

**Representation of the Orient in 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century  
English Drama with Focus on Persia: A New Historicist  
Perspective**



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**A thesis submitted to  
International Islamic University Islamabad, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English**

**Department of English  
Faculty of Languages & Literature  
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**2020**



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## **DECLARATION**

I, Abdul Ghaffar s/o Mumtaz Hussain, Registration no# 93-FLL/PHDENG/F-15, do hereby solemnly declare that this work has been composed by me at the Department of English, International Islamic University Islamabad, and that the subject-matter contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated in the text. I also declare that this work has not been submitted for a degree or professional qualification in a university anywhere in the world.

Abdul Ghaffar

Researcher

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**ABSTRACT**  
**Representation of the Orient in 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century English Drama with  
Focus on Persia: A New Historicist Perspective**

The subject of the current dissertation is to present a new historicist study of representation of the Orient in 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century English drama with focus on Persia in relation to the four plays: *Cambyses*, *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers*, *The Sophy* and *Mirza*. The work is primarily focussed on confirming the contention that the English playwrights have misrepresented the Orient including Persia in their plays. Using new historicism as a major theoretical framework, the study seeks to reveal that not only the selected English plays but also the varied contemporary discourses have represented Persia and Persians in a negative manner with a view to establishing and asserting cultural hegemony. Though the discourse employed in these plays may not be described as Orientalist or imperialist discourse yet the plays obviously register the birth of the discourse which later on took the form of Orientalist discourse. New historicist assumptions - historicity of the text, discourse and power relationship and the construction of identity are used to examine these plays. This theory sees an inseparable link between literary works and socio-historical conditions. The key assumptions of new historicism are studied as reflected through various elements in the plays, prominently in the representation of Persian characters, dialogues and the interaction between Persian and English characters. The study also heavily draws on Edward Said's views in *Orientalism*. His views on representation and existence of an Orientalist discourse from the time of Greek civilization provide an ancillary theoretical lens to investigate the representation of Persia in the selected plays. It is employed in order to reinforce the explanations and findings related to the representation of Persia and Persians. Application of both theories indicates many affinities in the explicatory process of these plays as well as in the findings drawn from their examination. The study reveals that the English playwrights deliberately misrepresented Persia with a view to disseminating and asserting their cultural hegemony across the world. Thus, the validity of the contention is confirmed through this study. The juxtaposition of literary works with non-literary works also demonstrates that the contemporary inter-discursive practices form intertextuality. Further, these varied discourses as ideological tools show complicity in supporting the dominant ideology of the period. This awareness may enhance our understanding in regard to the English perception of the Oriental people in general and Persians in particular during early modern English period. However, the objective of this study is not to blame one or the other party or to highlight the undeniable differences between the West and East. But, the objective is to develop understanding that may help overcome the differences and lead towards accommodation, tolerance and forgiveness since this is the way to start new beginnings and become a part of larger humanity and universal brotherhood.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Representation:

Representation refers to the portrayal of reality that a writer perceives around him or her. In case of literary representations, it may refer to the depiction of socio-historical conditions, characters' interaction with each other and their inner worlds. Writers represent all this through the means of varied discourses that they employ in their works, through images, through characters' appearance, their dialogues and construction of their identities. These representations serve as ideological tools and help writers shape individuals and the society in which they live. Thus, these function as an instrument of the forces of containment. These forces of containment are regulated by "the panoptic state [that] and maintains its surveillance not by physical force or intimidation, but by the power of discursive practices" (Barry, 1999, p.176). The English writers employed different representational strategies and discursive practices to represent the Orient, Oriental people and their culture (especially the Muslim states) in early modern English literature. These strategies and discursive practices pervade in literary as well as non-literary writings of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ian Buchanan (2010) defines representation as "the image of an idea or thing. At its most basic, representation means two things: (1) Creating something that stands for another thing.... (2) Creating something that is in at least some sense equivalent to another thing, most often because it resembles that other thing" (p.405). It means representation stands for something but it is "not the same as that other thing" (ibid, p.406). *Merriam-Webster On-line Dictionary* (2006) defines it as "(a)

an artistic likeness or an image (b) a statement or an account made to influence opinion or action (c) a dramatic production or performance ....” Actually, the issue of representation is very ancient one. From Plato and Aristotle to Sidney and Said, the scholars have defined and dwelt a lot on it in their works. The crux of their views is that representation is an imaginative construct, a fictionalized reality that the writers create with specific interests in their minds. These interests may be at the conscious or unconscious level to entertain, instruct, or provide aesthetic pleasure to their readers and audience.

## **1.2. Representation of The Orient:**

The survey of the scholarship that deals with the representation of the Orient i.e. Islam and Muslims shows that the scholars have mainly focused on the Turks and African Moors and neglected the two other important Muslim Empires of the time such as the Moughal India and the Safavid Persia. Though the scholars such as Jyotsna Singh (1996), Pompa Banerjee (2003) and Richmond Barbour (2003) have paid some attention to the Moughal India yet the majority of scholars has ignored the Safavid Persia. Consequently, the scholars like Nabil Matar (1999), Linda McJannet (1999), Javad Ghatta (2009), Jane Grogan (2010) and Abid Masood (2012) have highlighted this fact and stressed the need to work in this area. A brief cultural, historical and religious background of the early modern England can help us understand the conditions that created these representational practices. The relationships between the Muslims and Christians have always been a sight of struggle. One may observe the transitory shifts in these relationships but mostly there has been a tug of war between the two. In this case, the period of 16<sup>th</sup> century has great

significance due to the socio- political and religious changes that took place during that period. As a result of Martin Luther's movement of reformation, the schism in Christianity divided the Christian world into catholic countries governed by the Pope through the Vatican church and protestant countries mainly England governed by Queen Elizabeth through the Anglican church. This thing is further evident in the wars that took place between the Catholic Spain and the protestant England. Similarly, the schism in Islam also divided the Muslims into Shi'a Muslims mainly in Persia and Sunni Muslims in the Ottoman Empire and other Muslim states. The Shi'as of Persia followed the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) along with Mortus Ali and believed that Abubakar, Umar and Usman deprived Ali of caliphate whereas the Sunni Turks followed the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) and all the four Caliphs equally (Baron, 1642, pp. 187-188). Because of these contradictory views, the Turks and the Persians disliked each other and there had been serious confrontations between the two.

The Ottoman Empire was a powerful Muslim empire in 16<sup>th</sup> century so much so that the Europeans generally and England particularly had threats from the Turks because of the increasing conquests of the Ottoman Empire. English people were facing the fears of conversion, piracy and insecurity of sea trade routes due to the Ottoman attacks. For this purpose, they were looking for different options and possibilities. These options sometimes took the form of John Prester, the imaginary Messiah or rescuer, having political, commercial and military alliance with the Safavid Persians against the Turk Ottomans and sometimes even bilateral diplomatic negotiations with the great Turk, or Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. Another important thing that happened during the early

modern period was the expansion of English maritime industry, which helped England to dominate the Asian waters. Subsequently, it caused the growth of trade and cultural exchanges in the East. These exchanges lent England an opportunity to know the East and its culture, its people and emperors, its politics and its religion, its beauty and its colors, its wealth and luxury. In this case, the three trading companies of England namely the East India Company in the Moughal India, the Muscovy Company in Persia and the Levant Company in the Ottoman Turk played an important role and provided the information that later on enabled England to dominate the East in future. Therefore, it was in this context, the writers of the period represented the Orient with some intentional or unintentional motives in their minds.

For the present study, I have selected four plays of early modern English literature i.e. Thomas Preston's *Cambyses* (1561), Day, Rowley and Wilkins' joint play *The Travailes of Three English Brothers* (1607), Denham's *The Sophy* (1642) and Robert Baron's *Mirza* (1642). I have specifically chosen these four plays due to their thematic link and, therefore, they may serve appropriate illustrative examples of the representation of the Safavid Persia. Wherever it is relevant and necessary, I shall juxtapose these plays with a few important non-literary sources of the period. These non-literary sources include Sir Thomas Herbert's *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* (1634), *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic 1601-1603*(1864), Thomas Minadoi's *A History of the Warres between the Turkes and the Persians* (1595), and *Don Juan of Persia: A Shia'h Catholic 1560-1604* (2013) written by Uruch Beg later known as Don Juan de Persia. This juxtaposition of the plays with non-literary works will not only provide complementary interpretations but

also contribute substantially to our understanding about the representation of Persia during early modern English period.

### **1.3. Representation of Persia:**

A large number of researchers have worked on the representation of the Orient and Oriental in early modern English literature. However, the majority of the work that has been produced and published deals with the Ottoman Turks. The representation of the Safavid Persia in early modern English literature has been a neglected area. A surge of interest in the studies related to the representation of the Orient and Oriental in early modern English drama goes back to Louis Wann's *The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama* (1915) and W.G. Rice's *Turk, Moor and Persia in English Literature* (1927). However, it was Samuel C. Chew's *The Crescent and the Rose* (1937) which proved a seminal work in this case. While evaluating the works of these scholars, Linda McJannet (2009) summarizes that Wann and Rice have mainly focused on the historical and aesthetic aspects of the plays. However, the two scholars admit that in some cases the sources related to the Oriental plays were often inaccurate. Similarly, Rice and Chew have observed that the Western writers have portrayed the Muslim characters as monstrous and cultural stereotypes. Further, they are ideologically and artistically unconvincing (pp. 183-193).

These scholars have briefly surveyed and analyzed the plays in the light of history works, travelogues, captivity narratives and other cultural works and devoted only a few pages to each play. The Turkish scholar Orhan Burian (1952) has noted the ambivalent and critical reactions towards the depiction of the Turks in English plays. Nevertheless, Nabil Matar

(1999) provided the real boost in the Oriental studies who opined that the dramatic literature of early modern England mainly created anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim stereotypes. Likewise, Emily Bartles (1997) and Richmond Barbour (2003) argue that the images of Muslims are far more nuanced and ambivalent. In case of the representation of the Orient and Muslim women, the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montague (1993), the works of Bernadette Andrea (2007), Delariver Manley and Mary Pix (2012) are important in the list. Similarly, Sabine Schulting, Sabine Lucia, Muller and Ralf Hertel (2012) in their collaborative work have analyzed different forms of performativity including travelogues, plays, letters, and fiction and argue how these works are imaginary stages where one can observe and study the performance of western travelers and the Anglo-Oriental cultural encounters.

Another group of critics such as Nabil Matar (1999), Ken Parker (1999), Mathew Dimmock (2005), Mathew Birchwood (2007) and John Tollan (2013) argue that imaginary encounters were nuanced and informed by actual encounters in numerous and complex ways. Here it would be pertinent to talk about the impact of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (2003) on literary studies and the way it revolutionized the literary theory. In this respect, one group of critics thinks that Saidian model of Orientalism cannot be applied to the works of early modern English period whereas the other considers that Saidian model of Orientalism is also valid in case of the literary studies of the period. The scholars like Nabil Matar (1999), Gerald Maclean (2001), Daniel Goffman (1988) and Daniel Vitkus (2003) reject the application of Said's Orientalism model to early modern English studies on the ground that at that time England had not emerged as a colonizer



since it had no explicit cultural, military and technological superiority over the East. England was a belated player and it approached the East, in the words of Daniel Vitkus, as “supplicants or mimic men” (Vitkus, 2003, p.9). Whereas the critics like Anthony Parr (1996), Richmond Barbour (2003) and Ralph Hertel (2012) argue that, there are clear indicators of England’s role as an ambitious colonizer and the way England has constructed the East is enough to show the validity and veracity of Said’s Eurocentric perspectives.

A panoramic survey of the bulk of scholarship related to the representation of Islam and Muslims reveals some important facts. Firstly, the Western writers have misrepresented the Orient, Oriental characters, and their culture. Secondly, they have not represented the Safavid Persia as an adverse rival empire as they have represented the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, their attitude to the Orient empires of the time is almost same. Particularly, they have perceived the Orient from the perspective of Islam that they considered a fake and fraud religion. It is under the influence of this perception that they have misrepresented the Orient and its culture with a view to asserting and establishing the soundness of Christianity and the Western cultural superiority. Thirdly, majority of the critics and scholars have focused much on the representation of Turks and less on the representation of Persians in early modern English literature. This also corresponds to the production of the literary works and non-literary works created in this field. Hence, Nabil Matar (1999) insists that Persia needs our attention. While talking about the Eastern and Western encounters, he stresses that “Before a study of the impact of Persians and Mughal Muslims on Renaissance England is conducted \_ a project that has yet to be

undertaken \_ an investigation of the impacts of the Turks and Moors of the Ottoman Empire and North Africa must be completed” (pp. 4-5). After him, Linda McJannet (1999) in the same year insisted on bringing in a Persian into the scene. Another scholar who has drawn our attention to Persia as neglected empire is Jane Grogan (2010) who also points out that the recent scholarship focuses too much on the Ottoman Empire as a representative of the East whereas Persia is an ignored empire. The Ottoman Turks occupy the prominent place as the sole representative of Islam and Muslim culture. She opines that the representation of Persia “hitherto a blind spot of Early Modern English study needs to be added to the ‘Turks’ narratives” (p. 913). Consequently, a shift can be traced in the Oriental scholarship of early modern English literature and critics like Linda McJannet (1999), Richard Barbour (2003), Anthony Parr (1995), Chloe Houston (2009), Laden Niayesh (2008), Mathew Birchwood (2007), Javad Ghatta (2009) and Jane Grogan (2010) have contributed to the representation of Persia in early modern English literature.

No doubt, the Ottoman Empire occupied a central position in early modern England being a powerful empire of the East. Therefore, it is not a coincidence if the English writers have given more importance to the Ottoman Empire than other Oriental empires. However, it is untrue to develop understanding about the Orient through the lens of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire is not the whole East. The whole East is kaleidoscopic. It has many colors and voices and the scholarship about early modern English literature has ignored the colors and voices of Persia. Abid Masood (2012) mentions that: “Safavid Persia, then is the territory that has been largely ignored by

recent scholarship working on Early Modern Anglo-Islamic relations with the results that our understanding of English Perceptions of Islam and Muslims in early modern period today is based on Anglo-Ottoman or Anglo-African contacts and is consequently partial” (p. 1). All The above-mentioned scholars emphasize the need to work in this domain for the greater understanding of Anglo-Persian as well as Anglo-Oriental relations. Furthermore, there is no systematic study in which new historicist theoretical framework has been carried out to analyze the representation of Persia and Anglo-Persian relationships in early modern English literature. Though a few studies related to the representation of Persia and Anglo-Persian relationships with regard to individual plays exist yet no work has been reported that attempts to study the representation of Persia in the selected plays in the perspective of the new historicist principles and Said’s views in *Orientalism*. The proposed study, therefore, would be the first of its kind that employs the new historicist assumptions along with Edward Said’s Orientalist views.

#### **1.4. Statement of the Problem:**

The representation of Persia in Early Modern English literature has been complex and contradictory. Different circulating discourses of the time such as religious, literary, travel, historical, political, and trade created it. The analysis of these different discourses shows that the English writers and dramatists have misrepresented the Orient, Oriental characters, and their culture. They have denigrated the Orient and its culture and thereby asserted and established the cultural superiority of the Western civilization in contrast to the Eastern civilization. Nevertheless, the traditional and existing scholarship upto now in this domain has not dwelt on this issue. If some English and non-English scholars and

researchers have worked in this area, they have occluded this issue due to a few factors. First, they think that it is already a neglected area. Therefore, it is uninteresting and unworthy of their study. Second, their Eurocentric perspectives have not let them to elaborate on this issue. Third, they think that some other issues such as trade relations, diplomatic relations, military relations, cultural exchange, cultural hybridity, cultural diversity, political analogies, and rich and colourful Persian heritage are more important than this one and, consequently, they have explored those issues in their works. Fourth, they think if they talk about this issue, they will probably lose the international readership. These factors reveal a gap in the existing scholarship on the representation of Persia that I have chosen to bridge through my contribution. Furthermore, there have been echoes of Islamophobia in the West and the Western writers and scholars have demonized Islam and Muslims in recent years. The proposed study, on the one hand, fills the research gap that exists in the domain and, on the other hand, evinces continuity in the misrepresentation of the Orient, Oriental people and their culture. The objective of my proposed study is to communicate the idea that Christianity and Islam may be two different religions but more than this, the practitioners of both religions form the part of a larger community i.e. the humanity. Both can only understand it if they are ready to accommodate each other with all their differences and divisions. However, this understanding and accommodation requires the recognition of the differences and divisions. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the misrepresentation of Persia and Persian people in literary as well as non-literary texts and explore the motives behind this misrepresentation through close reading and application of the new historicist

assumptions along with Said's views in *Orientalism* (2003) to the selected plays. Consequently, this analysis will help understand how these motives influenced the English perception of Islam, Persian Muslims and Anglo-Persian relationships. There are, no doubt, works that deal with the representation of Persia in individual plays and similarly there is evidence of new historicist studies in case of Spenser, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Wyatt and some of the Victorian writers. However, in the researcher's opinion based on intensive reading and browsing, there is neither a single available work that puts together the selected plays for close reading in the domain of representation nor any other work has been reported in which the conflated theoretical framework of new historicism and Orientalism has been applied with reference to the selected plays. Therefore, this study will bridge that gap. Through this study of the selected plays from 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, my concern is to answer the following research questions that will govern the overall research.

### **1.5. Research Questions:**

1. How do the selected plays function as a part of continuum in representing Persia with other historical and cultural texts from the same period?
2. To what extent do these plays promote ideologies that support or undermine the prevailing power structures of the time and place in which these plays were written and performed?
3. How do these plays add to our understanding of the ways in which literary and non-literary discourses influence, overlap with one another during that historical period?

4. To what extent do the afore-mentioned literary and non-literary sources of the period reflect the writers' motives behind the misrepresentation of Persia?

### **1.6. Rationale:**

Representation of the orient, oriental people and their culture in the Early Modern English literature is not a new research area. The bulk of scholarship in this area has mostly focused on the representation of Islam and Muslims, of the (Turks) Ottoman Empires, of the Moors, and of the Moughals. The representation of the Safavid Persians has been an ignored and marginalized area. Only a few scholars have paid attention to the representation of Persia and English perception of Persia and Persians in plays. Some have examined these plays by using Saidian model of Orientalism while the others have analyzed them by following the economic and globalization models. The third group has analyzed them in terms of their historical accuracy or the writer's faithfulness to the available sources. Unlike other works, this proposed study attempts to bring the afore-mentioned literary and non-literary works together for the better understanding of the phenomenon. It tries to explore how the circulating discourses reflect the prevalent ideologies of the period and how these works constitute the society and in turn are constituted by it. It will also examine the power relations between Anglo-Persian communities.

Finally, this study will serve as a model for the application of new historicist assumptions and add another dimension to the pre-existing knowledge vis-a-vis the representation of Persia in the selected works. I, therefore, find it justified for me to analyze, examine and study these plays to understand the working of the web of discourses at that time and

their impact on the public and vice versa. Further, I shall use Edward Said's views in *Orientalism* (2003) as supporting theoretical lens to get a clearer and broader picture of the whole issue.

### **1.7. Methodology:**

The research will be carried out while using the qualitative approach. I shall explain and interpret the selected works in the light of new historicism that will be used as main theory. Edward Said's views in *Orientalism* (2003) will be used as ancillary theoretical lens to substantiate my findings. The data will be the selected literary texts i.e. the plays that will be juxtaposed, analyzed and interpreted with the afore-said non-literary texts wherever it is relevant and required. It will focus on the representation of Persia by the English writers in the selected works and its impact on Early Modern England. It will also analyze how these texts shaped the society and in return were shaped by it and then how both constructed individual identities through the negotiation and exchange of ideas.

My theoretical framework comprises two parts. The first part deals with the application of the new historicist assumptions to the selected works. According to the new historicists, both the literary texts and authors are cultural artefacts because they are product of their negotiation with the socio-historical conditions of a specific period. Such texts have more resonance than others that are less culture-sensitive. Therefore, it is an appropriate critical theory to analyze historical and cultural plays that I have chosen for examination and analysis. It has already been successfully applied to the works of Renaissance writers. The selected plays will be juxtaposed with the above-mentioned non-literary works like histories, pamphlets, diaries, and letters. New historicists

challenge and question the assumptions of New Criticism and liberal humanism in order to analyze the mechanisms of power reflected in the circulating discourses. For this purpose, new historicism conflates the deconstructive technique of literary reading with the (post)-Marxist ideological orientation and provides a useful insight into the socio-cultural power dynamics. Peter Barry (1999) points out the following methods that the new historicists adopt for their approach to literature:

1. They juxtapose literary and non-literary texts, reading the former in the light of the latter.
2. They try to 'defamiliarise' the canonical literary text, detaching it from the accumulative weight of previous literary scholarship and seeing it as if new.
3. They focus attention (within both text and co-text) on issues of state power and how it is maintained, on patriarchal structures and their perpetuation, and on the process of colonization, with its accompanying 'mind-set'.
4. They make use, in doing so, of aspects of the post-structuralist outlook, especially Derrida's notion that every facet of reality is textualized, and Foucault's idea of social structures as determined by dominant 'discursive practices' (p.179).

In the light of the new historicist assumptions, the proposed study will draw on Michel Foucault's notion of the relationship between knowledge and power that functions through the circulation of discourses and Clifford Geertz's concept of thick description. While using the technique of juxtaposition, the selected literary texts will be studied with the non-literary texts. In the words of Louis Montrose (2007), new historicism is "a



reciprocal concern with the historicity of the texts and the textuality of history” (Veese, 2013, p. 20). Old historicism uses history as a background to contextualize the works of art and claims the autonomy of the works of art. Contrary to it, new historicism gives equal importance to literary as well as non-literary texts e.g. history, newspaper, diaries, letter, pamphlets, speeches. One text refers to another. There is no absolute truth or fact rather there are only narrations and interpretations. It does not use history as context rather history works function as co-texts with which we can see how things are represented in the circulating discourses. This co-textuality or inter-textuality provides a panoptic view. These circulating discourses reflect ideologies and the ideological conflicts of the period and play vital role in constructing individuality. Moreover, it is through these ideologies, the workings of power dynamics and how power groups wield power to construct individuality can be understood. In this respect, new historicism also differs from Marxist literary criticism as Marxist literary critics believes that power is related to class. Whereas, new historicism argues that power permeates the whole society. It circulates in all dimensions and it works equally everywhere through the process of exchange from top to bottom and vice versa. The exchange, maybe the exchange of goods, exchange of people or exchange of ideas embedded in circulating discourses. Through the interaction of overlapping, competing discourses, an insight into the phenomena can be gained but no definite truth is possible for the socio-cultural complexity precludes any adequate explanation. Influenced by the post-structural thinking, new historicists also advocate the multiplicity of meanings. There is no history. All are narratives, and stories. Likewise, there are no meta-narratives or grand narratives.

It is only a matter of interpretations. These interpretations always occur within a framework of social and cultural conventions. Hence, new historicism is also known as cultural poetics. This leads to Clifford Geertz's (1973) concept of thick description that "means detailed examination of a given cultural production to discover the meaning that particular cultural production had for people in whose community it occurred and to reveal the social convention, cultural codes, and ways of seeing the world that gave that production those meanings" (Tyson, 2006, p. 288). Thick description is not search for meanings rather it is concerned with the interpretation of an event that is socially or culturally embedded phenomenon. Moreover, historical analysis cannot be objective as old historicists argue; rather it is subjective as personal biases are there. There is always self-positioning in one way or the other. The second part of my theoretical framework is related to Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) in which he has introduced a long list of the characteristics that show how the Western writers and scholars have misrepresented the Orient, Oriental characters and their culture in their works due to their Euro-centric perspectives. Said's *Orientalism* was first time published in 1978 but, throughout this proposed study, I shall use the edition of Said's *Orientalism* published in 2003. I shall draw on Said's views about representation which he has elaborated in this work and use them as criteria to evaluate whether there is misrepresentation in the afore-said works or not.

### **1.8. Chapter Division:**

The current study is organized into the following six chapters:

Chapter one provides an introduction to the phenomenon of this study, namely, representation of the Orient and representation of Persia. The relevance of the study within the context of new historicism and Edward Said's views in *Orientalism* has been considered. Background leads towards the formulation of research questions and the statement of the problem. An overview of the methodology as to how to address the questions is also provided. Finally, the rationale, significance and organization of the thesis are presented. Further, it also appraises of the definitions of the key terms.

Chapter two consists of two parts. The first part provides a review of the literature related to the central concepts in this study. This part also reviews the developments in the field of representation, representation of Orient i.e. the representation of the Ottoman Turks, Moors and especially the Persians. Previous research findings are brought to the limelight in order to identify gaps and provide justification for the current study. In addition, this part gives a detailed survey of literature (research papers, scholarly essays, review articles, books, criticism etc.) of the selected plays. The second part gives an overview of the selected plays as well as selected non-literary works for general understanding.

Chapter three outlines the orientation provided by the theoretical frameworks of this study, namely theory of new historicism and Edward Said's Orientalist views. They hold very specific ontological and epistemological implications that are discussed in detail in this chapter. Through a detailed discussion, the gist of each theory is presented under separate headings that could be applied to the selected plays.

Chapter four deals with the application of new historicist assumptions to the selected plays. The selected plays are juxtaposed with non-literary works wherever it is pertinent to get an insight into the working of the prevalent discourses. The dialogues, representation of the characters and their interaction with each other are examined as textual evidences in detail to investigate how these discourses support the dominant ideology of the period.

Chapter five comprises the application of Edward Said's views in *Orientalism* to the selected plays. Said's theory of Orientalism is used as a complementary reading to supplement the findings drawn from the previous chapter. This chapter also focuses on the misrepresentation of Persia and Persians in the selected plays and analyzes the motives behind it.

Chapter six concludes the whole thesis by offering a summary of the findings in relation to the research questions. It highlights the scope of the current study for future researchers, acknowledges the contribution to the existing corpus of knowledge and outlines its limitations.

### **1.9. Significance of the Study:**

In the researcher's opinion, this research will give a new direction to the study of representation of Orient in general and representation of Persia in particular in early modern English literature. By conflating new historicist assumptions with Saidian model of Orientalism, the study will enable a comprehensive and detailed examination of the selected plays. Unlike many other studies, through this conflation, it will examine how the English playwrights have represented Persia and Persians in their plays and attempt to

explore the motives behind these cultural representations. It will be a unique study both in terms of analyzing the plays not hitherto analyzed together and conflating the theory of new historicism with Said's views in *Orientalism* not hitherto employed together. It will be helpful for the future researchers, teachers, scholars and readers of early modern English studies. This study will also help bridge the research gaps contributing to the existing corpus of knowledge on one hand and will serve as a valuable addition to the existing criticism on the selected plays on the other. Lastly, it is likely to proffer valuable insights in the domain of representation of the Orient in early modern English literature. These make the current study a timely and relevant undertaking.

Below are the definitions of key terms that are frequently used in this study. These definitions serve quick reference and can help understand things in better perspective.

## **1.10. Key Terms and Their Definitions:**

### **1.10.1. Thick Description:**

New historicists have borrowed this term from Clifford Geertz who has introduced and explained it in his work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973). It refers to a detailed examination and explanation of an event with reference to its social and cultural practices since meanings cannot be detached from the culture where an event takes place. Thick description can be contrasted with thin description that means simple and superficial knowledge of an event.

### **1.10.2. Ideology:**

A set of beliefs and ideas that are pervasive in a society and work invisibly. It helps construct human identity and legitimizes the interests of a powerful group. Philosophers

and literary theorists have explained this term in different ways. Marxists perceive it as superstructure and false consciousness. Louis Althusser considers it a falsification of reality and equates it with ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) which he contrasts with repressive state apparatuses (RSAs).

### **1.10.3. Discourse:**

Anything spoken or written that produces knowledge and, thereby, molds the minds of people. It functions as a tool of power for dominant groups and serves their purposes. It is a frequently used term in new historicism and Said's *Orientalism* and both have borrowed it from Michel Foucault. Under the influence of Foucault, new historicists sometimes use it as an alternative term for ideology.

### **1.10.4. Intertextuality:**

The way one text is connected with other texts because it embodies the traces of and echoes the voices of other texts. Thus, all texts are interdependent and the concept of originality of a text is wrong one. It is usually associated with Julia Kristeva who popularized this term to signify that one text can be read, explained and understood with the help of other texts and, therefore, meaning is an 'in-between' process.

### **1.10.5. Episteme:**

In Greek language, it means knowledge. Michel Foucault employed this term to signify the structure of thought produced by various elements that generate knowledge during one historical period.

**1.10.6. Self-fashioning:**

Stephen Greenblatt uses this term to explain how individual identities are formed with the help of discourses and the dominant ideology embodied in those discourses.

**1.10.7. Subversion-containment Relationship:**

Greenblatt employs these two terms with reference to the operations of power. Subversion may be described as any act of resistance against authority. The authority itself encourages such acts that are later on suppressed and contained for effective functioning of power operations.

**1.10.8. Dialectic Relationship:**

A dynamic relationship occurs between all things, which is characterized by contradictions. In Greek language, it means an argument containing thesis and anti-thesis that helps get at truth. It also refers to reciprocity or intellectual exchange of ideas.

**1.10.9. Deconstruction:**

A technique of reading literary texts that subverts the hierarchal oppositions to reveal the plurality of meanings. The French philosopher, Jacques Derrida introduced this technique to signify that meaning is an ongoing process since there is a free play of signs.

**1.10.10. Eurocentric Perspectives:**

Biased and prejudiced perception of European-Western philosophers and scholars about the Orient. Edward Said has used this term in *Orientalism* to talk about the western representations of the Orient.

**1.10.11. Hegemony:**

The execution and maintenance of power without falling back on coercive methods. The Italian scholar, Antonio Gramsci used it as an alternative term for ideology to give the concept of soft power that is exercised through consent and internalization.

**1.10.12. Binaries:**

Oppositional pair of terms that have symbiotic relationship with each other. They define and complete each other due to their oppositional nature. Said mentions the binaries of West and East, white and black in *Orientalism* that he finds in abundance in the western discourse.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers a review of the literature related to the central concepts in the study. As the current thesis is based on the representation of the Orient with focus on Persia from a new historicist perspective, the views of scholars, authors and critics with different backgrounds are analyzed and found helpful in synthesizing with this study. The thorough review of the existing literature helps contextualize the study in the on-going research in the domain of representation of Persia. Attempts are made to explore and bridge the research gap(s) and to provide justification for employing the theoretical foundations for this study. I begin this chapter by providing the working definitions of the key concepts such as representation, representation of the Orient, Orientalism, and new historicism, followed by making a concerted effort to give an overview of the historical evolution of representation of the Orient from times past to date. Brief descriptions of the major concepts of new historicism given by the most representative new historicists are brought to the limelight. Then I attempt to bring in the works (dissertations, scholarly articles, academic papers, books etc.) related to the present study. Here I deal with the representation of the Orient, particularly Persia and how new historicism can be fruitful to the representation of Persia by looking at some theoretical developments in this area. These are the works directly or indirectly related to my present study as they help me locate the place for my present enterprise. Next to follow is the comprehensive review of the existing literature on the selected plays--- *Cambyzes*, *The Travels of Three English*

*Brothers, The Sophy* and *Mirza*. Vast ranges of varied analyses already done on these literary productions are highlighted. This too, has enabled me to establish my research territory in order to investigate and bridge the existing gaps.

### **2.1. Representation:**

The concept of representation occupies a significant place in western aesthetics. Stephen Halliwell (2002) remarks that “The concept of mimesis [imitation, representation] lies at the core of the entire history of western attempts to make sense of representational art and its values” (p. vii). It has been described as a basic human instinct. The ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle have dwelt on it in their own ways. Aristotle considers that man learns to imitate things from childhood and it is his ability to imitate that distinguishes him from animals. It is also through imitation that he learns the surrounding world and its atmosphere. In modern times, Aristotelian echoes can be heard in Walter Benjamin’s (2005) words when he says that

Nature creates similarities. One need only think of mimicry. The highest capacity for producing similarities, however, is man’s. His gift of seeing resemblances is nothing other than a rudiment of the powerful compulsion in former times to become and behave like something else. Perhaps there is none of his higher functions in which his mimetic faculty does not play a decisive role (p. 1).

Plato was the first who raised the issue of mimesis (imitation, representation) in *Republic*. According to his views, poetry i.e. the world of representation reflects the

phenomenological world that in its turn is a shadow of the real or original world. Therefore, poetry is thrice removed from truth and hence a lie, or an illusion. Poets are not useful citizens because they tell lies and provoke the emotions of youth with their false and sentimental verses. Subsequently, they should be banished from an ideal state (Daiches, 1956, pp.20-22). His views reflect the necessity of reason as opposed to emotion so that man may lead a balanced life. Plato's concept of representation is utilitarian and moralistic in its essence. R. A. Scott-James (1928) opines "Looking at the matter, then, from the first, the social, point of view, Plato is interested in literature, or art, only in so far as its influence is beneficial in moulding the life of the good citizen" (p. 39).

Contrary to Plato, Aristotle addresses the issue purely in aesthetic and artistic terms in *Poetics*. For him, representation is "an imaginative reconstruction of life" (ibid, p. 53). It is a central human activity. It is basis of all arts, which differ from each other due to the object, manner and medium of imitation. Object of imitation may roughly refer to the subject matter or content, manner refers to the form i.e. how and in what way an object is represented and means alludes to the medium that is used to represent. For instance, the object of imitation in tragedy, according to Aristotle, is action whereas in comedy, it is non-serious action. The manner of imitation in epic is narration but in drama, it is action. Similarly, the medium of imitation in painting is brush and color but in poetry it is language, rhyme, and meter. The poet is not deceived by the appearances rather he delves deep into reality and depicts what has great significance for human life. David Daiches (1956) rightly puts it "The poet does not simply imitate or represent a particular events or

situations which he happens to have noted or invented; he handles them in such a way that he brings out their universal and characteristic elements, thus illuminating the essential nature of some event or situation whether or not what he is telling is historically true” (p.37). No doubt, what the poet represents is not reality rather an illusion of reality. It is a poetic truth. Nevertheless, the poet purports to bring a positive change in man’s life through this poetic truth. In this way, Aristotle not only justified the importance of arts for human life but also became a founding figure in the western tradition of aesthetics.

The word representation may be considered as the Greek equivalent of mimesis that means imitation or mimicry. The *OED* (2007) defines mimesis as “a figure of speech, whereby the words or actions of another are imitated [and] the deliberate imitation of the behavior of one group of people by another as a factor of social change”. Likewise, W. J. T. Mitchell (1990) refers to representation as “things that ‘stand for’ other things” (p.1). It is significant to mention over here that the terms---mimesis, imitation, representation and mimicry--- are counterparts of each other and mean the same thing. While defining and discussing art, M. H. Abrams (1971) mentions that it is common for the western theory of aesthetics to usually employ “the word ‘imitation,’ or else one of those parallel terms which, whatever they might imply, all faced in the same direction: ‘reflection,’ ‘representation,’ ‘counterfeiting,’ ‘feigning,’ ‘copy,’ or ‘image” (p.11). Explaining the term further, Eric E. Peterson (1983) notes “I take representation in its broad philosophical sense to include such concepts as imitation(art, an imitation, represents action, life, beauty, the good—all things to be imitated), resemblance or similitude (art represents nature, reality), genius (art represents a creative imagination, intuition),

pleasure (art represents feelings, emotion, experience), perception (art represents an idea, image, ideology), communication (art represents meaning, information, signs), and so on” (p.25).

Thus, representation plays a key role in the creation of art. It is a symbolic way of portraying reality. There may be different forms of representation such as linguistic representation, dramatic representation, and mental representation. Linguistic representation employs language to depict reality as in the case of literature whereas dramatic representation depends on action. Representation in drama makes use of both linguistic and dramatic representation. Mental representation takes place in mind and may refer to thoughts, ideas, and imaginative acts. Sometimes the term ‘representation’ is also used to differentiate from its hyphenated form re-presentation. If representation is an imaginative construct, a symbolic way of depicting reality, then re-presentation means to present or show something again.

There is close relationship between literature and semiotics. To semioticians, literature is a system of signs among other sign systems. Therefore, the study of signs in literature can provide great insights. C. S. Peirce (1998) has described three different types of representational relationships among signs: iconic, indexical and symbolic. Icons are resembling signs e.g. the picture of a railway station, or an aero plane. Index refers to signs which have cause and effect relationship e.g. smoke and clouds may be signs of fire and rain. Symbolic refers to arbitrary and conventional signs e.g. the words like cat and dog and the whole system of language. Thus, from semiotic point of view, literature falls under the category of symbolic signs. With reference to the theory of signs and

representation, Saussure's contribution is also significant one. In Saussure's opinion, sign has two aspects: signifier and signified. Signifier is the word, sound whereas signified is image, or object. For example, the word 'tree' is signifier and its image or object i.e. tree in itself is signified. Saussure further argues that meanings are arbitrary and relational which leads to the inference that representations are conventional, cultural and relational. To understand representations, it is important that they should be examined and analyzed conventionally, culturally and in relation to other representations. As Mitchel (1990) opines

And the representational sign never seems to occur in isolation from a whole network of other signs: the dab of paint that stands for a stone will probably do so in the context of a whole field of dabs of paint that represent other things adjacent to the stone-grass, earth, trees, sky, other stones. Take the dab of paint out of that context, and it ceases to represent, becomes merely a dab of paint (p.2).

Another theorist whose work is important in this case is Jacques Derrida. To Derrida, meaning of a representation or sign is based on the concept of 'differance' that conflates to differ and to defer. Meaning is like encyclopedic entry that has references and cross references. Therefore, search for meaning (center, truth, reality) is an endless process. At the end, there is multiplicity of meanings what Derrida calls aporias. Representation is such an important issue that Edward Said (2003) has also dwelt on it in *Orientalism*. To him, representations are mainly subjective and political. They have specific purposes.

They are either formations or deformations and are tinged with cultural biases. Similarly, to the new historicists, representations do not simply reflect social reality. Rather, representations mediate reality. There is a dialectic relationship between the two.

Despite the complexity of the issue, the historical perspective of the concept of representation highlights its due significance in the theory of aesthetics from Greek period to modern times. Now I shall define representation in operational terms that will help me explain the representation of the Orient by the English writers. Representation is an imaginative construct that makes an artist perceive and portray reality according to his/her own construct of the self. The artist represents reality the way he/she perceives it. What he/she portrays may not be reality but an illusion of reality or an interpretation of reality. Nonetheless, it communicates something important related to human life. As it is mainly subjective, it may come close to misrepresentation. Moreover, every representation reflects contemporary realities that must be taken into account while examining a work of art. As Mitchel (1990) argues “It should be clear that representation, even purely “aesthetic” representation of fictional persons and events, can never be completely divorced from political and ideological questions; one might argue, in fact, that representation is precisely the point where these questions are most likely to enter the literary work. If literature is a “representation of life,” then representation is exactly the place where “life,” in all its social and subjective complexity, gets into the literary work” (p.3). E. L. Rocca (2012) takes the argument further and insists that

Every era creates a particular world-view, and art is one of its representations: in its language, art mirrors an era's way of life,

customs, and habits. It conforms to its social dynamics, its moral and religious convictions, its governing fashions and etiquette (p.8).

To further strengthen her point of view, she uses a German term “Lebenswelt [which means] the ‘sphere of life’” (ibid) in which a work of art is produced. She considers that the study of art within the frame of ‘Lebenswelt’ may be insightful and help understand that work properly.

## **2.2. Orient and Orientalism:**

The Orient, oriental and orientalism- all these are interlinked terms and carried positive and apolitical connotations before Edward Said’s adaptation of these terms. First, these terms will be discussed in their traditional sense and then explained in Saidian context. According to the *Webster online Dictionary* (2006), Orient is an alternative term for the East. Oriental refers to “(1) of, relating to, or situated in Asia (2) of superior grade, luster (3) often capitalized sometimes offensive: Asian”. Similarly, it defines orientalism as “(1) something (as a style or manner) associated with or characteristic of Asia or Asians (2) scholarship or learning in Asian subjects or languages”. Ian Buchanan (2010) gives the following definition under the entry of Orientalism: “Traditionally, any form of scholarship or indeed fascination with the Orient, meaning the countries generally referred to today as the Middle East (but also encompassing the whole of North Africa, Turkey, Pakistan, and the northern tip of India)” (p. 353). Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (2013) describe, “Professionally Orientalists included scholars in



various disciplines such as languages, history, and philology...” (p.167). Jeremy Hawthorn (2000) writes under the term “Traditionally, an Orientalist was a scholar devoted to the study of ‘the Orient’ or the East” (p.141). Similarly, if Orient and Oriental are interrelated terms, Occident and Occidental are also counter interrelated terms and refer to the West and Western respectively. Thus, in the past, the Orientalists were the scholars, philosophers, travelers and linguists who were interested in gathering information about the Eastern lands, languages, their literature, and culture. However, with the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (2003), these terms acquired and conveyed political meanings. Therefore, the term Orientalism now usually refers “to cultural imperialism by means of the control of discourse not only in the orient but anywhere in the world” (Abrams & Harpham, 2011, p. 306). Next to it, there is a survey of the works, which deal with the representation of the Orient, new historicist studies, Orientalist readings, and it has been examined how the West has represented the Orient in literary and non- literary works.

The history of the representation of the Orient goes back to the origin of the Western-European tradition i.e. the Greeks. Aeschylus is the first Greek playwright who has represented the Orient in his play *The Persians*. He represents the Persians lamenting and weeping after being defeated by the Greeks. He portrays the Persians as emotional, irrational, and sentimental people whereas the Greeks have been depicted as rational and well-planned people. It is because of these elements, Aeschylus’s *The Persians* is considered “the first unmistakable file in the archive of Orientalism” (Hall, 1989, p. 99) since it “marks the birth of Orientalism” (Niayesh, 2008, p. 128). One prominent feature

of the play is that Aeschylus has represented Persia in feminine terms as a wailing woman and Greece in masculine terms. Its echoes can be clearly noticed in Day, Rowley and Wilkins' collaborative play *The Travailes of Three English Brothers* (1607) where the playwrights have depicted "a feminized Persia" (ibid, p. 132) that is won by the masculine England at the end of their play. In addition to it, there are some scenes and episodes in Day, Rowley and Wilkins' collaborative play which give evidence of what Nabil Matar (1999) calls "the birth of a British/ European discourse of conquest" (pp. 15-17). This shows that there is continuity in the tradition of Eurocentric perspectives as these texts form intertextuality and can be interpreted with the help of each other. The second significant work is Euripides' *The Bacchae*. The play portrays a conflict between Pentheus (a paragon of reason) and Dionysus (an embodiment of emotions). The end of the play shows the triumph of Dionysus and the defeat of Pentheus whom the bacchanal forces punish. Thus, the end evinces the supremacy of emotions to reason that is something surprising and shocking for the Greeks who would love to see Pentheus as the victor. Dionysus symbolizes Oriental myths and mysteries which have their origin in Asia and shows Euripides' familiarity with these "foreign ecstatic religions of Bendis, Cybele, Sabazius, Adonis, and Isis, which were introduced from Asia Minor and the Levant and swept through Piraeus and Athens during the frustrating and increasingly irrational years of the Peloponnesian War" (Said, 2003, pp. 56-57). These two plays serve as pioneering works that set the tone for the future European western scholars and philosophers whose works deal with the domain of representation of the Orient. As Said records "The two aspects of the Orient that set it off from the West in this pair of plays

will remain essential motifs of European imaginative geography. A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant” (ibid, p. 57). Another instance from ancient Greek works will further give us evidence that Orientalism extends back to ancient Greek writers. The famous historian, Herodotus has distorted the historical facts in case of the representation of Cambyses in his work. Moreover, he has described the Persians as barbarians as compared to the brave Greeks (Houston, 2014, p. 456).

Later on, it became a common western attitude to represent the Orient in an unfavorable light. The rise of Islam from the ascendancy of the first caliph in 632 to the great Ottoman Empire by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was a period when the Muslims not only ruled in most parts of Asia but in some parts of Europe also. The west looked with fear and envy to this period. Said notes “Not for nothing did Islam come to symbolize terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians. For Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma” (ibid, p. 69). Islam was considered a fake and fraud religion and a travesty of Christianity. The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was dubbed as an imposter and Mohammedanism was used as a derogatory term for Islam and Muslims. Using this tone Barthelemy d'Herbelot's (1777) in his work *Bibliothèque orientale* wrote, “This is the famous imposter Mahomet, Author and Founder of a heresy, which has taken on the name of religion, which we call Mohammedan” (p. 648). The movement of demonizing Islam and the Prophet gained momentum due to the crusades and subsequently the literature that was produced in the middle Ages. As Illaria Sabbatini (2011) demonstrates that “As with the crusades emerged the necessity to promote it as the enemy, Islam

acquired demoniac features and was conveniently represented as pagan” (p.475). In this respect, Dante’s *Divine Comedy* is a very precise and graphic instance that shows how European imagination perceived and represented Islam and Muslims. In this work, Dante shows that the prophet Muhammad, a few of his companions and some prominent Muslim scholars and leaders are in *Inferno* because of their sinful ways of life. Humphrey Prideaux did the same thing in 17<sup>th</sup> century in his biographical work on Muhammad which is subtitled *The True Nature of Imposter*. Its continuity can be traced even in 20<sup>th</sup> century in Jorge Luis Borges’s *A Double for Mohammed* (1981) and other Western works. There is an unending series of such negative representations of Islam and the Prophet. Observing this continuity in the negative representation of the Prophet, Ian Almond (2004) notes that

From Dante's infamous twenty-eighth canto, where the "false prophet" is repeatedly torn asunder and disemboweled for his crimes of heresy and factionism, to Humphry Prideaux's seventeenth-century biography of the Prophet (*The True Nature of Imposture*), Borges's brief text (barely a page in length) belongs to a very definite corpus of defamatory ideas concerning Mohammed (p. 442).

For a comprehensive view of the representation of the Orient i.e. Islam and Muslims, this part is divided into different categories i.e. the representation of the Ottoman Turks, the Moors, and the Safavid Persians. My focus will be more on the Ottoman Empire, the North Africa, and Safavid Persia and a few selected works which suite to my research purpose. This part starts with the representation of the Ottoman Turks and the different

connotations the word Turk has. In 16<sup>th</sup> century, the English and Muslims have also been on good terms with each other. There is a report of Abdel Guahid, the Moroccan ambassador, who with other members of the embassy visited the English court and met Queen Elizabeth. According to B. Harris (1958), the apparent purpose of this visit was to hand over some Christian captives to England and establish some trade contracts but actually Guahid was there to seek an alliance between England and Barbary to capture the East and West Indies from Spain (pp. 89-97).

As piracy was a common practice in those days, so the exchange of captives was a normal issue. Moreover, because of schism in Christianity, the protestant England had tense relations with catholic countries and especially with Spain. Therefore, England wanted to establish positive trade and military relations with the Muslim states of the period. Consequently, it was in this scenario that England, through its ambassador William Harbone, made a request to Murad 111, the Ottoman Emperor, to get aid against the Spanish Armada but Sultan never helped England in this respect.

Though these two instances of actual encounters portray positive aspect of Anglo-Oriental relations, yet the imagined encounters i.e. the literary representations reveal another story. In literary representations of the period, Turk was an umbrella term, which was employed for all Muslims, and disregard of their color and cast, all Muslims were represented in a negative way. It was a very elastic and an ideological term that carried different negative connotations that were totally opposed to the positive values represented by Christianity (Vitkus, 2000, pp. 1-53). However, later on, the distinctions were made and Muslims were represented as Turks, Moors, Arabs, and Persians. Gerald

Maclean (2007) comments “Simply put, ‘Turk’ referred to any Muslim but, in more general usage, the word could also be pejoratively applied to anyone who portrayed contradictory or violent or tyrannically patriarchal characteristics: Shakespeare’s use of the term in *Othello* offers illuminating examples” (p. 8).

### **2.2. 1. Representation of the Turks:**

With reference to the representation of the Turks, Louis Wann’s study (1915) deals with the theme of representation of the Orient in the corpus of the forty seven English plays containing the Oriental content. Wann’s main concern in the analysis of these plays is to evaluate whether the playwrights have faithfully followed the sources or not. Though, Wann seems objective and balanced in his analysis yet the study is full of contradictions and ambiguities. Wann criticizes English playwrights for showing the Muslim characters commit suicide, which is a clear misrepresentation. He observes that both Turks and Moors have been represented brave yet they are also cruel, barbarous and lustful. And later on, he sums up

In brief, the characterization of the Oriental is fairly accurate, considering the fact that the great majority of dramatists very likely never saw one of them. The attitude toward him is usually one of genuine interest and, except in the case of the Moor, rarely shows any avowed prejudice, if allowances be made for the very natural religious antagonism of Christian toward Mohammedan (ibid, p. 442).

Wann's acknowledgement that the playwrights never saw any of the Orientals throws light on the fact that this is purely a representation, and a fabrication. Wann's study not only highlights the Eurocentric perspectives of the Western playwrights but also his own ambiguous and contradictory attitude towards the Oriental characters. Warner Grenelle Rice's (1926) work investigates the representation of the Orient in English plays. His focus is on the psychoanalysis of the characters and poetic qualities in the Oriental plays. Besides it, Rice examines the accuracy of the Oriental characters and their settings in these plays. He demonstrates that English dramatists have exaggerated in case of the Oriental characters due to which they, particularly the Moors, appear as cultural stereotypes. They seem unconvincing and, therefore, are artistic and ideological failures. Like Wann, Rice also talks about the historical inaccuracies of the plays but his focus is on the aesthetic worth of these plays. Rice's work confirms Wann's observation and points out the playwrights' exploitation of the sources in their plays.

Samuel Chew (1937) is a representative and detailed scholarly work that sheds light on the theme of representation of the Orient in English plays. Like Wann and Rice, Chew, too, has focused on historical and aesthetic elements of the plays. However, he has examined the thematic aspects of these plays in detail. Actually, because of increasing power of the Ottoman Empire, England had a fear of invasion, piracy, and conversion. The theatre of that time portrayed this fear in the plays to educate its public. As Chew remarks "a man of average education and intelligence", could learn, "a relatively large number of detailed events in the history of Ottoman Islam and its encroachments upon Christian Europe" (p.103). Like Rice, Chew also thinks that the representation of Islamic

characters is biased and lacks artistic merits. There are a few commonalities in the works of these early critics. Firstly, they have highlighted the issues of historical fidelity and artistic merits of the Oriental plays. Secondly, they have mostly talked about the Ottoman Turks and treated the Persians as less significant characters. Thirdly, though they seem to agree that the English Playwrights have represented the Oriental characters as cultural others yet they have just touched upon this issue in their works and not dwelt on it. However, according to the modern scholars and researchers, the description of reality of the Orient as a cultural other is to simplify the situation. This reality should be viewed beyond the binaries of self and other, Orient and Occident.

To these modern scholars, the Anglo-Oriental relations always have been dialectic and based on exchange. These scholars have highlighted the theme of complexity with reference to the reality of the Orient in their works. As Lisa Jardine (1998) explains how the exchange of goods played a significant role in breaking the boundaries between self and other and shaped the Oriental and Occidental identities. She has used the term cultural fusion to describe this phenomenon. Likewise, Jerry Brotton (1997) argues that both cultures influenced each other. Therefore, the Anglo-Oriental relations reflect cultural hybridity. Nabil Matar (1999) has advanced the same idea. To him, it was not imperialism rather it was trade and exchange that helped establish positive Anglo-Oriental relations. Matar narrates that “English accommodation of Muslims was invariably conducted with an eye on trade” (p. 23). One prominent theme of these critics’ works is cultural hybridity and cultural exchange. They refuse to view Anglo-Oriental relations as monolithic and fixed in nature. One thing that lacks in their works is that they



have given these observations based on the actual encounters of English and Oriental people. For an instance, Matar's observation is only based on actual encounters between English and the Orientals and he has paid little attention to the imagined encounters of the same period between the two that indicates a limitation of his analysis. There is a self-contradictory note in his arguments. In case of the actual encounters of Anglo-Orient in North Africa and the Levant, he asserts that there was "interaction and familiarity, along with communication and cohabitation" (Matar, 1999, pp. 1-42) but in case of imagined encounters, he observes that

Turk was cruel, 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 (ibid).

Therefore, disregard of positive relations between England and the Orient, the significance of the imagined encounters cannot be put aside while discussing these relations because these imagined encounters i.e. literary representations of the period, after all, also reflect the contemporary reality and must be studied to bring completeness in our understanding of Anglo-Oriental relations. This is what Daniel Vitkus (1997) argues that these "representations are "real" in the sense that any such representation has a material and ideological impact as a historical phenomenon" (p. 207). Stephan Schmuck (2006) alludes to this fact when he comments that

Ultimately, England's real and imagined encounters with 'Turks' all constitute responses to Islam. The English stage produced 'Turks' who were strikingly at odds with 'Turks' encountered by the English merchant in Tripolis (p. 11).

