Imagining 'the Turk'

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**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

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Stereotyping 'the Turk'

In discussions on the image of 'the Turk,' stereotyping is a common practice in the west and in the east. Thus, in his book on the image of 'the Turk' Mustafa Soykut, for instance, suggested that for centuries, 'from the very beginnings of interactions between the Muslims and Christians, Turks represented for the European the "other" *par excellence*.'

> To the Protestant, it represented the evilness of the Catholic; to the Catholic, the heresy of the Protestant; the man of the Renaissance identified the Turk with the Persians as enemies of the Greek civilisation, and of the European civilisation *per se*; to the Church in Rome, they were the arch-enemies of Christendom to wage war at all costs; and to Venice, an indelible 'infidel' commercial partner, with whom amicable relations were of vital importance for its very existence.

> Luther was of the conviction that the Catholics and Turks (Muslims) were similar. According to him, they both thought that God gave help only to the pious, and that like the Pope, the Turks were also not going to ascend to the Father through Christ, because the Turks did not recognise Christ's divine nature, and because the pope had betrayed him. Strangely enough, for another Protestant and an opponent of the Pope like Elisabeth I of England, the Turks and Protestants were quite similar. In 1583, Elisabeth I sent her ambassador William Harborne to sultan Murat III (1574-1595), described as a 'totally lost Calvinist' by the Venetian *bailo* in Constantinople, Gianfrancesco Morosini, for the aim of promoting England's trade interests in the Orient. The letter that she gave to the ambassador contained the affirmation that friendship between Turkey and England was natural. Since France and Spain and especially the Pope were idol worshippers, and England abhorred sacred images as much as the Muslims, and that their religion was greatly similar to the Turkish one as much as a Christian confession could be (Soykut 2001: 5-6).

Soykut, of course, is wrong. 'The Turk' in the gaze of Westerners never had just one face, he always had many different faces, and they were subject to a range of changes during the times. Western authors regarded the military and political conditions of a given country among the most important items of evidence for their judgements about it. Thus, when the Ottoman Empire was a great power, they used to admire its magnificent court and the military prowess of this 'great and mighty' empire. As long as the Ottoman Empire was expanding, its civil and military institutions were frequently idealised as far superior to those of their contemporaries. Emperor Ferdinand II's ambassador to the Porte under Sultan Suleiman in 1554-62, Augerius Gislenius, for instance, argued that while the Ottomans had 'a mighty, strong and wealthy Empire, great Armies, Experience in War, a veteran Soldiery, a long Series of Victories, Patience in Toil, Concord, Order, Discipline, Frugality and Vigilance,' on the Western side there was 'public Want, private Luxury, Strength weakened, Minds Discouraged, an unaccustomedness to Labour or Arms, Soldiers refractory, Commanders covetous, a Contempt of Discipline, Licentiousness, Rashness, Drunkenness, Gluttony.' Worst of all, he found that the former were 'used to conquer' and the latter 'to be conquered' (Gislenius 1744: 137).
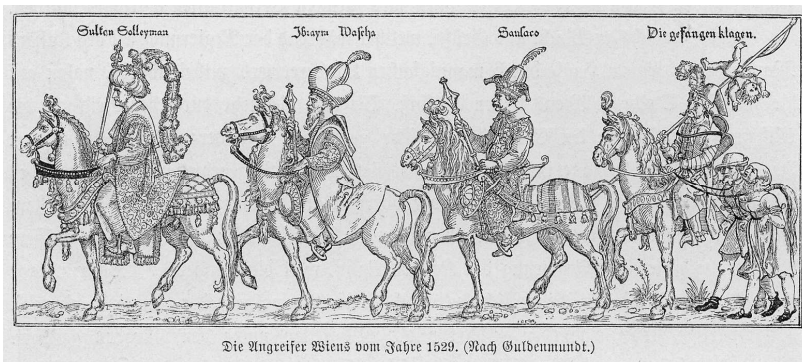
Vienna 1529, in *Oesterreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild*, Wien

In 1683, when King Jan Sobieski of Poland defeated Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa's army besieging Vienna, the Ottoman expansion westwards was put on halt. At the same time, the overall prestige of the eastern empire and its civilisation declined. Eventually, in the nineteenth century, what had once been a formidable power became known as 'the Sick Man of Europe.' By then, the more or less idealised images had faded away, being replaced by duskier and more obscure ones (Jezernik 2004: 42-3).

A pamphlet published in Lyon in the early seventeenth century, gives an account of the incident that reportedly occurred at Ahmet's birthday banquet when, after his pompous boast of the marvellous obedience he could command, the assembled foreign ambassadors made the mistake of protesting that their masters, too, were well obeyed. At that Ahmet rose in wrath, turned toward Solca Afor Pasha and cried 'Tue toy!' whereupon that pasha plunged his scimitar into his body and died. The 'Begleribeid de la Natolie,' Arminac Basod, the Grand Aga of the Janissaries, and three Cadis swiftly followed in the gory exhibition, and Basac Alac, at the sultan's command, slew his old father Amurac, 'Berleibeif d'Egipte,' before he killed himself. The pamphlet appropriately portrays Sultan Ahmet with flames rising from his turban (Rouillard 1941: 81).

