

ABSTRACT

"The Oriental Element in the Elizabethan Drama with Special Reference to Marlowe, Shakespeare and Ben Jonson", is the topic of the present Ph.D. work. It is an attempt to examine the approaches of Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson to Oriental material in their plays. The thesis is divided into the following six chapters:

Chapter 1, 'Orientalism in the Medieval Age (1100-1500): A Historical Survey', presents an outline of the beginning and main contours of literary Orientalism up to the Renaissance period. The historical setting helps us, in turn, appreciate Elizabethan Orientalism, especially how it marks a departure from Medieval tradition of literary Orientalism.

Chapter 2, 'Orientalism in the Elizabethan Period', focuses Oriental images in Elizabethan travels, diplomatic relations, socio-economic interests, and dramatic works. The main concern, however, is to describe the

presentation of the Orient in the literary texts of this period.

Chapter 3, 'The Oriental Landscape', deals with Marlowe's, Shakespeare's and Jonson's fascination with the Oriental landscape with concrete illustrations from their plays. The playwrights speak admiringly of the Orient as a marvellous land, though they had never visited any Oriental country.

Chapter 4, 'The Oriental Diction', surveys all the plays of Marlowe, Shakespeare and Jonson, isolating and explaining words of Oriental origin featuring in their plays. There is also reference to the context in which playwright uses these Oriental words and their aptness, accuracy and impact on the total effect of the play.

Chapter 5, 'The Oriental Characters', brings out the Elizabethan stereotype in the representation of Oriental characters. Marlowe and Shakespeare represent Oriental characters in their own different ways. These playwrights appear to enter into genuine feelings and traditions of Turks and Moors in depicting them.

Chapter 6, 'The Oriental Element in Marlowe's, Shakespeare's and Jonson's plays – A Comparison', resumes the discussion broached in Chapter 2 and extends the arguments of Chapter 5. By discussing at length Marlowe's Orientalism in *Tamburlaine* and Shakespeare's in *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and Jonson's in *The Alchemist*, this comparative study shows the relative strengths and weaknesses of the three playwrights.