Seen from this perspective, one may argue that the representations of the Orient and Oriental characters are complex and cannot be described in simple terms. But keeping the delimitation of my proposed study, I have mainly focused on the imagined encounters i.e. the literary representations and not dwelt on the actual encounters as narrated in the travel and history works of the early modern English period.

With reference to the literary representations of the Turks, C. A. Patrides's (1963) work touches upon the theme of misrepresentation of the Turks. He demonstrates that the bloody and cruel Turk is a common stereotype, which was based on the thesis that Turk is a scourge of God who is there to punish the Christians for their sinful lives (pp. 126-135). Besides being disseminated from the pulpit, the scholars like Heinrich Bullinger and George Whetstone further propagated and promoted this idea. So much so that the Turk became a satirical metaphor through which conflicts in Christianity could be explored and perceived. The negative connotations that the word Turk conveyed were constantly promoted by the writers of the period. In this case, John Foxe's *History and Tyranny of the Turks*, which is included in *The Acts and Monuments* (1570), and Richard Knolles' *The Generall Historie of the Turkes* (1603) played a key role. Linda McJannet (2006) thinks Foxe's work is "technically the first English history of the Turks" and describes how according to Foxe all Turks are "devilish automatons, who murder and

pillage without any evidence of recognizable human feeling” (p. 58). Richard Knolles’ representation of Turks reflects his mixed feelings. He pays tribute to the Turk army for its perfect co-ordination and great strength as compared to the Christian army that is disorganized and lacks discipline. Nevertheless, despite his praise of Turks, Knolles also describes Turks, using his oft-quoted phrase, as the present terror of the world (Knolles, 1603, pp. 1-46). All this happened because of the circulation of the pervasive discursive practices of the period that were created and propagated by the priests, playwrights, historians and travelers. Patrides’ work reflects how the English writers of the early modern period perceived and represented the Oriental characters in negative terms that explicitly point out their biased attitudes.

In this respect, among all other discursive practices, particularly the Renaissance English drama played significant role in depicting the negative representations of the Orient. Drama has great appeal and scope among its audience since it is simultaneously a fictional and socially real genre. It is fictional since it is based on an imaginary story, an illusion. The members of the audience know that the drama they are watching is a fictional creation. However, despite that fact, they develop empathy with the characters. The early modern English drama that dealt with the Oriental matter gave this feeling of empathy to the audience of the period and what they experienced on the stage was nothing but the brutality and irrationality of the Oriental characters. This feeling of empathy bred hatred for the Orient among the members of English audience and helped them shape their identities as civilized and noble people in comparison to the ignoble and illogical people of the Orient. It is socially real genre because the story presented on the

stage claims to approach reality and is rooted in socio-historical conditions. Performance on the stage has great impact on the audience because drama is an interpersonal communication between the actors and audience. Because of its dialogic nature, its impact is direct and immediate. It is in this dialogic capacity that drama exposes critical social issues and thereby gives awareness and prompts a desired social change. Keeping this point into consideration, the early modern English drama served as an ideological tool and by representing “anti-Islamic and anti-Muslim stereotypes” (McJannet, 2009, p. 185) on the stage, it helped the English audience construct their unique identity in contrast to the Oriental identity. Moreover, drama is a public property and can attract and invite more people as compared to the other forms of performativity. Therefore, theatre played a significant role in projecting and disseminating the idea of the cultural other. As Schmuck (2006) maintains, “Unlike histories, however, plays staged in theatres were an easily accessible medium, open even to the illiterate. The theatre was, indeed, a potent and effective venue for the dissemination of ideas revolving around ‘Turks’” (p. 18). If the priests and historians propagated the idea of Turk as an embodiment of evil, the playwrights of the period furthered this cause.

The Turks and Moors were familiar characters for the 16<sup>th</sup> century audience as the Globe and Rose theatres had performed different plays such as *The Mask of Moors and Amazons* (1551), *A Mask of Goddesses, Huntress, with Turkish Women* (1555), *A Mask of Turks Magistrates with Turks Archers* (1555), *A Mask of Moors* (1559) and *A Mask of Turks* (1559). Though these plays are now non-extant, yet their very names throw light on the demand and popularity of these characters on the renaissance stage. After 1580s,

there was a gradual increase in the dramatization of such characters on the stage and almost all playwrights of the period produced the plays that dealt with the Orient. Louis Wann (1915) has charted a corpus of 47 Elizabethan plays (1558-1652) which deal with the Orient (pp. 443-447). Similarly, Jonathan Burton (2005) notes that from 1579 to 1624 "over sixty dramatic works featuring Islamic themes, characters, or settings were produced in England" (p. 11). These figures further indicate the demand and popularity of the Oriental characters on the Elizabethan stage. The key point that emerges from the corpus of these Oriental plays is that the Playwrights of the early modern English Period not only capitalized on the demand of audience of the period but also used drama as an ideological tool to propagate and promote "an imperialist cause" (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv).

Below is an overview of the plays, which are concerned, with the theme of the misrepresentation of the Turks. As the Ottoman Empire posed a threat not only to England but also to the whole Europe, the English perceived the Turks in most unfavourable light. Hence, the English playwrights of early modern period have portrayed the Turks and their emperors as brutes, sexual monsters, tyrants and despots in majority of these plays. Marlowe's *Tamburlaine 1 & 2* (1587-88) is the story of a shepherd who becomes a world conqueror due to his lust for power. The play shows Tamburlaine's shifting identities from Tartar to a Persian and then from Persian to a Turk and finally again a Tartar. His words reflect his Muslim identity when he swears by sacred Mahomet. But, actually, he is a transgressor. During his career, he transgresses worldly and divine laws, humiliates and ruthlessly kills his opponents. After his wife, Zenocrate's death, he issues orders to burn the Alcoran and all other books present in the temples of Mahomet.

At the end, he faints and dies. Bajazeth is the second character who gets prominence because of his Islamic identity. The play shows the insult and humiliation of Bajazeth and his wife Zabina at the hands of Tamburlaine. Bajazeth is chained and imprisoned in a cage. He is used as a foot stool of Tamburlaine. Finally, because of his utter degradation, he commits suicide, which is historically untrue. He is shown as an epitome of all those qualities that the word Turk connotes. Marlowe has portrayed two other Turk characters in the same vein. Ithamore is villainous and Calymath is depicted despotic and deceiving in *The Jew of Malta*. Marlowe's plays may be described as the pioneers of early modern plays among the canonical plays of the period in which the Oriental characters have been represented as cultural others on the stage. Marlowe's drama is also significant in the history of English drama with reference to the misrepresentation of the Orient, Oriental characters, Islam and Muslims. As I have mentioned above that, Marlowe makes Tamburlaine burn the Holy Quran and other Islamic books in the temples of Mahomet that is an instance of blatant blasphemy and its echoes can be found in the recent years as well.

The instances of misrepresentation and demonization of the Turks may also be observed in the other dramas of the period as well. Thomas Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda* (1589-1599) demonstrates Soliman as a monstrous cultural stereotype. The play depicts the story of Perseda, a Rhodian girl, and her lover Erastus, a Rhodian knight. Erastus loses a chain that Perseda had given to him as a token of love. When Perseda sees Lucina, another girl, wearing that chain, she charges Erastus with betrayal. Upon which Erastus causes the murder of Lucina's lover while getting the chain back and consequently flees

to Constantinople. Perseda follows him, is arrested by the Turks and is brought before Soliman, the Ottoman Emperor, who falls in love with her at his first sight. However, Perseda rejects Soliman, threatens to commit suicide if force is used, and remains loyal to Erastus. Finally, both the lovers meet and Soliman promises their marriage. Nevertheless, before their departure, Soliman consumed by his lust, charges Erastus with treachery and is beheaded by the Turks. The end shows Perseda's revenge, her brave fight against the Turks and Soliman's death as Perseda kisses Soliman with her poisoned lips. Kyd's demonization of the Turks and especially the Ottoman emperor Soliman reflects continuity in the early modern writers' trend of representing the Oriental emperors as cultural stereotypes.

Robert Green's *Selimus* (1592) also portrays the image of cruel and barbarous Turk. Blinded by the desire for power, Selimus like Tamburlaine not only ruthlessly kills his enemies but also commits the sins of patricide and fratricide. He kills his brothers Acomat and Corcut and poisons his father Bajazeth to become the sole emperor of the Ottoman Empire. Again Green's play, like Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, lacks historical accuracy in many incidents. Like *Tamburlaine*, *Selimus* violates worldly as well as divine laws. Daborne's *A Christian turn'd Turk* (1610) focuses on the story of an English pirate, Ward, who for the love of Voada turns Turk. He appears on the stage on an ass, performs a ceremony of his conversion and then disappears on the ass. In the end, he kills Voada because of her deception and finally kills himself. The idea of turning Turk was so loathsome for the English writers that they ultimately showed the deaths of such apostates in their works to make them abominable in the eyes of their audience. This is

what happens with Othello, with Ward and with almost all other apostates represented in literary works. As long as Ward is a Christian, he is represented in positive terms but as he converts, he becomes a target of satire and mockery. Daborne's lesson for the audience of the period is that Islam is a sensual religion and allows a lot of sexual freedom to its followers. And, it is due to this reason, Ward converts from Christianity to Islam. Besides sexual transgression, some Christians willingly turned Turk for the sake of status and monetary benefits and enjoyed their lives. However, the Playwrights of the period have not depicted the characters of such volunteer converts in their plays that may be deemed an evidence of their Eurocentric perspectives. Thus, the Turks were portrayed as cultural stereotypes due to the ideological demands of the period.

Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk or Amurath the First* (1615-23) highlights Sultan Murad's sensual and capricious nature. The play portrays Sultan Murad's life, career, and his conquest of Serbia and Bulgaria. Later on, it shows how Murad falls in love with Eumorphe, a concubine, and finally kills her. Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1623-24) presents the same theme and portrays Islam as a sensual religion. Vitelli, a Christian merchant, while selling his goods in the market of Tunis, falls in love with Donusa, the Ottoman princess, against the warning of his mentor Francisco. Enthralled by her beauty, Vitelli visits Donusa's secret chamber and develops sexual relationship with her. However, he soon resists himself and repents for what he has done. Later on, he persuades Donusa and succeeds in converting her to Christianity. Upon which the Turks decide to execute Vitelli and Donusa for their sins. Before their execution, Pauline (a Christian woman who was sold to Asembeg, the lustful and tyrannous ruler and the



representative of the Great Turk in Tunis) tempts Asembeg by offering herself to him. In this way, Pauline causes delay in Vitelli and Donusa's execution and finally their escape along with other Christians. Thus, the play highlights the lustful nature of Muslims through the character of Asembeg.

Literary critics and scholars have also observed this theme of misrepresentation of the Orient in European Western representations of the Orient. They find a close connection in the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and the theme of Britain's imperial desires. Syed Mohammad Ahsan (1969) asserts that the images of the East are definitely distorted and reflect the Western prejudices. The hatred and animosity which started against Islam and Muslims from the medieval period lasted for a long time and its echoes can be even traced in present time. The early modern England received ideas about Islam and Muslims from the medieval period without challenging and questioning their veracity as it is visible in the Renaissance literature. Emily C. Bartels' (1990) study can be described as a seminal work because she observes a close relationship between the negative representations of the Orient and England's imperial desires. It examines an English ambassador, Edward Hogan's report of his stay and job in Marrakech. In her study, she claims that England displayed her imperial superiority towards the North African Moors during Renaissance period. As an instance, she references Hogan's portrayal of Sultan Abd-al-Malik as a childish and cunning person. Moreover, she finds imperialist and racist elements in the English depictions of the Black people. Bartels calls it the period of nascent imperialism of England and later on contrasts it with the period of mature imperialism. In her opinion, the seeds of Victorian imperialism or mature imperialism can

be traced back in nascent imperialism of Elizabethan period. It is during early modern period England dreamt of her imperial desires, disseminated these desires through literary representations in her own country and further developed these desires by expanding her maritime industry and commercial relations. Emily C. Bartels's (1992) work shows the further evidence of idea of the birth of English imperial desires in Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. She discusses how the double vision of the East i.e. denigration of the Orient on one hand and admiration on the other hand motivated the playwrights to create the plays that functioned as England's imperialist agenda. In her detailed analysis of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine Part One*, she demonstrates that Marlowe's representation of Tamburlaine is an attempt to construct imperialist identity of England.

If literary representations of the period promoted the theme of Britain's imperial desires on the intellectual front and helped construct the national identities, the established maritime industry played an important role in fostering these imperial desires outside England. It is in this case, John E. Wills, Jr.'s (1993) work links the theme of Britain's imperial desires with the theme of strong maritime industry. He demonstrates how England secured dominance in Asian waters by strengthening and supporting her maritime industry through the Muscovy Company in Persia and the East India Company in India. While using the phrase 'interactive emergence', he explores England's trade exploits in Asia which enabled her sustain her presence in Indian Ocean from 16<sup>th</sup> century to onward and consequently helped expand her power in Asia. Christopher Pye's (1994) work talks about the theme of construction of identities and its connection with drama and the market. He exposes the reciprocity between commerce and theatre during

early modern English period. To support his point of view, he brings evidence from Jean C. Agnew's *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (1986) where the author has stressed the well-knit relationship between theatre and market. He also emphasizes the role of new historicism in developing understanding about the part played by economy in constructing Renaissance subjectivity. As an instance, he investigates the role of economy in constructing characters' subjectivity in Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*.

There are some critics who deny the theme of Britain's imperial desires and, therefore, reject the application of Saidian model to early modern English literature. Nabil Matar's (1996) work is most prominent in this category of critics. After investigating different travelers' narratives, particularly the captivity literature, Matar questions Said's assumptions and asserts that England had no "naval and military power to confront let alone "dominate," Muslims and their lands" (p. 189). In his view, works of the writers like Peel, Marlowe, Shakespeare and travelers like Coryat, Sandy, and Mandevill are canonical. These works reflect an ideology that demonstrates Western superiority and perceives things in terms of binaries. Such works ignore reality that we find in the captivity literature. Matar emphasizes the significance of such literature as it represents the superiority and allure of Islam. Matar's views are significant but he seems to ignore the basic fact in case of the early modern English literature. On the one hand, he talks about the weak naval and military power of England and, on the other hand, he admits that the canonical literature of the period reflects Western superiority. It was through these literary representations Britain secured intellectual superiority within the country and

abroad as well. Matar seems to ignore this intellectual superiority of England, which consequently led to the phenomenon known as the British imperialism and colonialism. Such omissions and contradictions characterize the majority of the scholarship related to the representation of the Orient including Persia and point out the gap in existing traditional criticism that I have chosen to bridge with my proposed study. Besides, they also justify the application and validation of new historicism and Said's views in *Orientalism* to the early modern English plays, especially the selected plays chosen for this study. To Matar, the Muslim empires till 16<sup>th</sup> century were powerful but Islam started declining at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century because the Muslims did not progress in the domains of education, science and technology.

England secured this intellectual superiority by showing the denigration of the Orient, Islam and the Holy Quran through different discursive strategies. Lemiya Mohamed Almas' (1999) study discusses the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and Islam. She describes Western misunderstanding about the *1649 Alcoran* that was printed in early modern England. The military conquests of the Ottoman Empire roused the feelings of fear and fantasy among the English which bred biases towards the Ottoman Turks and made the English perceive Islam in a negative way. This fear was so pervasive that the English considered the printing of the translation of the *1649 Alcoran* extremely dangerous. Therefore, she concludes that Islam, its history and Muslim doctrines have been misinterpreted in the *1649 Alcoran of Mahomet*. Greg Bak (2000) critically looks at the representations of Islam and Muslims vis-a-vis the Ottoman and Moroccan Empires from 1575 to 1625 in the Renaissance period. There was antagonism between England

and Spain owing to their religious conflicts, which prompted England to promote commercial, diplomatic and military relationship with the Ottoman and Moroccan Empires and establish her embassies at Istanbul and Marrakech to counter the Spaniards. According to Bak, the policy of openness towards Islam existed during Elizabethan period. Consequently, the representations of Islam during the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century are positive. But as the Spanish threat decreased due to the ascendancy of King James I, after the death of Queen Elizabeth, English foreign policy towards Spain became friendly and the negative representations of Islam started appearing. Bak's study indicates the shift in representation of Islam and Muslim but he omits the negative representation of the Oriental characters, particularly the Ottoman Turks in the literary works of the period in which case there is consistency.

This consistency in the theme of negative representation of the Ottoman Turks has been duly highlighted by Esin Akalin's (2001) study in which he stresses the need to analyze the literature related to the Ottomans in the light of historical events such as the fall of Constantinople, the first siege of Vienna in 1529, and the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The increasing conquests of the Ottoman Empire created mingled feelings of fear and fascination and caused the production of a large body of literature that dealt with the Ottomans. To him, the roots of negative representations of the Turks can be traced in history and ideology of the period. The Ottoman Turks as cultural other enabled the West to define itself and consequently helped it construct and shape its identity. As at the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century the Ottoman Empire started declining, so there is a shift in the representations of Turks from negative images to the positive images.

Richmond Barbour's (2003) work talks about the theme of Anglo-Indian relations via trade, which developed through East India Company, tourism and diplomacy. These strategic and economic relations helped England boost her economy. Therefore, England's relations with the Muslim Empires were rooted in the economic interests rather than in its imperial designs. It highlights the differences between travelers' versions and representations of media and playwrights. Barbour also analyzes the way Renaissance influenced Moghul art and vice versa. Barbour's analysis seems insightful but he does not consider this fact that the trade relations and trading companies supplied the information about the Orient back to England and facilitated England to know and manage the Orient properly. It was this knowledge of and about the Orient that later on helped England dominate the Oriental states. Maclean's (2004) work is continuity of Barbour's theme from a different perspective. It focuses on the theme of Anglo- Ottoman relations via the travel narratives. The work consists of travel narratives of four travelers Thomas Dallam, Henry Blount, William Biddulph and T.S. who travel into different parts of the Ottoman Empire. Their narratives reflect a sense of discovery, curiosity, adventure, exploration and fascination. Through these real Anglo-Ottoman encounters, Maclean asserts that English-Turk relations were not as hostile as it is usually believed. Maclean's study covers the narratives of the travelers in the form of actual narratives and excludes the narratives described in the imagined encounters whereas the imagined encounters have their own significance and they must be taken into account while presenting a convincing picture of representation of the Orient. Maclean's study reveals the same flaw that is evident in Matar's (1996) study. Both scholars omit the significance of the literary

representations of the period, which functioned as more effective ideological tools than the actual encounters. Such works also reveal the fact that there may be differences between the representations of the Orient in actual encounters and the representations of the Orient in imagined encounters.

Jonathan Burton (2005) focuses on the theme of Anglo-Muslim relations via the themes of piracy and conversion. He demonstrates how the Protestants and Catholics used the term Turk to satirize and highlight religious differences of each other. Burton rejects Said's implications of Orientalism for early modern English studies. However, he favors Said's notion of contrapuntal analysis and insists on the inclusion of Muslims voices along with the European Western sources. This is what Burton has applied to Shakespeare's *Othello* where he studies Othello along with Leo Africanaus. The most important feature of this work is the corpus of over sixty plays that deal with the Orient. After analyzing the plays which are concerned with the themes like piracy and conversion, Burton wonders that conversion of Muslims to Christianity is represented as a sincere act whereas the conversion of Christians to Islam is shown insincere, under compulsion and as a *modus operandi*. This difference in treatment of the converts shows how the English writers were biased in their attitude towards Islam and Muslims. The study also focuses on different ways in which the English perceived themselves vis-a-vis the Orient and helps understand early modern Anglo-Muslim relations in cross-cultural terms. Burton, like Brotton (1997), Jardine (1998) and Matar (1999), also finds complexity and subtlety in the representation of Muslim characters. However, despite the

complexity in these representations, the study reveals the Eurocentric perspectives of the English writers.

The echoes of the theme of complexity in the representation of the Orient can also be observed in Linda McJannet's (2006) study. She explores how the Turks have been compared to natural elements and depicted in bestial terms. As she traces different negative epithets like bloody, cruel, barbarous, unbridled and swarming which were pervasive in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to represent the Turks. McJannet reveals her concern about the unidirectional approach adopted by the recent scholarship related to the Anglo-Oriental encounters in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century and examines the Eastern sources about the Ottomans. The important Eastern sources include Chalkokondyles's *Demonstrations of Histories* (1470-1490), Sadeddin Mehmed ibn Hassanjan's *A History of Turks* and Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Arabshah's *Timur Nahmeh*. She observes that Western writers and readers received these sources in Latin and other vernacular translations. Subsequently, these translated works enriched and at the same time complicated Western concepts of the East. Her stance is that though these translators have expressed hostility toward the Ottomans yet they have praised their Eastern authors and reinforced the association of the East with wisdom, civilization and learning. These mixed feelings not only mark the translators' works but also are visible in Western writers' accounts. Thus, the works of Western scholars like Clouser, Golius, Lewenklaw, Artus, Seaman and Knolles fall in the category of writers who have expressed mixed responses towards the East and opened another window vis-a-vis Anglo-Ottoman relation. Though McJannet, like other critics who have highlighted the same theme in their works, also advocates the



complexity in the representations of the Ottoman Turks yet her work also points out the negative representation of the Ottoman Turks.

Gerald Maclean (2007) is a great contribution to the scholarly works that deal with the representation of the Orient. In his opinion, England's relations with the Ottomans were based on both fear and fascination: fear of invasion and fascination with the Ottoman culture. The Anglo-Ottoman relations were dialectic and symbiotic which influenced and shaped both communities. It is in this context some scholars have explored the cultural hybridity and cultural mixing of the English and Turk communities. However, the main challenge, which the recent scholarship has to face, is the non-availability of Islamic sources. The existent scholarship follows single-archive method hence it is unidirectional and lacks Islamic voices. He describes how the term 'Turk' carried negative implications and was used as a general term for Muslims before Muhammetan. Maclean thinks that the clerics and dramatists of the period demonized Islam and Muslims and animosity towards Islam was pervasive in the early modern Europe. Maclean's study offers a fairly detached and dispassionate analysis since he points out the explicit instances of misrepresentation of the Ottoman Turks. He particularly uses the term imperial envy to describe pre-colonial England's intellectual, political, military, economic and cultural vision which later on took the form of British imperialism and colonialism.

Gerald Maclean's (2007) another study examines five recent scholarly works related to early modern Anglo-Oriental encounters. Maclean complains that most of the western scholarship from Chew's *The Crescent and the Rose, Islam and England during the Renaissance* (1937) to date is unidirectional due the conspicuous absence of Muslim

sources. Furthermore, it is recycling of earlier assumptions about the Turks. His stance is that there have been and are differences between Muslims and Christians and the binaries like alterity versus similarity, self versus other but there is a need to go beyond them and look for viable solutions. The most prominent feature of this study is the scholar's recognition of the divisions and differences that exist between the two communities and his sincere effort to search for the solutions that may resolve these differences. Thus, Maclean's study opens the option for the future researchers to think of and offer such viable solutions, which may help the two communities, come close to each other. The works of Burton (2005), McJannet (2006) and Maclean (2007) mark the development in the existing scholarship related to the Ottoman Turks because these critics argue to see beyond the unidirectional sources and stress the inclusion of both eastern and western voices to draw reliable and justifiable findings.

Mathew Birchwood (2007) explores the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and Oriental people by focusing on the representation of Islam in early modern English literature with focus on the period from 1640-1685. His analysis shows the religious, political, and cultural changes that took place in England, the Ottoman Empire and Safavid Persia because of their mutual interactions. Birchwood demonstrates how European Western writers used Islam in various ways on stage for their vested interests. Birchwood's work evinces the continuity in the misrepresentation of Islam and Muslims and how the writers of the period used literature as an ideological tool. The extension of this theme can be further observed in Ian Jenkins' (2007) study in which he analyzes how the biographies related to the Prophet Muhammad in early modern England served as

models for negative representation of Islam and Muslims. He finds a parallel between the negative themes attributed to the prophet and the themes, which have been portrayed, in the literary works of the period. Particularly, these themes find full expression in Turk plays. He concludes that these negative views about Islam and Muslims are atavistic. These were most effectively produced, propagated and promoted in early modern England that became the foundations for the British imperial attitudes and ambitions in the coming years.

Mohamed Ibrahim Hassan Elaskary (2008) also investigates the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and Oriental characters via the image of Moors in early modern English drama and concludes that the playwrights' motives behind such representations were political. However, he thinks that the Anglo-Oriental relations have been shifting from friendship to animosity and war to peace. There was a love-hate relationship between England and Islamic states. In this respect, the West has always been pragmatic in terms of its relationship with the East. During early modern England, the Anglo-Moroccan relations had been friendly to the extent that there was a military alliance between the two and both fought together against Spain. The English literature of the period reflects this ambivalent and conflicting attitude. He discusses the representation of Moors in relation to the Spaniards whose representation is worse than the Moors. Therefore, he concludes that the representation of the Moor is not fixed rather it kept on shifting with the shifting of the Anglo-Moroccan relations. That is why, if the Moors have been represented as traitors, murderers, and lustful, they have been portrayed noble as well. Nevertheless, they are part of the broad group of cultural others who have

been depicted as stereotypes. In comparison to the white natives, they are devilish and criminal. He feels sorry for this type of Western-European thought and seems to agree with Elliot who notices that the white man's crime is not attributed to his race or nationality but this applies in the case of the black man. Its continuity can be seen in current time as well. The findings of the studies like Birchwood (2007), Jenkins (2007) and Elaskary (2008) substantiate my contention that the playwrights of the period have misrepresented the Orient and Oriental characters.

The misrepresentation of the Oriental characters and Islam has been a dominant theme in the early modern English literature. There have been shifts in English attitudes towards the Orient and Islam due to England's own stakes but, mainly, there is consistency in the negative representations. The same is evident in Nabil Matar's (2008) study in which he has examined the British perception of Islam during the period from 1689 to 1750. During this period, England's established maritime industry and expanded trade relations further fanned her imperial desires, which had their origin in 16<sup>th</sup> century. While referring to John Locke's theory of toleration in case of the non-Christians in Britian, Matar argues that the relations between English people and Islamic states of North Africa were on good terms during this period. The Islamic countries like Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco had military alliance with England against Spain and France. Matar also refers to Joseph Morgan who advocted that there were many similarities between Christianity and Islam. Thus, there was a shift from the sense of hostility to the sense of familiarity towards the Muslims on the part of England. Nevertheless, despite this shift, Islamophobia prevailed in England. Apparently, England had good relations with the Muslim states but, in reality,

she wanted to dominate the Muslim states to control and possess their resources. Matar's study links the increasing power of England and her desire to dominate the Muslim states during this period with England's naval power and trade. Nabil Matar (2009) shows an extension of the same idea. He surveys the representations of the Orient from 16th century to 18<sup>th</sup> century. Matar finds two groups who represented Muslims in their own interests. Firstly, the preachers and playwrights who promoted prejudice in case of Muslims and secondly, the traders and diplomats who gathered detailed information about Muslims to gain commercial benefits to which Matar calls *realpolitik*. Both groups represented Muslims negatively. However, if the first group produced negative and stereotypical images of Muslim characters, the second group was less hostile in their depiction of Muslim characters. Matar acknowledges that increase in literacy ratio and improvement in printing technology furthered this prejudice. And, despite John Locke's theory of toleration, prejudice is pervasive in the West. Matar describes how Christians wondered about the causes of their failures against Muslims and concluded that their failure was neither military nor technological rather it was religious and moral. These two works of Matar reveal the British attitudes towards the Muslims during the early modern English period. These relations were friendly and positive due to the commercial, diplomatic and military benefits only on the surface but, inwardly, English people were biased and prejudiced. They had eyes on the resources of the Muslim states and wanted to seize them.

Linda McJannet's (2009) investigates the theme of misrepresentation in a review article on the literary scholarship related to the representation of the Orient. She examines and

analyzes scholars and literary critics' views regarding the representation of Islam and Muslim characters in English drama. The work divides this scholarship into three main categories. According to McJannet, the earlier critics like Wann, Rice, and Chew have mainly concentrated on the historical faithfulness and aesthetic aspects of the plays. However, their analysis shows dramatists' prejudice and distortion of historical sources on which they have based their plays. Subsequently, a group of scholars has observed the demonization of Muslims in early modern English literature. They consider that dramatists' motives for distortion and stereotyping of Muslim characters reflect England's nascent imperialism rather than mere ignorance or stereotypes that they inherited from medieval religious polemic. These scholars argue that early modern English literature can be studied in the light of Said's binaries of East and West. Contrary to it, the second group of scholars denies the application of Said's assumptions on the ground that England at time was not culturally, militarily, and technologically superior to the Islamic states of that time. The third group of scholars and critics prefers to use the term cultural hybridity instead of seeing things in terms of Said's binaries. Like Burton (2005) and Maclean (2007), McJannet also suggests going beyond unidirectional archival approach and insists on the inclusion of Islamic sources along with Western sources.

Ander Ingram's (2009) work is in line with the works of former scholars such as Brotton (1997), Jardine (1998), Matar (1999) and Burton (2005). Like them, he also advocates the theme of complexity in the reality of the Orient. His work traces the evolution of early modern English literature related to the Orient through the translations of continental works, historical accounts, travel narratives, plays, and sermons. He comments that the

literature on the Ottoman Turks shares similarities in terms of use of sources, citation of authorities, and recycling of information. The English playwrights focused too much on the Ottomans due to the Ottoman conquests, religious rivalry, the Levant merchants' interests in the Ottoman Empire, and English travelers' curiosity. Ingram considers it wrong to see the representation of the Turks in pure black and white terms because the complete picture reflects complexity, and diversity in representation of the Turks.

Mathew Dimmock (2010) explores the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and Islam through the Western accounts of Islam during Tudor literature. These accounts reveal biased and prejudiced perceptions of the West about Islam because these are based on mere reports and hearsay. Most of the common stereotypes about Islam and Muslims prevalent in early modern England came from France, Italy and Spain. To Dimmock, almost all Western writers have heavily drawn on old sources without confirming their veracity. The English plays that were created during 1579-1603 obviously reflect the prejudice of English dramatists. David Hawkes' (2010) work also deals with the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and Islam. He investigates why the early modern English literature portrayed Islam as a sensual religion and Muslims as idolaters. Hawkes analyzes the plays of the period that clearly reflect this tendency of the Renaissance dramatists. He deems that this tendency may be due to the relative luxurious life style of the Ottoman Turks and practice of polygamy prevalent in Muslim culture. However, in modern times, there is shift in the portrayal of Islam from a sensual religion to anti-sensual and puritanical faith. Why the Western writers could not portray Islam superior to Christianity is owing to the reason that it was culturally difficult for any English writer to

suggest that Islam was in any way superior to Protestant Christianity. Hawkes' study beautifully summarizes the English perceptions of the Orient, Oriental characters, Islam and the Muslims. It further validates my contention with reference to the misrepresentation of Persia and Persians as the part of the Orient.

M. Fatih Esen and Melih Karakuzu (2011) also show consistency in the theme of negative representation of the Ottoman Turks. Their joint work examines a number of early Modern English plays and demonstrates the playwrights' manipulative attitudes and their prejudiced views towards the Ottomans. The researchers think that the fear of invading Europe and converting Christians was the underlying motive behind the misrepresentation of the Turks. Dr. Fahd Mohammad Taleb Al-Olaqi's (2012) work confirms the findings of the former scholars and critics in case of the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and Islam. He analyzes Elizabethans attitudes towards the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran. Elizabethans had hostile feelings towards Islam. English people considered Muhammad as a fake prophet and the Quran as a book that provides evidence of the evil traits found among Muslims. Majority of the English works particularly English plays explicitly reflect prejudice in case of the Prophet and the Quran. The echoes of Al-Olaqi's words may be discerned in the selected plays which I have chosen for my proposed study where they find full expression. Similarly, another work of Al-Olaqi (2012) also focuses on the same theme through the images of Arabs in English literary works. The English literature of the medieval period has depicted Arab kings as tyrants, weak and sensual characters. The Arab Bedouins are filthy and the Muslim women are seductive and capricious. The modern English literature has



portrayed the Arabs as a threat to the West. To Al-Olaqi, this inaccurate picture is part of a profound ignorance in the West about Islam. Similarly, Steven A. Roy's (2012) work also dwells on the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient and argues the mixed feelings of the English towards the Ottomans. He makes a point that the development of England's maritime industry, its commercial and diplomatic relations during renaissance period played a key role in formulating English perceptions about Islam and the Ottomans. The English writers created negative image of Islam and Muslims mainly owing to the fear of captivity, piracy and apostasy. Nevertheless, Anglo-Oriental relations reveal English hostility and envy at the same time. Mathew Dimmock's (2015) explores the theme of misrepresentation of the Orient in Shakespeare's plays. He demonstrates that Shakespeare shows great awareness in representing Judaism and Islam in his plays. Nevertheless, he shows these two religions in background as compared to Christianity which is kept in foreground to establish and assert the Christian values and virtues. There seems clear disapproval of both Judaism and Islam as invalid and fraud religions in face of Christianity as a true and divine religion. However, Shakespeare's attitude to non-Christian religions is less harsh than the attitude of his contemporaries. The survey of the scholarship related to the Ottoman Turks shows that the scholars have concentrated on different themes. These themes include (mis)representation of the Orient and Islam, Anglo-Muslim relations, Anglo-Ottoman relations, piracy, conversion, construction of identities, Britain's imperial desires, complexity in the representation of the Orient, trade relations, maritime industry, lack of Muslim/ non-Western sources, cultural fusion or hybridity and cultural exchange. Out of these varied themes, the theme of

misrepresentation of the Orient and Islam emerges as a recurrent theme that has been investigated in detail. The majority of the scholars and critics have explored this theme and even other themes in the Oriental plays with reference to Britain's imperial desires. These scholars and critics' views seem to substantiate my contention that the Western writers and playwrights have misrepresented the Orient including the Persia

### **2.2. 2. Representation of the Moors:**

In case of the representation of the moors, Shakespeare's three plays *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *The Merchant of Venice* (1596) and *Othello* (1603) are important and may serve good examples as all of these revolve round the misrepresentation of the moors. Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* is represented as a Machiavellian character like Marlowe's Barabbas, the Prince of Morocco, Portia's suitor, in *The Merchant of Venice* is portrayed as a sexual monster whereas Othello is depicted as a devil. Mostly, a Moor, a black colored person in early modern English drama is represented as a devil or an insensitive creature. Ian Smith (2003) rightly argues, "Within the dramatic and theatrical traditions, supplementing the general ideology of early modern English culture, blackness implies the absence of consciousness and soul..." (p. 34). In Shakespeare's Othello, Othello is represented as a Moor and then the playwright shifts his identity from a Moor to a Turk. In other words, he turns Turk. This new identity is so abominable for Othello that suicide is the only solution for him to get rid and purify himself of his newly acquired identity. Like the word, Turk, the expression *to turn Turk* also carried negative connotations. As Daniel Vitkus (1997) explains that besides conveying the meaning of conversion, it also expressed the idea of "sexual transgression" (p. 146). Consequently, it is in this context,

the Muslims and especially the Ottoman Turks have been depicted in the contemporary plays such as Thomas Kyd's *The Tragedye of Solyman and Perseda* (1588), Daborne's *A Christian turn'd Turk* (1610), Robert Green's *Selimus* (1592), Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1623-24) and Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk or Amurath the First* (1615-23). The representation of the moors as cunning and crafty people, devils and sexual monsters in contemporary plays indicates that the Western writers have represented the Oriental characters as cultural stereotypes and supports the findings related to the representation of the Ottoman Turks. These plays also validate Saidian concept of binaries, which he has elaborated in *Orientalism*. According to it, the western people are white colored and white stands for light, purity, civilization whereas the eastern are black and black symbolizes devil, dishonesty and brutality.

### **2.2.3. Representation of the Persians:**

In relation to the theme of the representation of Persians, it is important to take into account that Persia occupied a prominent place in the world history being an ancient civilization along with Greece and Rome. The references of Persia can be found even in the *Bible* and classical literary works of writers like Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides and Aeschylus. According to the Bible, the Three Magi came from the East, probably from Persia, to offer their gifts to the newborn baby, Jesus Christ. Thus, the Magi stood for Eastern wisdom and represented divine and universal nature of Christianity for the Western European imagination. As the Magi were Persians in origin, all the Persian kings became embodiment of the values such as goodness, piety and nobility. Later on, among the classical works, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* narrates the story of Cyrus, a founder of the

Achaemenid Empire in Persia. Xenophon depicts Cyrus as a brave and noble king under whose command Persia achieved many victories. The image of Persia and Persians which emerges through these classical writers is that of a noble but cruel and a powerful nation. The classical writers have also mentioned Persian evil traits like luxury and cruelty. Aeschylus' *The Persians* is probably the first dramatic work where he has represented Persians as emotional and irrational people. Thus, the English were not only familiar with Aeschylus' representation of Persians, Cyrus and Darius of Persia via translations of classical works but they also knew Persia through the story of *The Three Magi or The Three Kings in the Bible*. Therefore, the Western people had mingled feelings towards the Persians and, hence, one finds the complexity in representation of Persia and Persians.

Among other important sources of information regarding Persia during early modern English period, the information supplied by the traders of the Muscovy, the Levant and East India Companies also contributed a lot towards creating the positive image of Persia. According to this information, Persia has not one fixed or uniform concept rather it has been described in different terms. Some saw Prester John in the Persian Sophy whereas others described how Persia was different from the Turks in religious matters and appreciated her hospitality and nobility. It is due to these reasons, majority of the scholars advocate the theme of complexity or fluidity in the representations of Persia.

Among the early studies, Wann (1915) notices that Persia did not get as much prominence as the Ottoman Empire because the West had no military threats from Persia. As I have already pointed out that with reference to the theme of representation of the Orient, Wann's work points out the accuracy of the historical sources in the Oriental

plays. Nevertheless, his work is full of many contradictions. These contradictions may be observed in case of Persia. Byron Porter Smith (1939) also comments that since Persia was geographically distant and posed no danger to the Europe, the English attitude towards the Persians was friendlier than the Turks and Moors. It is due to this reason Anthony Parr (1996) maintains that "Persia was a rather different case [as it] was not so much Europe's Other as its opposite or foil" (p. 20). What both Smith and Parr ignore is that these relations were not friendly in the true sense because these lacked equality and sincerity.

Recently, an Iranian scholar, Vali Erfanian T. Baghal-Kar's work (1981) has focused on the theme of the representation of Persia in Renaissance and in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries when England clearly stood as a colonial power. The work traces marked differences in the representations of the both periods and points out a considerable shift from the images of Persians that highlight their truthfulness, discipline, and their martial qualities to the images of Persians as despot, indolent, and sensual people. Nevertheless, Baghal-Kar's study lacks in-depth investigation of the circulating discourses of a specific period. As Abid Masood (2012) has rightly noticed that, it fails "to produce a sustained analysis of any one period and the different factors that influenced the creation of a certain image" (p. 16). Eugene D. Hill's (1992) study explores the theme of the politics of early modern English period along with the theme of representation of ancient Persia. He establishes a parallel between Cambyses and Ambidexter on the one hand and King Henry VIII on the other hand. His analysis of the existent scholarship on Cambyses also confirms Cambyses's drunkenness, debauchery, ruthlessness and cruelty in the play. To him, the

play is a commentary on the contemporary political situation of England. Thus, the playwright deftly holds drama as a mirror to reflect the contemporary circumstances. This thing is further established through the coincidence of accidental deaths of both Cambyses and King Henry as divine punishment and through the coincidence of the ascendancy of a new queen in Persia as well as in England. There may be a few political connections of Cambyses' story with King Henry's story but, like the contemporary writers of the period, Hill has also portrayed Cambyses as a negative figure.

Linda McJannet (1999) talks about the theme of representation of Persia in the Oriental plays related to the Persian content. She examines Western writers' attitudes toward Persians as compared to Turks and Moors. She points out that the three pioneer scholars i.e. Wann, Rice and Chew have ignored Persia in their studies. In her opinion, Western scholars' relative neglect of Persia may be because of political and military role of Persia, racial and religious differences of Persians from other Muslims and English knowledge of ancient Persia. After analysis of different plays related to Persia, she concludes that western writers have portrayed both good and bad cultural stereotypes in these plays rather than depicting them in fixed and categorical terms. McJannet's study fails to pay attention to the negative representation of Persia that is evident in the dramatic and non-dramatic discourses of the period. This deliberate occlusion of facts on the part of McJannet may be witnessed in the major bulk of the Western scholarship and indicates the Eurocentric perspectives of both the Western writers and scholars. However, exceptions may be noticed in this regard. Mohammad Taghi Nezam-Mafi (1999) relates the theme of representation of Persia vis-à-vis Anglo-Persian relations. He argues that the

turbaned Robert Sherley was the first Persian in England as he was appointed ambassador of Shah Abbas. To him, the Anglo-Persian relations had been performative and theatrical. Robert Sherley as a citizen of England and as an ambassador of Shah is good example of these performative and theatrical relations. Nezam-Mafi's use of the term performative and theatrical relations is a good comment, but he fails to see the truth and depth of these relations that lacked equality and sincerity.

Bernadette Andrea (2005) demonstrates a clear departure from the traditional Western criticism that deals with the theme of representation of Persia since she admits that Persia has been misrepresented in the Western scholarship. Her work is, actually, a counterpoint made by her in response to Mohammad Taghi Nezam-Mafi's (1999) doctoral thesis where he has argued that the turbaned Robert Sherley was the first Persian in England. Contrary to it, Andrea agrees with Samuel Chew who considers Lady Teresa Sherley a heroine and the first Persian in England. Like McJannet, Andrea also thinks that Persia has been ignored in the scholarship related to the representation of the Orient but unlike McJannet she thinks that it is due to the fact that most of the work on the representation of Persia has been in thesis form. Andrea's comments related to the representation of Persia at the end of this work are noteworthy where she asserts that misrepresentation of Persia as a Christianized state "shared by Western Christians from Canterbury to Rome" (p. 283) was "completely erroneous" (ibid, 289). Javad Ghatta (2006) argues that the theme of complexity in representation of Persia seems prominent in the literary works of the period. He stresses that Persia is not monolithic rather it has multiple identities as we observe in the two plays. Ghatta's stance is that there is diversity in representation of

the Islamic characters in these two plays. Tamburlaine is portrayed as a man of shifting identities ranging from Tartar to Persian, to Turk and back to Tartar again. Similarly, *The Travels* also reflects diverse Persian culture. Therefore, Ghatta emphasizes that politico-religious conditions of Persia and England of that time must be given significance in such studies. Though Ghatta's observation of Persian cultural diversity seems relevant yet his study ignores many important facts in his selected plays. For an instance, he fails to notice the utter humiliation of the Oriental emperors in *Tamburlaine* which is also historically inaccurate. He has passed no comments about the burning of the Holy Quran and other Islamic books that have been described in detail in this play. Likewise, Ghatta neglects the misrepresentation of Persian characters vis-à-vis the Sherley brothers in *The Travels*.

Ladan Niayesh's (2008) work also deals with the theme of complexity of representation of Persia. Her work analyzes Persian characters and Persian influences in Shakespeare's plays. To her, English playwrights including Shakespeare have treated Persians differently particularly from Turks and Moors due to the Persians being Shi'a Muslims, enemies of Sunni Turks and their ancient heritage. Like Matar and McJannet, she also stresses that there has been a lack of scholarship on the representation of Persia in English literature. This deserves our attention. The reasons for this relative neglect may be either the relative absence of Persians as main characters in Marlowe and Shakespeare's plays or Persia's ambiguous and unstable status among other Islamic states of that period. In her opinion, Said's model does not apply to Shakespeare's plays and many other works related to Persia because Persia appears as an unstable reference in the



works of these dramatists. Niayesh's study is full of contradictions since she herself cites many instances of misrepresentation of Persia and the presence of the Saidian binaries in the English plays. Chloe Houston (2009) focuses on the theme of Anglo-Persian relations as a dominant theme of travel literature and demonstrates how England capitalized on the sectarian conflicts between the Ottomans and Persians and developed trade and military relations with Persia. The travel literature of early 17<sup>th</sup> century projects a positive, friendly and hospitable image of Persia that welcomed the Europeans. It highlights the similarities and differences between the two countries as well. Seen from this perspective, one needs to reconsider one's views about Anglo-Orient relations, which have been complex, and multidimensional. Houston's work does not encompass the literary representations of the period in which there is clear misrepresentation of Persia. Besides, she has given her observation while drawing on the travel works of Minadoi and Herbert whose own works register misrepresentation of Persia. Laurence Publicover (2010) discusses the theme of representation of Persia with reference to *The Travels of Three English Brothers*. He categorizes this play in the subgenre of the nationalistic romance. Publicover defends Sherley brothers and describes them national heroes who deserve honor and respect from their audience. To him, the Sherleys are unknown knights who get great protocol in Persia because of their inherent nobility. Like other scholars, Publicover also points out Persian distinctiveness because of its Shi'a Muslim identity and the Zoroastrian influences. This distinctiveness sets apart Persia from the Turks who are usually portrayed negatively. Publicover fails to focus how the three playwrights have

exploited the material due to their Eurocentric perspectives to achieve their desired ends and seems to support their propaganda of the Sherleys as great English heroes.

Jane Grogan (2010) treats the theme of complexity in representation of Persia through a survey of the works both from ancient sources and early modern English sources related to Persia. She demonstrates that the image of Persia has been very familiar and positive for the renaissance people. Persia has been the not-forgotten empire because of her distinctiveness. She thinks that the Orientalist and globalization theories have failed to measure the diversity of Persian material, historical and cultural aspects. In the past, Persia was a famous and prestigious empire as it is reflected in the *Book of Daniel* and in the works of Xenophon and Herodotus. The contemporary images of Persia reflect Persia a wealthy and hospitable state that welcomes foreigners. Nevertheless, she considers that Persia had been ignored in early modern English studies and it needs to be added to the Turks narratives. Grogan has mainly highlighted the positive images of Persia, and, if somewhere she has mentioned the negative images of Persia, she overshadows them with the positive images. For an instance, the Greek authors have described Persians as barbarians and have pointed out the Persian vices of luxury and cruelty but Grogan overshadows the Greek narrative with the Roman narrative that describes Persians as warriors and prestigious people. In addition to it, Grogan has analysed only two or three plays in which she touches upon the cultural diversity of Persia and fails to offer a detailed analysis of these plays since the detailed analysis may produce another picture. Ralf Hertel (2012) also deals with the theme of complexity in representation of Persia in *The Travels*. He exposes the self-created exploits of the Sherleys and exhibits that there is

not one picture of the East rather there are two pictures: one of the Persians and the other of the Ottomans. Persia because of its exoticness and non-interference with Europe provides another aspect of the East, which is different from the Ottoman Turks who are usually depicted as cultural stereotypes. Thus, Persia offers the positive aspect of the East that stands out from the Ottoman Empire representing the negative aspect: Persia as a brother and Turk as other. Hertel stresses the point that the play deindividualizes and dehumanizes the Turks by portraying them as nameless characters and, therefore, ousts the Ottomans from the play. Hence, he calls it a Turk play without Turks, which indicates English inferiority complex. There is no doubt that the English writers have treated Persia differently from the Ottoman Empire, but, there are explicit instances of misrepresentation of Persia to which Hertel has paid no attention in his work. As it has been pointed out earlier, such omissions may be intentional and reflect the Eurocentric perspectives of the Western writers and scholars.

#### **2.2. 4. Dr. Hafiz Abid Masood' Contribution:**

Dr. Hafiz Abid Masood's (2012) work is a seminal contribution with reference to the representation of Persia in the recent scholarship. It falls in the category of the works that advocate the theme of complexity in representation of Persia. Masood examines different images of Persia that were prevalent during early modern England. Persia occupied a prominent place in English imagination due to her ancient heritage and her hostility towards the Ottoman Empire. It became an Islamic state with Shah Ismail's rise to power. The conflation of classical heritage and Islamic identity of Shi'a Muslims which distinguished the Persians from the Sunni Muslims of the Ottoman Empire created a

complex and diverse image of Persia and, consequently, attracted the attention of many early modern English writers. Day, Rowley, and Wilkins' *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers* reflects this complex and flexible identity of Persia beautifully. Masood's work provides a panoramic survey of the works related to the Persian content from the classical to the early modern English sources. Especially, he has analysed Minadoi's *Historie of Warres between the Turkes and the Persians* and *The Travels* in detail to show the diverse images of Persia. Though Masood points out both the positive and negative images of Persia in these two works yet negative images seem to be overshadowed by the positive images.

#### **2.2.5. Departure from Hafiz Abid Masood's Research Work**

My proposed research study is a counter-narrative of Masood's assumptions that he has explored in his thesis. It registers a clear-cut departure from Hafiz Abid Masood's work in a number of ways, which are as under:

##### **1) Difference in Topic and Findings:**

Hafiz Abid Masood's doctoral thesis titled *From Cyrus to Abbas: Staging Persia in Early Modern England* examines the diverse images of Persia both in Classical and early modern English literary works and concludes that there is complexity in these images. My thesis titled *Representation of the Orient in 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Century English Drama with Focus on Persia: A New Historicist Perspective* explores only the four selected plays of early modern English period. It attempts to show the validity of the contention that the English playwrights have misrepresented

(mainly due to the Oriental discourse, Eurocentric perspectives and misrepresentation of Persia) the Persians in these plays. The findings of my proposed study indicate that the English playwrights have mainly depicted Persia, Persian people, Islam and Muslims in a negative way in their plays. The negative representations of Persia and Persians outnumber the positive representations that are few and rare in the selected plays. Hence, there is obvious misrepresentation instead of the complexity in representation. Thus, the findings of my study totally subvert Masood's findings that there is complexity in the images of Persia.

## **2) Difference in Chapters:**

Masood has not devoted separate chapters for literature review and research methodology in his thesis. Rather, he has inserted both in the introductory part of his work. He has talked about his theoretical model only in one long paragraph (Masood, 2012, pp. 10-11). Similarly, his literature review consists of nine pages (ibid, pp. 11-19). Contrary to it, I have composed two separate and detailed chapters for literature review and research methodology. The chapter on literature review comprises almost eighty-eight pages and, likewise, the chapter on research methodology consists of approximately thirty-two pages.

## **3) Difference in Data:**

Though Masood explores the positive and negative images of Persia in ancient as well as early modern English literature yet he has used Thomas Minadoi's *Historie of Warres between the Turkes and the Persians* and *The Travels* as his main data. Whereas, I have investigated the misrepresentation of Persia in the four

selected plays that constitute my main data. These plays include Thomas Preston's *Cambyses*, Day, Rowley and Wilkins' joint play *The Travailes of Three English Brothers*, Denham's *The Sophy* and Robert Baron's *Mirza*. I have juxtaposed these plays with the non-literary works only wherever it is relevant and necessary. The non-literary works chosen for juxtaposition include Sir Thomas Herbert's *A Relation of Some Years Travaile, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic 1601-1603*, Thomas Minadoi's *A History of the Warres between the Turkes and the Persians*, and *Don Juan of Persia: A Shia'h Catholic 1560-1604* written by Don Juan de Persia.

#### **4) Difference in Research Methodology:**

Masood emphatically argues that the Orientalist model does not apply to early modern English literature due to some obvious limitations. Therefore, he concludes, "just as a Saidian model is unsuitable for the early modern period, so is a post-colonial model" (Masood, 2012, p. 10). He further asserts, "The representation of Persia in early modern texts shatters the binary opposition of 'East' and 'West' or Islam and Christianity completely" (ibid, p. 11). Contrary to Masood's theoretical model, my theoretical framework questions and challenges what Masood considers "unsuitable" (ibid, p. 10). The Saidian and post-colonial models inform my study as it argues that the selected plays obviously show the emergence of an imperial or orientalist discourse that later on helped England dominate the Orient. For this purpose, I have dovetailed new historicism with Saidian Orientalist model to validate the contention that the English playwrights

have misrepresented the Orient, Oriental people, Islam and Muslims in the selected plays due to their Eurocentric perspectives. I have categorically stated in the introductory chapter of my thesis “The analysis of these different discourses shows that the English writers and dramatists have misrepresented the Orient, Oriental characters, and their culture. They have denigrated the Orient and its culture and thereby asserted and established the cultural superiority of the Western civilization in contrast to the Eastern civilization. Nevertheless, the traditional and existing scholarship upto now in this domain has not dwelt on this issue”.

All the above-mentioned points indicate that my work is diametrically opposed to Hafiz Abid Masood’s thesis in terms of topic, data, literature review, research methodology and findings.