In the late nineteenth century, however, on the frontispiece of a pamphlet titled *A Regular Little Turk, or, Mrs. Christian's troublesome brat*, published in London in 1877, 'the Turk' is depicted as a troublesome brat of a young and vigorous lady who is giving him a good spanking owing to the mess he created.

The course of history was not that straightforward, though. In the Crimean War in 1853-1856 two Christian powers, Britain and France, fought as allies of the Ottoman Empire against another Christian power, Russia. And a few decades later, two other Christian powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, allied with 'the Turk' - against Britain and France. Then, Sultan Mehmet V became–together with the Kaisers Wilhelm II and Franz Joseph I and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria–a part of the *Vierverband,* an alliance of four comrades-in-arms who united their forces in order to fight the British *Volkstyrannei*. Due to defeat of the Central Powers in the First World War, 'the Turk' was again excluded from Europe as an 'Asiatic barbarian' only to resurrect as a strategic ally of the 'free world' during the early years of the Cold War.

As we have just seen, when speaking of the image of 'the Turk' it is important to take into account that every image is determined in a great part by the observer's position towards the observed. This, of course, does not mean that 'the Turk' was a passive player. On the contrary, in the process of construction of the image of 'the Turk,' he definitely played an active role. Throughout centuries, European powers maintained their diplomats in Istanbul, and eventually, after the defeats in the wars of 1768-74 and 1787-1792, the Ottomans themselves began to recognise that their empire could no longer be defended without European allies. As a result, the sultans established permanent embassies in Europe in 1793 (Neumann 1999: 53). Unsurprisingly, they, too, learned to play European cards in accordance with their geostrategic interests.

The Fall of Constantinople

The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople under Sultan Mehmet II, on 29 May 1453, marked the end of one empire and the beginning of another. News of the fall of the City of Caesars spread throughout the Christian world during the summer of 1453 depicting 'the Grand Turk' as bold and ambitious who desired more than Alexander or Caesar to conquer the whole world (Schwoebel 1967: 5). The monk who was an eyewitness of the fall of Constantinople and described its fall as the greatest catastrophe in history was not just an upset observer; his description contains some wishful thinking, too. Namely, about Christian unity in the face of such a powerful enemy. However, the event clearly showed that for many Greeks the Ottoman turban was less hated than the Roman tiara (Schwoebel 1967: 16). In western Europe, the conquest of Constantinople was understood in a way which signified that western Christendom had now become the trustee of the ancient Greek culture, which, at this date, the 'Franks' equated with 'Culture' with a capital C (Schwoebel 1967: 10).

It was in this period of time, when Christendom was being politically fractured under the strain of the Ottoman offensive, that the term 'Europe' was brought into use and took on political importance. It was a favourite term of Pope Pius II, who was the first to use it in a book title. Pius's priority as pope was to rekindle the crusading zeal of Christendom–the referent for which had so obviously been partitioned by the Great Schism–by appealing to 'our Europe, our Christian Europe.' Europe was an easier term under which to preach unity than Christendom, and this unity was directed against that Islamic military opponent called 'the Turk.' Renaissance authors viewed the 'Turkish peril' as the latest phase in the centuries-old assault of Islam on Christianity, and drew heavily from the crusading literature of the Middle Ages. They also invoked the ancient Greeks, who saw their own system of city-states as the realm of dynamic change and who saw the 'barbarians' in the East as living in a static world (Neumann 1999: 44). The Holy See became the centre of endeavours to oppose the progress of the Conqueror. Yet there are traces of a belief in the conversion of Sultan Mehmet II to Christianity. In 1461, Pope Pius II sent a letter to Sultan Mehmet II, in which he urged his conversion to Christianity and so become the greatest of Christian princes promising him the admiration 'of all Greece, of all Italy, of all Europe' (Gilmore 1952: 18; Vaughan 1954: 66-7; Hay 1966: 84).

The first alliance between European Powers and the Ottoman Empire occurred during the struggle for the Holy Roman Empire between the Emperor Charles V and King Francis I of France. King Francis sought an

ally to open a second front against the Habsburgs and found a powerful ally in Sultan Suleiman (Rouillard 1941: 106; Vaughan 1954: 111; Neumann 1999: 47-8). In 1535, King Francis negotiated an agreement with the Porte, and France was conceded capitulations, receiving superior trade privileges.[1] Eventually, French and Ottoman forces undertook some joint ventures, including an attempted invasion of southern Italy in 1536-1537. The Ottoman navy sacked Reggio and Nice in 1543 and, needing winter lodging, were accommodated by the French, who vacated the city of Toulon, leaving it at the Ottomans' disposal (St. Claire 1973: 8-9).

For similar reasons, Queen Elisabeth of England sent, in 1583, Sir William Harborne, her 'first duly accredited ambassador to the Great Turk,' to Istanbul. Sir Harborne persuaded the sultan to threaten Spain just at the time when the Great Armada was being prepared for the attack on England (Chew 1937: 157).

