

Frontier Orientalism in *The Siege* by Ismail Kadare and *The Siege of Sziget* by Miklos Zrínyi

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Abstract

The western image of Turks has changed throughout history in Europe especially in the Balkans, Central and East Europe since the countries in these regions are directly exposed to the sieges, invades and attacks of the Ottomans as frontiers. Even though the image evolves to a softer position due to the changeable strategies and policies of the countries, the metaphor is utilised in order to mythicize the past for an interpretation of the current situation. The image of Turks and the effects of the Ottomans have played a crucial role in the countries which encounter them as frontiers directly and its reshaping process of cultural, political and national identities. This paper aims to analyse the Albanian historical fiction, *The Siege*, by Ismail Kadare as a post-modern work and the epic poem, *The Siege of Sziget* by Miklos Zrínyi as an earlier text in the light of Andre Gingrich's Frontier Orientalism. The main focus is to perceive these two countries' perceptions of the Turk image in different time periods with an insight of their national backgrounds. Along with the collapse of empires and increasing nationalist movements, establishing a sovereign nation-state identity and fashioning the Self by separating it from the Other became crucial as a protective state policy against any social unrest or disorder. The literary works written under the influence of the "Other" symbolizing a "pagan" oppressor had a huge impact on shaping the Self for the Central European countries, especially for Hungary.

Keywords: Turkish image, *The Siege*, Ismail Kadare, *The Siege of Sziget*, Miklos Zrinyi

İsmail Kadare'nin *Kuşatma*'sında ve Miklos Zrínyi'nin *Sziget Kuşatması*'nda
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Öz

Avrupa'da özellikle Balkanlar'da, Orta ve Doğu Avrupa'da, bu bölgelerdeki ülkelerin sınır olarak Osmanlı'nın kuşatma, istila ve saldırılarına doğrudan maruz kalması nedeniyle Türklerin Batılı imajı tarih boyunca değişmiştir. Ülkelerin değişen strateji ve politikaları nedeniyle söz konusu imajı daha yumuşak bir hale dönüşse de mevcut durumun yorumlanmasında geçmişle mitleştirmek amacıyla metafordan yararlanılmaktadır. Türk imajı ve Osmanlı etkisi, Türklerle doğrudan sınır olarak karşılaşan ülkelerde kültürel, siyasi ve ulusal kimliklerin yeniden şekillenmesinde önemli rol oynamıştır. Bu makale, Andre Gingrich'in Sınır Oryantalizmi ışığında, İsmail Kadare'nin Arnavutluk tarihi romanı *Kuşatma*'yı post-modern bir eser olarak ve Miklos Zrínyi'nin daha eski bir döneme ait epik şiiri *Sziget Kuşatması*'nı incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

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Gönderilme Tarihi: 3 Ocak 2025

Kabul Tarihi: 10 Mart 2025

Çalışmanın temel odak noktası, bu iki ülkenin farklı zaman dilimlerindeki Türk imajına ilişkin algılarını, tarihi geçmişlerini de göz önünde bulundurarak anlamaya çalışmaktır. İmparatorlukların çöküşü ve milliyetçi hareketlerin artmasıyla birlikte egemen bir ulus-devlet kimliğinin oluşturulması ve Ben'in Öteki'nden ayrılarak biçimlendirilmesi, her türlü toplumsal huzursuzluk ve düzensizliğe karşı koruyucu bir devlet politikası olarak önem kazanmıştır. "Pagan" bir zalimi simgeleyen "Öteki"nin etkisi altında yazılan edebi eserler, başta Macaristan olmak üzere Orta Avrupa ülkelerinde Benliğin şekillenmesinde büyük etki yaratmıştır. İsmail Kadare'nin tarihi romanı "Kuşatma"'yı, Miklós Zrínyi'nin epik şiiri "Sziget Kuşatması" ile analiz edip karşılaştırırken, Andre Gingrich'in ortaya attığı Sınır Oryantalizmi ve Stephen Greenblatt'ın "Kendini Biçimlendirme" kavramları ana kavramlar olacaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Türk imgesi, *Kuşatma*, İsmail Kadare, *Sziget Kuşatması*, Miklos Zrinyi