J. Lopez-Palaez Casellas’ (2013) work focuses on the theme of representation of Persia in *The Travels*. He challenges and questions the veracity of the existent Sherleyan discourse with the conclusion that these discourses conflict with each other and offer new dimensions of knowledge. These conflicting discourses refer to the concept of intertextuality and throw light on the notion of early modern England. Lopez-Palaez Casellas agrees with Matar and Burton and stresses the inclusion of non-Western sources along with the Western ones. To Casellas, England wanted to establish commercial and military relations with Persia due to her stakes. Therefore, it was due to these reasons, the English writers mentioned the possibility of Persia as a favourable state for the Christians. Maryam Jahanmardi (2014) also investigates the theme of representation of

Persia through the cultural, commercial and political relations between England and Persia through the Sherley dossiers. No doubt, Persia was an Islamic other but she insists that Anglo-Persian relations have been ambivalent, versatile and fluid starting from ancient Greece to early modern England. This trend of creating fluid representation of Persia lasted until the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century but as the process of colonization of the East started in 18<sup>th</sup> century, obvious shift can be traced in English literature from fluid representation to the fixed and negative representation. Maryam's study fails to point out the negative representation of Persia in the Sherley dossiers as well as other works that were created during the early modern period. Again, Jonathan Burton's (2009) study deals with the theme of representation of Persia through the characters of Anthony Sherley and Hussein Ali Beg, the two Persian ambassadors, who were sent by the Sophy for strategic alliance between European Christian countries and Persia against the Ottoman Empire. Burton employs the method of reciprocal comparison i.e. the inclusion of non-English voices with the English voices to get an objective view of Anglo-Persian relations and better understanding of the roles and characters of these two ambassadors. The reciprocal comparison reveals many inconsistencies and contradictions in the English Sherleyean narratives. To him, the playwrights of *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* have decultured and denigrated Persia using the technique of appropriation i.e. by attributing and transferring Persian honors and titles to the Sherleys. Burton calls it a fabrication and an act of cultural legerdemain. Thus, it is misrepresentation and concoction rather than truth. Burton's work is a counter-narrative of those scholars' works that advocate the theme of complexity in the representation of Persia and questions



the traditional criticism on this play. Burton's observation substantiates both the assumptions and findings of my study. Anthony Parr (1996) explores the images of Persia in early modern England. Both the ancient Persia because of its renowned and prestigious background and the Safavid Persia due to its Shi'a Muslim identity and the influences of Zoroastrianism lend a distinctive place to Persia in early modern England as compared to other Islamic states of the period. Therefore, Persia was not so much Europe's other like other Muslim states. Parr notices that the English playwrights have manipulated the historical facts in *The Travels of Three English Brothers*. The Sherley brothers' self-fabricated mission in Persia and later on Robert Sherley's appearance as a turbaned ambassador of Persia in England created a great furor in English diplomatic and court circles. To him, Robert Sherley was a liar and an imposter. Parr notices the British imperial idea in embryonic form in different Sherleyean narratives. Parr's views reflect ambivalence as he argues, on the one hand, that Persia was not a Europe's other, and on the other hand, that *The Travels* embody the embryonic form of British Empire.

Jane Grogan (2014) explores the theme of the complexity in the representation of Persia. She demonstrates that England had great interest in Persia during early modern period owing to Persian classical heritage and England's desire to establish commercial and military relations with Persia. She argues that it was the first direct Anglo-Persian military collaboration in 1622, which helped them wrest the island of Ormuz from the Portuguese. The early modern England took great inspiration from the ancient Persia and considered Persia as a model for English society. One can easily trace Persian influences in English literary works such as Philip Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*, James I's *Basilikon*

*Doron* and Thomas More's *Utopia*. To Grogan, Persia does not seem as a cultural other like other Islamic states in the works of Renaissance humanists. Rather, they have highly appreciated Persian values reflected in Cyrus, the founder of Achaemenid period. The ancient Persia inspired the early modern English imagination to the extent that the English writers took it as a good imperial model. Grogan also complains of the relative neglect of Persian themes and characters in Renaissance drama. Only a few playwrights like Christopher Marlowe, Samuel Daniel, William Alexander and William Shakespeare have alluded to Persia in their works. There is no doubt that ancient Persia has been a good imperial model along with the Greek and Roman imperial models but the English writers have reflected the decline of the ancient Persian model during the Safavid period. It is during this period that England's interest shifted from admiration to trade and military benefits. In addition to it, Grogan fails to reveal the negative representations of Persia that outnumber the positive representations. Grogan has nowhere mentioned these negative representations in her work due to her Eurocentric perspectives.

Margaret Meserve's (2014) study deals with the theme of representation of Persia related to the Safavid dynasty. She demonstrates how Shah Ismail's rise to power produced mixed responses among the West. Some hailed him as a symbol of hope who would help Christians fight against the Ottoman Turks. Others took him a revolutionary figure, a liberator for Persia. The third concept of Shah Ismail was a divine figure who was for a specific job in Persia. In short, the Sophy's tale in Renaissance period reflects the mixed feelings of skepticism and belief. Like Grogan, Meserve has also highlighted only the positive representation of Persia. Moreover, the concept of Persia as a favourable state for

the Christians was a wishful thought that never materialized except in the literary works of the period. Mark Hutchings (2015) also investigates the theme of representation of Persia in *The Travels*. He critically looks at the Sherleys' mission. To him, the Sherleys' project was self-contrived and unofficial. It exposes Sherleys' heroic motives by considering them vain and ridiculous. Hutchings observes that the playwrights have employed the mode of irony, which punctures and deflates Sherleys' heroic, nationalist and patriotic claims skillfully. Hutchings not only exposes the sham and spurious heroic claims of the Sherleys that have been represented in varied Sherleyan discourses but also indirectly alludes to the misrepresentation of Persia in such discourses.

Sheiba Kian Kaufman (2016) relates the theme of complexity in the representation of Persia with reference to early modern English literature. She offers a picture of Persia as a hospitable globe as it emerges from English representations of Persia in early modern English literature. To her, English playwrights have not portrayed Persia as a cultural other rather they have represented the Achaemenid emperors in a very positive manner. This friendly and hospitable image of Persia can also be noticed in early modern English plays. The Anglo-Persian relations were based on cultural and religious exchanges and because of this Persia enjoyed distinctive place as compared to other Islamic states. Therefore, it will be a mistake to describe Persia through some stable category of representation. Rather, Persia's complexity and multidimensionality negates all definite and fixed terms. One common mistake in case of the scholars who have advocated the theme of complexity in literary representations of Persia is that mostly such scholars occlude the negative representation of Persia due to their vested benefits. Amin Momeni

(2016) explores the theme of complexity in representation of Persia through the Anglo-Persian relations in early modern English plays. It throws a new light on the Tudor-Stuart foreign and domestic policy during the said period. Momeni's thesis is a significant contribution to the existing studies related to Persia because he has not only highlighted the distinctive place of Persia but also focused on the dynamic relations that existed between Islamic Persia and England. Momeni's study also fails to pay attention to the negative representation of Persia in early modern English literature, since there are few references that relate to the negative representation of Persia. The survey of the works related to Persia demonstrates that the traditional existing scholarship in this domain points out the theme of complexity in the representations of Persia. Nevertheless, some scholars tend to disagree with the mainstream criticism and have highlighted the negative representation of Persia in their works.

### **2.3. Works Related to New Historicism:**

New historicism emerged in 1980s because the existing theories such as formalism and new criticism ignored the socio-historical and political factors that may affect author, reader, critic, the process of creation and consumption. It advocates a turn to history. This turn to history in literary criticism is not something new. Before new historicism, the traditional or old historicists focused on the simple relationship between history and literature. Contrary to it, new historicism explores the complexity of this relationship and evinces a clear shift from the methods of old historicism. New historicism as a critical practice is intertextual and interdisciplinary approach as it claims for reading literary texts along with the non-literary texts and draws upon disciplines like anthropology,

economics, history, sociology, psychology, linguistics, and techniques of literary deconstruction. New historicists are deeply influenced by Michel Foucault and Clifford Geertz and apply their views in literary analyses.

Peter Barry (1999) defines new historicism as “a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period” (p.172). Stephen Greenblatt introduced the term new historicism in the journal *Genre* in 1982. Later on, he insisted for the preference of Cultural Poetics as more appropriate term. Nevertheless, despite Greenblatt’s preference for Cultural Poetics, the term new historicism has gained popularity in the field of literary theory. Besides Greenblatt as a main practitioner of new historicism, the names of other practitioners include Jonathan Goldberg, Catherine Gallagher and Louis Montrose. All these scholars share some common assumptions and “conceive of a literary text as ‘situated’ within the totality of the institutions, social practices, and discourses that constitute the culture of a particular time and place, and with which the literary text interacts as both a product and producer of cultural energies and codes” (Abrams & Harpham,2011, p. 244). This situating of literary works in socio-cultural practices does not produce single absolute truth rather can help us understand literary works in better perspective due to the plurality of voices. Charles E. Bressler (2007) concludes, “What we will learn by applying these principles and methodologies, say the Cultural Poetics critics, is that there is not one voice but many voices to be heard interpreting texts and our culture: our own, the voices of others, the voices of the past, the voices of present, and the voices that will be in the future” (p. 190).

To the new historicists, all texts, literary as well as non-literary, are cultural constructs and embody the ideologies of the period. The new historicist reading investigates how literary texts with other texts form discourses that support or undermine a specific ideology, the power relations between the dominant group and the dominated one, the biases and cultural attitudes that inform those discourses. Furthermore, it explores how texts as sites of struggle reveal conflicting voices and how the dominant groups i.e. through subversive strategies contain these conflicting voices. The all-pervasive discourses play a vital role in constructing and shaping individual identities. This shaping process is reciprocal since the discourses shape individual identities and in return are shaped by them. Thus, the new historicist reading practice offers useful insight into social and cultural practices and subsequently enables understand cultural working in prevalent discourses of the period.

However, despite the assertions and claims made by the new historicists regarding the usefulness and advantages of applying new historicism as a critical practice, it has faced opposition as well. The opponents of new historicism have levelled some charges against it. Firstly, the new historicists put too much focus on power relations in their analyses that it seems like a grand narrative. Secondly, new historicism ultimately produces one formula, simple reading of all texts by ignoring their complexity. Thirdly, it does not pay any special attention to the aesthetic elements in the literary texts. New historicists do not give any weightage to these charges. Rather, they assert that this critical practice offers valuable insights. As Ann B. Dobie (2001) notes “New historicists answer such charges

by saying that the value of their type of reading is that it provides a more complete understanding of a text than could be discovered under the older system” (p. 182).

Below is a survey of the works where the new historicist advocates and practitioners have applied new historicist assumptions to different literary works. Clifford Geertz’s (1973) work introduces the new historicist principle of thick description that may be used to investigate different literary works. In his seminal study, he illustrates the point that meaning or interpretation is a cultural phenomenon, which calls for a detailed analysis of social and cultural practices. According to Geertz, culture is a set of values and instructions that govern human behavior. Moreover, there is no possibility of human nature independent of culture. He explains his viewpoint with the help of a young man winking at someone. To Geertz, the winking may have layered of meanings, which are grounded in the context of a given culture. He calls this interpretive process as a process of a thick description. Thick description is different from thin description that refers to the simple and surface meaning of an event. The main limitation of Geertz’s work is that it suggests just one point in case of the new historicist analysis and fails to give a comprehensive theoretical model for application to the literary works.

Stephen Orgel’s (1975) study introduces the new historicist principle of the reciprocity between the cultural conditions and the theatre. It is a significant contribution to the field of new historicist studies with reference to early modern period, particularly the reign of James I and Charles I. To Orgel, renaissance theatre as an instrument of power had great impact on the politics of the period. It helped the monarchs to project and disseminate the image of ideal monarchs and ideal states hence the co-option between theatre and

politics. Talking about this co-option of renaissance theatre and politics, Orgel records that “the stage at Whitehall was his truest kingdom, the masque the most accurate expression of his mind” (p. 79). Orgel talks about the reciprocity between the socio-historical conditions and the plays that should be taken into account while analyzing literary works. However, like Geertz, Orgel’s study also does not provide a comprehensive theoretical model to apply to literary works. Montrose’s (1980) work manifests the application of Orgel’s principle to literary works. He investigates how different symbolic modes particularly the pastoral form contributed to the construction of Queen Elizabeth’s personality and her regime and in return, Elizabeth’s personality provided content for literary representations of the period. Thus, literary works and structures of power are complicit with each other. Both Greenblatt and Montrose interpret the controlling and construction of individual identities in the same way. The only difference is that Montrose assigns this role to pastoral poetry whereas Greenblatt attributes this role to theatre. Montrose’s work also suffers from the same flaw that is evident in the works of Geertz and Orgel.

Greenblatt’s (1981) seminal study introduces three important new historicist assumptions, namely the construction of identity, negotiation between self and culture and subversion-containment relationship. It is through subversion and containment the colonizer states control the colonized states. He juxtaposes Thomas Harriot’s *A Brief and True Report of the New-Found Land of Virginia* with Shakespeare’s *Tempest*. It is an insightful study of European colonizing methods in America, which are based on Machiavellian policies. Harriot admits that the English used Machiavellian methods such as force, fraud, lies and



deceits to hegemonize the Native Americans. Greenblatt finds a parallel in Prospero's methods to control the colonized Caliban in Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Shakespeare's *Henry* plays also register same invisible bullets since the ruler's authority seems to be inspired by Machiavellian policies. If there are some subversive voices in Shakespeare's plays, they are contained so deftly that the Elizabethan theatregoers accept them normal. Thus, there appears an explicit relationship between subversion and containment. After reading Shakespeare's plays like *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear* and *Richard II*, Greenblatt argues that Shakespeare's drama is rooted in renaissance culture. There is relationship of negotiation and exchange between Shakespeare and his culture. The renaissance culture constructed Shakespeare's personality and in return, Shakespeare constructed the renaissance culture through his literary works.

Stephen Greenblatt's most of work deals with renaissance studies due to which he is also known as a renaissance scholar. It is in this context, Greenblatt (1983) examines the works of Durer, Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare. Here, he investigates another important new historicist principle of how the literary works are cultural artefacts. Greenblatt argues that history has great impact on generic codes. For an instance, the Stuart and Tudor regimes were characterized by religious and political unrest, inflation, unemployment, and class conflicts and the literary works of the times are embedded in these socio-cultural forces. Like other works of Greenblatt, this also proffers a few more concepts of new historicism. Firstly, in it, Greenblatt has analyzed widely different texts to study the power relations. Secondly, he argues that literary works are interconnected

and grounded in social practices of the period. Thirdly, the techniques of power vary from age to age. Greenblatt's contribution to the theory of new historicism is significant since he has given some basic assumptions of this theory and, thus, made the task of application easier for the novice practitioners. Lisa Jardine (1983) is a useful work as it applies new historicist principles of literary works as cultural artefacts to the representation of female characters in Elizabethan drama. She suggests the feminist critics to do away with the orthodox Shakespearean criticism and try to explore the relationship between social conditions and literary works. Following new historicist assumptions, Jardine goes through widely different texts such as Sidney's *Arcadia*, Marlowe's plays, Shakespeare's dramas, The Golden Legend, Golding's translation of Ovid, and Puritans' tracts against drama to point out that the representation of female characters on the stage indicates the patriarchal apprehensions about the social changes, which were happening at that time. The boy actors performed the roles of female characters and their performance caused homoerotic appeal rather than the heterosexual one. Majority of the female characters shown on the stage have typical feminine roles—reticent, chaste, modest and docile. Even the powerful female characters ultimately seem to conform to the patriarchal norms.

Jane E. Howard (1986) is an extremely useful secondary source to understand the new historicist assumptions. In a very objective manner, she describes how new historicism has challenged the traditional concepts of Renaissance as an ideal culture defined by Jacob Burckhardt in his work *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. Then, she compares and contrasts the assumptions of old historicism given by Tillyard with the

assumptions of new historicism propounded by Greenblatt and Montrose. For this purpose, she goes through the works of Greenblatt and Montrose and observes some differences despite the commonalities between the two. The two important aspects of Howard's work are the comparison between old historicism and new historicism and the differences and similarities between Greenblatt and Montrose. Louis Montrose, M.W. Ferguson, M. Quilligan, and N.J. Vickers (1986) have introduced some of the key assumptions of new historicism such as the use of anecdotes, juxtaposition of literary text with non-literary one, analysis of power relations, ideology, and historicity of text and textuality of history. These scholars have juxtaposed Simon Forman's dream with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to show how specific cultural forces created and shaped the play and in return, how the play created and shaped these cultural forces. They elaborate how different literary works like comedies, court masks and Spenser's *The Faerie Queen* projected and promoted the cult of the Virgin Queen and helped construct Queen Elizabeth's personality. Thus, there is complicity between real life and literary works of the period. The essay is also a good example of new historicists' interdisciplinary approach as the scholars have employed techniques of feminism and psychoanalysis. They have analyzed Queen Elizabeth's different roles moving from young seductive figure to an aged mother. Through this analysis, they show how Elizabeth was ruling in the patriarchal society of renaissance culture. Elizabeth succeeded in doing so because she differentiated herself from other women and her rule in no way was a menace to the patriarchal hegemony of that culture. Shakespeare's female characters in *A Midsummer*

*Night's Dream* evince same conformist attitude as Shakespeare introduces this idea through the stories of Theseus-Hippolyta and Oberon-Titania.

Brook Thomas (1987) insists that new historicist approach is necessary in introductory literary classes. Students at this level usually lack historical knowledge and subsequently they have no proper understanding of the present. The introduction of new historicism in such classes can successfully fill this gap for it will enable the students to historicize literary works and develop awareness about socio-historical conditions in which that work was produced. Equipped with historical consciousness, students can have a better look at the present. Thus, Thomas emphasizes the principle of new historicism that past is approachable and recoverable. Edward Pechter (1987) demonstrates the application of new historicist principle of how texts are cultural artefacts. He considers new historicism as an attempt to re-historicize literary texts. It enables to recover text and history at the same time. Texts exist within contexts, which help understand the facts that caused the production and reception of texts. To him, new historicism is a kind of Marxist criticism, a new kind of politicization. Power structures produce subversion that is used as a means of maintaining its control hence subversion-containment relationship. Anthony B. Dawson (1988) examines the new historicist concept of power in relation to subversion or resistance. New historicism conflates example and text using anecdote. It challenges and questions the humanist tradition and the power mechanics. It reveals texts as complicit in the ideological structures. Thus, literary texts as ideological products help legitimize power and hegemonize people, as is the case with Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. It is in this context, Renaissance literature had hegemonic role.

Greenblatt (1988) talks about the new historicist principle that past is accessible and graspable. It is a collection of essays on the principles of new historicism. The author argues that literary works may seem individual products but actually, they are collective products and are results of negotiations. Moreover, they are created through the vehicle of language that is manifestation of collective creation. Therefore, creation is a social and cultural phenomenon. Seen from this perspective, Shakespearean theatre is also a collective product. To Greenblatt, though the writers of the past have died yet their works outlive due to the life or social energy embedded in them. This social energy helps understand the literary works of the dead writers. D. G. Myers' (1989) work highlights in a very simple and easy manner clarifies the complexity of new historicism. New historicism emerged as a reaction to formalistic approach to literature. It gained increasing popularity in the domain of literary criticism. New historicism emphasizes that it is impossible to recover the meaning of a text. However, the ideology that gave birth to the production of that text may be recovered, therefore, texts are ideological products. Ideology pre-exists history and texts and texts must be studied in relation to other texts to gain better understanding of the pervasive ideology.

H. Aram Veesser (1989) introduces some key assumptions of new historicism, which may be employed by the researchers in their new historicist analyses of literary works. It is a valuable collection of essays written on new historicism. No doubt, new historicism has received a lot of criticism but it has widened the scope of literary criticism and opened a new way of analyzing and interpreting literary works. Talking about the interdisciplinary approach of new historicism, Veesser comments that it has helped the scholars bridge the

gap between literature and other disciplines such as history, politics, anthropology, and economics. New historicists address the issues related to power and politics, which relate to people's practical lives. Veese's collection is a good example of contention and heterogeneity that is also at the heart of new historicism. The book opens with Greenblatt's essay and then the essays of Montrose, Gallagher, Lentricchia, and others follow. To Veese, new historicism as a method has brought "culture in action" (p. xi). This is what Montrose suggests through the notion of thick description. It has given a new awareness about the history, culture and literature. New historicism has been specially applied to Renaissance studies where scholars have created majority of works but it has been equally applied to the Romantic Age, Victorian period and American Renaissance studies. The terms like negotiation, exchange, circulation, and social energy, which have been borrowed from commerce, are at the heart of new historicism. To Greenblatt, all social practices including literature involve exchange that may be material or symbolic but it is always there. Talking about the significance of cultural artefacts, Greenblatt (1990) asserts that they are time bound and informed by the socio-historical, political negotiations. The study reveals how Greenblatt developed his interest in Renaissance studies. Resonance and wonder are two main characteristics of works of art. If resonance refers to universality and creates a sense of complexity of cultural forces, wonder evokes amazement, and awe which makes you stop and feast your eyes on beautiful objects. Greenblatt notices this element of wonder in abundance in early modern literature. Beauty causes wonder that a creative genius captures and portrays in his work. This wonder is a cultural phenomenon since culture constructs one's gaze, the

way one looks and experiences beauty. Finally, Greenblatt opines that new historicism does not proffer some hard and fast rules for critical interpretation. Rather, it allows you to situate a work of art in relation to other contemporary literary representations to see, as Montrose claims, historicity of the text and textuality of history.

Peter Uwe Hohendahl (1992) explains how literary works are cultural artefacts due to their exchange with the socio-cultural conditions. He argues that it is difficult to define new historicism in theoretical terms. Its common concern is the function of power. Apparently, the origin of power may lie in text, author, reader, state, society, or the king but actually, it is a result of negotiations. Therefore, it is a misconception to think the autonomy of a text, an individual, or an author. Hohendahl traces Foucault's influence in three main areas: its anti-humanism, autonomy of the subject, and its focus on the power relations. It is because of this sometimes critics call new historicists as neo-Foucauldians. Jan R. Veenstra (1995) further develops the idea that texts are cultural artefacts that embody the circulation of social energy. He elaborates that new historicism or Poetics of Culture focuses on the relationship between literary texts and their socio-historical contexts. The social forces play an important role in constructing subjectivities as well as culture. This relationship is dialectic. Literary works through negotiation and exchange produce social energy i.e. the intensities of experience that help in fashioning identities. Greenblatt's Poetics of Culture throws light on the notions of self-fashioning process, the dialectics of assimilation and differentiation and the circulation of social energy. New historicism, more than a theory or doctrine, is a practice. It considers that texts, authors, individuals, critics and historians are constructs. They are cultural artefacts. Literary texts

because of their uniqueness play vital role in self-fashioning. Interpretations are based on negotiations and because of different negotiations, meaning of a literary work may change as it happened in the case of Richard 11's performance. When the performance of Richard 11 was shifted from the conventional limits of theatre to the streets and open houses, it gained new meanings. Texts exude social energy (joy, pain, anxiety and relief) which involves appropriation i.e. the use of language, theatrical props, stories, and ceremonies. When this social energy is performed on the stage, it affects audience, travels back through the public into the society and returns to the stage. In this way, there is circulation of social energy.

Prafulla C. Kar (1995) demonstrates some main principles of new historicism with particular focus on Greenblatt's *Resonance and Wonder* (1990). These principles can be summarized one by one. Firstly, thick description is conflation of literature and history. Secondly, new historicist reading situates literary text in relation to other literary representations. Thirdly, resonance and wonder characterize literary works and the more elements of resonance and wonder a literary work has, the more it rises to popularity. Fourthly, new historicist reading is a subjective process since every reader creates his/ her own meaning according to his/ her own positioning. Literature reveals the complex working of ideology and helps understand larger cultural patterns. Author may have individuality but that individuality is actually aggregation of cultural forces that find expression in creative expression. Therefore, the concept of single proprietorship and originality is a myth.



John Brannigan (1998) is an indispensable work on new historicism and can be used as a guidebook for the application of new historicist principles to literary works. The book consists of three parts: part one deals with the theoretical aspects of new historicism and cultural materialism, part two is concerned with the application of both theories to different literary works, and part three consists of Brannigan's concluding comments. However, Brannigan is clever enough to connect this part with the importance of not concluding. The most important part of this book is related to the application of new historicism and cultural materialism, which offers a guideline to the researchers as how to apply these theories to the literary texts. The book serves a good introduction to these theories as it dwells not only on the complexity of both theories but also the contradictions and heterogeneities that characterize these two theories. The shared assumption of both theories is their emphasis on the return to history. Both theories argue that all texts are political and there is mediation between texts and socio-cultural practices. Both focus on power relations with the difference that new historicism analyzes power relations within the context of the past whereas cultural materialism investigates power relations within the present context.

Greenblatt (2004) is a useful introductory work to gain understanding of new historicist principle like self-fashioning and the role of negotiation in self-fashioning. He argues that culture fashions individual identities and in return individuals fashion culture since the relationship of negotiation and exchange is at work. This is what he finds in the case of renaissance culture as he notices that literary and social identities were formed in the Renaissance culture. Thus, self-fashioning is a dialectic process. It occurs due to the

encounter between an authority and an alien. Self-fashioning not only involves self-construction but also surrender to the power structure. It is shaped when it meets the “threatening other - heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist” (pp. 255-257). In this fashioning, the literary representations supplied raw material for the early modern period to fashion the selves. Renaissance theatre functioned as a tool of power and helped the state control people hegemonically. To Greenblatt, different forms of representations that construct identities are fictional. Thomas More and other writers created their identities in this way through the improvisation of power.

Sarah Maza (2004) discusses new historicism with reference to the concept of anecdote. Particularly, she defines and explains the concept of anecdote and how it can be used in new historicist practice. Anecdote is a historical fragment, which is juxtaposed with a literary fragment. Actually, new historicists use anecdote i.e. *petite histoire* (little history) as a safeguard against the risks of grand narratives. This juxtaposition helps make certain claims about history and it can be used as an entry point into a broader cultural system. Evrim Dogan (2005) argues that new historicism is a subjective approach, which has been mainly applied to Renaissance studies. Literary texts are informed by socio-historical practices and play a vital role in fashioning identity. Literature as a social construct is produced and shaped by the culture and in return shapes that culture. Social, political, religious, and economic factors have great impact on literary works. These factors circulate in society through social energy, which is encoded in literary works, and become the means to represent the ideology of the culture through resonant texts. As

texts are products of negotiation and exchange, new historicist reading becomes a culturally situated exchange.

Nicholas Vandeviver and Jurgen Pieters' (2015) work deals with the new historicist principle of construction of identities vis-à-vis the degree of freedom exercised by the individuals to construct their identities. They examine the status of freedom that Shakespeare possesses in Greenblatt's different works. Early modern England had a specific ideology, which allowed individuals to fashion their identities within certain limits. Majority of the individuals are ideological products. The same is the case with Shakespeare. However, Shakespeare differentiated himself from others as he chose a different path for himself by transcending the pervasive cultural forces to fashion his identity. Shakespeare was not a cultural explorer, as it is usually believed but a cultural promoter. However, in this process, he not only explored the constraints of the culture but also disclosed them, which granted certain degree of freedom to him. Shakespeare achieved that freedom through the power of imagination. The authors have drawn a comparison between Sartre and Foucault for the similarities of ideas, which may be observed in new historicism. They conclude that Shakespeare is an example of existentialist hero who retains a Foucauldian conceptualization of power and Sartrean concept of imagination.

Greenblatt (2017) is a further development of his notion of wonder and its effects in literary works. To him, wonder evokes the feelings of pleasure, surprise and admiration. The cultural products of the past produce the sense of otherness, sense of something different from the present due to the element of wonder, and in this way, enrich human

experience and enhance self-understanding. Thus, the knowledge of the past as the other helps define and construct the present as the Self and vice versa. New historicists have paid special attention on this concept of otherness in colonial studies. According to Greenblatt, the early European travelers experienced a sense of wonder due to their confrontation with the other cultures and subsequently a desire for possession was born. This wonder produced cultural resonance as well as led the Europeans to the phenomenon, which is known as imperialism and colonialism. Another important theme of this work is cultural assimilation and cultural differentiation that results from cultural hybridity. Greenblatt illustrates how the Indonesian people watching a violent American movie and a traditional Balinese puppet play on the Indonesian Independence Day were easily shifting from one to the other.

The survey of the new historicist works reflects heterogeneity that is the main characteristic of the theory of new historicism. The new historicist scholars have talked about various new historicist assumptions like historicity of text and textuality of history, discourse and power relations, use of anecdote, construction of identities, literary works as cultural artefacts. It further reveals that most of the new historicist practitioners and scholars have introduced only one or two principles that may be employed to analyze the literary works. Subsequently, the future practitioners find it difficult to develop a theoretical model out of their works. However, after going through the works of all these scholars, a workable model can be developed to explicate the literary works.

#### **2.4. Works Related to Said's Orientalism:**

As it has been discussed earlier that the term Orientalism had positive and apolitical meanings in traditional sense. It was, however, Edward Said (2003) who adapted this term in his revolutionary work *Orientalism* to analyze the Western European constructs about the people of the Orient and their culture. The topic of Orientalism is not a new one. Before Said, the scholars like Raymond Schwab, V. G. Kiernan, A.L. Tibawi, Abdullah Laroui, Anwar Abdel Malek, Talal Asad, and Romila Thapar had also dwelt on this subject. Nevertheless, Said's *Orientalism* (2003) is a departure from its predecessors in the sense that it conflates the notions of Michel Foucault and Antonio Gramsci to deconstruct the Western European constructs about the East. It critiques how through different periods of history but particularly in post-Napoleonic times the Western European scholars have been representing the Orient in their writings. It was through the discourse of Orientalism that the West not only constructed the East but also itself as two binaries, which define and complement one another. Critics have criticized as well as commended Said's *Orientalism* owing to its certain merits and demerits. With reference to the application of Said's views to early modern English literature, critics have expressed mixed responses.

Some scholars have stressed the need to look for specific ethnic and cultural studies related to the Turks, Moors and Persians instead of bracketing and studying them under single generic term 'the Oriental' or the Ottomans or the Moors. Some other scholars have argued that the presence of common stereotypes, demonization of the cultural other, and reflection of the nascent imperialism in early modern English literature makes it "ripe

for analysis in terms of Said's East-West binaries" (McJannet, 2009, p. 185). Nevertheless, another group of critics has challenged and questioned the application of Said's assumptions to early modern English literature due to some convincing and cogent reasons. However, some of them later on end with the confirmation of Said's Orientalist assumptions. For instance, Nabil Matar (1996) asserts that "In the early modern period, Islam and Muslims were not within the English/Eurocentric provenance of domination [because] the Briton was not in power, nor was he superior to the Muslim; rather, he was physically, religiously, and psychologically dominated by the people whom he would later describe" (pp.187-196). Matar (1999) again insists that England did not "enjoy military or industrial power over Islamic countries. Rather the Muslims had a power of self-representation which English writers knew they had either to confront or engage" (p. 12). Disregard of these observations, Matar also notes that early modern English playwrights definitely produced stereotypes and negative images of the Muslims that is perfectly in line with Said's views. As he observes that, "It was plays masks and pageants ... that developed in British culture the discourse about Muslim Otherness.... Eleazar and Othello [became] the defining literary representation of the "Moor," and Bajazeth, Ithamore and Amureth of the "Turk"" (ibid, p. 13). Greg Bak (2000) thinks that Said's *Orientalism* is a significant work to examine Western representations of Islam. To him, Said's concept of otherness can be employed in the studies related to the early modern period. Nevertheless, contrary to his viewpoint, he argues as the representation of Islam in early modern period ranges from affiliation to alienation. Therefore, Said's concept of simple binaries is not useful for such studies.

Hossein Peernajmodin (2002) argues that the representations of Persia reveal heterogeneity, which cannot be easily captured through Said's model of Orientalism. The nascent colonialism that is evident in the works of Spenser, Marlowe and Milton finds full development in Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. He finds Said's model extremely useful for the study of works related to the Orient as it offers a vocabulary and concepts with which the analysis of representations of the East becomes easier. However, he observes some limitations in application of Said's model because it does not take into account the distinctiveness of Persia and special status of Persia, which it enjoyed due to its classical heritage and its multidimensionality from other Islamic states. Thus, the representations of pre-Islamic and Islamic Persia demand for a different perspective to look at it.

Likewise, Daniel Vitkus (2003) maintains that England was a weak and mimic man in early modern period as compared to the Islamic states of the period. Nevertheless, Vitkus like Matar also finds that the demonization and distortion of Islam and Muslims has a long history. As he demonstrates "The demonization of Islam is a long and deeply rooted tradition in the West---it spans centuries, from the early medieval period to the end of twentieth century and, harks back to a tradition of representations that describe the Eastern empires and invading hordes that came before Islam, such as the Assyrians and the Persians of the ancient world" (p.6). Furthermore, he stresses, "it is important to acknowledge that the 'idea' of empire arose in England long before there was a real, material empire on the ground" (ibid) which is a clear indication that imperial desires can be studied in early modern English literature. The views of Matar, Peernajmodin, Vitkus

and McJannet reflect their ambivalence. It is due to their equivocal statements that I have identified a gap and decided to explore these issues in detail.

In their collaborated edited work, Lena Cowen Orlin and Peter Stallybrass (2006) argue that during early modern period England was obviously a marginal state in comparison to the Muslim states, which had central position. Therefore, it is because of Britain's status as a marginal state that the Orientalist model does not apply to the literary works of the period. Nevertheless, these scholars ignore the explicit reflection of British cultural hegemony and her imperial desires in the literary works of the period. Similarly, Ladan Niayesh (2008) demonstrates that Said's binary Orientalist model does not apply to Persia because of Persia's special status among other Islamic states. By putting emphasis on others, she admits that the Turks and Moors have been represented as stereotypes and cultural others which is confirmation of Said's binaries at least in case of the representation of the Turks and Moors in early modern English literature. Moreover, while discussing a Persian play, *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*, she unconsciously interprets the marriage of Robert Sherley and the Sophy's Niece according to Said's binaries of East as a feminine and West as a masculine. As she comments "With this Pocahontas-like princess, a feminized Persia seems to be metaphorically claimed and possessed by the Christian West to which Robert Sherley belongs" (p. 132). Following Niayesh, Jane Grogan (2010) also perceives that Said's Orientalist model fails to encompass the true nature of the Eastern Western encounters and particularly the diversity of Persia. Nevertheless, at the same time, she agrees that "But its [Said's Orientalist model] identification of a broadly imperial and Eurocentric agenda



underpinning scholarly and cultural engagements with the East apparently remains secure in place” (p.912). Like Matar, Peernajmodin, Vitkus, McJannet and Niayesh, Grogan’s conflicted comments further confirm the gap related to the existing scholarship in the domain of representation of Persia, and, highlight the need to explore these issues in detail.). It is because of such shifts and ambivalent attitudes, Mathew Dimmock (2005) rightly argues that some critics are “so entangled in Said’s work that they often end up reasserting the basic divisions of his thesis in the process of denying them” (p. 6).

Some other critics think that Said’s Orientalist assumptions can be easily applied to early modern English literature, as there is substantial evidence of demonization of the Oriental in it. The English writers demonized the Oriental, as it was part of England’s imperialist agenda. This is what Emily C. Bartels (1992) records “For while the demonization of the Oriental rulers provided a highly-charged impetus for England’s own attempts to dominate the East, their valorization provided a model for admiration and imitation, shaming or schooling the English into supremacy, or providing an excuse for defeat” (p. 5). Some critics reject Said’s application of Orientalism to early modern English literature because Anglo-Oriental relations in early modern period were complex and diverse. As Chloe Houston (2009) points out while quoting the words of Matar that “... the tacit assumption of a ‘binary opposition between a civilized Christian West and the encroaching barbarity of the infidel East’” (p. 149) fails to apply due to this complexity and diversity. Jane Grogan (2014) highlights the role of Persia in shaping the identity of the English society during early modern period. Particularly, the ancient Persia became a

model for England's nascent imperial project as it fanned England's proto-imperial aspirations.

Gerald Maclean (2007) severely criticizes application of Said's Orientalist views to early modern English literature based on a couple of factors. Firstly, Edward Said himself has mainly focused on the Western representations of the Orient by totally occluding the experts i.e. the Orientalists as well the Oriental sources, which is indicative of his unidirectional approach. Secondly, during the early modern period, Turkey, Persia and India were great imperial powers instead of Spain, France and England. Thirdly, the Anglo-Oriental relationship during that period was mutual and symbiotic and based on exchange as critics like Lisa Jardine (1983), Jerry Brotton (1997), Nabil Matar (1999) and others have discussed it in their works. Therefore, it is wrong to apply Said's views to early modern English literature. Similarly, in his abstract of doctoral thesis, Amin Momeni (2016) argues that Said's views of binaries do not apply to the studies of Islamic Persia as represented in early modern English drama. Rather, he asserts that positive representation of Islamic Persia in early modern English drama contradicts Said's self-other construct discussed in *Orientalism*. I have already pointed out the flaws that are evident in their works in the preceding pages of this chapter.

Among the critics who have interpreted Anglo-Oriental relationship in terms of exchange, they stress that there is need to look beyond the dichotomies of East and West, Islam and Christianity, self and other as it is difficult to "find a ground zero between the two supposed opposites" (Topinka, 2009, 118). Therefore, instead of perceiving Anglo-Oriental relationship in absolute terms, one finds cultural mixing or cultural hybridity.

This is what Jonathan Burton (2005), Linda McJannet (2006), MacLean (2007), Lara Bovilsky (2008), Barbara Fuchs (2011) and Geraldo U. de Sousa (2016) point out in their works. These writers emphasize that the relationship between the English and Muslims was subtle and nuanced. Thus, the cultural and commercial interactions between the two blur the fixed terms. As Jonathan Burton (2005) argues that the representations of Muslims in early modern English literature range “from others to brothers” (p. 12). Matar (1999) sees trade as a key role that affected this relationship. As he observes that the “English accommodation of Muslims was invariably conducted with an eye on trade” (p. 23). There was frequent exchange of traders, ambassadors, captives and goods between the two, which helped shape renaissance identity. As Gerald Maclean (2005) narrates “Rather, the ‘Renaissance would have been entirely different, if not impossible, had it not been for direct and regular contact with the eastern, largely Muslim world, and the constant exchange of goods and ideas” (p.3). Consequently, Muslims were not others rather commercial competitors. Similarly, Mathew Dimmock (2005) writes “Yet the field of literary representations of what is so often misleadingly termed the early modern 'other' remains... both sparse and uneven” (p. 6). Actually, it is hard to see the constructs of culture and identity in pure terms because construction is an ongoing and unending process. Both the East and West had great impact on each other and subsequently both define and complement each other. Another issue related to this point is that the whole scholarship focuses and cites the Western viewpoint by ignoring the Muslim perspective. Matar (1999), Burton (2005) and Maclean (2007) have duly highlighted this fact. Despite the arguments of cultural hybridity and influencing each other’s identities, Said’s

views have still great significance and “the influence of his work on those who study the relationship between Islam, England, and the early modern period is undeniable” (Topinka, 2009, p. 118). Maclean (2007) also notices that the phrase ‘imperial envy’ is appropriate to describe early modern period of England as it can help understand “the growth of imperial fantasies and ambitions that would help to energize and transform an insular people into an imperial nation” (p. 21). Taking this point further, he explains how this imperial envy played key a role in construction of English renaissance identity as it meant for English nation “identification as well as differentiation, of sameness as well as otherness, of desire and attraction as well as revulsion” (ibid. p. 22).

Derek Bryce (2013) is an objective study related to the application of Said’s views in *Orientalism* to early modern English literature. To Bryce, though Said’s thesis in *Orientalism* is more applicable to postcolonial studies yet his views equally apply to all studies, which show representation of the East by the West. He agrees that Said’s *Orientalism* mainly focuses on the Arab-Islamic lands (the Arab Islamic Middle East) and ignores the Ottoman Turks. Nevertheless, this point can be overruled on the basis that the Safavid Persia, Mughal India and China along with the Ottoman Empire have been marginalized by Said because these states had no specific significance for Said’s thesis. Related to the application of Said’s views, Bryce cites Turner’s (2004) comments as Turner finds something different in Said’s *Orientalism* and opens a new avenue of thought. He opines that Said’s disciples have been more eager to apply his dichotomies to ever-new contexts by ignoring Said’s real purpose. Contrary to it, Said’s purpose was to understand these divisions and to overcome them.

Hector Roddan (2016) is a significant and review article that evaluates the application of Said's dichotomies to early modern travel narratives. Roddan takes a survey of the recent scholarship with reference to the implementation of Said's assumptions to early modern travel writing related to the Ottoman Empire. Current scholarship stresses that English representations of cultural others in early modern period were more diverse than Said's simplistic binaries. Thus, Said's assumptions cannot be applied mechanistically to premodern texts. Roddan summarizes the main assumptions of Said's *Orientalism* which can serve as criteria for evaluating any work from Saidian perspective. Literary critics and scholars reject Said's application to early modern English period and its literature on different grounds. Firstly, the Ottoman Empire itself was a power stronger than England. Secondly, there was no unified Europe at that time rather it was divided into protestant and catholic blocks. Thirdly, the English representations of the Orient shift from negative to positive images. Fourthly, Said's concept of authoritative European representational power is untrue due to the counter narratives of the captives. There is a long list of critics such as Nabil Matar, Lawrence Danson, Linda McJannet, Mathew Dimmock, Andrea Pippidi, Caroline Finkle, Gerald Maclean, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, David Blanks, S. C. Akbari, C. L. Johnson, and Julia Schleck who stress the multiplicity of voices, and the complexity of Muslim-Christian encounters rather than the presence of Said's dichotomies. Even the non-Western scholars like Aziz al-Azmeh, Anouar Majid like Matar also observe that Said's binaries cannot be applied to early modern narratives. However, despite the dissenting voices, Roddan (2016) concludes that early modern travel texts cannot be studied without referring to Said's claims.

The preceding discussion on the concept of representation and the survey of the works related to the representation of the different categories of Orient, Orientalism and New Historicism reveal certain important points.

- ❖ Representation is an imaginative construct and it may be aesthetic or political in nature. Both Edward Said and new historicists believe that literary representations cannot be studied in isolation from socio-historical realities of the period, which produce them.
- ❖ Though it may be correct to say to some extent that representations of the Oriental characters in early modern English literature range from others to brothers yet a large number of the works of the period reflects writers' conscious or unconscious efforts to portray the Oriental people as others.
- ❖ The European-Western writers and scholars have represented the Orient and Oriental people like the Moors, the Ottoman Turks, the Persians, Islam and Islamic figures in a negative way. They have demonized them and portrayed them as cultural stereotypes. There may be difference of degrees in representation of a few Oriental people. Nevertheless, it does not mean that they have depicted them as equally strong and positive as they have delineated their own fellows. Their works implicitly and explicitly reflect their cultural biases.

- ❖ As far as the reception of these plays is concerned, these plays got great popularity on the early modern stage due to their Oriental material. The playwrights of the period knew this fact and exploited it on the stage. With reference to the critical reception, the mainstream scholars and critics have registered uniformity in their responses. Majority of the critics have interpreted these plays in terms of their contemporary political and historical relevance and described them as allegorical works. However, a few critics have provided insightful comments, which serve as deviations from the established traditional critical reception of these plays. In this respect, the names of such critics are noteworthy since they have explicated these plays beyond their contemporary issues and revealed Eurocentric perspectives of the Western writers.
- ❖ The European-Western writers of early modern English period have mostly inherited these negative images of the Orient and Islam from the Greco-Roman writers and the crusading history of the medieval ages.
- ❖ Literary works and scholarship on the representation of the Persians show that it has been a neglected area. Scholars have duly emphasized the need to work in this area. This point alludes to the gap with regard to representation of Persia and provides a justification for my current study.
- ❖ Review of the literary works related to Orientalism and new historicism indicates that no reported study or research work has hitherto examined the selected plays together. Similarly, there is not a single available reported study that has conflated Said's views in *Orientalism* with new historicist assumptions and used them to

- analyze the selected plays of the early modern English period. These gaps further give me justification and direction to conduct research in this area.
- ❖ Similarly, the survey of the literature related to Persia reveals some recurrent themes such as the theme of complexity in the representation of Persia, Anglo-Persian relations and relative neglect of Persia vis-à-vis other Islamic Empires. The existing traditional scholarship in this domain argues that there is fluidity in the representations of Persia related to the early modern English period. It views these representations in unstable and unfixed terms. Nevertheless, there are some scholars like Emile Bartels (1993), Bernadette Andrea (2005), and Mark Hutchings (2015) who have questioned the traditional criticism in the selected works. These critics have looked at the claims of the traditional criticism with suspicious eyes and revealed the opposite facts.
  - ❖ My thesis builds on the views of the three above-cited critics and further argues that the English playwrights have misrepresented Persia in their works. So, my proposed study questions the traditional and existing assumptions and attempts to explore the theme of misrepresentation of Persia in the selected plays from a new perspective by applying the theories of new historicism and Said's views in *Orientalism*. I have chosen these two theories since both theories employ deconstructive techniques and challenge the traditional assumptions. Hence, I consider the application of both theories suitable for the investigation of this theme that is also dominant in the representation of the Turks and Moors. Besides it, the traditional scholarship points



out the relative neglect of Persia as compared to other Islamic states. This relative neglect of Persia has given me further justification to choose this issue as my research topic.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter provides a detailed description of the theoretical assumptions employed in the current research. As it is about the representation of Persia, new historicist approach is used as a major theoretical framework to analyze the representation of Persia. Besides, Edward Said's views are also employed to investigate the representation of Persia and examine the underlying motives behind these representations. The reason to wed these two theories is that there are many affinities between two theories in their approach towards text and its worldliness, their concept of author, the notion of intertextuality, the use of deconstructive technique and their belief that literary texts have political motives. Moreover, both theories focus on literary representations vis-a-vis their social and political roles in molding people's minds and shaping culture through discourse. In this respect, both theories draw on the work of Michel Foucault and use him extensively to explicate literary works. Therefore, they can proffer a comprehensive picture to understand the whole phenomenon. That is why, both these theories are conflated to throw a detailed light on this issue. This chapter provides explanations of the major tenets of both theories, which might be helpful for application.

#### **3.1. NEW HISTORICISM**

For grasping the ins and outs of the theory, it is imperative to comprehend the key concepts, which form part of it. These precisely include the concept of history, text,

author, critic, use of anecdote, study of power relations, historicity of text and textuality of history and construction of identity.

### **3.1.1. Origin of New Historicism**

New historicism or cultural poetics sprang forth due to the neglect of the study of socio-historical, economic, and political contexts in the existing literary theories. Its origin can be located in the works of Raymond Williams's *Marxism and Literature* (1977) which advocates the re-historicizing of literary works in England and America, and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) which deconstructs the Eurocentric perspectives and questions the cultural superiority of the West. Both Williams and Said stress the inclusion of economic, political and historical aspects in the analysis of literary works. Michael McCannles coined the term new historicism, but it gained currency due to the works of Stephen Greenblatt. Some other practitioners of this approach include Louis Montrose, Catherine Gallagher, Jerome McGann, Marjorie Levinson and Marilyn Butler. The newness of new historicism may be attributed to the dissatisfaction of the scholarship with the formalism, or to the different worldview of the Renaissance culture offered through the examination of literary works, or to the new analytical methods adopted by the new historicists to explicate the literary works (Howard, 1986, pp. 17-18). One thing is sure, that it invigorated the domain of literary studies by injecting the socio-historical and political contexts in literature. Talking about the relevancy of this theory, Brook Thomas (1987) stresses

A New Historicism is necessary because our cultural amnesia has left us with no perspective on the present, thus making it more difficult than ever

to shape the direction of the future. Alienated from history, our students are confined to a series of fragmented, directionless presents (p. 3).

New historicism as a literary method focuses on the socio-historical and cultural contexts of a literary work, its author, its production and consumption. According to its assumptions, a literary work is embedded in its social and cultural contexts, which play a significant role in its creation. As Anton Keas (1989) records that “Reinserting a text in its historical context means relating it to a vast and varied field of cultural representations” (p. 4). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate and examine these practices in a literary work. This literary method of criticism argues that along with the analysis of the content of a literary text, a critic should also concentrate on the history of the writer, as history is an indispensable aspect of the text. New historicists consider that themes and characterizations introduced in a literary text may be common and relate to the contemporary culture. Thus, the study of a literary text with special reference to the historical, biographical, social and cultural contexts makes it a new historicist reading. Different literary theorists and scholars have defined and explained the tenets of new historicism. Among them, D.E. Wayne (1990) comments that new historicism is, basically, concerned with the examination of local, political and social contexts, which may help, understand the works of art in a better perspective. Similarly, Frank Kermode (1988) argues "The method seems to be to choose a point near the periphery of possible relations, to 'swerve' away from the central text and then move in toward it, with a view to enriching the understanding of it by bringing to bear on the center this information about the remote partner in a lost negotiation" (p. 32). This method enables the

practitioner to recover the common discourse, which has produced different texts. Thus, the context of a text facilitates to interpret the meaning of the text and the society in which it is written.

Stephen Greenblatt (1982), the main practitioner of new historicism, suggests the four basic assumptions of new historicism. Firstly, literary works are history-oriented hence, they are the negotiations of complex social and cultural forces. Secondly, literary works proffer an alternative vision of history. Thirdly, literary as well as history works, are constituted by social and political forces of the period and in return constitute them. Moreover, literary works are ideological products of the period in which they are created. Finally, literature should be interpreted in terms of its historical contexts because, as it has been earlier said, literature is history-oriented (pp.1-2).

### **3.1.2. Concept of History**

New historicism as a critical reading practice has revived interest in history. New historicists visit and reconstruct the literary works of the past from a vantage point of the present. In this way, they define the role of the present in reconstructing the past and relate it to the present. Louis A. Montrose (1989) calls it a return to history from the post-structuralist obsession with language and argues that new historicism is concerned with "the historicity of texts and textuality of history" (Veese, 1989, p. 20). The text embodies historicity since it is rooted in the social and cultural practices, and history contains textuality because there is no direct link to the lived authentic past and only traces of it are preserved. Stephen Greenblatt (2007) defines new historicism as "a shift away from a criticism centered on 'verbal icons' toward a criticism centered on cultural artefacts" (p. 3)

in which history and literature are intertwined with each other in a dialectic relationship. Both affect and shape each other because both emanate from and are informed by the same ideology. That is why new historicists argue that by analyzing texts, they attempt to recapture the ideology of the time in which that work was created.

To new historicists, history does not function merely as a context, or a background in the study of literary texts rather it remains on the foreground and forms a co-text. As Greenblatt (2013) maintains that “history cannot simply be set against literary texts as their stable antithesis or stable background, and the protective isolation of those texts gives way to a sense of their interaction with other texts and hence to the permeability of their boundaries” (p. 198). This concern with co-textuality (giving equal importance to history works) distinguishes new historicism from old historicism since both history and literature are texts and reveal “fields of force, places of dissension and shifting interests, occasions for the jostling of orthodox and subversive impulses” (Greenblatt, 1982, pp. 3-4).

New historicism advocates a parallel study or juxtaposition of the literary works with the non-literary works belonging to the same period. Both literary and non-literary works get equal ‘weighting’, as suggested by Montrose, and both are closely read. In this way, these parallel discourses are employed to interrogate the common social and political forces of the period. Thus, non-literary works do not form the context of literary works but stand out as a co-text along with the literary works. New historicist reading practice usually neglects the existing traditional criticism on the literary works, which are scrutinized from a new historical perspective. This is the typical procedure that Greenblatt has

employed in the study of Renaissance plays by juxtaposing them with the historical documents of the period and, in this way, offers new insights into the Renaissance studies.

This technique of juxtaposition or parallel study leads to Clifford Geertz's use of the term thick description, which may mean a detailed description of an event in its cultural context. According to Colebrook (1997), the term refers to the analysis of a particular social event that has meaning in the patterns of conventions, codes and modes of thinking that attribute those meanings to the cultural event (p. 75). The meaning of an event resides neither with the author, nor in the text. Rather, it can be dug out and explained by relating it to the cultural practices of the period to which it belongs.

Furthermore, Greenblatt argues that texts do not exist in isolation but relate to other texts. They are interconnected and embody the social, historical forces and the prevailing ideologies within them. As Lois Tyson (2006) in *Critical Theory Today. A User-friendly Guide* comments that texts are

Cultural artefacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text was written. And they can do so because the literary text is, itself, part of the interplay of discourses, a thread in the dynamic web of social meaning ... because text (the literary work) and context (the historical conditions that produced it) are mutually constructive: they create each other. (p. 291).

The historical orientation plays a significant role in the current study, as it will enable me to disclose how intertextuality and inter-discursive practices inform the selected plays. Within the scope of this work, however, I shall focus only on how other texts of the contemporary period, chosen from widely different areas like state letters, history works written by English writers as well as non-English writers, shape the selected plays, their themes, titles, and characters. This method of juxtaposition and comparative analysis will then enable me to determine how the common discourse informs these widely chosen works. Subsequently, it will help me trace whether that discourse reinforces or destabilizes the prevailing ideology.

