The Archaeological and Postcolonial Transformation of the Discourse of Orientalism from Renaissance to Restoration Drama

Hussein A Kareem Hussein Alhawamdeh
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND POSTCOLONIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE
DISCOURSE OF ORIENTALISM FROM RENAISSANCE TO RESTORATION
DRAMA

A Dissertation
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Doctor of Philosophy

Hussein A Kaream Hussein Alhawamdeh
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
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Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
The School of Graduate Studies and Research  
Department of English

We hereby approve the dissertation of

Hussein A Kaream Hussein Alhawamdeh

Candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

June 6, 2011

Ronald G. Shafer, Ph.D.  
Professor of English, Advisor

June 6, 2011

Lingyan Yang, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of English

June 6, 2011

Michael T. Williamson, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of English

ACCEPTED

Timothy P. Mack, Ph.D.  
Dean  
The School of Graduate Studies and Research
Title: The Archaeological and Postcolonial Transformation of the Discourse of Orientalism from Renaissance to Restoration Drama

Author: Hussein A Kaream Hussein Alhawamdeh

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Ronald G. Shafer

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Lingyan Yang

Dr. Michael T. Williamson

This dissertation, based on Foucauldian analysis of discourse, comparatively explores the dramatization of the Turk and Moor on the Renaissance versus Restoration stages and identifies the political, religious, and cultural transformation and modification to the discourse of Orientalism from Renaissance to the Restoration periods. The development, in Restoration drama, of the concept of the “cultural renegade”—or what I call the “Restoration gone cultural revolutionary protagonist,” who is a cross-cultural, revolutionary and political activist, transcending the limitations of place, religion, and nation and interfaces other cultures without losing his/her religion or culture—explains the complex figuration of the Turks and Moors in the western perception. The figure of the “cultural renegade”—Alphonso, Solyman, Ianthe, and Roxolana in William Davenant’s The Siege of Rhodes (Parts 1/2) (1656-1663), Almanzor and Almahide in John Dryden’s The Conquest of Granada (Parts 1/2) (1672), Wildblood and Donna Jacinta in Dryden’s An Evening’s Love (1668), Dorax in Dryden’s Don Sebastian (1689), Towerson and Ysabinda in Dryden’s Amboyna (1673), and Thomazo in Henry Neville Payne’s The Siege of Constantinople (1675)—deconstructs the Renaissance concept of
the religious renegade, who opts for one culture and religion over the other and encourages Islamic/Christian cultural rapprochement.

Moreover, from a Post-Colonial vantage point, this study sheds light on the Restoration period’s transformation and modification to the Renaissance discourse of Orientalism in terms of 1) the Restoration deconstruction of the Renaissance perception of the Turk and Moor as a fierce and “greedie lyon,” in Knolles’s terminology, as represented in Renaissance selected plays—William Shakespeare’s Othello (1604), John Mason’s The Turke (1607), and Robert Daborne’s A Christian Turned Turk (1612)—2) the Restoration denunciation of the Greco-Roman imperial heritage against the East, and 3) the recognition of the notion of the “Trojan Turk,” as represented in Dryden’s selected plays—All for Love (1678), which adapts Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra (1607); Tyrannick Love (1669); and Troilus and Cressida (1679), which adapts Shakespeare’s Troilus and Cressida (1602).

This study bridges and corrects the gap left by modern scholarship which either confuses or neglects the dramatic transformation of the discourse of Orientalism between the two periods.