INTRODUCTION

The newly constructed Balkan nation states which regained their national independence during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire utilized literature for their political purposes while they were striving to form their national identities from scratch. Among these political novels, Ismail Kadare's novel *The Siege* is a significant narrative of national identity building process in Albanian culture. Shedding light on the Enver Hoxha's regime in the early 1970s, the novel enlightens how an Albanian fortress was assaulted and besieged by the Ottomans. Hoxha's communist regime made use of nationalism as an ideological device and a form of social mobilization to build Albanian national identity. Gingrich indicates: "The mythologic of 'frontier orientalism' hence functions with the central mythological arrangement of being threatened or besieged on a nearby, contested, and fluctuating border through which an almost equally matched, dangerous, and therefore 'evil' Oriental invades and existentially threatens 'us' as well as our women" (Gingrich, 2015, pp. 62-63). In his comparison and contrast of the Muslim Ottoman invaders with Christian Albanians, Kadare skilfully achieves to create a positive Albanian image as well as creating negative, hideous Turkish images by means of the 'othering' method. The image of the 'Other', Turks in this case, served reinforcing the national self-image as well as justifying its foreign policies and internal struggles. On the other hand, Miklos Zrinyi's epic poem *Siege of Sziget* is based on the Hungarian-Turkish wars and the Turkish occupation of Hungary for 150 years. Regarded as one of the cornerstones of Hungarian literature, the poem is partly a chronicle of war, partly a testimony or partly theological treatise including the elements of romance and adventure under the Ottoman threat looming over all of Europe as it was written by Croatian Count Miklós Zrínyi's great-grandson as an authentic portrayal of the seventeenth century warfare and friction between Turkey and Hungary.

In his groundbreaking work *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said explores the complex dynamics between the East and the West during the colonial era, framing them as the "Orient" and the "Occident." Postcolonial theorists like Said characterize the colonized people or cultures as the "colonial other" or simply "the other." Said opposes the Western stereotypes and prejudices against Islamic and Eastern cultures. Edward Said's *Orientalism* revolutionized the field of

postcolonial studies by exposing the power imbalances between the East and the West and critiquing the dominance of Eurocentric ideologies. He discusses that the Western perception of the East or Orient is often subjective and biased. The relationship between the two cultures is dominated by the West's power and control over the East. Said also argues that Western scholars, known as Orientalists, often illustrate Eastern cultures as backward and uncivilized, and need the guidance of the more advanced West or Occident. This prevailing Western perspective, reinforced through global narratives, compels the West to perceive the East through a narrow, fragmented, and distorted lens. Said argues that this perspective is not only unjust but also fundamentally misrepresents the richness and complexity of Eastern cultures. Wang Ning suggests that: "The so-called Orient or Orientalism is nothing but an empty shell on which West-centrism functions. Thus, Said's critique again shows his "anticolonialism" to some extent (Wang, 1997, p. 60). Employing Foucault's ideas about power and knowledge, Said examines the relationship between colonial powers and the colonized regions and peoples, emphasizing the critical role of identity in shaping these dynamics. As outlined by Ashcroft, Said's central argument highlights the colonized individuals' drive to resist imperialism by redefining themselves in opposition to it. This process of self-reinvention is deeply tied to the construction of identity, which exists within and sustains the binaries imposed by colonial narratives. Ultimately, Said underscores that, even under the weight of oppressive narratives, people retain the agency to shape and assert their identities.

Said's notion of identity is rooted in this framework and focuses primarily on Eastern identity. He contends that the colonized should challenge the dominance of the West, reject the imposed identity, and develop their own sense of self. Said argues that literary works are inherently shaped by the historical and cultural contexts in which they are produced. To him, identity functions like a dynamic text—constantly evolving and intricately connected to the themes explored in his broader body of work. In addition, in accordance with American critic Stephen Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning clarifying how texts and cultures can interact, self-fashioning is "used to describe the process of constructing one's identity and public persona according to a set of socially acceptable standards" (Greenblatt, 1980), as quoted by H. Abdul Moula (Abdul Moula, 2023:28). However, Said's *Orientalism* presents a post-colonial perspective which takes on the issues of British, English and American colonial period, rendering their superiority over the Orient. In this perspective, Said's *Orientalism* reflects limited time frame of the history in 18th and 19th century. Andre Gingrich, expands the boundaries of Said's *Orientalism*, states a new theory called *Frontier Orientalism* in which he broadens his argument on Central European countries and their cultural relationship with Muslim countries. In this paper, I argue that Said's notion of Orientalism is limited, therefore; the history of the Central Europe is fallen behind, as if it did not exist. Orientalism, in Said's perspective is the state of the western world creating a dominant narrative, the occident that allows its higher privilege to define and describe the eastern world, the orient in its own exaggerated denotation, evidently creating a binary opposition of west versus east, superior versus inferior. This narrative eventually solidifies the west's position as the foundational superior that defines different cultures as the other, allowing the misrepresented narrative to gradually form up a subtle prejudice against these cultures. The

concept of frontier orientalism, in Gingrich's "Frontier Myths of Orientalism: The Muslim World in Public and Popular Cultures of Central Europe," focuses more on the Central Europe's experience that's been affected by the Ottoman Culture in the forms of myths and folklore that has solidified as a sub-narrative amongst the Mid-European community.

