

Orientalist Images in the Lion of Janina, Or the Last of Janissaries by Mór Jókai

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ABSTRACT: Jókai's images of the Orient conforms to Western notions of the Orient, which was well-established in the nineteenth century Europe in some parts of his novel, while he breaks with this tradition completely time to time. This paper also aims to demonstrate how the Hungarian writer, Mór Jókai represents the Orient in his novel *The Lion of Janina, or the Last of Janissaries* and how Orientalism takes a different hue with his treatment of oriental images and themes in a distinctive frame. While the novel partially reflects the stereotypes fabricated by western authors, it mostly does not employ oriental images in an imperial context or with a colonialist mentality. The Orient is identified with being "cruel" and "decadent" by Jókai, who creates a controversial hero with Ali as he is a very negative hero with his rule filled with killings, superstitions, and blasphemy despite arousing some sympathy in readers for himself sometimes. Representing the westerners' side and feeling affinity with the Orient at the same time, Jókai searches for answers to the important questions of life to reach the meaning of life through the Orient as a colourful setting with its amazing and endless secrets and mysteries.

KEYWORDS: Mór Jókai, *The Lion of Janina, or The Last of Janissaries*, Orientalism, Orient, Occident, Ottoman Empire, harem (seraglio)

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I. INTRODUCTION

In his ground-breaking book Edward W. Said puts forward that "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said, 1988: 3). When we investigate the oriental elements in the Hungarian romantic writer, Mór Jókai's work in the nineteenth century, we can easily come across the metaphors of the evil, dangerous Turk, anti-Turkish imagery, and symbols. However, according to Ildikó Bellér-Hahn mirroring a vivid oriental vision through its plot, characters and scenery, the novel is "far from replicating the dominant Western picture of the degenerate Oriental man" (Bellér-Hahn, 1995: 230). The representation of the Turks in the novel is a bit complicated as Bellér-Hahn also indicated. Jókai's images of the Orient conforms to Western notions of the Orient, which was well-established in the nineteenth century Europe in some parts of his novel, while he breaks with this tradition completely time to time. "The Romantic imagining of the Orient represents an alternative to the hegemonic view theorized by Said... The Romantic view, which offers a more positive appreciation of the Orient, has been subject to criticism by the upholders of the hegemonic view. However, both views are based on the view of the Orient as some kind of "Other" (Gáfrík, 2020: 178). Turks are portrayed as "powerful, cunning, formidable, malicious, greedy and treacherous". What kind of an image of the Orient does Mór Jókai provide us compared with the Western notions of the Orient? The answer to this question will be basically looked for throughout the paper. This paper aims to demonstrate how The Hungarian writer, Mór Jókai represents the Orient in his novel *The Lion of Janina, or the Last of Janissaries* and how Orientalism takes a different hue with his treatment of oriental images and themes in a distinctive frame. While the novel partially reflects the stereotypes fabricated by western authors, it mostly does not employ oriental images in an imperial context or with a colonialist mentality.

Said defines Orientalism as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident"" (Said, 1988:3). Michel Foucault discusses that power and knowledge are inextricably interconnected and one is meaningless without the other (Foucault, 1988). If you have knowledge, you also have the power to rule. By setting out with this analysis of power/knowledge inspired by Foucault in Orientalist discourse, I want to argue that the evil hero of the novel *The Lion of Janina*, Ali Tepelenti intends to maintain his political strength and position in the eye of his enemies with the control of his destiny through the superstitions and predictions of dervishes. The stories dispersed through the whole novel in a fragmentary style in fact constitutes a whole that contributes to the portrayal of an exotic Oriental vision based on the story of decapitation under the influence of the prophecies of dzhin, that is,

supernatural being. Jókai chooses his heroes from historical figures sometimes and creates his heroes from Orientals in his imagination sometimes. Tepelenti Ali, the hero of *The Lion of Janina*, is depicted to be the merciless ruler of Albania. The Orient is identified with being “cruel” and “decadent” by Jókai, who creates a controversial hero with Ali as he is a very negative hero with his rule filled with killings, superstitions, and blasphemy despite arousing some sympathy in readers for himself sometimes. Throughout the novel we perceive that Ali has a very controversial character and identity due to his contradictory family background. Representing the westerners’ side and feeling affinity with the Orient at the same time, Jókai searches for answers to the important questions of life to reach the meaning of life through the Orient as a colourful setting with its amazing and endless secrets and mysteries. The figures of the Eastern sage, dervish or oracles who can predict the future is like a guide for a Christian youth looking for the meaning of life. A Christian’s encounter with an Eastern wise man is a satire of the Westerners’ image of the Orient in Jókai’s novels as the Orient has mostly been associated with despotism, splendor, cruelty, or sensuality.

