed.

The Hollywood Image of Turks

Since the 1950s, Hollywood’s representation of Turks has been almost like a caricature and the cruelty of Turks has been reaffirmed repeatedly with the Turkish portraits in films such as, *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *America, America* (1963), *Midnight Express* (1978), *The Usual Suspects* (1995), *Eastern Promises* (2007) and many others. Turks have been constantly vilified as ‘cruel, murderous, violent, corrupt, vile, and lewd.’ In all of the aforementioned popular films and in many others, the Turkish character is reminiscent of the ‘terrible Turk’ image featured in Western discourse and being examined in this thesis so far. As Burris (2008) suggests, filmmakers have perpetuated the longstanding image of the ‘terrible Turk’ since the early days of cinema. Even in 1904, The French silent film *Le Bourreau Turc*, which is known in the US as *The Terrible Turkish Executioner*, mocked Turkish injustice by showing four prisoners at an Istanbul bazaar reattach their own freshly decapitated heads and seek revenge against their executioner (Burris, 2008). The film humorously showed “the apparent barbarism of the Turk”

(Burris, 2008; p.166). In most Western films, the ‘Turk’ represents ‘cruelty’, ‘violence’, ‘barbarism’, ‘oppression’, ‘corruption’ and ‘sexual perversion’. To be able to determine the symbolic associations between Turks’ historical image and their stereotypical image in Western cinema, it is crucial to have a closer look at the characteristics that are frequently attributed to Turks in films.

The Turk as the Despot

Ottoman despotism and tyranny have been the focus of some Western films. These films depict Turks as ‘oppressors’ and even in some cases, as ‘mass murderers’ when they show the minorities under the despotic regime of the Ottoman Empire. For example, *America America* (1963) offers the audience a glimpse of Ottoman despotism and cruelty. The film depicts how minorities living in Turkey were oppressed and brutalized by the Ottoman government. In the film, Turks are shown assaulting the Greek and Armenian villages, and massacring the Christians. The director and screenwriter of the film, Elia Kazan, is from a Greek family that emigrated to the United States from the land of the Ottoman Empire. The film tells the story of Kazan’s paternal Uncle, Stavros, who was the first in the family to escape from the Turkish atrocities and come to America. In the film, the despotic Ottoman government, as the oppressor of the Greek minority, is juxtaposed with the United States, as the land of freedom and opportunities. Because Ottoman Turks are often represented as the oppressors of the minorities in Western discourse, the film was widely embraced by the reviewers without questioning its ideological message. In films, the themes of ethnic cleansing, massacres, and even genocide are more compelling whenever Turks are portrayed as the antagonists. Therefore, such cinematic portrayals become more believable, as the audience would accept Turks in that role more easily without questioning it. Keeping in mind ‘intertextuality’⁷² a term coined by Julia Kristeva which was discussed in Chapter 1, the insertion of history into text helps filmmakers create a more persuasive storyline based on the characterization of Turks.

More recently, Atom Egoyan’s film *Ararat* (2002) presents the Ottoman atrocities towards the Armenian minorities in Turkey. The storyline centers around

⁷² Julia Kristeva’s term ‘intertextuality’ is discussed by Norman Fairclough in *Discourse and Social Change* (1993/2009), p.102.

a film director, Edward Saroyan (Charles Aznavour), who wants to make a movie about the alleged ‘Armenian Genocide’ by the Ottoman Empire during World War I. The film offers two timelines, as a ‘movie within a movie’, showing both the present day and the past, when the genocide took place in Ottoman Turkey. Although *Ararat* is a film about the Turks and Armenians, there is only one Turkish character in the film, a Canadian born half-Turkish homosexual man named Ali (Elias Coteas). Ali is an actor who plays the brutal Turkish governor, Cevdet Bey, in Edward’s film that portrays the Turks as genocidal murderers. Ali’s character, governor Cevdet Bey, reaffirms the image of ‘terrible Turk’ for the audience. Furthermore, Ali himself, by constantly denying the Ottoman atrocities towards the Armenians, reminds the audience that modern day Turks and the Turkish government are in denial of the ‘Armenian Genocide.’ Although *Ararat*’s director and writer, Egoyan, rejects the allegations of ‘propaganda’, his film makes references to Hitler and likens the Turks to Nazis, while equating Armenians to Jews.⁷³ The film is loosely based on the book, *An American Physician in Turkey* by Clarence Ussher who is a missionary. According to McCarthy (2010), Ussher “is so blinded by his prejudice that even his English and American contemporaries spoke of his innate dislike of Turks and his inordinate fanaticism” (p.288). *Ararat* also alludes to the Armenian terrorist organization, ASALA that plotted against the Turkish government in 1970s and 1980s, by assassinating Turkish diplomats and civilians. Raffi, one of the main characters in *Ararat*, sympathizes with his late father, who was an ASALA member and was killed trying to assassinate a Turkish diplomat. The image of the ‘terrible Turk’ is so forceful that even terrorist acts against the Turkish Republic and the modern-day Turks, who have nothing to do with the wrongdoings of the Ottoman Empire, seem to be justified in the film.⁷⁴ In the film, there is an underlying message suggesting that historical facts of the past are always subject to interpretation depending on personal bias and tradition. The long interrogation of Raffi by a customs officer, when he was suspected of

⁷³ See the article, “Art and Propaganda: Ararat Case Study- Part 2” by Sedat Laciner in *The Journal of Turkish Weekly*. Also available as a book with the same title by Sedat Laciner & Senol Kantarci, ASAM Institute for Armenian Research (2002).

⁷⁴ The reaction of the Armenian diaspora towards the ASALA assassinations, as well as Atom Egoyan’s response, are being discussed in the chapter titled “Telling a Horror Story Conscientiously: Representing the Armenian Genocide from Open House to Ararat” by Lisa Siraganian, from the book, *Image and Territory: Essays on Atom Egoyan* (2007). Atom Egoyan remarks “I was completely torn... While one side of me could understand the rage that informed these acts, I was also appalled by the cold-blooded nature of these killings” (p.135).

smuggling drugs into Canada, establishes this underlying message. Whether Raffi is telling the truth or not during this interrogation metaphorically represents the critical question of historical reality.

Ottoman oppression towards minorities is depicted in other films that are not perceived as propaganda tools. For example, the British film *Pascali's Island* (1988) presents similar accounts of minority massacres in association with the brutal images of the greedy Turkish officials of a Greek Island controlled by the Ottoman Empire. The film also portrays the Turkish Pasha of the island as a cruel and murderous Ottoman ruler. In the film, Pascali (Ben Kingsley) works as a spy for the Ottoman Sultan, but finds himself in the middle of bizarre events after a British archaeologist arrives at the island and becomes romantically involved with the Austrian painter (Helen Mirren), whom Pascali secretly was in love with. Because of Pascali's obsessive jealousy and condemnation, the lovers are murdered by the Turkish Pasha. In *Pascali's Island*, as well as in *America America* and *Ararat*, the Turkish characters underscore the image of Ottoman Turks as 'barbarian, cruel, tyrannical, murderous' as discussed in the previous chapters. Therefore, the Turkish portrayals in these films become more compelling and believable. Ottoman oppression and cruelty are depicted even in a recent *Dracula* film titled *Dracula Untold* (2014). In this film, Vlad the Impaler, the prince of Wallachia and Transylvania, is taken hostage by the Ottomans and trained to be a Janissary warrior. When he becomes an Ottoman soldier, he turns into a merciless murderer and gets the nickname 'impaler' by killing thousands of people. The film implies that Vlad transforms into a killer due to the Ottoman military training. Therefore, it attests that the natural state of a Turkish soldier is a 'bloodthirsty murderer.' After Vlad returns home to rule his own domains, Sultan Mehmed II (the conqueror of Constantinople) comes to demand 1000 boys from Vlad's domains, including his own son. Collecting young boys from the annexed Ottoman territories was a common practice called *devshirme*, which served the purpose of training Janissary soldiers. In the film, it underscores the Ottoman despotism and the oppression that the Christian population was subjected to. It is also a justification for Vlad's later attempt to turn into a vampire and acquire supernatural powers to resist the invasion of Ottoman Turks led by Sultan Mehmed II.

The Turk as the Criminal, Murderer or the Barbarian

In Western cinema, Turkish barbarism and cruelty are not reserved solely for the portrayals of the Ottoman Empire. The films that tell modern-day stories also portray Turks negatively. Particularly, Hollywood films have often exploited the so-called ‘barbarism’, ‘violence’ and ‘cruelty’ of the Turks by portraying them as a ‘boogeyman’ or a ‘villain’. For example, in *The Usual Suspects* (1995), one of the main characters, Verbal Kint (Kevin Spacey) fabricates a fictitious criminal mastermind named *Kayser Soze*, while being interrogated by the police. Kayser Soze is described as ruthless, violent and a bloodthirsty murderer. His cruelty is legendary to an extent that he murdered his own family. Reminiscent of the Ottoman Sultans, who were accustomed to the practice of ‘fratricide’, the film presents Kayser Soze as a Turk, who is capable of killing his own family members. When the name of Kayser Soze is given to the police as the ‘Turkish ruthless criminal’, they release the ‘real’ criminal without even questioning the facts. *Usual Suspects* is a critically acclaimed film that received several award nominations. The film won the BAFTA award, which is an equivalent of British Oscars, for its original screenplay. The same year the film also won the Oscar for the screenplay category, along with Kevin Spacey as the actor in a supporting role category. Due to the high recognition the film has received, it has reached a larger audience and become more popular. Thus, Kayser Soze has become a mythical film character, like the myth of ‘terrible Turk’, who is widely known by the movie audience worldwide. After 20 years, the film is still being watched on DVD and online.

The characterization of Turks as bloodthirsty murderers is also found in King *Solomon’s Mines* (1985). The evil Turkish slave trader and bandit named Dogati (John Rhys-Davies) collaborates with a Nazi colonel for a treasure quest on a German military expedition. During the quest, they go into a tribal village in Africa and attack the villagers with full force. When they run into a moat of quicksand and have trouble crossing it, Dogati kills both the colonel’s men and his own men, and uses the dead bodies as stepping stones to cross the moat. Once again, the ‘terrible Turk’ image is reaffirmed as Dogati acts even more ruthless and barbaric than a Nazi colonel. In *America America* (1995), during an attack of Ottoman soldiers, a group of helpless Armenian villagers, mostly women and children, hide in a church for safety. The church is set to fire and burned to ashes

by the Ottoman soldiers, reinforcing the image of Turks as ‘cruel’ and ‘murderous’. The tragic events happen in the Greek protagonist Stavros’s village. Later, Stavros befriends a duplicitous Turkish bandit named Abdul, who steals his money and family belongings. Furthermore, Abdul tries to kill Stavros to get the three coins that he swallowed, but Stavros stabs him in self-defense. The portrait of Abdul reminds the audience of the brutal Turkish soldiers who attacked Stavros’s village and killed both Greeks and Armenians. Therefore, the pain, frustrations, and hardships that Stavros has gone through, because of the Turks, justify the murder of Abdul.

The ‘murderous’ Turk pattern continues with a more recent critically acclaimed film named *Eastern Promises* (2007). The opening scene of the film shows a young Turkish man named Ekrem (Joseph Altin) walking into his uncle’s barber shop in London. While his uncle Azim (Mina E. Mina) is cutting her customer Soyka’s (Aleksander Mikic) hair, Ekrem locks the door, closes the shades and changes the sign from ‘open’ to ‘closed.’ When Azim introduces his nephew to Soyka, Ekrem gets extremely nervous. Azim gives his razor blade to Ekrem, tells him to move forward as planned and urges him to kill Soyka. Ekrem slits Soyka’s throat with the razor blade and lets him die painfully. Later in the film, the audience discovers that Azim helped the Russian mafia kill Soyka. As a Turk, Azim is portrayed not only as a paid killer, but also as a mentor who helps his nephew with his first murder. Once again, the image of the Turk both as a murderer and a criminal is re-affirmed. *Eastern Promises* drew more attention and audience after the film was nominated for Golden Globe awards in both best motion picture and best actor categories for Viggo Mortensen, who plays the lead role as the Russian mobster, Nikolai. Viggo Mortensen was also nominated for an Oscar for his acting in a leading role.

In other films, Turks are also depicted as shady businessmen or organized crime members, like arms dealers or drug dealers, as seen in *International* (2009) which is a popular film about an Interpol agent (Clive Owen) and an American district attorney (Naomi Watts) who investigate the corruption in a fictitious bank. The film also portrays a Turkish duplicitous businessman named Ahmet Sunay (Haluk Bilginer). Sunay is an aerotech manufacturer who sells his navigation

technology to both sides of the opposition and thus, extends the international conflicts in countries. Engaging in drug dealing is one of the common crimes Turkish characters commit in films and Turkey is represented as a country that supplies narcotics to the world. As discussed in the preceding chapter, it is a stereotypical feature reinforced by the Orientalist perception of Turks as lazy, indolent people who smoke pipe or opium all day. For example, in *Mediterraneo* (1991), a film about a group of Italian soldiers stationed on a Greek island during World War II, the lone Turkish fisherman named Aziz arrives at the island and offers the Italian soldiers hashish. When the soldiers fell asleep due to the drug's effects, Aziz robs them taking away their weapons, equipment and valuables. After the island's Orthodox priest learns about this, he laughs and says: "Never trust the Turks." *Mediterraneo* won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1991 and has been viewed by a large audience worldwide. In *Buffalo Soldiers* (2001), Ray Elwood (Joaquin Phoenix) is an American soldier who is stationed at a military base in Germany. Ray is portrayed as a sympathetic character that passes time by cooking high-grade Turkish morphine into high-grade heroin. Unlike Ray, his Turkish drug supplier, nicknamed the *Turk*, is depicted as an unsympathetic and cruel businessman. The Turk, played by the Turkish actor Haluk Bilginer, is ready to kill Ray rather than see his drug profits drop. Although both Ray and the Turk are corrupt in their own ways, the Turk is presented as an unattractive and one-dimensional character in contrast with Ray's likability and nuances. In some films, sometimes just the mention of Turks may be enough to explain where the drug problem originates. For example, in Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972), the character who introduces the narcotics trade to the Italian mafia is known as the 'Turk.'⁷⁵ Also, in *The French Connection* (1971), Turkish farmers sell the opium poppies to the underworld market where it is converted into heroin. The heroin is smuggled from Turkey into France and then, transported into the United States.

The Turk as Sexual Beast

Western filmmakers usually eroticize Turks in their films by either depicting them as lascivious, sensual, lustful, and promiscuous, or showing them engaging in abnormal or forceful sexual conduct. Although Turkish sexuality is

⁷⁵ Cited in "Sultans of Silver Screen: The Turk in Reactionary Cinema" by Gregory Burris (2008), published in *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 35(4), p.168.

sometimes reflected as an alluring quality and as the realization of repressed sexual fantasies, more often, the Turk is seen as ‘sexual beast’ to repulse (Burris, 2008). The audience is so familiar with the gruesome Turkish sexuality that sometimes it is sufficient for the filmmakers to mention the ‘Turk’ to convey the image of a sexual predator. For example, in *A Knight’s Tale* (2001) the film’s hero, William Thatcher (Heath Ledger) is introduced to a crowd as the knight who once “saved a fatherless beauty from the would-be ravishings of her dreadful Turkish uncle.” By the same token, Turks may also be characterized as repugnant people who even target children for sex. The Steven Seagal action film, *Out of Reach* (2004), shows a sex-trafficking network that preys on orphans as being operated from the Turkish embassy in Warsaw, Poland.⁷⁶ The sexuality of Turks in Western films needs to be examined under the categories of female and male sexuality. First, I will have a closer look at the Turkish female sexuality in the context of harem and promiscuity.

Harem Women

Oddly, despite the predominant representations of harem and Turkish women in the Orientalist travel literature, it is not so common to see Turkish women in Western cinema as erotic, voluptuous and seductive harem girls, who desire sensuality and offer sexual pleasures. Most of the harem representations on the movie screens involve either Arab harem girls or Western women abducted and trapped in the harem of an Arab sheik or chieftain. Popular films like *The Sheik* (1921), *The Thief of Baghdad* (1924), *The Son of the Sheik* (1926), *Kismet* (1955), *Road to Morocco* (1942), and *Harum Scarum* (1965) all show harems in Arabic lands, rather than showing Turkish women in Ottoman imperial harem. In such films, the Orientalist description of the Ottoman imperial harem manifests itself in the Arabic settings, involving either Arab women living in the harem or Western women who are forced to be in the harem. Inspired by the Orientalist travel accounts and novels that were discussed in the previous chapter, these popular films exploit the Western harem fantasies about polygamy, sensuality, lesbianism

⁷⁶ Details of such films that involve Turks’ aggressive sexual behavior and immorality towards children are given in “Sultans of Silver Screen: The Turk in Reactionary Cinema” by Gregory Burris (2008), published in *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 35(4), 170-171.

and eroticism. Shohat (1991) explains this Orientalist pattern in Hollywood films as follows:

The topos of the harem in contemporary popular culture draws, of course, on a long history of Orientalist fantasies. Western voyagers had no conceivable means of access to harems . . . Yet Western texts delineate life in the harems with great assurance and exactitude (Shohat, 1991; p.49).

As with voyeuristic anthropological studies and moralistic travel literature concerning non-normative conceptions of sexuality, Western cinema diffused the anachronistic but still Victorian obsession with sexuality through the cinematic apparatus (Shohat, 1991; p.48).

The harem scenes in Western films are not necessarily Ottoman imperial harems but still reflect the European obsession with the harem concept, which is a product of the Orientalist imagination.

The film called *The Favorite* (1989, a.k.a *Intimate Power*) is a rare example for the Turkish harem representation because it specifically shows the Ottoman imperial harem rather than a generic harem. It is a film inspired by the true story of a French woman, named Aimée du Buc de Rivéry (1776-1817), who was captured in the sea by the Barbary Corsairs and forced into the Ottoman Sultan's harem in Turkey. The film shows a Turkish harem woman attempting to kiss and fondle the French protagonist, Aimée, while she is sleeping. Because of the Western obsession and fantasies about lesbianism in harems, Western filmmakers often emphasize lesbian sexual endeavors when describing Turkish female sexuality. Besides the common lesbianism theme, it is unlikely to see Turkish female sexuality explored in Western cinema. For example, in the TV movie, *Dark Holiday* (1989), the Turkish female prison guard is sexually attracted to the American woman, who was imprisoned in Turkey for smuggling an antique while she was on vacation there. In *America America* (1963), on the other hand, Elia Kazan depicts Turkish women as 'promiscuous' and 'unattractive'. In the film, the character of Kazan's uncle Stavros repeatedly rejects the sexual opportunities presented by the promiscuous Turkish women. In a scene, he is offered two chubby and bad-looking Turkish women who dance for him vulgarly, manifesting a beast like sexuality. To emphasize their sexuality, their panderer refers to one of the

women as 'beast.' Later in the film, Stavros finally surrenders to the Turkish lasciviousness and engages in sexual activity with a veiled female prostitute, who uses this opportunity to steal his money. Therefore, Turkish women are represented as not only lewd, but also deceitful. Overall, despite the sparse number of portrayals, Turkish female sexuality is often identified with promiscuity, lasciviousness, lesbianism and immorality in Western cinema. On the other hand, there is a substantial amount of Western films that characterize the sexual aggression, homosexuality and sexual perversion of Turkish men.

Turkish Men: Sexual Aggression and Homosexuality

A significant part of the Turkish stereotypical image in Western cinema embodies male sexuality given that Turkish men are often characterized as a 'sexual monster'. Even silent films show Turkish men abducting Western women, or trying to force them for sexual intimacy, usually by raping them. For example in *The Sixteenth Wife* (1917), an American dancer is kidnapped by a Turk named Kadir, who wants her to become his 16th wife.⁷⁷ Another silent film, *Virgin of Stamboul* (1920) shows a poor girl in the streets of Istanbul (Constantinople), who witnesses a man, named Ahmed Hamid, murdering someone.⁷⁸ To silence her, Ahmed forces the girl into his harem, but when she refuses, he takes her to his fortified camp outside the city walls. After the silent films, the representation of Turkish men in cinema as sexual predators has also continued in contemporary Western cinema. Portrayals of Turkish sultans or beys (chieftains), who enslave Western women and restrain them in their harems for their sexual appetite, exist even in the modern day entertainment media. Besides the aforementioned film, *The Favorite* (1989), the American TV movie titled *Harem* (1986) is another example of the Turkish male desire to subdue a Western woman in his harem.

In contemporary Hollywood films, Turkish male characters usually possess two distinctive sexual qualities: sexual aggression, and homosexuality. Turkish men are commonly depicted as aggressive sexual predators who abuse or assault women. Furthermore, they are presented as tough looking macho men who secretly

⁷⁷ The portrayals of Turks are documented in "Sultans of Silver Screen: The Turk in Reactionary Cinema" by Gregory Burris (2008), *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 35(4), 164-173.

⁷⁸ Gregory Burris (2008). "Sultans of Silver Screen: The Turk in Reactionary Cinema" *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 35(4), 164-173.

enjoy homosexual relationships and particularly prey on Western men. The prevailing Turkish homosexuality theme is derived from the prior Orientalist writings involving Turkish ‘sodomy’, which were discussed in the previous chapter. Not only in Orientalist travelogue, but also in earlier Western texts during Renaissance and Early Modern period, Turks were commonly described as ‘sodomites’. In particular, English writers helped create the stereotype of ‘lustful Turk’ who enjoys ‘sodomy.’ In Western discourse, the representations of sodomy among Muslims and Turks are more common than those among the native people in colonial discourse. Matar (1999) suggests that there are even more allusions to Muslim sodomy in the Western writings about Ottoman Empire than the colonial discourse on Americas.⁷⁹ Inspired by the Turkish men’s so-called obsession with sodomy, Western filmmakers often show them engaging in homosexual acts that are sometimes consensual but often times not. The Turk attempts to rape a man more often than not if his homosexual urge is denied. If there is no actual rape in the film, there is always a sexual innuendo for the audience regarding the sodomitical intentions of the Turkish male character. Apart from these typical qualities, they may also be portrayed as bisexuals or sexual perverts. For example, in *Pascali’s Island* (1988), bisexuality is attributed to the Ottoman spy, Pascali (Ben Kingsley), although his Turkishness is never made clear in the film. When Pascali realizes that the woman he secretly loves is having an affair with another man, he tries to recover from his sexual frustration by soliciting the services of a Turkish boy in a Turkish bath (hamam). Because Pascali is perceived as a straight Ottoman, the bath scene exposes his bisexuality, while at the same time, emphasizes the Turkish passion for homosexual conduct. This scene also underscores the representation of Turkish baths in the Orientalists texts as a meeting place for homosexual encounters.