A Part of the European Balance of Power

The so-called Turkish threat was also a benefit for other opponents of the Habsburgs inside and outside their realms, not just for the Catholic kings of France alike. During the sixteenth century, the Protestants, too, repeatedly allied themselves with the enemies of the Austrian Empire, because any force the Habsburgs engaged against the 'infidels' in the east detracted from their potential to intervene in the affairs of the west (Johnson 2002: 95). On account of this, the Ottoman Empire had been called 'the ally of the Reformation' (Vaughan 1954: 135). The Ottoman conquest favoured the spread and survival of Protestantism in all its forms in lands in which, had they been under Christian rule, it would have probably have been stamped out later by the Counter-Reformation. While numerous contemporary authors suggested that Ottoman sympathy for the Reformation had a genuinely religious basis, it is clear that to the sultan the Reformers were of great interest as a weapon against the Habsburgs. In 1572, French observers in Istanbul reported that prayers were offered in the mosques for the continuance of Christian religious divisions, which had so greatly helped the Ottoman advance into Europe (Vaughan 1954: 143-44).

The Treaty of Paris in 1856 officially recognised the Ottoman Empire as a permanent part of the European balance of power. The preamble to

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[1] The agreement also designated the French ambassador as the official protector of Europeans in Istanbul who were without other diplomatic representation; this is why the Ottomans called all Europeans *Franks* (St. Claire 1973: 8).

Austrian Mission at the Court of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in 1530

that treaty declared that the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire was vital to 'the Peace of Europe,' while Article 2 gave the Sublime Porte the right 'to take part in the benefits of international law and the Concert of Europe.' This status was codified at the Hague Conference in 1899, in which the Ottoman Empire was included as one of the participants (Neumann 1999: 40; Berend 2003: 121).

European states, entering into negotiations or concluding arrangements with the Ottomans, *de facto* recognised the Ottoman Empire and acknowledged a policy of coexistence. However, the negotiations and alliances were not accompanied by any official redefinition of the status of the Ottoman Empire or its acceptance as a legitimate member of the community of nations (Schwoebel 1967: 204). The turning point for the relationship between European Powers and 'the Turk' was marked by the Treaty of Carlowitz (1699), representing the first instance in which 'the Turk' was invited to participate in a European congress. But despite the decline in military threat, 'the Turk' was still perceived as a 'cultural threat.' As a result, Europe pursued its former conqueror with a particular intensity. Although the time of reconquest and empire was seen by many as a reincarnation of the old religious war, the former 'infidel' metamorphosed into a 'barbarian.' That is to say, civilisation seemed to supplant religion in Europe's external differentiation from 'the Turk' (Neumann 1999: 51). This change, however, did not bring down the wall of exclusivity which divided the West from the East:

> The greatest of all 'iron curtains' in history is that which has separated, and still separates, the Moslem from the Christian world. Although from time to time it was partly torn aside by the Crusaders of the Middle Ages, or pushed aside by the trading cities of Italy in the Renaissance, it has remained until our own day the dominant fact in the Near East. This is because religious prejudices, if given rein and not held in check by the sober realities of rational thinking, are the strongest of all impulses, having the strength of the primitive taboo. Throughout history, therefore, the 'unbeliever' has been regarded as the most dangerous of enemies, armed not only with a sword, but with a curse to kill the soul. Antagonisms which go as deep as this cannot be shuffled off in time of peace, but continue to block the path of understanding and distort the conception of what the 'unbelievers' are really like.

> The most striking instance of this kind of misunderstanding is our conception of the Turk. The nation which has been the titular leader of the larger part of the Mohammedan world and its greatest champion in Eastern Europe has now been revealed as the least fanatic of Mohammedan peoples, its head, Mustafa Kemal, discarding almost casually the caliphate, the sacred office of the successorship of Mohammed (Shotwell 1949: 115).

German and Austrian kaisers, Ottoman sultan and Bulgarian tsar united in arms against English *Völkertyrannei*, postcard, from the author's collection

Antemurale christianitatis

The Ottoman Empire which conquered the greater part of the Balkans was posing a substantial threat to the Habsburg Empire. The constant raids of bigger or smaller units were weakening the power and the will to resist of their victims. The Emperor Ferdinand's ambassador to Istanbul, Oghier Ghiselin de Busbecq, once remarked of 'the Turk' that 'like a raging lion he is always roaring around our borders, trying to break in, now in this place now in that'" (Rothenberg 1960: 27). Archduke Ferdinand of Austria, brother of Emperor Charles V, had to agree to pay the sultan a yearly 'gift' of 30,000 ducats, and Emperor Maximilian was forced to continue the yearly 'gift.' Only after the peace made in November 1606 was the humiliating yearly 'gift' discontinued, but the emperor had to pay a huge sum of 200,000 florins (Rothernberg 1960: 25, 39, 62). Although the Ottomans did not make significant additional conquests in the seventeenth century in Europe, their military presence was sufficient to perpetuate the 'Turkish terror.'

    The belief that the 'Turkish terror' was the divine judgment upon Europe's sins and religious divisions was widespread, and, after 1541, in towns and villages of the Austrian Empire the 'Turk-bells' (*Türkenglocken*)

called the faithful every day at noon to penitence and prayer (Vaughan 1954: 107; Schwoebel 1967: 19). When, during the summer of 1591, the Ottomans started an offensive on a wide front between the Adriatic and Kanizsa the 'Turk bells' rang once again to summon the faithful to pray to God for help against the 'wild Turks' (Orožen 1902: 123; Rothenberg 1960: 57). This practice spread into all Austrian lands and continued till the early twentieth century. It was a habitual practice in many Slovenian villages late in the nineteenth century that people added to the Lord's Prayer the angelical salutation for 'averting the evil Turk' (Gruden 1912: 583-84).