In particular chapters of the novel we are informed about the institution of the Janissaries, the officials and intrigues surrounding the Sultan, the Sultan’s generous and indulgent way of living and ruling as well as the religious practices that were influential in making significant political and military decisions. The Janissaries’ rebellion had a profound effect on Jókai himself, who played an important role in the unsuccessful 1848 Hungarian revolt. Turks have extraordinary physical strength, intellectual power and moral qualities based on their Islamic faith and religion. They also have connections with Christians or Hungarians in an extraordinary level. Their nationalistic feelings and features as violent warriors in the borders made them a dangerous power and a big threat for other countries. Gingrich points out:

These rich symbolic fields of anti-Turkish symbols have two focal points: the Turk as violent aggressor and invader, and the Turk as defeated and humiliated opponent. The image of the violent and aggressive Turk refers primarily to the periods before the pivotal victory of 1683 and is somewhat more frequently found in folk art on the domestic and village levels, in village histories, in the art of country churches and monasteries. Usually it relates to the more ancient layers of history. The second focal point for anti-Turkish imagery is concerned with the more recent period beginning in 1683. It celebrates Austrian victory over the Turks at home and abroad. No longer the dangerous aggressor, the Turk now is the humiliated, defeated opponent and appears most frequently in this guise in Baroque art, in the art and historiography of the Habsburg’s military and the aristocracy, and of the central institutions of the Catholic clergy¹ (Baskar & Blumen, 1998: 108-109).

In the novel Jókai makes a strong criticism of weak, decrepit, and demoralised empire. It “provides Jókai with a pretext to furnish lavish, detailed and lengthy descriptions of the exotic and decadent surroundings of rich and dissolute rich Turks” (Jókai, 1962: 106-113). Descriptions of the seraglio, the slaughter of concubines, odalisques, arranged marriages in the novel are an echo of western images. However, in her study *The Imperil Harem* Leslie Peirce explains: “the word haram is a term of respect, redolent of religious purity and honour and evocative of the requisite obeisance” (Peirce, 1993: 5). Jókai’s narrative style conflicts with the typical western view in Saidian Orientalist vision. For instance, the English sailor, Murrison’s (Morrison) only wish is to see the Sultan’s favourite concubine. However, when she shows her face to a Christian, she becomes defiled and so she is condemned to death. The Sultan coldly replies to the sailor: “whenever a Christian man beholds the face of one of our women, that woman must die” (126). He then signified to the sailor that he was dismissed. Mahmoud verifies that the *dzhin* told the truth. He talks deliriously after the death of her favourite beloved: “Mahmoud loved thee to the death, and yet Mahmoud slew thee!”. In contrast to the traditional western view that regards the Orient as “violent, cruel, barbaric and backward” as highlighted by Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, the barbaric ruler, Sultan turns into a humanist ruler when he weeps for his favourite beloved. From this encounter between the Westerner searching for knowledge and the despotic Oriental, it is obvious that the Sultan turns out to be morally superior to the ignorant foreign intruder ignoring local customs with enormous insensitivity and this leads to the tragic end of an innocent woman. This episode subverts the Orientalist view in the traditional sense. “These images promoting monogamy and the idealization of love are features not usually associated with the Western image of Oriental sensuality” (Bellér-Hahn 1995: 232). As regards the source of orientalist imagery, Gingrich comments

The dominant confrontational version of mythohistory negates or distorts the more creative and peaceful sides of Turkish interactions with central Europe during those centuries; a well-known example is the prevailing legend about how coffee came to Vienna. Turkish influence on local

¹ The depicting of the hated enemy nevertheless did not develop into individual representation: fallen, naked and succumbing under the hoofs of the horse of the victorious commander-in-chief, characterised by the crescent, by turban, bow and arrow, a mighty sicimtar the Turk becomes a standing formula in the imagery of the Baroque triumphant art of the Austrian Age of Heroes’ during the 18th century.” (Schütz 1978: 99) One of the influences inspiring this standing formula is interpreted as deriving from Titian’s Lepanto allegory.

language, clothing, food, furniture, architecture and even imported flora, is either flatly ignored or is represented as having been captured as trophy of war, in accord with the mythohistorical narrative of violent conflicts with the Turks along a shifting frontier. By ignoring or downplaying these aspects, the dominant mythohistorical narrative reifies the violent opposition between an illusionary, coherent, “us” and a dangerous or humiliated Turkish “them” on the other side of the frontier (Baskar & Blumen, 1998: 110-111).

The Orient was an important center of interest and inspiration for Hungary in the nineteenth century because of some factors, such as its historical connections with the Ottomans, the new role of the Turks as benefactors of Hungarian exiles and its effort to define Hungarian national identity. As regards Jókai’s writing, Bellér-Hahn notes: “most of his works served several purposes: the popularization of a recently constructed national history, the shaping of positive images of Hungarians fighting off foreign oppression and exemplifying nationwide cooperation and, in the best romantic tradition, the demonstration of the superiority of morality over immorality” (Bellér-Hahn, 1995: 227). Greenblatt defines self-fashioning:

It (self-fashioning) invariably crosses the boundaries between the creation of literary characters, the shaping of one’s own identity, the experience of being molded by forces outside one’s control, the attempt to fashion other selves. Such boundaries may, to be sure, be strictly observed in criticism, just as we may distinguish between literary and behavioural styles, but in doing so we pay a high price, for we begin to lose a sense of the complex interactions of meaning in a given culture.” (Greenblatt, 1980: 3).