Undoubtedly, the films that emphasize Turkish male sexuality and cruelty the most are *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) and *Midnight Express* (1978). In these two films, Turkish portrayals epitomize the historical image of the Turks as the ‘terrible Turk’. *Lawrence of Arabia* is inspired by the story of T.E. Lawrence, a British

⁷⁹ Nabil Matar documents the references to Muslim ‘sodomy’ in English writings during Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline England, in his book titled *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery*, (1999), p.109-127.

army officer who helped the Arabs revolt against the Ottoman Turks during World War I. Despite the film's huge financial and critical success, it has been considered as an Orientalist film by most scholars (see Rosenblatt, 2009; Shohat, 1991). The film's portrayals of Turks are particularly noteworthy, as they appear strikingly worse compared to the Arabs in the film. The representations of Turks in *Lawrence of Arabia* will be examined closely because the film attests the uniformity of the Turkish image, and therefore supports the argument made in this chapter. Moreover, *Midnight Express* is another example that shows the utmost Turkish stereotype inspired by the historical image of Turks. This film not only solidifies the 'terrible Turk' image on the movie screens, but also takes it beyond by turning it into a 'myth' in popular culture. Therefore, it is essential to look into *Midnight Express* and its implications on the image of Turks in general. First, I will examine the representation of Turks in *Lawrence of Arabia* and analyze the cinematic image of Turks as a juxtaposition of Arabs in this film.

Lawrence of Arabia (1962)

Lawrence of Arabia is based on the story of T.E. Lawrence, an archetypal English hero who single-handedly undertook the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Turks and enabled the liberation of Arabs from the Ottoman Empire. It is mostly a British-made film that was directed by David Lean and produced by the Hollywood independent producer, Sam Spiegel. The film was backed by the American film company, Columbia Pictures, which managed the marketing and distribution of the film all around the world. Based on the life of T.E. Lawrence, the screenplay was a collaboration of British and American screenwriters, Robert Bolt and Michael Wilson, respectively. Praised by the critics, *Lawrence of Arabia* became a huge success and received ten Academy Award nominations, including best director, best picture, best screenplay, and Peter O'Toole as best actor for his portrayal of T.E. Lawrence. Among these nominations, the film earned the best picture and best director Oscars.

As *Lawrence of Arabia* is considered an Orientalist film, it is critical for this study to understand the content of T.E. Lawrence's book, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, which inspired the film. Published in 1922, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* is T.E. Lawrence's autobiographical book about his involvement in the Arab revolt

and the events transpired during the liberation of Arabs. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1978) harshly criticizes Lawrence's book as an "Orientalist discourse", a "storylike work" and accuses him of being an 'Orientalist-as-agent' and "imperial agent" (p.238-240).

if the collective academic endeavor called Orientalism was a bureaucratic institution based on a certain conservative vision of the Orient, then the servants of such a vision in the Orient were imperial agents like T.E. Lawrence. In his work we can see most clearly the conflict between narrative history and vision, as – in his words – the "new Imperialism" attempted "an active tide of imposing responsibility on the local peoples [of the Orient]." . . . It would be important, nevertheless, never to let the Orient go its own way or get out of hand, the canonical view being that Orientals had no tradition of freedom (Said, 1978; 240-241).

Said regards Lawrence's biography as the story of a typical Orientalist view based on the preconception of "uncivilized" East (Orient) guided and liberated by the "sophisticated" West. He elaborates:

In any event, what matters to Lawrence is that as a white expert, the legatee of years of academic and popular wisdom about the Orient, he is able to subordinate his style of being to theirs, thereafter to assume the role of Oriental prophet giving shape to a movement in the "new Asia" (Said, 1978; p.243).

Said (1978) accuses T.E. Lawrence of being an archetypal Orientalist who wrote a biased account of Arab revolt and reduced the entire narrative to *his* vision of himself and the Orient. According to Said, it is Lawrence's version of the Orient that counts. He suggests:

Indeed, what Lawrence presents to the reader is an unmediated expert power – the power to be, for a brief time, the Orient. All the events putatively ascribed to the historical Arab revolt are reduced finally to Lawrence's experiences on its behalf. In such a case . . . one voice becomes the whole history, and – for the White Westerner, as reader or writer – the only kind of Orient it is possible to know (Said, 1978; 243).

Seven Pillars of Wisdom exemplifies a white-man who fights along with the Arabs, on behalf of colonial power, and liberates them from the despotism of Ottoman Turks. It is Lawrence who carries the storyline, Lawrence who gives shape to the

Arab revolt, and Lawrence who directs its strategy (Macfie, 2007). Said criticizes this Western authority exemplified by Lawrence:

The British vision, exemplified by Lawrence, is of the mainstream Orient, of peoples, political organizations, and movements guided and held in check by the White Man's expert tutelage; the Orient is "our" Orient, "our" people, "our" dominions (Said, 1978; p.245).

Seven Pillars of Wisdom is Lawrence's version of the Arab revolt, during which he sees himself as the progressive Western man who leads the helpless and unsophisticated Arabs to have their independence. Said is not the only scholar who criticizes Lawrence's subjective description of Arabs' liberation from the yoke of the Ottoman Turks. Some historians, particularly Arab historians, also dispute Lawrence's account of the Arab revolt and rebuff it as a work of history because of the alleged distortions of fact.⁸⁰ For example, in his biography of T.E. Lawrence, Suleiman Mousa writes that Arab revolt was predominantly an Arab affair and that Lawrence exaggerated his own part in it, which was a minor one, and gave insufficient credit to the Arab leaders and fighters (cited in Mack, 1976; p.181). Based on his review of the historians' critiques, Mack (1976) suggests that there are distortions in the *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. His remarks are as follows:

The distortions and inaccuracy result from Lawrence's need, deriving from the conflicts and his self-regard, to elevate the tale to epic proportions and to make of himself a contemporary legendary figure. The legend-making did not of course end with *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. The Lawrence of myth continued to grow and be enriched by the tales of he told his friends (from which, once they are retold, it is impossible to distinguish the embellishment and embroidering that is Lawrence's from that of his friends and biographers) and especially from the accounts he supplied his biographers (Mack, 1976/1998; p.224).

The image of Lawrence of Arabia was created by Lowell Thomas, an American journalist who wrote a biography of T.E. Lawrence and turned him into a world figure by creating a legendary hero. According to Macfie (2007), Thomas was unofficially sponsored by the American government during the First World

⁸⁰ See John E. Mack's Pulitzer Prize winning biographical book, *A Prince of Our Disorder: The Life of T.E. Lawrence* (1976/1998), for the criticisms of Lawrence's book *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, by the historians.

War in order to raise popular support for American participation in the war. Thomas met Lawrence in 1918 during his visit to see General Allenby in Jerusalem and took several photographs of Lawrence in his Arab dress. Thomas used them, with a brilliant imagination, to prepare a series of lectures about his travels. The series of lectures was titled “With Allenby in Palestine and the Conquest of Holy Arabia” at first which was then changed to “With Allenby in Palestine and Lawrence of Arabia.”⁸¹ His lecture was illustrated with photographs of Lawrence in Arab dress, along with more than 240 lantern slides and about 30 film segments. It was also embellished with Levantine music and an Oriental dance routine (Macfie, 2007). Beginning from March 1919, Thomas had given about 4000 lectures all around the world for four years, including venues like Madison Square Garden, New York and the Royal Opera House, London, and places like Australia and New Zealand. By the time Lawrence published *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in 1922, he had already become famous worldwide. People came to know him as “Lawrence of Arabia,” which is an image that has lasted for a long time.

David Lean’s film, *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), magnified Lawrence’s legendary image invented by Thomas and turned it into a myth. The film is criticized by many scholars for being Orientalist, such as Ella Shohat (1991) who argues that *Lawrence of Arabia* provides a typical example of a European penetration into the Third World. She suggests that the film is a “Western historical representation whereby the individual Romantic ‘genius’ leads the Arab national revolt, presumed to be a passive entity awaiting T.E. Lawrence’s inspiration” (Shohat, 1991; p.27). She claims that films like *Lawrence of Arabia* reinforce the reductionist Orientalist thinking and the dichotomy of ‘uncivilized’ Easterner versus the ‘civilized’ Westerner. Shohat continues:

The portrayal of a Third World region as undeveloped, in the same vein, is reinforced by a topographical reductionism, for example the topographical reductionism of the Orient to desert, and metaphorically to dreariness. The desert, a frequent reference in the dialogues and a visual motif throughout the Orientalist films, is presented as the essential unchanging decor of the history of the Orient. While the Arabs in such films as *Lawrence of Arabia* . . .

⁸¹ The background information about Lowell Thomas is given on p.82 of Alexander L. Macfie’s article titled “Representations of Lawrence of Arabia: From Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) to David Lean’s Film (1962)” published in *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* (2007), 43(1), 77-87.

are associated with images of underdevelopment, the Westerner as the antithesis of the oriental desert, is associated with productive, creative pioneering, a masculine redeemer of the wilderness (Shohat, 1991; p.32).

On the other hand, Caton (1999) disputes Shohat's observations about *Lawrence of Arabia* suggesting that they are "not dialectical enough" (p.175). He argues that the Arab representations in the film are not 'orientalized' in archetypal sense because the film seeks to challenge the common stereotypes of 'uncivilized' Arab by using nuanced portrayals. However, Caton (1999) also admits that the representations of Turks in the film appear "more Other than those of Arabs", but fails to take them into account while questioning the film's Orientalism (p.195). As Turks are Orientalized more than the Arabs in the film, Caton's omission of Turkish portrayals in his detailed study weakens his argument that *Lawrence of Arabia* is not a textbook Orientalist film. Yet Caton is not an exception, as it is not uncommon for critics to overlook the representations of Turks when they discuss Orientalism. This indicates that the Turkish stereotype in the film is such a widely accepted norm that it can be ignored even though Turks are 'Otherized' and 'Orientalized' more than the Arabs in the film.

Like Caton, other scholars too have barely paid any critical attention to the representations of Turks in the film while analyzing the Orientalism in *Lawrence of Arabia*. The Turks in the film are characterized stereotypically as incompetent, murderous, cruel, and perverted, as opposed to the Arab portraits that are normal, compassionate and more nuanced. The cruelty and vileness of the Turks in the film are highlighted to an extent that they present a contrast with the Arab depictions. The filmmakers show a considerable effort to highlight the atrocities and brutalities committed by the Turks in order to justify the violent acts performed by the Arabs in retaliation. For example, there is a scene that shows the aftermath of the massacre executed by the Turks in the town of Tafas. The camera slowly shows the slaughtered, disemboweled men, slayed children, and murdered women, with blood between their legs. After the massacre, Turks encounter the Arabs led by Lawrence (Peter O'Toole), who orders the killing of every single Turk by shouting "No prisoners." During the battle scene, Sherif Ali (Omar Sharif) tries to stop Lawrence from killing unarmed Turks who surrender. Sherif Ali's composed

demeanor is an indication of Arab compassion and humanity as opposed to the Turks' cruelty. Both the slaughter of Turks by the Arabs and Lawrence's brutality are perceived as retaliation against the Turkish atrocities and thus justified. Arabs and Lawrence are depicted as 'freedom warriors' who render justice in contrast with the Turks who are characterized as 'bloodthirsty murderers.'

In the aforementioned scene, Lawrence's uncontrolled killing spree is not a reaction only to the massacre executed by the Turks. Lawrence himself is possessed with vengeance because of the torture and sexual assault he had to endure at the hands of Turkish soldiers. In *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Lawrence writes about how he was captured in Deraa by the Turks, brutally beaten and presumably raped. According to Lawrence, after he was captured by the Turkish soldiers, he was taken to the Bey named Nahi, the Governor. He was told that he would be permitted to leave if he "fulfilled the Bey's pleasure" (Lawrence, 1991; p.442). When Lawrence rejected his sexual advances, he was beaten, whipped and gang raped by the Bey's soldiers. Lawrence's remarks about the incident are as follows:

He [The Bey] began to fawn on me, saying how white and fresh I was, how fine my hands and feet, and he would let me of drills and duties, make his orderly, even pay me wages, if I would love him. . . . The Bey cursed me with terrible threats and made the man holding me tear my clothes away, bit by bit. . . . Finally, he lumbered to his feet, with a glitter in his look, and began to paw me over (Lawrence, 1991; p.443).

The corporal had run downstairs; and now came back with a whip . . . and then he began to lash me madly across and across with all his might . . . After the corporal ceased, the men took up, very deliberately, giving me so many, and then an interval, during which they would squabble for the next turn, ease themselves, and play unspeakably with me. . . . By the bruises perhaps they beat me further: but I next knew that I was being dragged about by two men, each disputing over a leg as though to split me apart: while a third man rode me astride. It was momentarily better than more flogging . . . how in Deraa that night the citadel of my integrity had been irrevocably lost (Lawrence, 1991; p.444-447).

The rape of T.E. Lawrence by the Turkish soldiers has long been disputed by the critics. Some suggest that Lawrence made up the whole story, while others claim

that he was actually captured and beaten, but not raped⁸². There are also others who even argue that Lawrence enjoyed the beating and the rape, because he discovered that he was a sadomasochist. In his biography of Lawrence, Harold Orlans (2002) claims that Lawrence had a homosexual disposition, as “he fled sexually eligible women, admired handsome men, worshipped large men, sought and enjoyed male companionship” throughout his life (p.240). He also comments on Lawrence’s homosexual interests and alleged sadomasochistic practices.

His one known love, for the Arab boy Dahoum, probably found physical expression only in friendly wrestling . . . His one known physical relationship, with a young Scotsman, was perverse. He enjoyed his whipping and rape in Deraa and was driven to repeat the whippings, perhaps also the sodomy (Orlans, 2002; p.240).

In Desmond Stewart’s 1977 biography of T. E. Lawrence, it is maintained that Lawrence fabricated the rape in Deraa and also, suggested that his post-war flagellation episodes derived not from the beating and rape, but from his relationship with an Arab man during that time (cited in Crawford, 1998; p.168). Although T. E. Lawrence’s private life and sexual preferences are not relevant to this thesis, his presumed rape is crucial, because there is a particularly memorable scene in *Lawrence of Arabia* based solely on his allegations of rape in his memoir.

In the film, after Lawrence is captured in Deraa by the Turks, he is put in a line-up inspected by the Turkish Bey (José Ferrer). The Bey, who is wearing shiny leather boots, rips open Lawrence’s shirt and observes intently. The scene takes place as follows:

Turkish Bey: Yes, you are a deserter . . . but from which army? Not that it matters at all. A man cannot be always in uniform.

He removes his right glove and taking Lawrence's pectoral muscle between thumb and forefinger begins to knead. The Bey admiringly kneads Lawrence's muscles between his fingers, remarking, “Your skin is very fair.” Lean cuts to a close-up of the Bey's moist lips, followed by a close-up of Lawrence's frightened eyes. Lawrence strikes out in homophobic

⁸² T.E. Lawrence’s alleged rape and torture in Deraa are contested in several sources. The detailed discussions and evidence can be found in books such as; *Richard Aldington and Lawrence of Arabia: A Cautionary Tale* (1998) by Fred D. Crawford, *T. E. Lawrence: Biography of a Broken Hero* (2002) by Harold Orlans, and *The T. E. Lawrence Puzzle* edited by Stephen E. Tabachnick (2011).

mania, which prompts the Bey to issue an order to strip him to the waist and beat him (Raw, 2005; p.254).

As described effectively by Raw, the scene is enriched with indications of the Turkish Bey's sexual desires towards Lawrence. Even the leather boots of the Turkish Bey are an allusion to his sadomasochistic tendencies. After the Turkish soldiers strap Lawrence face down on a wooden bench and ensure that his legs are well spread, the beating begins. Although the whipping is not shown directly, the filmmakers make it obvious by showing the Turkish soldiers grinning lasciviously, contrasted with Lawrence's agonized look as he sees the whip being raised to strike him. As the Bey is seen peeping from the adjoining room, his voyeurism reveals to the audience that Lawrence's punishment gives him sexual excitement. Despite the absence of an actual rape scene, the filmmakers make sure that the sexual innuendo is apparent and the sexual assault is unequivocal. Outside, the camera shows the horrified reaction of Sherif Ali (Omar Sharif) hiding behind a column and listening to the voices inside. His disturbed and shaken look on his face offers a contrast for the Arab humanity versus the Turkish cruelty.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, whenever Turkish sexuality is represented, 'homosexuality' and 'sodomy' are predominant themes in Western writings, particularly in Orientalist travelogues. These themes continue to exist in contemporary cinema and promote the stereotypical image of Turks. The sexual assault by the Turks in *Lawrence of Arabia* is one of the best examples of the Turkish cinematic stereotype that is deeply rooted in the Orientalist image of Turks. While Turks' sexuality is represented from an Orientalist standpoint, Arabs are portrayed as normal and decent. In Orientalist travel accounts, sodomy and homosexuality are described as common practices of Muslim men however, in the film it is applied specifically to the Turks, but not to the Arabs. Raw (2005) calls attention to the contrast between the depictions of Turkish male sexuality versus the sexuality of Arabs in *Lawrence of Arabia*. He also points out the how the representation of Turks in the film is associated with the image of Turks in Orientalist discourse as homosexuals or sodomites:

In their efforts to challenge orientalist representations of the Arabs, the screenwriters –like Lawrence himself – Orientalized the Ottomans. *Lawrence of Arabia* stresses the contrast between the two races by drawing upon a tradition of homosexual orientalism, applied specifically to the Ottoman (and the Turks) that dates back to the work of nineteenth-century travelers such as Sir Richard Burton, and that persists in more recent films such as *Midnight Express* (1979). Lean was not particularly anti-Ottoman; rather he chose to demonize them as a means of explaining the behavior of his Arabic and British central characters (Raw, 2005; p.253).

Considering the sexuality, despotism and cruelty of Turks in *Lawrence of Arabia*, one may conclude that the depiction of Turks in the film is a continuation of the Turkish image in the Western discourse, particularly the Orientalist discourse where Turks are commonly represented as sodomites and despots. The film is a testament to the image of Turks as “cruel and beastly, murderers and rapists”, which has been promoted and disseminated by the “European tutelage” (Macfie, 2007; p.84). *Lawrence of Arabia* is critical to this thesis as it shows the uniformity of the Turkish image. The film “tries to understand the Arab state of mind, particularly its preoccupation with male honor and blood feuds” (Raw, 2005; p.259), but it never attempts to analyze the Turks or consider the state of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. Instead, it portrays the Turks as violent, cruel, murderous and perverted, which is the stereotype that has been frequently found in Western writings discussed so far. The fact that the Arabs are represented more human than the Turks in *Lawrence of Arabia* supports the uniformity of the Turkish image. The second significant film that upholds this argument and promotes the Turkish stereotype is *Midnight Express*, which will be examined next.

Midnight Express (1978)

Midnight Express is about an American college student, named Billy Hayes, who was imprisoned in Turkey in 1970 for drug smuggling. The film is based on Billy Hayes’ memoir, which was published in 1977 and was adapted into a screenplay by American screenwriter Oliver Stone. As a British and American collaboration, the film was directed by Alan Parker, produced by David Putnam and Alan Marshall who are British, and backed by Columbia Pictures, an American film company. After its release in 1978, the film became a favorite

among film critics on an international scale. *Midnight Express* received six Oscar nominations including best picture and best director, and best adapted screenplay, for which Oliver Stone won the Oscar. The huge commercial success of the film provided both Oliver Stone and Alan Parker with the popularity upon which they successfully capitalized in Hollywood during the following years. *Midnight Express* also inspired several other films in the 1990s that depict Americans imprisoned on drug-related charges in Third World countries. Two noteworthy examples are *Return to Paradise* (1998) and *Brokedown Palace* (1999) that take place in Malaysia and Thailand, respectively.

