

– Hakemli Makale –

PROSPECTS FOR UTILIZING RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND STUDIES OF WORLD RELIGIONS FOR TURKISH REPRESENTATION

Kemal ARGON

PhD

keargon@gmail.com

ÖZ

Bu makale dini çalışmalar konusunda Türkiye’de yapılan akademik çalışmalar ve daha geniş bir çerçevede ele alındığında özellikle dünya dinleri konusunda gerçekleştirilen akademik faaliyetlerde değerlendirilmek üzere olası bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, dünya dinleri konusunda yapılan akademik çalışmalar ve oluşturulan içeriklerin Batılı muhatapların ilgisini çekecek terimlerle ifade edilmesi, alanda daha detaylı ve derin bir anlayışın tesis edilmesi ve akademik çalışmaların gerçekleştirilmesi için odak gruplar ve organizasyonel öğrenme metodolojisi kullanılarak teori, metot ve içeriğin yeniden gözden geçirilmesi ile uygulamaya konulabilir. Bu çalışmalar Türkiye ve İslam’ın daha geniş bir alanda ve daha etkin bir şekilde kültürel olarak temsili konusunda da hazırlık olarak değerlendirilebilir. Karşılaştırmalı dini metotlar, İslam ve dünya dinleri konusunda verilen eğitimler, temsil ile ilgili mevcut sorunların üstesinden gelinmesi ve eksikliklerin giderilmesi konusunda oldukça faydalı olacaktır. Akademik alanda yapılan modern din çalışmaları ile İslam kültüründe yer alan geleneksel öğrenme faaliyetlerini teşvik amacı ile Türkiye’nin bir çok üniversitesinde bulunan dini çalışmalar ve İslam konusundaki dikkate değer altyapı, daha fazla kişi tarafından kullanılarak bahsedilen amaca ulaşmak için değerlendirilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslami Çalışmalar, dünya dinleri, Dinlerarası ilişkiler, kültürel temsil, dini temsil, uluslararası ilişkiler, tarih

Abstract

This article suggests some additional possible scope for utilization of Turkish academic religious studies and specifically the area of world religions within a larger academic area. This could be done by representing the academic world religions product and content in interesting terms to Western audiences. This could be expanded by reviewing theory and method and content to facilitate more nuanced and deeper understanding of the field and academic production. This can be preparation for culturally representing Turkey and Islam more broadly and more effectively. Training in comparative religious methods and content in Islam and world religions can be

understood to be potentially useful to overcome some existing problems and shortcomings in representation. The remarkable infrastructure for religious studies and Islamic studies in Turkey's many universities for fostering modern academic religious studies and the traditional learning of Islam could be accessed by more people for this purpose.

Keywords: Islamic Studies, world religions, Interfaith relations, international relations, cultural representation, religious representation, history

The purpose of this article is to suggest that the publications of Turkish academic scholars of religious studies could provide relevant content for different types of academic representation within different academic disciplines, especially within publications and teaching, for improving relations for Turkey.¹ The utilization of the products of Turkish scholarship of religious studies and world religions in Turkish universities could be extended to provide material and to inform both an intellectual and cultural representation of Turkey and Islam generally and this could be done to help relations with Europe and North America to continue and hopefully improve.²

Intellectual equipment from Turkish religious studies of Islam and world religions and related modern academic disciplines could aid this activity not only within academia but also within the cultural sphere.³ Within the cultural area of interfaith work, as one example of representation, Turkish academic work on religion could be relied upon to achieve a three-fold strategy of presentation of Turkish cultural and religious heritage for others. This three-fold strategy of presentation would be to talk about what

¹ Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 4th Conference Proceedings," 349. For a systematic examination of othering of Turks and Turkey in a European discourse see Beyza Ç Tekin, *Representations and Othering in Discourse: The Construction of Turkey in the EU Context*. Volume 39. *Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture (DAPSAC)*. (Amsterdam, NL, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010). Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 3rd Conference Proceedings," 158. Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 1st Conference Proceedings," 568.

² Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 4th Conference Proceedings," 349, 357. This overall effort should be part of nonviolence and peacebuilding and for more on the concept of "nonviolence and peace building" from an Islamic perspective, see the section on "Islamic Views on Nonviolence," in Daniel M. Mayton II, *Nonviolence and Peace Psychology, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Societal and World Peace* (Springer Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York, 2009) 189-191. About cultural representation, see Angel Rabasa, (et al.) *The Muslim World After 9/11*, (Santa Monica CA: The Rand Corporation, 2004), 21 cited in Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 4th Conference Symposium Proceedings," 354. Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 3rd Conference Proceedings," 155.

³ Angel Rabasa, (et al.) *The Muslim World After 9/11*, (Santa Monica CA: The Rand Corporation, 2004), 21 talks about working in the "cultural spheres." cited in Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 4th Conference Proceedings," 354. , "TIMAV 4th Conference Proceedings," 349. Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 3rd Conference Proceedings," 157.

is “good, true, and beautiful:” these three points are dispersed and widespread throughout North American Christian circles.⁴

Interreligious dialogue also demonstrates a problem, this to be seen in the observations by Fahy and Bock where, “interfaith initiatives remain limited by their focus on similarity and their inability to engage meaningfully with difference.”⁵ Being informed by a Turkish comparative scholarship on Islam and world religions generally can help with this problem. So, instead of a non-Turkish perspective on religion or Turkish culture, Turkish comparative scholarship on religion could invite more nuanced discussion from a Turkish point of view about aspects of religion and culture in Turkey.

There are different areas where this can be done. For example, in the area of Islam in the modern world and contemporary Islamic thought, content can include analysis of different Muslim thought and various Muslim and non-Muslim ideologies that are relevant or of interest to the Turkish and Muslim community.⁶ The need for critical review and analysis is true not only

⁴ Acknowledgement should be made to Professor David Goa of the University of Alberta, Canada in Edmonton for suggesting to me inclusion of “The True, the Good, and The Beautiful” as an area of discussion with Christians. See <https://www.davidgoa.ca/> accessed 05/10/2019. These three concepts are adopted as points of comparison based on their widespread use and popularity in Christian circles in North America. See for example Robert E. Wood, *The Beautiful, The True and the Good: Studies in the History of Thoughts, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, Volume 58, General editor Jude P. Dougherty, (Washington DC. Catholic University of America Press 2015); For the evolution of this concept, see John Levi Martin, “The Birth of the True, The Good, and The Beautiful: Toward an Investigation of the Structures of Social Thought” in Harry F. Dahms, Lybeck Eric R. (ed.) “Reconstructing Social Theory, History and Practice” in (book series) *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* 35, (2017): 3 – 56; Emerald Group Publishing Limited, ISSN: 0278-1204/doi:10.1108/S0278-120420160000035001 <http://home.uchicago.edu/~jlmartin/Papers/The%20Birth%20of%20the%20True,%20the%20Good,%20and%20the%20Beautiful.pdf> (Accessed 04/30/2019). See alternatively and additionally, Henry Rutgers Marshall, “The True, The Good and the Beautiful” *The Philosophical Review* 31 No. 5 (Sep., 1922): 449-470.

⁵ John Fahy & Jan-Jonathan Bock, edited by Julian Hargreaves, *Beyond Dialogue? Interfaith Engagement in Delhi, Doha and London*, Available from the Woolf Institute, 72. From <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/assets/imported/Beyond-Dialogue-Interfaith-Engagement-in-Delhi-Doha-and-London.pdf> accessed 05/21/2019 cited in Kemal Argon, “TIMAV 4th Conference Proceedings,” 355.