### **3.1.3. Concept of Author, Text, Critic, and the Reader**

According to new historicists, author, text, critic, and reader, all are cultural constructs. They are results of negotiations with the socio-historical practices of the period. Literary texts and history are inseparable since literary texts are products of its time, place and the external realities of the period. They, as representative of literary discourse, are not autonomous in nature. Rather, they are interconnected with other texts, which employ different discourses i.e. the legal discourse, scientific discourse and religious discourse. All these discourses in their collectivity form interdiscursive practices, which embody the dominant ideology of the period. It is in this way, interdiscursive practices through their ideology shape society and are shaped in their turn. Thus, texts are not passive but active entities in the sense that they are constructed by the socio-historical factors and construct them. This relationship is dialectic and based on negotiation and exchange. Keeping this in account, the new historicists repudiate the old historians' mimetic view that texts



simply reflect social reality. Contrary to it, they see a mediation between texts and the external reality, which is complex and interwoven. In addition to it, text is not a sole proprietorship of an author. Rather, it is result of collective negotiation. Thus, text is not a result of an individual's efforts but a product of collective thoughts of a culture that constitute an author's identity.

Literary texts as mediators of power perform political roles in a society. They either promote an ideology or expose and critique it. New historicism helps explore and grasp the power dynamics embedded in the ideology of a text. Texts do not have self-contained world and do not convey the meaning fully. Meaning resides in the social practices and with the reader who extracts it through an interpretive process, which is tinged with his personal experience. To discover the meaning, a new historicist critic, in the words of Charles E. Bressler (2007), "investigates the life of the author, the social rules and dictates found within a text, and all reflections of a work's historical situation" (p. 224). Once granted that critic is a construct, it means his work is not divorced from the socio-historical practices of the period. Whatever he describes will bear the strong impression of external realities.

#### **3.1.4. Study of Power Relations**

The analysis of power relations in literary works is a focal point of this approach. New historicists analyze how power operates and is dispersed in the literary works. Texts are results of specific socio-historical and political forces, they embody those forces within them. Thus, the relationship between the text and its contexts is dialectic. This is what Greenblatt asserts by using the terms negotiation and exchange. In their analysis of power

relations, new historicists seem deeply influenced by Michel Foucault's views on power. According to these views, power does not reside only with the king or prince. Rather, it is all pervasive, flows in all directions and its visibility can be felt in all places and at all levels. As Sherwood (1997) comments that it does not circulate in a "linear structure, with influence flowing in one direction, but as an intricate web or network or cycle of exchange ... All power relations [therefore] are complex and are reciprocal" (pp. 370–71). It circulates through exchange that may be material or symbolic. In case of material exchange, there may be exchange of goods as in acts of charity, business and smuggling or there may be exchange of people because of slavery and marriage. In case of symbolic exchange, there is an exchange of ideas created and disseminated by a culture through different discourses. These discourses play a vital role in shaping individual identities and in return are shaped by them. An investigation of these discursive practices can reveal how the authors and texts gloss over and support or expose and undermine an ideology. As Jean E. Howard (1986) states that "The whole point of [the new historicist practice] is to grasp the terms of discourse which made it possible to see the 'facts' in a particular way- indeed, made it possible to see certain phenomena as facts at all" (p. 15). The dominant groups use them to achieve power or their desired ends create discourses. For an instance, Foucault (1972) argues that madness, hysteria, and sexuality are not objective facts. Rather, they are discursive constructions created by the dominant groups for their political purposes (p. 32).

New historicism owes much to Foucault's theory of the limits of collective cultural knowledge and, particularly, his way of analyzing texts chosen from widely different

areas to comprehend the episteme of a specific period that may be observed in the discourses. The texts chosen from widely different areas may be literary as well as non-literary. It is up-to the new historicist practitioner/critic what sort of texts he/she thinks appropriate for his/her purpose out of the vast array of texts. This choice is random and purely subjective. Therefore, sometimes a critic may choose petty and out-fashioned sources to understand the episteme of a specific period. For this purpose, it is important to understand the relationship between discourse and episteme. A discourse, simply speaking, is a statement that generates knowledge. When a discourse recurs in a variety of texts, it may be described as an episteme or structure of thought. Each period has its own episteme that varies from the episteme of other periods.

New historicists use Foucault to explicate how power structures of the society operate in literary works. In this respect, there is a lot of resemblance in the analytical methods of both Orientalism and new historicism as both pay close attention to the power relations. The desire for power is common. Both the powerful and weak groups hanker to gain it. As it is possessed by the powerful group, so that group controls the weak and marginalized through power. That is why, the new historicists attempt to locate the examples of power in the literary works and see who the powerful and weak is. Being anti-establishment in nature, new historicists advocate autonomous and rebellious attitude but at the same time, they think that efforts of freedom and rebellion are vain and useless. Because power circulates everywhere and in all institutions through discourse. As Foucault (1978) stresses “Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but

because it comes from everywhere” (p. 93). It is firmly rooted in the dominant ideology hence the claim of individual autonomy is impossible. Greenblatt (1980) notes that

Indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact (p. 256).

If power is everywhere and there is no possibility of personal freedom, is there any chance of resistance? Greenblatt (1981) discusses this issue by introducing the terms of subversion and containment. Subversion may be defined as any act that opposes authority and threatens to destroy it whereas containment refers to the controlling of subversive acts to hinder them so that they may not challenge the power structures. Greenblatt thinks that there is possibility of subversion but usually such subversive acts are treated as anomalous and irregular behaviors by the society and are contained accordingly. The authority deliberately invites and allows subversive acts only to contain such acts. That is why, Greenblatt argues, “subversiveness is the very product of that power and furthers its ends” (p. 48). It is through the subversion-containment process that the Europeans controlled the aliens or others. As John Brannigan (1998) observes that during the cultural encounters between colonial and aliens “power is reinforced and the threat of subversion is eradicated” (p. 64). In this respect, Greenblatt (1981) states that Shakespeare’s plays serve good examples of “the production and containment of subversion and disorder” (p. 29).

### **3.1.5. Use of Anecdote**

An anecdote means an ordinary, insignificant event or activity. While juxtaposing a literary work with the non-literary work, the new historicists make use of an anecdote in their literary analyses. Anecdotes may function like little histories and, in the words of Sarah Maza (2004), can be “useful to New Historicists for making certain claims about history” (p. 14). With the help of these anecdotes, new historicists confirm and validate socio-historical and political facts. Usually, a new historicist essay incorporates a historical anecdote by occluding the existing criticism on the work under study. As Louis Montrose et al (1986) employ the anecdote of Simon Forman’s dream dreamt by him on 23 January 1597 and juxtapose it with Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Peter Barry (1999) cites the opening sentence of this article as an instance in this case: "I would like to recount an Elizabethan dream - Not Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* but one dreamt by Simon Forman on 23 January 1597 " (p. 173). These anecdotes are usually mentioned with date and place and are quoted as documentary and eyewitness proof to substantiate the textual evidence of the literary work. However, the new historicist practitioners do not cite complete documents. Rather, only the relevant and required chunk of information is employed as an anecdote for the comparative analyses.

### **3.1.6. Use of Literary Technique of Deconstruction**

New historicist analyses make use of Derrida’s technique of literary deconstruction with some modifications and exceptions. Deconstruction argues that there is no singularity of meaning hence an attempt for an absolute truth is a myth. Instead, a text proffers multiplicity of meanings, which have dissenting voices. Similarly, new historicists also

firmly believe in the plurality of meanings and consider that a text is not univocal, hence there is no absolute truth. Meaning is embedded in socio-cultural and historical practices of the period. It is product of exchange and negotiation. Deconstructionists attempt to extract meanings through the close reading of the concerned text only whereas the new historicists concentrate on the play of social and cultural contexts that go in the production of a text. New historicists, like Derrida believe that nothing exists outside the text. Nevertheless, they modify and expand this idea and claim whatever is related to history, it is in textualized form. In this sense, all texts are equally significant and can help grasp the complexity of the past by deconstructing the textuality of the history while living in the present time.

### **3.1.7. Old Historicism versus New Historicism**

The old historicism is usually linked with E. M. Tillyard and Dover Wilson whereas Stephen Greenblatt and Louis Montrose may be considered prominent new historicists. The list of the practitioners of both theories can be extended. Both old historicism and new historicism emphasize the role of history in interpreting the literary works. However, there are some differences in both theories. These differences are as under. Firstly, old historicism foregrounds literature and treats history as background. In this way, it establishes the relationship between literary works as texts and history works as contexts. Contrary to it, new historicism views both literary works and history works equally significant for their analyses and treats them as text and co-text. Thus, it emphasizes to maintain a balance between literary texts and history works i.e. between the aesthetic and the real. Secondly, old historicists consider that literary works are product of an age to

which they belong to and hence reflect the monolithic, perfect picture of that age. Whereas the new historicists argue that, this picture is characterized by complexity. As Greenblatt (1982) himself differentiates old historicism, which is mono-logical and generates a single political vision, from new historicism which identifies the cultural complexity and is characterized by heterogeneity. (p. 5).

Thirdly, the old historians believe in the linear, progressive and evolutionary view of the history. Thus, there is a gradual development in all human affairs moving from primitive period to the present civilized times. New historicists approach history as a series of ruptures marked by the disordered events. Fourthly, the old or traditional historians claim that historical events can be analyzed objectively and, therefore, truth can be extracted. New historicists argue that our analyses are influenced by the socio-historical conditions, which construct us. Subsequently, they insist on subjectivity and consider objectivity as a fallacy. Given the situation, search for truth is useless as there is no single version of history rather there are dissenting voices, which produce many versions or many histories.

### **3.1.8. New Historicism and Cultural Materialism**

Both new historicism and cultural materialism are sister literary approaches since both focus on the literary representations vis-a-vis their cultural significance and both are interdisciplinary. As a result, sometimes they are considered similar in nature. However, there are similarities and differences between the two approaches. Both theories view man as cultural construct and believe in the indispensable role of external realities. New historicism has its origin in America and is mainly associated with Stephen Greenblatt.

Whereas, cultural materialism is a British phenomenon and is linked with Raymond Williams. According to Graham Holderness, cultural materialists usually deal with contemporary cultural practices. They examine literary texts by situating them in the present scenario. Contrary to it, new historicists are mainly concerned with the past and situate the literary texts in the context of past. Moreover, cultural materialists are overt in their political implications whereas new historicists try to efface them (Holderness, 1991, p. 157). However, now new historicism is being applied to a variety of works belonging to both past and present. Another important difference lies in their approach towards resistance or subversion. Cultural materialists tend to think that individuals can change their worlds and, hence, there is possibility of subversion. Nevertheless, new historicists consider that it is impossible to change due to the strong hold of external realities. This attitude, in the words of Peter Barry (1999), makes cultural materialists the political optimists and new historicists the political pessimists (p. 185). No doubt, there is much affinity between the two theories but the differences point out that these two theories should not blur the researchers to confuse one with the other.

### **3.1.9. Construction of Identity**

The construction of identity is a key issue for the new historicists and Greenblatt (1980) dwells on it in his significant work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Here, Greenblatt refutes the concept of a perfect and autonomous self. Under the influence of psychology, he perceives self as something amorphous and fluid, which is always in the completing process since constructing process, continues until the last. Fashioning of the self passes through two phases. During first phase, the self surrenders to an absolute power which



may be the state, or patriarchal system, or church. In the second phase, the self defines and completes it with reference to the other(s) which may be demonic, heretic, or subversive. The presence of other(s) is a dire necessity since we define and construct ourselves in relation to what we are not. Consequently, what we are not is demonized and objectified as others. Moreover, as the otherness of the other is a threatening force, attempts are made to assimilate it, or eradicate it and the residual otherness is treated as a case of differentiation, which causes a conflict between assimilation and differentiation.

The dominant discourses by projecting ideology play an important role in fashioning of the self. Greenblatt argues that the discourses of the Renaissance period shaped the Renaissance culture as well as people and vice versa. It is generally believed that Renaissance period is characterized by individual freedom. However, actually, even at that time, identities were subject to socio-historical realities of the period. In this process of identity construction of Renaissance culture, there is a great role of assimilation and differentiation. Greenblatt (2017) introduces the two concepts by which he means sameness and otherness. He describes how the early modern travelers like Mandeville and Columbus experienced a sense of wonder and shock when they stepped on the lands of aliens, which generated the desire for possession.

Greenblatt further develops the concept of the construction of identity in relation to the terms of mobility and improvisation. He defines mobility as an upward movement from a lower social status to a higher one whereas improvisation means the appropriation of the given materials with a view to transforming them to suite one's own conditions. William Shakespeare and Thomas More serve good instances of mobility who show how they

constructed their new identities due to their interaction with “the powerful and the great” (Greenblatt, 1987, p. 7). As an example of improvisation, one can notice how the Church of England and the Tudor kings employed Catholic symbols to legitimize their authority. To Greenblatt, the idea of constructing their identity on the part of the Renaissance people was a result of their suspicious attitude towards the set, and fixed values of the period, which developed a “self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as manipulable, artful process” (ibid, p. 2).

Related to the issue of construction of identity, Greenblatt (2012) sees a connection between the construction of identity and personal freedom. Only the special individuals can skip ideological constraints and can achieve freedom to fashion their identity which otherwise is a dream, or an impossible task. Greenblatt considers Shakespeare as a perfect case of human freedom who formed his identity due to his unique genius i.e. powerful imagination disregard of the all-pervasive ideological constraints. His imagination enabled him to not only recognize these constraints but also improvise them and subsequently imparted freedom to Shakespeare to explore as well as disclose the limits of his culture in his works. Greenblatt (2011) further develops the idea of construction of identity in his article *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*. Swerve is, basically, a departure or deviation from the set norms. It generates subversion and indicates the signs of free will. To Greenblatt, if things move in straight direction, there will be no possibility of freedom, which lies in the act of swerving since swerve is the source of free will (pp. 107-108). In swerving and not by following the trodden paths, one can construct one's identity.

### 3.2. Orientalism

Orientalism is the second part of my theoretical framework. I have conflated it with new historicism because both theories are intrinsically interrogative and deconstructive in nature. I have chosen both these theories suitable for my analytical study since both defy traditional criticism and promise to offer a new insight. As Hans Bertens (2001) emphasizes that Said's *Orientalism* offers "a challenging theoretical framework and a new perspective on the interpretation of Western writing about the East" (p. 205). Therefore, like new historicism, I shall also discuss some key concepts related to Orientalism for its better understanding and its application to the selected plays. The word Orient literally means the sunrise and refers to the Middle Eastern countries, Pakistan, India, China, Japan, Afghanistan and the countries of Africa. The term Orientalism, in its traditional sense, refers to the studies of languages and cultures of various countries of the Middle East and the Far East. Nevertheless, Edward Said in his work *Orientalism* (1978) has dwelt on it from a new angle. Now, it carries deeper meanings than the traditional and neutral meanings, which were once attached with it.

Said (2003) defines the term Orientalism from three different perspectives. One, in academic sense, it refers to "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient... is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism" (p. 2). In this category, one can include the travelers, religious people, administrators, anthropologists, historians and philologists who studied the Orient as a source of information. Two, in general sense, as a style of thought it means the epistemological and ontological difference between the Orient and the Occident. In this class, there are the literary figures, scholars, and

philosophers who have portrayed the Orientals as cultural others and highlighted the differences. And, three, as a corporate Orientalism, it alludes to “a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (ibid, p. 3). The third definition refers to the discourse of Orientalism, which enabled the West to hegemonize the East. Both the first and second definitions relate Orientalism to, in the words of Ashcroft and Ahluwalia (1999), “the textual creation” of the Orient whereas the third definition deals with how the West used the discourse of Orientalism in the East to “execute domination” (p. 69).

Said finds a relationship between Orientalism and theories of racial discrimination and moves to the conclusion that after 1870, there is a shift in Orientalism “from an academic to an instrumental attitude” (Said, 2003, p. 246). The western attitude towards the Orient has been dual i.e. both of attraction and repulsion. Right from the ancient times, the East has been a land of fascination, opportunities, and romance with haunting memories and, therefore, has a great attraction for the West. However, at the same time, it has been a distant and dangerous place inhabited by the cultural others, which evokes fear and hatred. Therefore, the East as an object of fascination and as a cultural other has been a desired object, a land to be conquered and possessed. Seen from this perspective, according to Said, the relationship between the West and East has been a relationship of power, of domination, and of complex hegemony (ibid, p. 5).

### 3.2.1. Representation of the Orient

In this process of hegemony, the cultural representations have played a pivotal role. Usually, with the concept of representation, there comes the notion of faithfulness to the original. However, in case of the western representations of the Orient, there is no truth and faithfulness. To Said, the western writers and scholars have misrepresented the Orient due to their vested benefits and dogmas, which characterize the specific western mindset. Said summarizes them as under:

- 1) The absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior; and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior.
- 2) abstractions about the Orient, particularly those based on texts representing a classical Oriental civilization are preferable to direct evidence drawn from Modern Oriental realities.
- 3) the Orient is eternal, uniform and incapable of defining itself; therefore, it is assumed that a highly generalized and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically 'objective.'
- 4) the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared, or to be controlled by pacification, research and development, or occupation (ibid, pp. 300-1).

According to Said, the roots of Orientalism go back to the classical works of Homer and Aeschylus. Their works may be considered as the pioneer representations of the cultural others, which set the tone and fashion for the later European-Western scholars and writers (ibid, pp. 55-57). However, he delimits his study to the Middle East and Islam, and to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the times during which the British colonialism and imperialism was at its peak. Besides Britain, France and America have been two main colonizers who dominated and ruled the Orient. Though Said confines himself to the Middle East, yet his views may be generalized and can be applied to the whole Orient. His *Orientalism* is a seminal work, which deconstructs the Eurocentric perspectives prevalent in western literary representations and discourses. The representation of the Orient as a cultural other has been an evolutionary process. Its earlier traces can be discovered in the classical period, it had its rise in the medieval period, it reached its peak during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and it still pervades in the western media. Thus, Orientalism should not be deemed as a sudden and spontaneous phenomenon of 18<sup>th</sup> century European colonialism.

Said believes that the West has obviously misrepresented Islam. In this respect, he thinks that as all representations are formations or deformations, it is also true in the case of the representation of the Orient and Islam. There is little possibility of true representation as all “representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer” (ibid, p. 272). Another issue related to the representations of the Orient is their discursive consistency through which the West has created the Orient. What one sees is not a true Orient but a fictionalized and Orientalized Orient. Said gives a very precise and graphic example of the process of

Orientalization from two of Gustave Flaubert's novels *Herodias* and *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (ibid, p. 6). Flaubert recalls the character of Kuchuk Hanem, an Egyptian courtesan, who was unable to speak of herself and represent herself. Flaubert takes her character as a single instance for all Oriental women by describing her a typically Oriental. In this process, the Orient and Oriental are the subject and source of information whereas the West as Orientalist assumes the role of knower and container of knowledge. This process helped the west create stereotypical images of the Orient and Oriental people. Said quotes Flaubert as an example of the Orientalists' subjective and biased attitudes toward the Orient.

The western discourse has gained currency and the world accepts it as an official version of reality, or true knowledge. However, Said calls it a political knowledge as it serves a purpose. Hans Bertens (2001) rightly comments that "For Said, Western representations of the Orient, no matter how well intentioned, have always been part of this damaging discourse. Wittingly or unwittingly, they have always been complicit with the workings of Western power" (p. 204). It is in this perspective, Said argues that the West has represented the Orient in a theatrical way, which negates and opposes the reality of the Orient. As he records that "The idea of representation is a theatrical one: the Orient is the stage on which the whole East is confined. On this stage will appear figures whose role it is to represent the larger whole from which they emanate. The Orient then seems to be, not an unlimited extension beyond the familiar European world, but rather a closed field, a theatrical stage affixed to Europe" (Said, 2003, p. 63). Thus, it is through these theatrical acts i.e. representations that the West created the reality of the Orient. All this

was done deliberately and systematically through citations and through intertextuality. Therefore, what the world observes and experiences is a representation, a fabrication, a textualized reality instead of a true picture. As Said notes:

Everything they knew, more or less, about the Orient came from books written in the tradition of Orientalism, placed in its library of ideas recues; for them the Orient, like the fierce lion, was something to be encountered and dealt with to a certain extent because the texts made that Orient possible (Said,2003, p. 94).

Representations are subject to cultural biases and prejudices. As a result, Said concludes after describing the five attributes of Orientalist representation, the knowledge generated by these representations is “never raw, unmediated, or simply objective” (ibid, p. 273).

### **3.2.2. Relationship between Discourse and Power**

Orientalism as a discipline enabled the West to gather more and more knowledge about the Orient and lent more power to the West over the Orient. Subsequently, this knowledge of the Orient, in the form of the discourse of Orientalism, helped the western scholars, writers, travelers and historians to grasp the complexity and multidimensionality of the Orient and they used this discourse to dominate and rule the Orient. In this context, Said mentions Alfred Balfour’s speech about the British colonization of Egypt. Balfour talks how the power of knowledge, instead of military or economic power, enabled Britain to dominate and rule Egypt. British gathered knowledge about Egypt by studying the Egyptian civilization from the ancient period to the present time, which made them know Egypt better than the Egyptians themselves, and paved the way to colonization.



The West has been glossing over the reality of colonization by claiming that they are on a civilizing mission in the East. They want to civilize and educate the savage and uncultured Oriental people who do not know to express themselves. As Said cites Karl Marx before the introduction to *Orientalism* “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented” (ibid). Nevertheless, this has been an apparent pretext for their presence in the East. Actually, they came to the East as a land of opportunities, a place of fulfilment of their exotic desires whose resources they plundered and looted at the cost of large-scale human dislocation, cultural denigration and even loss of human lives. Thus, behind the noble and lofty claims of the West, Orientalism has been a commercial enterprise for the West.

Discourse alludes to anything in spoken or written form. The cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, discussing discourse in colonial terms, defines it “as a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e. a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. 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” (Hall, 1992, p. 291). Though it is embedded in language, yet it is closely linked with the power structures of a society and plays an important role in constructing our understanding process. In other words, it contributes to form the worldview. It is produced through the tool of language. As a result, language controls people through it. It can be perceived in people’s language as well as in their behavior. The members of the dominant class create it to get authority over others. Therefore, their discourse is considered the dominant discourse or the

hegemonic discourse, which grants them the right to dominate other classes with no discourse, or less dominant discourse. It is, in this way, tied up with the power structures of a society.

Orientalism is a western discursive construct. In this respect, Said borrows the concept of discourse and its relationship with power from Michel Foucault and the concept of hegemony from Antonio Gramsci to lay bare the inner workings of the western discourse. In Foucault's opinion, discourse is a firmly bounded area of social knowledge. There is a close relationship between knowledge and power. Knowledge gives power and facilitates the controlling process. It is tied with the power structures of the society. The mediation or the interplay between knowledge and power gets its reflection in discourse (Foucault, 1971). Therefore, the discourse of Orientalism granted hegemony to the West over the East. The hegemonic process occurs not through force or coercion but through consent or willingness. According to Gramsci, the dominant class effectively secures it by establishing and inculcating its cultural superiority on the less dominant classes. Ultimately, the less dominant classes disparage their own culture and glorify the culture of the dominant class (Gramsci, 1998). This is what happened in the cultural encounters between the West and the East. The West put it in the mind of the Oriental people through its discourse that they are uncivilized, uncouth, and backward, hence their culture is inferior and must be revamped.

Said considers that Foucault's concept of discourse can enable us to grasp and unravel the functioning of the western discourse with which the west created the Orient the way they wanted to. The West employed the Orientalist discourse to define and disseminate its

image vis-a-vis the East and dominated the East. It became a means in the hands of the West to establish its cultural superiority. Said describes Orientalism as a kind of “textual attitude” (Said, 2003, p. 92) which resulted from bookish knowledge and hence it lacks any concrete evidence. The west not only disseminated knowledge of the Orient with the help of this attitude but it also enabled them to create and shape the reality of the Orient. Consequently, Said comments, “In time this knowledge and reality produce a tradition or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it” (ibid, p. 94). Later on, through this discourse, the West imposed this fabricated reality on the Orient and made it believe what it was not. Of course, it was this discourse which empowered the West to speak and represent the Orient and the West became the defining and controlling authority of the Orient, its culture, and its people. The West used Orientalism as an academic discipline, as a discourse of power, an ideological tool and a modus operandi to hegemonize the Orient.

The former Orientalists created textualized reality of the Orient through this discourse. Travelers, historians, scholars, linguists and anthropologists, all were complicit in this project. The later Orientalists accepted them as standard statements and authoritative versions without interrogating them. This gave birth to a network of knowledge which empowered the West and gave them authority over the Orient. Said opines that Orientalism i.e. the western discourse about the Orient helped the west hegemonize the Orient. Therefore, the discourse of Orientalism lent intellectual and cultural hegemony to dominate and control the Orient. The Western-European orientalists inculcated the sense

of their intellectual and cultural superiority on the mind of the Orient repeatedly and incessantly through their scholarly works. This as a psychological necessity helped them not only create the Orient but also define and distinguish themselves from Oriental people as cultural others. As Said notices, “In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture” (ibid, pp. 1-2).

The West constituted its identity through the process of othering since it is the interplay of self and other that constructs identity. Therefore, the other is oppositional but at the same time a complementary concept. It is a psychological need as well as an internal desire on the part of the West. In this process of defining and constructing identity, the binary of self, which refers to the West and other, which means the Orient is significant as it leads to another important binary of exclusion and inclusion. It places the western self in a privileged position, in center and marginalizes the Orient as cultural other. Consequently, this process of othering allows the Western writers to perceive themselves as master, superior, and true human and to view the Eastern as slave, inferior, and brute. Historians, travelers, politicians, and writers like Dante, Flaubert, Shakespeare, Peele and Conrad contributed a lot in creating and propagating such depictions of the Orient and Oriental people. It is here Said views a close relationship between literature and ideology. The West has employed literature as an ideological tool to project, propagate and promote its views about the Orient. In this way, literature became a close complicit in asserting and establishing the western cultural hegemony and paved the way for British

colonialism and imperialism. Said (1993) fully explores this idea where he highlights how the genre of English novel gave a helping hand in creating and supporting the British colonial and imperialist policies in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **3.2.3. Concept of Binaries**

The close analysis reveals that the western discourse and cultural representations of the Orient are replete with dichotomies and binaries like ‘we’ versus ‘they’, ‘self’ versus ‘other’ and ‘East’ versus ‘West’. This discourse with the passage of time took the form of an institution, and an ideological process with which the West constructed its identity and the concept of the self because of its cultural encounters with others such as the Orient. It brought the West in a position to define its cultural values and establish its superiority in all terms, which later on got the status of only valid humanized and universalized concepts. Western-European civilization assumed the role and shape of a cultural model. The other cultures and civilizations should define themselves with reference to the West. Thus, the Orient was dubbed as an exotic and a romantic place that appealed to the western fascination as a desired other. The West as white person symbolized masculinity, light, knowledge, progress, reason and all other positive superlatives which can come in one’s mind. Contrary to it, the East as black person symbolized femininity, irrationality, and all the negative connotations, which can be associated with this word. Such binaries pervade the Orientalist discourse and lead Said to conclude, “The Orientalist reality is both antihuman and persistent” (Said, 2003, p. 44).

Said argues that all these dichotomies are not natural but man-made. They are cultural and sociological concepts introduced by one group of people to describe their perceived

differences about the other group of people. Similarly, the boundaries between the West and East are also not geographical but cultural. Whether it is Homer, or Aeschylus, or Dante, or Balfour, or Cromer, all the writers' works and views reflect these dichotomies. This discourse has usually portrayed the East having weak, passive, and feminine character whereas the West has been depicted with strong, active and masculine character. It shows a clear categorization of the East and West as separate entities with separate poles of values. That is why, Said asks an important question: "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" (Said, 2003, p.45)? The rational answer will be definitely no and Said warns the dire consequences of such polarizing attitudes because polarizations foster distances, hatred, and animosities, limit human interaction and widen the gulf between cultures, and nations.

It was due to such polarizations that the West misrepresented the Orient and Islam. Islam was declared a distorted form of Christianity and Muhammad was dubbed as imposter, which naturally led to the judgement that his followers, the Muslims are cunning, devious and dishonest. It was through this long and interconnected process of the Oriental representations that the West created the Orient as cultural other. In the dichotomic relationship of 'we' and 'they', 'we' means the center and 'they' refers to the periphery. Subsequently, anything belonging to the center symbolizes positive and human whereas, anything attached with the periphery stands for evil and animal. Thus, there started a series of unending concocted and artificial representations, which had no empirical

evidence and the persistence of such representations can be noticed even now in the western world. As Said (1997) avers that “Instead of scholarship, we often find only journalists making extravagant statements, which are instantly picked up and further dramatized by the media” (p. Xvi). These binaries also legitimized the western encroachment and invasion of the East. Once, the West had convinced the world that it was superior in all terms and it wanted to ennoble and educate the inferior, and uncivilized Eastern people, its presence in the East became inevitable and justifiable.

Therefore, in this context, all Orientalists’ representations suffer from subjectivity and cultural biases. Like new historicists, Said also believes that an author is a cultural construct. That is why, it is fairly difficult for an author to be objective and impersonal in his works. As he asserts:

For if it is true that no production of knowledge in the human sciences can ever ignore or disclaim its author's involvement as a human subject in his own circumstances, then it must also be true that for a European or American studying the Orient there can be no disclaiming the main" circumstances of his actuality: that he comes up against the Orient as a European or American first, as an individual second (Said, 2003, p. 11).

Said somewhere else also talks about his own subjectivity in writing *Orientalism*. He frankly admits in an interview that he created this work due to his attachment with the struggle of Arab and Palestinian nationalism and his main motive is to liberate people from such stereotypical and biased attitudes (Said, 2001, p.374). Similarly, Said, like the

new historicists, emphasizes the worldliness of the text, which means the material being of the text along with the cultural, political and economic factors that construct a text. Same is the case with all the orientalist texts and as a reader and critic, one should take the worldliness of these texts into account. Though Said (1983) discusses these ideas in *The World, the Text, and the Critic* yet these ideas help understand his other works as well. In the same work, Said introduces the concept of 'secular criticism' by which he means freedom from the restrictions of intellectual specialization. It is only by freeing oneself from the false constructs of the self, a critic can trace the link between a work and its socio-political realities and can boldly speak truth to power.

Talking about the scope and significance of Said's *Orientalism*, A. Rubin and M. Bayoumi (2001) in the foreword of *Orientalism of The Edward Said Reader* notice: "After *Orientalism*, scholars in the humanities and the social sciences could no longer ignore questions of difference and the politics of representation". There is no doubt that Said's contribution to the field of literary theory is undeniable. His *Orientalism* has developed awareness among the academia concerning the representation of the Orient and revealed new ways of interpreting the western canonical texts, which were formerly examined through liberal humanist tradition. It has brought a considerable change in the domain of literary theory and particularly the postcolonial studies. The influence of Said's analytical and contrapuntal reading method, which he has also employed in *Culture and Imperialism (1993)*, can be noticed in such fields as literary, cultural, racial, gender, and 'Area' studies. His work *Orientalism* critiques and deconstructs the Eurocentric, ethnocentric, and anti-Islamic perspectives which have been popular and



pervasive in the past in literary studies and advocates a fresh approach based on objectivity and honesty. It is due to its wider application that Orientalism has become a key concept in literary studies.

Said's *Orientalism* has been appreciated as well as depreciated due to its polemical views. One group of critics like Donald Little (1979), Albert Hourani (1979), Malcolm Kerr (1980), Fedwa Malti Douglas (1979), Bryan Turner (1981), Jane Miller (1990), and Reina Lewis (1995) argue that Said is selective in his approach. Consequently, he has occluded some important Orientalists, particularly the German Orientalists in his analysis. Though Said himself mentions this thing in the introduction that he has excluded Germany because Germany was not as great colonial power as France was and Britain had been yet the critics feel unconvinced by Said's logic. They consider that such occlusions have helped Said produce a simplistic and limited picture of Orientalists' works. Thus, Said's work suffers from same complaints, which he has from the Orientalists. Another group of critics like J. H. Plumb (1979) and C. F. Beckingham (1979) opine that Said has distorted historical facts in his study, which indicates Said's lack of historical knowledge. John McLeod (2010) summarizes this criticism in four broad points, which include that Said neglects resistance by the colonized, resistance within the West, gender differences and finally Orientalism is ahistorical (pp. 47-48). If Said's *Orientalism* has found opponents, it has also many advocates. Ian Buchanan (2010) calls it a cornerstone of Postcolonial Studies. Similarly, John McLeod (2010) views it a groundbreaking study. Hans Bertens (2001) comments that disregard of its

shortcomings, Orientalism has “revolutionized the way Western scholars and critics looked at representations of non-Western subjects and cultures” (p. 205).

New historicism and Orientalism are too broad theories to cover in this chapter in detail. However, the preceding discussion related to these two theories has helped me develop a theoretical framework in order to explicate the selected plays. With reference to new historicism, I shall be focusing on the use of anecdote, the concept of history, study of power relations and the construction of identity. The use of anecdote will enable me to compare and link the selected plays with some contemporary real documents and form some authentic claims regarding the validity and veracity of the discourses employed in these works. The historicity of text and textuality of history will enable me to investigate how the selected literary works are rooted in the socio-historical conditions of the period and how these discursive practices form closed discourses. The study of power relations will help me explore how the authors of these plays have shown their complicity with the dominant power group in propagating the specific ideology through their works. Similarly, in case of construction of identity, I shall analyse how the playwrights attempted to construct the identity of both the individuals and nation by employing particular discourses that circulated in that society. To substantiate further my findings, I shall explicate the selected plays in the light of the representation of the Orient, the concept of binaries and the relationship between discourse and power. The representation of the Orient will help me evaluate whether the representation of the Orient and Oriental characters is true or biased. And, if it is biased, how this representational strategy/ discourse formed a nexus of power and supported the dominant

group to pave the way for what we call colonialism. The concept of binaries will enable me to explore how these playwrights employed the binaries in their plays to create a discourse that served as a tool to further their ideas.

New historicism argues that literary texts are the results of negotiation with the external realities. Therefore, while analyzing texts, one should focus on this dialectic relationship to comprehend the specific ideology of a period. This analysis can throw a light on the power operations and power relations, which may be prominent in that culture. By stressing the cultural dimension in the literary works, new historicists make a point that all literature is a cultural manifestation and this cultural coloring affects our judgment. Said's *Orientalism* follows the same line of thought and notices the cultural influences in literary works. Both theories emphasize the role of literature as a political weapon in the hands of a dominant group that can use it to bring a social change. The commonalities between two theories make them effective investigating tools in explicating literary works in political and historical terms. It is because of this efficacy, I have conflated them in my present study to investigate and explain the external realities, which were at play in the works of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries when these works were created.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **NEW HISTORICIST Reading of the Plays**

This chapter comprises three parts. The first part contains a short survey of the existing scholarship that treats the representation of Persia as a unique case. Though this has been done in detail in chapter two of this study, yet the purpose here is to contextualize the representation of Persia particularly with reference to the genre of English drama. The second part provides the overviews of the selected plays and other contemporary non-literary texts, which will be juxtaposed with the plays wherever it is required. It is followed by the third part that deals with the application of new historicist assumptions to the selected plays to show how the selected plays as cultural representations are result of negotiation with the socio-historical conditions of the period. There is a dialectic relationship between the two. They shape the culture and are shaped by it. These representations obviously support the dominant ideology of the period, which is the main contention of this study. Hence, they function as ideological tools and help England dominate and hegemonize the Orient including Persia. I shall apply only the relevant and some of the key assumptions of new historicists as it is not realistically possible to apply all the principles of a theory to a literary work. The selected plays will be dealt with separately except Denham's and Baron's plays which will be explicated together due to their similarity in terms of theme, plot and historicity. Moreover, there may be many overlapping ideas between the Orientalist reading and new historicist reading of the

selected plays since both theories have many similarities and are interrogative and deconstructive in their nature. It is due to these similarities, I have conflated these two theories in the current study to get a comprehensive picture of the selected plays. As it has been already mentioned in chapter three that new historicist theoretical assumptions such as the use of anecdote, the concept of history, study of power relations and the construction of identity will be investigated in the selected plays. This analysis will be supported with the textual quotations and scholarly evidences and will be done under separate headings to make things clear. The texts of the selected plays will be juxtaposed with the non-literary works where it is relevant and required.

## **Part One:**

### **4.1. Contextualizing the Persian Plays:**

The early modern English drama that deals with Persian matter mainly revolves round the Achaemenid period of ancient Persia and the Safavid period of the contemporary or modern Persia. These plays usually portray and focus on the stories of Persian kings and princes as the titles of most of the plays reveal this fact. Hence, it is a drama of the royal families of Persia both ancient and contemporary ones, disregard of the fact that majority of these plays are based either on histories or on “travel books” (Rice, 1927, p. 444). The early modern England had great interest in the Orient, Oriental people, languages, and culture with its exotic appeal and fabulous riches. The establishment and expansion of maritime industry, travelers’ narratives, search for safe trade routes and markets, looking for new alliances and the desire to capitalize on the resources of the alien lands may have

evoked this interest. Wann (1915) records that this interest “was not merely one of curiosity or novelty, but an active interest made necessary by the conditions of the time” (p. 444). The playwrights of the period capitalized on these factors and wrote plays dealing with the Oriental affairs. Linda McJannet (1999) counts seventy-one plays that deal with the Orient and out of them thirty-three relate to “Persian element” (p. 240).

Here, it is significant to mention that Aeschylus’ *The Persians* is the first dramatic work that deals with the representation of the Orient in general and Persia in particular as the title indicates. The play clearly displays Edward Said’s concept of binaries. Aeschylus delineates the Greeks as rational, ordered and organized people. Contrary to the Greeks, the Persians are weak, irrational and emotional. That is why, Edith Hall (1989) considers it as a prototype with reference to the representation of the Orient which served as a model for the future western European writers and scholars. Masoud Farahmandfar (2016) also notices that the Persians have been represented “invariably as hostile other” (p.141) in Aeschylus’ *The Persians*. He further adds that this can also be “seen in later works such as Thomas Preston’s *Cambises* (c.1560), Christopher Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine the Great* (1587), and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queen* (1590-6)” (ibid).

The same is true in relation to early modern English drama, which explicitly shows English playwrights’ Eurocentric perspectives in case of the Orient. There is a general impression that some Western historians such as Thomas Minadoi (1595), Giovanni Botero (1603), and Thomas Herbert (1634) have represented Persia positively in their works. Similarly, the critics like Anthony Parr (1996), Linda McJannet (1999), Ladan

Niayesh (2008), and Jane Grogan (2014) argue that the early modern English playwrights have not dealt Persia negatively as they have dealt with the Turks, Moors and Arabs due to the unique case of Persia. Nevertheless, there are some plays related to Persia, which explicitly reflect English dramatists' Eurocentric perspectives. In these plays, the playwrights have spoken in a disparaging manner about the cultural others. Therefore, application of Said's views should not be limited only to trace the concepts like 'binaries' or 'othering' in Western literary works. Rather, it also means how the West has spoken and represented the Orient. As K. Sahin & J. Schleck (2016) opine, "Said's *Orientalism* does not only call attention to the process of othering, however. It also emphasizes the ways in which the Europeans spoke for Eastern peoples when they spoke or wrote of them" (p. 105). And, the ways in which the Europeans have spoken for the Oriental people is obviously biased and prejudiced.

The early modern English drama, more than the drama of any other age, is replete with the Oriental characters i.e. 'the cultural others' and Louis Wann (1915) rightly observes that almost all the major dramatists "of the period were attracted to the Oriental matter" (p. 427). It was common habit of the dramatists of the period to depict the "'other', non-European worlds like Persia, Egypt, Africa, and the East" (Bartels, 1993, p. X111) on the stage. Talking about this pervasive phenomenon of the period, Emile C. Bartels (1993) poses a question "why the alien was such a vital and appealing subject on the Renaissance stage and within Renaissance society more generally" (ibid). If the cultural other was so prominent and pervasive in the minds of Renaissance playwrights and on the Renaissance stage, there must be some significant reasons and motives behind it which

need exploration. Therefore, I shall be focusing on these reasons in my study: what were the motives of the English playwrights for creating and staging the cultural others on the stage during this period? What desired effects did they want to achieve through these dramatic representations of the cultural others? To what extent did these dramatic representations play role in constructing identities of the English audience? I shall be exploring these and some other related questions in this chapter and the next one and shall be looking for possible answers in the light of textual and scholarly evidence.

## **Part Two:**

### **4.2. Overviews of the Selected Works**

#### **4.2.1. An Overview of Thomas Preston's *Cambyses: A Lamentable Tragedy Mixed Full of Pleasant Mirth* (C. 1561):**

Preston's *Cambyses* portrays the story of King Cambyses, a son of Cyrus, the Great (559–530 BC), founder of the Achaemenid Empire, the ancient Persian dynasty. Cyrus conquered many countries of Asia and after his death, Cambyses continued the expansion of the Achaemenid Empire till the conquest of Egypt. The play opens with prologue that announces different pieces of advice given by Agathon, Tully, and Seneca, the three great classical philosophers who advise the rulers to follow law and practice justice in their countries. A ruler should present himself as a good example to his public. Then, the prologue introduces Cambyses as a famous king of Persia who falls due to the sin of pride like the Greek mythological character, Icarus. The play shows many personified characters such as Shame, Ambidexter, Commons Cry, Commons Complaint, Proof,



Cruelty, Murder, Trial and Execution. The incorporation of personified abstractions into a historical story make it an amalgam of historical and morality drama. Like other contemporary renaissance plays, it also mingles comedy with tragedy to meet the demands of the groundlings. Most of the comic elements have been introduced through the dialogues of Hob and Lob, the two clownish compatriots, Ambidexter (who plays with both hands and thus symbolizes hypocrisy and duality), HUf, Ruf, and Snuf, three ruffian soldiers and their female companion, Mistres Meretrix who sometimes even cut obscene jokes and provoke uproarious laughter.

In the beginning of the play, it is shown that Cambyses plans to go to Egypt to get the upper hand over Egyptians. In his absence, he appoints Sisamnes, the Persian judge as a caretaker ruler, who starts getting bribery and does not dispense justice properly. Meanwhile, Shame as a personified character discloses King Cambyses' debauchery and drunkenness. When Cambyses returns, Common Complaint complains that Sisamnes has not given justice to the poor and deprived them of their proper rights. Proof and Trial as eyewitnesses confirm the words of Common Complaint. Cambyses becomes angry and declares the death sentence of Sisamnes. After Sisamnes' death, Cambyses honors and elevates Sisamnes' son Otian as a judge of Persia. Cambyses' counselor, Praxaspes advises him to refrain himself from drinking which infuriates Cambyses. To penalize Praxaspes, Cambyses orders him to fetch his only youngest son and shoots him to death despite the repeated requests made by his father for the life of his poor son. Cambyses' drunkenness along with cruelty and sensuality makes him blind to the realities of life. He not only causes the death of many innocent people but also the death of his brother,

Smirdis and his own wife, the Queen who criticizes Cambyses for the murder of Smirdis. Cambyses dies because of a wound of his own sword. As he rides on his horse, the sword runs into his thighs and over bleeding claims his life. The play ends with a poetic justice showing the death of a tyrant king due to his own misdeeds.

**4.2.2. An Overview of John Day, George Wilkins, and William Rowley's *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* (1607):**

This drama is based on Anthony Nixon's pamphlet entitled *The Three English Brothers* (1607). It is believed that both the pamphlet and the play were produced with the help of the material provided by Thomas Sherley, one of the Sherley brothers. It portrays the adventures of the three English brothers: Anthony Sherley, Thomas Sherley and Robert Sherley. The prologue personified as Fame describes the partition of three brothers from their father and their warm welcome in Persia by the Governor of Casbin. It is a great day for Persians because the Sophy, Persian king, is returning with a big tribute, which he has received, from the Turks by defeating them and handing over their forty thousand prisoners back to them. Later on, the Sophy comes and shows a mock war between the Persians and the Turks to the three brothers so that they may get a fair idea of the manner of Persian wars. In this war, the Persian soldiers behead their enemies, the Turks and impale their heads on the soldiers.

The Sophy asks the Sherley brothers how they like the Persian wars. Anthony Sherley praises Persian wars and then shows a manner of Christian wars in which the Christians though make their enemies prisoners yet spare their lives or exchange the prisoners to buy the freedom of their own soldiers. Upon which, the Sophy is greatly impressed by the

manner of Christian wars. Anthony Sherley tells that they have come to Persia for a military agreement with the Sophy to fight against their common enemy, the Turks. The Sophy is pleased to listen this and appoints Sir Anthony as the General of Persian army against the Turks. Sir Anthony convinces the Sophy to send a Persian Embassy to other Christian countries to form a grand alliance with them against the Turks. The Sophy nominates Halibeck, the Persian Duke and Sir Anthony as a chief ambassador for this purpose. In Anthony's absence, Robert Sherley is honored as a General of Persian army. Halibeck and Calimath, the two Persian dukes feel jealous and show resentment over this but cannot express it openly.

In the Persian court, there is a meeting between the Sophy's Niece and Robert Sherley. In it, the Niece applauds the Sherleys' bravery and feels great attraction towards Robert, who has come to pay the compliments to the Niece. Impressed by and attracted towards Robert Sherley, now the Niece has no interest in Duke Halibeck, her Persian suitor. Sir Anthony and Halibeck, first reach Russia for persuading the Russian Emperor for a league against the Turks. Over there, Halibeck out of jealousy poisons the Russian Emperor's ears against Sir Anthony that he is a man of low status, dishonest and fraud. As a result, Sir Anthony is imprisoned in Russia for a short time and then released. After Russia, both Halibeck and Sir Anthony go to Rome in the court of the Pope. There, Sir Anthony requests the Pope to ask all the Christian princes to join this league against the Turks. The chorus informs that they go from Rome to Venice, Italy and other countries.

The scene shifts to Sir Thomas Sherley and his soldiers who are ready to attack a town near Sicily under the occupation of the Turks. But, unfortunately, Sir Thomas' soldiers rebel against him, desert him and flee away. The Turks arrest Sir Thomas and his servants, and decide to convey him to Constantinople. In Persia, Robert Sherley as a General of Persian army shows his mettle, defeats the Turks in a battle, captures many Turks and brings these captives including some Turk commanders back in Persia. It is through one of the Turk prisoners, who is actually a Christian and a former servant of Sir Thomas, Robert Sherley comes to know that his brother Sir Thomas is a prisoner of the Turks. He arranges the safe return of his brother in exchange of twenty Turk commanders. But this does not work. Later on, it is because of the royal interference from England that the Turks hand him to an English agent. Meanwhile, it transpires that Sir Anthony is in trouble in Venice for getting a jewel from Zariph, a Jew, against the bond that he will give the money as he receives from the Persian Sophy. But, he never receives that money as it is intercepted by Halibeck secretly. Sir Anthony is arrested and imprisoned for not returning the money within the promised date. Delighted and jubilant, Halibeck plans to go back to Persia where he will further provoke the hatred of the Sophy against Sir Anthony by his fabricated stories. It is here in Venice that the playwrights provoke the laughter through the appearance and dialogues of Will Kemp, an English clown, and an Italian Harlaken.

Back in Persia, Calimath tries to defame Robert Sherley in the eyes of the Sophy by informing him that Robert Sherley has not only violated the Persian tradition of killing the Turk captives, their enemies but also tried to win the love of the Sophy's Niece. The

Sophy gets enraged and criticizes her Niece for being so frank with a stranger. The Sophy also rebukes Robert and threatens to deprive him of all honors bestowed on him by Persia. In another meeting, the Niece succeeds in convincing the Sophy that Robert is innocent. The Sophy restores Robert to former honorable position in Persia and agrees for the marriage of her Niece with him. Halibeck returns to Persia and tries to make the Sophy go against Sir Anthony by his concocted stories but Robert's prudence does not let Halibeck's scheme thrive. From Venice, Sir Anthony goes to Spain where he is elevated as Knight of Saint Iago. The play ends on a happy note as the Sophy is shown to participate in the baptism ceremony of Robert and Niece's newborn baby and orders for the construction of a Christian church in Persia. Again, at the end, Fame, as a personified abstraction, appears, requests the audience to applaud the play, and shows the happy union of the three brothers with their father through 'a perspective glass', a magical device used by the dramatists.

#### **4.2.3. An Overview of John Denham's *The Sophy* (1642):**

As far as its source is concerned, it owes a lot to Sir Thomas Herbert's *Travels* (1634). The play portrays the story of Abbas, King of Persia, Abbas's son, Mirza, the Prince, Mirza's wife, Erythaa the Princess, Mirza's daughter, Fatyma and Mirza's son, Sophy, the titular character. The prologue asks the audience to praise the play otherwise, it will be a loss for the theater and not for the poet since the poet cares for nothing. The poet, Denham, wrote it because he had no other task to do. The play is set in the background of Turk and Persian wars. Abdall and Morat, the two Lords, the friends of Mirza, discuss the imminent war between the Turks and Persians in which the Turk army outnumbers the

Persian army. Both think it wise if Mirza, the Prince should keep this fact in his mind and not go for a war as the Persians may incur a great loss. They praise Mirza's valor and depreciate Shah Abbas for his sensual ways of life. It is a pity that the rulers are usually surrounded with the flatterers and seldom anyone speaks truth to them. Nevertheless, Mirza returns victorious despite the apprehensions of his friends and his wife.

Haly and Mirvan, the two lords and favorites of Abbas, appear on the stage. They are conspirators, manipulators and evil designers. Actually, Haly has lost grace in the eyes of Mirza as Mirza can see through the tricks of Haly. Both Haly and Mirvan make a plan that, on one hand, they will puff up Mirza's ambitious nature and his passion for war and, on the other hand, they will make Abbas jealous of Mirza's victories and, thus, capitalize on his old age. This thing will prompt jealousy between father and son and satisfy their desire for revenge. Haly gets a golden opportunity when Mirza asks Haly to persuade King Abbas to give command to two Bashaws (the Turk commanders who were made captives during war between the Turks and Persians) since they have improved their behavior and are ready to fight on the side of Persians. Haly promises to do this favor to Mirza. When Haly meets Abbas, exaggerates Mirza's war adventures and his triumphs which makes Abbas feel as if he himself were a forsaken conqueror, a thing of past. The folk praise and talk about Mirza and have forgot the king as a hero of the bygone times.

To fan and foster his fears and suspicions, Haly informs Abbas that Mirza spends most of his time in the battles instead of living at home which is indicative of this thing that he does not like the king and is waiting for his death. He is admired and worshipped by the Persian people. Moreover, he craves for Abbas' favor to give some important duty to the

Turk captives in future wars, which makes Abbas suspicious of the fact that Mirza doubts the faithfulness of Abbas' subjects as well as his own countrymen. Soon, Haly and Mirvan meet and feel rejoiced over their future prospects. In Mirza's absence, the two Bashaws come to enquire Haly about their possibility of getting Abbas' favor. Haly informs that Abbas is angry with Mirza and has issued the orders of their death. He tells them that there is one way that they should immediately leave and raise an army in the favor of Mirza. He will convey all this information to Mirza and Mirza may call them when he needs them. This sudden flight of the Bashaws provides another opportunity to Haly to prove that they are traitors and are in league with Mirza.

When King Abbas comes to know all this, he at once, out of jealousy, concludes that his son, Mirza wants to take away his life and crown. He convenes a meeting of his lords and informs them about the audacity of Mirza. Meanwhile, a messenger brings the Bashaws' letters in the court, which have been intercepted by the intelligence. The Bashaws have written that Abbas' attitude towards Mirza seems unnatural. Abbas even issued the orders of their deaths but they escaped and now, armed on the borders, they would be waiting for Mirza's orders. This letter furthers Abbas' suspicions and he decides for the lifelong imprisonment of Mirza as he comes back. However, Abdall, Morat, and Solyman, a stupid courtier, speak in favor of Mirza yet the King does not revoke his former decision. On his return, Mirza meets Princess, his wife who tells him about the king's inconstant temperament. During this discussion, Morat comes and tells Mirza that there is a lurking danger waiting for him but Mirza ignores it and goes to meet his father, Abbas. On his way, Haly and some guards arrest Mirza. He is imprisoned and blinded. The enraged

Mirza pledges to revenge by killing his daughter, Fatyma who is the favorite of king Abbas.

On Mirza's disappearance, Abdall and Morat make a plan to restore Mirza by organizing the soldiers who love Mirza and hate Abbas. In the meantime, Abbas comes to know about the evil designs of Haly and Mirvan. But, it is too late. Haly poisons Mirza, which causes his death. King Abbas visits the dying son, asks for forgiveness and explains that all this happened due to jealousy. Haly is the real criminal. After this, Mirza dies because of poison. Abbas, haunted by the ghosts of his father and brother to whom he had already killed for the throne, dies due to the guilty conscience. Before his death, he orders his grandson, Sophy to take the revenge. With the aid of Abdall and Morat, Sophy becomes the king of Persia and wields justice by issuing the death sentence of the conspirators.