Midnight Express was first screened at Cannes Film Festival in May 1978 and immediately became the epicenter of controversy. The film received mixed reviews and was primarily criticized for its ‘anti-Turk’ rhetoric. According to Mutlu (2005), some critics appreciated it as a powerful ‘real-life drama’, and ‘anti-drug film’ and ‘courageous filmmaking’, while others criticized it for its ‘needles violence’, ‘xenophobia’, ‘racism’ and ‘homophobia’ (p.480). The Turkish government and press considered *Midnight Express* as an insult and a political assault against Turkey and Turks, and the film was banned in Turkey shortly after the Cannes screening (Mutlu, 2005). The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs even released a statement through its embassies worldwide in an attempt to prevent its screening in other countries (Raw, 2011). Despite the protests of the Turkish government and the Turkish communities in Europe, *Midnight Express* was shown in many countries such as France, Britain, Ireland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Holland, where some scenes were cut (Mutlu, 2005). The reaction to the film in Europe was covered in the US press even before the film’s release in America. *The Washington Post* reported the reaction from the Turkish community living in Netherlands as follows:

Protests from Holland’s 100,000-member Turkish community caused the distributors of the American movie *Midnight Express* to cut certain scenes from the film for Dutch release. They cut scenes in which the main character abuses Turkey and Turks in general,

which Turkish organizations argued incite hatred and discrimination by portraying Turks as inferior (*The Washington Post*, 1978, August 31).⁸³

The reaction to *Midnight Express* in Europe created anticipation and curiosity in America and increased the film's publicity in the American film market. Since its release in October 1978 until the end of January 1979, the film became one of the 20 top-grossing films in the United States.⁸⁴

Midnight Express presents a powerful modern horror story about Billy Hayes' ordeal in a Turkish prison and his ultimate escape. After the film's release, some critics argued that Oliver Stone's depiction of Turks was 'racist' (Whaley, 2013). Film critic Pauline Kael characterized Stone's screenplay as "indicting a whole people on the presumption that the brutality of the prison guards represents the national way of life" (quoted in Whaley, 2013). The film's racist quality was even discussed in the House of Lords in England. The British newspaper *The Independent* wrote:

When *Midnight Express* was released, there was some debate about whether its depiction of the Turks was racist. Lord Coleraine raised the issue in the House of Lords, suggesting that the film, about western prisoners in a Turkish jail, might have contravened the Race Relations Act. When the producers offered the proceeds of the British premiere to Amnesty International, that body declined. It wished to dissociate itself from "any tendency which could be interpreted as a generalized denigration of Turkey and the Turkish people" (McArthur, 1997, Aug 15, *The Independent*, p.15).⁸⁵

The charge of racism about *Midnight Express* mainly originates from one of the scenes where Billy Hayes (Brad Davis) delivers a blistering speech in the courtroom condemning the Turkish justice system and the Turkish nation as a whole. In the scene, Billy loses his temper and curses the Turks in the court, after

⁸³ The reactions of the Turkish government and Turkish communities to the film, as well as the news coverage by both European and US press are described by Dilek K. Mutlu (2005) in her article, "The *Midnight Express* (1978) Phenomenon and the Image of Turkey", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 25(3), pp.475-496.

⁸⁴ Dilek K. Mutlu (2005), "The *Midnight Express* (1978) Phenomenon and the Image of Turkey", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 25(3), p.485.

⁸⁵ McArthur, C. (1997, Aug 15). Warning: Beware a Narrow Focus on the Wide Screen, *The Independent*, Retrieved from: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/warning-beware-a-narrow-focus-on-the-wide-screen-1245523.html>

his jail sentence is increased from four years to thirty years due to the smuggling conviction. An excerpt from his speech is as follows:

you'd know a society is based on a sense of fair play, a sense of justice. For a nation of pigs, it sure is funny you don't eat'em. Jesus Christ forgave the bastards, but I can't. I hate you. I hate your nation, I hate your people, and fuck your sons and daughters because they're all pigs, you're a pig, they're all pigs! (*Midnight Express*, 1978).

Film critic Hubert Niogret from the French film magazine *Positif* stated that Billy Hayes's courtroom speech, including the statement "I hate your nation, I hate your people", was a fabrication of the film-makers and marked the moment when the film turned into 'the discourse of an unsupportable racism'.⁸⁶ Bruno Villien from *Cinématographe* associated it with 'anti-Turk racism', while Bernard Bolan from *Cahiers du Cinéma* found the film's representation of the 'Other' as 'racist' and argued that "These Turks are not Turks but the abstract and undifferentiated signs of the Other [inspiring] hatred."⁸⁷ As Hubert Niogret suggested, the speech is a fabrication as it does not exist in Billy Hayes's memoir, which the film is based on. While trying to dramatize Billy's frustration towards the Turkish justice system, the filmmakers took it to an extent that they insult the Turks as a nation. Because of the common perception of Turks as brutal, cruel and barbarian, it may be likely for the audience to overlook the insult against the Turkish nation. Therefore, despite the offensive language used against the Turkish nation in the scene, the filmmakers are likely to avert any criticism because of the well-known image of the 'terrible Turk.'

The filmmakers were primarily criticized for altering the facts in Hayes's memoir and for overdramatizing his story. The film portrays Billy Hayes and all the other Western inmates as sensitive, decent, and honest people who are imprisoned unfairly by the Turkish justice system and treated brutally by the Turks in the prison. For example, Jimmy Booth (Randy Quaid) is portrayed as a fellow American imprisoned for stealing candlesticks from a mosque, whereas his

⁸⁶ See the article by Dilek K. Mutlu (2005), "The Midnight Express (1978) Phenomenon and the Image of Turkey", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 25(3), p.481.

⁸⁷ Quoted in the article by Dilek K. Mutlu (2005), "The Midnight Express (1978) Phenomenon and the Image of Turkey", *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 25(3), p.480-481.

character is actually inspired by a drug smuggler in the memoir, who was sentenced to fifteen years for smuggling 88 pounds (forty kilos) of hashish.⁸⁸ In contrast, the Turks in the film are characterized as ugly, brutal, and perverted. The Turkish inmate and informant, Rifki (Paolo Bonacelli), and the head prison guard, Hamidou (Paul L. Smith) are the two villains in the film. Although Rifki is Jordanian in Billy Hayes's memoir, the film presents him as a Turk who is vicious and ugly looking. He even kills the cat that belongs to Max (John Hurt), who is a sensitive and vulnerable British prisoner, and also Billy's friend. However, Billy Hayes does not mention such an event in his memoir, nor does he talk about the existence of any cats in the prison.⁸⁹ To emphasize the cruelty of the Turks even more, both Turkish villains, Rifki and Hamidou, collaborate on the most horrifying scenes of the film. When Billy asks for a blanket during his first night in prison, Rifki refuses to give him one, so he gets a blanket from another cell. Because of his disobedience, Billy gets beaten very badly by Hamidou. In that particular scene, the guards tie him up from his feet and hang him upside down, and Hamidou beats him with a thick, wooden stick, recalling the scene from the *Lawrence of Arabia*, where T.E. Lawrence was beaten by the Turkish soldiers. The brutality of Turks is reaffirmed as the film shows Hamidou beating the prisoners frequently, and once even letting his own children watch.

At the end of the aforementioned beating scene of the film, Billy Hayes is also sodomized by the head guard, Hamidou. The actual rape is not shown in the film, but the audience is assured that the rape took place. Similar to *Lawrence of Arabia*, the theme of sodomy is replicated in *Midnight Express*, being emphasized even further. In both films, the Western protagonists are beaten and sodomized by Turkish men, but in *Midnight Express* the homosexuality of Turkish men is highlighted even more. For example at the beginning of the film, when Billy Hayes gets arrested and is taken to the police station, he is stripped down naked by the police during a drug search. When he is standing naked in the room, the camera shows the lewd and nasty looks of the Turkish policemen around him. They all stare at Billy's naked body with desire, implying their homosexual tendencies. In

⁸⁸ Character portrayals are detailed in Billy Hayes's memoir, *Midnight Express* (1977), New York: Thomas Congdon Books.

⁸⁹ Billy Hayes, *Midnight Express* (New York: Thomas Congdon Books, 1977).

fact, there is a scene in which Hayes makes generalizations about the sexuality of Turkish men. He claims that Turkish men are either bisexual or homosexual, because they love to have sex with each other all the time, although they consider it to be a shame. At the end of the film, when Hamidou attempts to rape Billy again, Billy kills him and escapes from the prison. However, in his memoir, Billy Hayes does not claim to have been assaulted sexually in the prison and does not accuse any Turkish guards either.⁹⁰ Instead, he writes about his consensual homosexual relationship with a Swedish inmate named Arne, who is portrayed as Erich in the film.⁹¹ However, the film shows Billy refusing any homosexual advances by Erich in contrast with the book. Receiving the Oscar for Best Screenplay, Oliver Stone was asked why the events in the film did not correspond with those in the book. He answered: “We were not making a documentary. The book did not have the dramatic cohesion the film needed” (qtd in Holden, 1994; p.77). Therefore, Stone embellished the screenplay with the prison rape overtones which are fitting to the image of Turks as ‘sodomizers’ in the Western discourse, prevalent particularly in the Orientalist travelogues.

Since its release in 1978, *Midnight Express* has been a big hurdle for Turkey and the Turks, as the film disparages Turkish judicial system, Turkish police, Turkish prisons, and Turkish male sexuality while at the same time vilifying Turks as a nation. In his article, Turkish journalist Haluk Sahin describes below how the film tarnished the reputation of Turks as a nation.

This unsolicited new identity, this cursed Hollywood passport, this media-age Star of David that was branded upon me, upon all citizens of Turkey, has caused incalculable suffering for millions of my countrymen⁹² (Haluk Sahin, 1999, March 2, *Hurriyet Daily News*).

Midnight Express also affected the touristic travel to Turkey for a long time and had a huge economic impact on Turkey as the country lost a big chunk of its

⁹⁰ Billy Hayes & William Hoffer (1977). *Midnight Express*. New York: Thomas Congdon Books.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Haluk Sahin (1999, March 2). ‘Midnight Express’ 20 Years Later: A Turkish Nightmare. *Hurriyet Daily News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/midnight-express-20-years-later-a-turkish-nightmare.aspx?pageID=438&n=midnight-express-20-years-later-a-turkish-nightmare-1999-02-03>

tourism revenue for several years. In her article, Leslie Esbrook suggests: “it is commonly known that this film singularly ruined Turkey’s tourism industry and global economic growth for years.”⁹³ According to Tulin Daloglu, even Billy Hayes himself, whose memoir inspired the film, said in a newspaper interview: “There’s no doubt it changed the whole face of Turkish tourism . . . It’s not fair. The burden fell on people who weren’t to blame.”⁹⁴ Sweden’s ambassador to Turkey, Christer Asp, points out the power of the film’s negative cultural promotion and its long-lasting effect.

the single worst picture, that the worst thing that would have happened Turkey was that film . . . *Midnight Express*, it was devastating I think to the Turkish image. I’ve never seen a film provoke that kind of a lasting impression of a country (qtd. in Kemming, 2009; p.172).

In 2004, right before the European Union’s decision whether or not to launch membership talks with Turkey, Oliver Stone apologized for offending the Turks in the film. During his trip as a guest of Turkish Culture Ministry, Stone commented about Turkey’s response to *Midnight Express* and why he had not been able to visit Turkey for a long time:

It is true I overdramatized the script, but the reality of Turkish prisons at the time was also referred to . . . by various human rights associations . . . For years, I heard that Turkish people were angry with me and I did not feel safe there. The Culture Ministry gave me a guarantee that I would be safe, so I feel comfortable now.⁹⁵

Regarding Stone’s remarks, Billy Hayes also confirmed that the screenplay was overdramatized. He also stated that the prison conditions in Turkey were not much worse than those in other countries, even in the US. Still it was unfair to depict all Turks bad in the film just based on that fact.

⁹³ Leslie Esbrook (2012, Sep 10). How Cinema Conditions the Image of Turkey. *Today’s Zaman*. Retrieved from: http://www.todayszaman.com/op-ed_how-cinema-conditions-the-image-of-turkey-by-leslie-esbrook-_291949.html

⁹⁴ Tulin Daloglu (2006, March 13). Turkey’s Image Problem. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2006/mar/13/20060313-094413-6511r/>

⁹⁵ Helena Smith (2004, December 15). Stone Sorry for *Midnight Express*. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/dec/16/turkey.film>

Paul Krassner (2005, January 6). Oliver Stone Apologizes to Turkey. *LA Weekly*. Retrieved from: <http://www.laweekly.com/news/oliver-stone-apologizes-to-turkey-2139327>

My biggest problem with the screenplay and the film was that you did not see a single good Turk . . . so the overall impression was that all Turks are like those depicted in the film. And, of course, this is not true. It does not take away from the fact that the prison was brutal and the legal system hypocritical, but that can be said of almost any country, particularly, and unfortunately, ours. Prison guards are not necessarily the cream of any society.⁹⁶

Despite the fact that the film's screenplay is overdramatized and has many discrepancies with Hayes' memoir, the appalling prison scenes and the brutality of the Turks in *Midnight Express* have remained in the minds of film audiences around the world for years to come. It has also been argued that the film might have been one of the biggest reasons why the EU did not address Turkey's membership application for a long time. In an interview the film's director Alan Parker commented on this issue by saying: "They do polls asking why people do not want Turkey in the European Union, and the prevalent reason is *Midnight Express*. I feel terrible."⁹⁷ *Midnight Express* may not be the reason for EU's decision to delay Turkey's application, but it is plausible to suggest that the film had an effect on the public opinion regarding Turkey's membership. *Midnight Express* is available on DVD and online, and is still being watched worldwide, possibly having the same petrifying effect on the viewers. The film has been so infamous that the phrase 'Turkish prison' became synonymous with 'hellish ordeal' in American English.⁹⁸

Midnight Express has promoted the myth of 'terrible Turk' image that has been examined in this thesis. As discussed in Chapter 1, Barthes (1957) suggests that myth should have a historical foundation and "it is therefore by no means confined to oral speech" (p.109). The image of Turks in the film is inspired by the Turkish stereotype that originates from the Western discourse since the Middle Ages. As being analyzed in this thesis, this stereotype has been uniform and has not changed in Western discourse throughout different time periods. The same stereotype continues to exist in *Midnight Express* and the mythical Turkish image

⁹⁶ Paul Krassner (2005, January 6). Oliver Stone Apologizes to Turkey. *LA Weekly*. Retrieved from: <http://www.laweekly.com/news/oliver-stone-apologizes-to-turkey-2139327>

⁹⁷ Fierman Daniel (1999, October 1). Midnight Run. *Entertainment Weekly*, 505, p.84.

⁹⁸ Fierman, Daniel (1999, October 1). Midnight Run. *Entertainment Weekly*, 505, p.84.

has been bolstered by the popularity of the film. Therefore, the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ has remained uniform, constant and everlasting.

The Turkish Image in European Cinema

The selected films being discussed so far are largely representative of Hollywood productions that are either American films or British-American collaborations. Usually, Hollywood productions are advertised, promoted and distributed worldwide and thus, reach a large number of audience around the world. These films, including the collaborated ones, are released and marketed internationally with the financial backings of American film companies. Some of them, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Midnight Express*, are advertised and promoted more forcefully than the others and hence, bring in both critical and commercial success worldwide. Therefore, these films have become popular not only in American and European markets, but also become widely known all around the world. Other than these well-known films, there are also some European films that are not as popular as the Hollywood productions. These small budget films are usually released in the European market only and fairly seen by the European audience in most cases. Therefore, they are not widely available in the US, except for DVD release or online stream. These films are primarily reviewed by critics, but usually go unnoticed by the general film audience around the world. Due to their limited viewership, the popularity and the impact of these films are not as big as the Hollywood productions. Nevertheless, some of these films are still noteworthy in terms of their representations of Turks and Turkish culture. Also, it is essential to discuss the representations of Turks in European cinema because the main focus of this thesis has been the Eurocentric perception of Turks. Therefore, to present a more sound argument about the Turkish image in Western discourse, I will examine a selected number of European films in this section.

Like the Hollywood films, European cinema offers several examples that represent Turks negatively. The same pattern of depicting Turks as oppressors, criminals, murderers, drug dealers and rapists can also be found in many European films. The films that show the Turks as oppressors usually focus on the Ottoman

yoke and despotism in European countries, whereas other films just offer a glimpse of Ottoman military attacks in the background as the plot advances. For example, the Macedonian entry for Best Foreign Language Film Oscar, *To the Hilt* (2014), takes place in Ottoman Macedonia, a small Eastern European region that was under the Turkish rule for five hundred years. The film offers a love quadrangle between a romantic Macedonian rebel, an educated wealthy young man, a merciless Turkish officer, and a spoiled European woman. The film portrays the Turkish officer as arrogant and cruel, while depicting Ottoman Turks as murderous and brutal, who massacre defenseless Macedonian villagers. The British comedy film, *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen* (1988), takes place in an unnamed European city, which is under the attack by the Ottoman army in the late 18th century. The whole storyline revolves around the Baron's efforts to save the city from the invasion of the Ottoman Turks. The Ottoman Turks are portrayed as a force of the nature that attacks Europe constantly and terrifies Europeans.

Representation of Turks as murderers, criminals, drug dealers and sexual predators is also the most common pattern associated with the Turkish image in the European cinema. For example *Empire of the Wolves* (2005), the French film originally named as *L'Empire des Loups*, involves all these negative elements while the plot centers around a Turkish crime network that is linked to an ultranationalist group in Turkey. To find a serial killer, two detectives Schiffer (Jean Reno) and Nerteaux (Jocelyn Quivrin) go into the Turkish underworld, which is traced to Paris's Turkish neighborhood named 'Little Turkey' in the film. While the film depicts the Turkish neighborhood as a dangerous world of drugs and crime, it also insults the Turkish cuisine which is, in fact, one of the reputable cuisines in the world. When detective Nerteaux is disgusted with Turkish food and refuses to eat it, detective Schiffer remarks: "To fight evil, you gotta taste it" (Burris, 2008; p.169). The filmmakers characterize Turks as 'evil' and also disdain Turkish food at the same time. The Turkish clubbers in the film are presented as nose-pierced, and tattooed, while the Turkish criminals have even more distasteful physical features. For example, the Turkish mob boss has a terrifying ugly body that was permanently deformed due to acid exposure. The psychotic killer, who has the habit of carving the image of a statue in the face of his unfortunate victims, is also Turkish. Therefore, by characterizing Turks as bloodthirsty murderers,

ruthless criminals and gruesome people, the film follows the pattern of vilifying Turks as it has been frequently done in Western discourse.

On occasion, Turks may be seen as the evil in the form of an unearthly creature. In *Black Sabbath* (1963), an Italian-French horror film, the evil force is a vampire Turk. In one of the three storylines of the film, the father of a central European family sets out to confront Turkish vampire, but becomes a vampire himself too (Burris, 2005). On the other hand, the Spanish-German vampire film, *Vampiros Lesbos* (1971), illustrates a human Turkish character who is even worse than the evil vampires. The villain of the film appears to be a female vampire who enslaves other women and manipulates them into a lesbian relationship by taking advantage of their repressed sexual fantasies. Yet, the film also presents a Turkish hotel porter named Mehmet whose wife is under the lesbian power of the female vampire. His frustration turns Mehmet into a sadistic killer, who lures women into the hotel wine cellar, tortures them in the most horrific ways and murders them. Therefore, the film characterizes Mehmet as a bloodthirsty sadistic murderer who is driven by his frustration and uncontrollable rage, whereas the actions of the vampire are perceived normal. The Spanish director of *Vampiros Lesbos*, Jesus Franco, directed another film named *Venus in Furs* (1969) that also features a psychopathic Turkish killer played by German actor Klaus Kinski. In the film, Ahmed (Kinski) is portrayed as a millionaire playboy who sadistically rapes and murders a young woman. Either as a vampire or as a sadistic killer who tortures and rapes women, Turks are depicted as 'evil' in all of these films. Also, rape and sexual aggression are shown as the main characteristic of Turkish male sexuality in both cases.

Similar to Hollywood films, European cinema also offers examples of Turkish portraits who are drug dealers, drug addicts or members of drug related organized crime. The Dutch film, *Godforsaken/Van God Los* (2003), portrays a gang of drug using adolescents who commit small crimes and get away with them. They act as amateurs until they are hired by the Turkish mob boss Osman. After working for the Turkish mob, the adolescents start executing murders and become professional killers. The Italian film *Mediterraneo* (1991) that was previously mentioned as the winner of the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar is another

example of the European cinema where Turks are represented as drug dealers. As a reminder, the Turkish character in the film sells the Italian soldiers hashish and steals their belongings after they pass out due to the drug's effect.

Inspired by the prior image of 'Lustful Turk', some European films focus on Turkish sexuality and sensuality. In the Spanish film, *The Turkish Passion/La Pasión Turca* (1994), the Turkish male character embodies the characteristics of a lascivious and seductive Turk. As an adaptation from the popular 1993 novel by Antonio Gala, the film became one of the highest grossing films in Spain in the 1990s. It also received twelve nominations for the prestigious Goya Awards in 1994, which is the equivalent of Spanish Oscars. The film is about a married Spanish woman named Desi who is bored with her sexual life and has an affair with a handsome and passionate Turkish tour guide named Yaman during her trip to Turkey with her husband. For Desi, Yaman became the one man whom she finds sexual fulfillment and utmost gratification for the first time in her life. When Desi returns to Spain, she realizes that she is pregnant with Yaman's child. After her baby dies due to illness, Desi leaves her husband, goes to Turkey and starts living with Yaman. Their sexual desire and passion continue but things begin to change when Desi gets pregnant again. From thereon, the film introduces the other side of Yaman, who can also be an immoral, debauched and nasty man. Despite Desi's resistance, Yaman forces her to have an abortion which leaves Desi unable to have children anymore. Then, Yaman begins pressuring her to provide sexual favors for customers who come to the Turkish carpet store, the family business Yaman is running with his brother. Having been outraged with Yaman, Desi refuses his dirty dealings and goes back to Spain. However, she cannot stand being without him and returns to Turkey. Yaman beats her because she left him, but Desi does not care as she is under the sexual domination of Yaman, the overpowering and manipulative Turk. To make Yaman happy, she even begins pleasing the store customers and carpet dealers sexually. One day, when Desi finds Yaman having sex with a couple, she realizes that she cannot tolerate his homosexual relationship. Desi shoots Yaman and escapes back to Spain. The image of the 'Lustful Turk' becomes more apparent as Yaman is also characterized as a man who enjoys homosexual as well as heterosexual sexual conduct. In addition to the sexual

component, the film offers a glimpse of the ‘Terrible Turk’ image because it portrays Yaman as corrupt, immoral, and deceitful.