The East is the suppressed and undervalued and colonized, whereas the West is privileged, valued and colonialist. The West takes responsibility to speak and represent the "Other". However, Said, defines Orientalism as "other" within the scope of British, French, American perspectives. Since, the theory of orientalism is the result of colonialization of the third-world countries, Said's Orientalism may overlook the concept of otherness, he evaluates solely the European Imperialism which can be acknowledged as the root of colonialization. However, there are some parts which are undermined or missed in Said's Orientalism that needs to be defined and examined thoroughly. Robert Gafrik in his essay *Imagining the Orient in Central Europe: An Intercultural Studies* makes a clear distinction between Europe and Central Europe further, he postulates several examples from the Eastern Europe by analyzing its roots and origin, compiling resources from Czechia, Slovakia, Poland, and Hungary. He contends that Central Europe is rarely acknowledged in discussions of Orientalism. When it is mentioned, it is typically portrayed as the subject of Orientalist narratives constructed by Western Europe. (2). Gafrik examines the main issues of missing part of Orientalism by emphasizing the familiarity of countries which are located at Central Europe. These countries, according to him, are the representation of the Central Europe which are considered as the parts of Europe, whereas they are undermined, devaluated, eliminated from the discourse of the West. This puts the Central European region in a peculiar, if not paradoxical, position: it is a victim as well as a producer (or a reproducer) of Orientalization. (178). This situation in which Central Europe is both the outsider and also insider within the scope of Western culture can still be controversial, and the lines which define the borders of Eastern Europe and Western Europe cannot be formulated easily. From this point of view, to formulate my ideas on this research area elaborately, I would like begin with the Andre Gingrich's concept of *Frontier Orientalism*.

Frontier Orientalism

Frontier Orientalism is a term that was coined by Andre Gingrich to define and evaluate the historical, geographical and religious roots of the Central Europe and its formation of national identity while elucidating their interaction between Eastern colonizers and Muslim countries. As a different concept rather than a criticism of Said's Orientalism, Central Europe draws its attention to Balkan countries to seek and formulate their historical past and their interaction with Muslim countries mostly with Ottoman Empire. Mzia Jamagidze defines Balkan regions as Georgian territory between Western and Eastern regions where the traces of contacts among different cultures coexist with indigenous cultural features" (Jamagidze, 2018: 88). These encounters with different cultures and countries put the Central Europe to a different place in which coexisting several cultures and nations help Eastern countries shape their formation of national identity. Rather than Said's notion of "orientalism", Gingrich extends this notion of frontier orientalism by

adding Central Europe and Southern East with their connection to Muslim countries, their transgression within the geographical space played an important role for defining “frontier” and the “orient”. Andre Gingrich has defined the *frontier orientalism* as “a relatively coherent set of metaphors and myths that reside in folk and public culture” (Gingrich, 1996). These myths and folk culture that pave the way for shaping and constructing the national identity also preserve their value for differentiating the two concepts of Orientalism. In contrast to Western imperialist Orientalism (Said, 1978), the image of the Orient in Central Europe was not a justification for colonialism, but a means of preserving cultural identity (Sabatos, 2018: 3). Central Europe has encountered several military attacks from Muslim countries throughout centuries, these military attacks and exploitations of lands enable the Central Europe to develop a sense of nationalist identity and patriotism. Military attacks and confrontation with coexisting cultures blur the reality of the past and the present and forms the unifying awareness of national identity. In this respect, in contrast to Said’s Orientalism, Gingrich expands the borders of the West which are defined and acknowledged as the colonizer, he also gives several examples from Central Europe where Slovak, Czech, and former Austria- Hungary Empire are the central focus to define their national identity within the framework of *frontier orientalism*. By taking into account these two perspectives on the Orient, I will analyze these two works which are the reflections of two different kinds of Orientalism. I will also expand my argument by supporting that Said’s Orientalism rather falls into the Western colonialization period at the 18th and 19th century. Although it can be seen as the clear representation of Arap and Muslim countries as a threat and danger to the most of Western countries, in the 14th and 15th centuries, Ottoman Empire and Muslim countries were the representation of power and a mere potency in which they sought to take over and exploit the Central European countries in order to expand their territory. In this perspective, Martin Varisco in his book *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (2007) tries to expand his argument about classical Orientalism by thinking that Said rhetorically opposed but intellectually promoted (Said, 2007, p. 1). Further, Varisco identifies the strict borders and limitations that Said confines himself only to the West by radically undermining and overlooking the Far East (China, India, Japan) and especially Eastern Europe (Hungary, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Austria). These limitations can be seen in these two reflective works which are the main focus of Said’s reductionism, and it may enable readers to perceive Orientalism in a broader framework.

The relationship between the West and East Europe is ambivalent throughout history. Central Europe, which is very often regarded as the eastern part of the continent, is not seen as “the true Europe” by the western side. Therefore, with the removal of the “*Iron Curtain*” after the fall of the Communist regime, Central Europe’s cultural identity seeking process by evaluating its conditions under the circumstances has been accelerated as a considerable need which has already started before the dissolution in the earlier eras. These countries unite in the frame of integration with the other part of Europe easier and collaborate in order to support each other because of the fact that they are closer not only geographically but also historically, politically, and culturally. Thanks to this unification, *Vise grad Group* which involves Poland, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary is formed. This group is not considered as true Europe; however, it is not abandoned completely