Greenblatt suggests that self-fashioning is carried out when an alien and an authority interact with each other and the result of this encounter has elements from both authority and alien that will be attacked, therefore, “any achieved identity always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss” (Greenblatt, 1980: 9). Self-criticism is significant to fashion the ideal self. Accordingly, Jókai’s novel does not reflect Muslim World as weak, inferior, morally corrupt as his humanism combined with the idea of Hungarian-Turkish affinity. His descriptions of the Orient bore didactic aims considering his great interest in this exciting and fascinating world. Certainly, Jókai’s novel shares much in common with the works of the British and French Orientalists. However, when compared with the literary output of Western Orientalism, his works serve the Western literary trends partially as orientalism takes on a different hue in contexts and realms outside the major imperial powers. Interestingly, accompanying Rudolph II’s mission to the Sultan in the 1590s as a young man, Václav Vratislav z Mitrovic

wrote a highly readable and very popular account of his journey. He complained about the way he was treated by the Turks, who imprisoned him, and told stories that reflected the stereotypes of his day, and he portrayed the Turks as violent and cruel. But in his description of the life and habits of the Ottoman Empire’s inhabitants he proved to be an unbiased and keen observer. He often praised what he considered to be the Turks’ virtues – their humility and religious fervor, their love of animals and flowers and their innocent forms of entertainment – and showed that they could be humane and tolerant. He wrote, for example, that the much-feared janissaries, who were considered generally to be “atrocious beasts,” also protected the local population, and did not indulge in lustful behavior (Malečková, 2021: 80)²

Mór Jókai’s novel *The Lion of Janina or the Last of Janissaries* starts with the description of Ali Tepelenti’s encounter with the mystical dervish. Bing delineated as “the stranger” mysteriously in the first part of the novel, Ali’s entrance is depicted as follows:

the new-comer dismounted from his horse, tied it to a tree, and, proceeding to the latchless door, amused himself by reading the scrawl which had been written on the outside of it, and was, as usual, one of those sacred texts which the Turks love to see over their door-posts: “Accursed be he who disturbs a singing-bird! (9)

Later he continues reading what follows:

“He who knocks at the gate of him who prays will knock in vain at the gate of Paradise.” When the stranger faces the dervish, he says: “in the purse are a thousand sequins; on the blade of this sword is the blood of at least as many murdered men. I ask thee not—Dost thou recognize me? or dost thou know my name? Maybe thou dost know—for thou knowest all things—and, if so, thou dost also know that none hath ever betrayed me on whom I have not wreaked my vengeance. If, therefore, thou dost want a reward, listen; but if chastisement, speak!” (13)

Trying to find the place of the “dzhin”, that is, the supernatural being, the stranger asks the dervish to lead him to that cavern where the *dzhin* of prophecy dwelled. Then, he goes to the cavern where the *dzhin* lives

² See *Adventures of Baron Wenceslas Wratislav of Mitrowitz: What He Saw in the Turkish Metropolis, Constantinople, Experienced in His Captivity, and after His Happy Return to His Country, Committed to Writing in the Year of Our Lord 1599* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1862), 4–6.

with the dervish. "It must, indeed, be a resolutely wicked spirit that would venture to attack him" (14). He asks his critical question to the dzhin: "Dost thou know my fate?" The invisible voice answers: "I know it," "thou art a poor man who hast lost what thou hadst, and what thou now hast is not thine" (14). With a mythological description, Ali Tepelenti is first introduced in the novel: "the mighty pasha, Pasha of Albania and master of half of the Turkish Empire" (19). The dzhin informs us about what happened to him as a pitiful character with these words:

Ali Tepelenti, Lord of Janina, thou art poorer than the lowliest Mussulman who girds himself with a girdle of hair, for thou hast lost everything which thou didst account precious. Thy kinsmen, who were for thy defence, thou hast slain; thy mother, who loved thee, thou hast strangled; thy right hand has pulled down the house which thou didst build up; thy glory, in which thou didst exalt thyself, has become a curse to thee; and thou hast made bitter haters of those who loved thee best (15).

Ali Tepelenti insistently asks the dzhin: "Tell me but one thing. Shall I one day pass in triumph through the gates of the seraglio at Stambul?" (16). This is his biggest desire that urges him to pursue the knowledge of the unknown and mysterious as knowledge means power for him. However, the dzhin reveals that his gorgeous life will be upside down with the betrayal of his beloved ones. It foresees that he will be the victim of his own misdeeds and put to test with the people closest to him. It explains:

"He who sins with the sword shall perish with the sword", saith Allah. He who sins with love, shall perish by love. Thou hast two hands, the right and the left; thou hast two swords, one covered with gold and one with silver; thou hast three hundred wives in thy harem, but only one in thy heart; thou hast twelve sons, but only one whom thou lovest. Look, now! Take good heed of thy life, for thy death lieth in what is nearest to thee; thine own weapon, thine own child, thine own property, thine own two hands, shall one day slay thee (16).