The aforementioned selected films provide a sample of Turkish portraits that are representative of the corrupt, immoral, cruel, lustful and debauched Turk which has been common in the Western discourse. The representations of the Turks in these films are similar to those of Hollywood productions. However, unlike Hollywood, European cinema offers some nuanced and humanized portrayals of Turks at the same time. Some films primarily focus on immigration and explore the adversities that immigrants face in the host country. Other films shed a light on difficulties they face during their journey to a foreign land. For example, *Journey of Hope* (1990) tells the story of an underprivileged and poor Turkish family that tries to immigrate to Switzerland from Turkey to have a better life. Living in a small village of southeastern Turkey, Haydar and Meryem, played by the Turkish actors Necmettin Cobanoglu and Nur Surer respectively, sell their livestock and land to pay for their passage to Switzerland. They are stowed away to Italy and arrive at Genoa. From there, they are taken to the mountains by a sleazy bunch of smugglers and sent to the Swiss Alpines without any guidance in the snow and cold. Trying to find a passage to Switzerland, Meryem breaks her leg and Haydar is forced to leave her behind to get help with his son. They get caught in a blizzard and his son freezes to death by the time help arrives. Haydar gets arrested by the Swiss authorities on charges of negligence and the couple is detained awaiting deportation to Turkey.

Journey of Hope (1990) won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 1990. The film is a co-production of Switzerland, United Kingdom and Turkey, but it was submitted for the Academy Awards by Switzerland. The screenplay is written by both Feride Cicekoglu from Turkey and Xavier Koller from Switzerland, who also directed the film. The initial publicity for the film describes Haydar and his family as Turkish, but later, they were also identified as Kurdish given the fact that they come from the southeastern region of

Turkey where most of the inhabitants are Kurdish.⁹⁹ However, there is nothing in the film that specifically identifies the family as Kurdish, as they all speak Turkish throughout the film. Regardless of their ethnicity, the film portrays the hardships and struggles of a migrant family that seeks a better life in a land of promise.

Another touching immigrant story about Turks can be found in *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002) about a Turkish young woman named Senay (Audrey Tautou), who is an immigrant in UK. She works illegally as a cleaner at a hotel where the hotel manager, Juan, also runs an illegitimate business of swapping the kidneys of illegal immigrants for forged passports. The film evolves around Senay's struggle to be able to stay in UK, after her illegal work status is discovered by the authorities. From thereon, she has to endure many adversities such as performing oral sex on her employer who threatens to report her and having sex with Juan who promises to give her a forged passport in return for her kidney. After all the hardships, she manages to get on a flight to New York to start a new life. Senay is portrayed as a Turkish immigrant who is economically and physically exploited due to the risk of deportation. Produced by BBC films and directed by British director Stephen Frears, *Dirty Pretty Things* (2002) characterizes a fair portrayal of a Turk as an immigrant. Similar to other films about immigrants, it deals with immigrant issues such as racism, cultural difference and exploitation and shows that the host society can be more hostile than hospitable in most cases.

Although *Journey of Hope* and *Dirty Pretty Things* are not the only European films which manifest vulnerable, desperate and victimized Turks, the examples are sporadic. Some of the rare examples for this type of films are created by the Turkish immigrants themselves who live in Europe. These films also involve nuanced and multidimensional portrayals showing the human side of Turks. Particularly in Germany, which has the biggest Turkish immigrant population among the European countries, the Turkish-German diasporic cinema is enriched with such examples. Given that the main argument of this thesis is about the Western perception of Turks, Turkish-European diasporic cinema is not central to this thesis. It is also a tremendously broad topic which would be much more

⁹⁹ See Vincent Canby's movie review titled *Turks Seek Happiness in Swiss Alps*, in New York Times, April 26, 1991.

suitable for a separate research project rather than being included in this thesis. Nevertheless, some of the well-known diasporic filmmakers will be mentioned briefly because the Turkish image they reflect in their films may still be relevant to this chapter.

Turks are the biggest ethnic minority in Germany with a population of 3.5 million.¹⁰⁰ In the early 1960s, Turkish workers began arriving at West Germany as *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) to help with the labor shortage during the post-World War II economic boom.¹⁰¹ With the economic downturn of the early 1970s, the West German government banned the recruitment of foreign labor, but permitted the *Gastarbeiter* to stay and bring their families into Germany, and thus the guest workers became ‘immigrants’.¹⁰² The Turkish community is one of the longest-established and largest immigrant groups in Germany. Turkish immigrants in Germany not only created diasporic urban neighborhoods and self-sufficient suburbs, but also began making a mark on German cinema with films created by second or third generation of Turks. Some of these filmmakers include Fatih Akin, Thomas Arslan, and Yuksel Yavuz. During the 1990s, a new generation of Turkish-German cinema began to emerge in Germany by these young filmmakers of Turkish origin with films such as *Brothers and Sisters/Geschwister* (Arslan, 1996), *Dealer* (Arslan, 1998), *Short Sharp Shock/Kurz und Schmerzlos* (Akin, 1998), and *April Children/Aprilkinder* (Yavuz, 1998). Among these filmmakers, Fatih Akin stands out as the most recognized and successful Turkish-German filmmaker both critically and commercially with films such as *Head On* (2004), *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (2005), *The Edge of Heaven* (2007), *Soul Kitchen* (2009), and *The Cut* (2014). He also wrote and directed a segment in the American film *New York, I Love You* (2008) with an ensemble cast such as Bradley Cooper, Ethan Hawke, Natalie Portman and Robin Wright. The recent Turkish-German ‘diasporic’ cinema has been viewed positively by critics and scholars as it focuses on cultural identity and hybridity rather than alterity. For example, Gokturk suggests that by resisting restrictive identity politics and

¹⁰⁰ Turks in Germany: The Guests Take Over the House (Gatestone Institute International Policy Council) <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/2566/turks-germany-guests-take-over-house>

¹⁰¹ See Jessica Gallagher’s chapter titled *Between Hamburg and Istanbul: Mobility, Borders and Identity in the Films of Fatih Akin* from the book, *Frontiers of Screen History: Imagining European Borders in Cinema, 1945-2010*. Chapter 8, pp.176-194, (2013).

¹⁰² Ibid.

focusing on potential hybridity “filmmakers have begun to tackle migration and cultural clashes with a sense of humor and irony” (cited in Gallagher, 2013; p.180). Rather than representing the Turks as ‘victims’, the Turkish-German diasporic cinema characterizes them as immigrants, or children of immigrants, who are trying to establish their own identities while dealing with cultural hybridity. The cultural diversity in German filmmaking business helps the Turkish image improve and be more nuanced and multidimensional. Therefore, the representations of Turks in German cinema have been diversified compared to the other European countries.

Another filmmaker of Turkish origin that is noteworthy is Ferzan Ozpetek, who moved to Italy to study in college, and later became an Italian citizen. Most of his films are screened in international film festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Toronto and Tribeca and received critical acclaim along with many awards. Some of these films include *Hamam /Il Bagno Turco/Steam: The Turkish Bath* (1997), *Harem Suare* (1999), *Facing Windows/La Finestra di Fronte* (2003), *Saturn in Opposition/Saturno Contro* (2007), and *Loose Cannons/Mine Vaganti* (2010). Despite his dual nationality, Ferzan Ozpetek is accused of providing an Orientalist view of Turks and Turkish culture in his films *Hamam* and *Harem Suare* (see Girelli, 2007; Mora, 2009). The film *Hamam* (1997) tells the story of an Italian couple, Francesco and Marta, who come to Turkey to sell the Turkish bath they inherit from a family member. Francesco begins having a homosexual relationship with Mehmet, the young handsome son of the Turkish family who runs the Turkish bath. In the film, Ferzan Ozpetek enhances the Turkish bath and Turkish culture with Orientalist stereotypical representations. Reminiscent of the Western representations in the Orientalist travel accounts, The Turkish bath is illustrated as a place of homosexuality and sensuality and rather than a steam bath or sauna. In *Harem Suare* (1999), the story takes place in the Ottoman imperial harem where the Sultan’s favorite concubine has a love affair with the black eunuch and becomes the Sultan’s official wife engaging in imperial intrigues. In this film, Ozpetek also paints an Orientalist picture of harem where eroticism, sexual freedom, and sensuality co-exist with imperial plots and machinations. Except for these two films Ozpetek’s other films do not center around Turkey or Turkish culture, but rather involve minor Turkish representations or none at all. Without,

analyzing the films *Hamam* and *Harem Suare* any further, one may conclude that diasporic cinema offers a variety of Turkish representations as well as a dynamic Turkish image. The trans-nationality and the heritage of the diasporic Turkish filmmakers give them a unique advantage of exploring Turkishness in a different way in terms of both seeing the virtues and flaws of the Turkish culture while challenging the long-established stereotypical perceptions at the same time. As Girelli suggests:

the transnational condition has been increasingly appraised through a series of assumptions: typically, displacement has been seen as a state of potentially higher perceptions, as a privileged viewpoint, the very instability or hybridity of which fosters the re-negotiations of established parameters (Girelli, 2007; p.24).

Furthermore, trans-nationality also indicates that the stereotypes can be challenged so that more nuanced characterizations can emerge because of the cultural diversity in the film productions and film industry worldwide.

Although the portrayals of Turks become increasingly multidimensional in European cinema due to a large number of Turkish immigrants living in Europe, these films remain relatively unnoticed compared to the popular Hollywood films produced and promoted with big budgets. Most of them may be categorized as independent films that are produced with small budgets and do not usually reach a wide audience worldwide. Therefore, these films do not have the necessary impact to alter the stereotypical image of Turks that became so common in mainstream entertainment media, particularly in Hollywood films. The analysis of selected films in this chapter demonstrates that the Turkish cinematic image is uniform and static despite some multidimensional and nuanced Turkish portraits in European films. Based on the cultural impact of the Hollywood films around the world, I still argue that the image of Turks in Western cinema is stereotypical.

In conclusion, the image of Turks in Western cinema manifests a long-standing stereotype that has been uniform and static. This image is inflated with the stereotypical features of cruelty, brutality, murderousness, immorality, sexual aggression, lustfulness and homosexuality inspired by the prior representations of

Turks. These characteristics originate from the long-standing Western images of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ that have been predominant in Western discourse as being discussed so far. The stereotypical image of Turks is promoted and reinforced with the representations in films in the contemporary cinema and thus, permeates into popular culture. The historical image of Turks becomes a myth that has been bolstered by the cinematic image of Turks. The Turkish stereotype in popular Hollywood films such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Midnight Express* are the most significant films that fostered the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ and helped this image endure throughout the 21st century. However, the image of Turks in the entertainment media will not be the only image that will be popularized in the future, as the social media platforms are becoming an important source of information for younger generations. Other than the entertainment media such as films and TV shows, the popular culture is also being influenced by the social media. Along with the popular culture, individual perceptions of other cultures, nations, and religions may also be affected by the social media. Therefore, the next chapter will attempt to explore the image of Turks in social media. It also seeks to answer the question whether social media may affect the Western perception and alter the Turkish stereotype in the future.

CHAPTER 6

WESTERN PERCEPTION OF TURKS IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

In the preceding chapters I have looked into the image of Turks in Western discourse, including historiography, Renaissance humanist discourse, Early Modern English drama, Orientalist travelogues, and Western contemporary cinema. My analysis of these prior discourses illustrates that the representations of Turks have often been negative and stereotypical. The same analysis also shows that the Western image of Turks has been perpetual, uniform and consistent, rather than variable. My analysis of the Turkish image relies on Western discourse in different epochs and various representational forms that are considered most influential and popular at the time. For instance, Orientalist travel accounts, English drama and Western contemporary cinema are all considered as influential and popular because the imagery conveyed in the texts or films continue to shape the perception towards Turks. Following the same pattern in this chapter, I will explore the social media platforms as the most popular media of the new millennium. Moving forward, I will look at the prospect of the Turkish image in the new millennium by examining the impact of the new media.

As the consumption of new media increases over time, its significance and impact will grow simultaneously, especially for younger generations. I will primarily focus on the impact of social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, which have already been influential in many social movements and political events. I argue that social media platforms will be a significant influence on individuals both culturally and intellectually because of its global impact through networking via the Internet. However, at the moment, it is improbable to determine the effect of the social media networks on the Western perception of the 'Other'. This is an issue that will be investigated and examined further in the future, therefore, I will avoid making any predictions as a researcher. However, to the best of my ability, I will attempt to explore how new media may alter the Western perception of Turks in the new millennium. To achieve this goal, I will have a closer look at the social media platforms, particularly the social network

sites (SNSs) such as Twitter and Facebook. To better determine the effect of social media, first, I will have a closer look at how social media platforms work and how they integrate with the lives of SNS users. I will discuss the role of SNSs during the Arab Spring as it will serve as a means for realizing the significance of social media platforms in mobilizing individuals for common causes as well as changing the narrative. A closer look at the Arab Spring will also show that social media can have a huge impact on how traditional mainstream media cover the news, and thus, may change the perception towards other cultures. Second, I will also examine the Gezi Park Resistance that took place in Turkey during the summer of 2013, to assess the impact of social media on the image of Turks.

The Impact of Social Media

Every day, millions of people interact through social media sites by using their smartphones, tablets, laptops or desktops. As of January 2014, 74% of all Internet using adults are users of a social network site (SNS) of some kind.¹⁰³ The ratio for the SNS users who are in 18-29 age group even goes higher to 89%. The availability of widespread wireless technology and the increasing convenience, easiness, and affordability of the smartphones have made ‘social networking’ just a finger tap away. According to PewResearch Internet Project, the data for April 2012 shows that 40% of mobile phone owners use SNSs on their phones and 28% do so on a typical day.¹⁰⁴ Among younger mobile phone users, between the age of 18 and 29, the percentage is even higher at 67%. As of 2013, Facebook is the most popular SNS with a share of 71% of all online adult users.¹⁰⁵ These numbers keep growing constantly, as more young people become online by gaining access to smartphones, tablets and laptops. The increasing number of SNS users generates more online interaction and sharing of the multimedia products.

In the new social media platforms, the quantity, speed of production, transmission and exchange of expressions rise exponentially. As the quantity of multimedia users and of their creations increase, the variety of cultural expressions

¹⁰³ PewResearch Internet Project - Social Networking Fact Sheet
<http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/social-networking-fact-sheet/>

¹⁰⁴ PewResearch Internet Project - Social Networking Fact Sheet

¹⁰⁵ PewResearch Internet Project - Social Media Update 2013
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/12/30/social-media-update-2013/>

also increases. According to Castells, “diversity of the cultural expressions” is the most important characteristic of multimedia. He suggests the following:

the most important feature of multimedia is that they capture within their domain most cultural expressions, in all their diversity [author’s italics]. Their advent is tantamount to ending the separation, and even the distinction, between audiovisual media and printed media, popular culture and learned culture, entertainment and information, education and persuasion. Every cultural expression from the worst to the best, from the most elitist to the most popular, comes together in this digital universe that links up in a giant, non-historical hypertext, past, present, and future manifestations of the communicative mind. By so doing, they construct a new symbolic environment. They make virtuality our reality (Castells, 2000; p.403).

Therefore, the social media platforms provide cultural diversity generated by various SNS users who come from different cultural, political, ethnic and religious backgrounds. In such a network environment, information and knowledge can be shared openly without the interference of powerful institutional actors. As the sources of information exponentially rise, the cultural representations will be more diversified. In *Configuring the Networked Self*, Julie Cohen (2012) describes culture as emergent and dynamic rather than a fixed collection of texts and practices. She explains it as follows:

culture is not a fixed collection of texts and practices, but rather an emergent, historically and materially contingent process through which understandings of self and society are formed and reformed. The process of culture is shaped by the self-interested actions of powerful institutional actors, by the everyday practices of individuals and communities, and by ways of understanding and describing the world that have complex histories of their own. The lack of fixity at the core of this conception of culture does not undermine its explanatory utility; to the contrary, it is the origin of culture’s power (Cohen, 2012; p.25).

Therefore, in the social network platforms it is unlikely to find homogenization of cultural expressions created by a few central senders. SNSs rather provide diversification and versatility, enabling communication and interaction among a variety of users, and thus, allow inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of all cultural expressions.

It is not feasible to predict whether the diversity of cultural expressions and representations will reduce preconceived notions and prejudice over time or not. However, one can agree that social media and SNSs are becoming an important part of our daily lives. The social media platforms are changing the way we consume and engage with media messages. Thus, the question of how social media and SNSs may affect individual beliefs and conceptions depends on the trustworthiness of these messages. In other words, it is directly correlated with the way individuals perceive the social media. Kostiuchenko (2014) addresses the significance of embedding through social media platforms and the trustworthiness of social media as follows:

Embedding through social media occurs in various dimensions, specifically in relational, cognitive and emotional, cultural and political, and spatial and geographical spheres of one's life. It is highly connected with how people perceive social media trustworthiness and to what extent they are media literate (Kostiuchenko, 2014; p.462).

The trustworthiness of social media and the oversight of the participants' messages are becoming the biggest issues that need to be addressed within the new computer mediated communication environment. For instance, anyone can post a video on YouTube with few restrictions and make it available for users who can watch it anytime from anywhere. Although there is oversight regarding the limits of free expression on YouTube, particularly regarding copyright infringements and government censorship of political content in crisis situations (Castells, 2010; xxviii), the videos are all user-generated based on individual initiatives, interests, and desires, as well as individual propaganda.

However, not every social media platform operates the same way, particularly not the ones that are based on social networking. Fonseca (2014) defines 'social networking' as a virtual community, where people share similar interests. He elaborates on social networking and its utilization as follows:

Social networking is about people with similar interests building a virtual community, and its lynchpin is building trust that leads one to share what is valuable, engaging others to move from taking value to adding value by participating, thereby completing the cycle and creating true collaboration. Social networking can be used by agencies in a variety of

ways, ranging from creating cross-government coordination and knowledge management to recruitment activities and supporting event announcements to the public (Fonseca, 2014; p.534)

For example, users of Facebook and other SNSs tend to build a network with individuals who share their tastes, values, and demographics; a characteristic that is referred to as *homophily*, which may limit opportunities for citizens to be exposed to competing ideas (Jacobson, 2014, p.489). Hence, the diversity of cultural expressions and media messages may not be as effective in a Facebook environment because individuals tend to pay attention to the messages or postings of those whom they consider familiar or credible. Nevertheless, Facebook is the most popular social network in the world, registering more than 1.11 billion users worldwide as of March 2013. Also, it ranked as the second most visited Web site behind Google.com (see Jacobson, 2014; p.489). Overall, users of Facebook may still be exposed to diversified cultural expressions and wide-ranging information due to the scope and size of the network. On the other side, Twitter has evolved from a social media platform where users simply share updates about their daily activities with their friends “into a complex information dissemination platform” (Fonseca 2014, p.534). Therefore, Twitter has become this unique social network where users can also publish real-time updates about current events. Recent political campaigns, social movements and revolutionary protests, such as Arab Spring, are examples of events during which Twitter and other social media platforms were used effectively. A closer look at the Arab Spring will help understand the significance of social media in mobilizing individuals in social movements, organizing protests and influencing mainstream media, along with the public opinion.

Arab Spring

Social media platforms became the center of attention for media critics, scholars, and even for journalists during the ‘Arab Spring’ that began in December, 2010. It has been suggested that Twitter, Facebook and YouTube facilitated the rapid collapse of the regimes in two Arab countries; Tunisia and Egypt. Particularly, Twitter was celebrated as the news source for the uprising and demonstrations in Egypt, as people all around the world followed the real-time

tweets, pictures and videos on their smartphones, tablets, and computers. These events have demonstrated that social media can be used to mobilize individuals for sociopolitical movements and activism. On the other hand, some scholars have argued that “the protest movement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was initiated by the underlying sociopolitical and socioeconomic conditions in the region” (Tindall & Groenewegen, 2014; p.7), not merely by the social media. Even though social media were not the only cause of the revolutionary movement in these countries, SNSs and other social media platforms undoubtedly enhanced the ability of citizens to mobilize and spread the movement so that they could gain support and participation to make a change in domestic politics of their countries. Furthermore, social media platforms helped draw attention to what is happening in the MENA countries and provided the world with the opportunity to follow these events when there was hardly any coverage about it by the Western news outlets and mainstream media. During these events, social media platforms, particularly Twitter, have been considered as the citizens’ empowerment to challenge mainstream media. Van Dijck (2013) emphasizes the quality of social media as a galvanizing and empowering tool during social movements:

The Iranian uprising, in 2009, the Arab Spring in 2010, and the Occupy movement of 2011 were all considered examples of users’ empowerment through social media – citizens taking hold of their own communication and propaganda channels to challenge the power of conventional gatekeepers such as governments and news organizations. The 2009 revolt in Iran was hailed as the “Twitter revolution,” stressing a view of social media as inherently liberating . . . Foreign media and government officials attributed major significance to social media platforms in the Arab Spring uprisings; they considered them neutral tools, which, in the hands of prodemocratic citizens, rendered them powerful as a collective (Van Dijck, 2013; p.74-75).

As seen during the Iranian uprising and the Arab Spring, social media platforms and SNSs allow “protesters to circumvent the gatekeeping of traditional media and take control of the message they want presented publicly” (cited in Harlow & Johnson, 2011; p.1360). If it was not for the social media, the traditional media would be inclined either to frame the revolutionary protests in the MENA region as ‘marginal’ or to ignore them altogether. This is because of the tendency of Western media to portray protests in the Arab world either as ‘irrational’ and

'aggressive,' or as 'apathetic' and 'dead' (cited in Harlow & Johnson, 2011). According to Harlow and Johnson (2011), "protest paradigm" suggests that traditional media coverage of protests rely on official sources, and thus, tend to delegitimize, marginalize, and even demonize the protesters. However, in the case of Iranian uprisings and Arab Spring, the traditional news media shifted away from the 'protest paradigm.' The real-time news was disseminated to the world by the tweets of the local activists and journalists, with the updates of the local bloggers, and with the YouTube videos of the protesters. Therefore, the social media platforms led traditional media to cover the Arab Spring protests comprehensively and judiciously. As a result, the media audience and social media users got a glimpse of what will be the future of media culture: the convergence of traditional and social media.