From 1396 to 1736, the 'bloodthirsty Turks' incessantly raided into Slovenian lands at longer or shorter intervals. During these raids, they destroyed many villages and took droves of captives, mostly young men and women, to slave markets (Rozman 1854: 139; Gruden 1912: 338; Lončar 1939: 26). According to historian Josip Gruden, it could be said without exaggeration that in Carniola alone 'the Turks took away for sure more than a hundred thousand of our people and that they, at least, killed that many' (Gruden 1912: 366). Raiding parties created a state of constant insecurity along the frontier; the peasants in particular lived in terror as villages were frequently looted and burned, the inhabitants killed or carried off into slavery. 'Slave-hunting,' commented Busbecq, 'is the chief source of profit to the Turkish soldier' (Rothenberg 1960: 40).

Although it was widely held that 'the Turk' was militarily superior to the West, the major Habsburg weakness was financial. As a rule, the Estates of the various lands were reluctant to vote adequate tributes to raise a powerful army. Yet the Habsburgs usually managed to obtain enough money, and the 'Turkish menace' proved to be one of the best means to raise higher taxes. Ambassador Cavalli of Venice once remarked that the powers of Ferdinand of Austria fluctuated with the degree of the 'Turkish danger.' However, the lack of secure imperial revenues made the conduct of military operations uncertain and confused. A victorious army might suddenly come to a halt because the subsidies from the Estates of various lands or the loans from various financiers had run out (Rothenberg 1960: 8-9).

As a result, the peasants were frequently left unprotected and exposed to raiding parties. Thus, in 1747, the peasants of Carinthia asked the Carniolan and Carinthian Estates, assembled in Wolfsberg, that they cancel the land tax if they intend to keep on levying the 'Turkish tax' without doing anything about driving out the enemy. In 1474 the Styrian Estates, assembled in Maribor, similarly informed Emperor Frederick III that the peasants were desperate because of continual invasions and that

they were ready to renounce their allegiance to the manorial lords and either unite with 'the Turk' or else emigrate. According to the annalist Jacob Unrest, the peasants of Carinthia particularly grumbled bitterly against the lords and openly accused them of having secret treaties with 'the Turk' (Lončar 1939: 29).

Although the 'Turkish menace' subsided after 1683 and the Ottoman Empire no longer posed any real military threat to the Habsburg Empire, Habsburg propagandists enjoyed praising the dynasty as a paragon of courage and as the bulwark of Christendom, and the frequent exaggeration of the 'Turkish threat' was a means of amplifying the Habsburgs' achievements and importance. Overstatements also helped mobilise support at home and abroad, by implying that if the Habsburg bastion fell, 'the Turk' would first slaughter the Habsburgs' own uncooperative subjects and then proceed up the Danube to the Rhine or Paris and do the same to the Habsburgs' Protestant and French enemies. In this respect, the propagation of the idea of a common menace contributed to bridging denominational gaps and consolidating the Habsburgs' domestic and international position by emphasising their indispensability (Johnson 2002: 83). In Habsburg propaganda, the value of the 'Turkish menace' was deemed very high, the more so as the Military Border was not only a bastion against 'the Turk,' but also in case of any uproars in Hungary (Rothenberg 1960: 100). Even more importantly, the 'Turkish menace' was a helpful tool in the process of centralisation in the Habsburg Empire (Gestrin 1952: 26).

If the ideology of expanding the domain of Islam through warfare against the 'infidel' played an important role in legitimising the rule of the sultans, fighting the 'Turkish peril' served as a potent means of asserting the legitimacy of the Habsburg dynasty. The greater the 'Turkish peril,' the greater was the importance of the role of the emperors for their subjects and their enemies. Hence, the Ottomans were portrayed as a mortal danger, not just for the Habsburgs but also for their own uncooperative subjects and to the Habsburgs' Protestant and French enemies, if the Habsburgs were not fit for their noble task as bulwark of Christianity (Johnson 2002: 83). As a result, the themes of barbarism and sacrilege abound in the chronicles of the times. The stereotype 'Turk,' sensual and cruel, who was wantonly shedding the blood of Christians, destroying their settlements, seizing their wealth, carrying them into slavery and polluting the holy places, was really a product of the pamphlet literature of the sixteenth century, when the emperors required greater power for themselves against the local estates and demanded higher taxes for the crusade against the 'infidels' by vivid presentations of the atrocities committed by the enemy.

The confrontation between the Austrian and Ottoman Empires was imagined as an East-West confrontation in ideological terms: the Islamic Orient versus the Christian Occident (Schwoebel 1967: 187). As long as the Ottomans were regarded as infidels, and western princes as the defenders of the true faith, the crusade was the obvious solution proposed to meet the eastern menace (Schwoebel 1967: 34).