There is a detailed description of the harem in which the three sons, Omar, Almuhan, and Zaid, inhabit with the three gates. The back of this building looks out upon the garden, in which the harems of the pasha's sons are wont to disport themselves (21). With an oriental imagination Jókai illustrates Ali's harem so:

If anyone peep down upon it from the summit of the lofty Litanizza he would perceive inside it a fairy palace, with walls of colored marble protected by silver trellis-work, with blue-painted, brazen cupolas, with golden half-moons on their pointed spires. One tower there, the largest of all, has a roof of red cast-iron, and this one roof stands out prominently from among all the other buildings of the inner fortress. The colored kiosks are everywhere wreathed with garlands of flowers, and the spectator perched aloft would plainly discern cradles for growing vines on the top of the bastion. He might also, in the dusk of the summer evenings, distinguish seductive shapes bathing in the basins of the fountains, and lose his reason while he gazed" (22) and "this wondrous retreat was Ali's paradise".

Ali is deeply devoted to her beloved Eminah in this paradise surprisingly as a very loyal and sensitive guy, in contrast to his evil side full of mischiefs, misbehaviours, or savagery in the red tower. Except for her father and her husband, Eminah had never seen a man, and therefore fancied that other men also had just such white beards and silvery eyelashes as they had. Raised in the midst of a harem, among women and eunuchs since her childhood, she had not "the remotest idea of the romantic visions which the hearts of love-sick girls are wont to form from the contemplation of their ideals; to her husband was the most perfect man for whom a woman's heart had ever beaten, and she clung to him as if he had been a supernatural being" (24). For instance, Ali wept sore as he told Eminah the story of the doves of Kilsura and "Ali was certainly a sensitive soul" (25) according to Jókai's illustration.

The seraglio is echoed to be very mystical, exotic, and fairy-like in Western orientalism. Hálek, claims: "I saw Constantinople from every possible perspective, I saw it at sunset and sunrise, I gazed upon it in the bright light of the day and on moonlit nights, and from whatever angle I looked at it, it always appeared to me with an ever new charm and unfailing beauty..." (Hálek, 1925: 154). Furthermore, Neruda compared the view of Istanbul to an extraordinary sight, a vision impossible to depict:

Whatever the imagination may have conjured up about the view of Constantinople, Constantinople itself surpasses it, it does not deflate the imagination the way Rome and Paris do, but transports it to unexpected heights. Constantinople is in its own way unique; it cannot be compared to any other place. To describe Constantinople would be like writing the most wonderful poem; all of history and all of nature have made poetry here, as if the whole universe and all its sounds and color, all its forms and thoughts have converged here to create a poem (Neruda, 1909: 8).

Jókai also depicts the lifestyle in the seraglio through Eminah as an oriental woman figure which is saturated with Orientalist images: "the beautiful woman had everything that eye could covet or heart desire. In her apartments were mirrors as high as the ceiling, masterpieces of Venetian crystal, and the floor was covered with Persian carpets embroidered with flowers. Blossoming flowers and singing birds were in all her windows, and a hundred waiting-women were at her beck and call. From morn to eve Joy and Pleasure were her attendants, and each day presented her with a fresh delight, a fresh surprise" (26). Furthermore, "thirty rooms, opening one into another, each more magnificent than the last, were hers, and hers alone. The eye that feasted on

one splendid object quickly forgot it in the contemplation of a still more splendid marvel, and by the time it had taken them all in was eager to begin again at the beginning” (26). Curiously Eminah asks Ali what is in this tower that she is not allowed to see, and what he does when he stayed there all night alone, but Ali does not tell her the truth. At such times Ali replies that he goes there just to consort with spirits who teach him how to find the stone of the wise, how to become perpetually young, how to foresee the future, and make gold and other marvels—all of which it was easy to deceive a woman who did not even know that all men do not wear white beards.

In the second chapter of the novel we are encountered with Ali Tepelenti in a very pitiful situation in fairy-like city, Albania. He starts to experience what the dzhin predicted for him one by one. After observing what is happening in the red tower, especially Ali’s cruel and bloodthirsty behaviours due to his greed for treasury, Eminah decides to leave this disgusting man immediately. She helps the girl whose fiancé was beheaded by Ali in the red tower and escapes from the harem together with her. “And whether they lived or whether they died, Ali Pasha lost on that day two talismans which he should have guarded more jealously than the light of his eyes: one was the spirit of blessing, the other the spirit of cursing, both of which he had held fast bound, and both of which had now been let loose” (41). This case prepared the collapse of Ali Pasha, who waits for his destiny to come true nervously.

Mockery of religious subjects was no unusual thing with Turkish magnates in those days. Blasphemy had gone so far as to become an open scandal; popular fanaticism and official orthodoxy made it all the more glaring (49). Especially Ali’s sons were involved in blasphemy while they were drinking and revelling with their damsels in the harem and making fun of the Prophet. In the face of this scenery Ali Pasha was shocked and filled with horror at the shamelessly impudent words he heard from his hiding-place (51). He drew a pistol from his girdle and softly raised the trigger to warn his sons about their blasphemous manners. During the blasphemy of his brothers “only Vely Bey remained motionless. He, at any rate, had not sinned. He had not angered the Prophet in that orgie of amorous rivalry. He had loved one only, by her only had he been loved, and she, yes, she was perishing there among the others!” (59).

