



Topicality and Representation: Islam and Muslims in Two Renaissance Plays

Hammood Khalid Obaid

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This book focuses on the importance of topical reading in understanding Islamic figures and themes, and applies this approach to two landmark Elizabethan plays: George Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* and William Percy's *Mahomet and his Heaven*. The former is the first English play to present a Moor as a major character, while the latter is the first English play to be based on Quranic material and feature the Prophet of Islam as a major character. In both plays, the book argues, topical concerns played a major role in the formation of Islamic characters and themes, rendering the term 'representation' highly debatable. The book also briefly covers other Elizabethan plays that contained Islamic elements, such as Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and *Doctor Faustus*. Topical issues covered in the work include British-Muslim relations, the Spanish Armada, Elizabethan patriotism in literature, Catholic-Protestant tensions in the late 16th century, the gynaeocracy debate, and Elizabethan alchemy and magic.

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