Turkish Lion as a German Poodle, postcard, from the author's collection

The confrontation between the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire consolidated the bulwark as a metaphor used to define the roles of Austrian nations in history as well as their relationships with one another. Yugoslavs, Albanians, Hungarians and Poles equally shared the belief that their nation's historical mission was the defence of Christendom and Western civilisation against the bloodthirsty enemy (Orožen 1902: 64;

Johnson 2002: 25; Berend 2003: 71; Žanić 2003: 163-68). The use of the bulwark metaphor dates back to the Middle Ages. The term *antemurale christianitatis* (from medieval Latin *ante* [pre- or fore] and *murus* [wall]), 'the Bulwark of Christendom,' was commonly used to describe Western Christendom's frontiers with oriental 'infidels' like the Tatars and the Turks or with the Eastern schismatics of the various Orthodox denominations (Johnson 2002: 64).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this myth included a sense that the rising nations of Central and South-eastern Europe had borne the brunt of defending Europe, and, consequently, that they deserved the gratitude of the West. Then, Slovenian writers frequently appealed to Slovenian glorious past and Slovenian services to other western nations. They interpreted the age of the 'Turkish wars' as a hard period of time in Slovenian history, indeed, and simultaneously the most heroic age of the Slovenian nation (see e.g. Parapat 1875: 40; Slemnik 1877: 3; Glaser 1894: 72; Orožen 1902: 211; Vosnjak 1918: 100; Lah 1927: 15). 'While other nations and even kindred Slavic tribes, for instance Czechs and Poles, could have nicely developed in peace,' suggested Karl Glaser, 'Slovenians, Croats and Serbs had to fight with savage Turks, with the cursed enemy of Christianity and civilisation, and thus defended western nations against savage enemies' (1894: 72). And, in the years preceding the Second World War, Edvard Kardelj stated:

> The historical merit of the Slovenian nation is that it was one of the most important dams bringing to a standstill the push of the Turks against Europe. If today certain west-European racist ideologues call them 'historical manure,' they are forgetting that Slovenians defended with their bodies for three hundred years that culture with which today they boast of (Sperans 1939: 59).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the image of 'the Turk' as a savage enemy of Christian people was supported by literature and the mass media, creating a false impression that this mythological figure was a real historical personage. The impression was so strong that even in the second half of the twentieth century the historian Vasko Simoniti in his monographs (1990; 2003) was unable to tell the difference between what were historical facts and what fictions of Habsburg propaganda.

In the early twentieth century, such a task was much more difficult, as 'the Turk' played an important role in Slovenian politics and his clear-cut and well-defined role had such a long tradition that many took it for granted. Thus it was when, in the beginning of March 1910, in Štepanja vas near Ljubljana landowner Florijan Lisjak unearthed in the field which lies

on the bank of the Ljubljanica's old river-bed, a burial ground, full of mysterious 'skulls.' Altogether, more than one hundred skulls had been excavated; among them were also the bones of five dogs and some horse


The 'skulls' from Štepanja vas

bones. The director of the museum, Dr Josip Mantuani, visited the site himself; however, as it was only half open and everything in fragments, it was not possible to determine on the spot whether the mysterious hemispherical clods were human heads or not. Director Mantuani found it significant that only heads were found, without any other signs. As the main Slovenian daily *Slovenec* reported:

> The skulls are filled with earth and are crushed. The bones are completely shattered, putrefied and extremely light. From this it may be concluded that the skulls have already been laying for a long time in the earth. If they were from the French times, they would have to be heavier. The heads are buried in a trench of 65 metres in length. Most probably at this place, in those times, there was a long ditch into which the heads were flung. Most of the skulls are laying face downwards. There must certainly have been several hundred heads interred, as is also indicated by the fact that it was reported to us today that they had again unearthed about one hundred skulls. In what times those skulls were interred it is not yet possible precisely to determine, since further time is required for such research. It is

also significant that the heads were interred on the bank of the old course of the river Ljubljanica. It is most probable that these heads were buried in the earth already during the Turkish times. The Turks, namely, severed heads from the trunk, flung the corpses into the Ljubljanica and then in their own manner impaled the heads on stakes. Once the Turks had disappeared from the environs of Ljubljana, the local inhabitants came out of their refuges and buried the severed heads. With regard to the dogs' bones, it is considered that the dogs had been gnawing at the severed heads, and therefore the people killed them and buried them together with the mass of heads in the ditch. The conclusion that the skulls date from Turkish times is also supported by the fact that the French did not practise decapitation – at least not on such a mass scale – and that, had it been done by them, one would also have to have found corpses. – The entire burial ground has been photographed. More detailed examination, however, will be required (Anonymous 1910: 3).
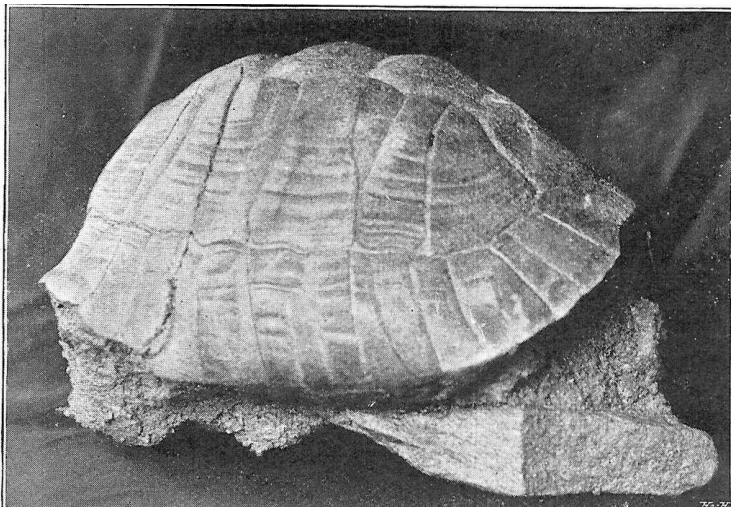
The 'skull' taken by Director Mantuani to the museum

Director Mantuani above all missed the jaws. Therefore, he took with him one of the apparent skulls, wrapped it into a blanket with plenty of soil, and took it with him to the museum for the purpose of further investigation. He also ordered the burial ground to be completely uncovered, washed out and photographed. It is not clear how the apparent skull was classified when brought into the museum as today there are no traces of this acquisition. However, the photographs of the apparent skull and the

uncovered site were very interesting. 'Namely, instead of human skulls bony tortoiseshells appeared (Sajovic 1910: 178).