The other day Ali Tepelenti prays all the morning by locking himself up in his inmost apartments and weeps instead of pursuing the fugitives. He was brave enough to confront with his destiny rather than cringing before danger. Sometimes he sends for the nimetullahita dervish living a long time in the fortress and questions him about his future. “It must not be supposed, indeed, that Tepelenti ever took advice from anybody; but he would listen to the words of lunatics and soothsayers, and liked to learn from magicians and astrologers, and their sayings were not without influence upon his actions” (53). At this point Jókai draws our attention to the great interest and curiosity of Ottoman Pashas (Ottoman Orientals) for superstition, oracles, or fortune-telling. He informs us that “the marvels of our modern table-turning and table-tapping spirits, and all the wonders of this sort, were known to the Arab dervishes long ago” (54). He also adds “in those days the Mussulmans frequently diverted themselves with such superstitious games as palmistry” (62), in a reference to the tendency of the Orient for superstition. Actually, superstition was common in the Western world; however, as part of the duality between the Orient and Occident within the romantic orientalism, this feature is imposed upon the Orient charged with immoral and inferior qualities.

Another episode that refers to Oriental images is the story of the Greek Merchant from Smyrna and Kasi Mollah. The Greek Merchant visits Circassia to purchase kid-skins every year. Kasi Mollah claims that children should be whipped in order that they may be good, that they may be kept in order, and that they may not get nonsense into their heads. He thinks that “it is also a good thing to train them betimes to endure greater sorrow by giving them a foretaste of lesser ones, so that when they grow up to man’s estate, and real misfortune overtakes them, they may be able to bear it” (132-133). Objecting to Kasi Mollah about the upbringing of children, the Greek merchant asserts that children are not his speciality, for Kasi Mollah does not understand how to bring them up. In the whole land of Circassia there is none who knows how to bring up children according to the merchant. He warns Kasi Mollah and asks him to give the children to himself: “that children are the gifts of God, and he who beats a child lifts his whip, so to speak, against God Himself, for His hands defend their little bodies. You do but sin against your children. Give them to me!” Kasi Mollah opposes him: “You are a Christian; I am a Mussulman. How, then, shall you bring up my children?” (134). In the face of othering the other religion, the merchant bravely responds: “Fear nothing. I do not want to keep them for myself; I mean rather to get them such positions as will enable them to rise to the utmost distinction. I would place them with some leading pasha, perhaps with the Padishah himself, or, at any rate, with one of his Viziers, all of whom have a great respect for Circassians” (134). At this point Filiz Turhan’s observation is in point: “the empire was ostensibly a meritocracy where anyone, regardless of birth, religion, or race, could rise to power and wealth by virtue of talent and hard work. This policy was also designed to militate against the rise of competing Turkish dynasties and to ensure the stability of Ottoman rule” (Turhan, 2003: 113).

In the former chapters, when Sultan Mahmoud lost his favorite damsel so strangely, Milieva was brought into the Seraglio instead. The girl was then about fourteen years old. The Circassian girls at that age are fully mature, and the bloom of their beauty is at its prime. From the very first day when she entered the harem,

Milieva managed to become the Sultan's favorite damsel (159). On the other hand, Thomar joined the ranks of the *ichoglanler*, a band of youths who are brought up in the outer court and constitute the Sultan's body-guard. It was in this year that Mahmoud founded the *Akinji* corps by selecting its members from amongst the Janissaries and turned them into a small regular army. Not having seen his father for a long time after their last fight, Thomar also started to hear a good deal of the village of Himri and of Kasi Mollah, since they now called his father "murshid".