#### **4.2.4. An Overview of Robert Baron's *Mirza* (1642):**

The play is a revenge tragedy. It is based on Sir Thomas Herbert's *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* (1634), Dodmore Cotton's letters and probably John Denham's *Sophy* (1642). Baron also acknowledges these sources in the text of the play. Basically, *Mirza* is a replica of Denham's *Sophy*. However, he asserts that his play is different in treatment from that of Denham's *Sophy*. In the Argument, Baron himself gives an outline of the story of the play. The story mainly revolves round the characters of a Persian king, Abbas, his son, Prince Mirza, Mirza's wife, Princess Nymphadora, their son and daughter Sophy and Fatyma respectively. Mahomet AllyBeg is Abbas' favorite and performs the role of a villain in the play. He is assisted in his villainy by the King's counsellor, Beltazar. Faraban and Seleucus are two attendants of AllyBeg. Emangoly serves as a



Lieutenant General in the Persian army under the Prince and Methiculy, Hydasfus, and Alkaham are officers in the Persian army and sincere friends of the Prince. Floradella is Abbas' mistress whereas Olympa, Earina, Omay and Cloe are the women of King Abbas' seraglio.

Like Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the first act opens with the appearance of EmirHamze' ghost who warns King Abbas to renounce his sinful ways of life and be ready for severe punishment for his misdeeds. It is informed that Abbas murdered his father, Mahomet Codoband, and his eldest brother EmirHamze in the past to become the sole king of Persia. That is why, their ghosts keep on haunting Abbas. The scene shifts to King Abbas' seraglio where he is with his mistress, Floradella. Floradella says to Abbas that people applaud his son, Mirza for his valiance and give no importance to the King as he is only confined to the palace and always indulged in the gratification of sensual pleasures. This is enough to provoke Abbas' jealousy. Soon, AllyBeg and Beltazar join them. First, they praise Abbas as a hero and a great king who is the right successor of Great Cyrus and Darius. Then, they deftly switch the conversation to Mirza who is also adored and worshipped by the Persian people due to his heroic deeds in wars against the Turks. In this way, they further pique Abbas' anger and jealousy by drawing Abbas' attention to the fact that Mirza abstains himself from indulging in worldly pleasures and spends most of his time in the battlefield gaining more and more victories on his credit. Moreover, he is ambitious by nature and cares a fig for his family ties. He has no interest in beauty or anything else but wars. Even, his wife, Nymphadora's love and sweet embraces cannot stop him to go to the battlefield. Having such nature, the Prince can be a

great threat for King Abbas and may dethrone him in the future. The safe remedy is to confine him to the court so that his aggressive and ambitious nature may be tamed.

Abbas' credulous nature believes all this and takes some immediate steps to avoid the future apprehension. Firstly, he sends a messenger to the Prince to tell him to return and attend the King as early as possible. Secondly, he commands Beltazar to go in the battlefield and assume the responsibility of a joint command along with Emangoly. Thirdly, he suggests Floradella to visit the Princess and glorify Mirza's bravery so that Nymphadora may not suspect anything regarding Mirza's hasty return to the palace. In their isolation, both AllyBeg and Floradella, who actually love each other, rejoice at the development of their wicked designs. The play introduces a little comedy through the short appearance of two thieves who come to deprive Faraban of his wealth, are arrested and executed. While Nymphadora, Sophy, Fatyma and her waiting woman, Iffida are watching a mock tragedy, Floradella visits them and praises Mirza's heroic deeds. She further adds that the Prince should also learn the court manners, as the King is getting old. AllyBeg sends his attendant, Seleucus as a royal messenger to Mirza to inform him that the King is looking forward to his presence in the court. Both AllyBeg and Beltazar meet and feel satisfied with the progress of their plans. While the Prince with his army is fully ready to attack the Turks, Seleucus arrives and tells the Prince that the King is waiting for his speedy return.

The royal message aborts this attack and Mirza, after discussing the issue of his return with his army officers, moves back to the palace to meet his father. Beltazar also joins the Persian army and takes the charge of the joint command of the army with Emangoly,

which displeases the army officers who are sincere to Mirza. Abbas also appoints AllyBeg the Duke of Shiras in place of Emangoly for his flattery and valuable services rendered for Persia. AllyBeg informs Abbas that Mirza will be arrested by the seven Mutes, executioners as he enters the trap door. Floradella and AllyBeg envision the luxuries of life they will have in their seraglio. AllyBeg will be the future king and she herself will be the queen of Persia. As Mirza comes to the palace, he is manacled, imprisoned and blinded according to the directions of the King. With the passage of time, the King permits Mirza's wife and his children to meet Mirza. The guilt-ridden King likes and loves his granddaughter, Fatyma and enjoys her company. Infuriated and mad Mirza strangles Fatyma to revenge from Abbas since Fatyma is apple of Abbas' eyes. This is appalling for Abbas and Mirza's family. AllyBeg buys the support of some army officers who were formerly loyal to the Prince by promising them high positions in future. He convenes a meeting at Omay's house in which the ladies of the King's seraglio and a few army officers participate. He and Floradella persuade all the participants that their King is old, insane and drunkard. Mirza is blind and in prison. They must do something immediately for the glory of Persia.

Meanwhile, Emangoly's servant, Vasco who loves Floradella's waiting woman, Cloe comes to know through her the conspiracy of AllyBeg and Floradella to dethrone the King and reveals all this to Emangoly. Emangoly speedily goes to the King and passes on this secret to the King. Mirza, broken and lost, requests a servant in the prison to give him poison to get rid of his miserable life. When Abbas listens the villainy of AllyBeg, he at once calls the guards and goes to Omay's house to see the traitors with his own eyes.

He is appalled to see all of them over there and asks the guards to arrest all. In a final meeting with dying Mirza, Abbas confesses his crime, which he did due to the instigation of AllyBeg and Floradella, asks for Mirza's pardon. Mirza, before his death, forgives his father and asks his son Sophy, who has now become the king of Persia, also to pardon Abbas and seek his guidance in all affairs.

**4.2.5. An Overview of Sir Thomas Herbert's *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* (1634):**

It describes Herbert's travel experiences of different parts of Asia and Africa but particularly Persia and Mogull India. Herbert came to Persia and India in 1627 as a part of the English Embassy along with Sir Dodmore Cotton and Robert Sherley. The objectives of this embassy were to establish positive commercial and diplomatic relations with the Safavid Persia. The work consists of three books. The first book deals with Herbert's description of India, the second book is related to Persia. Whereas, the third book narrates travels to different countries such as Maldiva, Japan, China, Mauritius and America.

In book first, Herbert reports that they started their voyage on Good Friday, 1626 from Dover. They navigated the Atlantic Ocean and reached the isles of Canarie, La Palma, Tenerissa and other adjacent isles. There, they followed the route of Angola, Aethyopia, Madagascar, Mozambique, and via Red Sea, entered India through Goa and Surat, two well-known cities of India. Herbert's keen observation lets him describe the people of these places, their habits, colors, customs, crops, birds and animals. Even the petty and trivial pieces of information related to the foreign lands seem interesting and make this

work readable and enjoyable. Talking about the people of Canarie, Herbert comments that the men of Canarie do not know the use of fire. They shave with flintstone, plough earth with the horns of oxen and treat their women like cattle. The people of Angola use beads of glass, seashells, stones, or other trash as coins to purchase the commodities of life. When a person of Angola dies, he/ she is buried with decorative objects. In Longa, people consider sun and moon as husband and wife and stars as their children. Aethiopian people remain mostly naked and the rich cover their bodies with skin of animals. Their women expose themselves as an act of courtesy whenever they receive something. In Surat, he narrates the death of Persian ambassador, Nogdi AllyBeg, the enemy of Robert Sherley who poisoned himself and was buried in Surat. The Bannyans, followers of Hinduism, and the Mahometans inhabit Surat. The Bannyans follow the laws of 'Bremaw' or the 'Shaster'. Then, he describes the Parsees of India who worship fire and act upon the teachings of Zertoost, their prophet. About Mogualls, he says that they are descendants of Tartars starting from Cingis Chan, Timberlane, Mirza Sultan Mohammed, Babur and Homayon. They made great conquests in India and the neighboring countries. After Surat, Herbert describes the places like Agra, Gujrat, Deccan, Tatta, Lahore, Delly, Kabul, Casmir, and finally Ormus. Herbert elaborates the origin of Mogull, their wars, conquests, and the conspiracies of Mogull courts.

In book second, Herbert describes Persia, Persian monarchs, their religion, and their wars with the Turks in detail. He narrates that they entered Persia through the Port Town of Gumbroon. Dodmore Cotton, the chief ambassador, sent Robert Sherley to request the Sultan of Gumbroon for their proper entrance into the Persian Court and meeting with

Shah Abbas. From Gumbroon, they went to the different parts of Persia such as Larr, Shiraz, Persipolis, Cuzcuzar, Spawhawn, Asharaff, Corazan and Cazbyn. Herbert says that the Persian mosques in Larr are made on the pattern of Alcaba, the holy Temple in Mecca. The Persians have great respect for their mosques. No one can enter a mosque without removing his shoes. After Larr, they reached Shiraz. Shiraz is known because of great historical figures like Nimrod, Cyrus, Macedonian, and the Magi. Persian people enjoy and celebrate the beauty of spring season at the festival of the Naowrouz. There, they meet Emangoly, the Arch Duke of Shiraz, Sultan of Larr, and the Lord of Ormus, who organizes a great banquet for them. Emangoly had three hundred mistresses in his seraglios. Herbert tells the large number of concubines determines the greatness of a duke.

From Shiraz, they went to Persipolis and Spawhawn, the metropolis of Persia. Its old name was Dura. The Mydan, a big market, is a spacious place where people buy and sell things. It is in this part, Herbert narrates the story of the Persian King, Abbas who murdered his father, brother, and even son, to become the sole king of Persia. After Abbas' death, the young Sophy became the king. Both Parsees and Muslims live over here. In the past, Persians were Parsees but then they embraced Islam. The Embassy meets Abbas and tells him that they have come over here at the behest of their king and want to have trade and diplomatic relations against the Ottoman Turks. Moreover, they want to clarify Abbas' mind regarding Robert Sherley's false charges, which were levelled against him by Nogdi AllyBeg, the Persian ambassador. Upon which, Abbas warmly welcomes them in his court and says he wishes the same. In case of Sherley, he

did a great favor to him and he was going to penalize Nogdi AllyBeg severely but he guessed it and somehow or other escaped the King's punishment. Herbert portrays Abbas as a cruel and a lusty fellow. All Persians, men and women, are circumcised. This is important to become a Muslim. Persian women usually take veil. No man praises other's wife as it can cause quarrel.

With reference to Persian religion, Herbert says that Persian religion is different from the Turks in the sense that Persians venerate Mortis Ally and consider him the right successor of Mahomet to whom Herbert considers a liar. The third book describes Herbert's travels to Choul, Mallabar, Callicut, Zeyloon, Sumatra, Java, Japan, China, and America. Like other two books, he also describes the people and famous places of these lands. All this reveals Herbert's keen observation and deep knowledge of planets, zodiac division, Greek and Latin languages. The salient feature of Herbert's style is that it is informative and easy to read and understand. He has incorporated classical authors' references, which are dispersed in the whole work. Particularly, he heavily draws upon ancient writers like Ptolomy, Strabo, Pliny, Homer and others. The whole work is illustrated with pictures of birds, animals, people, and buildings of foreign lands. Somewhere, he has also inserted words, names and numerics of alien languages along with the parallel English translation.

#### **4.2.6. An Overview of Thomas Minadoi's *A History of Wars Between the Turks and Persians* (1595):**

It was basically written in Italian language by an Italian physician, Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi (1540-1615). He gathered the relevant data regarding this work when he was in Syria and Constantinople working as a physician in the Venetian Consulates. His stay and

job as a physician in the Oriental states provided him an opportunity to know the Muslims and their affairs closely. It comprises nine books, the writer's epistle to the readers in the beginning, a letter related to the exact name of Tauris, and a table consisting of the names mentioned in the text. Abraham Hartwell (1553-1607) has translated this work in English. As Minadoi dedicated this work to Pope Sixtus V of the Vatican Church, Hartwell dedicates his translated work to Archbishop of Canterbury, England. Hartwell admits that though he will be unable to capture Minadoi's eloquence yet he will describe all things truly and faithfully. He laments that the present Persia is not a shadow of the ancient Persia. After this, there is a translation of Minadoi's work. In the epistle to the reader, Minadoi vows that he will follow the dictates of truth on all occasions in the text. He acknowledges the services of Theodore Balbi, Giovanni Michele, and Christoforo de Bouni, the three Venetians associated with the Venetian Consulate, who helped him to gather all this material.

Minadoi's first book deals with the period of Tamas, the King of Persia, Tamas' will to make Ismahel, his younger son, the king in place of Mahamet Codabanda, the eldest son. It describes court conspiracies, unnatural deaths and jealousies, which take place in the royal courts. After Tamas' death, Aidere, with the help of his sister Periaconcona, becomes Persian King temporarily who is then beheaded. After him, Ismahel, the next King, is strangled to death. Finally, Mahamet Codabanda (diseased in his eyes) is the new king of Persia who fights wars against the Turk emperors such as Selim 11 and Amurat (Murad 111). Minadoi rejoices at the wars between the Persians and Turks as both are



enemies of Christians and it will help the Christian countries to refresh and enhance their military strength. However, Minadoi thinks the Persians weaker than the Turks.

The second book narrates the birth and death of Mahamet, the Prophet of Islam, his marriage with Cadige, the manner of Muslims five times' prayer, the Alcoran, the Prophet's daughter, Fattime's marriage with Aly. Minadoi elaborates how Abubakar, Umar and Usman, the first three caliphs unlawfully became the caliphs by depriving Aly, the right heir of Mahamet. Then, he describes how Shiaism was introduced by Siec Giunet, the founder of Shiaism and the religious conflicts between the Persians and the Turks as the major cause of rift between the two. At the end of second book, Minadoi gives information about the Persian government, the titles of Sultan and Chan used by Persian Dukes and Governors, Persian soldiers and their weapons. The rest of the books provide a detailed picture of the wars that took place between the two countries. During these wars, Persia also tried many times to negotiate the peace agreement with the Ottoman Turks by sending the ambassadors like Maxut Chan, Ebraim Chan, and Aider Aga. But all these missions failed, according to Minadoi, because the Turks considered themselves proud and superior to the Persians in military power. Despite this fact, Minadoi portrays the Turks and Persians as co-rivals worthy of each other's animosity. The most important aspect of this work is that Minadoi gives an outline before the start of each book, which makes the readers picturize the things that will be discussed in detail in the coming pages. Minadoi's informative and analytical style makes this book as one of the pioneering works on history of the Turks and Persians. That is why, Samuel Purchas,

Richard Knolles and John Cartwright have also drawn on Minadoi's work in their history books.

**4.2.7. An Overview of *Don Juan of Persia: A Shiah Catholic, 1560-1604* (2013):**

Shah Abbas, King of Persia, sent a Persian Embassy to the Christian countries of Europe in 1599. The mission of this Embassy was to form a league with the Christian countries so that they may unitedly fight against their common enemy i.e. the Ottoman Turks. Uruch Beg or Ulug Beg, a Persian Shiah Muslim, who later on converted to Christianity (Catholicism) and was named Don Juan of Persia in Spain, was part of this Embassy. The embassy consisted of Husayn Ali Beg (Chief Ambassador), his four secretaries (one of them was Uruch Beg), Sir Anthony Sherley (who was deputed by The Persian King due to his wide experience of foreign relations), many other Persian and English men and two Catholic friars. Don Juan noted his observations and experiences in a diary in Persian language. Later on, he, with the help of Alfonso Remon, (his Spanish friend) compiled this work in Castilian (Spanish) language in 1604 during his stay in Spain and G. Le Strange translated it in 1926. The work comprises three books. Each book is further divided into chapters. In the beginning of each chapter, there are a few introductory lines related to the issues under discussion in the chapter.

The first book charts Persian history both ancient and contemporary, people, culture, its governmental system, and its customs. Don Juan pays many thanks to God and Jesus Christ who gave him courage and strength and revealed the light of Christianity unto him. All this was divine will and divine mercy. He also mentions that through his work, he wants to rectify the mistakes made by Giovanni Botero and Thomas Minadoi, the two

well-known historians, in their works. Don Juan relates that Persia is an ancient country. Its capital is Shiraz, which was known as Persepolis in old times. He describes Persian men and women and their interest in trade. Talking about the Persian political system, Don Juan says that the Persian King has to seek the support of the nobles for administration. These nobles usually belong to thirty-two most influential and powerful families. The King's palace is called the 'Dawlat Khanah' whereas the Queen's palace is known as seraglio or the 'Haram'. A royal seraglio may have hundreds of beautiful women who are guarded by eunuchs and old men. Besides them, nobody can think of entering seraglio. Persians follow the Prophet Mahomed. But, they think Ali, the right descendent of Mahomed instead of Abubakar, Omar and Othman.

The second book recounts the genealogy of the Safavid dynasty that can be traced back to the cousin and sun-in-law of the Prophet Mahomed, Ali and the wars that took place between the Persians and Turks. The Persians, in the imitation of Ali, wear hats of red color due to which they are called 'Qizil Bash'. A Persian king is called Sophi, which may mean a wise person, but in Persian language, the word means cotton or wool. The most famous Persian Kings of the Safavid dynasty like Shah Ismail, Shah Thmasp, Muhammad Khuda Bandah and Amir Hamzah fought many wars against the Turk Emperors such as Sultan Sulayman, Sultan Selim, Sultan Murad. Don Juan tells that he and his father, Sultan Ali Beg, also participated in some of these wars against The Turks. He also describes the jealousies and conspiracies that took place in the Persian court and caused the deaths of the members of royal families.

The third book deals with the Embassy's visit to the eight Western-European countries, his own and his fellows' conversion to Christianity in Spain and his decision to live in Spain forever. Don Juan describes how the members of Embassy were warmly welcomed in Moscow, Germany and Spain. In this book, Don Juan narrates the quarrel that happened between Husayn Ali Beg and Sir Anthony Sherley and the subsequent disappearance of Anthony Sherley and other Englishmen who were the part of this Embassy. Finally, Don Juan discusses the conversion of three Persian secretaries of the Persian Embassy: Ali Quli Beg who became Don Philip of Persia, Buniyad Beg who was named as Don Diego of Persia and Uruch Beg himself who was christened as Don Juan of Persia. The Spanish King honored them, granted yearly pension of 1200 crowns to each and many more facilities. At the end, Don Juan once again pays special thanks to both God and the Spanish King for showing him the light of true faith.

**4.2.8. An Overview of *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of The Reign of Elizabeth, 1601-1603 (1864)*:** State Papers refer to the governmental record of the chronological correspondence related to the home affairs during the early modern period of England. These papers contain the letters (private & official), reports, memoranda and instructions, which were written during the period of different secretaries of the State. They are a useful source to know the British history of the period since they provide significant information about different aspects of early modern England like trade, government policies, religious, economic, social issues and many more. *The State Papers (1601-1603)* may be divided into four parts.

The first part is related to the papers about the famous rebellion of the Earl of Essex and the disciplinary measures, which were taken against the Earl's adherents. It contains the examination and confession of the people who were attached to the Earl of Essex in one or the other way. Most of the people like Sir Charles Danvers, Sir Christopher Blount, Guillam Merrick and Mr. Cuffe, who were involved in this rebellion, were sentenced to death. The Earl himself was beheaded because of his treacherous acts. The second part is about the religious conflicts between the Protestant England and the Catholic Spain, the differences between the Jesuits and the secular priests, Pope Clement VIII's advice to the Queen to exercise charity, the landing of famous Spanish Armada commanded by Don Juan d' Aquila in Ireland, the plans to invade England and to murder Queen Elizabeth. The third part deals with the papers, which give information about the illness and death of the Queen. The fourth part consists of Sir Anthony Sherley's letters (no doubt only a few letters) which he wrote to the Secretary Cecil, the Lord Chief Justice (the most important and lengthy one), the Countess of Cumberland and some others which open a new window with regard to the Sherleyean myth. Anthony Sherley's letters reveal his efforts to prove that he is a faithful servant of the Queen and loyal to England. It is through these letters we come to know that Persia had strong diplomatic relations with Spain.

### Part Three:

#### 4.3. New Historicist Reading of the Selected Plays

##### 4.3.1 A New Historicist Reading of Thomas Preston's *Cambyses: A Lamentable Tragedy Mixed Full of Pleasant Mirth* (c. 1561):

###### 4.3.1.1. USE of Anecdote:

And albeit at the begynnyng he [Cambyses] subdued and conquered Egypte, yet anone he forgatte all goodnes and degendred quyte and cleane from the renowned and excellent vertues of hys father... But such maners coulde not long haue successe. For God speaketh in the scripture. Blowdy men and wylde shall not fynyshe halfe theyr days upon the erthe. Wherefore not long after, wyth a greuouse vengeance, God plaged him (Taverner, 1539, Fol. 18v- 21r).

Richard Taverner (1539) describes the story of Cambyses, King of Persia in the second book of his historical work *Garden of Wysedome*. He shows only one good deed of Cambyses i.e. the flaying of his corrupt deputy Sisamnes. Otherwise, he represents Cambyses as a tyrant and a wicked person who commits many heinous crimes in the whole story. For an instance, Taverner highlights at the end of the play that “god woll not longe suffer tyrants to reigne. For not longe after the deathe of Cyrus above the space of one yeare lyved Cambyses, neither lefte he any heire of hys kyngdome” (ibid). Thus, according to Taverner, as Cambyses is a tyrant, so his fall is an act of divine punishment. Like Taverner, a German writer John Carion (1550) has represented Cambyses in a negative way in his work *Chronichorum*. According to Armstrong (1950), Carion’s work

in translation was available in England six years before Taverner's work (pp. 129-135). If it is accepted, it means Taverner has followed Carion. Just look at the similarity at the end of Cambyses' story in Carion's work that "This example sheweth, that God suffreth tyrauntes not very long. For he lyued not much more than one yeare after Cyrus, neither left he anye heyre after hym: and of thys wyse is he cleane deade" (ibid, p. 134). Similarly, Preston (1561) in his play *Cambyses* depicts Cambyses in a negative way. Ambidexter describes Cambyses in the words:

I insure you he is a king most vile and parnitious,

His doings and life are odious and vicious. (Preston, 1561, L. 778-779. p. 31).

After Cambyses' death, the First Lord comments:

A just reward for his misdeeds the God above hath wrought (ibid, L. 1193. p. 45).

One of the traditional ways of starting a new historicist analysis is to narrate a historical document that is termed as the anecdote. An anecdote is "the literary form or genre that uniquely refers to the real" (Fineman, 1989, p.56). The juxtaposition of anecdote with the literary text enables the new historicists to explore the power relations in both the text and co-text and subsequently make certain generalized socio-historical and political claims. The above lines taken from Taverner's (1539) *Garden of Wyshedome* and Preston's *Cambyses* (1561) provide the picture of how the early modern writers of the period perceived King Cambyses of Persia as an incarnation of evil who met his punishment because of his wickedness. All early modern writers like Carion, Taverner

and Preston has represented Cambyses in a negative way in different discourses that help us get at the episteme of the period. As Burton J. Fishman (1976) puts it that “Cambyses was, after all, regarded in middle ages and in Renaissance as an unredeemably vicious and cruel man” (p.201). Nevertheless, the modern historians like A.T. Olmstead (1948), T. C. Young, Jr. (1988) and *Encyclopedia Britannica* see the Western discourses about Cambyses with suspicious eyes. On the basis of their rigorous study of some ancient non-Western sources such as the accounts of Udjahorresene, Elamite documents, Aramaic materials, *the Bisitun inscription of Darius I*, Babylonian cuneiform sources, *the Cyrus Cylinder*, the Egyptian hieroglyphic writings, and the Memphis Serapeum, they consider Cambyses an “effective king of Babylon” (Young, 1988, p. 47). In the light of the evidence of these ancient non-Western discourses, it can be argued that the early modern English writers have misrepresented Cambyses in their works which shows their biased attitudes in case of representations of the cultural others. This was a general discourse of the early modern English period to represent the negative and stereotypical images of the cultural others for the sake of education, entertainment, and construction of the identities of their audience of the period. Nevertheless, the main purpose of this discourse was to support and justify England’s domination of the world’s resources. This type of discourse may be described as “the Renaissance’s imperialist discourse” (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv).

#### **4.3.1.2. Discourse and Power Relations:**

While using Foucault’s concept of discourse, new historicists, like Edward Said, see a close relationship between discourse and power. A discourse “is not singular and monolithic” rather “there is always a multiplicity of discourses” (Barry, 1999, p. 176).



Power circulates more effectively in different directions through exchange of ideas, which may be traced in different discourses of a culture. A discourse is “not just a way of speaking or writing, but the whole mental set and ideology” (ibid). The terms discourse and ideology “are often used interchangeably” (Tyson, 2006, p.285). With reference to the representation of Cambyses in the early modern English period, not only Taverner who has employed imperialist discourse in the portrayal of Cambyses but other writers of the period also have done the same thing in their works. For an instance, Preston also depicts Cambyses in his play *Cambyses* (c. 1561) as an Oriental despot who possesses all the negative traits, which may be observed in the Western representations of some other Oriental rulers like Sultan Soliman, Sultan Selimus and Sultan Murad. Taverner and Preston copied this information from their Western-European predecessors such as Carion, Herodotus and other classical writers “with or without acknowledgement and felt no compunction in coloring the narrative to increase its interest” (Wann, 1915, p. 434). In this way, these writers have supported the ideology of the dominant group and demonized the Oriental characters.

Both Taverner and Preston have employed the same discourse to represent the cultural others which can be even traced back in the work of Greek historian, Herodotus’ *History* printed in 1584. This imperialist discourse, which denigrated the others, was pervasive in the early modern English society to promote “an imperialist cause” and for “the ideological backing” (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv). In this case, it is worth mentioning in passing that “the phrase The British Empire was invented in the late sixteenth century by the English mathematician and astrologer John Dee” (Khan, 2012, p.94). It shows that the

seeds of imperialism were sown in the early modern England though the real imperialism started in 18<sup>th</sup> century. This imperialist or pre-colonial discourse granted linguistic and intellectual superiority to England and subsequently enabled her to project the image of a civilized and powerful nation of the world. Writers and playwrights of the early modern period used their literary representations as ideological tools to strengthen this sense of superiority. This becomes prominent at the end of the play where Preston introduces the positive adjectives for his queen and country fellows. He has created this play to admonish “the gentle Audience” and guide “the noble Queen and her honorable Council” (Preston, 1561, Epilogue. pp. 45-46) so that they may practice justice in England. Moreover, he uses the binaries of “this wicked king” and “our noble Queen” (ibid) to stress the point that the Oriental are irrational, illogical, beast-like and the Western are logical, rational and true human beings. Here, the choice of words ‘gentle, noble and honorable’ for the West and the ‘wicked’ for the East is significant and meaningful as it refers to the way the Western writers perceived the East. Thus, Preston’s *Cambyses* is complicit in the contemporary discourses, which were Eurocentric. The play supports the dominant ideology of the period which was to demonize the cultural others. Like Preston, most of the playwrights of the period have portrayed stereotypical images of the aliens or the others in their works. As Emile Bartels (1993) asks a question “And why were ‘other’, non-European, worlds like Persia, Egypt, Africa, and the East so often the settings on the stage ...” (ibid, p. Xiii)? In this context, Carion, Taverner and Preston have represented Cambyses as a tyrant, despot, a drunkard, a murderer and a lusty fellow who commits unnatural acts to hold the sway. Thus, all these texts “form a perfectly

circular and closed discourse” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 152) since they are intertextual and treat the story of Cambyses in the same manner. If Herodotus, Carion, Taverner, and Preston have represented Cambyses as a tyrant, there is a reason behind it. For this purpose, it is significant to understand Cambyses’ role in “Judeo- Christian history” (Hill, 1992, p. 419). According to the historical events of the period, Cambyses persecuted the Jews and stopped them to build their Jewish temple, the house of Lord, which they had started building during the reign of King Cyrus. Mainly, it is due to this act, Cambyses is considered “a sacrilegious tyrant” (Calvin, 1852, pp. lxxi-lxxii). In England, King Henry also persecuted his political and religious enemies and stopped the construction of the reformed church because of which he is known as a “tyrant and lecherous monster” (Hill, 1992, p. 427). Thus, the story of King Cambyses, a cultural other not only enabled Preston to comment on the contemporary political situation but also helped him disseminate the dominant ideology of the period. Subsequently, these different discourses may be considered as imperialist discourses that paved the way for the Oriental discourse of the later years.

The commonalities in these different discourses of the period i.e. literary discourse of Preston and historical discourse of Carion and Taverner reveal the fact that texts are cultural artefacts because they are embedded in the socio-historical and political realities of the early modern English period. Both literary and non-literary texts “tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text was written” (Tyson, 2006, p. 291). They result from the negotiation or exchange with the socio-historical conditions of the period hence there is a

dialectic relationship between them and the conditions. Both Preston's *Cambyses* and Taverner's *Garden of Wysedome* along with Carion's *Chronichorum* "are mutually constitutive: they create each other" (ibid, pp. 291-292). The conditions of the early modern period created these texts and in return, the texts created them. Like the texts, the authors, historians, readers and critics are also cultural constructs because they are unavoidably caught up in their socio-historical and political contexts. Therefore, Preston, Taverner and other writers have written what circulated in the early modern culture because of exchange of ideas. These ideas in the form of different discourses shaped their personality and in return, they shaped their works. Different discourses create the episteme which refers to "the rules and constraints outside which individuals cannot think or speak without running the risk of being excluded or silenced" (ibid, p, 185). Thus, it was a dominant thought of the early modern English period to portray the negative and stereotypical images of the cultural others and particularly the Orient rulers. It is under this thought Carion, Taverner and Preston have represented the negative image of Cambyses in their works. These works support the ideology of the dominant group and helped the West to inculcate upon the minds of the Oriental people that they are inferior, uncivilized and uncultured as compared to the Western people. Thus, these works serve as powerful ideological tools and, consequently, enabled the West dominate the East.

#### **4.3.1.3. Historicity of Text and Textuality of History:**

The historical discourse of Carion and Taverner and the literary discourse of Preston serve good example of what Louis Montrose defines as "the historicity of text and the textuality of history" (Montrose, 1989, p. 20). The historicity of text means that a literary

text should be studied with reference to its context i.e. the socio-historical conditions of the period. Thus, the study of Preston's *Cambyses* with reference to the conditions of the early modern period in which this play was created may be described as the historicity of the text. The textuality of history means that all history is recorded in written form, in different texts of the past written by historians, therefore, history is in textualized form. From this point of view, the parallel reading of Carion and Taverner's historical texts along with Preston's *Cambyses* forms the textuality of history. It is through these literary and non-literary works, "one not only arrives at a more accurate picture of the past but also discovers knowledge that was lost in traditional historical and literary accounts" (Dobie, 2002, p.185). This is the only way to know the past and "to speak with the dead". (Greenblatt, 1988, p.1).

Preston's play *Cambyses* was 'performed for the queen [Elizabeth] at the beginning of her rule' (Ward, 2008, p. 167). Its purpose was to express good wishes, "pray" (Preston, 1561, Epilogue. pp. 45-46) for the newly enthroned queen and make her learn the lesson from the story of an Oriental barbarian. The play serves an oblique commentary on the historical and political conditions of the period. It refers to the significant events that took place during the regimes of King Henry VIII, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. Martin Luther's movement of religious reformation, which started with the publication of his 95 theses in Wittenberg, caused the division of Christianity into Catholicism and Protestantism. England decided to follow Protestantism and dissociated herself "from the wild boar of Rome" (Sanders, 2000, pp. 104-105). This prompted the abolition of Pope's authority (1534) in England and King Henry VIII (1509-1547) became the head of the

Church of England. But it was Queen Elizabeth who properly consolidated the Church of England and attained the dual dignity of the “Head of State and the Supreme Governor of the Church of England” (ibid, p. 128). After the death of King Henry, Edward VI (1547-1553) ruled England and was followed by Queen Mary (1553-1558). With the accession of Queen Mary, there was return to Catholicism in England. Queen Mary’s death in 1558 led to the accession of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) who revived Protestantism in England.

Eugene D. Hill (1992) finds close parallels between Preston’s story of Cambyses and the contemporary historical conditions. To him, Henry VIII resembles Cambyses. As Cambyses obstructed the construction of the Jewish temple, similarly, Henry VIII hindered the building of the Church of England. (pp. 404-433). To support his point, Hill cites Anthony Gilby, the famous translator of Scripture known as the Geneva Bible. Gilby, describing the period of Henry VIII, sums up “Thus was there no reformation, but a deformation, in the time of that tyrant and lecherous monster” (ibid, p. 427). Later on, when Mary became the Queen of England, she caused the persecution of many Protestants, particularly through Edmund Bonner who was a Bishop of London from 1553 to 1559 and who became notorious as ‘Bloody Bonner’ (Carleton, 2004). Preston (1561) in *Cambyses* compares Cambyses to this Bishop:

What a king was he that hath used such tyranny!

He was akin to Bishop Bonner, I think verily!

For both their delight was to shed blood,

But never intended to doo any good (L. 1147-1150. p. 43).

Preston's mention of Bloody Bonner in the play is an explicit allusion to the violence of Queen Mary's period. Lawrence Stone (1989) observes that this was "the fearful period", "the most ferocious period of arbitrary and bloody tyranny in English history" (p. 24-38). All these events created the atmosphere of frustration and rebellion and fanned the subversive voices among the people of England. Thus, the need was felt to contain and control the public peacefully. There was a surge of multiplicity of discourses such as statutory, religious, historical and literary whose purpose was to teach English public the doctrine of passive obedience to a tyrant. In this respect Henry VIII's 1534 and Mary's 1553, royal proclamations are significant since they warn the citizens not to do any seditious act (Mathur, 2010, p.47). Similarly, the theological discourses of the period exhorted people not to disobey a tyrant since he is a divinely ordained ruler, therefore, "whosoever resisteth shall go to dampnacioun" (Ward, 2008, p. 151). It is in this context, Carion and Taverner created the historical discourses, and Preston created the literary discourse to teach the concept of passive obedience. In this way, the function of these different discourses may be seen as vehicles of containment that tried to counter the subversive voices of the early modern English society. All these discourses also support the dominant ideology of the period that was to make people obedient to the rulers of the period. To make their message more effective, the writers and playwrights of the period chose the story of a cultural other like Cambyses since through a story distant geographically, they found great space to deal with the issues close locally. As Allyna Ward (2008) remarks that "In developing the emphasis on the infernal nature on Cambyses' actions, Preston took explicit account of contemporary discussions about

political resistance and obedience, predestination and divine providence” (p. 153). In the light of this historicity, it can be argued that Preston’s play *Cambyses* and Taverner’s description of Cambyses in his historical work *Garden of Wysedome* are rooted in the socio-historical realities of the early modern English period. They are in conformity with one of the basic concepts of New Historicism that there is “the mutual embeddedness of art and history” (Gallagher & Greenblatt, 2001, p.7) because there is an interaction in all these discourses. The interaction of the different discourses related to Cambyses also confirms the new historicist concept of ‘thick description’, which they have borrowed from the French cultural anthropologist, Clifford Geertz’s work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973). Geertz in his work contrasts thick description with thin description. Thin description “focuses only on an isolated act” whereas thick description “includes the context of the act” (Dobie, 2002, p.186) and conveys the “notion that history is a matter of interpretations, not facts, and that interpretations always occur within a framework of social conventions” (Tyson, 2006, p. 289). Thus, the multiplicity of discourses on Cambyses are not facts but mere interpretations. That is why, the new historicists think that the claim of objectivity or finding truth is wrong since truth is “narratologically and culturally contingent” (Dobie, 2002, p. 178). Furthermore, this historicity also bears out new historicists’ views on representation. To them, representation does not simply reflect reality. Rather, representation refers to a process of mediation which involves negotiation and exchange. All representations are “in some ways interconnecting and interactive” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 132). Preston’s *Cambyses* is also a product of negotiation with the contemporary representations of Cambyses such as Tavern’s *Garden of Wysedome* and



Carion's *Chronichorum*, which circulated in the early modern English period. Further, all these representations have dialectic relationship and form intertextuality.

#### **4.3.1.4. Construction of Identity:**

One of the central assumptions and arguments of new historicist analyses is that identities are fictions which are formulated and adapted through narratives and performances, and that they are formulated and adapted in response to and as a way of interacting with the prevailing historical conditions (Brannigan, 1998, p. 61).

New historicism rejects the concept of a complete and autonomous self. Like text, author, reader and critic, self or personal identity is also a cultural artefact. It results from negotiations and is constituted by and constitutes the culture in which one lives. The new historicist critics like Louis Montrose (1980), Stephen Orgel (1975) and Stephen Greenblatt (1980) in their works tend to emphasize the significant role of Renaissance culture in shaping identities. Greenblatt (1980) stresses that "literary and social identities were formed in this culture" (p. 6). Renaissance culture shaped identities through the interplay of different discourses. In this respect, the interplay of different discourses related to Cambyses, King of Persia, such as literary and historical played an important role in constructing individual and cultural identities that in return constituted these discourses.

The critical reading of the discourses related to Cambyses indicates the point that these writers have depicted Cambyses as an Oriental despot and barbarian to teach English audience and royal figures that they should try to distinguish themselves from the

Oriental people and rulers due to their nobility and cultural superiority. It is only by setting them apart from the irrational, sensual and wicked Oriental, the English can become the leaders and dominate the world. These discourses embody the dichotomies of self and other which show self as superior, noble, rational, and full of self-control whereas other as inferior, wicked, irrational and sexual. The interplay of discourses on Cambyses not only helped the West produce the Orient of their own will, define itself and finally form its identity. The Oriental is wicked and inferior and, we are noble and superior. Therefore, being intellectually and culturally superior, it is our right to dominate and rule such irrational and illogical others. The demonization of Cambyses like other Oriental rulers, on the one hand, enabled the English writers and playwrights of early modern period to educate and entertain their audience, and on the other hand, “provided a highly charged impetus for England’s own attempts to dominate the East” (Bartels, 1992, p. 5).

The demonization of others is necessary for the construction of self and subsequently for the justification of gaining power over others. As Greenblatt maintains that “we define ourselves in relation to what we are not, making it necessary to demonize and objectify what we are not as ‘others’. Designated as disruptive, foreign and perhaps mad, the ‘others’ are evidence of the rightness of our own power” (Dobie, 2002, p. 180). Such imperialist discourses functioned as the tools of “ideological backing” (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv) and paved the way for colonialism. In this way, the circulation of the multiplicity of discourses on Cambyses provided great space to the writers and playwrights of the early modern period. Firstly, they enabled them to comment obliquely on the contemporary

topical and political conditions of Renaissance period and subsequently fashion the identities of the English public by instructing through these discourses to become the obedient citizens of England. Secondly, as circulating discourses related to a cultural other i.e. Cambyses, they helped them assert their cultural superiority, define themselves and construct their identity as superiors with which they distinguished themselves from the Oriental as inferiors. In the words of Edward Said (2003), it was this “idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” which granted cultural hegemony to the Western countries “both in and outside Europe” (p. 7). This cultural hegemony lent linguistic and intellectual superiority to the West with which it produced the Orient through their cultural representations and at the same time constructed its identity.

#### **4.3.2. A New Historicist Reading of John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins’ *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* (1607):**

##### **4.3.2.1. Use of Anecdote:**

... worthy personages whose Noble spirits [...] have drawn other Nations into admiration of their valours and emulation of their virtues, [...] the Three Heroes of our Time [...] Honour by them has added to her [i.e., England’s] glory. [...] they were unkindly used by us, to be made strangers here at home. (Nixon, 1607, B- B2).

Usually, the new historicists analyze a literary work by juxtaposing it with a non-literary work that may be a historical document. The new historicists call this historical document an anecdote. The use of anecdote helps the new historicists explore the power relations

and “show how power extends its operations from minute anecdotes to the more complex and intricate texts and material practices embedded in a particular society or culture” (Brannigan, 1998, p. 133). In this way, the new historicists may pronounce certain socio-historical claims about history since anecdote “make[s] reference to the real (Fineman, 1989, p.56). The above lines from Anthony Nixon’s pamphlet *The Three English Brothers* (1607) serve reference to the real and may be used as an important contemporary historical document to comprehend the circulation of the prevalent discourses and the dominant ideology. The scholars like Samuel Chew (1937), Anthony Parr (1995) and Lopez Casellas (2013) point out in their works that Anthony Nixon (1607) acknowledges that he wrote the pamphlet *The Three English Brothers* in the light of the instructions given to him by Thomas Sherley who had returned to England in 1606 after two-year imprisonment in Constantinople. His purpose to narrate the accounts of the Sherley brothers is to show their worthiness because he perceives them as heroes. Soon after the publication of the pamphlet, John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins (1607) dramatized the Sherley brothers’ travels highlighting the same purpose in their play *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers*. In the play, the three playwrights make a request to the audience:

If forrein strangers to him be so kinde,

We hope his native Country we shall finde

More courteous, to your just cenures then,

We offer vp their trauels and our pen (Ridha, 1974, p. 46).

Both the text i.e. the play of the three playwrights and co-text i.e. Anthony Nixon's pamphlet seem to make a request to the audience that the Sherley brothers should be given kind treatment. This requesting tone strengthens the idea that both of the Sherley discourses have been created as part of the propaganda whose objective is to restore the honor of the Sherley brothers. In this respect, both the play and Nixon's pamphlet attempt to justify the Sherley brothers' "unauthorized" (Hutchings, 2015, p. 44) mission to "encourage a Christian-Persian alliance against the Ottomans" (Casellas, 2013, p.37). As the Sherley brothers' self-decided and self-contrived mission (1599-1601) was unofficial, it put their honor and fortunes in their own country at stake. An effort was required to restore the Sherley brothers' public image. It is in this scenario, the eldest brother, Thomas Sherley commissioned the writers of the period to create the play and the pamphlet "to influence public opinion on a current affair" (Publicover, 2010, p. 695). This similarity in treatment of theme and the Sherleys' defense, which is the common objective of both discourses, makes them "intertextual" (ibid, p. 701). Intertextuality and inter-discursive practices show that the relationship between the play and the pamphlet is dialectic and "material ... is transferred from one discursive sphere to another and becomes aesthetic property" (Greenblatt, 1982, p.3).

Though the play is mainly based on Nixon's pamphlet yet "The playwrights in adapting Nixon's account for the stage ignored some parts of his version and added some new incidents" (Ridha, 1974, p.14) to make their play culturally suitable and a market success. Therefore, besides some apparent objectives, which are in line with Thomas Sherley's instructions, the discourses related to the Sherleys, particularly the play *The Travailes of*

*Three English Brothers* as a dramatic discourse, have certain cultural and ideological motives, which can be explored in connection with England's imperial desires in the early modern period. In addition to it, these motives can be traced in representation of the Persian and Ottoman Turks as cultural others in the play. The dramatic discourse employed in the play may be described as the imperialist discourse whose purpose in the early modern English period was to grant cultural hegemony, which paved the way for later colonialism.

#### **4.3.2.2. Historicity of Text and Textuality of History:**

Louis Montrose (1989) emphasizes that texts “are inscriptions of history” (p. 24). Literary text as cultural artefacts should be evaluated and explicated with reference to the socio-historical conditions of the period since these conditions produce a text and a text in return produces these conditions. Therefore, a literary work cannot be divorced from its socio-historical conditions that form the historicity of the text. The textuality of history means that history or past is in textual form. It is through textual traces i.e. the documents, there is possibility of getting limited access to past since “access to full and authentic past” (ibid, p. 20) is difficult. In short, historicity of text refers to the conditions, which create a literary work, and textuality of history refers to the fact that history is textualized. Though, it may be difficult to recuperate the full past yet, it is possible “to recover the ideology that gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helped to spread within the culture” (Dogan, 2005, p. 82).

As far as John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* (1607) is concerned, it dramatizes the Sherley brothers' travels from

1599 to 1601. It was created and performed in 1607. It is grounded in the socio-historical conditions of the early modern period. Firstly, the religious conditions of the period that form the background of the play are worthy of discussion. As it has been mentioned earlier that England became a full-fledged Protestant country under the rule of Queen Elizabeth when she assumed the dual responsibility of the “Head of State and as Supreme Governor of the Church of England” (Sanders, 2000, p. 128). England’s religious identity as a Protestant country and her separation from the Church of Rome developed hostility between the Catholic Spain and Protestant England, which consequently caused the wars between the two countries.

Both Samuel Chew (1937) and Lopez Casellas (2013) mention that Anthony Sherley and Robert Sherley, Protestants by birth, during their travels to Persia and other Eastern lands had converted to Catholicism from about 1598-1600. The two brothers’ conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism along with their unofficial mission created serious problems for them. Anthony Sherley was banned to come back to England by Queen Elizabeth “because of his unauthorized departure [and] lived out his years mostly in Spain” (Houston, 2009, p. 141) where the titles of the “Knight of Saint Iago” and “Captain of th’ Armado” (Ridha, 1974, p.136) were bestowed upon him. The youngest brother Robert failed “in gaining James’ support for trade alliances with Persia [and] died there in disfavor with Abbas in 1628” (Houston, 2009, p. 142). In these adverse circumstances, the eldest brother Thomas Sherley who was imprisoned in Constantinople came back to England in 1606 due to the interference of James 1 and devised a strategy to restore the honor of the Sherley family. That is why, he commissioned the writers and playwrights of

the period to create the works which might restore the Sherleys' honor in their own country.

Secondly, the political conditions of the period particularly with reference to Anglo-Muslim relations are also worth mentioning. As the Christianity had bifurcated into Catholicism and Protestantism, similarly the Muslims also divided into Shi'a Muslims of Persia and Sunni Muslims of the Ottoman Empire. Because of these religious differences, both disliked and hated each other. England had clear knowledge of the sectarian differences between the Shi'a Persians and Sunni Turks (Masood, 2012, pp. 5-6). The English wanted to exploit these differences and form a Christian-Persian alliance against the Ottomans. This alliance was beneficial for the whole Europe because if the Turks and Persians fought against each other, "Persia would act as buffer to fend off Ottoman's threats to Europe" (Farahmandfar, 2016, p. 145). At the same time, England had established friendly commercial relations with the Ottoman Turks despite her avowed hatred against the Turks during the reign of Queen Elizabeth especially through the Levant Company, which was supplying a lot of wealth to England and boosting her economy. Thus, the national interests got the upper hand over the national hatred and England became a trading partner of Turkey. The accession of James to the English throne prompted a shift in English policies towards The Turks. Despite his strong liking for and inclination towards the Persians, James could not foster either the trade relations or the military alliance with Persia due to the national interests, which England was gaining in the form of the Levant Company. It is in this scenario, Sir Anthony's suggestion to the Persian Sophy in *The Travailes of Three English Brothers* to have a



Christian-Persian league against the Turks finally proves “out of date” (Hutchings, 2015, p. 52) and fails to mature.

Thirdly, the Sherleys’ thirst for fame and riches i.e. the economic desires that inspired them to try their fortunes in the exotic lands also seems to function as the main motive for their travels to Persia in the play. According to Jonathan Burton (2009), Anthony Sherley during his stay in Venice came to know about the Persian silk trade and the Sophy’s hospitality towards the foreigners, this idea came in his mind that he should introduce himself to the Sophy as an official ambassador of the Christian princes and negotiate for trade as well as military relations with Persia. In reality, Anthony was deputed neither for Christian-Persian alliance nor for trade relations by any Christian ruler of the period. It was mere Sherleys’ “a wish-fulfilment fantasy” (Hutchings, 2015, p.53). The textual analysis of the play bears out the fact that the Sherleys visited Persia for fame and wealth rather than for any noble or patriotic aims in their minds. That is why, the three playwrights seem to convey this point through the personification of Fame in the prologue and epilogue of the play. In the Epilogue, Fame as a personified character makes this point clear that:

Thus far hath Fame with her proclayming trumpe,

Sounded the Trauailles of our English brothers (Ridha, 1974, p. 136).

The playwrights have done their best to portray the Sherleys as heroes in the play but their deeds in foreign countries are unheroic and in no way worthy of their noble characters. For an instance, Thomas Sherley decides to attack a town under “the Turks dominion” (ibid, 8. 22, p. 83) with his soldiers by tempting them “to purchase gould”

(ibid, 9.41, p. 85). But the soldiers desert Thomas Sherley and refuse to attack the Turkish town because they think that overthrow may be their lot “instead of gold” (ibid, 9. 44, p.85). During this attempt, Thomas Sherley is arrested by the Turks, who convey him to Constantinople. While explaining the sudden arrest of his brother Thomas to the Persian Sophy, Robert Sherley tells Thomas’ motives, which brought him to Turkey:

desire of fame

That in all ages has beene Sherleys aime

Drewe him from home (ibid, 15.121-123, p. 113).

Like his brother Thomas Sherley, Anthony Sherley is also mean and greedy. Halibeck, a Persian lord, describes him “a Fugitive, / A Christian spy, a pirate and a Theefe” (ibid, 5. 4-5, p. 77). The playwrights do their best in the play to defend these accusations levelled against Anthony Sherley and depict him as hero but the reality was otherwise. Anthony was a real culprit. As Mark Hutchings (2015) argues that Halibeck’s “charge is not without foundation; indeed [Anthony] had operated as privateer early in his career and was accused of theft in Russia” (p. 51). When the Sophy comes to know about Anthony’s underhand activities in foreign countries where he has gone as a member of the embassy that negotiates the Christian-Persian alliance against the Turks with different Christian monarchs, he tells Robert about Anthony that

How much he has abus’d himself, and vs

In his employments (Ridha, 1974, 15. 112-113, p. 113).

The Sophy further adds that the Sherleys are “all ambition” (ibid, 14. 102, p. 112) and they are nothing

But traitors.

Ignoble Sherley, treacherous Christian (ibid, 14. 88-89, p.111).

All these conditions form the historicity of Day, Rowley and Wilkins' *The Travailes of Three English Brothers*. As far as the textuality of the history is concerned, all the discourses such as literary, historical and travel related to the Sherleys which circulated at that time in the society form the textuality of history since these circulating discourses constitute the textualized history and provide an access to the history of the past.

#### **4.3.2.3. Discourse and Power Relations:**

“Discourse, by which is meant all sign systems and generators of meaning, is the only material subject of study, and therefore the only route to the past, to self, to any form of knowledge” (Brannigan, 1998, p.62). Power flows in society through the circulation of multiplicity of discourses, which are all pervasive and regulate the operations of power. Discourses may be “overlapping and competing with one another ... in any number of ways at any given point in time” (Tyson, 2006, p. 285). In case of the Sherleys' adventures, there was a multiplicity of discourses, which circulated in the early modern period. The discourses related to the Sherleys may be divided into two categories: the overlapping discourses, which are mainly English in sources, and the competing or conflicting discourses, which are non-English in sources except *Calendar of State papers, Domestic Series of The Reign of Queen Elizabeth, 1601-1603* (1864) which is English in source and consists of the official correspondence. Among the conflicting discourses either in French or in Spanish language, the most prominent are Abel Pincon's *Relation d'un voyage de Perse* (composed in 1605 but published in 1651) and Don Juan's

*Relations de Persia* (2013). The conflicting discourses both English and non-English “interrogate the positive picture of the Sherleys” (Casellas, 2013, p. 38). These conflicting discourses present different picture of the Sherley brothers, which does not match with the picture portrayed in the overlapping discourses. The official correspondence of the period recorded in *Calendar of State papers, Domestic Series of The Reign of Queen Elizabeth, 1601-1603* (1864) and Don Juan’s *Relations de Persia* (2013) show the Sherleys in most unfavorable light. In a letter of March 3, 1602 from Venice, Sir Anthony Sherley complains to Secretary Cecil that he opened a great way of profit as from Persia to China but he is “reported to be banished, and proclaimed traitor” (CSP, 1864, p.159). In another letter of July 20, 1602 also from Venice, Anthony Sherley requests the Lord Chief Justice of England for “pardon” and seems to protest against Queen Elizabeth’s “cruel and unjust” (CSP, 1864, pp. 223-224) judgment. Similarly, Don Juan’s *Relations* (2013) is replete with Sir Anthony’s indecent acts, which he did as a member of the Embassy. He has portrayed him as a “charlatan, liar and murderer” (Casellas, 2013, p.38). For an instance, Don Juan narrates how the Dominican Friar was imprisoned and threatened by Anthony because Anthony had usurped the Friar’s “thousand crowns and ninety small diamonds” (Strange, 2013, p. 258) and was unwilling to return him. In another incident, Don Juan reports Anthony’s quarrel with the Persian ambassador, Husayn Ali Beg over the issue of the presents which they were supposed to present to different Christian monarchs according to the instructions of the Persian Sophy. Juan describes Anthony as a cheater who “sold or bartered away the contents [of] the thirty-two chests of presents” (ibid, pp. 283-284). It is due to such negative acts, E.