at the same time. In the light of this information, it can be seen as an undeniable fact that this leads to shaping their own cultural identity in accordance with being along the frontier between West and East; that is to say, they are reshaped through their experiences under the threat of the Ottoman Empire's invasion, occupation or assimilation under the dominant culture by other nations. In order to shape and to strengthen a cultural identity for themselves, Central European countries reach a general consensus on the shared hatred of a common enemy; the Turks. Even though the Turk image is seen as the real enemy on the surface throughout history, this may symbolize a replaced opponent due to their policies from time to time. Thanks to the direct interactions between Eastern Europe and the Ottomans, the effect of the Ottoman Turks in this region, including literature, cannot be denied. By taking this impact into consideration, this paper aims to present the Turk images in a postmodern historical fiction, *The Siege*, by Albanian Ismail Kadare and an earlier text *Siege of Sziget* by Croatian Miklos Zrinyi within the scope of Frontier Orientalism.

For a comprehensive perception of the concept, it is required to examine the understandings of the Oriental, the Good Muslim and the Bad Muslim of Central Europe in the first place although these terms are interchangeable representations in accordance with the circumstances. In Frontier Orientalism, "Muslim" is the Oriental which is entitled with the undesired parts of human nature such as being irrational, aggressive, and so on, whereas the affirmative adjectives are associated with the Europeans who are rational, honest, and trustworthy. Gingrich has explained "The Oriental -mostly Muslim in Frontier Orientalism, rarely a Chinese, Hindu, or Japanese- has religion, albeit the wrong one; he, therefore, has culture, albeit an incomprehensible one. His culture governs his relations with women. Primarily he is a soldier; he knows how to fight" (Gingrich, 1996:120). Apart from being an ally or enemy as an Oriental, he is a warrior which means he is an alone, single and heterosexual man; that is why, in frontier Orientalism, the only role of the women is related to the one who needs protection from the Bad Muslims' threats. Gingrich also draws a line "Along a central structural device of a nearby territorial frontier - the conceptual and spatial dividing line between "us" and "them", or "self" and "other" - the repertoire locates the Oriental, a dualistic metaphoric figure" (Gingrich, 1996:117). It may be inferred from this dualistic metaphoric figure that they distinguish the Bad Oriental and the Good Oriental from each other. The Bad Oriental, the Bad Muslim in other words, is seen as a danger for the local selves, it is a rival; however, the Good Oriental or the Good Muslim is their trusted allied forces. On the one hand, the Bad Muslim refers to the Turk while the Good Muslim is used to define Bosnians as the standard register. On the other hand, the secondary register involves the Jew, the Arab, and the (orthodox) Slav. This metaphorical pairing enables to interpret the current national circumstances with the help of the past incidents; that is to say, the aim of mythicizing the past by using its key symbols is to evaluate the present. Charles Sabatos states: "in contrast to the Western imperialist Orientalism (Said 1978), the image of the Orient in Central Europe was not a justification for colonialism, but a means of preserving their cultural identity" (Sabatos, 2018). By taking Sabatos' expression into account, it might be interpreted that the Bad Muslim refers to early modernity; the Turk is equivalent to a physical and cultural threat to their existence and identity. Therefore, in the

light of this mythological interpretation, they are expected to be defeated by the frontiers for their modernity, rise to power, wealth.

Unlike its opposite, the Good Muslim belongs to the late colonialism since the Muslim is not regarded as a powerful enemy, but a devoted supporter against the frontier's foes. According to the notion of the frontier Oriental, the transformation of a devoted supporter might only happen when the Oriental is under control as humiliated and dominated one. From Gingrich's point of view, although Muslim is accepted as the frontier Oriental in the standard repertoire, it might also be said that secondary and additional metaphors might be used and interchanged in accordance with the interests and strategies. In this metaphoric language, fighting with their rivals, the Turk in this context, to defend themselves is a must, and loyal allies, if subjected to colonial control, are accepted to fight side by side against the foes of the frontier. To highlight this information, it might be convenient to examine the relationship between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Bosnians. As the Good Muslim; Bosnians join the battle on the Austro-Hungarian side against the Serbs during the outbreak of World War I. This is the reason that Bosnians stand for the Good Muslim in their imagination; on the contrary, the Turk is a metaphor which is used for the Bad Muslim.

For Gingrich, there are two different focal points of anti-Turkish imagery; the Turk as violent aggressor and invader, and the Turk as defeated and humiliated opponent. The symbol of aggression and occupation refers to the periods before the siege of Vienna in 1683, whereas defeated and humiliated opponent image is shaped after the second unsuccessful attempt against the fortress. The Turks' failure leads them to shift their images from a powerful and dangerous enemy to the humiliated and weaker position from their standpoints. Since Hungarians are mediators between Austrians and Ottomans, they have direct contact with the Turks; and this shapes their identities. With this weakened Turk image, The Hungarians and intellectuals claim to achieve, maintain and emphasize their cultural autonomy from Austria. In order to gain independence in the nineteenth century, the Hungarians' target has also changed and turned into Austrians who assimilate them. Robert Gafrik states "peoples of Central and Eastern Europe who did not have contact with the Muslim world through colonies but through encounters with the Ottoman invaders" (Gingrich, 1996, p. 182). Because of the inevitable military conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, the Orient image covers a remarkable place in their imagination. Gingrich categorizes four different types of interactions:

The first group, the classical colonial powers of Europe, had considerable influence on overseas in one or more main parts of the Muslim world. The primary members of this group are Britain, France, and the Netherlands, with their colonial rule in southern and Southeast Asia... The second group is composed of countries with limited colonial power in more adjacent regions of the Muslim periphery- Spain, Austria, and Hungary. In the third group are those European countries which, for one of two reasons, never had any noteworthy colonial influence in the Muslim world... The fourth and the final group includes the countries of southeastern Europe that for several centuries have had a local Muslim population, either a resident majority or an old local minority such as Turkey,

Greece, Albania and so on. These traditional Muslim populations represent one among many outcomes from an inverse colonial past (Gingrich, 1996, pp. 100-101).

As it is stated earlier, an Albanian historical fiction which belongs to the fourth group and, a Hungarian epic poem from the second group country in accordance with Gingrich's categorization, are going to be analysed in this paper. Albania, which has an inverse colonial past as a fourth group country, is a member of Europe geographically; however, it remained severed for a period of five- hundred years under the Ottoman Empire domination. Its effort to be bound with its parent continent after the Ottomans and Socialist past is defined by Ismail Kadare in *The Balkans; the Truths and Untruths* as "among the peoples of the Balkans and Caucasus, they tell the legend of a captive eagle that manages to escape from captivity and return to its family. But its sometime master has ringed its claws, and this stigma makes the fugitive a stranger among its own race. And the family refuses to take the escaped bird of the prey back into its bosom" (Kadare, 2001). There is a duality in historicizing the relationship of the Ottomans and Albania; two-sided and scarcely credible versions. The Ottomans claim that they bring civilisation to those lands, on the other hand, the Balkans project themselves as martyrs. However, there is the third version of the story which is not named by either side. Even though the Balkans resist to the empire which is famous for the most perfected military structures around the world, the empire's expeditions to Europe would not probably be as effective as it is without the Balkan people. In other words, the Balkan people put another brick on the wall throughout history with the empire. Kadare suggests:

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when each of the peoples of the Balkans in turn detached themselves from the empire, they began to forget a part of their history, the part that they felt was shameful, in other words their collaboration, recalling only the heroic part, that of revolt. This mythologizing of history was also at the root of all nationalisms in the Balkans; the distortion of the facts, which was initially a justifiable stratagem changed into a serious psychosis of hostility towards others (Kadare, 2001).

The Siege as a Historical Fiction

Reverberating across the centuries as a war illustration, Ismail Kadare's insightful novel *The Siege* presents a fictionalized work of history. As a prominent Albanian writer and poet in Albania since the 1960s, Ismail Kadare employs Balkan history and folklore in her novels excessively. The skirmish between these two grand civilizations is depicted vividly when the Turkish horses and thousands of men filled the plain in order to besiege the fortress. Narrating the enthralling story of the war that lasted for weeks and months, the novel portrays the of the battlefield oscillating between the feelings of hope, exhilaration and desperation while the whole world expects that the fortress will fall. Kadare's historical fiction novel, *The Siege*, might be read as an allegory for the Socialist current situation of Albania and the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha. As it is stated earlier in the text, mythicizing the past might be necessary to interpret the current national situations. This post-modern novel portrays a siege about an unnamed Albanian fortress by the Turks. However, it reflects not only the image of the Turks in Balkans on the surface but also examines the identity

formation process of the Albanians during the current Socialist conditions of the country. Albania's religion is converted to Islam under the empire's rule, and this leads Europe to associate the country with the Orient even after gaining independence. Therefore, the Europeanisation of the Balkan is affected by religious factors. Anna Die Lellio states that "Kadare considers the identification of Albanians with Islam, no matter how tempered by additional cultural and religious influences, as wrong and dangerous" (Lellio, 2009: 34). By the help of this critique from Kadare's point of view, Albania can never be seen as the Orient with the acceptance of Islam since this is not their original identity.