Jókainotes: "But let none say that, in the regions of the merry Orient, fairies and wonders do not still make their home among men" (171). Ali Tepelenti wants to take revenge on his sons who betrayed himself and prepares a plot for them. Just when the beys had consumed the price of the last slave they had to sell, such wealth poured in upon them, in heaps, in floods, as we only hear of in old fairy tales; and fairy tales, as we all know very well, have no truth in them at all (171). Dirham meets Ali's sons in Adrianople. Ali sends a ring to his sons through Dirham and there is a talisman in it. When they heard about it, both the brothers burst out laughing. They had often ridiculed Ali for his absurd superstition (179). However, they favoured the secret of the eggs that their father contemplated for secret communication in the harem. Dirham gives the money Ali sent to them to buy ships and collect arms and unite their forces to his and then leaves, but both brothers do not want to return to Ali. They planned to send Dirham messages written in the eggs to Bublinia to inform her that they are ready with their fleets in order to attack Kapudan Pasha in the rear is she attacks him in front. Nevertheless, the eggs were carried to the Sultan, and when he had opened them and had read the writing written on their inner skins, he was horrified. He found out the "Treachery and rebellion!"; the conspiracy was spreading from one end of the empire to the other. The complicated intrigue, one of whose threads was in Janina and the other in the islands of the Archipelago, had its third in the very capital required terrible reprisals according to Sultan Mahmoud (184). Sulaiman fainted when they informed him that the secret of the eggs was discovered. Mukhtar felt that the moment had come of which Ali had said that the lowest slave would not then exchange heads with his two sons, and in that hour of peril he bethought him of the talismanic ring which had been sent to him. Hastily he removed the emerald, believing that at least a quickly operative poison was contained therein, by which he might be saved from a shameful death. There was, however, no poison inside the ring, but these words were engraved thereon, "Ye have fallen into the hands of Ali!" (184). In this case the brothers had to reveal the place of five million piastres on the English ship and this proved to be their ruin. Although the Sultan demanded the money of the beys from Morrison, he defends that the money is only bound to deliver to its lawful owner. The Sultan responds: "if their not being dead was the sole impediment," remarked the Minister of Foreign Affairs, "you perceive that it has now been removed" (185). Then without any answer the Reis-Effendi sent out his officers and the severed heads of the beys stood in front of Morrison on a silver trencher. "Morrison thereupon handed over all the gold and silver in his possession as rapidly as possible, and quitted Constantinople that very hour; he had no great love of a place where every word cost the life of a man" (185). These examples of sudden decisions and strict ways of governance within the empire terrified the people from other cultures and led to the fabrication to lots of oriental stories and imagery concerning Ottoman rulers, morality, and exotic lifestyle in the harem. Strangely enough, Ali Pasha thrice bowed his face to the ground and gave thanks to Allah for His mercies. And he caused to be proclaimed on the ramparts, amidst a flourish of trumpets, that his sons, the treacherous beys, had been decapitated at Stambul. Such is the reward of traitors! (186). And when in the evening Ali took a promenade in his garden, and walked up and down among his flowers, he would now and then trample the earth beneath his feet. It was the grave of Zaid that he was trampling upon (186). This merciless, savage, and vengeful qualities attributed to the Albanian ruler is nothing more than the product of the Western Orientalism. As Nash notes, especially "[r]omantic Orientalism, influenced by the Arabian Nights, represented the Turk as barbarous, cruel and effeminate" (59).

There is a harsh criticism of *devshirme* system throughout the novel that prepared the end of many Ottoman rulers. The feared prophecy of the *dzhin* concerning Ali's death is also realized by the janissaries brought up within this system on the contrary to the great expectations of Ali Tepelenti about ruling in the *seraglio* in Istanbul. In those days, the Ottoman armies suffered many defeats from the Christian arms. At the end of the fifteenth century, when the Turkish crescent had won an abiding-place among the constellations of Europe, there dwelt in the Turkish dominions a worthy dervish, Haji Begtash by name (187). In his accompaniment of Turkish soldiers while entering Christian villages, this worthy dervish took away weeping orphan children with him and planted a garden with them to the surprise of mocking folks. Haji Begtash accepted this jest in real earnest and named his children the flowers of Begtash's garden. They preserved this name in the coming centuries. These saplings (amongst them were some of the loveliest little creatures of six and seven years of age) were brought up by the indefatigable Haji year after year. He instructed them in the Kuran; he told them everything concerning the innumerable and ineffable joys which the Prophet promises to those who fall in the defence of the true Faith; and at the same time accustomed them to endure all the hardships and privations of this earthly life (188-9). These were called the flowers of Begtash's garden.

The first battle established the fame of the youthful band that had been brought up by the old dervish, and by the time the second campaign began, Haji Begtash was already the chief of innumerable monasteries

whose inmates were called the Brethren of the Order of Begtash. Consisting, as they did, of captive Christian children, and standing under the immediate command of the Sultan, they composed a new army of infantry, the fame of whose valor filled the whole world. These were the “jeni-cheri” (new soldiers), which name was subsequently altered into Janichary or Janissary. But for long ages to come, if any Janissary warrior had a mind to speak haughtily, he would call himself “a flower from Begtash's garden” (189). *Jókai* expresses his criticism on Janissaries as follows:

If they were powerful servants, they were also powerful tyrants. Their valor often reaped a harvest of victories, but their obstinacy again and again imperilled their triumphs. With the increase of their power their self-assurance increased likewise. It was not so much the Sultans and Viziers who commanded them as they who commanded the Sultans and Viziers. And if the rebellious Janissaries hoisted on the Atmeidan a kettle, the signal of revolt, it was always with fear and trembling that the Seraglio asked them what were their demands; and the whole Divan breathed more freely when the answer came that it was gold they wanted, and not blood—the blood of their officers (191).