Convergence of Traditional Media and Social Media

The shift from traditional mass media to computer-mediated communication and digital multimedia has altered the information flow and thus, changed the nature of news coverage. For example, mainstream media outlets have adopted Twitter as a means of engaging with audiences, strengthening their reach and influence while also changing the way they use their news sources (Lotan, Graeff, Ananny, Gaffney, Pearce & Boyd, 2011). During critical world events, such as the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings, "mainstream media turn to Twitter, both to learn from on-the-ground sources, and to rapidly distribute updates" (Lotan et al., 2011; p.1376). In these revolutions, particularly in Tunisia, where few mainstream media organizations had a formal presence before the uprisings, social media were employed extensively by activists to organize the demonstrations and to disseminate the events both locally and globally. Twitter emerged as a key source for real-time logistical coordination, information, and discussion among people, both within MENA region and across the globe (Lotan et al. 2011). After the news started coming from the social media, particularly from Twitter, mainstream media outlets began using both old and new media while reporting and documenting the uprisings. For example, Al Jazeera covered the Egyptian Revolution with streaming video starting with the "Friday of Anger" on January 28, 2011, whereas journalists from Western media organizations began reporting from Egypt at a later stage (Lotan et al. 2011).

The use of social media and its relationship with the mainstream media during the Arab Spring have been studied by many scholars. For example, Lotan et al. (2011) analyzed the Twitter information flow during the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings across different actor types, such as mainstream media organizations, individual journalists, influential regional and global actors. The findings show differences in information flow in Egypt and Tunisia, suggesting that each country behaved differently on Twitter as a media system. The study reveals that mainstream media, non-media groups and individual activists generated more responses in Egypt than in Tunisia, whereas bloggers in Tunisia had more information flow than those in Egypt. The journalists appeared to have equally large information flows in both countries (Lotan et al., 2011; p.1399). Harlow and Johnson (2011) conducted a content analysis of *New York Times* (NYT) online coverage and a NYT reporter (Nick Kristof) Twitter feed about the Egyptian uprising, along with the Global Voices, which is a grassroots media site reporting from web blogs and citizen media from all around the world. Their analysis shows that NYT fell behind in competing with blogs and social media, because they had difficulty in maintaining credibility as their coverage tended to marginalize and undermine the protesters (Harlow & Johnson, 2011; p.1370). Iskander (2011) analyzed the connections between old and new media during the Egyptian uprising. She concluded that social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, helped activists spread information, organize, share videos and pictures, and thus, created a snowball effect during the protests. However, she suggests: “it was the relationship and interaction between social media and traditional media that was pivotal to creating the environment for renewed political activism” (Iskander, 2011; p.1231). Aouragh and Alexander (2011) reached a similar conclusion after they interviewed Egyptian activists for their study. Based on their interviews, Aouragh and Alexander (2011) observed that the interaction between social media and the traditional media operated in different ways at different phases of the uprising. For example, Twitter provided a mechanism by which contacts could be made between activists and international journalists during the early stages. One of their interviewees, activist Amr Gharbeia, explains how they used Twitter to communicate with the international media:

During the sit-in in Tahrir, people from the international media often looked for hashtags [grouped messages], and got in touch with us through Twitter. This was how we got to speak on their shows. So some communication with the mainstream media internationally started on the social networks (cited in Aouragh & Alexander, 2011; p.1351).

As seen during the Arab Spring, the effect of social media on the traditional media has been undeniable. The interaction, communication and information exchange between the activists and the international journalists through social media platforms facilitated broadcasting these events throughout the world. In his interview, the Egyptian activist, Hossam el-Hamalawy underscores the significance of the convergence of social media and traditional media. Aouragh & Alexander (2011) recount his remarks as follows:

Hossam el-Hamalawy argues that the [real] strength of the Internet lies in the fact that traditional media themselves now use it as a source of information. Thus, when well-known and respectable online journalists post something that is read by thousands of others, it almost certain that Al-Jazeera, the BBC, and the *Guardian* will mention it, as happened with the live feeds from Egypt in January and February (cited in Aouragh & Alexander, 2011; p.1351).

Similar to the Arab Spring, the news about the Gezi Park protests in Turkey was also heard on Twitter and other social media platforms for the first time. The images of protesters, who were brutalized by the Turkish riot police, appeared on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube and were spread globally in a very short time. After the news broke in the social media, the international mainstream media also got engaged and began reporting and broadcasting the events in real-time. The following section will focus on the Gezi Park Resistance in Turkey and its effect on the perception of Turks in the Western media.

Social Media and Gezi Park Protests in Turkey

The Gezi Park Resistance began on 28 May 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey, initially with a small group of activists who tried to defend a public park at Taksim against the government's plans to build a shopping mall. When the police used excessive force against a small sit-in protest to evict the park, more protesters kept coming to show their support. Subsequently, other demonstrations were held

across Turkey for solidarity, in almost every city including the two next biggest cities Izmir and Ankara, the capital. The police responded brutally with tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and water cannons to disperse the peaceful demonstrators, causing 11 deaths and more than 8,000 injuries, most of them critically.¹⁰⁶ The violent reaction of the police sparked an outrage that gave rise to a huge revolutionary uprising on 1 June at Taksim square, Istanbul. After the riot police withdrew from the area, the peaceful demonstration was restored and turned into an Occupy-like resistance movement, where protesters put up tents at Gezi Park and Taksim square, organized food distribution, formed their own media, created a library and even a medical center. Evren (2013) describes the peaceful, vibrant, creative and expressive atmosphere of the resistance as follows:

There was room for everyone's creativity. People made jokes everywhere: on the walls, on upturned police vehicles, on signs; there were performances in every corner of the square, not all by artists but some by activists, even some by passers-by. Some helped to design a park library. People used a police car to make a wish tree, like Yoko Ono's Wish Trees. There were concerts in various parts of the square, different types of music. Some groups marched and chanted, others worked on an indie radio station, organized painting workshops for children, or just shouted against the government (Evren, 2013; p.8).

However, the protesters were dispersed by the police on 15 June and the police took over Taksim square and Gezi Park, putting an end to the Gezi resistance. Although there were other protests with smaller groups followed in Istanbul and in other big cities, they eventually faded due to the excessive force used by the Turkish police and the extreme measures taken afterwards against the protesters by the Turkish government, such as unofficial detentions, persecutions, unsubstantiated allegations for coup attempts, beatings, harassment and intimidation towards the protesters and their families.¹⁰⁷

The Gezi Resistance was not merely an environmental protest or a revolutionary movement like in Egypt, but rather a grassroots resistance that emerged as a reaction to the police brutality and to the Islamist government led by Prime Minister (PM) Erdogan, who became more authoritarian recently. The

¹⁰⁶ Amnesty International USA, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/eur440222013en.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Amnesty International USA, <https://www.amnestyusa.org/sites/default/files/eur440222013en.pdf>

protests attracted people from every class, status, occupation and political view. Evren (2013) describes the fabric of the protesters and the nature of the resistance as follows:

The Gezi Resistance included apolitical youth, precarious employees, workers, activists, anarchists, Marxists, Kemalists, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and most importantly many artists. This movement was initiated by a new generation of young activists but their mothers supported them too, conquering bread: giving food, helping youngsters to protect themselves against police brutality. For many it was the first political action they had taken part in. After the government inflicted a series of oppressive actions designed to transform Turkey into an Islamic authoritarian regime, people reacted (Evren, 2013; p.8).

The Gezi resistance was truly an internet-based uprising as Twitter and Facebook played a significant role in bringing the crowds out on the street after the violent police response towards the peaceful sit-in protest by a small group of activists at the park. With the help of social media, particularly Twitter, the resistance attracted thousands of people who have never been involved in a demonstration before but wanted to show their dissent against the government's authoritarianism. The social media helped many people from all walks of life to step out and voice their defiance. As Evren (2013) puts it, Gezi resistance is "the first completely grassroots Turkish social movement. There are no leaders, no parties dominating the movement. No initiations. This distinguished it from all previous revolutionary moments" (p.9).

During the Gezi Park protests in Turkey, Twitter was acknowledged as an important platform for "knowledge sharing" and for the "circulation of the affects of outrage, disbelief and defiance" (Parikka, 2014; p.91). In contrast with the social media, the mainstream media in Turkey ignored the protests altogether and followed their regular programming. The news channel CNN-Turk was criticized for airing a documentary about penguins while the demonstrations and the police brutality against the protesters were taking place on the streets of Istanbul. On the day of the massive protests, Bloomberg's Turkey Bureau Chief, Benjamin Harvey, tweeted: "Seriously, CNN-Turk is airing a show on penguins" to show his

frustration with the Turkish media.¹⁰⁸ While the mainstream media in Turkey remained silent, “tweets from Gezi were distributing a whole different set of images about what was happening to public space in Turkey” (Parikka, 2014; p.91). The protesters at the Gezi resistance were using Twitter to disseminate the real-time news not only to the Turkish public but also to global news outlets. Both the *New York Times* (NYT)¹⁰⁹ and *The Guardian*¹¹⁰ reported the news about the protests in their World News section on May 31, 2013. Soon enough, BBC in UK and CNN in USA began broadcasting the news from Turkey to the audience worldwide. In their study, Varol, Ferrara, Ogan, Menczer and Flammini (2014) found that the worldwide attention to the Gezi resistance was created with the presence of trending hashtags, #direngeziparki (resist Gezi Park) being the most popular that trended several times between May 31st and June 2nd, 2013. The statistics on trending hashtags suggest that “the conversation acquired traction immediately, and exploded when the first on-the-ground events and police action occurred” (Varol et al., 2014). Although a significant amount of the tweets originated in Turkey, the global discussion about Gezi Park resistance began spreading with tweets produced particularly in United States, Brazil and Europe (Varol et al., 2014). Other hashtags include #DirenGezi (resist Gezi), #OccupyGezi, #OccupyTaksim, and #Tayyipistifa (resign Tayyip, invoking PM Erdogan’s resignation). Besides Turkish and English, hashtags related to the Gezi resistance also trended in a variety of other languages, Spanish, and Portuguese being the most popular (Varol et al., 2014).

With the worldwide trending hashtags, Twitter enabled the news from Turkey to be distributed to the world immediately, allowing the global news media to follow the events and report them in a timely manner. The videos and pictures shared and broadcasted on other social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube also documented the excessive police force used against the protesters

¹⁰⁸ Tweet from @BenjaminHarvey , on June 1, 2013, (retrieved from: <http://www.dailydot.com/news/cnn-turk-istanbul-riots-penguin-doc-social-media/>)

¹⁰⁹ Arango, T. & Yeginsu, C. (2013, May 31). “Peaceful Protest Over Istanbul Park Turns Violent as Police Crack Down.” *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/world/europe/police-attack-protesters-in-istanbuls-taksim-square.html>.

¹¹⁰ Letsch, C. (2013, May 31). “Turkey Protests Spread After Violence in Istanbul Over Park Demolition.” *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/may/31/istanbul-protesters-violent-clashes-police>

and the reaction of the Turkish public. Despite the size of the news both on social media and traditional media, it is not feasible to determine the effect of Gezi Park resistance on the Western perception of Turks. However, examining the representation of Turks and Turkey in Western media, before and after the Gezi Park resistance, may serve as a means to determine the effect of social media on the news coverage regarding Turkey, as well as the perception of Turks. Therefore, I will look into the changes of the representations of Turks and Turkey in Western media with regards to Gezi Park protests. My analysis will provide a better understanding about the effects of social media on the traditional mass media, and ultimately on the Western perception of Turks. Before beginning the analysis, it is critical to address the image of Turkish Prime Minister (PM) Erdogan and his Islamist Justice and Development Party (a.k.a. AKP with Turkish initials). Also, Turkey's application for the membership of the European Union is relevant to the thesis moving forward because European public opinion and perception of Turks and Turkey may be a deciding factor for Turkey's accession. Therefore, it will be one of the issues that will be examined in the analysis of media coverage.

The Turkish Image in Western Media

Turkey has been a long-standing Western ally and a NATO member since 1952. However, it has not been accepted as a member of the European Union (EU) despite its pending application for years. At the Helsinki summit of the European Council in 1999, Turkey was officially recognized as a candidate for full membership of EU, but its accession has never been granted despite Turkey's continuous efforts in introducing reforms to comply with the Union's standards. Turkey's pending EU membership has been an issue frequently reported and discussed in Western media. At the same time, Turkey has attracted considerable attention with its democratically elected Islamist government led by PM Erdogan. Erdogan and his Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP) have been the focus of Western media since Erdogan's landslide victory in the 2002 Turkish general election. He was re-elected both in 2007 and 2011 and remained the Prime Minister until 2014 when he became the first democratically elected President of Turkey, a position that had been appointed by the Turkish Parliament previously.

Since his first election in 2002, Western media have closely followed the undertakings and accomplishments of Erdogan and his government. In the rest of the chapter, I will examine the image of Turks in Western media since Erdogan became the PM of Turkey. Erdogan's election represents a huge milestone for the Turkish political history because of his Islamist background and the Islamic roots of his political party, AKP. Before Erdogan's election, Turkey had lacked the political stability that the Western world expected because democratically elected governments were being dismantled by military coups, the most recent taking place in 1980. The Turkish military had been the self-appointed watchdog of secularism in Turkey for several years, as well as the protector of political stability during the times of turbulent coalition governments. Therefore, Erdogan's election offers a good starting point as the first democratically elected Islamist government with a big majority.

As discussed previously, the Gezi Park Resistance has been the biggest social movement in Turkey, which saw people from all walks of life oppose the authoritarianism of the Turkish government. As mentioned before, the Gezi Park protests occupied the social media platforms both domestically and internationally, sparking an outrage against the brutal response of the Turkish riot police. As a result, the mainstream media outlets began covering the events in Turkey in real time, which eventually made an impact on the Western perception of Turks, particularly of PM Erdogan and his government. For that reason, I will attempt to assess the effect of the Gezi Park Resistance on the perception of Turks by reviewing the Western media representations before and after the protests. I argue that Gezi resistance has changed the representation of Turks, particularly of PM Erdogan and his government. To better understand the impact of social media on the image of Turks, I will conduct a discourse analysis of the Western media coverage before and after the Gezi Park resistance. The discourse analysis will be based on a selection of reputable mainstream Western newspapers such as, the *New York Times* (NYT) and *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) from the US, and *The Guardian* and *Financial Times* from UK. Due to the language barrier, it would be impractical and time consuming to review newspapers from non-native English speaking countries in Europe. However, because there has been very strong opposition to Turkey's accession to EU in France, I do not want to overlook the French opinion.

Therefore, I have also selected the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, to examine the Turkish image in France, as it is relevant to this chapter. Despite the language obstacle, I will attempt to examine the articles in *Le Monde* with my limited French, along with the help of Google translation, to the best of my ability. Due to the extensive volume of the news coverage before and after the Gezi Park protests, I have limited the scope of my analysis with specific issues. Therefore, I will scan the newspapers based on these issues and review the articles that are relevant. The issues that I will concentrate on in my analysis are free speech, freedom of expression, the concern about the Islamic government in Turkey and Turkey's EU membership. The news coverage that will be reviewed in my analysis is limited to these topics only.

Before the Gezi Park Resistance

During the several years before the Gezi Resistance, the Western media remained sympathetic both to the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan, who has an Islamic background, and to his ruling party, AKP, which is considered Islamist. Turkey has been viewed as a bridge between the Islamic World and the West, the sole Muslim democracy that could bring the two together. In his 2008 op-ed Roger Cohen elaborates on this viewpoint and Turkey's unique stance between the Islamic East and The West. He has argued that Turkey is unsuitable for George W. Bush's polarizing world because as a nation of nuances, Turkey does not fit in his binary representations of "us-or-them" "good-or evil" or "for-us-or-against-us." Cohen goes on to characterize Turkey as follows:

a nation of nuances, Muslim but not Islamist, religious in culture but secular in construct, of the Occident and the Orient, bordering the West's cradle in Greece and its crucible in Iraq. Here, in this bridging country, a NATO member long served the diet of mild bigotry that has held it not quite European enough for the European Union, a struggle is ongoing. It pits proud secularists in one corner against pious Muslims in another in a battle to establish the contours of state and mosque.¹¹¹

For that reason, the American and British media generally viewed Turkey's membership to EU as a positive step because it would bring a Muslim democracy

¹¹¹ Roger Cohen (2008, June 23). The Fight for Turkey. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/23/opinion/23cohen.html?_r=0

closer to the West. They even praised Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). In NYT, Sabrina Tavernise writes that Turkey's new leaders were committed to the kind of "dynamic, pluralist society that Europeans might welcome into their club."¹¹² She acknowledges the success of Erdogan and his AKP government and continues as follows:

In the last four years, as the dominant power in the national Parliament, it has drawn more Turks into the political process and adopted as its major goal membership in the European Union. It has passed more than 800 laws to make Turkish laws and standards match those in Europe. It has scrapped the death penalty. It has removed military representatives from several layers of Turkey's civilian government.¹¹³

Tavernise also quotes Joost Lagendijk, a member of the European Parliament, who celebrates the efforts of Erdogan and Islamist AKP government and suggests that "they opened up a system that had to be opened up to get into the EU." Lagendijk also claims that if the parties of the secular elites "had remained in the government it would have been impossible to start EU negotiations."¹¹⁴ In *The Guardian*, Adam Hug underscores the significance of Turkey's accession to EU as follows:

Failure to grant Turkish accession would be one of the greatest strategic mistakes the EU could inflict upon itself, one that would be hugely harmful to business and undermine European prosperity and security. The path to accession is challenging for both the EU and Turkey, but advocates of an open and progressive Europe need to stand up and make the case that it is a challenge that we must not fail to meet.¹¹⁵

The Guardian not only emphasized the importance of Turkey for the EU, but also criticized the political parties who have been pushing for an increasingly narrow view of Europe and reinforcing the rejection of Turkey's accession to EU. According to Tariq Ramadan, the underlying reason is 'religion'.

Political parties that call for an increasingly narrow view of Europe are gaining ground. These parties promote a strictly Judeo-Christian perspective of European history, mistrust

¹¹² Sabrina Tavernise (2007, May 20). A Rumble is Heard in Ataturk's Grave. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/20/weekinreview/20tavernise.html?_r=0.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Adam Hug (2008, Nov 10). Turkey, Europe's Future. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/nov/10/turkey-eu-accession>

of Islam, repressive hardline immigration policies and reject a Turkey they claim is overpopulated and excessively Muslim.¹¹⁶

Ramadan also suggests that Turkey's historical and economic influence on Europe is undeniable because the Ottoman Empire had a huge impact on Europe for more than four centuries. He continues as follows:

The arguments that locate Turkey outside European history and geography cannot withstand analysis. For more than four centuries the Ottoman Empire shared and shaped the political and strategic future of the continent. During the late 19th and early 20th century, it became the "sick man of Europe". Even today, Turkey's historical and economic influence continues to be substantial.¹¹⁷

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) commented on Turkey's membership to EU from the religion standpoint as well and assured its readers that Islam would not be a problem. For example, in his WSJ article, Hugh Pope claims that Europe does not need to fear Turkey and its modernized version of Islam. He suggests that the EU should grant full membership to Turkey because Europe needs a democratic Turkish state due to economic and geopolitical reasons. Pope also emphasizes that secularism in Turkey could not be endangered by the Islamist government. His remarks are as follows:

There is no need for Europe to fear Turkey's membership goal . . . Nor is there cause to fear the Turks' mostly pragmatic take on Islam. The AKP's affable foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, almost certain to be elected president by parliament this month, has highlighted his vow to preserve the secularism of Turkey's political system . . . The secularist mass demonstrations this April and May showed that Turkey's still-powerful Kemalist establishment and vigilant society will be the first to block any real attempt to install a theocratic regime.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Tariq Ramadan (2009, Aug 6). Turkey Is Part of Europe. Fear Keeps It Out of the EU. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/aug/06/turkey-eu-membership>.

¹¹⁷ Tariq Ramadan (2009, Aug 6). Turkey Is Part of Europe. Fear Keeps It Out of the EU. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/aug/06/turkey-eu-membership>

¹¹⁸ Hugh Pope (2007, Aug 20). Losing Turkey. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com> (ProQuest at NTU Library Online).

The *Financial Times*, on the other hand, was more cautious than NYT, WSJ, and *The Guardian* when addressing Erdogan and his Islamist ruling party. For example, in his article, Christopher Caldwell offers a balanced evaluation of Erdogan and describes him as both a “democratic reformer” and an “Islamist” while praising his party for their efforts to make Turkey a part of the EU.

The government of the EU's most important prospective candidate state is run by people who have long called themselves Islamists. Yet the same government has assembled a unanimous, almost dissent-free majority for that candidacy - not just in the Turkish political classes but also in the public at large.¹¹⁹

At the same time, Caldwell calls attention to the dilemma Erdogan has as the PM of a democratic secular Turkey and as the leader of AKP, which was founded on the remains of two former Islamist political parties.

Europeans confused about whether to view the AK party [AKP] as a problem at their doorstep or the latest, best model of moderate Islam may be relieved to know that Turks suffer the same confusion. Is Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the prime minister, a pragmatist who has learnt to build coalitions with secular forces? Or is he distinguished from more worrisome Islamists merely by his patience and skill at dissembling? Is he the gentle, charismatic leader who tells reporters: "I am a democrat in my office and a Muslim in my household"? Or the firebrand who was - fairly or not - removed from his post as mayor of Istanbul and jailed for reading from a poem about minarets and bayonets?¹²⁰

The representation of Erdogan and his government in the French newspaper, *Le Monde*, strikes as the most cautious and restrained compared to the other publications reviewed so far. For example, in 2003, Daniel Vernet writes about the challenge Erdogan faces when he tries to implement the reforms demanded by the EU without agitating his Islamist party base and the Kemalist Turkish military.

He [Erdogan] refused to call the Union a "Christian club" but he said he was determined to "take all universal values that Europe is: democracy, pluralism, human rights, secularism,

¹¹⁹ Christopher Caldwell (2004, May 29). The Puzzle at Europe's Door. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com> (ProQuest at NTU Library Online).