Dennison Ross (1933) calls Anthony “an inveterate and unscrupulous intriguer, a sententious hypocrite” (p.86).

The significant English sources include the anonymous *A True Report of Sir Anthony Sherley's Journey* (1600), William Parry's *A New and Large Discourse of the Travels of Sir Anthony Sherley, Knight* (1601), George Manwaring's *A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley's Travel into Persia* (1601), Nixon's *The Three English Brothers* (1607), John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* (1607) John Cartwright's *The Preacher's Travels* (1611) and Anthony Sherley's *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613). The common feature of all these English sources is that they have represented the Sherleys as noble fellows who possess all positive virtues. For an instance, the anonymous *A True Report of Sir Anthony Sherley's Journey* (1600) appreciates Sir Anthony's role who got privileges of the Sophy for Christians to trade and traffic in Persia (Ross, 1933, p. 96). William Parry (1601) reports the Sophy's admiration that amounts to exaggeration for Anthony (ibid, p.116-120). George Manwaring (1601) portrays Anthony as a Christ like figure who suffers himself so that his English fellows may be facilitated in Persia (ibid, p.193). These three discourses were created by the people who served Anthony and Robert (Casellas, 2013, p. 38) and accompanied them to Persia. These earlier discourses set the laudatory tone, which can be observed, in Nixon's pamphlet as well as in Day, Rowley and Wilkins's play. Both Nixon and the three playwrights have represented the Sherleys as the national heroes who do a great service to England. But, the reality was otherwise.

Despite the fact that these overlapping discourses register England's increasing trade interest in alien countries such as Persia and Mughal India, they also have great implications. They serve as ideological tools because they attempt to establish the Western cultural hegemony by showing the Sherleys as members of a superior culture and superior religion as compared to the Persians and Turks as people of an inferior culture and inferior religion. As J. Lopez-Pelaez Casellas (2013) observes that these varied English discourses portray the Sherleys as "exemplars of English virtue, courage and wit" (ibid, p.38). Particularly, this thing becomes most prominent in John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' play *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* (1607). The three playwrights have explicitly employed Eurocentric discourse in the play with a view to establishing this cultural hegemony. This can be observed in case of representation of the cultural others such as the Persians, Turks and the Jews in the play. The playwrights have demonized these cultural others and portrayed their stereotypical and negative images. As Jyotsna G. Singh (2009) points out that

English travel accounts to those empires also express mixed feelings, suggesting an attraction to the promise of trade and the grandeur of these courts, but also an investment in a Christian ... ideology of demonizing religious and cultural others (p. 7).

The playwrights' biased and prejudiced attitudes can be traced in the representation of the Persians who have been portrayed as emotional, jealous, liars, clever and deceitful in the play. The three playwrights have represented the Persian Sophy an emotional, illogical and irrational person. The dialogues between the Sophy and Anthony Sherley

serve a good example that represent the East in inferior terms and West in superior terms. After showing the manner of Christian wars to the Sophy, Anthony Sherley tells him that with the “engines of more force” i.e. the cannons:

We can lay cities leuell with the pauement,

Bandee vp Towers and turrets in the ayre;

And on the seas orewhelme an Argosie (Ridha, 1974, 1. 112-116, p. 51).

The Sophy like an ignorant child is wonder-struck to see this cannon show and thinks that the cannon “is a God” (ibid, 1. 119, p. 51) and Anthony is a divine figure with “God-head” (ibid, 1.126, p. 52). That is why Ladan Niayesh (2008) notes that “Western superiority here takes the form of a cannon, which the Sophy apparently sees for the first time” and which causes him “worship both the object and the man who wields and masters it” (p.131). Like an enthralled person, the Sophy requests Anthony:

First teach me how to call thee ere I speake,

I more and more doubt thy mortality

Those tongues do imitate the voice of heauen (Ridha, 1974, 1. 121-122, p. 52).

The Sophy continues that:

Tell vs thy precepts; and we’ll adore thee. (ibid, 1. 128, p. 52).

These and ensuing dialogues reveal how the three playwrights have depicted Anthony Sherley as hero, a demi god, a member of an enlightened, educated and intellectually superior race and the Sophy as an ignorant child who does not know the art of communication, a member of uncivilized and inferior race. The Sophy’s praise and adoration of Anthony is an evidence of what Nabil Matar (1999) describes “a

representation of representation” in the Oriental plays like this one which marks “the birth of a British/ European discourse of conquest that preceded the development of other constituents of conquest” (pp.15-17). The Sophy in his efforts of Anthony’s admiration and adoration undervalues himself so much that he exclaims:

But God or Christian, or what ere he be,

I wish to be no other but as he (Ridha, 1974, 1. 78-79, p. 50).

This desire of self- negation and adoption of foreign identity on the part of the Persian ruler, the most powerful person of Persia, is completely unconvincing and unappealing and show him a king of shreds and patches. These dialogues reflect exaggeration and appropriation of the three playwrights who make the Sophy denigrate his own identity and culture and exalt the Christian characters and their culture. It is in this perspective, Jonathan Burton (2009) thinks that the play may be seen as a part of “the grand narrative of the rise of British empire” (p.38). He further adds that “If English texts of early modern period develop an imperial rhetoric, the defining mode of that rhetoric is appropriation” (ibid, p. 40).

The Sophy’s adoration and applaud of Anthony is so unconvincing for Anthony himself that he informs the Sophy to be pragmatic:

Oh, let your princely thoughts descend so low,

As my beings worth, think me as I am:

No stranger are the deeds I show to you

Then yours to me (Ridha, 1974, 1. 129-132, p. 52).



All these dialogues show the clear contrast between the Sophy and Anthony Sherley: the Sophy is emotional, irrational and illogical but Anthony Sherley is pragmatic and factual. This leads to the conclusion that the Eastern are emotional and illogical whereas the Western are rational and pragmatic. The playwrights have further highlighted this idea in case of representation of the Sophy's Niece vis-a-vis Robert Sherley and in the depiction of Hallibeck and Callimath vis-a-vis Anthony Sherley. Through the romantic episode of Robert and the Niece, the playwrights show how the Niece as a typical Oriental woman is emotional and seductive whereas Robert is calm, composed and exhibits self-control. Similarly, the playwrights have portrayed Hallibeck and Callimath as schemers, dishonest and evil minded with reference to Anthony Sherley on whom the playwrights confer the title of Sir throughout the play. The playwrights have skillfully appropriated and exploited the historical material to establish and assert their cultural hegemony. The final attempt to assert this cultural hegemony can be observed in Robert's marriage with the Niece which indicates the peak of "imperial appropriation" (Burton, 2009, p. 39) in the play where the English adventurer overcomes the hurdles and wins an Oriental woman. Symbolically speaking, the masculine and powerful West due to his unspeakable positive talents dominates the feminine and weak East with all of her exotic and romantic appeal. In this way, "a Christianized Persian Sovereign" (Andrea, 2005, p. 289) or "a feminized Persia seems to be metaphorically claimed and possessed by the Christian West to which Robert Sherley belongs" (Niayesh, 2008, p. 132).

This denigration and demonization of cultural others seems at its worst in case of the Jews and the Ottoman Turks. The playwrights have introduced only one Jewish character

in the play in the form of Zariph, the moneylender. Like Marlowe's Barabas and Shakespeare's Shylock, he has been represented as a typical greedy Jew for whom money is more precious than humanity or mercy for a fellow being. Sir Anthony borrows a hundred thousand ducats from this Zariph to purchase a jewel for the Persian Sophy, but, he is unable to return the money on time. When Zariph demands his money, Anthony requests him to exercise mercy and give him more time to manage the money. Zariph refuses to do so and utters abusive words for Christians:

The Lice of Aegipt shall devour them all,

Ere I shew mercy to a Christian:

unhallowed brats, seed of the bond-woman,

Swine devourers, uncircumcised slaves,

That scorn our Hebrew sanctimonious writte (Ridha, 1974, 13. 7-11, p. 102).

He further threatens Anthony that “the sweetest part of a Jewes feast, is a Christian heart” (ibid, 13. 20-21, p.102). Because of his cruelty and inhuman attitude, Anthony calls him an “inhumane Dogge” (ibid, 13. 95, p.105) and “a bloody Jew” (ibid, 13. 112, p. 107). In the real adventures of the Sherleys, particularly in the narrations of Anthony Nixon (1607) and D. W. Davies (1967), there is an inclusion of a good Jew but the playwrights have changed the good Jew into a cultural stereotype. As Anthony Parr (1995) mentions that “figures like The Great Turk and Zariph the Jew are theatrical stereotypes that keep the play anchored in a Renaissance audience's reality” (p. 12).

Like the Persians and Jews, the English playwrights have represented the Turks as cultural stereotypes and worst human beings. The Great Turk is depicted as a man full of pride. He is “a God on Earth” (Ridha, 1974, 2, 27, p. 56). Because of his pride, he not only condemns Christians but also “their God” (ibid, 2. 41, p. 57). All the Turks are infidels and “devils” whereas all Christians are “vertuous men” (ibid, 2.56, p. 58). The war against the Turks is a just war in which they can freely shed blood because the objective is “to wash the euill from the good” (ibid, 2. 186, p.64). It is due to such negative representations of the cultural others and especially the Muslims, Linda McJannet (1999) argues that “Anti-Islamic stereotypes are not absent from the play” (p. 252). Such cultural representations granted intellectual superiority to the West and while functioning as ideological tools, they enabled the West to dominate the East. Therefore, despite England’s weak military power in comparison to the military strength of the Muslim empires like the Ottoman Empire, she “had already begun to put the necessary propaganda in place- to create an East full of promise and threat, ripe for English domination” (Bartels, 1992, p. 21).

#### **4.3.2.4. Construction of Identity:**

“... our individual identity consists of the narratives we tell ourselves about ourselves, and we draw the material for our narratives from the circulation of discourses that constitutes our culture” (Tyson, 2006, p. 290). Circulating discourses related to the Sherleys’ travels played significant role in constituting the identities of the audience of Renaissance period and vice versa. These discourses enabled the writers to shape the individual identities in different ways. Firstly, the writers of the period created these

discourses to mold people's mind in the support of the Sherleys who otherwise were "proclaimed traitors" (CSP, 1864, p.159) by Queen Elizabeth. Thus, one purpose of these discourses was "to improve the brothers' public standing in England" (Parr, 1996, p.15). Secondly, the play created by the three playwrights out of the circulating discourses helped them define themselves and construct individual and national identities. In this respect, the play explicitly portrays the Persians, Turks and Jews in a negative manner. Its representation of the others conforms to the representation of the cultural others in the dominant discourses of the period. It is not only the case of the three playwrights who have portrayed the cultural others in this way in their drama. Rather, it was a pervasive ideology of the period to depict the cultural others in negative and stereotypical manner. This may be observed in the pamphlets, plays, prose works, sermons and historical works of the period.

It is by creating the negative images of the others, the three playwrights have attempted to establish their cultural hegemony in terms of their intellectual, linguistic and religious superiority and defined themselves vis-à-vis the cultural others. A few textual citations from the play would be suffice to validate this point. When Anthony Sherley shows the cannon show to the Persian Sophy, he is so much impressed that he requests Anthony to teach him how to address him properly (Ridha, 1974, 1. 121, p. 52). This shows that the Sophy lacks the art of communication. Like a novice, he is in dire need of a mentor, a teacher who can guide him how to speak and what to speak. As he continues "Tell us thy precepts; and we'll adore thee" (ibid, 1. 128, p. 52). He finds "the voice of heaven" (ibid, 1. 123, p. 52) in Anthony's tongue and feels delighted to hear Anthony speak (ibid, 1.

158, p. 53) since he perceives him a divine figure with a God-head (ibid, 1. 126, p. 52). All these textual references clearly prove the English intellectual and linguistic superiority in relation to the Sophy and other Oriental characters in the play. This sense of superiority, which the playwrights attempt to assert from the beginning of the play, reaches its zenith at the end of the play. The last scene shows how the Sophy agrees for his Niece's marriage with Robert Sherley, sanctions the construction of a church in Persia and stands as a godfather in the christening ceremony of Robert and his Niece's new born baby. By dramatizing this perfect conquest of the Sherleys in Persia, the playwrights have conveyed the idea of a British Empire in embryonic form (Parr, 1996, p. 30). In a way, this is a march of the completely Muslim state towards Christianity. This was the long cherished and deliberately propagated fantasy of the Western Christians who wished to see Persia as a Christian state (Andrea, 2005, p. 283). Such cultural representations of the others through the dominant discourses obviously helped the writers of the period construct identities by channeling the individual and national attitudes in a specific direction.

Another thing, which must be added over here with reference to the construction of identities in the early modern period, is the role of the cultural encounters between the West and East. These cultural encounters between the West and the East in which the West symbolized as self and the East symbolized as other affected both. Therefore, it is incorrect to talk of Western identity or Eastern identity in pure and absolute terms. What happened during these cultural encounters was the exchange of intellectual and material goods that influenced and shaped the identities of the both. As the critics like Lisa Jardine

(1996), Jerry Brotton (2002), Jonathan Burton (2005) and Barbara Fuchs (2009) demonstrate how the exchange of intellectual and material goods played a significant role in the relations between West and East (Schmuck, 2006, pp. 1-29 & Topinka, 2009, pp. 114-130). These critics argue that it may be misleading to mention the dichotomous concepts like self and other in case of the identities of West and East in pure terms. Therefore, they prefer to use the alternative concepts like cultural fusion and cultural hybridity (Topinka, 2009, pp. 118-130). This phenomenon can be observed in case of Anglo-Persian encounters, particularly in the characters of Robert, the Niece and their newborn child. Robert Sherley remained in Persia for a few years and when he went back to England in 1611, he was a transformed person- a Protestant-Catholic and an English-Persian person. His new identity made King James angry and subsequently he had to return to Persia.

#### **4. 3.3. A New Historicist Reading of John Denham's *The Sophy* (c. 1642) and Robert Baron's *Mirza* (c. 1642):**

##### **4.3.3.1. Use of Anecdote:**

... poore prince! the path he treads to add luster to his Fathers Diadem, to do his country good, to be accounted commendable; betrays his steps, and intices him to an affrighting precipice: the more he labours to delight his Father, it serves as fuel to unjust jeolousie; the more hee dignifies his countries honour , the more applause the people crown him with; and Abbas fears his popularity (Herbert, 1634, p.174).

Sir Thomas Herbert (1634) in this extract of *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* mentions jealousy and fear as two main flaws of Shah Abbas, which caused his own catastrophe, as well as the tragic death of his son Mirza. Like Herbert, Denham and Baron also highlight these two flaws of Shah Abbas in their plays. Following him, Denham (1642) in *The Sophy* makes King Abbas confess to Mirza:

but he that now

Has poison'd thee, first poison'd me with Jealousie,

A foolish causeless Jealousie (Denham, 1642, 5.i).

In the first act of this play, Mirvan, the co-conspirator of Haly, advises him that by capitalizing on Abbas' fears, he can befool the king and make him go against Mirza:

Work on his Fears, till Fear hath made him cruel;

And Cruelty shall make him fear again (ibid, 1.i).

Like Denham, Baron (1642) also follows Herbert in his play *Mirza*. Baron comments in 'The Argument' of the play that "This jealousie... irritated by some Cabinet Councillours, enemies to the Prince about the King, begat in him a fear of the Prince growth" (Baron, 1642, p. 6). At the end of the play, Abbas confesses that it was his jealousy, which caused Mirza's imprisonment and his subsequent death:

I did,

I did, O mischief of credulity!

And causelesse jealousy! (ibid, 5. pp. 134-135).

This similarity in the representation of Shah Abbas in three different discourses shows how the early modern English writers and playwrights perceived Shah Abbas. Thus, all

these works reveal intertextuality or interplay of the discourses, which may be the focal point of the new historicist analyses.

New historicists usually start analyzing a literary work by juxtaposing it with a non-literary work, which may be described as an anecdote. New historicists do so to link the literary work with the real and, in this way, make some general statements. As Michael Payne (2005) comments that “A typical new historicist procedure is to begin with a striking event or anecdote, which has the effect of arousing skepticism about grand historical narratives or essentializing descriptions of a historical period such as the Renaissance” (p. 3). The above lines taken from Sir Thomas Herbert’s *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* (1634) allude to the tragic story of Shah Abbas’ son Prince Mirza. To Herbert, Mirza’s heroic deeds and war victories make Shah Abbas jealous of Mirza and go against his son. Provoked by jealousy, Abbas blinds Mirza and imprisons him so that he may rule Persia for a long time without any fear of a rival prince. Though there is no doubt that Herbert’s work provides useful information regarding the Safavid period yet it retains “some historical inaccuracies” (Loloi, 2012, pp. 349-350) and reflects Herbert’s Eurocentric perspectives. The discourse, which Thomas Herbert has employed to talk about the cultural others and Islam may be described as imperialist discourse. Parvin Loloi further perceives Herbert an unsophisticated and badly informed traveler in whose narration the historical Abbas has been transformed into the most enduring stereotype of medieval and Renaissance thought- the cruel Oriental tyrant (ibid). Similarly, John Butler under the entry of Thomas Herbert published on October 29, 2010



in *Encyclopedia Iranica* comments that Herbert's account shows "a marked prejudice against Islam" and he

also shares the Western stereotype of the "oriental despot," and comments at length about the unfettered power of rulers such as Shah Abbas and Jahāngir (q.v.), comparing them unfavorably with the English system of government.

John Denham's *The Sophy* (1642) and Robert Baron's *Mirza* (1642) are based on this tragic story of Mirza and both playwrights have heavily drawn upon Herbert's *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* (1634) as their source. Both plays are similar in terms of plot, theme and source except a few differences. It is due to these commonalities that I shall treat these two plays together under the following discussion. Moreover, both plays have Islamic setting, which has been emphasized through the choice of the names of well-known Muslim figures, through the story of Muslim rulers and by the oaths, which these Oriental characters constantly utter by the name of their Prophet Mahomet and by Mortys Ally. Even the recent critics like Linda McJannet (1999), Mathew Birchwood (2007), Sheiba Kia Kaufman (20016) and Amin Momeni (2016) have treated and analyzed both plays together due to their thematic and source similarities. Like Herbert's work, Denham's and Baron's play also reflect their Eurocentric perspectives towards the representation of Islam and the cultural others i.e. the Oriental characters. Similarly, both playwrights have used the same imperialist discourse to portray the Oriental characters. The writers and playwrights have created their works to instruct and entertain the audience of the early modern period through the cultural others since the Oriental

material retained a great fascination for the audience of the period. But along with instruction and entertainment, their works have deep ideological implications as well. They have demonized the Oriental characters and represented them as cultural stereotypes through this discourse with a view to establishing cultural hegemony and authority over the Orient.

#### **4.3.3.2. Historicity of the Text and Textuality of History:**

Historicity of text means that a work of art cannot be read in isolation from the cultural conditions since there is a dialectic relationship between the two and both “are mutually imbricated” (Payne, 2005, p.3). Textuality of history refers to the fact that history may be read and explored in the texts of the past. In other words, all the contemporary texts/discourses be they literary, historical, religious or political form textuality of the history or intertextuality. This intertextuality and interaction of discourses enables the new historicists to know the conditions in which the text was created and, finally, to recover the dominant ideology of the period. As far as Denham’s *The Sophy* (c. 1642) and Baron’s *Mirza* (c. 1642) are concerned, both plays were created in 1640s during the reign of King Charles 1. Denham’s *The Sophy* was “among the last plays to be acted” (Birchwood, 2007, p. 70) at the Private House in Black Friars before the closing of theaters in 1642 whereas Baron’s *Mirza* “was published in 1655 and clearly intended to be read rather than performed” (ibid). There are some uncertainties regarding the publication date of Baron’s *Mirza*. For an example, Baron himself notes in the beginning of *Mirza* that he “had finished three compleat Acts” (Baron, 1642, p.5) of *Mirza* before he saw Denham’s *The Sophy*. If Baron’s claim is true, it means the play was created in

1642. Linda McJannet (1999) claims that the play “may even have been published and read by” King Charles and some of his courtiers “before his defeat in 1646 and his death in 1649” (p. 259). If Denham’s *The Sophy* was created earlier in 1642 and Baron’s *Mirza* was created later in 1646 or in 1655, Baron’s *Mirza* reveals continuity and extension of the same historical material. Therefore, whatever the publication date of Baron’s *Mirza* may be, it has close affinities with Denham’s *The Sophy* in terms of plot, theme and source. Both plays have allusions to the socio-historical conditions of 17<sup>th</sup> century England and may be taken as a critique, a moral lesson, or a warning to the rulers of the period. The two plays refer to the unfavorable political and religious conditions that led to the Civil War and the subsequent execution of King Charles 1. Thus, the two plays serve an oblique commentary on the regime of King Charles 1 in an allegorical manner.

Charles 1 was king of England from 1625 to 1649. He believed that a king had divine right that permitted him to exercise unlimited authority in all state affairs. This belief led him to do many unwise decisions such as his marriage attempts with Spanish, Catholic princess Maria Anna, his second marriage with French, Catholic princess Henrietta Maria, his conflicts with the parliament, his too much support of Duke of Buckingham and Sir Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, his enforcement of uniform religious policies through William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, his interference with the Church of Scotland, his levying of taxes on the people of England without getting consent from the parliament and his determination to arrest and punish the five members of the parliament against the charges of treason. His unwise decisions provoked public hatred and people perceived him in terms of an absolute king and a tyrant. When King

Charles 1 was brought to Westminster Hall, the main charge against him was that “he had in fact governed by will and not by law” (Kishlansky& Morril, 2008, p. 49) and finally the executioner severed his head from his body on 30 January 1649. However, in 1660 with the restoration of monarchy, the “parliament declared Charles a martyr [and] added him to calendar of Anglican saints” (ibid, p.52).

Keeping these socio-historical conditions into consideration, the tragic story of Mirza and his tyrant father Shah Abbas offers some link with the period of King Charles 1. For example, the character of Shah Abbas may stand for King Charles 1. Though some critics like O Hehir (1968) and Parvin Loloï (1998) think that the view that Abbas may represent Charles 1 seems unconvincing (Momeni, 2016, p. 77). Contrary to it, the critics like J.M. Wallace (1974), and Amin Momeni (2016) think that Abbas and Mirza reflect two different aspects of Charles 1’s personality. As Momeni (2016) suggests that Denham “attempts to gesture towards Charles’s errors via” (p. 82) Abbas and Mirza. Similarly, Wallace (1974) thinks that Abbas as an arbitrary ruler and Mirza as the good prince allude to the two serious errors of Charles 1’s personality. In both plays, it is shown that Abbas and Mirza are culpable for their fall because Abbas granted too much power to his evil counselors and Mirza absented himself from the state on important occasions. (p. 274).

In Denham’s *The Sophy*, Abbas grants too much power to Haly, Mirvan and Caliph who ultimately cause his catastrophe whereas Mirza keeps himself away from the Persian court for adding more victories to his name. Similarly, in Baron’s *Mirza*, Abbas gives too

much power to Mahomet AllyBeg, Beltazar and his mistress, Floradella whereas Mirza remains absent from the court due to his war exploits. The difference in two plays is that Denham portrays Abbas under the influence of political and religious counselors and Baron represents Abbas under the influence of political counselors and the women of his seraglio. Parallel to this situation, Charles 1 also gave too much power to his counselors, particularly to Duke of Buckingham, William Laud and Sir Thomas Wentworth. It is believed that it was under the influence of these counselors, Charles 1 committed many errors, which ultimately prompted his execution. From this point of view, the characters of Haly and Mirvan in Denham's *The Sophy* and the characters of AllyBeg and Beltazar in Baron's *Mirza* may be analogous to Earl of Strafford and Duke of Buckingham, the evil counselors who capitalize on the monarch's fear and Jealousy. This analogy tends to work well in Denham's *The Sophy* where the character of Caliph may refer to William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

As Abbas had fears and jealousies, Charles1 experienced the same during his reign. In his angry reply to Parliament on March1, 1642, Charles 1 exclaimed that "You speak of Jealousies and Fears: Lay your hand to your hearts, and aske yourselves whether I may not likewise be disturbed with Fears and Jealousies" (Wallace, 1974, p.273). As Abbas granted too much power to his counselors, Charles 1 also did the same. As Abbas' fears and jealousies provoked him to do some foolish things, which caused his downfall, Charles 1 also did many wrong acts which led to his downfall. As J. M. Wallace alludes to the fact that "Charles, driven by fears and jealousies of his own, besides those of his

counselors, had committed an act of violence” (ibid, p. 287) against the five members of Parliament which was a tragic mistake and made him unpopular in the eyes of English public. This may be analogous to Abbas’ decision of Mirza’s imprisonment and blindness. It may be further said that Mirza’s imprisonment in Denham’s *The Sophy* and Baron’s *Mirza* refers to “Charles’ infamous imprisonment in Carisbrook Castle” (Birchwood, 2007, p. 83). Thus, in short, the picture of Persia as a collapsing empire in these two plays mirrors the picture of “England at the verge of collapse” (Ghatta, 2009, p.245).

Besides, these topical and political allusions, the two plays have some ideological implications. It was the cultural demand of the period to present the Oriental matter on the stage. This demand may be traced in Renaissance audience’s interest in the exotic appeal of the Orient, or in the fabulous riches and luxurious style of the Orient, Oriental people and monarchs, or the writers’ and playwrights’ ideological desires to construct the national and individual identities through the representation of the cultural others like the Oriental characters. It is due to this fact that Emile C. Bartels (1993) rightly thinks that the alien was a fascinating subject on the Renaissance stage (p. xiii). So, these may be considered the historicity of the two plays that eventually led to the creation of these two plays. This historicity bears out the fact that representations do not exist in isolation. Rather, they are results of negotiation or exchange and they are intertextual. Being cultural artefacts, neither these representations nor their meanings can be comprehended without comprehending the conditions, which produced them. And, all these cultural representations or discourses, be they literary like Denham’s *The Sophy*, Baron’s *Mirza*

or historical such as Herbert's *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* or travel accounts in which the travelers have represented the tragic story of Mirza constitute the textuality of history since it is recorded in all these texts. It is only through these texts, there is chance of getting glimpses of the past.

#### **4.3.3.3. Discourse and Power Relations:**

Discourse is “the language of a particular time and place that controls and preserves social relations: discourse can be thought of as ideology in action” (Dobie, 2002, pp. 184-185). It is through discourse that a dominant group regulates power in society. Usually, regulation of power works effectively through multiplicity of discourses, which may be overlapping or competing. The study of multiplicity of discourses enables new historicists to understand the socio-historical conditions, which created these discourses, and in return, these discourses created them. With reference to Shah Abbas, King of Persia, many discourses circulated in the early modern period. In all these discourses, particularly in the literary discourses of the period, the Western writers and playwrights have represented Shah Abbas and other Islamic Persian characters in a negative manner. This thing seems more prominent in case of the Muslim leaders. The Western writers and playwrights did so owing to a significant development in the history of early modern period which Emile Bartels calls “the prominent emergence of imperialist ideologies and propaganda” (Bartels, 1993, p. xiii). This development was indispensable for England to impose her dominance throughout the world (ibid, p. xiv). England achieved this objective by using and propagating a discourse, which may be considered as an imperialist, or Orientalist discourse. It is through this discourse, the West has, on the one

hand, demonized the Orient and Oriental people, Muslims and Islam and, on the other hand, distinguished itself from the Orient by employing the binaries such as self versus other and we versus they. Moreover, this discourse manifests the biased attitudes of the West towards the East, which may be termed as Eurocentric perspectives.

This Orientalist discourse seems the dominant discourse of the period and it can be traced in the works of writers and dramatists of the early modern period. Shah Abbas ruled Persia from 1588 to 1596. Persia prospered a lot under the exemplary government of Shah Abbas. Abbas laid the foundations of modern Persia. The Persian historians remember and revere him as Shah Abbas “the Great” (Romer, 1986, p.278) due to his valuable services which he rendered for Persia. But majority of the Western writers have represented him as a cultural stereotype. For example, Edmund Spenser represents Shah Abbas as an enemy of Christianity. In *The Faerie Queen* (1590-6), he mentions Shah Abbas to “warn the Christian world “against their forren foe that comes from farre” (Spenser 138) and, similarly, Thomas Heywood in *The Four Prentices of London* (1594) portrays Abbas “as a sworn enemy of Christendom that must be eliminated” (Farahmandfar, 2016, p. 142). Thomas Minadoi (1595) in *A History of Wars Between the Turks and Persians* describes the Turks and Persians as “the Barbarians” (Hartwell, 1595, p. 6) and perceives them as “two enemies of the name of Christ” (ibid, p. 7). Spenser, Heywood and Minadoi set the tone, which was followed by their successors in their works. John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins (1607) in their joint play *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* have also portrayed Shah Abbas as an irrational and illogical person in comparison to the Sherleys who have been depicted as rational,



calm and composed. During the cannon show in the play, the Persian Sophy i.e. Shah Abbas becomes speechless after seeing and listening the wonders of the English cannon from Sir Anthony Sherley. He is so much wonderstruck that he requests Anthony:

First teach me how to call thee ere I speake (Ridha, 1974, 1.121, p. 52).

The Sophy says so because he considers himself an ignorant, an inferior person, an earthly creature and perceives Anthony a well-informed person, a superior person and a divine figure with “God-head” (ibid,126). Referring to such cases of adoration of Christian characters in English plays related to the Oriental matter, Nabil Matar (1999) describes them “a representation of representation” which bespeak “the birth of a British/European discourse of conquest” (pp. 15-17).

Thomas Herbert (1634) in *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* has praised Shah Abbas only once as a ruler who is “more beloved at home, more famous abroad [and] more formidable to his enemies” (p.169). Besides this short laudatory comment, he has described Abbas as if he were a devil. To him, Abbas is a “crafty” and “politicious” (ibid, p.171) ruler, a sexual “beast” who has “four thousand concubines in his seraglio” (ibid, p. 172), a cruel and inhuman King towards his subjects and a murderer of his blood relations (ibid, pp.168-177). Herbert’s negative attitude can also be found in the representation of other Oriental characters, especially in case of the Islamic figures who will be further discussed in the coming discussion. This Orientalist discourse about Shah Abbas and Persians was popular in the cultural representations of the West. So, when Denham and Baron created their plays in the early modern culture, how they could ignore the earlier discourses related to Shah Abbas which already circulated in that culture.

Definitely, being the cultural artefacts, they capitalized on and followed the works of their successors.

Denham (1642) in his play *The Sophy* has depicted Shah Abbas as a typical Oriental despot whose negative traits can be found in the Western representations of other Oriental despots like Cambyses, Sultan Soliman, Sultan Murad, and Sultan Selimus. He represents Abbas as a lusty fellow, superstitious, suspicious, a cruel and inhuman ruler who does not spare even his father, brothers and son to prolong his rule. The gratification of physical and sexual pleasures has made him a negligent ruler:

For though his Eye is open as the Morning's,  
Towards lusts and pleasures, yet so fast a Lethargy  
Has seized his Powers towards public Cares and Dangers,  
He sleeps like Death (Denham, 1642, 1.i).

Mirvan, the co-conspirator of Haly, counsels Haly to raise Abbas' "jealousies" and "work on his Fears" since this is the best strategy to make Abbas "suspicious" (ibid) and go against Mirza. Haly calls Abbas an "Old indulgent Father", "Old and Jealous" (ibid, 2.i). Mirza bids farewell to Abbas' court as it has become a place of debauchery where "Vice" is rampant (ibid). The superstitious Abbas thanks Haly for his sincerity:

Mahomet I thank thee,  
I have one faithful servant, honest Haly (ibid).

Abbas' oath by Mahomet, the Holy Prophet would have definitely provoked a laughter among the audience of the early modern period because the English people knew that Mahomet, the Prophet of Muslims was superstitious and so are all the Muslims. Because

of his superstitious nature, Abbas compels Caliph “to advance [his] purpose” (ibid, 3.i) of taking severe action against his son, Mirza since Mirza is determined to deprive Abbas of his life and crown. Upon which, Caliph fabricates that Great Mahomet appeared and “Advised me in a Vision” to:

Tell the King,

The Prince his son attempts his Life and Crown (ibid).

It is one of “The Prophet’s Revelations”, therefore, no Persian, being follower of Mahomet, can question or challenge Caliph’s words. The crafty Abbas pays his thanks to Mahomet for this special care:

Great Mahomet we thank thee,

Protector of this Empire, and this Life,

Thy Cares have met my Fears (ibid).

All these dialogues between Abbas and Caliph reveal that the Muslims driven by superstitions lose the path of reason and virtue and can degrade themselves enough to fulfill their desires. To satisfy his jealous and credulous nature, Abbas imprisons and blinds Mirza. Upon which, the enraged Mirza calls Abbas unnatural and “Tyrant” since he “Find[s] out no other object but his Son” (ibid). It is this unfair treatment of Shah Abbas that makes the critics like H. R. Romer (1986), Linda McJannet (1999), Parvin Loloi (2012) and Amin Momeni (2016) note that the West has not paid due and deserving significance to Abbas. Denham’s Eurocentric perspectives may also be observed in relation to the Turks who have been represented as cultural stereotypes. For an instance, the Turks are like a “storm” (ibid, 1.i) and “fatal” (ibid). The two Turk Bashaws are

“villains” (ibid, 5. i) and traitors. Their emperor is an “ungrateful Master” (ibid, 2. i). It is due to such negative representations of the Turks in the play, Amin Momeni (2016) comments that Denham’s portrayal of the Turks is in line with the negative Western-European perceptions of the Ottomans (p.77). These Eurocentric perspectives can also be found in the “representation of Islamic Persians” (ibid, p. 78). For an instance, these perspectives can be seen in the character of Haly, the corrupt political counselor, whose name “has religious connotations” and is ‘the distortion of Ali, the fourth Muslim Caliph” (ibid). Similarly, Denham’s biased and prejudiced attitude may be observed in the character of Caliph, the hypocrite religious leader, who gives “a fatwa” (ibid, p. 81) and provides justification to Abbas’ actions.

Robert Baron (1642) in *Mirza* has represented Abbas in the same negative light as his predecessors did. Baron’s Abbas is also a tyrant and an Oriental despot who possesses uncountable evils in his personality. In ‘The Argument’ of the play, Baron narrates Abbas as a murderer of his father, brother and son. He is jealous, tyrant and cruel. The ghost of Emir Hamze advises Shah Abbas to:

leave thy Adultries,

Thy Rapes, thy Incest, heaps of Perjuries,

And Ghomorean sports, no sting behind (Baron, 1642, 1. p. 9)?

Floradella, Abbas’ concubine calls him “A good effeminate Prince [who] lie[s] wallowing here/ In pleasures” (ibid, p. 12). Later on, she calls him “Th’ Old Dotard King” (ibid, 4. p. 97). To achieve his ends, Abbas can “ruin all mankind” (ibid, 3. p. 53). He argues that his son, Mirza’s fall is tyrant’s necessity:

No, he must fall; yet he falls not my crime,

But Tyrant Necessities, that knoweth

No law, not those of jusice, nor of nature (ibid, p. 66).

After his imprisonment, Mirza calls Abbas “cruel Father”, “Tyrant Fathe”, “unnatural Father” (ibid, pp. 68-69) and “Serpent” (ibid, 5. p. 132). Admitted, Abbas committed some of these crimes due to his bitter past and his personal fears. But, is it right to see a person in absolute evil terms? It is due to this unfair and undeserving treatment of Shah Abbas by the Western writers and playwrights, an Iranian Scholar, Parvin Lololi (2012) argues that they have changed the historical Abbas into a cultural stereotype (pp.349-350). As a cultural other, Abbas is represented as an enemy of Christianity who caused the death of “1000(some say 1200)” (Baron, 1642, p. 114) Christians. This image of Abbas as an enemy of Christianity is in perfect harmony with Abbas’ image represented by Spenser, Heywood, Minadoi and other Western writers in their works. Thus, it becomes obvious that all these inter-discursive practices are rooted in same socio-historical conditions and reflect similar mindset.

This imperialist or Orientalist discourse, which the West used to assert their cultural hegemony and dominate the East, can be observed in the representation of the Ottoman Turks and other Islamic Persian characters. Baron shows indirect hatred of English people against the Turks by depicting the Turks as the worst enemies of the Persians. The Great Turk is represented as a proud king who has set him “too high” (ibid, 2. p. 48). The Turks are false and superstitious like their Prophet (ibid, p. 194). Like Denham’s Haly, Baron’s Mahomet AllyBeg is also portrayed as a villain of the play and like Haly, the

name Mahomet AllyBeg has also religious connotations. He is modeled on Ali, the fourth Muslim caliph, a superstitious and a hellish figure of Dante, Sandy and Herbert in their works. The only difference between the two playwrights is: Denham has criticized Haly, the corrupt counselor, vis-a-vis religious hypocrisy of Islam as evident in the character of Caliph in *The Sophy*, Baron criticizes Mahomet Ally beg in relation to sensuality of Islam as shown through Floradella and other ladies of Abbas' seraglio in *Mirza*. The implication is: one attempts to prove that the Muslims are hypocrite and the other says that Islam is a sensual religion.

The same Orientalist discourse of the Western writers and playwrights during early modern English period may also be located in the representation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Islam and Muslims in their works. For an instance, Thomas Minadoi (1595) perceives both the Turks and Persians as barbarians and enemies of Christianity. The Turks are "very rascalles and vile" while the Persians are "great deceiuers, full of craftie Stratagms, vnconstant, and breakers of their word" (Hartwell, 1595, pp. 6-7). The last vice is main characteristic of all Barbarians. He describes the Persian Muslims as the "disciples of crafty and wicked Mahomet" (ibid, p. 12) who was a "filthy and leacherous wretch" (ibid, p. 28) and who declared himself a prophet by concocting "certaine superstitious prayers and false visitations of an Angell" (ibid, p. 27). Minadoi sees Islam as distortion of the teachings of Christianity, which the Prophet learnt from "Sergio, a fugitive of Christendom" (ibid). The continuity of this Orientalist discourse can also be traced in Thomas Herbert's (1634) in *A Relation of Some Years Travaile*. To him, the Indian Mahometans are polygamous, "superstitious", "crafty and coward" (p.37-39). He

represents Mahomet as a false prophet and a sexual monster (ibid, pp. 251-252). To him, Alcoran is “trash” full of “obsceannesse, lyes, miracles, visions, moral and natural philosophy” (ibid, p. 253).

This Orientalist discourse may also be observed in Baron’s *Mirza*. He has used this discourse to demonize Islam, Muslims and the Orient. Particularly, the annotations of the play explicitly reveal his biased attitude. With regard to the murder of Emir-Hamze by Abbas, he generalizes it and exclaims that this is “A crime most usual in these Eastern Princes” (Baron, 1642, p.183). It is a generalization and the evidence of such generalizations, in the words of Linda McJannet (1999), “recalls Said’s description of Orientalist discourse” (p. 260). These Eurocentric perspectives may be found in the whole play. Ally, the fourth Muslim Caliph, is described as the “head of his [Mahomet’s] superstition” (Baron, 1642, p. 187). In the play, Beltazar assures Shah Abbas that he can “ope Mahomet’s shrine” (ibid, 1. p. 14) on his orders. Under the entry of Mahomet in the annotations, Baron describes the story of the death of Prophet. To him, the dead body of the Prophet remained unburied for thirty days until the air was “infected with the monstrous stink of his carcass” (ibid, p. 188-189). Like other Western writers, Baron also represents Mahomet as a false prophet and a lecher (ibid, p.208-216). The Alcoran is “a Fardel of Blasphemies, Rabinical Fables, Ridiculous discourses, Impostures, Bestialities, Inconveniencies, Impossibilities and Contradictions” (ibid, p. 210). He criticizes the Turks for being superstitious and the Persians for their love of “softness and ease, riches, pomp and vanity, curiosity and fair women” (ibid, p. 191). All these textual instances indicate Baron’s “Extreme prejudice and hostility” (McJannet, 1999, p. 261) towards the cultural

others. The continuity in the Orientalist discourse reveals intertextuality and interplay of Western discourses in the early modern period and forms what the new historicists call the circular and closed discourse. It was through these discursive practices, the Western writers and playwrights intentionally demonized the Orient, Oriental people, Islam and Muslims to establish their cultural hegemony.

#### **4.3.3.4. Construction of Identity:**

“Personal identity- like historical events, texts, and artefacts- is shaped by and shapes the culture in which it emerges” (Tyson 2006, p.290). All the above-mentioned discursive practices such as historical and literary widely circulated in the early modern culture and played a significant role in shaping national and individual identities. The writers and playwrights of the period used these discursive practices to form the identities in different ways. Firstly, they used their works to entertain and advise the audience and rulers of the time. The point was that they should learn the lessons from the stories of cultural others and not commit the mistakes like them. In this process, it was necessary to demonize the others to get the desired effects of their message and distinguish themselves from others. In this case, especially the plays serve as oblique commentaries on the topical and political conditions of the period. Secondly, these discourses enabled them to affirm that they are superior to the cultural others. They are noblemen, civilized, pragmatic, rational, follower of a true and revealed religion as compared to the others who are barbarians, uncivilized, irrational, lusty, and follower of a superstitious religion. Being culturally and intellectually superior, it is our right to rule the world. Emile Bartels (1993) rightly points out that “An important part of the support for English superiority and domination was the



insistence on the otherness of the other and on what had been or were becoming stereotypical demonizations of such figures as the Turk, the Moor, or the Oriental barbarian” (p. Xiv). Thus, these cultural representations helped the artists of the period shape the identities of their audience by inculcating their cultural superiority upon their minds. They serve the function of ideological tools, which played significant role in this process of shaping identities in early modern English period.

The new historicist analyses of the previously mentioned plays reveals that author, historian, critic, reader and texts are cultural artefacts. They are products of negotiation and exchange. They shape the culture in which they are produced and are shaped in return. There is a dialectic relationship between these plays and socio-historical conditions of the period. Moreover, these plays embody the specific ideology of the period and seem to support that ideology. In this way, the plays as ideological tools participate with the power structures to construct identities. From this perspective, the early modern English theatre as a device of power performed greater role in shaping identities than other literary forms due to its public appeal and popularity. The playwrights of the period deliberately chose the stories of cultural others because it was the need of that time to define and constitute their identity in relation to the others. This need may be attributed to the pre-colonial ambitions, exotic appeal of the alien lands, or the luxurious style of the Oriental monarchs, or the fabulous riches of these states, or the Western fears and anxieties about the others, or the trade opportunities in these alien lands. They felt and capitalized on that need and created the plays with which they, on the one hand, entertained their audience and, on the other hand, helped construct national and

individual identities. Their plays along with other discursive practices of the period help comprehend the ideology of the period, which went into the production of these plays.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Orientalist Reading of the Plays

This chapter comprises the detailed explication of the selected plays in the light of Said's views, which have already been thoroughly described in chapter three of this study. I shall apply only the relevant and some of the key assumptions of Edward Said to the selected plays since it is realistically difficult to apply all the views of a theory to a literary work. Concerted efforts are made to show how the selected plays reflect the playwrights' Eurocentric perspectives in their representations, which further strengthen the main contention of this study. For the purpose of analysis, special focus is given on the dialogues, representation of the Islamic characters, interaction of the characters with each other and the discourse employed in these plays. The whole analysis will be substantiated with the textual references and scholarly evidences wherever it is possible. Textual analysis of each play is carried out under separate heading for the sake of precision and clarity.

#### **5.1. An Orientalist Reading of Thomas Preston's *Cambyses: A Lamentable Tragedy Mixed Full of Pleasant Mirth* (C. 1561):**

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,  
 Would men observingly distil it out. (Shakespeare' King Henry V,1599,  
 Act. 4, scene. 1. L.4-5).

### **5.1.1. Representation of Cambyses:**

One of Said's (2003) main assumptions in Orientalism is that the Western writers and scholars have misrepresented the Orient because of their specific interests and dogmas. Out of those dogmas, one dogma because of which the West misrepresented is "the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior; and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped and inferior" (p. 300). This is true in case of depiction of the most of the Oriental rulers, especially like Cambyses, Soliman, Murad, Selimus, and Abbas. The play portrays Cambyses, king of Persia, as a tyrant and a despot. Except one good act of punishing the corrupt judge Sisamnes, Cambyses commits many heinous crimes, which are enough to declare him a tyrant, a despot, a murderer and a cruel king. He has no sympathy for children and women as it is shown through the shooting of Praxaspes' child and the royal orders to kill the Queen. He does not listen to the sincere pieces of advice and friendly criticism, which comes, either from his counsellor, Praxaspes or from his Queen. He relentlessly and ruthlessly responds and silences the opposing voices forever. He commits fratricide by issuing the orders of the murder of his brother, Smirdis due to jealousy. His public image is also not good. People dislike and hate him because of his excessive "Lechery and drunkenness" (Preston, 1561, L. 345, p.16). Therefore, when he dies because of a wound caused by himself, the First Lord says, "A just reward for his misdeeds the God above hath wrought" (ibid, L.1193, p. 45). Cambyses' crimes raise a few questions in one's mind: whether he was as evil as the play itself and its sources portray him or he had a few good characteristics for redeeming grace, to what extent Preston, the playwright and his

dramatic representation is faithful to the original historical character of Cambyses, a king of Achaemenid Persia. The answers of these questions will be explored in detail and then analyzed in terms of Edward Said's (2003) assumptions, which he has introduced in *Orientalism*. To Said, the Western-European scholars and writers have not represented the Orient truly or faithfully since the ancient times due to their Eurocentric perspectives. To him, there is little "truth" in the representations of the Orient because they lack "natural depictions of the Orient" (p. 21). I shall examine Preston's *Cambyses* in the light of this assumption and investigate to what extent Said's views have validity in relation to this play. On another occasion, Said notes, "The idea of representation is a theatrical one" (ibid, p. 63). The West created the Orient through "a textual attitude" (ibid, p. 92) which helped them deal with and dominate the Orient. He further adds, "representations have purposes, they are effective much of the time, they accomplish one or many tasks. Representations are formations, or as Roland Barthes has said all operations of language, they are deformations" (ibid, p. 273).

John Preston created this drama in 1561 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. According to Bevington (1962), it was performed by the Earl of Leicester's Men at Court for Christmas season of 1560-1561 (p. 60). Like other playwrights of the period, Preston uses the material from contemporary sources, which were available to the reading public of that time. Legouis and Cazamian (1933) argue that Preston has used Herodotus' *History* as a material for his play. (p. 251). D.C. Allen (1934) opines that Preston has taken his material from John Carion's *Chronicorum* (1550) which was printed at Frankfurt (pp. 384-387). William Farnham (1936) asserts that Preston has drawn on

Richard Taverner's *The Garden of Wysdom*, which was published in 1539 (pp. 266-267). Keeping these sources in consideration, W. A. Armstrong (1950) seems to agree, because of his un-refutable evidence, with Allen's viewpoint regarding the source of Preston's *Cambyes* and believes that Preston used Carrion's pocket history, which was available at least six years before Taverner's work (pp. 129-135). Besides these three possible sources, the references to *Cambyes* and the Achaemenid period also appear in the works of other classical writers like Xenophon, Justinus, Diodorus Siculus and Seneca (Ibid, pp. 129-130). These later historians replicated their predecessors without questioning the veracity of their information. As Louis Wann, (1915) notices that "Each historian copied from his predecessor, with or without acknowledgement, and felt no compunction in coloring the narrative to increase its interest ..." (p. 434).

The discussion related to the Western-European sources of *Cambyes* points out one fact that all these sources have their origin in the works of classical authors, particularly in Herodotus' *History*, and there are many similarities in all these versions despite some minor deviations made by different writers. One thought common to all these sources is the representation of *Cambyes* as a tyrant and despot, which is mainly in line with Herodotus' portrayal of *Cambyes*. The main outline of Preston's play is explicitly based on these sources disregard of the fact that Preston has slightly exploited the material taken from these sources to suite his purpose. For instance, Herodotus ascribes *Cambyes*' crimes to his madness and his death to the killing of Egyptian sacred bull, Apis. John Preston modifies it and attributes *Cambyes*' crimes to his excessive drinking and lust. Consequently, his death because of a self-inflicted wound in the play is shown a

right punishment for his sins. I shall compare the truth of Cambyses' character in the light of some recent scholars' research and investigation to see how some other ancient sources, except Herodotus and other classical writers, have narrated the history of King Cambyses. These sources include the accounts of Udjahorresene, the Admiral of Amasis and Psamtik, Elamite documents, Aramaic materials, *the Bisitun inscription of Darius I*, Babylonian cuneiform sources, *the Cyrus Cylinder*, the Egyptian hieroglyphic writings and the Memphis Serapeum.

It is by incorporating these sources in their works that the recent scholars have tried to present a balanced information of the Achaemenid period of Persia. In doing so, it is not to assert that the counternarratives claim truth or Herodotus was totally wrong. The aim for looking at the alternative ancient versions is to get at a comprehensive view of Cambyses' history. A. T. Olmstead (1948) keeping these ancient sources into consideration argues that the stories of Cambyses' savagery and the "Tales of mad doings of Cambyses in Egypt must be discounted. The oft-repeated slander that he killed an Apis bull is false" (p. 89). He further adds that the reports that he killed his brother Bardiya (Smirdis) are also wrong as Cambyses died before reaching Persia "by his own hand when he received the news of Bardiya's usurpation" (ibid, p. 92).

T. Cuyler Young, Jr. (1988) on the basis of his reading of Western as well as non-Western sources also agrees with Olmstead and describes Cambyses an "effective king of Babylon" who defeated the Egyptians and "consolidated the Persian position in Egypt with such success that there was no rebellion until the end of the reign of Darius" (p.47). When King Cyrus, Cambyses' father, requested Marduk, the great Lord, for his aid in the

Persian wars, he reports Marduk's response in *The Cyrus Cylinder*. While citing Cyrus' words, Young writes "Marduk, the great lord, was well pleased with my deeds and sent friendly blessings to myself, Cyrus, the king who worships him, to Cambyses, my son, the offspring of my loins" (ibid). According to the documents of Babylonia, Cambyses was a sane and prudent king who, won the title of "the King of Babylon and the King of Lands" (ibid) and ruled peacefully for eight years until his death. Cambyses also ruled peacefully in different states as a crown prince during his father, Cyrus' life and Cyrus was proud of his son. The above-mentioned ancient sources do not mention anywhere that Cambyses killed his brother, his Queen and the Egyptian sacred bull, Apis. It is not sure whether Cambyses knew about his brother, Bardiya or Smirdis' rebellion but it is reported that, according to *Bisitun* words, Cambyses died because of self-inflicted wound on his way back to Persia during his return journey from Egypt.

In case of religious tolerance, Cambyses allowed the Egyptians to worship according to their local customs. He also went in a festival, knelt before Apis, and organized all other religious ceremonies with great devotion. However, there is a truth that Cambyses reduced the wealth, which was given to the temples and the priests and ordered the priests "to grow more crops and raise more animals on their own land" (ibid, p. 50). Even in this respect, Cambyses was "selective" and his government kept on supporting some temples with "full honor and glory" (ibid). In the light of these reports, it seems quite illogical that a person, who ruled for eight years peacefully, conquered Egypt with his prudent strategic plans, and expanded the Achaemenid empire, can be insane as Herodotus repeatedly calls Cambyses 'mad' who was suffering from this sickness since his birth in



the book third of his *History* (Herodotus, 3. pp. 1-67). It is due to this evidence, Young (1988) suspects that “the poor reputation which Cambyses carried into posterity, as recorded by Herodotus - the reputation of a madman- is historically unfair and may reflect Herodotus’ prejudiced sources” (p.51). Similarly, *Encyclopedia Britannica* in its article, Cambyses II, published on January 19, 2016, comments that “The 5th-century-BCE Greek historian Herodotus accused Cambyses of many atrocities in Egypt, attributing them to madness, but contemporary Egyptian sources suggest that his accusations must largely be discounted”.

Herodotus is considered a father of history and, no doubt, his work falls under the category of primary sources regarding knowledge of the ancient periods. Nevertheless, the rigorous research of the recent scholars related to Cambyses highlights that Herodotus is somewhat biased which makes him a controversial person and his version of King Cambyses raises suspicions in the minds of the readers. This may be because of a few reasons, which can be given to defend Herodotus. Firstly, Herodotus created his work approximately after one century of Cambyses’ death and gathered his data through oral tradition i.e.by listening to people and visiting the places. For this purpose, he heavily drew upon the people’s opinions and reports of the religious priests of Egypt. There is stronger possibility that these priests may have developed hatred against Cambyses because of his strict religious reforms, particularly his measures to reduce the income of the priests would have caused it (Young, 1988, pp.1-51). Secondly, Herodotus, under the influence of his predecessors such as Aeschylus and other Greek tragedians narrated the Persians the way they had described them in their works.