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CHAPTER TWO

ON SYMBOLIC OTHERING:
'THE TURK' AS A THREATENING OTHER

RAJKO MURŠIČ

In popular imagery in Slovenia, 'the Turk' from the past is related to the imagery of a threatening enemy, while due to the fact that there has been almost no recent Turkish immigration to Slovenia in the past century, Slovenians have either no negative opinion on present-day Turkish citizens, or even have a positive attitude toward the Republic of Turkey. Perhaps this is so because many people from Slovenia would travel to Turkey, especially younger travellers, who bring back home very good picture of Turkish hospitality. This is perhaps the reason why there is Slovenian public support for Turkey to join the European Union.

After the radical break with the Ottoman past, the present-day Turkey has nothing in common with the Ottoman Empire from the past, with exception of some very basic constituent principles derived from Islamic tradition (cf. Gülalp 2002), therefore, whenever I refer to the notion of 'the threatening Turk,' I will be referring to the image of the Ottoman invader from the past (fifteenth to seventeenth century) who is still a part of inherited–or recently reintroduced–collective memory in Europe.

In order to understand such a notion of 'the threatening Turk' (or 'threatening Turks'), I will present a more general theoretical framework based on a combination of semiological, phenomonological and historical-materialist approaches, and discuss the creation of the Other through processes of othering. With the concept of alterity, I will critically assess representations of 'the Turk' and critically examine the limits of symbolic-interactionist (i.e. instrumentalist and constructivist) approaches in understanding of the creation of the Other. By adopting the dynamic approach, I will finally focus on examples from the other side of alterity: I will place

together agency of the (Oriental) Other and primal fear of the (Western) Subject.

Imagery of Threatening Invaders from the East: on Primal Fear, or Urangst, in the West

The imagery of 'the threatening Turk' is rooted in the well-fertilised soil of pan-European primeval fears of a ruthless enemy who will invade their lands from the East. Attila the Hun, whose grave is to be found, according to many local legends and stories, in Slovenia, or other central European countries, is only one of them. The major threats for the Ancient Greeks were 'the Persians' (see Said 1996), and the Roman Empire was destroyed by the barbarian tribes from its eastern borders. This primal fear, or *Urangst* (in German), is deeply enrooted into Western notions of the world, despite the fact that Alexander the Great with his troops reached India, and the Romans conquered Northern Africa and the Middle East. It is worth mentioning the threats from the West itself, e.g., the Vikings, Charles the Great, and Napoleon or Hitler, but nevertheless, the Avars, the Magyars, the Tatars, and the Mongols kept this imagery alive. Furthermore, threats to the West were not only coming from the distant Orient. They were as well related to the fall of Rome and fear of the Teutons and the Slavs right behind the north-eastern borders. This imagery was again well reinforced during the period of the Soviet Union.

Whenever a new threat appeared on the horizon, the imagery of the 'Oriental threat' was already there. It was used as a threat that might unite dispersed city-states and kingdoms of Europe under the banner of the Catholic Church (see Mastnak 1998). 'The Turk' was easily imagined as the threat of war, plunder, death, captivity, janissaries, and as a religious threat. A typical example of such imagery is the following song of the Slovenian thrash metal band Sarcasm from 2002 about deaths in car accidents, entitled *Slovenski genocid* (Slovenian Genocide; CD *Igra narave*, 2002). Its refrain goes as follows:

> Ne vojna ne Turki ne kuga ne more
> Ne more Slovenca nikoli pobit
> Na cesti se kolje morimo otroke
> Cesta slovenski bo genocid![1]

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[1] Neither war, nor the Turks, nor the plague,/ Could ever kill the Slovenian,/ As we slaughter ourselves on the road, kill children/ The road will be Slovenian genocide (Author's literal translation from the Slovenian).

So, the three key metaphors of death and destruction, understandable to any Slovenian kid, are war, 'the Turk'and the plague. In order to understand this hidden and apparently inconsistent imagery, we have to understand processes which bring to the fore not only as irrational notion of the threat, but also processes which create the Other with processes of othering through identification, differentiation, subjectivation and classification. The final result of the process is alterity, or radical alterity, creation of the imagined Other which may appear in any disguise imaginable. As much as a human being is a symbolic creature, he or she is an active producer of alterity. But where does the impulse of othering come from?

It is a result of human symbolic capacity which prevents fulfilment of any desire. The capacity of symbolic communication brings human beings, no matter how civilised they might think they are, into eternal quest for fulfilment of their desire. Alas! it is inevitably beyond the reach of the 'civilised' or 'cultivated' people. The Other–and only the Other!–is capable of unbridled enjoyment.