¹²⁰ Christopher Caldwell (2004, May 29). The Puzzle at Europe's Door. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com> (ProQuest at NTU Library Online).

freedom of thought, conscience and initiative." It's probably not always easy to put his acts in accordance with his words when one is at the head of an Islamic party that the establishment traditional Kemalist Turkey, closely linked to the military, looks with suspicion.¹²¹

In the same article Vernet also refers to Erdogan's aggressive tone during an interview he gave before the meeting of the European Council. In his interview, Erdogan lashed out at the EU suggesting that Turkey's Islamic culture should not be an issue for the membership process.

In an interview with *Le Monde* and other European newspapers a few days before the European Council . . . deciding a possible start of negotiations on the accession of Turkey to the European Union, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish Prime Minister adopts a decidedly offensive tone. [He said] "It is out of question . . . that we accept a privileged partnership. . . . You do not change the rules along the way!" Erdogan said his country meets the conditions that were demanded. If the EU is not a Christian club, he adds, the Muslim character of the Turkish population should not be a problem.¹²²

Vernet continues to point out the negatives, as well as the positives, by stressing Mrs. Erdogan's absence during a state dinner and questions if her avoidance from the spotlight is due to her headscarf she has been wearing as a symbol of her Muslim religion.

It is not always simple, in public life and in private life. Mrs. Erdogan did not attend the state dinner in honor of her husband and José Maria Aznar. Shyness? Fear of being ostracized by ignorance of a foreign language? Fear of provoking a scandal - in Turkey more than in Spain - coming to the table with a headscarf? Mrs. Erdogan remained in her hotel room and, whatever the reason, people could not help thinking that the traditions caused a hard time.¹²³

While opinion editorials were supportive of Turkey's accession to EU and favorable to Erdogan and his government, they were also criticizing France and

¹²¹ Daniel Vernet (2003, Nov 2). Turkey: the Difficulty of Being European (Turquie: de la Difficulté d'être Européen). *Le Monde*. Retrieved from <http://www.lemonde.fr> (Search archives).

¹²² Daniel Vernet (2003, Nov 2). Turkey: the Difficulty of Being European (Turquie: de la Difficulté d'être Européen). *Le Monde*. Retrieved from <http://www.lemonde.fr> (Search archives).

¹²³ Daniel Vernet (2003, Nov 2). Turkey: the Difficulty of Being European (Turquie: de la Difficulté d'être Européen). *Le Monde*. Retrieved from <http://www.lemonde.fr> (Search archives).

President Sarkozy for opposing Turkey's inclusion in EU. For example, Philip Stephens in the *Financial Times* favors Turkey's accession while criticizing Sarkozy's opposition. Stephens suggests that it would be in Europe's best interest to have a Western-facing Turkey and underscores the significance of Turkey's inclusion into the EU during a time when the West loses its powers over the Middle East.

But the west is losing its leverage. US power is being challenged across the Middle East; and Europe seems intent on irrelevance. Mr. Erdogan's Turkey still wants to be part of Europe. And on every challenge - from energy, from terrorism, drugs and migration to trade and investment - Europe has an immutable interest in nurturing a democratic, west-facing Turkey. Its security is the west's security. But Mr. Sarkozy and his like want nothing more than to hold on to the past. Turkey speaks to the world as it is becoming.¹²⁴

In June 2007, Dan Bilefsky of the NYT writes that President Sarkozy of France blocked a key element for the negotiations of Turkey's membership during the EU summit.¹²⁵ According to Bilefsky, Sarkozy opposes the membership of Turkey on the grounds that "the country is neither culturally nor geographically part of Europe."¹²⁶ In April 2009, the NYT editorial even urges the recently elected US President Obama to convince France into admitting Turkey's EU membership.

Mr. Obama must persuade Mr. Sarkozy and others that admitting Turkey — a Muslim democracy — is in everyone's interest. And he must persuade Ankara that the required reforms will strengthen Turkey's democracy and provide more stability and growth.¹²⁷

In *The Guardian*, Tariq Ramadan also points out the same remarks by Sarkozy who suggested "Turkey is not European – geographically or culturally."¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Philip Stephens (2009, Oct 22). Turkey Turns East As Europe Clings to Past. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://newsbank.com> (Access World News at UNF Library Online).

¹²⁵ Dan Bilefsky (2007, June 25). Sarkozy Blocks Key Part of EU Entry Talks on Turkey. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/25/world/europe/25iht-union.5.6325879.html>.

¹²⁶ Sabrina Tavernise (2007, May 20). A Rumble is Heard in Ataturk's Grave. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/20/weekinreview/20tavernise.html?_r=0.

¹²⁷ Editorial (2009, Apr 3). Mr.Obama and Turkey. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/04/opinion/04sat1.html>

¹²⁸ Tariq Ramadan (2009, Aug 6). Turkey Is Part of Europe. Fear Keeps It Out of the EU. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/aug/06/turkey-eu-membership>.

In his article, Ramadan criticizes the claims of geography and culture put forward by Sarkozy as criteria for Turkey's accession to EU.

No one is likely to be fooled by attempts to redraw the geographical boundaries of Europe for ideological or political purposes. If we were to apply the same criteria across the board, Cyprus would not be part of Europe. Such artificial distinctions ignore history, just as they ignore the realities of European society itself, where national origins, memories and cultures have long met and blended. Approximately 40% of Turkey's population is of European origin; millions of Turks have already acquired the nationality of a European country.¹²⁹

At the same time, *The Guardian* also focused on UK's strong backing on the same issue. For example, in his article, Nicholas Watt describes UK Prime Minister David Cameron's criticism of both France and Germany regarding their opposition to Turkey's EU membership as:

In a passionate defense of Turkey, whose EU ambitions have long been championed by Britain, the prime minister [Cameron] will accuse Paris and Berlin of double standards for expecting Ankara [Turkish Capital] to guard Europe's borders as a NATO member while closing the door to EU membership.¹³⁰

In the *WSJ*, Laurence Norman also writes about UK Prime Minister Cameron's remarks criticizing the opposition to Turkey's accession to EU and showing his support for Turkey's membership as follows:

It makes me angry that your progress can be frustrated in the way that it has been," Mr. Cameron said in a speech on a visit to Ankara. "My view is clear. I believe that it's just wrong to say that Turkey can guard the camp but not be allowed to sit inside the tent. I will remain your strongest possible advocate for EU membership and for greater influence at the top table of European diplomacy," Mr. Cameron said.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Tariq Ramadan (2009, Aug 6). Turkey Is Part of Europe. Fear Keeps It Out of the EU. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/aug/06/turkey-eu-membership>.

¹³⁰ Nicholas Watt (2010, July 26). David Cameron Warns EU Not to Shut Turkey Out. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/jul/27/david-cameron-turkey-european-union>

¹³¹ Laurence Norman (2010, July 27). UK to Push for Turkey EU Membership. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com> (ProQuest at UNF Library Online).

Financial Times did not only recite Cameron's aforementioned remarks, but also quoted his provocative jab at France, when comparing French obstructionism to De Gaulle's veto of the British accession to EU as "We know what it is like to be shut out of the club."¹³² While Turkey's importance for the EU and Cameron's supportive remarks were underscored frequently in the *Financial Times*, there was also criticism about the missteps of the Turkish government and the political rhetoric of PM Erdogan. In an editorial, the *Financial Times* commented on these missteps and warned PM Erdogan about diminishing Turkey's chance in becoming a global power player.

Mr. Cameron diplomatically and correctly indicated where Turkey is falling short. On Iran, Turkey's recent vote against United Nations sanctions was unfortunate, given the threat posed by the Iranian nuclear program. On Israel, Turkey must end its rift with Benjamin Netanyahu's government, reverting to its role as a mediator between the Israelis and Syrians. Above all, prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan must abandon his periodic outbursts over issues such as Cyprus and Gaza, which are driven by populism rather than diplomacy. Turkey has a big opportunity today to gain global influence. It must not be squandered.¹³³

Unlike the US and UK publications, there was not any noteworthy reporting in *Le Monde* about David Cameron's visit to Turkey on July 27, 2010. Based on my review of *Le Monde* for the months of July and August of 2010, the time before and after PM David Cameron's visit to Turkey, I have not come across any of Cameron's remarks regarding UK's support for Turkey's accession to EU. *Le Monde*'s lack of reporting on David Cameron's speech, which favors Turkey's accession to EU, may indicate two things: Either the newspaper was overly cautious about the opposition of the French government to Turkey's EU membership and the French public opinion, or Cameron's visit was not considered noteworthy in France.

My review so far shows that despite the cautionary reporting on PM Erdogan and his Islamist government, particularly by the *Financial Times* and *Le*

¹³² Alex Barker & Delphine Strauss (2010, July 27). Cameron Boosts Turkey's Bid for EU Membership. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com> (ProQuest at UNF Library Online).

¹³³ Editorial (2010, July 27). Cameron Throws a Spotlight on Turkey. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com> (ProQuest at UNF Library Online).

Monde, Western media was mostly sympathetic to his leadership style and the actions of his government before the Gezi Park resistance. In a NYT editorial of 2004, Erdogan was celebrated as “an Islamic politician who favors democratic pluralism.”¹³⁴ The same article claimed that under his leadership Turkey has been setting “a constructive example for the entire Muslim Middle East.” Furthermore, the NYT editorial urged the Turkish military not to interfere with Erdogan’s foreign policy decisions, particularly his Cyprus diplomacy, which would be a compromise for Turkey in order to continue its bid for the EU membership.

Turkey's generals claim to be strong defenders of Turkey's pro-Western orientation. By standing behind Mr. Erdogan's Cyprus diplomacy, they can advance Turkey's E.U. candidacy. They should also give strong backing to Mr. Erdogan's efforts to move closer to Western-style democracy. America has a strong interest in Mr. Erdogan's success.¹³⁵

The *Financial Times* also commended the transformational leadership quality of PM Erdogan despite the Cyprus obstacle during the EU talks. In his article Vincent Boland writes;

Mr. Erdogan insisted last week that, regardless of what effect the Cyprus impasse has on Turkey's EU accession, his government would continue to implement democratic, political and social reforms. He is clearly sincere when he says this: he is the most reform-minded Turkish prime minister since Turgut Ozal in the 1980s.¹³⁶

The praise for Erdogan and his party AKP continued when they took on the issue of ‘free speech’ by weakening the law against insulting ‘Turkishness.’ The proposed amendment to the law was considered “a key measure of the democratic maturity of this Muslim country as it tries to gain acceptance to the European Union.”¹³⁷ The law has been known as Article 301, which was used to prosecute Turkish intellectuals such as Orhan Pamuk, who won the Nobel Prize for literature. On April 30, 2008, “Turkish legislators approved a government-backed proposal to

¹³⁴ Editorial (2004, Jan 28). A Turkish Success Story. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/28/opinion/a-turkish-success-story.html>

¹³⁵ Editorial (2004, Jan 28). A Turkish Success Story. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/28/opinion/a-turkish-success-story.html>

¹³⁶ Vincent Boland (2006, Dec 8). Spotlight: Recep Tayyip Erdogan – A Shadow across EU Table. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://newsbank.com> (Access World News at UNF library).

¹³⁷ Sabrina Tavernise (2008, Jan 25). Turkey to Alter Speech Law. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/25/world/europe/25turkey.html?_r=2&ref=todayspaper&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

amend Article 301, which prohibits the denigration of Turkish identity or institutions.”¹³⁸ The NYT reported that the EU welcomed the legislative amendment and quoted the statement released by the EU presidency praising the decision.

This is a constructive step forward in ensuring freedom of expression, and we look forward to its effective implementation. This step is both positive for Turkey and an indication of Turkey’s continuing commitment to the reform process.¹³⁹

The amendment of the infamous Turkish law that allowed the prosecution of citizens for insulting ‘Turkishness’ was also reported by Vincent Boland in *Financial Times*. In his article, Boland states that the European Commission welcomed the law amendment as a step forward but also claims that the critics did not see the amendment as an improvement in free speech. Boland also emphasizes the authoritarian nature of the AKP government despite the reforms in penal codes.

Although the socially and religiously conservative government has introduced EU-minded political and social reforms, it accepts the authoritarian nature of the Turkish state and is ready to ensure it is legally protected.¹⁴⁰

On the other hand, *The Guardian* did not report the amendment for easing Article 301 as individual news, but rather mentioned it several times in other articles in the months following the decision by the Turkish Parliament. The newspaper, instead, focused more on the news about the Turkish Parliament’s attempt to lift the long-standing “headscarf ban.” In June 2008, Robert Tait reported that the Constitutional Court, the highest court in Turkey, ruled for the ‘headscarf ban’ to stay in effect. He wrote:

¹³⁸ Associated Press (2008, May 1). Turkish Law Easing Curbs on Speech Wins Praise. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/01/world/europe/01turkey.html?ref=world>

¹³⁹ Associated Press (2008, May 1). Turkish Law Easing Curbs on Speech Wins Praise. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/01/world/europe/01turkey.html?ref=world>.

¹⁴⁰ Vincent Boland (2008, May 1). Ankara Eases Free Speech Law to Pacify EU. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://newsbank.com> (Access World News at UNF library).

Turkey's highest court yesterday overturned a politically controversial law allowing women students to wear the Muslim headscarf at university, dealing a blow to the country's Islamist-leaning government and its chances of survival.¹⁴¹

The news about the continuance of headscarf ban by the decision of Turkey's highest court's was also reported by the NYT in an article by Sabrina Tavernise, who wrote:

The Constitutional Court said in a brief statement that the change, proposed by Mr. Erdogan's party and passed by Parliament in February, violated principles of secularism set in Turkey's Constitution. . . . The ruling sets the stage for a showdown between Turkey's secular elite — its military, judiciary and secular political party — and Mr. Erdogan, an observant Muslim with an Islamist past.¹⁴²

The decision by the Turkish Constitutional court to uphold the headscarf ban in universities and government institutions was widely reported by the *Financial Times*, particularly from the standpoint of Erdogan's political future as the PM of Turkey. The articles in the *Financial Times* focused on the political and economic risk of AKP's pending closure case, due to its alleged efforts to dismantle secularism in Turkey. Because it was PM Erdogan and AKP that proposed the lift of the headscarf ban, the verdict of the Constitutional Court could embolden the secularists and jeopardize the political status of Erdogan as well as the economic stability of Turkey.

The case against Mr. Erdogan — who appears to be the primary target of the closure case — is based in part on his headscarf initiative. It is part of the broader accusation that he and his fellow AKP leaders are trying to Islamise Turkey. They reject the charge out of hand. But the headscarf issue and the closure case show the extent to which the country's secular institutions — the courts, the military, the media and others — are determined to cut the AKP down to size. . . . Investors are worried by this development. Uncertainties surrounding it make it difficult to judge what impact it may have on financial markets.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Robert Tait (2008, June 5). Fears for Turkish Ruling Party as Court Overturns Headscarf Law. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jun/06/turkey.islam>.

¹⁴² Sabrina Tavernise (2008, June 6). Turkey's Highest Court Overturns Headscarf Rule. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/06/world/europe/06turkey.html>

¹⁴³ Vincent Boland (2008, June 9). Once Unassailable Erdogan Slips into Precarious Position. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://newsbank.com> (Access World News at UNF library).

In WSJ, although there was no commentary regarding the ‘headscarf ban’ during the months of June and July of 2008, there was a lot of attention regarding the pending case of closure of PM Erdogan’s ruling party, AKP. In her article, Farnaz Fassihi focused on the political risks and economic risks that Turkey might face if the popular AKP is shut down by the court decision. She also commented on the implications of the AKP’s closure for the West as follows:

Beyond its own fate, Turkey's political stability is important to the U.S. As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and a nation of Muslims under democratic rule, Turkey offers the U.S. a bulwark against Islamist extremism in the region. Recently, Turkey has played an important role as a mediator between Israel and Syria and between Iran and the U.S., and its booming economy attracts billions of dollars in foreign investment each year.¹⁴⁴

In June 2008, except for a short news report through *Reuters*, there was not any commentary in *Le Monde* regarding headscarf ban. The only commentary was written by Guillaume Perrier, who suggests that headscarf is not the only issue of ‘freedom of expression’ in Turkey. Perrier also questions the urgency of the ‘headscarf’ and asks why PM Erdogan is in a rush concerning such a sensitive issue.

The Prime Minister also says it plans to include this reform in the proposed new constitution being drafted and should be presented to Parliament during the winter. . . . The announcement took political commentators by surprise. While Erdogan was expected to tackle the issue of ‘freedom of expression’, such as the reform of Article 301 of the Criminal Code, he preferred to put the headscarf issue back on top of his priority list.¹⁴⁵

With the amendment of Article 301 penal code and an attempt to lift the ban on headscarf, Turkish PM Erdogan and his AKP government worked hard to improve the laws about freedom of expression to gain EU’s stamp of approval. On the other side, Erdogan’s attitude towards the Turkish media was becoming increasingly authoritarian, indicating that the new reforms regarding “free speech”

¹⁴⁴ Farnaz Fassihi (2008, July 25). Turkey’s Ruling Party Risks Being Dissolved as Court Deliberates. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121692816813582017>

¹⁴⁵ Guillaume Perrier (2008, June 5). In Turkey the Government Revived the Controversy Over Veil (En Turquie, le Gouvernement Relance la Polémique sur le Voile). *Le Monde*. Retrieved from <http://www.lemonde.fr/international>.

did not extend to Turkish media at all. After the election of President Obama, in a NYT editorial about the prospective relationship between the new US President and Turkey, NYT harshly criticized the recent attempt of PM Erdogan's intimidation of a major media company, owned by Aydin Dogan. The remarks from the editorial are as follows:

We are concerned about Mr. Erdogan's increasingly autocratic tendencies. His government's decision to slap the media mogul Aydin Dogan with a \$500 million tax bill smacks of retaliation against an independent press that has successfully exposed government corruption.¹⁴⁶

In the same year, the tax fine was raised to \$2.5 billion, which would possibly put *Dogan Yayin* out of business as a media company. The NYT published another editorial focusing specifically on this issue. The editorial called attention to Erdogan and his government's persecution towards the Turkish journalists and media companies. The editorial details Erdogan's intimidation of the media group, *Dogan Yayin*, which also owns *CNN-Turk* (Turkish-language version of CNN), and pans the tax penalty demanded from one of the biggest media corporations in Turkey.

Now Turkey has provided a particularly chilling example of another way to shut down independent voices — a fine of \$2.5 billion that appears to be designed to put a major media company out of business. As the committee's [Committee to Protect Journalists] executive director, Joel Simon, said, "A hefty fine is often an effective cloak for repression." . . . Dogan journalists have not shied away from stories that the government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's iron-willed prime minister, does not like. And Aydin Dogan, an owner of the media group's parent company, is one of Mr. Erdogan's most vocal critics. That makes it all the more suspicious that the Erdogan government levied a tax penalty on the Dogan group that is almost as much as the value of the entire company.¹⁴⁷

The NYT editorial was a critical warning as Turkey has been struggling with ensuing the reforms to align itself with EU and the rest of the Western world. The

¹⁴⁶ Editorial (2009, Apr 3). Mr. Obama and Turkey. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/04/opinion/04sat1.html>

¹⁴⁷ Editorial (2009, Sep 12). A Clear Assault on the Press. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/opinion/13sun3.html?_r=0

article suggests that these types of actions undermine that process and endanger Turkey's accession to EU.

Executives of the European Union, which has been considering the addition of Turkey to its powerful group, quickly noted their concern. "When the sanction is of such magnitude that it threatens the very existence of an entire press group, like in this case, then freedom of the press is at stake," a spokesman said.¹⁴⁸

WSJ also covered the news extensively about the tax penalty imposed on Dogan media group by the Turkish government. In his article, Marc Champion comments on Europe's reaction to the increasing impediment towards the press freedom in Turkey.

The tax case against Dogan Yayin Holding AS -- which owns roughly half the television and newspaper market in Turkey -- has drawn concern at home and abroad. Days after a \$2.5 billion fine was announced last month, the European Commission in Brussels expressed "serious concerns" over the implications for press freedom in Turkey and said it would include the incident in its report later this month on progress in Turkey's talks to join the European Union. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe also has expressed concern.¹⁴⁹

The *Financial Times* also widely reported the Turkish government's attack on Aydin Dogan and his media corporation and indicated that the media mogul was intimidated by PM Erdogan for writing about the corruption scandals involving Erdogan and his government.

A record \$2.5bn (€1.7bn, £1.6bn) tax fine imposed on the Dogan media group has shocked the business elite, stoked European Union concerns over press freedom . . . [PM] Mr. Erdogan has often lashed out at Mr. Dogan, whose publications have portrayed his government as a threat to Turkey's secular order, reported aggressively on corruption scandals and, in 2007, raised little protest when the military attempted to block his nomination of colleague Abdullah Gul to the presidency. . . . But journalists writing for non-Dogan papers, in a country where many have previously faced prosecution or

¹⁴⁸ Editorial (2009, Sep 12). A Clear Assault on the Press. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/opinion/13sun3.html?_r=0

¹⁴⁹ Marc Champion (2009, Oct 5). Turkish Premier Defends Media Tax Battle. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB125469621389762827>

harassment for speaking out, openly deride the suggestion that Dogan is suffering martyrdom for championing free speech.¹⁵⁰

French newspaper *Le Monde* also reported the news and called the action taken against the major media group in Turkey ‘intimidation of the press’. Furthermore, in his article, Perrier detailed the rivalry between the Turkish PM Erdogan and media mogul Aydin Dogan, the owner of the fined media group.