Whatever the reasons may be, it becomes quite clear that Greek philosophers and writers were biased in representing the Orient and Oriental characters. For instance, Herodotus' own famous work *History*, which describes the Greco-Persian wars, is explicitly biased from the beginning. The first two books of this work, which describe these wars, were printed in 1584 as *The Famous History of Herodotus* with the detail of "the renowned adventures of the Grecians and Barbarians" (Houston, 2014, p. 456). Grecians are Grecians, they have their identity but the Persians' identity is their barbarity. Similarly, Aeschylus and Euripides misrepresented the Orient and Oriental characters to assert their superiority in the dramas like *The Persians* and *The Bacchae* respectively and Herodotus is no exception. As Edward Said (2003) in *Orientalism* puts it that "In classical Greece and Rome geographers, historians, public figures, ... and poets...[tried] to prove that Romans and Greeks were superior to other kinds of people" (p.57). Later on, the West inherited this sense of superiority because the West considers the Greeks and Romans as its ancestors and this is, obviously, not without a reason since the modern Western civilization owes a lot to them. Therefore, Like Aeschylus, Euripides, Herodotus, and some other contemporary Western writers who have particularly written on Cambyses, Preston also seems biased in his drama *Cambyses*. There seems persistency in the misrepresentation of Cambyses as these writers have exploited the material on Cambyses the way they wanted to. As Allyna Ward (2008) observes, "In developing the emphasis on the infernal nature of Cambyses' actions, Preston took explicit account of contemporary discussions about political resistance and obedience, predestination and divine providence" (Ward, p.153). Its explicit example can be found in the opening of the

play when the Prologue announces that Cambyses ruled for a short period and then died due to his misdeeds:

To bring to end with shame his race, two years did not he reign.

His cruelty we will relate, and make the matter plaine” (Preston, 1561, p.5).

But, historically speaking, Cambyses nearly ruled for eight years. Almost all the above-mentioned non-Western sources agree that Cambyses’ reigned peacefully for eight years. Don Cameron Allen (1934) quotes Herodotus, the Greek historian, who also writes in book third of his *History* that “the usurping magus completed the remaining seven months of Cambyses’ eight years” (p. 385). This may be called a modification or a dramatic necessity but Preston’s stance of Cambyses’ two years tyrannous regime appears distortion of historical facts and reveals his biased attitude.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that Preston probably had no access to the afore-said non-Western sources, as they were translated and available to the reading public later. But this does not diminish the fact that Preston is not biased in depicting Cambyses as an Oriental despot, a tyrant and an unruly person. Similarly, it is also unacceptable “that if Elizabethan dramatists erred in presenting false pictures of history or life [of the Orient], the blame was not theirs but that of the historians they followed” (Wann, 1915, p. 438). Therefore, if John Preston used these classical sources to create a play on the character such as Cambyses, he relied on these sources because their authority was well established and unquestioned. He took them for granted. In creating *Cambyses*, Preston has followed the tone, which was set by the classical writers and misrepresented the Oriental characters as his predecessors had earlier done in their works. It has been a part of

“European imaginative geography” (Said, 2003, p. 57). The former orientalists were the pioneers in this respect and the later orientalists cited their works considering them as authority. As Edward Said remarks that “The idea in either case is that people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes” (ibid, p.93). Said calls this phenomenon “a textual attitude” (ibid, p. 92). It is through this textual attitude, the Western Europe created the reality of the Orient by writing the texts that allude to other texts. That is why Said (2003) demonstrates that “Orientalism is after all a system for citing works and authors” (p. 23). While considering Said’s views, it becomes clear that Preston’s *Cambyses* registers continuity of the Eurocentric perspectives, which were initiated by the classical writers of Greece and Rome and later on followed by the writers of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. As Burton J. Fishman (1976) puts it “Cambyses was, after all, regarded in the middle ages and Renaissance as an unredeemably vicious and cruel man” (p. 201).

### **5.1.2. The Concept of Binaries:**

Said’ second assumption with respect to the Orient is that the Western discourses, particularly literary representations, reveal the abundance of the binaries, which present the West in terms of superiority and the East in terms of inferiority. Said discusses this concept of binaries under the second definition of the term Orientalism. As he says, “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’” (ibid, p. 2). Once it became an established fact, all the writers and scholars “accepted the basic

distinction between East and West as the starting point” (ibid) for their works related to the Orient. It is through these binaries that the West created “the recurring images of the Other” (ibid, p.1) which helped it define and construct its identity. Seen from this perspective, Preston’s *Cambyses* is rife with these binaries. The play depicts the story of an Oriental despot, a tyrant, a cultural other who belongs to Persia, an alien land. Preston dramatizes this story of a barbarian and “a wicked king” (Preston, 1561, p.45) to teach moral lessons to “the gentle audience”, the noble Queen and her honourable council” (ibid, pp. 45-46). By these binaries, Preston conveys the message that Persian rulers and Persian people are uncivilized, cruel and sensual whereas English rulers and people are civilized, noble and paragon of all virtues. From the beginning of the play, Cambyses is portrayed as if he were an incarnation of evil. Like Sultan Soliman in Thomas Kyd’s *Soliman and Perseda* (c.1589), Sultan Selimus in Robert Green’s *Selimus* (1592), Sultan Murad in Thomas Goofe’s *The Courageous Turk or Amurath the First* (c.1615), Preston also represents King Cambyses as another cultural stereotype, a demon. These are the examples of a few plays, which portray the Eastern rulers as monsters and demons. Otherwise, this list can be extended. In the Prologue, Cambyses is compared to Icarus who fell down into the sea and perished due to his pride. Thus, the audience are foretold that Cambyses’ downfall will result from his arrogance and pride. The personified character, Shame, reports Cambyses’ crimes in these words:

Lechery and drunkenness be doth it much frequent;

The tigers kinde to imitate he hath given full consent;

He nought esteems his Counsel grave us vertuous bringing-up,  
 But dayly stil receives the drink of damned Vices cup (ibid, L. 345-348. P. 16).

Except one just decision of punishing the corrupt judge, Sisamnes, all his decisions reflect Cambyses' barbarous nature and stem from his drunkenness, lust and pride. Praxaspes, Cambyses' sincere counselor, admonishes him to refrain from drinking:

The vice of drunkenness, oh king, which doth you sore infect,  
 With other great abuses, which I wish you to detect. (ibid, L.481-482. P. 21).

King Cambyses ignores his words and replies:

To pallace now I will returne, and thereto make good cheere.  
 God Baccus he bestows his gifts, we have good store of wine,  
 And also that the ladies be both passing brave and fine (ibid, L. 484-486).

When once again Praxaspes advises him to discontinue his habit of drinking, Cambyses becomes infuriated and to revenge, he shoots the heart of Praxaspes' youngest son. After this heinous crime, he issues the orders of the deaths of his brother, Smirdis and his wife, the Queen. Before his death, Smirdis affirms that

Consider, the king is a tirant tirannious,  
 And all his dooings be damnable and parnitious (ibid, L. 724-725. P. 29).

Similarly, when Hob, Lob and Ambidexter discuss King Cambyses' cruelty, Ambidexter concludes:

I insure you he is a king most vile and parnitious,  
 His dooings and life are odious and vicious (ibid, L. 778-779. P.31).

Later on, Ambidexter threatens Hob and Lob with the charges of treason for speaking against their king. Before Cambyses' death, Ambidexter once again summarizes Cambyses' career in the words:

What a king was he that hath used such tyranny!

He was akin to Bishop Bonner, I think verily!

For both their delights was to shed blood,

But never intended to do any good (ibid, L. 1147-1150. P. 43).

At the end of the play, Cambyses himself is convinced that his death is the natural cause of his crimes. As he utters:

A just reward for my misdeeds my death plain declare (ibid, L. 1172.p. 44).

After Cambyses' death, the First Lord repeats Cambyses' words:

A just reward for his misdeeds the God above hath wrought (ibid, L. 1193. P. 45).

All these textual citations highlight Cambyses' sensuality, depravity and irrationality. These negative images of Cambyses are truly in line with the Eurocentric perspectives which Said (2003) suggests in his *Orientalism*. As he stresses that "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different; thus, the European is rational, virtuous, mature, normal" (Said, 2003, p. 40). If positive traits of Cambyses' personality are expressed in the drama, they are just expressed in one or two lines. For instance, his severe punishment of Sisamnes and his virtuous brought-up which he forgets when he becomes a king, are the only good deeds which have been mentioned in the drama. Otherwise, Preston represents Cambyses as a perfect negative character in the whole drama to give a moral lesson to his audience, and particularly to the royal audience,

through the story of a negative character. H. B. Norland (1993) refers to the fact that “The avowed purpose of the play is to offer advice to the ruler through this negative exemplum...” (Norland, p. 340). Preston successfully achieves this purpose by introducing the most significant binaries of “this wicked king” and “our noble Queen” in the Epilogue of the play (Preston, 1561, Epilogue. P.45-46). The use of these binaries in concluding lines of the play indicates as if the whole play were designed to achieve this objective.

### **5.1.3. Relationship between Discourse and Power:**

While borrowing the concept of discourse from Michel Foucault, Said (2003) argues that the discourse of Orientalism enabled the West to hegemonize the East. Preston’s *Cambyse* as a literary discourse is the part of all other contemporary discourses, which represent Cambyses as a negative character. Preston represents Cambyses as a ‘wicked king’, a cultural other to teach the Elizabethan audience the lesson of passive obedience to the English rulers on the one hand, and to admonish the ‘noble Queen’ i.e. Queen Elizabeth to practice justice and kindness during her reign on the other hand. Critics like W. A. Armstrong (1950), P. Happe (1965), J. P. Myers (1973), B. J. Fishman (1976), K. P. Wentersdorf (1981), Eugene Hill (1992), H. B. Norland (1992-1993), Allyna Ward (2008), and Maya Mathur (2014) have interpreted Preston’s *Cambyse* as a didactic play, or an allegorical work, or a propaganda play, or an advice literature in their works. They seem to emphasize the idea that Cambyses has been represented as a negative character to enforce the moral and political truths. Granted, the play *Cambyse* contains all these interpretations which have been mentioned by the worthy critics, but at the same time, the



play as a literary discourse relates to the other imperialist discourses of early modern England which represent the Orient as a demon and cultural other. The playwright conveys to his audience that the Oriental rulers are wicked, sensual and irrational. We, the Western, are civilized, noble and different from them. This has been a part of the Western plan and propaganda. The Western playwrights employed this imperialist discourse in the early modern period to promote “the imperialist cause” (Bartels, 1993, p.XIV). This discourse helped them disseminate their superiority and finally dominate the Orient. That is why, Emile Bartels (1993) raises a question: “What made figures like Dionysius and Cambyses the choice exemplars of such outrageous tyrants in moral plays such as Richard Edward’s *Damon and Pythias* and Thomas Preston’s *Cambyses, King of Persia*” (p. X111)?

#### **5.1.4. Othering and Construction of Identity:**

Preston represents Cambyses as an Oriental barbarian to score the point if we, the Western want to become superior, noble, virtuous and leaders of the world, we should distinguish ourselves from others. It is through the process of othering, the West has created the reality of the Orient, defined itself and subsequently constructed its identity. Said (2003) demonstrates that “The construction of identity ... involves establishing opposites and ‘others’ whose actuality is always subject to interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from us” (p. 332). The Western representations of the Orient during early modern period mostly rely on such differences between self versus other and we versus them and it is through these representations the writers have educated their people and constructed their identities. In this way, the writers of the

period have inculcated their cultural superiority on the minds of English people and assured them that we are intellectually and culturally superior to others. Being noble and superior, it is our right to dominate and rule others. Thus, the idea of portraying the others on the stage has profound ideological implications for the writers of the early modern England. As Emile Bartels (1992) maintains that “while the demonization of the Oriental rulers provided a highly charged impetus for England’s own attempts to dominate the East, their valorization provided a model for admiration and imitation, shaming or schooling the English into supremacy, or providing an excuse for defeat” (p. 5). Jyotsna G. Singh (2009) stresses the same idea when she notes that “Whether depicting tragic scapegoats or comic butts for jokes, English Renaissance drama frequently deployed figures of otherness – outsiders - who evoked social, cultural, and religious anxieties in the expanding world” (p. 23).

Such imperialist discourses helped England establish her supremacy over the Orient. Though the real imperialism started in 18<sup>th</sup> century, yet its foundations were laid in early modern England. Similarly, it may be argued with certain reservations that though, England was not superior to the Muslim states in terms of military or industrial power as Matar (1999) expresses it (p.12) yet, she was linguistically and intellectually superior to the Muslim states of the period. Since, what Renaissance gave to Europe was this sense of intellectual superiority that came in the wake of the age of discovery, the expanding trade relations and growing maritime industry. As Jyotsna G. Singh (2009) notes that “In effect, the expanding commercial world enlarged the intellectual, cultural, and linguistic boundaries of Europe” (p. 5). Europe became the center of intellectual activities and the

fountainhead of philosophical advancement. Because of this linguistic and intellectual progress, Europe deems itself as a center and the rest of the world as a periphery or the other. Goffman (2002) aptly points out that since the early modern times, Europe “especially Western Europe has imagined itself politically, philosophically, and geographically at the center of the world” (pp. 4-5). This position of centrality enabled the West to establish and assert its own cultural, literary canons and judgement criteria in the whole world. Therefore, what the West considered and declared appropriate and authentic was appropriate and authentic and the rest was inappropriate. Goffman further remarks that “Europeans and neo-Europeans in America and elsewhere have routinely judged art, literature, religion, statecraft, and technology according to their own authorities and criteria” (ibid, p. 5). Edward Said (2003) also makes the same point when he emphasizes, “The West is the spectator, the judge and the jury, of every facet of Oriental behavior” (p. 109).

What England was unable to achieve in the absence of a powerful military during early modern period, she achieved it through linguistic and intellectual superiority. Before projecting an image of a powerful nation abroad, it was significant that first England should instill this sense of superiority in her own people. Outside the country, England achieved these objectives with the aid of the trading companies and diplomatic relations, but inside the country, she achieved these objectives by representing the cultural others as ideological weapons in their written works and on the stage. As Emile Bartels (1993) remarks that “For how was the state to impose its dominance across the globe until the ideological backing was vitally and visibly in place at home” (p. Xiv)? Therefore,

Preston's *Cambyses* employs the contemporary imperialist discourse, which was becoming pervasive as an ideological tool. While quoting Vico, Edward Said (2003) writes in *Orientalism* that "human history is made by human beings" (p.331). In making history, Said explains that, "the struggle for control over territory and the struggle over historical and social meaning" (p. 331-332) are two significant parts of this process. The thing that English struggled first was getting control over historical and social meaning by disseminating such imperialist discourses and creating such ideological works as *Cambyses* which later on paved the way to get control over the territory.

## **5.2. An Orientalist Reading of John Day, George Wilkins, and William Rowley's *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers (1607):***

### **5.2.1. Historical Background:**

The cultural encounter between the West and the East has never been simple and monolithic. One may observe complexity and unevenness in the relationships between the Christians and the Muslims due to cultural, religious and ideological differences. The early modern English period has great historical, cultural and religious significance in this context. Because of Martin Luther's movement, the Christian world bifurcated into Catholicism and Protestantism. The Catholics follow the Vatican Church of Rome and the Pope whereas the Protestants consider the Bible as the authentic word instead of the priests and the Pope. Like some other Protestant countries, in the words of Andrew Sanders (2000), the "Widow England tried to free [herself] from the wild boar of Rome" (pp. 104-105) and became a Protestant country during the reign of King Henry VIII (1509-1547). However, England was able to consolidate her national church during the

regime of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) who had dual dignity of the “Head of State and as Supreme Governor of the Church of England” (ibid, p. 128). These religious conflicts fostered animosity particularly between the Catholic Spain and the Protestant England. Similarly, religious conflicts in Islam during 16<sup>th</sup> century also caused division of the Muslims into Shiite Muslims in Persia and Sunni Muslims in the Ottoman Empire. The Shiites of Persia follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) along with Mortus Ali and believe that Abubakar, Umar and Usman, the first three caliphs (Baron, 1642, pp. 187-188), deprived Ali of caliphate. Whereas, the Sunni Turks follow the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) and all the four Caliphs equally. The Persian Shiites believe that Mortus Ali was the right successor of the Prophet Muhammad. The famous historian, Richard Hakluyt (1903) in his *Principal Navigations*, while quoting Anthony Jenkinson’s views about Shah Thmasp of Persia and the Persian version of Islam, narrates, “...he professeth a kinde of holinesse and saith that he is descended of the blood of Mahomet and Murtezalli: and although these Persians be Muhometans, as the Turks and Tartars be, yet honour they this false fained Murtezalli...” (p. 170). Because of these contradictory views, the Turks and the Persians disliked each other and there had been serious confrontations between the two. As it has been mentioned earlier in chapter four of the study that the English knew these sectarian differences between the Persians and Turks very well and they wanted to capitalize on them for their political and commercial benefits. If the Persians and Turks fight against each other, it would be, in the words of an Iranian scholar, beneficial for the Europeans, because “Persia would act as a buffer to fend off Ottoman’s threats to Europe” (Farahmandfar, 2016, p. 145).

Thus, in this context, England employed “the age-old colonial policy of ‘divide and rule’ to inflame these sectarian differences” (ibid). If England had religious rivalry with Spain, she was also seriously disturbed due to the increasing conquests of the Ottoman Turks to whom Richard Knolles, an English historian, calls “the present terrour of the world” (Knolles,1603, p. 1) and there was a constant threat that the Turks might invade England. Though Persia was also a Muslim country, yet she was less belligerent than the Ottoman Turks and posed no threat to England. Therefore, in this scenario, England felt a dire need of a political and military ally, on the one hand, to counter the power of Spain, and on the other hand, to overcome the increasing menace of the Ottoman Turks. As Stephen Schmuck (2005) notices that “As a Protestant nation at the fringe of a predominantly Catholic Europe, England would welcome any ally to support its own position within a hostile Christian world...” (p. 4). All European countries generally and England particularly had threats from the Turks because of the growing military strength and conquests of the Ottoman Empire. The English were facing the fears of conversion, piracy and insecurity of sea trade routes due to the Ottoman attacks. For this purpose, they were looking for different options and possibilities. These options sometimes took the form of John Prester, the imaginary Messiah or rescuer, sometimes having political, commercial and military alliance with the Persian Safavids against the Turk Ottomans and sometimes even bilateral diplomatic negotiations with the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

Out of these options, the Persian-Christians alliance against the Ottomans was the best option for the English due to the religious differences and the subsequent animosity

between the Persian Safavids and the Turk Ottomans. The English thought that Persian Sophy i.e. Shah Abbas would form a political and military coalition which might help them defeat the Ottoman Empire, make their sea routes safe, and boost up England's economy. Furthermore, some of the English travelers, historians and writers had created a soft and favorable image of the great Sophy. As Anthony Nixon, describing the life of Robert Sherley, comments that the Sophy "Tends such attentive care [To Christianity] [...] that he [Robert] doubteth not [...] he [The Sophy] may in time bee brought to become a Christian" (Hackluyt, 1903, p. 180). Similarly, Ross (1933) has quoted Manwaring who believed that Sophy "Was almost a Christian in heart" (p. 208). However, these views were myths like the myth of John Prester. Cartwright (1611) rightly refers to the fact that the idea of Sophy as a convert to Christianity was "More little for a stage, for the common people to wonder at than for any man's private studies" (pp. 70-71).

### **5.2.2. Origin: *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers:***

The Sherleys' travels had so great popularity and commercial benefits for the writers of the period that they were published in the form of pamphlets, texts and autobiographical accounts. The three brothers themselves wrote about their adventures. The English people who accompanied the three brothers also published the stories of these travels. For example, William Parry's *A New and Large Discourse of the Travels of Sir Anthony Shirley, Knight* (1601), and George Manwaring's *A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley's Travels into Persia* (1601) are prominent texts. Later on, Anthony Nixon published *The Three English Brothers* (1607) with the help of the record and notes given

to him by the Sherley family. Nixon (1607) admits that he wrote it according to the notes and instructions, which he had received, and his purpose was to display their worthiness. Anthony Parr (1996) also confirms the fact that Nixon's narrative was commissioned by Thomas Shirley when he came back to England in 1606 after his imprisonment of two years in Constantinople (p. 18). Because of their popularity and demand, the Sherleys' Travels were also created in the dramatic form by Day, Wilkins and Rowley and performed by Queen Anne's Men in 1607, soon after the publication of Nixon's work. The play is mostly based on Nixon's work but somewhere the playwrights have modified, manipulated and exploited the incidents to suit their purpose. Abdul Rehman M Ridha (1974) comments that "The playwrights in adapting Nixon's account for the stage ignored some parts of his versions and added new incidents..." (p. 14).

Actually, the travel accounts to the alien lands such as the Safavids of Iran and Mughals of India in early modern English period had not only great appeal for the English public but also they served as an ideological tool. As Jyotsna G. Singh (2009) puts it that "English travel accounts to those empires also express mixed feelings, suggesting an attraction to the promise of trade and the grandeur of these courts, but also an investment in a Christian ... ideology of demonizing religious and cultural others" (p. 7). It is in this context, John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins have written their joint play *The Traviles of the Three English Brothers* (1607). All these narratives of the Sherleys were written, on the one hand, to restore the honor of the Sherley family and, on the other hand, to make money by publishing the stories of the adventures of the foreign lands due to the increasing interest of the Elizabethan audience in such stories. The play describes



the adventures of the three brothers: Anthony Sherley, Thomas Sherley and Robert Sherley.

Besides these English narratives of the Sherleys' travels, two non-English narratives are also worth mentioning i.e. Uruch Beg's *Don Juan de Persia* (2013) and Abel Pincon's *Relation d'urn voyage de Perse* (1651). According to J. Lopez-Pelaez Casellas (2013), the English reading public did not know about these two non-English narratives during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (p. 38). Nevertheless, the critical analysis of the English narratives of the Sherleys' travels with reference to the non-English narratives raises many questions regarding the veracity of the English narratives and ultimately it appears that "a non-contradictory Sherleyan narrative is irretrievable" (ibid, p. 51). The English narratives seem to be rooted in specific conditions of the period and to comprehend them, one should follow "an approach that conjoins early modern ideology, politics, and textuality" (ibid). It is also important to mention over here that Anthony Sherley was not the first English person who visited Persia and provided useful information about Persia and Persian culture to the people of England. Before him, many other English people had visited Persia. The most remarkable among them is Anthony Jenkinson who had visited Persia as an official ambassador of England. Queen Elizabeth has mentioned him in her letters: "Our faithful, and right well-beloved servant" (Masood, 2012, p. 10). The major difference between Anthony Jenkinson and Anthony Sherley is that Jenkinson was an official ambassador whereas Anthony Sherley is a privateer, self-directed ambassador who was sent unofficially by the Earl of Essex on a diplomatic mission "to foment the Spanish-Italian conflict over Ferrara" (Burton,2009, p. 30). Mark Hutchings (2015) also

confirms, “The mission was unauthorized and entirely at odds with official policy....” (p. 44). When Anthony Sherley was on this mission in Venice, he was out of money and looking for some sort of business through which he can earn money. So, when he came to know through some Venetian traders about Persian silk trade and the Persian Shah’s generosity towards the foreigners, the idea came in his mind that he should present himself to the Shah of Persia as an official ambassador and try his fortunes. He thought that this move would give him many advantages. As Jonathan Burton (2009) notices that “His successful disruption of Spanish-Persians relations and the promise of a new Anglo-Persian trade would, he calculated, overshadow any liberties taken and ensure a hero’s welcome upon his return to England” (p. 30) but this never happened and he failed to win the royal favor.

### **5.2.3. Representation of the Persian Sophy:**

Edward Said (2003) emphasizes in *Orientalism* that the Western writers have been misrepresenting the Orient for the last many centuries. They have been biased and prejudiced in their views towards the Orient. These may be described as Eurocentric perspectives. Said stresses the need to deconstruct these Eurocentric perspectives which have been pervasive in the Western works. To Said, representation means formation or deformation (p. 273). He uses it as an alternative of misrepresentation. As far as the play *The Travails of the Three English Brothers* is concerned, it is all fabrication, concoction and misrepresentation. It is in line with all those Eurocentric perspectives of the Orient and the Muslims which the Western writers have been representing for the times past as Edward Said has mentioned in his seminal work *Orientalism* (2003). It has a long history.

To the Eurocentric perspectives, the Muslims are emotional, uncultured, uneducated, cruel and barbarians. Abdul Rehman M Ridha (1974) rightly observes, “Most of these misconceptions stemmed largely from medieval tales, especially the view that Islam was a distortion of ancient Greek religious practices” (p. 30). Aeschylus did it in *The Persians*, Turold in *The song of Roland*, Dante in *The Divine Comedy* and this is what Day, Rowley and Wilkins have done in this play. This has been the part of the Western agenda to show themselves as superiors and the Eastern as inferiors. It is by laying down their sense of superiority that the West has gained cultural hegemony. As Said (2003) emphasizes that “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” has been “the major component” (p. 7) of European cultural hegemony. They have achieved this object through different discursive strategies, through appropriation and by projecting the negative images of the Orient. That is why, Jonathon Burton (2009) asserts that the play is a part of the grand narrative of the rise of British Empire. His comments are insight full as he says, “If English texts of early modern period develop an imperial rhetoric, the defining mode of that rhetoric is appropriation” (p. 40). This appropriation becomes explicit when we deconstruct the Eurocentric perspectives in the drama.

According to Peter Barry (1999), deconstruction is an oppositional sort of reading of a text, which helps the readers, unmask internal contradictions and inconsistencies in the text (p. 72). J. A. Cuddon (2013) defines deconstruction in the words “a text can be read as saying something quite different from what it appears to be saying...” (p. 190). Talking about the theme of the play, Margaret E. Owens (2005) opines that the play

shows the cruelty and ruthlessness of the Persian community particularly through the practice of beheading which differentiates the lenient and merciful England from the cruel Persia (pp.158-164). Right in the beginning, the Prologue “attired like Fame” (Ridha, 1974, P.44) appears on the stage and begs the audience:

Our scean is mantled in the robe of truth,

Yet must we crave (by law of poesie)

To give our history an ornament. (ibid, 5-8, p. 44).

The play is a theatrical representation and not reality. As the play starts, it transpires that the Persian Sophy has returned triumphant from a war against the Turks. The Governor of Casbin reports the arrival of the three English brothers in the Persian court to the Sophy. Moreover, he tells Anthony that he has reported “Your state, your habit, your fair demeanor, / And so well as my weake oratory could recite” (ibid, 1.11-12, p. 46) along with other ‘worths’ to the Sophy. All this idolization and adoration of a stranger in first meeting is unexpected and surprising. This is an instance of what Burton calls appropriation. More instances like these can be easily traced out with the further deconstructive reading of the play. As Peter Barry (1999) argues that the deconstructive process once started reveals the text “as fractured, contradictory, and symptomatic of a cultural and linguistic malaise” (pp. 76-77).

The non-English narratives of the Sherleys also do not bear out this too much protocol granted to the Sherleys. Similarly, the Sophy’s response is also unexpected because the Sophy exempts Anthony Sherley of traditional and ceremonial kissing of his foot and

calls him “courteous” (Ridha, 1974, 1.33, p. 47). Then the Sophy shows the manner of Persian wars in which the Persian soldiers “enter with heads on their swords” (ibid, 1.p.48). After it, Anthony Sherley with his brothers shows the manner of Christian wars and the way they do not kill their enemies rather imprison them, is very surprising for the Sophy. When Sophy asks Anthony Sherley to give his opinion, he says that our wars are different from yours. The main virtues of the Christian wars are clemency, charity and tolerance as they only imprison their enemies. The Sophy is so much impressed by this show of the Christian war that he concludes, “we never heard of honor until now” (ibid, 1.111, p. 51). He further adds “we do adore thee: your warrs are royall” (ibid, 1.89, p. 50). However, Sir Anthony’s claims of Christian clemency and charity seem self-contradictory when he explains to the Sophy that with the “engines of more force” i.e. the cannons, they can massacre, flatten cities to the level of a pavement, destroy the towers in air and ships on seas (ibid, 1.112, p. 51). Commenting on these lines of the play, Ladan Niayesh (2008) argues, “Western superiority here takes the form of a cannon, which the Sophy apparently sees for the first time” and which makes him “worship both the object and the man who wields and masters it, Sir Anthony” (p. 131). This cannon show enralls the Sophy and like a captivated person, he utters:

First teach me how to call thee ere I speake

I more and more doubt thy mortality: (Ridha, 1974, 1.121-122, p. 52).

And he further adds:

Tell us thy precepts; and we’ll adore thee (ibid, 1.128, p. 52).

Here the playwrights make the Persian Sophy adore and idealize Anthony Sherley and elevate Anthony Sherley to the status of a hero and a god. Talking about such instances of adoration of Christians in the dramas related to the Orient, Nabil Matar (1999) calls them “a representation of representation” which indicate “the birth of a British/ European discourse of conquest that preceded the development of other constituents of conquest” (pp. 15-17). The Persian Sophy lowers himself so much that he goes to the extent:

But God or Christian, or what ere he be,

I wish to be no other but as he (Ridha, 1974, 1.78-79, p. 50).

Again, the idolization and admiration of Anthony Sherley is surprising and is based on exaggeration. The last line is significant where the Sophy claims: “I wish to be no other but as he” (ibid, 1.79, p. 50). This effacement of one’s personal, cultural and national identity and adoption of the other’s identity on the part of Sophy is totally illogical and irrational. Particularly, when it is known that Persia was one of the great Muslim empires of the time. Therefore, if the most powerful person like a king desires a thing like that, it is quite ironical. This is an exaggeration and appropriation of the three playwrights who have portrayed the things in the way that the Persian Sophy denigrates his own culture and is ready to accept and adopt the foreign identity. This is visible throughout the play and at the end of the play, it reaches its peak when the Persian Sophy first disagrees and then consents for the marriage of Robert Sherley and his Niece, to have a Church in Persia and the Christening of the new born babe of Robert and his Niece (ibid, 16. 170-

200, pp. 133-134). Through all these attempts, the playwrights have asserted the religious and cultural hegemony of England.

Seen in this light, the title of the play *The Travails of the Three English Brothers* makes sense. It may also refer to the *travailes* i.e. the labor of the three playwrights Day, Rowley and Wilkins who have taken great pains to create and celebrate the heroic deeds of the three brothers in the play. Actually, the reality was otherwise. Firstly, the three brothers' mission was unofficial. Either Earl of Essex or personal fame and riches motivated it. Secondly, the three brothers had reputation of rogue Englishmen and unfaithful servants of the state (Chew, 1937, p. 338). They earned this reputation due to their unauthorized mission, their conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism, their indecent behavior and acts, and their allegiance to different monarchs of the states other than England. Anthony Nixon who calls the three brothers as the "three heroes of our time" but also complains at the same time that "they were unkindly used by us, to be made strangers here at home" (Casellas, 2013, p. 36). His statement is quite ironical and throws light on the true characters of the three brothers. Thus, the travel adventures of Sherleys are not the travels in the real sense of the word. Rather, they are verbal adventures i.e. the Sherleys' rhetoric and oratory through which the three playwrights have created a world of imagination. The Sophy is enthralled by it and pays tribute to Anthony Sherley in the words:

Let me feast upon thy tongue, I delight

To heare thee speake (Ridha, 1974, 1.157-158, p. 53).

So, it is through words, through verbal rhetoric, the playwrights have created the images of the Orient and Oriental characters and represented the contemporary reality. In the words of Anthony Parr (1996), this maybe an attempt to project and to promote “an embryonic form” of “the British Imperial idea” (p. 30). The playwrights have done their best to hide and gloss over the ideology they are presenting in the text. But when the text is read against itself, the cracks and fissures in the ideology become clear. The Persian Sophy is hypnotized by Anthony Sherley’s oratory and tells him:

Those tongues do imitate the voice of heaven (Ridha, 1974, 1.123, p. 52).

And

If thou hast God-head, and disguis’d art come

To teach us unknown rudiments of war (ibid, 1.126-127).

Influenced and impressed by Anthony’s oratory, the Sophy first assigns the command of his army to Anthony by appointing him the General of the Persian army and then deposes him as “Lord Ambassador” (ibid, 2.267, p. 67) along with Duke Hallibeck so that they may persuade other Christian countries to have a grand alliance against the Ottoman Empire. Not only this, the Sophy appoints Robert Sherley as General of his army in absence of Anthony Sherley. All these things are simply unbelievable and impossible. How can a ruler appoint a foreigner on such key posts? Actually, the playwrights have portrayed the Sherleys as if they were heroes, expert in warfare and diplomacy, suitable for all sorts of jobs and thereby asserted and established their own cultural superiority. However, the truth is otherwise. Critics like E. Dennison Ross (1933), Samuel Chew



(1937) and Jonathan Burton (2009) believe that Sir Anthony was an inveterate and unscrupulous intriguer, a sententious hypocrite devoid of all real sentiment, being incapable of single-minded devotion to any person or cause (p. 26).

Even in the play, Anthony Sherley himself does not believe in the too much honor bestowed on him by the Sophy. Shocked and surprised, he requests the Sophy:

Oh, let your princely thoughts descend so low,

As my beings worth, think me as I am:

No stranger are the deedes I show to you

Then yours to me... (Ridha, 1974, 1.129-132, p. 52).

The difference is significant and recalls Said's concept of binaries because the Sophy exaggerates and idealizes whereas Anthony is quite realistic and pragmatic. In other words, the playwrights are informing that the Eastern are emotional, irrational and illogical. Contrary to it, the Western are realistic and Pragmatic.

#### **5.2.4. The Concept of Binaries:**

Said (2003) demonstrates that the Orientalist discourse is replete with the binaries or "distinction[s] between East and West" (p. 2). The Western scholars and writers have employed this discourse in the representation of the Orient and Oriental people. According to this discourse, "The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, 'different'; thus, the European is rational, mature, 'normal'" (ibid, p. 40). This argument of Said finds full evidence not only in the representation of the Persian Sophy as

discussed above but also in the representation of other Oriental characters in the play, which will be highlighted under separate headings in the following discussion. The three playwrights have presented the Turks as Muslims, cruel, barbarian and an incarnation of evil as compared to the English characters who are portrayed as Christians, civilized, cultured and pious. This thing becomes obvious in a war between the Persian army commanded by Anthony on one side and the Turk army on the other side. The playwrights have given a religious coloring to this war. The purpose of this war is “to wash the evill from the good” (Ridha, 1974, 2. p. 64). All Christians are “vertuous men” and all Turks are “devils” (ibid, p. 58). In this crusade, Anthony is commanding and fighting against the Turks, “Christes foes” (ibid, p. 59), “the pagans” and “devils” (ibid, p. 58) and all Christ’s sons will be delighted in the death of pagans (ibid, p. 58). The dramatists have frequently employed binaries like these in the play to establish and assert their religious and cultural superiority.

### **5.2.5. Representation of The Oriental Women:**

The biased and prejudiced approach of the playwrights in representing the oriental characters is also noticeable in case of female characters who are “typically Oriental” (Said, 2003, p. 6). The playwrights have portrayed the Sophy’s Niece and her maid Dalibra as if they were sexual monsters. When Niece asks Dalibra about the Sherleys, their conversation in no way reflects the roles of royal ladies:

Dalibra: I think Madam, if they be as pleasant in tast, as  
they are fayre to the eye, they are a dish worth eating.

Niece: A Caniball Dalibra, wouldst eat men.

Dalibra: Why not Madam; fine men cannot be choose but bee fine meate.

Niece: I, but they are filling meat (Ridha, 1974, 3.5, p. 69).

The dialogues of both Niece and her maid Dalibra do not show the true roles of a royal lady and her maid. The Niece, like her uncle the Sophy, is so much impressed by the Sherleys that she develops a liking for and possibility of love affair with the young Robert Sherley who is a foreigner in Persia. She goes to the extent that she rejects the love of the Persian Duke Hallibeck for the sake of Robert.

When the Niece is talking about the Sherleys with her maid, Dalibra, Robert Sherley comes there and he is warmly welcomed and received by the Niece as “a goodly personage, / Composed of such rich perfection” (ibid, 3.63-64, p. 71). The Niece extends her hands to be kissed by him as a symbol of honor and acknowledgement of the Sherleys’ services for Persia. The dialogues between the Niece and Robert further reveal the Niece’s character. The Niece says Robert to come “Neerer yet more neerer” but Robert says “I cannot” (ibid, 3.77-78, p. 72). The above and the ensuing dialogues indicate that the Niece is emotional, takes initiatives and tries to seduce Robert Sherley. Whereas, Robert is calm, composed and exhibits self-control as he speaks:

I am high enough, the Shirlies humble ayme,

Is not high Maiesty, but honour’d Fame (ibid, 3.85-86, p. 72).

Again, when the Niece eulogizes the Sherleys, he says “You ouerprize us madame....” (ibid, 3.97, p. 73). Because of the Niece’s boldness and seductive attitude, Robert has to make a pretext that her uncle, the Persian Sophy “Expects my service” (ibid, 3.108, p. 73) to escape her. Thus, the whole romantic episode is a proof of stereotypical representation of the Eastern women. That is why, Abdul Rahman M. Ridha (1974) comments that the playwrights have incorporated this episode in the play to stress “the soundness of Christianity in contrast to Persian religious practices” (p.20). Similarly, Ridha maintains that the incident involving Zariph, the Jewish money-lender also “stresses the commendable features of Christianity as represented in the honest pious Sir Anthony in contrast to the dishonest and materialistic features of both Zariph, the Jew, and Hallibeck, the Muslim” (ibid, pp. 21-22). It is through incidents and episodes like these that the playwrights have tried to establish their cultural hegemony. Because “It is hegemony or ... cultural hegemony at work, that gives Orientalism the durability and strength” (Said, 2003, p. 7) and finally helps the West dominate the East.

#### **5.2.6. Representation of the Persian Dukes:**

The view that the Eastern are emotional, illogical and irrational is highlighted through other Persian characters as well. Hallibeck and Callimath are two Persian dukes but they are delineated as if they were miscreants and villains. Mostly, their characters have been portrayed through asides and one- line or two- line short dialogues. I shall confine myself to just two or three examples to show the representation of the two Persian dukes in a negative way. When Sir Anthony explains to the Persian Sophy how the English use the

cannon, the Sophy highly appreciates him. Hallibeck becomes jealous to see Anthony Sherley being elevated like this. Consumed by the pain of jealousy, he utters in an aside:

Hallibeck: [Aside] Sure 'tis a Devil, and I me tormented

To see him grac'd thus (Ridha, 1974, 1.119-120, p. 52).

Similarly, when the Sophy declares Sir Anthony as the Persian "General against the Turks" (ibid, 1.153, p. 53), the asides of both Callimath and Hallibeck reveal the negative traits of their personalities:

Callimath: [Aside to Hallibeck] Hee'll make him his heyre next.

Hallibeck: [Aside to Callimath] I'll lose my head first (ibid, 1.154-155, p. 53).

In this way, the playwrights, by reducing the roles of these two dukes as evil doers and schemers on the stage, have demonized them and skillfully turned them into marginalized characters. Their asides and dialogues reflect their negative personalities: jealous, treacherous, evil minded, greedy and poisonous. All these things are in true conformity with what Said (2003) notes in *Orientalism* that "Orientals are inveterate liars, they are lethargic and suspicious and in everything oppose the clarity, directness, and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race" (p. 39). The playwrights have further highlighted the negative traits of the Dukes in the scenes in which both Dukes appear together and particularly the scenes in which Hallibeck goes with Anthony Sherley to the European countries for convincing the European Kings to constitute a big coalition against the Ottoman Empire. This act of marginalization seems worst in case of the representation of the Turks in the

play. The playwrights have introduced only a few Turk characters despite the fact that the Ottoman Empire is represented as a great power of the world, which is historically true. Ironically, there is no female Turk character and all other male characters like the great Turk, Basha, Jailor, Turk prisoners and Turk soldiers are nameless and unidentifiable and have been represented as devils. The dramatists have not logically and convincingly developed either the Persian characters or the Turks. By introducing the Turks nameless, negative characters and by reducing their roles on the stage, the playwrights have marginalized and deculturalized the Turks. In the words of S. Schulting, S. Muller and R. Hertel (2012), “The play deindividualizes, if not dehumanizes, the Turks by showing them to speak, fight and even die as one ...This is a dramatic displacement of the Ottomans that renders powerless the superpower. This is- almost- the Turk play without Turks (pp. 142-143). The playwrights have demonized the Oriental characters whereas they have ennobled the English characters. For an instance, they eulogize and rhapsodize the character of Thomas Sherley in the words:

Shirlye a Christian and a Gentleman,

A Pilgrim souldier, and an Englishman (Ridha, 1974, 7.54-55, p. 81).

It is noteworthy that the dramatists have used all positive superlative words for the Sherleys and all derogatory and negative terms for the two Dukes. The Sherley brothers are heroic, noble, virtuous, skillful, calm, composed whereas the two dukes are jealous, greedy, evil doers and liars. Thomas Sherley is a ‘Pilgrim souldier’, a gentleman, a Christian but actually he is a pilgrim of fortunes. Again, the deconstructive analysis of the

text exposes the true nature of Thomas Sherley's aims. When he is going to attack a town ruled by the Turks, he tempts his followers and the sailors with the words "At my returne weele fight to purchase Gould" (ibid, 9.41, p. 85). But despite this temptation, his followers and sailors prefer to save their lives, desert him and flee away. He is not a pilgrim soldier but a liar and a deceiver who has left his country for wealth. He is a pilgrim of fortunes, greedy for wealth, and fame. The rhetoric of the Sherleys and the playwrights disguise reality so cleverly that a naïve reader is hoodwinked into seeing the things otherwise. Besides this, the personification of 'the Fame' as a character in the prologue (ibid, p. 44) and epilogue (ibid, 17.1, p. 135) of the play comments a lot on the true motives of the Sherleys. They have come to Persia for fame, honor and wealth and not for any noble or patriotic aims.

#### **5.2.7. Playwrights' Eurocentric Perspectives vis-à-vis Theme of Conversion:**

The theme of conversion from Islam to Christianity is an important theme of the play, which clearly demonstrates the playwrights' Eurocentric perspectives. The playwrights have skillfully disguised this theme in the play. The movement of the whole play bears out this fact. This theme has been incorporated in the drama by different ways. In the beginning, the Persians are shown to praise and admire the Christian culture and Christianity as it has been discussed above. Later on, this theme is developed through the binaries and distinctions between the soundness of Christianity and the denigration of Persian Muslim culture. The theme of conversion reaches a crescendo when the Persian Sophy allows the marriage of Robert Sherley with his Niece, grants the construction of a Church in Persia and we see the show and celebration of Robert and the Niece's newborn

babe's christening at the end. In other words, Persia is moving from her Shi'a Muslim religion and culture to Christian religion and culture. Thus, Robert Sherley-Niece romantic episode and their subsequent marriage, according to the Eurocentric perspectives, symbolically refers to the two significant binaries in which the West stands as masculine, dominant and powerful and the East as feminine, weak and emotional. As Ladan Niayesh (2008) argues that at the end of the play "a feminized Persia seems to be metaphorically claimed and possessed by the Christian West to which Robert Sherley belongs" (p. 132). Thus, the end of the play shows the conquest of a Western knight who ultimately succeeds in winning an Eastern royal lady. Call it "nascent English colonialism" having the English traders' eyes on the Persian silk industry (Grogan, 2010, p. 919) or "England's nascent imperial ambitions" (Hutchings, 2015, p. 44), the play obviously registers pre-imperial discourse or what is discussed as "the Renaissance imperialist discourse" (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv). Here, the question arises: did all this really and historically happen? Definitely, not. There is no historical evidence of all this. No doubt, the Persian Sophy was hospitable and generous towards the Christians. But, not to the extent to which the playwrights have portrayed him in the play. Despite the Persian Sophy's generosity and hospitality, both Anthony Parr and Ladan Niayesh perceive him in terms of an opposite of Christian values. Anthony Parr (1995) considers him a sort of an enlightened pagan (p. 11) and Ladan Niayesh (2008) calls him "the enlightened despot" (p. 132). Similarly, the Sophy's Niece was not her relative rather she was Teresa Sampsonia, a Christian lady. Bernadette Andrea (2005) and Jane Grogan (2010) confirm this fact. Jane Grogan (2010) says emphatically that "Teresa Sherley was actually a



Circassian Christian, and, like Robert, a convert to Catholicism” (p. 916). The playwrights have fictionalized the facts keeping into account the cultural, political and ideological demands of the period and performed this “act of cultural legerdemain” effectively and convincingly through an imperial rhetoric of appropriation (Burton, 2009, p. 39).

### **5.3. An Orientalist Reading of John Denham’s *The Sophy* (c. 1642):**

#### **5.3.1. Denham’s Eurocentric Perspectives:**

*The Sophy* implicitly as well as explicitly reflects Denham’s Eurocentric perspectives in case of the Ottoman Turks and the Islamic Persian characters. The playwright has demonized the Muslim characters under the influence of the ideological framework of the period. Moreover, the literary discourse employed in the play is in line with other Western discourses, which reflect the Eurocentric perspectives and, thus, registers continuity in this tradition. I shall discuss this point in detail in the following discussion. Like Baron’s *Mirza*, this play also deals with the story of Shah Abbas and the royal family. One thing, which is important to keep in mind while analyzing such Oriental plays, is their Islamic setting. Amin Momeni (2016) comments that “The Religion, here, is clearly meant to be Islam, and the context is the Persian court” (p. 80). This Islamic setting has been introduced through the choice of names of famous Muslim figures and by their oaths of ‘by our holy Prophet, by Mahomet’ and by ‘Mortys Ally’. For instance, Abbas’ Islamic identity has been established by his oaths of ‘by Mahomet’ which he repeatedly utters in the play. Moreover, he thinks that the Prophet Mahomet is also

protecting his throne. However, the available traditional criticism does not elaborate this point in Denham's *The Sophy*. Majority of the critics including Theodore Banks (1928), Samuel Chew (1937), J. M. Wallace (1974), Anat Feinberg (1980) Linda McJannet (1999), Mathew Birchwood (2007), Javad Ghatta (2009), Chloe Houston (2014), and Sheiba Kia Kaufman (2016) argue that the play has close relevance to the topical and political affairs of 17<sup>th</sup> century England. According to these critics, the play is a sort of critique, a warning or a lesson to the English rulers of the period. So, it is didactic in nature. Though the points of the worthy critics have great validity, yet the play has deeper ideological implications beyond the didactic element and the political relevance to the period. The playwright has represented Islamic Persians as cultural others and the play is rife with the negative images and stereotypical representations of Islamic characters. Since their representations are not, in the words of Edward Said, (2003) true to the "natural depictions of the Orient" (p. 21).

Amin Momeni (2016) observes, "Denham's dramatic representation of the Turks in this tragedy conforms to the persistently negative contemporary British and European perceptions of the Ottomans" (p. 77). He further continues, "Such perceptions are [also] evident in dramatic representations of Islamic Persians" (ibid, p. 78). His comments are insightful and provide a good start for the application of Said's views in *Orientalism* (2003) to Denham's *The Sophy*. I shall explicate the play in this perspective. Shah Abbas reigned Persia from 1588 to 1629 and because of his services to Persia, he is known as 'the Great'. But most of the English writers have portrayed him negatively and as a cultural stereotype. For instance, Edmund Spenser in *The Faerie Queen* (1590-6) has

mentioned “Shah Abbas to warn the Christian world “against their forren foe that commes from farre” (Spenser 138)” and similarly Thomas Haywood in *The Four Prentices of London* (1594) has pictured Abbas “as a sworn enemy of Christendom who must be eliminated” (Farahmandfar,2016, p. 142). Denham and Baron also have followed truly their predecessors and portrayed Shah Abbas as a cultural stereotype in their plays.

The Western writers have created the negative and stereotypical images of the Oriental characters due to the phenomenon which Emile Bartels (1993) calls the “emergence of imperialist ideologies and propaganda” or “the ideological backing” (pp. Xiii-Xiv). This thing can also be observed in case of historians who have represented Shah Abbas as a cultural stereotype. Among them, the most prominent is Sir Thomas Herbert who is the main source of Denham’s *The Sophy* and Baron’s *Mirza*. Herbert in *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* (1634) has represented Abbas as a bloody tyrant rather than a famous king, which reflects his biased attitude. This biased attitude of Herbert can be traced out in other cases as well. It is because of Herbert’s biased attitudes, Parvin Loloï (2012) calls him “a relatively unsophisticated and badly informed traveler” whose work is full of “some historical inaccuracies” and under whose eyes “the historical Abbas has been turned into the most enduring stereotype of medieval and Renaissance thought- the cruel Oriental tyrant” (pp. 349-350). If Thomas Herbert, to whom both Denham and Baron consider as authority, is biased in his attitude towards Shah Abbas, it is natural and logical that both the playwrights will also be biased in their representations of Abbas due to their heavy reliance on Herbert. They produced what they received and what they received was “Pre-judgement [which] produced judgement” (Matar, 2009, p. 223). Thus,

all these texts form an intertextuality and have been created “under the pressure of conventions, predecessors, and rhetorical styles” (Said, 2003, p.13) that limit creativity.

### **5.3.2. Representation of Shah Abbas:**

“In other words, representations have purposes, they are effective much of the time, and they accomplish one or many tasks. Representations are formations or... deformations” (Said, 2003, p. 273). Said’s stance is valid in case of the representations of Shah Abbas in most of the Western works, especially in the literary and historical works of early modern period. *The Sophy* and *Mirza*, like *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* (1607) also revolve round the story of Safavid king Shah Abbas and his family. *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers* apparently portrays Shah Abbas as a noble and hospitable king but ironically as it has been pointed out in the preceding discussion Abbas is depicted as an emotional, irrational and illogical person contrasted to the Shirleys. These two plays also represent Shah Abbas as a cultural stereotype and further accentuate the emotional and irrational aspect of Shah Abbas. Here, Shah Abbas is depicted as a superstitious, suspicious, cruel, lethargic and lusty Muslim monarch who always remains indulged in physical pleasures and to gain crown and prolong the period of his kingship, he commits heinous crimes such as parricide, fratricide and filicide. In Denham’s *The Sophy*, Morat, a Persian Lord and friend of Prince Mirza says about Shah Abbas:

For though his eye is open as the Morning’s,  
Towards lust and pleasures, yet so fast a lethargy  
Has seized his powers towards public cares and dangers,  
He sleeps like death (Denham, 1642, 1.i).

Before leaving the royal court, Mirza describes Abbas' court in the words:

Well, farewell Court,  
Where vice not only hath usurpt the place,  
But the Reward, and even the name of Virtue (ibid, 2. ii).

When Mirza is imprisoned and blinded, he calls his father an “old tyrant” (ibid, 4.1.) as he is unnatural and cruel towards his blood relations. Mirza's wife, princess Erythaa says him “a cruel tyrant” who is “so barbarous” and “vile” (ibid, 5. 1.). He is represented as a person who because of “a tragic flaw fails in wisdom and kingship” (Momeni, 2016, p.77). His representation as an Oriental barbarian and despot follows the typical formula, which the English playwrights have used in representation of other Oriental despots like Cambyses, Sultan Soliman, Sultan Murad, and Sultan Selimus. This has been the strategy of the colonial discourse, which is homogenizing and based on generalization. Louis Wann (1915) aptly notes that the Persians, Tartars, Arabs, and Egyptians “might have been cast in the same mold. Their morals are loose, and their monarchs are apt to be tyrannical” (p. 441). Through this homogenizing discourse, the West has tried to gain authority over the East. As Emile Bartels (1992) argues that despite the political aspects and didactic nature of the plays related to the Orient, “the demonization of the Oriental rulers provided a highly charged impetus for England's own attempts to dominate the East” (p. 5).

There is no doubt that Shah Abbas is rightly accused of a few of these crimes but he had some good traits in his personality, which have been totally occluded by Denham and Baron in their plays. Both Denham and Baron have depicted Shah Abbas as a tyrant and

despot without mentioning any single positive aspect of his personality. The point is: is it possible to judge a human being totally in black terms? Even the villains have some redeeming features in their personalities. This is very much true in the case of Shah Abbas disregard of his flaws, which he committed due to some personal fears, and bitter experiences of his life. Despite his faults, he was a great Persian ruler under whose regime Persia prospered a lot. But the playwrights have only highlighted the negative traits of Abbas' personality which may indicate their biased attitudes towards the cultural others. Linda McJannet (1999) comments that Shah Abbas "fascinated the West not for his imperial accomplishments ... but for his tragic ill-treatment of his own family" (p. 255). H. R. Roemer (1986) summarizing the achievements of King Shah Abbas pays a glowing tribute to him for reorganizing the Persian state out of chaos, for improving its economic condition, for developing an indigenous cultural style, and for patronizing the arts (p. 272). Like McJannet, Roemer further adds that "And though his historical significance has long been known there has as yet been no adequate appraisal in the West of 'Abbas as a ruler" (ibid). It is because of his great contribution to the development of modern Persia that the Persian historians name him Shah Abbas, 'the Great' (ibid, p. 278). The observations of McJannet, Roemer, and Loloi along with the Persian historians' accolades of Shah Abbas make it clear that Denham's treatment of Shah Abbas is somewhat unfair and undeserving.