On the other side, just the opposite, it is easy for them, 'the primitive Others,' to fulfil their desire, because they steal it from Us, 'the civilised people.' And this is why the Others are always a threat. They had stolen our deepest desire from Us. Only a hundred years ago, a couple of years before its end, European travellers described 'the Turks' from the Ottoman Empire as people who knew how to enjoy themselves: for full enjoyment, they would only need a wife or two, tobacco, coffee and peace for contemplation (see Jezernik 1998: 214).

'The Turk' as a Threatening Other

Let us discuss this economy of desire with the imagery of 'the Turk.' The typical Western stereotypical representation of 'the Turk' is derived from the assumption that 'he' (for 'the Turk' is always a male) will destroy everything that is considered normal. He will rob, kill and enslave. 'The Turk' is a male, a plunderer. He is the opposite of the 'civilised,' an antipode to 'normality.' There are no women representations in relation to 'the Turk.' The only exceptions to the rule are harem women and–perhaps–belly-dancers. This imagery of threatening males and females as easy-lovers, if not whores, is rather typically Orientalist (see more in Said 1996).

It is not difficult to realise that both are wrong, but at the same time their inconsistent imagery is pertinent: it is based on inherited structural rules and norms, historically occurring events and clashes. History and imagery are related, but how? They are twisted around by non-rationalised

practice, i.e. habitus (cf. Bourdieu 1977), for practical activity in most cases simply does not involve conscious decision-making. Alterity itself is a product of unintended practices provoked by the uncertain position of the subject.

In order to understand processes in the production of alterity, we have to start with a symbolic-interactionist approach to human relationships which is based on symbolic communication. Differentiation on Us and Them is not natural. Difference is established through symbolic inter-action. The very first differentiation is derived from recognition of the mirror image of oneself, which is seen as the Other (Lacan 1994) and thus, in imaginary, becomes a subject with something alienated from it: the unity of the subject and the universe.

> Identification, as a process qualified by aggressivity and narcissism, is a term that highlights not only the process of constituting a subject (i.e. subjectification) but also the aspect of this process that introduces the figure of the other within the subject (Axel 2002: 249).

George Herbert Mead explained symbolic interaction within society as a process where an individual and a collective interact through gestures and other exchanges of information. In the processes of symbolic interaction, an individual is engaged with other people in different ways and at different levels, but his or her self consists of the individual, unique and unpredictable I, and the socially derived, shaped and to a certain extent 'collective' Me. This social part of the self is basically shaped from the existing social positions, knowledge, powers and important individuals whom Mead named the 'generalised Other.' It is alienated from the core of the self in the dynamic relationship of the individual frivolous I and social Me. The point is that the social part of an individual self is not just given, but–together with the unique individual 'I'–produced from interaction with other 'selves' (with their individual and social parts) from continuous interaction (see Mead 1997).

Processes of collective identifications are based on symbolic interaction. Thus the symbolic-interactionist view was later applied in studies of ethnicity and ethnic issues. Collectivities are constantly being redefined by symbolic interaction. Typical results of symbolic differentiation and mutual recognition are ethnic groups: the boundary between Us and Them is symbolic. Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth used this symbolic-interactionist idea in his studies of ethnic groups which are created from similar symbolic interaction across the boundaries that define the difference. These boundaries are not given but continuously produced by interactions and are not clearly defined (see Barth 1969). It is not possible

to draw them precisely on maps, but they do demarcate the difference. Any social group is essentially a social construction (cf. Berger and Luckmann 1988).

The problem is how to demarcate particular phenomena from general notions that are represented by the demarcation processes, because particular self-consciousness is the prerequisite–and the first result–of these differentiation-cum-identification processes:

> …difference or alterity that inhabits the Self is projected out as a reflection in the mirror. This trace of the Other (the appearance of the Other in the mirror) is also the trace of the Self (Castañeda 2006: 129).

To understand why the difference is so important, we have to step back into the basic understanding of symbols and their role in human society.

Traps of Symbolic Capacity

Human identification is based on symbolic exchange. Yet what is so specific (and powerful) in symbols? Symbols are signs, and signs represent. Any living being capable of communication uses signs as carriers of information. However, only symbols can carry very specific information which does not refer to something present (or stand in the place of something present or particular), or even existing. A sign consists of a material signifier and a cognitive signified. Between them is no other correspondence than social agreement of their meaning. In other words, relationship between things that signify and their meaning is arbitrary (de Saussure 1997).

With representation, a sign at the same time differentiates and identifies. Symbols give additional, deeper meanings to differentiated and identified representations. A symbol is any sign that carries meaning by the convention and does not directly relate to the referent. This means that it is not a signal or an index. The sign itself consists of two parts, material (signifier) and cognitive (signified). Any material may be used as a sign, but what is essential for material used to signify is that it may define difference and identification. If we have any other material that may be recognised (i.e. perceived) as different (e.g., different sounds, or phonemes, in using the larynx), only then may the given material carry meaning.

A symbol is a sign capable of representing abstract (non-existing) representations. Because we create and use symbols socially, they are constantly contested and negotiated. Not without conflict. Human symbolic capacity is the main source of latent conflicts and violence among human social groups. So, to understand creation of the Self and the

Other, we have to understand two essentially important cognitive practices: differentiation and identification. Difference is easy to understand: it is recognisable objects, things, phenomena which we perceive and give us an opportunity to separate them from the other objects, things and phenomena. We do not have to go into phenomenological questions about reality to simply assume that in general not only people, but all living creatures perceive their common world in similar separable blocs, e.g. water – air, cold – heat, brightness – night, a stone – a tree, etc. But when we use these separable phenomena to communicate something attached to this perception, we cross the boundary between pure perception (in the aim of survival) and use of these phenomena with attachment of something cognitive, spiritual to things already perceived as different. And when we attach meaning to one thing, we exclude other things from carrying the same meaning. Other things can carry other (at least primal) meanings. And the thing that carries the meaning is identified as separate by marking. The signifier at the same time points to something else and identifies it with exclusion of other possible meanings.