In *The Siege*, Albanians who are surrounded by the great army of the Turk are Christians, and thanks to their Christianity and faith, they managed to protect and defend themselves against the cruel war strategies of the Ottomans. In Kadare's novel, the inseparable identity of Albanians from the mother continent is emphasized as a European country in terms of their religion, culture, and roots. In the novel the Turks try to beat them by attacking their castle physically; yet they could not manage to capture it. Therefore, the Ottomans endeavour to obtain it with the help of their stratagem such as putting the animals to contaminate the people or digging a tunnel through the fortress. The Turk image is shown as monstrous and merciless since they destroy Albanians' water supply in order to leave the people inside of the castle without water either to die or to give up. Despite all their stratagems, they are not able to be victorious towards the faithful Christians whose prayers for the rain were accepted by God. Moreover, when the Albanian defenders are offered to be surrenders by Muslims, they reject the ambassador's proposal. They prefer dying since they believe that they are going to go to the 'Heaven', unlike the Turks. In addition to the struggle between the sides throughout *The Siege*, the castle holders' only hope is the fires that they see at the top of the hills which are set by their Balkan allies. Not giving up from their religion might be related to the idea of not being marginalized but being unified under Christendom as a part of that continent. Furthermore, Robert Prügel defines the Oriental as "Janus-headed metaphorical figure, and places besides the image of the 'Bad Turk' who poses an external threat, a 'Good' - that is to say politically harmless- Turk" (Prügel, 332). By referring to the earlier explanations, the Ottomans are seen as the Bad Muslims who constitute a danger to the Albanian people's cultural, religious, and national identity. The Oriental image is used in the literature to rebuild and to strengthen their national identity that is why the author creates a positive "we" and a negative "them".

There are two different perspectives in the novel; one of them is a faithful Christian who mingles his emotions while telling his story from their sides, and this gives a chance to the reader to empathize with them. It gives a voice to the victim of the Bad, barbarian and invader Muslim; that is why it intends to establish a deep connection between the victim and readers. However, the second perspective is more objective due to the purification of the emotions. This insensitiveness leads to putting a barrier between Turks and the audience. It might be said that because of the difference between the expression types of both sides, readers have separate experiences. He attributes virtuousness, mercifulness and rationalism to his community as Christians and Europeans when compared with the Ottomans, whereas he reflects the Turk image as irrational, brutal, sneaky, and womanizer. While the Orientals, in other words, the Turks, are pointed out

with their wicked features, Albanians are associated with decent qualities as the opposite. When examining the leaders of both sides, it can be argued that Skanderbeg, the esteemed ruler, stands in stark contrast to the Turkish commander, Dursun Pasha. The latter's choice to end his own life at the war's conclusion—an act widely regarded as dishonourable for a warrior—underscores his perceived defeat. Another point to highlight might be the Turkish perception of women; they objectify the women in the novel. As Gingrich notes it, the Oriental is primarily a warrior who is single during wars and sieges for a long period of time and in frontier Orientalism, the only role of the women is being protected against the Bad Muslims. Based on this perspective, the Turks regard the women in *The Siege* as commodities assigned a monetary value. The Orientals are allowed to rape the women from the small villages nearby, to buy them from the slave bazaar, or to capture them during the war; that is to say, women are objectified by the Turkish soldiers. Even Dursun Pasha does not talk to the women that he has intercourse. Before and after having sexual intercourse with his fourth wife, Dursun Pasha does not talk to the young woman at all. Looking at the harsh and hard face of the man to whom she belongs" (18) the woman does not even receive answers to the questions she asks (18). That the Pasha does not communicate with her wife and touch her genitals and look at hairiness and wetness around her genitals (17,18) as if they were an object, makes women in the Ottoman Empire feel worthless in their domestic position and shows them as if they were objects.

Frontier Orientalism in *The Siege of Sziget*

Hungarian statesman and military leader as well as being the writer of the first epic poem in Hungarian literature, Miklós Zrínyi was mainly concerned with driving the Turks out of Hungary due to his position as a viceroy of Croatia. He stands out as an eminent Hungarian military leader of his era as he dedicated himself to fighting with the conquerors all his life. He is also known for resisting Hamburg rule for the sake of a unified and absolutist state and country. Representing Zrínyi's finest literary work and having a special place in Hungarian literature, the epic poem *Szigeti Veszedelem* is about the heroic defense of the Szigetvár fortress (1566) against the armies of the sultan Suleyman II. Another literary work analysed in this paper is the epic poem *The Siege of Sziget* (*Szigeti veszedelem*), which centres on the poet Miklós Zrínyi's great-grandfather, who shares his name. This epic poem has several mythological elements, while it is based on a real historical event. The outnumbered Hungarian army, joined by Croatian forces, valiantly defends Sziget Castle against the advancing Ottoman army. Despite their resistance, the castle's commander, overwhelmed by fear of the Turks, ultimately perishes during the siege.

In his well-known book entitled *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare*, Stephen Greenblatt articulates how the European self has been represented and developed since the age of the Renaissance. Central Europe, positioned at the crossroads between East and West, shaped its cultural identity largely in response to the looming threat of invasion and occupation by the Ottoman Empire. The development of national literatures in the historical fiction genre continued to be shaped by the legacy of this interaction, even long after the Ottoman Empire's permanent withdrawal from Central Europe in the late 18th century. In Central Europe, the image of the Orient