The threats of the Janissaries had forced Mahmoud to take up arms against Ali Pasha; and now, when Ali had kindled the flames of war all over the empire, and the Sultan bade the Janissaries hasten against the enemy and subdue him, they replied that they would not fight unless the Sultan led them in person (193). This stipulation is very dangerous for Sultan Mahmoud. From distant Asia, from the most brutal parts of the empire, Begtash's priests proclaimed death in the mosques and destruction on the heads of all the Greeks (193). The Sultan never knows his relatives as he is shut up in the Seven Towers as the latest born son while he is still a child. The first-born son can meet them only on the steps of the throne, when “the rebellious Janissaries drag one of them from his dungeon to raise him to the throne and lock up the first-born in his stead. The Sultan cannot be said to possess a wife; all that he has are favourite concubines, in hundreds, in thousands, as many as he chooses to have, and there is no difference between them except differences of feminine loveliness and the blind chance which blesses some of them with children” (194-195). However, this situation is a bit disadvantageous for the Sultan who cannot find any sincere person around himself when he feels mentally confused or psychologically weak. He is surrounded with lots of toady people acting with fear rather than genuine feelings. *Jókai* notes: “it is slavish obsequiousness and nothing else which bends its knee before the Padishah; it is fear, not love, which obeys him. And to whom shall he turn when his heart is held fast in the iron grip of that numbing sensation which makes the mightiest feel they are but men—fear? (195).

Having been one of the Chief Ulemas, and the Imam of the Mosque of Sophia, Achmed Sidi suggested teaching Turkish diplomatists the Bible to gain more power over the warriors and the diplomatists of the Tsaritsa Catherine as they had won victory after victory over the Ottomans, both on every battle-field, and in every political arena. As Michael Foucault referred, knowledge meant power and the indisputable superiority of the Christians could have been overcome with the knowledge of the Bible from which they derived all their military science and all their administrative wisdom. However, the well-meaning Ulema paid dearly for this good counsel because he was banished to the Isle of Chios, and he was first degraded from his office there for a very trivial offence, (for it is not lawful to kill a Ulema with weapons), and then he was handed over to the pasha of the place, who pounded him to death in a stone mortar—a deterrent example for future reformers. Ironically, *Jókai* warns: “let them beware, therefore, of moving a single stone in the ancient fabric of the Ottoman constitution!” (196-197). It took a lot of time for new ideas and reforms to be accepted owing to the conservative structure of the Ottoman Empire.

Most jealous of all these innovations were the priests of Begtash. One could every moment see them in their ragged, dirty mantles, lounging about in front of the gates of the Seraglio, impudently looking in the faces of all who go in and out; and if an imam passed them, or one of those wise men who favored the innovations, they would spit after him, and exclaim in a loud voice, “Death to everyone who proclaims the forbidden word! (277)

After the Greek merchant flees with the children of Kasi Mollah without his permission and went through a ship accident, he is saved thanks to these valiant children, Thomar and Milieva, who helps him to go ashore by carrying him on their backs in the sea. Later, they land in an island and slumber in a cave where the dzhin dwells as it is at the beginning of the novel. “God has worked wonders for us,” sighed the Merchant when they wake up. “It is plain that we are in quite a different place from that wherein we went to sleep” (209). “No doubt the peris of the mountains of Káf have conveyed us hither,” said Milieva (209). These children are elevated to a higher position in the harem of Sultan Mahmoud as the Merchant promised them many times. One day while Sultan Mahmoud was celebrating the birthday of his mother in a French style in the seraglio, they were raided by Janissaries. Sultan grew attentive and tried to understand the uproar outside the Seraglio. He heard: “Up, up, Mahmoud, from thy sofa! Away with thy glass and out with thy sword! This is no night for revelry; death is abroad; insurrection is at thy very gate! They are besieging the Seraglio! Twelve thousand Janissaries, joined with the rabble of Stambul, are attacking the gates at the very time when the orchestra is playing its liveliest airs in the illuminated hall” (219). To suppress the rebellion of the Janissaries Sultan asked: “What, then, dost thou require?” with a softened look that concealed the genesis of the thought— “the

Janissaries must be wiped off the face of the earth". "What dost thou require?" said the Padishah, softly. Kara Makan put on an important look, as of one who knows that the fate of empires is in his hands. "Hearken to our desires. We are honest Mussulmans. We do not ask impossibilities. If thou canst convince us that our demands are unlawful, we renounce them; if thou canst not convince us, accomplish them" (230). Their rebellious behaviours and increasing demands from the Sultan were a great threat and burden for the interior order and welfare of the Ottoman state administration in contrast to their moderate pro-state policies in the early periods of the empire.

The mob of Stambul had killed Mahmoud's father because of this name, which designated a new order of soldiers, and his successor had been forced to order that whoever pronounced this name should be put to death (277). Jokai reminds us of the tragic end of Bajraktar. Bajraktar, who had been the Sultan's Grand Vizier fourteen years before, had wished to reform the Turkish army, on which account a rebellion broke out at Stambul, and lasted till the partisans of Bajraktar were removed from office. As to what happened to Bajraktar himself later, he was burned to death in one of his palaces, together with his wife and children (277). "The priests of Begtash stirred up the fanaticism of the masses in front of the mosques and in the public squares, incited the mob which had joined the ranks of the Janissaries to acts of outrage against the Sultan's officials and those of the Ulemas, softas, and Omarite fakirs who were in favor of the reforms" (280) and so the name of the Janissaries was blotted out of the annals of Ottoman history. Thus a soldiery which had been founded by the wise Chendereli and existed for centuries, came to an end although it had won so many glorious triumphs for the Ottoman arms. It was now illegal to mention its very name. Nevertheless, when the bloody work was completed, "the Ottoman nation arose again full of fresh vigour, and it owed a new life, full of glorious days, to the hand which delivered the empire from its two greatest enemies—Tepelenti and the Janissaries" (292).