The rivalry between PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan, an Islamist-conservative, and Aydin Dogan, a secularist close to the Kemalist establishment and the army, did not begin yesterday. The two men clash regularly with blows of trials and threats. In September 2008, Erdogan had publicly called on supporters to boycott Dogan newspapers, including some of the most read in the country.¹⁵¹

Despite the alarming NYT editorial, and the detailed commentaries in WSJ, *Financial Times* and *Le Monde*, surprisingly, *The Guardian* did not cover the story in its world news section. Also, based on my review of the news coverage during 2009, I have yet to come across either an editorial or a news article in *The Guardian* regarding the fine Dogan media group was subjected to. The only news was in the form of a short article, buried among other news about media companies around the world, in the Media News section by Roy Greenslade¹⁵² The article dated October 21, 2009 was originally published in the *Financial Times*. The reasons for the lack of coverage of this news in *The Guardian* are unknown. My personal opinion is that the underlying reason might be related to UK’s strong support for Turkey’s EU membership. Therefore, *The Guardian* may be concerned that news about ‘press intimidation’ and about restrictions on ‘freedom of press’ in Turkey might influence the public opinion in UK negatively towards Turkey’s accession in EU.

I argue that the perception of the Western media towards PM Erdogan and his Islamist government has changed after the Gezi Park protests erupted. I suggest

¹⁵⁰ Delphine Strauss (2009, Sep 24). Shock at Turkish Media Group’s \$2.5bn Fine. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://newsbank.com> (Access World News at UNF Library Online)

¹⁵¹ Guillaume Perrier (2009, Sep 17). The Turkish Government Attacks the Media Mogul (Le Gouvernement Turc s'en Prend au Magnat des Médias). *Le Monde*. Retrieved from <http://www.lemonde.fr>.

¹⁵² Roy Greenslade (2009, Oct 21). Turkish Media Group Under Fire. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2009/oct/19/week>

that the perception of Erdogan as a ‘transformational leader’ may be affected due to the strong opposition that the Turkish public demonstrated during the protests against his decisions and authoritarianism. It is also likely that the social media images of the Gezi Park protests, showing Turkish students, doctors, teachers and civil organization members being brutalized by the police, may alter the Western perception of Turks as a nation. Therefore, it is crucial to look at the representations of PM Erdogan and Turkey in the Western media after the Gezi resistance. To make a fair comparison, I will examine the same newspapers to determine whether the massive protests and the brutal police response have had an effect on the image of Erdogan and his government. In the following section, I will attempt to assess how the dominance of Gezi resistance news on social media changed the Turkish image in NYT, WSJ, *Financial Times*, *The Guardian* and *Le Monde*.

After the Gezi Park Resistance

Before the Gezi Park resistance, both PM Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP) were praised in the US and UK media for their efforts to reform Turkey and bring the country closer to Western democratic values. Erdogan and his government were also accused of intimidating the journalists and the media companies. On the other hand, their representation in the French newspaper *Le Monde* was rather balanced, offering both the negatives and positives of PM Erdogan and his AKP government. In *Le Monde*, Erdogan was also criticized for being aggressive and authoritarian at times. Erdogan’s authoritarian decisions were also cautiously criticized by the NYT, and sometimes by the WSJ and *Financial Times*, which mostly focused on the economic risks awaiting Turkey unless the PM Erdogan’s government stays in power.

The Gezi Park resistance became a turning point for the Western media to pay more attention to what is really going on in Turkey, not only politically or economically, but socially as well. When the Gezi demonstrations erupted, after a brutal police raid towards the peaceful sit-in protesters, both Twitter and other social media became the news source for the global news outlets. As discussed previously, Twitter prompted the news coverage of the Gezi protests by the Western media. In a NYT op-ed titled “Turkey’s Authoritarian Turn”, Seyla

Benhabib writes about the increasingly authoritarian attitude of PM Erdogan and his government to Turkish citizens. She pointed out the anxiety of the secular population in Turkey regarding the possible threat imposed on the secular principles of the Turkish republic.

But the protests are not just about protecting urban greenery; they reflect a much deeper resistance to the political path being taken by Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and his increasingly Islamist Justice and Development Party, known by its Turkish initials, A.K.P. Mr. Erdogan was re-elected for a third term in 2011 and he has used the mandate to pursue an authoritarian agenda that many see as an assault on the secular republic that emerged after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵³

Benhabib also observes how PM Erdogan was interfering with the private lives of individuals by bringing new restrictions on alcohol sales and on abortion rights, as well as by asking Turkish women to have at least three children. Her critique of Erdogan and of his dictatorial style is as follows:

This moral micromanagement of people's private lives comes amid an increasingly strident government assault on political and civil liberties. Turkey's record on journalistic and artistic freedoms is abysmal; rights of assembly and protest are also increasingly restricted. . . . So far Mr. Erdogan has arrogantly dismissed his critics. If he continues to ignore their voices, the danger is that Turkey will descend further into violence and see its much-trumpeted experiment in Islamic democracy fail.¹⁵⁴

In another NYT op-ed, Dan Bilefsky comments about the implications of the Gezi protests and the brutal response of the Turkish riot police on Turkey's accession to EU as follows:

Now influential ministers from Germany and France, and European analysts are warning that the bloody crackdown in Taksim Square threatens to undermine frayed relations while reinforcing doubts that Turkey has the democratic credentials to join the club. . . . The clampdown on the protesters has undermined Turkish attempts to cultivate an international

¹⁵³ Seyla Benhabib (2013, June 3). Turkey's Authoritarian Turn. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/04/opinion/turkeys-authoritarian-turn.html?_r=0

¹⁵⁴ Seyla Benhabib (2013, June 3). Turkey's Authoritarian Turn. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/04/opinion/turkeys-authoritarian-turn.html?_r=0

image as a predominantly Muslim country that cleaves to secular European ideals and can serve as a model for the region.¹⁵⁵

In the same article, Bilefsky cites the German foreign minister, Guido Westerwell, who called the images from the Taksim Square ‘disturbing’ and said that the Turkish government’s reaction to the crisis was sending the wrong signal at home and abroad. Bilefsky also quotes the French EU affairs minister, Thierry Repentin, who said: “No democracy can be built on the repression of people who try to express themselves in the street. The right to protest, to oppose the government, must be respected.”¹⁵⁶

Following the Gezi protests, Peter Beaumont of *The Guardian* reported that PM Erdogan was not happy about the criticisms by the European Parliament, which voted to condemn the use of “harsh measures” by the Turkish police and urged Erdogan to take a more unifying and conciliatory stance. In the same article, Beaumont quotes Erdogan’s response to the European Parliament: "I won't recognize the decision that the European Union parliament is going to take about us . . . Who do you think you are by taking such a decision?"¹⁵⁷ Beaumont’s piece shows that *The Guardian*’s view of Erdogan has shifted dramatically, as the newspaper particularly emphasizes his combative and defiant attitude towards EU. Another article in *The Guardian* by Luke Harding cites the reaction by the EU members regarding the handling of the Gezi protests and its consequences. According to Harding, Stefan Fule, EU’s enlargement commissioner, described the protests in Taksim Square as “legitimate” in a democratic society. Fule’s comments, as cited in *The Guardian*, are as follows:

[Fule] hinted that Turkey would only be allowed to join the EU if it truly embraced European values. He also criticized Turkey's pro-Erdogan media, which initially censored

¹⁵⁵ Dan Bilefsky (2013, June 13). A Potential Casualty of Turkey’s Crackdown: European Union Membership. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/13/world/europe/a-potential-casualty-of-turkeys-crackdown-european-union-membership.html?_r=0

¹⁵⁶ Dan Bilefsky (2013, June 13). A Potential Casualty of Turkey’s Crackdown: European Union Membership. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/13/world/europe/a-potential-casualty-of-turkeys-crackdown-european-union-membership.html?_r=0

¹⁵⁷ Peter Beaumont (2013, June 14). Erdogan Issues Stark Final Warning to Turkey’s Gezi Park Protesters. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/13/turkey-gezi-park-protesters>

the uprising. Fule said: "There should be freedom to report on what is happening as it is happening." . . . Fule urged a "swift and transparent" investigation into the behaviour of riot police who used teargas and water cannons against peaceful demonstrators. He said: "The duty of all of us, European Union members as much as those countries that wish to become one, is to aspire to the highest possible democratic standards and practices. "These include the freedom to express one's opinion, the freedom to assemble peacefully," he pointed out.¹⁵⁸

In his article, Beaumont of *The Guardian* also points out the consequences of the handling of the Gezi protests for Turkey's international reputation and EU membership prospects.

On the international stage too, the past two weeks have damaged Turkey's reputation, crucially in Europe, where a group of countries led by Germany have put further brakes on the glacial EU accession talks because of the violence used against the protesters.¹⁵⁹

The reporting of the disapproving reaction of the EU members indicates a significant change in *The Guardian's* coverage of PM Erdogan and Turkey's accession to EU. The representation of Erdogan in *The Guardian* has shifted from favorable to unfavorable as PM Erdogan continues to confront the responses coming from the members of the EU. In the following article, Luke Harding blames Erdogan for the damage done to Turkey's international image:

Since the crisis began, the worst of his leadership, Erdogan has lashed out at numerous enemies, most of them fictive. Actually, Erdoğan only has himself to blame for the damage done to Turkey's international image. Hubristic, peevish, and not a little paranoid, only he has the power to reverse this.¹⁶⁰

In the *Financial Times* editorial "Mr. Erdogan's Authoritarian Creep", Erdogan is accused of authoritarianism and criticized for his persecution of

¹⁵⁸ Luke Harding (2013, June 7). Erdogan Accuses of EU Members of Hypocrisy over Turkey Protests. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/07/erdogan-accuses-eu-hypocrisy-turkey-protests>.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Beaumont (2013, June 15). Recep Tayyip Erdogan Struggles to Make Sense of Turkey's Trauma. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/15/erdogan-misses-point-turkish-unite-defend-rights>.

¹⁶⁰ Luke Harding (2013, June 11). Erdogan's Reaction to Turkey Protests Reveals Ominous Putin Parallels. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/11/turkey-recep-tayyip-erdogan-must-compromise>.

journalists, citizens and corporations, who happen to report about Gezi resistance or support the protesters in any way. The editorial of the *Financial Times* states:

Journalists whose coverage of Gezi did not square with the government's view have been sacked or silenced. Financial regulators have launched an intrusive probe against currency traders. The Koc group, which owns a hotel in which Gezi Park protesters were given shelter and medical attention, has been targeted by a tax investigation: an echo of the Dogan media group's heavy fines for alleged tax fraud in 2009. Mourners at the funeral of a protester shot dead by police face prison charges similar to those sought against the police officer who killed him.¹⁶¹

The same editorial also emphasizes that the perception of Turkey as a country that is striving for a mature democratic system of 'checks and balances' has been false all along. The article goes on to suggest that Turkey is going backwards and drifting away from the reformation process. The article asserts:

The perception that Turkey was steadily advancing toward a mature system of checks and balances was always ahead of reality. The reality is Turkey is now going backwards. A new law aims to clip the autonomy of the architects' and engineers' professional association, which was involved in the protests. This is a reversal of the early Erdogan years, in which a still-promising rapprochement with the EU led to the adoption of European governing standards.¹⁶²

The WSJ repeatedly reported about the Gezi Park resistance right after the protests erupted, detailing the brutal police response against the peaceful demonstrators. The news coverage described how the Turkish police used tear gas, pepper spray, plastic bullets, and water cannons, and how protesters, including women and children, got injured as a result of it. Furthermore, WSJ took an extra step and published an op-ed article written by Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who is the leader of CHP, the main opposition party in Turkey. In his article, Kilicdaroglu presented a grim picture of Turkish democracy which, he claimed, was under attack by the dictatorial leadership of PM Erdogan and his Islamist government. In his article

¹⁶¹ Editorial (2013, Aug 6). Mr. Erdogan's Authoritarian Creep. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://newsbank.com> (Access World News at UNF library).

¹⁶² Editorial (2013, Aug 6). Mr. Erdogan's Authoritarian Creep. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from <http://newsbank.com> (Access World News at UNF library).

“The Threat to Turkish Freedom”, Kilicdaroglu accuses Erdogan of authoritarianism and continues as follows:

In a Muslim setting, this [Turkish] democracy has owed its longevity to its secular underpinnings--the separation of state and religion. Today, though, this system faces its most serious challenge yet from the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its leadership. Our country is quickly drifting away from a functioning democratic regime toward a manifestly authoritarian and intrusive one built around the whims of a single individual in power.¹⁶³

Kilicdaroglu also slams Erdogan and his government’s actions for curtailing the civil liberties in Turkey and condemns the police brutality towards the peaceful demonstrators.

Freedoms of speech, of assembly and of the press no longer apply in Turkey. My country has one of the highest numbers of imprisoned journalists in the world; Reporters without Borders ranks Turkey 154th out of 179 countries in terms of press freedom. Peaceful demonstrators invariably encounter police violence. Extensive wiretapping is a fact of life.¹⁶⁴

If it were not for the Gezi Park protest, it would be unlikely to see the critique by Kilicdaroglu, the leader of the main opposition party in Turkey, be published in the main opinion page of the WSJ. One may conclude that the overwhelming reaction to the Gezi Resistance in the social media has had an impact on the WSJ’s perception towards PM Erdogan and his Islamist AKP government.

French newspaper *Le Monde* also reported frequently about the Gezi protests, the violent police attacks against the protesters and PM Erdogan’s authoritarian tactics. Similar to the WSJ, *Le Monde* too, gave an opportunity for the voice of an opposition group to be heard. This time the Alevis (Turkish followers of Shia Islam) living in France published an editorial condemning

¹⁶³ Kemal Kilicdaroglu (2013, Nov 25). The Threat to Turkish Freedom: The Government in Ankara is Democratic in Name Only. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304011304579219610005214556>.

¹⁶⁴ Kemal Kilicdaroglu (2013, Nov 25). The Threat to Turkish Freedom: The Government in Ankara is Democratic in Name Only. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304011304579219610005214556>.

Erdogan and his 'Islamist-conservative government' (*Le Monde's* words). The article "A New Ottoman Empire for Mr. Erdogan" was written by Ali Karababa, one of the board members of The Association of Alevi in France, FUAF (Fédération Union des Alévis en France). Karababa claims that Alevi in Turkey are oppressed by Erdogan's Sunni Islamist government. He continues:

Nationally, the Prime Minister [Erdogan] undertakes projects that are extraordinary examples of his ego. In terms of secularism, he hardens his tone and stance against Alevi. He maintains compulsory [Sunni] religious classes in primary and secondary school, refuses recognition of Alevi places of worship. He will even name the third Bosphorus bridge as, "Yavuz Sultan Selim", the name of the Sultan who slaughtered more than 40,000 Alevi. The perpetrators of the fire of July 2, 1993 with the death of 33 Alevi were released because of the limitation period. The permission for headscarf in universities, even the hijab in religious schools transforms the way of life of all citizens. The lipstick wear ban for the stewardesses of the Turkish Airlines, kissing in subways and control of the alcohol sale are all indication of Islamization via the assimilation of the entire population.¹⁶⁵

Therefore, with this article *Le Monde* not only criticizes the authoritarianism of PM Erdogan and his Islamist-conservative government, but also condemns his oppression of Alevi, the minority Muslim religious group in Turkey. It underscores PM Erdogan's dictatorial treatment of the people who do not agree with him or who do not have the same religion as him in Turkey.

As a result, the Gezi Park resistance has altered PM Erdogan's image negatively and changed the perception of the Western media. The review of the media coverage shows that the Western newspapers began characterizing Erdogan as 'authoritarian', 'dictatorial' and 'defiant' in contrast with their previous descriptions of him as 'democratic', 'pluralistic' and 'transformational'. His image has shifted from the "great reformer" to an "arrogant despot", which is more visible in an op-ed published in *The Guardian* by Fiachra Gibbons. In the article, Gibbons describes the striking transformation of Erdogan's image on the political arena as a result of the Gezi Park protests:

¹⁶⁵ Ali Karababa, FUAF (2013, June 3). A New Ottoman Empire for Mr. Erdogan (A Nouvel Empire Ottoman pour M. Erdogan). *Le Monde*. Retrieved from <http://www.lemonde.fr> (Search archives).

Until three weeks ago Erdogan was destined to go down as one of the greatest reformers in Turkish history alongside Ataturk and Suleiman the Magnificent, despite all the bullying and the backsliding of the past three years.¹⁶⁶

The article refers to the past few years of Erdogan's rule during when he completely revoked the political power of the Turkish military and prevented the generals from interfering with the democratic process. Gibbons argues that Erdogan has turned into the same kind of despotic authority which he tried to dispose of:

Yet the power he concentrated to defeat the generals – by foul means as well as fair – and the paranoia of that battle, has undone him. In a matter of days Erdogan has become the personification of all the corrupt despotism and violence of the old Kemalist Turkey he was elected to sweep away.¹⁶⁷

Luke Harding of *The Guardian* even compared Erdogan to Russian President Vladimir Putin because of his authoritarian governing style and his response to public protests. His remarks are as follows:

Faced with a choice between engaging with this new, vibrant civil society movement or crushing it, Erdogan has picked the latter course. Indeed, his reaction to the nationwide citizens' revolt reveals ominous parallels with another autocratic leader who has recently found himself in a tight spot: Vladimir Putin.¹⁶⁸

Following the footsteps of Putin, Erdogan also banned the use of Twitter in Turkey, which he viewed as the reason for protests against him and his government.

¹⁶⁶ Fiachra Gibbons (2013, June 19). Erdogan's Fall from Grace in Turkey Is Pure Shakespearean Tragedy. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/19/erdogan-turkey-shakespearean-tragedy>.

¹⁶⁷ Fiachra Gibbons (2013, June 19). Erdogan's Fall from Grace in Turkey Is Pure Shakespearean Tragedy. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/19/erdogan-turkey-shakespearean-tragedy>.

¹⁶⁸ Luke Harding (2013, June 11). Erdogan's Reaction to Turkey Protests Reveals Ominous Putin Parallels. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/11/turkey-recep-tayyip-erdogan-must-compromise>.

Twitter Ban in Turkey

After the Gezi protests, Erdogan described Twitter as the “worst menace to society”, which was mocked by the social media, as well as the international media. Furthermore, he offered conspiracy theories about the reasons behind the Gezi protests, such as blaming foreign provocateurs, international interest lobby, and the usual suspect, Twitter. In *The Guardian*, Constanze Letsch cites Erdogan’s remarks while Luke Harding discusses his actions:

“There is now a menace which is called Twitter,” Erdogan said. “The best examples of lies can be found there. To me, social media is the worst menace to society.”¹⁶⁹

Erdogan's polarizing tactics might have come straight from the Putin playbook. Instead of talking to the demonstrators – a diverse and previously non-political bunch – he has blamed the protests on a murky foreign conspiracy. Many critical journalists are already in jail and on Tuesday Erdogan denounced the international media. His ruling Islamist-rooted Justice and Development party (AKP) has made menacing noises about banning Twitter, one of the main conduits for anti-Erdogan mockery, and dubbed a menace by the PM.¹⁷⁰

After the decision to ban Twitter in Turkey, there was a huge uproar from the Turkish citizens, expressed particularly in the social media. The ban was protested on Twitter using hashtags, designed specifically to protest the Twitter ban in Turkey, which became popular and began trending globally in a short period of time. The NYT reports the reaction as follows:

Nonetheless the ban appeared to backfire, fomenting a loud and raucous backlash on Twitter, with the hashtags #Twitterisblockedinturkey, #occupytwitter, #turkeyblockedtwitter, and #dictatorerdogan quickly becoming popular trending topics globally.¹⁷¹

In NYT, the Turkish government’s Twitter ban was likened to a “digital coup” while Turkey was compared to China or North Korea. NYT also reported

¹⁶⁹ Constanze Letsch (2013, June 3). Social Media and Opposition to Blame for Protests, Says Turkish PM. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/02/turkish-protesters-control-istanbul-square>.

¹⁷⁰ Luke Harding (2013, June 11). Erdogan’s Reaction to Turkey Protests Reveals Ominous Putin Parallels. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/11/turkey-recep-tayyip-erdogan-must-compromise>.

¹⁷¹ Sebnem Arsu & Dan Bilefsky (2014, March 21). In Turkey, Twitter Roars After Effort to Block It. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/world/europe/turks-see-to-challenge-twitter-ban.html>.

the harsh criticism of the European Commission made via Twitter, calling the ban “censorship.”

While Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country of 79 million people, has long sought to portray itself as a model of democracy in a restive region, critics both inside and out outside the country denounced the government’s ban as a “digital coup” more befitting China or North Korea. They, too, of course, did so over Twitter. Echoing outrage from across the world, Neelie Kroes, vice president of the European Commission, the European Union’s executive body, wrote on Twitter that “The Twitter ban in #Turkey is groundless, pointless, cowardly. Turkish people and intl community will see this as censorship. It is.”¹⁷²

The same article also quotes PM Erdogan who brushed the critics aside in a defiant tone. Erdogan’s remarks are as follows:

Twitter, mwitter!” (the rough equivalent of “Twitter, schmitter!”) Mr. Erdogan said. “We will root out all. They say, ‘Sir, the international community can say this, can say that.’ I don’t care at all. Everyone will see how powerful the state of the Republic of Turkey is [author’s parentheses].”¹⁷³

The Gezi Park resistance was not the only reason behind the Twitter ban. There were also leaked audio tapes online revealing corruption within the Erdogan’s inner circle, as well as his government. Besides blocking Twitter, Erdogan also urged his government to shut down the access to Facebook and YouTube which shared the leaked audio tapes on their sites. In a WSJ article, it is argued that the way Turkish government blocks Twitter and other social media platforms may encourage other countries and set an example to censor social media.

Mr. Erdogan's shake-up, a rapid-fire response to a power struggle with political enemies, has left Internet companies and government officials from Washington to Brussels worried

¹⁷² Sebnem Arsu & Dan Bilefsky (2014, March 21). In Turkey, Twitter Roars After Effort to Block It. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/world/europe/turks-see-to-challenge-twitter-ban.html>.