> Most generally, this is the moment of ambivalence, which I discuss in terms of the citizen-subject's immanent alterity, the splitting of the one of the People-as-One. This alterity is what is disavowed. Turning away from the diaspora individual as threat, or from the enemy within society as threat, this notion of the immanent alterity of the citizen-subject suggests that any citizen, at any time, is both a promise and a threat to the People-as-One (Axel 2002: 249).

If separation, making of difference, may be understood as something that is already going on without use of symbols, it is impossible to speak about identification without use of symbols. Furthermore, only symbolic communication, and identification–which is essentially symbolic–enable processes we understand as consciousness–or separation of consciousness from unconsciousness. But we do not have to go into these philosophical and psychoanalytic issues. What is important is that there is no human self, and no human society, without–or beyond–symbolic communication.

Nesting the Other

The human race has to pay a very high price for great advantages derived from specific human culture enforced with symbolic capacity: a human being is an animal caught in webs of significance s/he himself/herself had created (Geertz 1973: 5). These webs are structured. Structures are

predestined transcendental principles excluded from space and time (and the very human history; see Lévi-Strauss 1989).

However, as the Self consists of the unique I and socially shaped Me, human society consists of inherited structures, practised in – habitus (Bourdieu 1977), that follow their own rules, and unique fields of human (individual or collective) agency. But even when we can define the human capability of autonomous acting, it is still impossible to differentiate precisely between structure and agency, or to find the way to observe their interdependency. Phenomenologically speaking, there is a problem as to where to locate human agency. The problem is that can not be separated from the symbolic.

Symbolic communication just another superior Other that defines and controls human behaviour? Though we can not escape many different consequences of our symbolic capacity, we are not simply slaves of symbols. As history shows, both individuals and groups of people, and whole societies, can change. They are not just slaves of culture (if we understand specific human culture as essentially symbolic), inherited systems and practices. They, individuals and social groups, have something we call agency. Margaret Archer subsumed Bauman's and Giddens' 'central conflation' approach with the observation that '"culture" should never be detached from human agency' (1996: 73).

So we make a full circle and finally collide with culture. Culture is derived from the Latin verb *colere*, meaning to cultivate, to inhabit , to worship, to grow/breed, and to protect.

> …when we examine Systemic influences upon us, human agency appears as a ghost in the machine; on the other hand, the investigation of our cultural products views ghostly agents as creating the machine (Archer 1996: 143).

The term agency itself is theoretically not well defined (Barth 1997), but in general it is an opposition to something we call structure. We can understand structure in two ways. Most commonly, structure is just an order of things, a kind of underlying mechanism, construction, constitution, organisation, or frame. But if we understand structure as symbolic order, it is a mechanism and much more than that: structure then becomes something that no more relates directly to the observed and perceived phenomena (world of signifiers), but is embedded into something that is produced from the interplay of meaning in symbolic communication. Structure thus not only transcends time (history), but any willing act of human beings and may become something indeed superior and transcendental to individuals and social groups. It is an order of the signifieds

and achieves not only mythical dimensions but may become worshipped as a transcendental reality that completely controls and directs human existence. We call this situation culturalism, cultural essentialism (Grillo 2003), or cultural fundamentalism (Stolcke 1995). Human creations (not only commodities) often become reified, and reification of structure is among the worst examples of establishing power relations in human societies.

This is the reason why we need an alternative view on permanent creation and a change of symbolic and structural fundaments. One possible alternative to the above-mentioned views in making of the Other and exploring the power of primeval fear of the Other might become employment of the radical phenomenological *epoché*.

A Critique of the Aberrational Mind

A human being is created as a social being, and at the same time creates the society; structures are inherited, but at the same time they generate new structures; habitus is inherited and inscribed into a human body, and at the same time generates new actions and practices (Bourdieu 1977). It is the human body where the symbolic structure is finally inscribed, and it is the human body where it is continuously contested. Structure is being changed and transformed with acts in ongoing improvisation of human bodies in phenomenal space.

Following phenomenological threads of the social sciences (especially if they are based on Merleau-Ponty's and Alfred Schütz's works), the emerging 'cultural phenomenology,' proposed by Thomas J. Csordas, may offer at least some new and specific theoretical tools to develop understanding of the interplays between the given and the radical alterity:

> This cultural phenomenology is characterized by recognizing the epoché in the moment of alterity, not only as otherness in the sense of encounter with other people(s), but as otherness in the sense of cultural difference that is alien, strange, uncanny. It is also characterized by an emphasis on embodiment as the common ground for recognition of the other's humanity and the immediacy of intersubjectivity (Katz and Csordas 2003: 278).

Anthropology is still striving to offer appropriate solutions in order to cope with–and transcend–paradoxes of human interaction:

> In place of the external values of science (the vocation of anthropology) and the Other, alterity (difference) without the Other but in the name of others becomes a dominant criterion of value–the external 'good' around