served as a tool for safeguarding cultural identity, while in Western imperialist Orientalism, it became a justification for colonial endeavours. Within the Eastern Austrian repertoire of Muslim Oriental imagery, the Orient, positioned near the territorial frontier, is portrayed as a dualistic metaphorical figure. This framework establishes a conceptual and spatial divide between "us" and "them," or the "self" and the "other," further categorizing the Oriental into the "bad Oriental" and the "good Oriental." The "bad Orient" is a threat to local selves and a dangerous rival while the "good Oriental" is an ally and obeying supporter. For the standard or primary register, the Turk is presenting the "bad Muslim" and Bosnian as the "good Muslim"; and in the same repertoire, the Jew, the Arab and the Orthodox Slav represent the secondary register. Retrospectively, Turkish wars and the last decades of the Habsburg Empire are considered as the standard register. The metaphorical contrast between "good" and "bad" frontier Orientals reflects a comprehensive narrative, offering a "standard and widely recognized framework for interpreting contemporary national concerns through key symbols from the past" (Gingrich, 1996: 117). Using Gingrich's metaphorical framework of frontier orientalism, strength and prosperity are achieved by protecting "ourselves" from the dangers posed by the "Bad Muslim." Meanwhile, the "Good Muslim," when kept under colonial control, can transform into a courageous ally and loyal subject, particularly when rivals threaten "our" safety. Conquering the "Bad Muslim" is deemed essential for establishing both identity and modernity, while simultaneously relying on the "Good Muslim" to counter other threats. This duality forms the core metanarrative of frontier orientalism (Gingrich, 1996: 119). The epic poem *The Siege of Sziget* written by Miklós Zrínyi, which became mandatory to be read in the elementary schools in later years, bears crucial importance for the Hungarian national identity. In this literary work, the Turks are portrayed as embodying the "Bad Oriental Muslim," a concept outlined by Andre Gingrich, reflecting an effort to distinguish the Magyars, representing the Self, from the Ottomans, depicted as the Other.

According to Andrew Wheatcroft, defending Köszeg, Szigetvár and other castles such as Eger, resulted in the creation of enormous myths that are depicted in books, maps and paintings. Those depictions of great victories and even defeats were painted on vast canvases for patriotic purposes; for the case of the Ottomans, the victories and defeats became an epic of heroism. In the case of *The Siege of Sziget*, Ottomans recorded it as *The Ottoman Chronicle of the Szigetvár Campaign* along with twenty colored painted miniatures, painted like the maps produced in the West. Suleyman I passed away due to sickness and old age, yet he was depicted as a martyr since he sacrificed himself in the battle against the enemy. Christians could accept the bravery of their enemies and Ottomans did the same most of the time; despite this fact, both sides also named each other as "damned" and "accursed infidels" (Wheatcroft, 2009, pp. 60-61). In *The Siege of Sziget* the images of "infidelity" and "paganness" of the Other are depicted frequently. The stanzas written from the poet's mouth exemplifies this concept: "Pagan dogs would see: he who fears God/Can never die, but lives eternally" (Part One, p.7, stanza 6). The poet draws a border between "they" and "us" by calling the other side of the frontier as "pagan". The same situation could be observed from the side of the Ottomans as well. Hungary started to become inferior in terms of economic and political position because of the political dependence they had during the eighteenth and

nineteenth centuries and this situation caused the rise of national feelings. In the early nineteenth century, during the "Reform Period," nationalist movements started to emerge, and it "sought historical and linguistic definitions to assert their own identity"; this was not only against Austria, but also the non-Magyar speakers who were a big part of Hungary's population and "whose discontent in the face of Magyar oppression and discrimination was a constant theme of the nineteenth century Hungarian history" (Beller-Hann, 1995, p. 224).

Stephan Greenblatt argues that self-fashioning occurs when an alien and an authority confront each other, resulting in a new identity that contains elements of both, which are then subjected to criticism. As Greenblatt states, "any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss" (Greenblatt, 1980, p. 9). In the poem, while there is a strong focus on the identity of the Magyars, self-criticism plays a role in shaping the ideal self. According to Greenblatt, self-fashioning begins at the point of encounter between authority and the alien, but self-criticism itself can be seen as a means of constructing this identity. In the first part of *The Siege of Sziget*, the poet begins by stating, "The great Almighty gazed upon the earth, / In a single glance, He took in the world, / But what caught His attention most was that the Magyars / Did not follow the path His Son had set. / He saw the Magyars straying, / Turning from God to worship idols, / Indulging in their pleasures without restraint, / Focusing only on satisfying their desires" (8). In reality, the poet Miklós Zrínyi is condemning his own nation for neglecting Christian values and focusing solely on worldly matters. As the poem unfolds, God speaks and commands the Archangel to send one of the Furies to Suleiman I. The Archangel complies and sends the Fury to invade Suleiman's dreams, instructing him to punish the Hungarians. The Fury assures Suleiman that he need not worry about the Hungarians receiving aid from others (13). God also declares, "And if they do not repent in time, / my eternal curse and wrath will fall upon them." This criticism of the Hungarians—depicting them as straying from the path of Christ and failing to unite as a nation—serves as a call for the audience to reflect on their current state as a people. As shown in the example above, these self-criticisms aim to provoke the target reader to reconsider their national situation. Thus, Miklós Zrínyi can be seen as shaping the Hungarian Self through this process of critique.