¹⁷³ Sebnem Arsu & Dan Bilefsky (2014, March 21). In Turkey, Twitter Roars After Effort to Block It. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/22/world/europe/turks-see-to-challenge-twitter-ban.html>.

that Turkey could become a template for other countries where leaders want to rein in the Internet without cracking down with as much force as China or Iran.¹⁷⁴

After the Constitutional Court ruled to reject the Twitter ban, access to Twitter was reinstated. Since then, despite other attempts to block Twitter, as well as Facebook and YouTube, there is currently access to all of these social media platforms in Turkey. However, the Turkish parliament, which is controlled by Erdogan's Islamist party, AKP, passed a law to increase the government oversight on social media. The law allows the Turkish government to demand, without a court order, any data deemed threatening to national security such as Web browsing activity, email and text messages, also Facebook and Twitter accounts. The actions taken by the Turkish government indicates that social media platforms have been influential in changing the political discourse, mobilizing individuals, and facilitating grassroots opposition movements and protests in Turkey. PM Erdogan's desire to ban the social media is a precautionary step to discourage the opposing voices and prevent future protests and demonstrations. It also indicates that he is concerned about his image on the international political arena. Therefore, one may conclude that social media have been effective in altering the Western perception of Turks and Turkey.

The review of the selected Western newspapers shows that before the Gezi Park protests, the image of Turkey in Western media was rather positive, despite some ambivalence at times. After so many decades of volatility in Turkey due to military coups, coalition governments and economic crises, PM Erdogan and his Islamist government were perceived as the new leadership that brought stability, economic growth and democracy. The Western media viewed Erdogan and his government as 'democratic', 'reformist' and 'pluralistic'. However, after the Gezi Park events, there has been a shift in the representation of Erdogan and his party in the international media. The selected newspapers began characterizing him as 'authoritarian', 'combative', 'aggressive', and 'despotic'. These descriptions are much more aligned with the longstanding image of Turks, which has been seen in Western discourse for centuries and discussed in the previous chapters. However,

¹⁷⁴ Joe Parkinson, Sam Schechner & Emre Peker (2014, May 2). Turkey's Erdogan: One of the World's Most Determined Internet Censors. *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com> (ProQuest at NTU Library Online).

the representation of Turks in Western newspapers also shows that there is a distinction between the Turks as a nation and the Turkish government, which was absent in the prior Western discourse examined in this thesis. My discourse analysis of the Western writings until the end of the 19th century demonstrates that Europeans' perception of Turks as a race and as a nation is obscured with their apprehension towards the Ottoman Empire. During the Gezi protests, social media provided an opportunity for both the Western public and media to see the Turks in a different way. The international mainstream media sympathized with the Turkish public while criticizing PM Erdogan and his government for being authoritarian. Western newspapers were more sympathetic towards the Turkish protesters as they were being brutalized by the Turkish police and mistreated by Erdogan and his government. Also, viewers of the mainstream news networks witnessed the violent reaction of the Turkish police towards a diverse group of Turkish protesters, including people from all walks of life. The news media also scrutinized the underlying reasons for the protests and questioned the wrongdoings of the Turkish government. Therefore, unlike the prior discourses discussed in this thesis so far, the representation of Turks was not stereotypical. Simply, the Western perception of the Turkish government and of the Turkish citizens was not the same, and their images were not lumped in together. After the images and news of the Gezi protests appeared on social media and triggered the real-time coverage of the Western media, the representation of Turks has become more impartial, balanced and nuanced. Consequently, one may conclude that social media may have an impact on the Western perception of Turks in the future too and may improve the stereotypical Turkish image, as the representations become more multifaceted over time.

CONCLUSION

The discourse analysis that has been conducted in this thesis reveals that the Western image of Turks has been uniform, constant, and consistent. Beginning with the First Crusade in the 11th century, Turks were defined as the Muslim ‘Other’ by the Christian Europe. This image was bolstered during the rise of the Ottoman Empire and Turks were characterized as the ‘enemy of Christianity,’ ‘evil Muslim’ and ‘wicked Other’ and became the epicenter of the Crusade propaganda until the middle of the 15th century. When the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, they were demonized as ‘bloodthirsty savages’ and became known for their ‘cruelty.’ During the Renaissance, European humanists branded the Ottoman Turks as ‘barbarians’, which highlighted their status as the enemy of Western civilization and Christendom. During the 15th and 16th centuries, the fear and anxiety that European Christians had because of the Ottoman military advances solidified the image of Turks as ‘cruel’ people. Around the same time, the stereotypical image of ‘terrible Turk’ emerged and later became predominant. Christian Europeans also showed admiration and envy towards the Ottoman Empire during that period and praised the Turks because of their strong military, efficient political organization and religious unity. In contrast, Christian Europeans suffered from a religious divide and at the same time lacked a formidable, unified and organized military. However, my analysis has also showed that the praise for the Ottoman military and administration in some Western writings was not sufficient to overcome the stereotype of ‘terrible Turk.’ Therefore, the European image of Turks as ‘cruel, immoral and barbarous’ remained, and the ‘terrible Turk’ stereotype endured.

During the 16th and 17th centuries, the notion of ‘Turk’ became central to the definition of Europe’s self. Both the internal and external threats to the unity and existence of Christendom created the need to define the ‘Turk’ in such terms that the image of Turk may either be justifiable or demeaning, depending on the political, religious, or ideological allegiance. The Ottoman military aggression and political domination in Europe was uncontrollable and unstoppable. The Ottoman peril inspired the English playwrights and the Turks became the epicenter of the

popular English plays, which bolstered the image of the ‘terrible Turk’ even more. The history books and treatises written during the same period also promoted this image by describing the Turks as ‘the present terror of the world,’ a phrase coined by historian Richard Knolles. The fear of being dominated by the Turks and the religion of Islam produced the term ‘turning Turk’ which embodies all the negative stereotypical features of Turks. Although the British Empire was not in imminent threat due to its geographic location, and was rather at friendly terms with the Turks compared to the other European monarchies, the British imperial envy towards the Ottomans was undeniable. This was also reflected in Early Modern English drama, and the image of Turks as ‘cruel’ was reinforced with demonizing representations, particularly of the Ottoman Sultans, for the purpose of alterizing the Turks. The invention of printing machine enabled these texts to reach increasing number of readers, and thus popularized and cemented the stereotypical image of Turks even more. The image of ‘cruel Turk’ encapsulated the threat to European ‘self’ and motivated both England and the rest of Europe to strive for more opportunities, explore other lands, and become superior. Towards the end of the 17th century, European monarchs began capitalizing on their efforts and spreading to other lands.

In the 18th century, the balance of power between Christian Europe and the Ottoman Empire shifted. Due to Enlightenment and colonialism, Europeans progressed both culturally and economically as opposed to the Ottomans. The incompetence and decadence of the Ottoman Sultans and the vulnerability of a weakening military caused the decline of the Ottoman Empire. During this period, Western travelers, who were often biased because of the European positional superiority, characterized Ottomans as ‘indolent, backward, ignorant, despotic, sensual and lustful’ in their travel accounts. My brief review of the Orientalist discourse demonstrates that Western travel accounts were embellished with European fantasy and imagination about Imperial harem stories, Turkish promiscuity, sensuality, homosexuality and sodomy. These representations produced the stereotype of ‘lustful Turk.’ However, the ‘cruelty’ of Turks did not fade from the Western discourse, as it has continued to exist on the movie screens of Western contemporary cinema.

The depictions of Turks in Western films are frequently stereotypical, which indicates a continuity of the Crusade rhetoric, Renaissance humanist discourse, Early Modern English drama and Orientalist travelogue that have been reviewed in this thesis. My analysis of selected American and European films maintains this continuity as the Turkish portrayals are often reminiscent of the ‘terrible Turk’ image of the prior discourses. The cinematic image of the Turks is inflated with the stereotypical features of cruelty, brutality, murderousness, immorality, sexual aggression, lustfulness and homosexuality inspired by the prior representations of Turks. The analysis also reveals that the Turkish image in Hollywood films has been uniform and consistent. Unlike Arab portraits, Turkish characters are not nuanced and multifaceted. On the other hand, the representations of Turks in European films are varied and involve both stereotypical and multidimensional characters. However, as discussed previously, these films are not as influential as the big Hollywood productions which are available for a worldwide audience. Taking into account the influential and popular films, my findings illustrate that the stereotypical features of Turks are homogeneous and prevalent in contemporary Western films. Therefore, one may conclude that the stereotypical features of Turks in Western films originate from the long-standing Western images of ‘Terrible Turk’ and ‘Lustful Turk’ that have been predominant in Western discourse. These stereotypes are further propagated and promoted by the popular films and permeate into Western popular culture. Therefore, I conclude that these images become a myth and they transcend time.

Among the people who have watched *Lawrence of Arabia*, quite a few of them must have been convinced that Lawrence, the blonde, blue-eyed, English hero, was brutally beaten and raped by the sadistic Turkish soldiers. Most people know what ‘Turkish prison’ stands for even though they have not seen *Midnight Express*. At the end of *The Usual Suspects*, when the brutal killer, Kayser Soze, is introduced as a Turk, the audience must have been convinced of his crimes as Turks are perceived to be murderers and criminals anyway. Such depictions of Turks are convincing due to the predominant stereotype of Turks as ‘cruel’ and thus, Turkish portrayals such as Kayser Soze become believable. In Chapter 5, I have addressed the associations between these stereotypical images in cinema and the mythical image of Turks, but my examination of Western films is still limited.

Also, it is implausible to measure the direct effect of these films on the audience due to the extensive material available and the time constraints of this thesis. Furthermore, some European films have diverse or nuanced Turkish portrayals, but these films are not widespread. They are mostly the products of Turkish diasporic cinema. Nevertheless, my analysis of Western contemporary cinema shows that the Turkish stereotype in films is uniform and consistent as well as predominant. This indicates that popular films such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Midnight Express* help promote the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ as well as ‘lustful Turk’ and enable these images to survive throughout the 21st century.

Overall, the findings of my discourse analysis support my argument that the images of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ have become myths. These images originate from the historical discourse and Orientalist discourse that have disparaged the Turks. These stereotypical images have continued to exist in the Western contemporary cinema preserving their uniformity and consistency. Therefore, they become trans-historical and transformed into myths. At the end of my thesis, I attempted to answer the question of how these myths could be altered. This question urged me to look at other popular media and explore how the image of Turks can be transformed in the future. For that reason, I have sought to determine the effects of social media in the last chapter of the thesis, as social media can have significant influence on people’s perceptions of other cultures. I was motivated to find out the possible impact of social media on the prospective image of Turks. To achieve this, I explored the possible effects of social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, due to their popularity especially among younger generations and demonstrated that social media could be influential in mobilizing people during public protests. Also, I attempted to establish the link between the social media and traditional news media by looking at the Arab Spring and the Gezi Park resistance in Turkey. To determine the effect of social media on the Turkish image, I reviewed a selected group of Western newspapers and analyzed the news coverage about Turkey before and after the Gezi Park protests. Based on the results of my analysis of the selected American and European newspapers, I have concluded that social media have been a significant factor for the changes in the representations of Turks.

My analysis also illustrates that the actions of the political governments do not necessarily reflect the beliefs and characteristics of the nations they represent. As discussed previously, European Christians alteredized the Turks based on their ethnicity and religion. Turks were stereotyped as ‘cruel’ and vilified as a whole ethnic group during the time when the Ottoman Empire was attacking Europe and conquering European territories. Even during the Early Modern era, when Europe had cultural and commercial interactions with the Turks, European Christians continued to demonize them because of the looming Ottoman aggression. This indicates that European Christians were not able to distinguish the Turkish people from their monarchy and their religion, as the Turks were always associated with the might of the Ottoman Empire and Islam. Following European colonialism, Western travelers had the opportunity see the Turks first-hand, but their perception was biased with the Orientalist viewpoint as discussed earlier. Social media provided an opportunity for the Turkish public to be judged independently during the Gezi Park resistance. Therefore, during the Gezi Park protests, social media were effective in altering the Western representations of Turks.

In the last chapter, my analysis of social media and newspaper coverage has demonstrated that Turkish governments do not necessarily reflect the beliefs, principles and values of the Turkish people. In contrast with social media, popular films such as *Midnight Express* do not differentiate between the Turkish public and Turkish government. The lead character in *Midnight Express* falsely accuses the entire Turkish nation of being oppressive and cruel, while insulting all the Turks at the same time. During the Gezi Park resistance, social media users had the opportunity to see the Turks separately from their government as they witnessed Turkish protesters being brutalized by the Turkish police. With the possible impact of social media, one may assume that it is unlikely for the Turks to be branded by the actions of their government in the future. Although it is not possible to measure the direct impact of social media due to the limited amount of academic research available at the moment, my analysis of social media poses important questions for future research. For example, examining whether the West perceives the Turks differently from the Turkish government would be a valuable contribution to the existing academic research. I think that looking into the representation of both Turks and Turkish government on social media offers a good opportunity to assess

the impact of social media. How social media platforms affect the images of national identities or alter the perceptions of other cultures are major questions that need to be investigated in the future. For future research, I intend to explore whether social media can help change the image of Turks and alter the deeply rooted stereotypes of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk.’

My research in this thesis upholds the argument that the images of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ come from the previous discourses and continue to appear in entertainment media. They have become myths that are so entrenched in the Western discourse that they permeate into popular culture. However, these two stereotypes are not the only images of Turks that Western people encounter in the media. There are so many accomplished and well-known Turkish people who represent Turks and Turkey worldwide. Some of these people are artists, writers, musicians, athletes, doctors, scientists, scholars and businessmen, who reach a worldwide audience with their films, TV shows, books and art, who do pioneering research and teach young minds at universities, or who manage corporations and sell popular products all around the world. For example, Dr. Mehmet Oz is a successful Turkish-American cardiac surgeon who is also a very popular TV personality and an author. Orhan Pamuk is a highly acclaimed Turkish writer and academic who is the 2006 recipient of the Nobel Prize in literature. Elif Safak is another award-winning Turkish author and academic who is also known for her articles in *The Guardian*. Nuri Bilge Ceylan is an acclaimed Turkish screenwriter and film director who won the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 2014 for his film *Winter Sleep*. In sports, Mehmet Okur and Hidayet ‘Hedo’ Turkoglu are two popular Turkish former basketball players who played in the NBA for several seasons. In corporate world, Muhtar Kent is a successful Turkish-American business executive who is the chairman and CEO of the Coca Cola Company. Another accomplished Turkish-American businessman is Hamdi Ulukaya, who is the founder, chairman and CEO of Chobani, the number one selling yogurt brand in the United States. Last but not least, Dr. Aziz Sancar, who is a Turkish-American scientist, made the headlines when he was awarded with the Nobel Prize in 2015 for his groundbreaking research in DNA repair.

All these distinguished Turkish figures and countless others have represented the Turks and Turkey worldwide with their achievements and have been celebrated for their success. The Western mass media have reported about their accomplishments and covered them in their newscasts. However, whether the cinematic portrayals of Turks in Western cinema reflect the achievements of such distinguished Turkish people is debatable. It is highly unlikely to see a Turkish character in films, who is a pioneering scientist or an acclaimed artist. Despite the successes of business executives such as Hamdi Ulukaya or Muhtar Kent, the Turkish businessmen in films are often portrayed as illegitimate people who either run a shady corporation or have connections with crime organizations. Although there is a significant number of renowned Turks living both in Turkey and other countries, United States and major European countries in particular, it is almost impossible to see a sophisticated Turk in films. Both the Turks in diaspora and in Turkey are culturally and intellectually diverse, but the Turkish portraits in films are not. However, there are two recent exceptions where the filmmakers have deserted the common stereotypical characteristics of Turks and portray them as human, sophisticated and even heroic at times. These films are: *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2012) directed by Mira Nair and *The Water Diviner* (2014), Russel Crowe's directorial debut. These films are not Hollywood productions, but distributed by the American companies. The nuanced and distinct portrayals of the Turks in these films require a closer look and an in-depth analysis to determine whether the representation of Turks may improve in cinema. Accordingly, they will be examined closely and discussed in my future research. So far, my analysis of the selected films in this thesis shows that the stereotypical cinematic image of Turks reflects a myth which is a product of the past discourses. Therefore, the findings of my analysis uphold my argument.

Surely, Turks are not the only ethnic group that is demonized in the Western discourse and contemporary cinema. In history, many people were disparaged because of their ethnicity, religion or color, such as Jews and Blacks. In Western discourse, there is ample amount of literature that shows the negative representations, sufferings and vilification of these people. One may also find abundance of stereotypical depictions in Western cinema that demonize Blacks, Hispanics, Chinese, Russians and particularly, Arabs. As discussed earlier, the

portrayals of these ethnic groups, including Arabs, are not always stereotypical as their depictions can be multidimensional and nuanced. For example, award winning films *Syriana* (2005) and *Babel* (2006) show the human side of Arabs and portray them heroes or victims. One may see black actors such as Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, Morgan Freeman, Will Smith and Idris Elba play heroic, multidimensional or emotional roles in films all the time. However, it is unlikely to single out a Turkish character in a Hollywood film that is someone other than a criminal, murderer, drug dealer or rapist. As discussed previously in Chapter 5, the stereotypical characterization of Turks in films shows that the myth of ‘terrible Turk’ is trans-historical.

Based on the findings, this thesis has made a significant contribution to the academic discussion about the Western image of Turks. As my main focus in this thesis has been the Western perception of Turks, I have not looked into how the Turks or other Muslims see the West. For the purposes of my thesis, the counter narratives such as Occidentalism are deemed inessential. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that the image of ‘terrible Turk’ and ‘lustful Turk’ are myths created and bolstered by the Western discourse. For further research, exploring the counter narratives will enrich the knowledge about the Turks and also provide a better understanding of the Middle Eastern standpoint. This thesis has also demonstrated that social media can have an impact on the perception of other cultures. It will be critical to investigate whether social media can improve the Western image of Turks. These issues will be my future research topics.

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LIST OF FILMS REVIEWED

A Knight's Tale (2001). Producers: Todd Black, Brian Helgeland, & Tim V. Rellim; Director: Brian Helgeland. USA: Escape Artists.

America America (1963). Producer: Elia Kazan; Director: Elia Kazan. USA: Warner Bros.

Ararat (2002). Producer: Atom Egoyan & Robert Lantos; Director: Atom Egoyan. USA: Miramax Films.

Black Sabbath (1963). Producers: Salvatore Billitteri & Paolo Mercuri; Director: Mario Bava. Italy: Emmepi Cinematografica Galatea Film.

Buffalo Soldiers (2001). Producers: Rainer Grupe & Ariane Moody; Director: Gregor Jordan. USA: Miramax Films.

Dark Holiday (1989, TV movie). USA: Peter Nelson-Lou Antonio Productions; Sony Pictures Entertainment.

Dirty Pretty Things (2002). Producers: Robert Jones & Tracey Seaward; Director: Stephen Frears. UK: BBC Films & Celador Films.

Dracula Untold (2014). Producer: Michael De Luca; Director: Gary Shore. USA: Legendary Pictures; Universal Pictures.

Eastern Promises (2007). Producers: Paul Webster & Robert Lantos; Director: David Cronenberg. USA, Canada & UK: Focus Features; Alliance Atlantis Motion Picture & BBC Films.

Empire of the Wolves / L'Empire des Loups (2005). Producers: Andrew Colton & Patrice Ledoux; Director: Chris Nahon. France: Gaumont/Columbia TriStar Films.

Godforsaken / Van God Los (2003). Producers: Henneke Niens, Reinier Selen & Anton Smit; Director: Pieter Kuijpers. Netherlands: TLA Releasing.

Hamam (1997). Director: Ferzan Ozpetek. Italy, Turkey & Spain: Strand Releasing.

Harem (1986, TV movie). USA: Highgate Pictures & New World Television.

Harem Suare (1999). Producer: Abdullah Baykal; Director: Ferzan Ozpetek. Turkey, Italy & France: Medusa Film.

International (2009). Producers: Charles Roven, Richard Suckle & Lloyd Phillips; Director: Tom Tykwer. USA & Germany: Sony Pictures.

Journey of Hope (1990). Producers: Peter-Christian Fueter & Alfi Sinniger; Director: Xavier Koller. Switzerland: Miramax.

King Solomon's Mines (1985). Producers: Yoram Globus, Menahem Golan & Rony Yacov; Director: J. Lee Thompson. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Lawrence of Arabia (1962). Producer: Sam Spiegel; Director: David Lean. UK: Horizon Pictures.

Mediterraneo (1991). Producer: Silvio Berlusconi, Mario Cecchi Gori, Vittorio Cecchi Gori & Gianni Minervini; Director: Gabriele Salvatores. Italy: Miramax Films.

Midnight Express (1978). Producers: Alan Marshall & David Puttnam; Director: Alan Parker. USA & UK: Columbia Pictures.

Out of Reach (2004). Producers: Frank Hildebrand, James A.Holt, Jeanna Polley & Elie Samaha; Director: Po-Chih Leong. USA: Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment.

Pascali's Island (1988). Producers: Tanja Blunden, Paul Raphael & Mirella Sklavounou; Director: James Dearden. UK: Channel Four Films & Dearfilm.

The Adventures of Baron Munchausen (1988). Producers: Thomas Schuhly, Ray Cooper, Jake Eberts, David Tomblin & Stratton Leopold; Director: Terry Gilliam. UK: Allied Filmmakers.

The Favorite (1989, a.k.a. Intimate Power). Producers: Gerges-Alain Vuille & Ascona Films Inc.; Director: Jack Smight. USA: 20th Century Fox.

The Turkish Passion / La Pasi3n Turca (1994). Producer: Andres Vicente Lopez; Director: Vicente Aranda. Spain: Lola Films.

The Usual Suspects (1995). Producers: Kenneth Kokin, Michael McDonnell & Bryan Singer; Director: Bryan Singer. USA: Spelling Films International.

To the Hilt (2014). Producers: Jordanco Cevrevski & Milivoje Gorgevic; Director: Stole Popov. Macedonia: Triangl Film & Sektor Film.

Vampyros Lesbos (1971). Producers: Artur Brauner & Karl Heinz Mannchen; Director: Jesus Franco. Spain: CCC Telecine & Central Cinema Company Film.

Venus in Furs (1969). Producer: Harry Alan Towers; Director: Jesus Franco. Italy: American International Pictures.

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