### **5.3.3. Representation of the Ottoman Turks:**

Denham's Eurocentric perspectives become explicit in case of the Ottoman Turks and other Islamic Persian characters who have been represented as the hostile others. The

Turks are represented as “fatal” (Denham, 1642, 1. i.) and invaders who are a great threat for the Persians. The Turkish power is compared to a “storm” (ibid, 1. i.). Denham shows the defeat of the Turkish army despite the fact that “The disproportion is so great” (ibid, 1. i.). Finally, the playwright shows the two Turk Bashaws as Persian prisoners. Mirza advises the Bashaws to “Forget your nation, and ungrateful Master” (ibid, 2. i). The Bashaws are portrayed as traitors, conspirators, and “villains” (ibid, 5. i.) who meet their due and deserving death near the end of the play. All these negative images of the Ottoman Turks fall in line with the stereotypical images of the Turks, which can be easily traced in the contemporary Western-European discourses. Definitely, the English audience would like and love to see their enemies, the Turks humiliated and defeated on the stage like this way. The defeat of the Turks at the hands of the Persians reflects an indirect hatred of the English against the Turks as their enemies. Thus, the playwright’s Eurocentric perspectives reflect the influence of the dominant ideology of the period.

#### **5.3.4. Representation of Haly and Caliph:**

These Eurocentric perspectives find their full expression in the Islamic Persian characters particularly in case of Haly and Caliph who have been portrayed as the true villains in the play. To Momeni (2016), the name Haly “has religious connotations” (p. 78) since it is “the distortion of Ali, the fourth Muslim caliph who ruled after the death of Muhammad” (ibid, p. 81). Thus, Haly has been modeled on that Ali to whom Dante in his *Divine Comedy* shows along with Mohammad in the eighth circle of Hell (Said, 2003, pp. 68-69). Like his leader and Prophet Mohammad, Ali has all those sins, which Dante has described in Mohammad. That is why, both Mohammad and Ali are being split in two in

Hell because of their sins. Not only Dante has portrayed these Islamic holy figures in this negative way but also the same biased attitudes of the Western writers can be observed in the text and annotations of Robert Baron's closet drama *Mirza* (1642) written on the same Shah Abbas. In the light of this analogy, Haly is represented as a perfect devil. The close examination of his character in the play bears out this fact. The dialogues spoken by him bring out different negative aspects of his personality. Moreover, the imagery, which is employed to delineate his character, reflects his insidious and predatory nature. He creates havoc in league with his confidant Mirvan and pushes Shah Abbas towards catastrophe. When Haly and Mirvan meet in the beginning of the play, Haly mentions a plot which he is designing to harm the Prince, Mirza. But, despite his "nets" which he has "often spread" as a hunter, a fisherman (Denham, 1642, 1. i.) to entrap, Mirza escapes. Upon which, Mirvan instructs Haly to raise jealousy between Abbas and Mirza and fan the fears of Abbas:

Work on his fears, till Fear hath made him cruel;

And cruelty shall make him fear again. (ibid, 1. i).

In the meantime, Mirza returns victorious from the war against the Turks with two Turk Bashaws as his prisoners. Mirza trusts these Turks and wants to give some important position to them in the Persian army for future wars. He has already discussed the issue with Abbas. Now, he requests Haly to get a favor from Abbas in this case. This provides him a chance to further Abbas' jealousy and rouse fears in his mind. As Haly utters in an aside:

I shall my Lord.



And glad of the occasion (ibid, 1. i).

Consequently, Haly decides to capitalize on this opportunity since Abbas and Mirza are two extremes that cannot tolerate each other:

He's old and jealous, apt for suspicions, against,  
 Which Tyrants Ears Are never closed. The Prince is young,  
 Fierce, and Ambitious. I must bring together  
 All these extremes ... (ibid, 2. i).

When Haly is with Abbas, he assures him that Mirza is idolized by soldiers and worshipped by people. Contrary to Mirza, Abbas is old and forgotten:

Actions of the last Age, are like Almanacks o' the  
 Last year. (ibid,2. i).

Mirza's absence and his hasty departure from the court further helps him enhance Abbas' fears. As a result, Abbas is hoodwinked by Haly into believing that his son Mirza wants to dethrone and replace him. Haly realizes the desired effects of his plans and says in an aside:

It's this must take (ibid, 2. i).

The preying and fishing imagery over here indicates Haly a huntsman and Abbas a victim that must devour the bait and ultimately it happens. This preying imagery is further developed through the dialogues between Haly and Mirvan. Mirvan meets Haly and asks him:

How did he take it? and the jubilant Haly responds:  
 Swallowed it as greedily

As parched Earth drinks Rain (ibid, 2.i).

The befooled Abbas, blinded by his jealous nature and fears, thanks Mahomet, the Prophet for having the company of such a sincere ser:

Mahomet, I thank

I have one faithful Servant, honest Haly (ibid, 2. i).

To persuade Abbas and prove the veracity of what he has reported to him, Haly presents a forged letter of the Bashaws intercepted by the intelligence in the meeting of the Persian lords with the King Abbas. The forged letter and the Bashaws' sudden flight confirms his words and the jealous and frightened King at once believes Haly's well-fabricated story. Consequently, Abbas plans for the lifelong imprisonment of Mirza. But the problem is how to convince the Lords and people of Persia who love Mirza. For this purpose, Denham makes Abbas use the weapon of religion in the form of Caliph. If Haly is a true disciple of Machiavelli, Caliph is a devil disguised in a religious garb, Dr. Faustus' Mephistophelean servant. One manipulates and exploits the King and the other legitimates and validates the King's actions through divine authority. One is a serpent and the other is a hypocrite. At the end of the play, the new Persian King, Sophy describes their true nature in the words:

First thou, my holy Devil, that couldst varnish

So foul an act with the fair name of Piety:

Next thou, th' Abuser of thy Prince's Ear (ibid, 5. i).

Like Haly's name, Caliph's name has also religious connotations. In Islam, Caliph is a religious leader, a holy figure, "an imam who issues a fatwa, a holy order" (Momeni,

2016, p. 81). All Muslims venerate and follow him and his words. Therefore, by using the generic holy name Caliph for a character and his words as divine authority for Mirza's imprisonment and blindness, Denham has demonized all the Muslim priests. In the beginning, Caliph tells Abbas that his "fears are causeless" (Denham, 1642, 3.i) but when Abbas reminds Caliph of his function and warns him:

We but advance you to advance our purposes:  
 Nay, even in all religions,  
 Their learned'st, and their seeming holiest men, but serve  
 To work their masters ends...  
 No scruples, do't or by our holy Prophet,  
 The death may rage intends to him, is thine (ibid).

Abbas' threat has great effect on the hypocrite Caliph and he with his great religious authority informs Abbas and other Persian Lords in a council that:

Great Mahomet, to whom our sovereign's life  
 And Empire is most dear, appearing, thus  
 Advised me in a vision: Tell the King,  
 The Prince his son attempts his life and Crown (ibid).

After listening to Caliph, neither Shah Abbas nor any of the Lords can ignore and deny "The Prophet's Revelations" (ibid). That is why, the assured Abbas declares in front of the Lords:

Great Mahomet we thank thee,  
 Protector of this Empire, and this life,

Thy cares have met my fears... (ibid).

The repeated use of 'Mahomet' refers to the Islamic setting of the play, on the one hand, and lends divine authority and approval, on the other hand, to whatever Shah Abbas will do to penalize his son Mirza which otherwise could have earned public hatred and dislike for the monarchy. Abdall and Morat, the two Persian Lords, perceive the symbiotic relationship between religion and tyranny and fear how it can be fatal for Mirza:

But oh, this Saint-like Devil!

This damned Caliph, to make the King believe

To kill his son, 's Religion (ibid, 4. i).

Caliph, the saint-like devil, is like Faustus' damned servant, Mephistopheles to whom Faustus informs:

That holy shape becomes a devil best (Marlowe, 1588, 1. iii).

If evil appears in ugly form, people will hate it and not be easily dissuaded from the right path. But if evil appears in the garb of virtue, it can easily befool and seduce people. This is perfectly true in the case of both Mephistopheles and Caliph. People like Caliph do not practise and preach religion to make the kings virtuous and God-fearing. Rather, they support the kings to legitimate and validate their tyrannous deeds through the tool of religion:

Even by these men, Religion, that should be

The Curb, is made the spur to Tyranny (Denham, 1642, 4. i).

Haly is pleased to see the progress of his evil designs and informs Mirvan that:

He can as well endure a prison, as a wild bull the Net (ibid, 4. i).

Again, the playwright introduces the imagery of hunting over here. Haly as a hunter has finally succeeded in capturing the wild bull, Mirza, with the help of his net. Mirza is imprisoned, blinded and, later on, poisoned by Haly which causes his death. Later on, Abbas comes to the recognition that he has been deceived and Mirza is innocent. He confesses it to Mirza before his death:

But he that now

Has poison'd thee, first poison'd me with Jealousie,

A foolish causeless jealousy (ibid, 5. i).

But, now all is in vain. The grief-stricken and ghosts- tormented Abbas dies. After Abbas' death, his grandson Sophy becomes the Persian King who knows full well the villainy of both Haly and Caliph. Consequently, he realizes the need to purify the state of evil characters who "are associated with Islamic element" (Momeni, 2016, p. 81). Therefore, Sophy issues the orders of the sacrifice of both Haly and Caliph as "an attempt to revive justice, and by doing so symbolically purges" (ibid) the Empire:

then all that were

Actors, or Authors of so black a Deed,

Be sacrific'd as victims to his ghost (ibid).

Thus, in this way, the playwright links the Islamic Persian characters with evil and chaos whose sacrifice and death can restore order and peace in the Persian state.

#### **5.4. An Orientalist Reading of Robert Baron's *Mirza* (c. 1642):**

##### **5.4.1. Baron's Eurocentric Perspectives:**

Robert Baron's closet drama *Mirza* (c. 1642) is an extension and elaboration of the Eurocentric perspectives, which are visible in Denham's *Sophy* (1642). Despite the fact that both plays have similarities "in terms of plot, genre and theme" (Momeni, 2016, p.85), Baron's *Mirza* is different in some other matters. Firstly, Baron repeatedly asserts the veracity of his story due to his reliance upon the authority of Sir Thomas Herbert. Secondly, Baron distinguishes Persian Shi'a belief by introducing the term 'by Mortys Aly' from the Ottoman Sunni belief. Thirdly, Baron has incorporated lengthy annotations in the play to provide the background knowledge to his reader. Fourthly, Baron portrays Mirza as a murderer of his daughter, Fatyma to achieve "the completest conquest that ever Revenge obtained over Virtue" (Baron, 1642, p.5) and allows Shah Abbas to survive. Disregard of these differences, Baron's *Mirza* reflects the Eurocentric perspectives of the playwright in the same way as Denham's *The Sophy* does.

Though it is customary to mention the year 1642 as the publication date of Baron's *Mirza* yet the recent scholarship agrees that it "was published in 1655 and clearly intended to be read rather than performed" (Birchwood, 2007, p. 70). The inclusion of lengthy annotations consisting of nearly one hundred pages make the play a scholarly text. These annotations reveal Baron's erudition and are "meant to contain or control the reader's response to the play proper" (McJannet, 1999, p. 262). Baron claims whatever he is writing, there is truth in it since he draws upon the authority of Sir Thomas Herbert (Baron, 1642, p.5). Besides Herbert, Baron also cites Richard Knolles and George Sandys

in the annotations to assert the authenticity of his material (ibid, pp.182-261). Whatever Herbert, Knolles and Sandys have said is correct and needs no confirmation. The predecessors are authentic. Therefore, the successors took them as authority and cited them as such to create the reality of the Orient. This is what Edward Said (2003) argues, “Orientalism is after all a system for citing works and authors” (p. 23).

#### **5.4.2. Representation of Prophet Mahomet and Islam:**

The Western writers have produced the Orient through their representations which have purposes and accomplish one or many tasks (ibid, 273). Therefore, most of these travel and history works like the literary works of the period serve as ideological tools which provide “much coveted information” to the early modern English reader and at the same time “implicit in these histories was the comparison between East and West, between barbarity and civility” (Schmuck, 2006, p. 15). So, such works enable the West to establish “the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (Said, 2003, p. 7). The Western writers and scholars had already inherited the negative and stereotypical images of the Orient and Islam from the classical writers and from the literature of the medieval ages. They further disseminated this idea of European identity as superior people and superior culture and Oriental people as inferior, irrational and backward during the early modern period through the poetry, plays, travelogues, religious sermons and captivity literature. They accepted these negative views without questioning their authenticity and produced the biased and prejudiced pictures of the Orient and Islam. Nabil Matar (2009) rightly puts it “Prejudice

is pre-judging, forming an opinion before and/ or without possessing reliable data about the subject” (p. 214).

It was due to the prejudice that “English literature of the early modern period portrays Islam as a sensual religion, and Muslims are often depicted as idolaters” (Hawkes, 2010, p.144). This movement of demonization was deliberately initiated from top to bottom. First, the Western writers demonized Islam and the Holy Prophet and subsequently this enabled them to represent all the Muslims through that negative lens. They wanted to point out that as the Muslim leader is sexual monster, fake and fraud, same is true in case of his followers, the Muslims. Thus, in this way, the Western writers demonized Islam, the Prophet and Muslims in their works to prove their cultural and religious superiority and thereby established their distinguished identity. It was this sense of distinguished identity, which helped England assert her cultural superiority and finally facilitated her to lay the foundations of British Empire. As Emile C. Bartels (1992) alludes to the fact that “it is by mapping out what is “ours” and what is “theirs” that empires are formed” (p.3).

Therefore, the works of the Western writers may be described as what Said calls “political knowledge” (ibid, p. 9) hence, they lack honesty and objectivity. Therefore, Baron’s claim becomes dubious since Herbert’s own account is full of inaccuracies and generalizations, which reveal his biased attitudes toward the Orient (Loloi, 2012, p.349). For an instance, Herbert (1634) portrays Mahomet as an enemy of Christians who with the army of Tartars and Arabians “dared to assault the infeeble Christians” (p. 251), a sexual monster (ibid, p. 252), a fraud prophet who attracted many people towards his false religion “by bribery, magic and other means” (ibid, p. 253). While describing the



Indian Mahometans, he calls them “superstitious Mahometans” who are “crafty, cowardly sort of people” (ibid, p. 37). He reports, “Poligamy is odious among them in which respect they cease not to villifie Mahometans as people of an impure soule” (ibid, p. 39). Similarly, while describing Persian Shah Abbas, Herbert comments that “Mahometan princes are terrible crafty or mysteriously politicious” and further adds, “such is the hardheartedness of Mahometans, a wicked people for cruel inventions” (ibid, pp.171-172). It is in the context of this biased background, Baron represents the Prophet Mahomet. Assuring Shah Abbas of his unflinching support, Beltazar tells him:

Let not my sovereign doubt my proved faith,

That would ope Mahomet’s Shrine at your command (Baron, 1642, 1. p.14).

Apparently, Beltazar is telling Abbas that he can do impossible things for him. But in reality, these two lines of Baron have deeper ideological implications. Firstly, no Muslim can imagine of uttering such words as opening the Prophet’s Shrine. This is blasphemy and profanity. Secondly, by making a Muslim character utter such profane comments, Baron is showing his biased attitudes. His biased attitudes find detailed expression in the annotations where he describes the false story of Mahomet’s death. According to Baron’s story, which he draws on Sandys and Herbert, Mahomet was a Saracen Law giver who died when he was sixty-three years old. He had given a promise to his seduced sect that he would resurrect after the third day of his death. But this never happened and he remained unburied till thirty days so much so that that the air was “infected with the monstrous stink of his carcass” (ibid, p. 188-189). All this is representation and nothing

else since representation is either formation or deformation (Said, 2003, p.273). Through these types of generalizations, Herbert and Baron have defamed the Prophet as well as his followers. Such statements obviously indicate the Western Eurocentric perspectives. As Mathew Birchwood (2007) acknowledges that by heaping “the litany of Imputations on Mahomet”, Baron’s *Mirza* manifests “a version of the bivalency that had long characterized the English treatments of Islamic other” (p. 88).

What Herbert and Baron say in their works is not something new or individual. Rather, it betrays the collective thoughts and attitudes, which the West had towards the Orient and Islam during the early modern period. As Mathew Dimmock (2015) records that for most of the early modern readers the term Mahometanism was more familiar than the term Islam and “Mahomet was imagined as a false prophet, a cynical manipulator of his followers, a fabricator of miracles: manipulative, lascivious, and violent, a juggling mortal who fraudulently performed divinity” (p. 295). There is consistency in the stereotypical images of Islam and prophet with the passage of time. For instance, Edward Said (2003) points out the same fact that “since Mohammad was viewed as the disseminator of false Revelation, he became as well the epitome of lechery, debauchery, sodomy, and a whole battery of assorted treacheries” (p. 62). That is why, the literature of the early modern period portrays “Islam as a sensual religion” because the writers were bound to do so under the ideological and legal pressures of the time (Hawkes, 2010, p.144). Thus, if a Prophet and a leader is corrupt, if a religion is fraud, its practitioners and disciples will definitely inherit all these traits. It is in this light the Western poets, playwrights, historians and travelers have portrayed the Orient, Oriental characters, Islam

and Muslims. The same is evident in case of Baron who has represented the Islamic Persian characters in this light.

#### **5.4.3. Representation of Shah Abbas:**

Baron's *Mirza* registers the Eurocentric perspectives, which have been discussed above, and the playwright has depicted Abbas in the same way as Denham has done him in *The Sophy*. Like *The Sophy*, the play also highlights Abbas' cruel and unnatural acts like parricide, fratricide and filicide. The ghost of Emir-Hamze calls his brother Abbas a "tyrant" and appears to warn him to:

leave thy Adulteries,

Thy Rapes, thy Incests, heaps of Perjuries,

And Ghomorean sports, no sting behind (Baron, 1642, 1. P.9)?

Explaining the murder of Emir Hamze under the eponymous entry, Baron comments in annotations of the play that it is "A crime most usual in these Eastern princes" (ibid, p. 183). This remark of Baron serves a clear example of "the Renaissance imperialist discourse" (Bartels, 1993, p. Xiv) or the Orientalist discourse which is homogenizing and based on generalizations. Referring to this remark of Baron, Linda McJannet (1999) notes that such "confident generalizations recall Said's description of the Orientalist discourse" (p. 260). The Western poets, playwrights, historians and travelers have been employing this type of discourse to define and describe the cultural others. As a cultural other, Shah Abbas, the Muslim King, is depicted as an enemy of Christianity. While recalling the

atrocities of Shah Abbas, Emangoly says, “What signified his wrong to the poor Christians” (Baron, 1642, 4. p. 114). In the annotations, Baron further explains that Abbas caused the death of “no less then the lives of 1000(some say 1200)” (ibid, p. 254) innocent Armenian and Georgian Christians when they tried to show their affiliation with the Church of Rome. As a cultural other, Abbas is shown an epitome of all evil traits. He is portrayed as a murderer, tyrant, superstitious and a jealous person. He is viper, unnatural, lethargic and a lusty fellow. Abbas’ Concubine, Floradella, his Counsellour, Beltazar and his Favorite, Mahomet Ally Beg tell Abbas that he is nothing but “A good effeminate Prince” (ibid, 1, p. 12) as compared to his great ancestors like Cyrus, and Darius. The Persian people say that he

Lie[s] wallowing here

In pleasures, and will one day take a surfet (ibid).

They fan Shah Abbas’ jealousy and fear by informing him that his son, Prince Mirza has more popularity and is “the peoples common theam” due to his valiant deeds than he and there was

A panegyric, sung by hired Eunuchs,

In adulation of the valiant Mirza (ibid, p. 13).

The befooled and blinded Shah Abbas accepts the words of the evil trio as ultimate truth and declares his verdict to penalize his son, Mirza:

No more debate; sentence is justly pass’d,

The execution rests... (ibid, p. 20).

Finally, it is decided that Mirza should be asked to come back from the battlefield to the court where he will be arrested and imprisoned. This task is assigned to Mahomet Ally Beg who sends a messenger to Mirza to tell him return to the court. Abbas assigns the joint command of the Persian army to Beltazar along with Duke Emangoly to counter Mirza's influence and authority in the army. Floradella is asked to visit the royal ladies frequently so that they may not suspect anything wrong. Meanwhile, Shah Abbas plans to dismiss Emangoly from the government of Shiraz and Elchee from the government of Hyrcania. Mahomet Ally Beg is appointed as next Duke of Shiraz in place of Emangoly. When Mahomet Ally and Floradella meet, they are pleased with all this development and consider:

Tis a good prologue to his sons Tragedy (ibid, 3, p. 55).

The provoked Abbas in league with Mahomet Ally appoints seven mute Executioners to strangle Mirza but then Abbas relents and orders for Mirza's blindness and lifelong imprisonment so that he may be considered "only careful and not cruel" (ibid). Mirza calls him "cruel", "unnatural Father", (ibid) "Tyrant Father" (ibid, 4, p.119), "dotard Tyrant, Serpent" (ibid, 5, p. 132) and plans to kill his own daughter Fatyma to take revenge from his father Abbas since Fatyma is Abbas' favorite child. Abbas describes himself in the words:

I have been a tyrant, nay a monster long (ibid, 5, p.175).

Baron, in all these textual references, represents Shah Abbas as a negative character, a tyrant, cruel, unnatural person and a sexual monster. As it has been mentioned above in detail that neither Herbert nor Denham has pointed out any positive aspects of his personality. Rather, they have transformed the historical Abbas into the cultural stereotype (Loloi, 2012, pp. 349-350). Like Herbert and Denham, Baron has depicted Shah Abbas as a tyrant on the pattern of other Oriental barbarians, particularly the Turk sultans. As Mathew Birchwood (2007) suggests, “Lurking behind King Abbas are Turkish counterparts, archetypes of cruelty, and lasciviousness who, although politically inimical in the narrative, are clearly imaginatively related in the drama” (p. 90).

#### **5.4.4. Representation of the Ottoman Turks:**

Like Denham, Baron’s Eurocentric perspectives can be observed in case of the Ottoman Turks and other Islamic Persian characters who have been delineated as negative characters and cultural stereotypes. For example, the Turks have been shown the sworn enemies of Persians. But through this indirect way, Baron demonstrates the English’s hatred against the Turks. Mirza’s return from battlefield to the Persian court is described in terms of “Plot of some Turk to ruin Persia” (Baron, 1642, 2. P. 48). The Great Turk is represented as a proud king who sets him “too high” (ibid, 4. P. 85) against the Persians. Mirza’s sword “is drunk and glutted with Ottoman blood” (ibid, 3. P. 65). Mirza’s stars can “eclipse the Turkish Moon or daub her horns with Ottoman blood” (ibid, pp. 38-39). Under the entry of the Turkish Moon in the annotations, while drawing on the authority of George Sandys, Baron explains that “The half moon, or crescent, is the Turks Armes, nor do they honor that planet onley in their Ensignes, but also in their devotions,

superstitiously gratulating the discovery of the new Moon” (ibid, p. 192). Here, both Sandys and Baron, on the one hand, are mocking the Muslims’ religious custom of sighting the new moon by which they calculate the days of a lunar month, and on the other hand, asserting that the Muslims are superstitious. This becomes more prominent when Baron comments under the entry of ‘Ottoman blood’ that the Ottoman Turks “in honour of their false prophet, the Turke having now embraced the Mahometan superstition” (ibid, p. 194) established their new Empire in the year 1030. The Prophet of the Muslims was false and superstitious, so are his disciples. Baron says this after deriving the authority from Herbert, Sandys and Knolles. Thus, there is “discursive consistency” (Said, p. 273) in all these works since all are clearly characterized by the Western biases and prejudices.

#### **5.4.5. Representation of Mahomet Ally Beg:**

Baron’s Eurocentric perspectives can also be traced out in the depiction of Mahomet Ally Beg whose name has “religious connotations” (Momeni, 2016, p. 78). Like Denham’s Haly, Baron’s Mahomet Ally Beg has been modeled on Dante’s, Sandys’ and Herbert’s Ali. While using the authority of Sandys and Herbert, under the entry of Mortys Ally, Baron notes that “This Ally was cosin to Mahomet, the Persian Prophet, to whom he gave in marriage his daughter Fatyma born of his first wife, and made him his heir, and head of his superstition, by the title of Caliph” (Baron, 1642. P. 187). The leaders and spiritual mentors of Muslims are false, fake, fraud, superstitious and same is the case with the Muslims. Mahomet Ally Beg inherits and embodies all the evils, which the Western

poets, playwrights and historians have represented in the Muslim leaders, particularly in the characters of Mahomet and Ali.

In *Mirza*, Baron portrays him Shah Abbas' Favorite, who was "raised to that height from obscure descent" but, actually, he was a "mean" person (ibid, p. 7). Mahomet Ally becomes so ambitious that he wants to be the future Persian king. For this purpose, he uses Abbas's concubine, Floradella "as an instrument to besot the King", (ibid). An important point with reference to the character of Floradella is that she is "not derived from Herbert but [is] the pure invention" of Baron to whom he has used as a "vehicle for much of the play's moralizing" (Birchwood, 2007, p. 85). Mahomet Ally is so crafty that he corrupts the great, buys the needy, fawns upon all and insinuates the people and makes them rebel authority (ibid). Because of these characteristics, Mahomet Ally admires himself and feels pride:

How shall I fall in love with mine own parts,

That have so conn'd all cunning mystique Arts (ibid, 4. P.92).

He is a true Machiavellian figure, a great manipulator and an exploiter. Equipped with all these negative traits, he can easily befool Shah Abbas. Floradella rouses fear and jealousy of Abbas by telling him that people love Mirza more than Abbas but it is Mahomet Ally who confirms it by saying that a panegyric was being sung in the praise of Mirza. Mahomet Ally tells Abbas that Mirza is a traitor and "treason is a kind of Hectique fever" (ibid, 1. P. 15) which should be cured as early as possible. He further



convinces Abbas by informing him that Mirza is ambitious and “Ambition knows/ No kindred” (ibid, p. 17). Mahomet is a crafty and coward fellow who instructs Abbas:

All cruel actions must be safely done,

And all their safetie lies in privacy (ibid, P. 20).

Abbas, consumed by jealousy, believes whatever Mahomet Ally tells him. He is even determined to kill his son and so much so that he utters, “I’ll ruine all mankind first” (ibid, 3. p. 53). Shah Abbas trusts him so blindly that he calls him “my beloved Mahomet” (ibid, p. 19), “Wise Mahomet” and “modest Ally Beg” (ibid, 3. P. 53-54). Like a preying bird, he is vigilant of every movement and waiting for a suitable opportunity. As he mentions to Floradella that “No fish shall ‘scape us when the water’s troubled” (ibid, p.22). He is a selfish and self-centered person. He is sincere to none, not even to Floradella whose strings are being moved by him. He calls her “Poor credulous cockatrice” (ibid) to whom he uses to catch the big fish, Abbas:

Thou art a good close spie, a bosome traitour,

And a fair bait for some smooth liquorish Sultan,

Whom Ile perhaps buy with thy prostitution (ibid).

He thinks that once he becomes a King of Persia after the deaths of Abbas and Mirza, he will be worthy of Princess “Nymphadora “a young widow lusty in her blood” (ibid, p. 23). Mirza can see through Mahomet’s tricks and knows his true nature. As Mirza describes him:

He has his ends if he

But speaks, or bowes, or nods to any man.

His very looks and smiles are all design (ibid, 2. P. 34).

Because of his flattering habit and devious methods, Mahomet Ally is soon able to replace Duke Emangoly and becomes the “second in glory” (ibid, 3. P.54). Shah Abbas bestows on him the titles of “Lord Treasurer” (ibid, p. 58) and “Angel Guardian of Persia” (ibid p. 54) under whose care shah and his Empire will be secure. Mahomet Ally and Floradella rejoice over this great victory and envision themselves as the king and queen of Persia. They will build a “Seraglio” (ibid, p.61) in which they will have all sorts of luxuries at their will. They will also build a city where they imagine that:

We'l lie on beds of Gold and Ivory,  
 Richer then that Bythinian Pythius gave,  
 Our great Darius: Golden Vines shall shade us,  
 Studded with pearls, whose artificial clusters  
 Shall be the freshest Rubies. Thus we'l tyre  
 Nature and Art, and ourselves too, with pleasures (ibid, p. 62).

#### **5.4.6. Representation of Harem or Seraglio:**

Baron's Eurocentric perspectives can be found in the representation of harem or seraglio. In the annotations, Baron, citing the authority of Sandys, elaborates that seraglios are the “Bawdy houses in which the noble men and Princes in Persia, Turkie, and indeed all over Asia keep their Concubines” (ibid, p. 206). In Islamic culture, Seraglio or ‘harem’ means

a forbidden and a sacred place in Muslim households. It is meant for women and only the owner of the house and seraglio can enter it. Other men cannot even come close to this place. But, the Western writers, travelers and historians have represented seraglio as a brothel house and a place where Oriental women lose their freedom in their works. They have represented Muslims' harems in negative terms to establish and assert their cultural hegemony since most of their representations related to Seraglios are based not on their own actual experiences but on their imaginations and false reports. In case of actual experiences, the picture is quite contrary. In this respect, Isobel Grundy's (1999) is a significant work in which she has narrated the actual experiences and memories of Lady Mary's journey (1716-1718) of Turkey. She records that Lady Mary "learned that the Harem rested less on sexual than family politics; that women (veiled of course) moved freely about streets; that the segregation of the sexes created a female space with its own culture and hierarchy" (p. 148). Thus, these representations of seraglios may be described as Western constructions. These are the part of the Orientalist and colonial discourse as these explicitly introduce the binaries between self versus other and East versus West, and, are in line with the perception of "Islam as a sensual religion" (Hawkes, 2010, p. 144). It is because of such images as depicted in the above passage, the East has been perceived as an exotic land, a land of luxury, a land of adventures, a place of fascination and desire to be possessed and enjoyed by the West. As Masoud Farahmandfar (2016) argues that in this context, Persia "denoted an exotic land much famed for its lavish splendor and arbitrary authority- all that was antithetical to European values" (p. 141).

If Denham criticizes Haly with reference to religious hypocrisy, duality and duplicity of Islam as embodied in the character of Caliph in *The Sophy*, Baron criticizes Mahomet Ally with reference to sensuality and sexuality of Islam through the characters of Floradella and her maids in *Mirza*. The point is: one says that the Muslims are hypocrite and the other says that Islam is a sensual religion. Such misrepresentations clearly reveal the Eurocentric perspectives of both playwrights in their plays because both playwrights have represented the negative and stereotypical images of Islam and Muslims. These facts may be traced out in the Islamic setting of the play, Islamic characters, and other Islamic references, which are scattered in the whole play. For instance, Floradella advises Mahomet Ally to use the Muslim priests to inveigh against Abbas' tyranny:

T'were good you won the Muftie to your purpose;  
 And some of the Abdalls, that at publique meetings,  
 And market Lectures, may expound the Text  
 Oth' Alchoran, according to your comment (Baron, 1642, 3. p. 62).

These lines serve an ample proof of Baron's Eurocentric perspectives because in these lines, he has mocked and criticized all the Muslim priests along with Mahomet Ally who can appropriate the Quran for the sake of material benefits:

Good cheer is bait enough for these poor spirits,  
 Fil them with that, and the bagpipes will sound  
 What tune you'l turn them to, when they are full (ibid).

Once they are baited, they will be at your beck and call and serve you the way you want. Mahomet Ally agrees with Floradella and informs her:

Tis true, great wit, these mercenary Priests  
 Are the best fire-brands, such I've ready kindled (ibid, p. 63).

#### **5.4.7. Representation of the Quran and Muslim Clergymen:**

The Quran, like the Bible, is a holy book for the Muslims. Therefore, neither the laity nor the religious ministers can ever imagine to distort or change it as this act is sacrilegious and blasphemous. But, because of their Eurocentric perspectives, the English perceive it “as the expression of a depraved heresy” (Birchwood, 2007, p. 87). So, by making the Islamic characters utter the above-mentioned lines, Baron is expressing his biased attitudes. This becomes more prominent in the explanation of these Islamic terms in annotations. Under the entry of the Muftie, Baron, drawing on the authority of Sandys and Herbert, notes that Muftie is a high priest, a supreme judge in Islamic culture. At the end of this term, he adds that “nor is he [Muftie] restrained, nor doth he restrain himself from plurality of women, and the delights of a Seraglio, a commendable recreation surely for so grave and infallible a Prelate” (ibid, pp. 208- 209). Similarly, in the term Abdals, Baron defines them mendicant Islamic monks. He describes them as “the wiser wolves in sheep skins who preach lying wonders, and expound the Alcoran according to their occasions or inventions” (ibid). These comments of Baron are confident generalizations and may be quoted as instances of Said’s Orientalist discourse. Such comments confirm Said’s statement “that people, places and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes” since “Expertise is attributed to it” (Said, 2003, pp.93-94).

Baron's Eurocentrism finds full expression in the explanation of the term the Alcoran. He has devoted nearly eight pages to the explanation of this term and in all these pages he tries to convince his readers that the Quran is "a Fardel of Blasphemies, Rabbinical Fables, Ridiculous Discourses, Impostures, Bestialities, Inconveniencies, Impossibilities, and Contradictions" (Baron, 1642, pp. 209-216). Mahomet, the Muslim Prophet, is an imposter, a friend of devils, a thief, and a lecher who has composed the Quran to justify his sins and so on. For the sake of authority, Baron cites almost a dozen of Western authors and scholars such as Sandys and Herbert who see the Quran, Islam and Muslims in this light. If such explanations of Islamic names and terms, on the one hand, demonstrate Baron's erudition, on the other hand, these reflect his "extreme prejudice and hostility" (McJannet, 1999, p.261) towards the Quran and the tenets of Islam.

The preceding discussion of the plays explicitly reflects the playwrights' Eurocentric perspectives, which shed light on the ideology of the period. The playwrights have represented Islam and Muslims who inhabited most parts of the Orient in a negative way to establish and assert their cultural superiority. Islam was a great rival religion to Christianity during the medieval age and the early modern English period. Particularly, the Islamic empires of the Ottoman Turks, Persia and Mughals served as models to be imitated and excelled in certain cases and at the same time posed threats of invasion, conversion and piracy for the Christian world. Therefore, it was impossible for the English writers to portray this superiority of Islam in their works. As David Hawkes (2010) puts forward that "Of course, it would have been ideologically, and legally, unacceptable for any English writer to suggest that Islam was in any way superior to

Protestant Christianity” (p. 152). Moreover, these representations of the cultural others enabled the West to produce the Orient, to define and distinguish itself from the Orient and to construct its identity.

However, the aim of this study is not to emphasize the differences, or to declare one party wrong and the other right. Rather, its aim is to help the readers overcome the differences, which are visible in the Orientalist discourse. Differences and divisions create distance and breed hatred and hostility. To overcome these differences and divisions, understanding is required. It is only after understanding these differences, there may be the possibility of tolerance, of acceptance, of accommodation and forgiveness. While summing up the aim of his work *Orientalism*, Said (2003) asserts that “My aim, as I said earlier, was not so much to dissipate difference itself ... but to challenge the notion that difference implies hostility, a frozen reified set of opposed essences, and a whole adversarial knowledge built out of those things” (p. 352). B. Turner (2004) rightly recognizes this positive note in Said’s *Orientalism* when he adds, “Said’s Purpose by contrast was not merely to understand these divisions of discourse, but to overcome them” (p. 174). This is only possible when one is ready to see beyond the rhetorics of blame, beyond the binaries and barriers.

## Chapter SIX

### Conclusion

This chapter reflects on the investigations, as they have been unfolded in the preceding chapters. It summarizes the whole thesis by accentuating succinctly the answers to research questions posed in the first chapter. It also throws light on the scope of future research in this field. In this thesis, I have sought to examine the validity of contention that the Western playwrights have misrepresented the Orient, Oriental culture, Oriental people, Islam and Muslims with focus on the Persians in the selected four early modern plays - John Preston's *Cambyses*, John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' *The Travailes of The Three English Brothers*, John Denham's *The Sophy* and Robert Baron's *Mirza*. The Western playwrights have depicted them as cultural others or aliens. They have done so due to the cultural and ideological demands of the period since it was in vogue to portray the negative and stereotypical images of the cultural others. In order to test the contention, I have explicated the selected plays in the light of new historicist theory, which has been employed as a main theoretical framework for this study. New historicist assumptions such as the concept of representation, historicity, the role of a dominant discourse and construction of identity were used to investigate the misrepresentation of the Persians in the selected plays. In addition to it, Edward Said's views in *Orientalism* have also been used as an ancillary theoretical lens in order to substantiate the contention that the Western playwrights have represented the Persians in a negative way in the selected plays. The two theories were conflated to get at a



complementary reading for the sake of clear and comprehensive picture of the whole investigatory process. It is only by presenting the true picture, misunderstandings can be clarified and barriers can be removed. Further, the objective of this study was not to blame one or the other party or to highlight the undeniable differences between the West and East. Nevertheless, the objective was to develop understanding that may help overcome the differences and lead towards accommodation, tolerance and forgiveness since this is the way to start new beginnings and become a part of the larger humanity and universal brother-hood.

The theoretical frameworks of new historicism and Said's Orientalism have helped me crosscheck the analyses and interpretations related to the selected plays. With reference to the concept of representation, both new historicist perspective and Orientalist reading of the plays confirm that the selected plays are political in nature. The playwrights used these plays as discourses to disseminate specific views embodied in them. Similarly, the application of both theories to the selected plays also validates the viewpoint that the playwrights used the ideology embodied in these discourses to construct the identity of their audience. Consequently, in this way, they facilitated the dominant group i.e. England to emerge as an empire through the plays as ideological tools. In this regard, the concept of binaries that exists in these plays further substantiates the point how these playwrights used them as political tools to initiate the process of becoming an empire. The historicity of the text and textuality of history enabled me to view how these plays are grounded in the socio-historical conditions of the period and, at the same time, partake in the contemporary discursive practices.

I have conflated these two theories owing to the similarities in their outlook towards the explication of literary works. Both theories show affinities in the following areas: -

- ❖ Both theories are interrogative and deconstructive in nature in the sense that both question the existing criticism and look in new direction.
- ❖ Both believe that role of context concerning the interpretation of a literary work is indispensable. The new historicists term it the historicity of text or the social realities that create a literary work. Said somewhere else calls it the worldliness of a text.
- ❖ Both theories show similarities in their views towards the concept of author, text and intertextuality.
- ❖ The two theories share common belief in relation to the concept of representation. Both think that cultural representations are political in nature, and, tied with the power structures of society. They function as ideological tools.
- ❖ The two theories also hold the same opinion vis-à-vis the role of discursive practices in shaping individual and national identities.
- ❖ The aim of both theories is to open new ways of perceiving reality by giving awareness to its readers/ practitioners.

Concisely, both theories complement each other due to affinities in their ways of analyzing and interpreting literary works. Nevertheless, despite the similarities, there is a marked difference between the two in many respects.

In order to seek answer to the first research question, new historicist assumption of historicity of text and textuality of history was used in detail under separate heading in the examination of each play. Under this assumption, a concerted effort was made to examine how the selected plays in the current study function as part of a continuum with other varied contemporary discourses like literary representations, history works and travel accounts. The whole explicatory process was substantiated through textual citations from the selected plays. Besides the primary sources, the views of researchers, critics and scholars have also been incorporated as supporting sources of information. In this part of study, I have concluded that the English playwrights have misrepresented the Orient and Oriental people especially Persia in the selected plays. These plays form intertextuality and are result of negotiation with the socio-historical context of the period. They cannot be detached from the context, which has produced them. Rather, they should be treated as part of what new historicists term as thick description and analyzed vis-a-vis that context. The most important finding that emerges in this part is that all forms of literary representations are cultural artefacts. They do not simply reflect reality but mediate it. There is an explicit dialectic relationship between representations and social realities of the period. They mutually shape each other. Like representations, authors, critics and readers are also cultural artefacts and cannot be seen in isolation from the context.

In relation to the research question as to what extent these selected plays support or undermine the dominant ideologies of the period, I have reached the conclusion that the selected plays strongly partake in the dominant ideologies of the period. It was one of the

dominant ideologies in the English literary representations to demonize the Orient and Oriental people during the early modern period. Since theatre, more than other forms of literary representations, can function as a powerful device to disseminate the dominant ideologies and shape identities, the early modern English playwrights used theatre to convey the dominant ideologies of the period and played significant role in shaping the identities of the audience. The Western playwrights did so because they wanted to establish and assert their cultural hegemony over the Orient and subsequently dominate it. It has been part of the strategy of Western cultural hegemony. In this way, the Western writers, travelers, historians and playwrights tried to validate that the Oriental people are members of an inferior race and at the same time defined themselves vis-a-viz the Orient and constructed their identity as members of a superior race.

As far as the next research question as to how these plays add to our understanding of the ways in which different discourses influence, overlap with and compete with one another is concerned, I have concluded that there is an obvious interplay of varied discourses of the period with one another. The overlapping discourses have marked affinities with one another and it seems that they reflect same dominant ideology. These overlapping discourses greatly influence one another and form a closed and circular discourse. They mainly belong to the dominant group and support the ideology of that group. It is under influence of the dominant ideology that playwrights created their plays. The dominant group used these discourses as ideological tools to disseminate its ideologies and thus shaped the identities of the audience. In case of the competing or dissenting discourses, there exist only a few dissenting discourses. They are mainly non-English in source, and,

show a clear departure from the overlapping discourses and tell another story. Further, the contrast between overlapping and dissenting discourses, points out the fact that the dominant group usually silences or occludes the dissenting discourses to regulate power smoothly.

In response to the question as to what extent the varied discourses of the period reflect the playwrights' motives behind the (mis)representation of Persia, I have concluded from the analysis of the selected plays that the English playwrights have depicted negative images and cultural stereotypes of Persia and Persians mainly because they wanted to assert their cultural hegemony over Persia and dominate it. It becomes evident from the discourse, which these playwrights have employed to portray the Persians as cultural others. Though this discourse may not be described as a fully developed Orientalist discourse which was employed by England during 18<sup>th</sup> century, the heyday of colonialism, yet the birth of this Orientalist or imperialist discourse may be easily traced out in the selected plays since these plays reflect England's imperial desires in their early stages.

The examination of the plays reveals that the East has been haunting and enchanting the Western minds due to different reasons. One, the East has been a land of opportunities and career for England. This has fanned England's imperial desires to access and control the resources of the East. As Renaissance was an age of discovery and exploration, England was looking for new markets to expand her trade and boost her economy. In this case, Persia due to her silk industry has been a lucrative market for England during Renaissance period. Its evidence may be found in the Sherley Brothers' travels to Persia

in Day, Rowley and Wilkin's joint play *The Travailes of Three English Brothers*. Two, the East due to its exotic appeal and fabulous riches has been a place to be possessed and claimed for England. The Eastern monarchs and courts due to their luxurious lifestyle has been fascinating the Western minds since long. Particularly, the European-Western people fabricated many romantic and lustful stories about the Muslim monarchs with reference to their seraglios or harems. Robert Baron has dwelt a lot on the concept of seraglio in Islamic culture in his play *Mirza*.

Three, varied historical events like the increasing conquests and military power of the Ottomans, the defeat of Spanish Armada and the huge amounts of wealth brought to England by her trading companies played pivotal role in sparking imperial ambitions of England. The Ottoman Empire with its growing military power and well-established government has prompted envy and there has been desire on the part of England to imitate it and even excel it. Four, the Western Europe has been perceiving Islam as false and superstitious religion and Muslims as disciples of fake and fraud prophet. This religious identity has blurred the Western judgment and led them conclude that Muslims are cunning, crafty, lusty, emotional and subsequently unreliable. Moreover, since Islam is not a revealed religion but an offshoot of Christianity, it is inferior to Christianity as an avowed revealed religion. The Christians are noble and champions of truth. Therefore, they are superior to Jews and Muslims in terms of their religion and culture. This is evident particularly in the early modern English drama that has depicted Jews and Muslims as cultural stereotypes. The medieval age further disseminated and strengthened these anti-Islamic ideas. The early modern English period inherited and accepted these

defamatory ideas about Islam without questioning the veracity of such ideas. These anti-Islamic ideas can be observed in Denham's *The Sophy* and Baron's *Mirza*. Combined with these anti-Islamic ideas were the negative perceptions of the East and Eastern people created by and transferred from the Greeks who viewed them as emotional and irrational people hence the image of the East as a weak and feminine character.

The above-mentioned factors indicate that the East preoccupied the English minds as a land, which evoked fear and fascination, an object of desire to be possessed and claimed for, and, Islam as a rival religion, and Islamic states like Ottoman Empire as military opponent that posed a threat as well as challenge to British imperial desires. In this context, the need was felt that the image of England as a superior nation must be propagated within the country and across the world if England wanted to realize her imperial dreams during the early modern period. England achieved this objective by developing different strategies. Firstly, she established good commercial relations with the Ottoman Empire through the Levant Company. This commercial strategy helped England come close to the Turks and consequently alleviate the hostility between the two countries. Secondly, England tried to establish positive diplomatic and military relations with Persia, the enemy of Turks, to counter the threat of the Turks. Thus, there has been friendly relations between England and Persia because both have been common enemies of the Turks. Thirdly, the English trading companies like the Levant, the Muscovy and the East India boosted British economy by bringing a lot of capital back to England. Besides it, these trading companies not only provided useful information about Eastern countries to England but also prompted the emergence of strong maritime industry of the

country. Fourthly and finally, the English writers, travelers, historians and playwrights portrayed the negative images of the Orient and Oriental people in their works and on stage to inculcate the point upon the minds of their country fellows that the Oriental people are emotional, irrational and barbarians. It is here England's strategy to represent the Oriental people as cultural others has been fruitful. These representations of cultural others helped England distinguish the self from other, define herself as a superior nation and construct individual and national identities.

In the context of friendly Anglo-Persians relations, it is often argued that the English playwrights have represented Persia and Persians in a manner different from the Ottoman Turks, Moors and Arabs. There is no doubt that Persia has been on good terms with England during early modern period but England developed these friendly relations because of her eyes on the Persian silk industry and as a part of her political and military strategy to use Persia as a countering force against the Turks. Thus, Anglo-Persian relations were the need of time and beneficial for England. These relations, however, lacked equality and sincerity. Particularly, when it comes to the representation of Islam and the Prophet, the English writers have demonized the both. They have portrayed Islam as a fraud religion, a sensual religion and the Muslims as an embodiment of all vices. The cultural representations of the period clearly reflect this English attitude towards Persia. Majority of the poets, playwrights and historians of early modern English period have represented Persia as an enemy of Christianity and Persians as barbarian people. Apparently, it seems that English playwrights have delineated Persia as a land hospitable for Christians but, in reality, they have represented Persians as cultural others like the



Ottomans, Moors and Arabs. If there is any difference in the representation of the Persians, it is because Persia did not pose as much threat for England as the Ottoman Empire posed. Furthermore, the English were soft in their attitude towards Persia because Persia as an enemy of enemy was her friend. Despite all these facts, the poets, historians and playwrights of the period have consistently demonized the Persians owing to their Oriental and Islamic identity and portrayed them as negative and cultural stereotypes since it was a dominant ideology of the period. A few instances will be enough to prove the validity of this statement. I have already cited these examples in detail in this study. I shall just summarize them here for making the picture clear.

For an instance, Spenser (1590-1596) narrates Shah Abbas in *The Faerie Queen* as a foreign foe of Christianity. Thomas Haywood (1594) in *The Four Prentices of London* represents Shah Abbas as a sworn enemy of Christianity who must be destroyed. Thomas Minadoi (1595) in *The History of Wars between The Turks and Persians* perceives both the Turks and Persians as barbarians and enemies of Christ. He further describes the Persians as liars, deceivers and followers of crafty, superstitious and wicked Mahomet. King Lear in Shakespeare's (c.1606) play *King Lear* asks Edgar to change his extravagant Persian costumes. Thomas Herbert (1634) in *A Relation of Some Years Travaile* comments with reference to Shah Abbas that all Mahometan Princes are clever and crafty. He has represented the Muslim monarchs as sexual beasts who have thousands of concubines in their seraglios. In the selected four plays of this study, the playwrights have explicitly represented the Persians in a negative way. The significant point is that there is consistency in the negative representation of Persians in all the

selected plays as all these plays are product of negotiation with the socio-historical conditions of the period. All these plays shed light on the circulating discourses related to the cultural others and reflect the dominant ideology that was at its work in shaping individual and national identities.

John Preston's *Cambyses* represents Cambyses, the King of Persia, as a despot and unjust ruler. He is a drunkard, a sexual monster who commits many unnatural crimes. Day, Rowley and Wilkins' *The Travailes of Three English Brothers* portrays Shah Abbas as an irrational and illogical ruler who is inferior to Sir Anthony Sherley whom he considers a godly figure. The three playwrights have particularly demonized the two Persian dukes and the Sophy's Niece along with her attendant woman, Dalibra. Similarly, Denham's *The Sophy* and Baron's *Mirza* depict Shah Abbas as a tyrant and a sexual beast. Both plays reflect the playwrights' Eurocentric perspectives as far as the representation of Islamic characters is concerned. In this case, Baron's *Mirza* is the most prominent play that surpasses other plays of the proposed study in the demonization of Islam and Islamic characters. Nevertheless, the existing Western scholarship on these plays has been ambivalent and ambiguous in their views in relation to the representation of Persians. The reason may be that some scholars have deliberately paid less attention to the textual references related to the misrepresentation of Persians and more attention to their political and contemporary relevance in their analyses. Consequently, they tend to argue that the English playwrights have projected a positive image of Persia in the selected plays. Even the Western scholars who have pointed out the instances of misrepresentation of Persia, they have commented on it in passing and then they shift

their critical focus to other issues. This attitude further confirms the point that English playwrights and scholars are Eurocentric in their perspectives towards the Orient in general and Persia in particular.

The findings of this thesis confirm the contention that English playwrights have misrepresented Persia and Persians in the selected plays. The study also suggests that the selected plays record the birth of a discourse, which was later on termed as Orientalist or imperialist discourse. It also confirms that English playwrights used this discourse to misrepresent Persia and thereby established and asserted their cultural hegemony.

#### **6.1. Limitations:**

The current study ventured to investigate the representation of Persia and Persians in the selected plays. New historicism was used to examine how the contemporary discourses including the selected plays represent Persia. The main assumption of this theory is that literary works are cultural artefacts and support or subvert the dominant ideology of the period. Further, Said's views in *Orientalism* were also used to investigate the representation of Persia in the selected plays. For this purpose, I mainly confined myself to the Western sources both primary and secondary published in English language and could not include the non-Western sources especially the sources created by the Persians which could have obviously broadened the whole picture. In case of excluding the non-Western sources, there were two main limitations: the linguistic barrier and non-availability of Persian sources. Similarly, the current study of representation of Persia was limited to the four plays of the early modern English period and it was not conducted

on the whole body of literature of the period including other plays, prose and poetical works, travel accounts, and history works. Therefore, literary and non-literary works other than these do not fall within its scope as it was confined to only four plays.

### **6.2. Scope for Future Researchers:**

The current study has provided a new framework for the explication of representation of Persia in four plays. Nevertheless, further study could be conducted to examine representation of Persia in the whole genre of drama as well as other genres belonging to the early modern English period. This kind of study can be done by employing the same theoretical assumptions to see whether other works of the period misrepresent Persia or not. This may add to the knowledge about Western attitude towards the Orient. These theoretical assumptions may be employed to carry out study related to the representation of Ottoman Turks, Moors, Mughals and Arabs in the literary works of the period. Such study of varied ethnic groups belonging to different geographical places of the Orient may further reveal the validity of the findings drawn from this study. The current study provides a new direction for a comparative study, either quantitative or qualitative, of representation of Persia and Turks by using the same theoretical assumptions. Language used in these plays and other literary works is also significant. Study related to representation of Persia and representation of Orient can also be conducted by employing some linguistic model to analyze the recurrent words and phrases, stylistic features and discourse of the literary works. Thus, the possibilities of further research on the representation of Orient and Oriental people seem unlimited. The investigation of representation of Orient and Oriental people is a deserving endeavor and will continue to

enrich our understanding with regard to the English perception of the Oriental people especially the Persians.

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