CONCLUSION

The method of defining something with its opposite is at the basis of the philosophy of Orientalism. As good one is interpreted according to the evil, the merciful according to the cruel, the innovative according to the reactionary, the negative perception of the East (Muslim South-East) has actually been created by Westerners in order to define the West (Christian North-West) positively. When the East is shown to have more negative qualities, the West gains more positive qualities automatically as its opposite. The Balkan countries, which were once under the Ottoman Empire, actively otherizes the Ottoman Empire and then Turkey during the process of gaining their independence and after winning it. By creating a "we" that is different from the "others" and even has opposite characteristics they disparage the Ottoman Empire. Activities like this are clearly found in Balkan literature written during the period when especially the influence of communism

in the Balkans was widespread after World War II. This attitude is abundantly present in Kadare's novel *The Siege* – Christian Albanians as 'us' against Muslim Ottomans as 'others'.

In *The Siege* events and situations are conveyed by two different narrators and from two different perspectives. First narrator is in the castle and the plural first person pronoun appears before the reader as 'we' and describes the feelings and general situation in the castle. The other narrator is the one who knows everything – the Ottomans down to their thoughts, fears and wishes and tells what happened in the Ottoman camp from the dominant perspective of the narrator. The effects of such a style of expression should be highlighted because with the narrator element, Kadare reflects the conflict between the judgement of values and mentality that the South-East and the North-West represent. By calling out from inside the castle, the voice communicates with readers and directly makes them feel the grievances of Albanian people as it aims to establish an emotional bond with the feelings of readers. On the other hand, the voice that has a dominant view explaining the events on Turkish side outside the castle is more scientific and emotional. On the contrary, the aim of using such a narrator is the transfer of objective and realistic information. Thus, it is expected to pass on to the reader every barbarity told about the Turks is treated as if it were more true. As in the narrator element, three main themes that reinforce the negative Ottoman image in *The Siege* - Ottomans and their attitude towards women, the bad personality and physical characteristics of the Ottomans, and the divine power/nature that stood against the Ottoman have been examined in detail. Kadare does not portray Ottoman men and women as positively as they are. Kadare, who did not want the Ottoman legacy in Albania, reflects his views with his powerful writing style in his novel *The Siege*. In this age when we experience freedom of thought, no one can interfere with anyone's thoughts and feelings. No one cannot expect literary fiction to fully reflect reality. Not only such an expectation is not possible, but its accuracy is also questionable. However, One should not remain unresponsive about the losses of life, human classifications and problems in general caused by 'othering', and the dualisms of West/North-East/South, Christianity-Islam created for centuries. Ismail Kadare stresses through propaganda that encouraged the Albanian people has the right to reject their Ottoman past and legacy. Kadare is also free to desire to create a new Albanian identity through political fiction.

On the other hand, *Siege of Sziget* by Miklos Zrínyi is not just a historical retelling of Croatian Count Miklós Zrínyi's defence of the Fortress of Szigetvár against a formidable, overpowering Ottoman siege for days. However, the epic poem is also a reflection of western stereotypes and Eurocentric perspective on the Ottoman Empire perceived in the position of an invader as barbarous, brutal or cruel. The general was the guardian of Christian Hungary with his struggle that cost his life. Moreover, Zrínyi and the castle guards who shed their blood with him represent the purest emotions such as love for the homeland, solidarity, dedication of his life, and moral purity. However, for Ottoman soldiers, it is not about defending the homeland, so they do not have the moral responsibilities that come with it. The poem written by Zrínyi in 1647 and published in 1651 narrates final war of Zrínyi's great-great father against the Ottoman Empire in 1566. Outnumbered Croatian-Hungarian army resisted the Turkish invasion to defend the fortress and consequently Zrínyi murdered Sultan Suleiman I. Later he was gunned down by Janissaries.

Associating the Iliad with its epic style, the poem bears supernatural features. It opens with the invocation of a muse as in the Iliad and Zrínyi is linked to Hector time to time throughout the text. Considered as one of the remarkable literary achievements of the 17th century, *Szigeti veszedelem* masterfully manages to impose negative connotations on readers about the Ottomans who represents the 'Other' for Hungarians. Identity is shaped by intercultural encounters and literature is essential to reflect the society it was produced in and to reshape the culture in that society through the different political ideologies of writers vacillating in the dialectic of historicity of texts and textuality of history. Greenblatt's concept of self-fashioning and Andre Gingrich's frontier orientalism very well uncovers the hegemonic relationships, different ideological forms and nationalist images emerging with new nationalisms with varied manifestations (Gingrich, 2015:60).

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**ÇAĞDAŞ
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Rumlar Etnisite ve Kimlik



Günce Yayınları

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Yaşamı, Yapıtları, Sanatı

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Günce Yayınları

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YAŞAM ÖYKÜSÜ, YAPITLARI VE ŞAIRLİĞİ

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