On the other hand, Ali Tepelenti was obsessed with the question "when shall I stand in front of the Seraglio on a silver pedestal?" His curiosity for finding the answer to this question under the effect of his fears brings his calamity. The *dzhin* of Seleucia had prophesied this termination to his career. Granting that all the other prophecies had been strictly fulfilled, only this prophecy remained to be accomplished (263). Learning that an illustrious visitor is coming to see him, Ali wanted to welcome his enemies that respected him despite being a fallen general, but it was a mistake. They started to quarrel after drinking wine. A bloody combat begins between the warriors of Mehemet and the warriors of Ali and Mehemet returns with a silken-net bag carrying the head of Ali in it. His head was placed before Kurshid Pasha. Ali's head was carried through the main streets of the town in triumphal procession, and finally it was exhibited on a silver salver in front of the middle gate of the Seraglio in the sight of all the people.

II. CONCLUSION

In a final assessment, Mór Jókai presents us an example of romantic orientalism in his novel *The Lion of Janina, or the Last of Janissaries* in a mixture of real and imaginary events and situations as an alternative to the hegemonic view reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness as theorized by Said. Based on the Saidian approach that "the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (Said 1988: 5), the novel partially conforms to Western notions of the Orient, which was well-established in the nineteenth century Europe in some parts of his novel, while it breaks with this tradition completely time to time. With the annihilation of such traitors as Ali Tepelenti and the Janissaries, a new page opens for the Ottoman Empire through new reforms. In his book *Mit ve Tarih Arasında: Orta Avrupa edebiyat tarihinde Türk imgesi*, Prof. Charles Daniel Sabatos remarks that his research illustrates "how cultural antipathies have endured through the profound social changes that these nations have experienced in the past century, and how the Turkish image evolved from a historical menace to a more abstract yet still powerful metaphor of resistance, and finally to a mythical figure that evokes humor as often as fear (Sabatos 2014: 256).

In Saidian framework of Orientalism, "on the one hand there are Westerners, and on the other there are Arab-Orientals; the former are (in no particular order) rational, peaceful, liberal, logical, capable of holding real values, without natural suspicion; the latter are none of these things (Said 1988: 31). Based on this duality between the Orient and Occident, Jókai reifies the Western conceptions and treatments of the Other only to some extent, while he generally does not employ oriental images in an imperial context or with a colonialist mentality. The anthropologist Andre Gingrich developed the notion of "frontier Orientalism" to describe the perceptions of the Orient by peoples of Central and Eastern Europe who did not have contact with the Muslim world through colonies but through encounters with Ottoman invaders. According to him,

The Muslim Oriental also defines the ups and downs of a supremacist, Germanic, or Catholic self along the Danube in the early modern and late colonial periods by defining both sides of a nearby frontier. Therefore, "the Muslim Oriental on both sides of this shifting frontier is a key contrasting device, a device that allows "us" to construct a fictitious continuity of selfhood and nationhood in the region (Baskar & Blumen, 1996: 111).

Jókai's novel does not portray Muslim World as weak, inferior, morally corrupt as Jókai combines his humanism with the idea of Hungarian-Turkish affinity. His descriptions of the Orient reflect her amazement, admiration, and curiosity for it, considering his great interest in this exciting and fascinating world. Certainly Jókai's novel has much in common with the works of the British and French Orientalists. However, when compared with the literary output of Western Orientalism, his novel serves the Western literary trends partially as orientalism takes on a different hue in contexts and realms outside the major imperial powers. There is a harsh criticism of devshirme system throughout the novel that prepared the end of many Ottoman rulers besides a strong criticism of weak, decrepit, and demoralised empire. The portrayal of the seraglio is very mystical, exotic, and fairy-like throughout the novel. As emphasized by Robert Gáfrik, "the images of the Orient in Central Europe cannot be grasped by a single notion as, for instance, that of Orientalism, especially Orientalism understood as a form of domination" (Gáfrik, 2020: 184). *With the intention to maintain a fictitious national identity and selfhood against victorious Turks*, Jókai sometimes cannot forbear making use of anti-Turkish imagery such as despotism, cruelty, or sensuality by regarding the "Other" as a contrasting image. In addition, "some of these intercultural interactions lack—what we can call, using Mihai Spariosu's term— "the mentality of power" (Spariosu, 1997). The prism of Orientalism can also blind us to encounters with a humanistic message, which may lie completely outside of the psychology of othering informed by the Saidian discourse" (Gáfrik, 2020: 185). Therefore, Jókai's novel enables us to acquire a relatively unbiased perspective on other cultures outside the hegemony of European ideas of the Orient.

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