⁶ Kemal Argon, “TIMAV 1st Conference Proceedings,” 562-563. Kemal Argon, “TIMAV 3rd Conference Proceedings,” 158. See Najibullah Lafraie, *Revolutionary Ideology and Islamic Militancy: The Iranian Revolution and Interpretations of the Quran* (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies/I.B. Tauris, 2009), 5-19 cited in Kemal Argon, “TIMAV 3rd Conference Proceedings,” 158-159 and “TIMAV 1st Conference Proceedings,” 564. For an example of the breadth and variety of Muslim thought, compare Ibrahim M. Abu Rabi, *The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam* (London: Pluto Press/ Edmonton, AL: The University of Alberta Press, 2010); and see the book chapter by Şahin Filiz and Tahir Uluç “Contemporary Turkish Thought” in *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*, Ibrahim Abu Rabi, ed., (Oxford UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 23-38.

of Muslim ideologies but also of other examples of non-Muslim ideologies encountered amidst Western secularism, in interfaith dialogues and peace building, one of these ideologies being Islamophobia.⁷ Not being informed by only one ideology and a perspective on Islam and not imposing one doctrine can give way to a better understanding of variegated Islamic thought, various Islamic movements, and various non-Muslim ideologies.⁸ This is probably as Ibrahim Abu Rabi' described when speaking of students from traditional Islamic institutions, which "are taught to think instead about how to impose faith or dogma upon society."⁹ This type of representation which imposes doctrine or ideology is common but will most likely only be received in a limited way by Westerners.

As Leonard Swidler states that, "dialogue is a whole new way of thinking. We are painfully leaving behind the "Age of Monologue" and are, with squinting eyes, entering the "Age of global Dialogue."¹⁰ Interfaith work can be one area where a proper understanding and utilization of Turkish religion scholars' academic product would be relevant and relied upon for more effective results of reaching a Western readership.

In the academic sphere, Turkish academics of multiple disciplines can be well represented and have a voice in international forums with a product that is convincingly "true, good, and beautiful," including their contemporary and historical descriptions of Islam and Turkish culture. Part of successfully achieving the informing of other academic disciplines relies on a critical core area of methodology within religious studies and also within these other disciplines, its utilization and development. A part of methodology to generate content within religious studies and to inform other academic disciplines would be the theory and method within religious studies.¹¹ This

⁷ Chris Allen, *Islamophobia* (Surrey UK, Burlington VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 190.

⁸ Kemal Argon, "TIMAV 3rd Conference Proceedings," 159.

⁹ Ibrahim Abu Rabi', *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History* (London, Sterling Virginia, Pluto Press, 2004), 9, cited in Kemal Argon, *TIMAV 1st Conference Proceedings*, 561-562.

¹⁰ Leonard Swidler, *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 16.

¹¹ This statement is based on Aaron W. Hughes' statement, "...the discipline is in considerable intellectual disarray." in "Theory and Method in the Study of Religion: Twenty-Five Years On" in *Supplements to Method & Theory in the Study of Religion, Volume 1 2013* (Leiden Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2013), 1. For more on this in the Turkish context see Bülent Şenay, "The Study of Religion, the History of Religions and Islamic Studies in Turkey: Approaches from "Phenomenological Theology" to Contextualism," in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion Volume 1: Regional, Critical, and Historical Approaches* Edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, Randi R. Warne, (Berlin, Germany: Walter De Gruyter, 2004), 70-100.

should be an area of opportunity for Turkish academics. Theory and method in religious studies can be reviewed and developed within a Turkish academic context with relevant Turkish academic contributions to the international field being recognized. This is relevant ultimately for production of content within the field, within religious studies but also for effectively informing other academic disciplines.

An example of this Turkish thinking about methodology also exists as one possibility. This uses both religious studies and Islamic studies together “reflexively” and could work between Islamic studies and religious studies.¹² Figuring out this “reflexive way” would most likely require senior scholars of religious studies and of Islamic studies, and then also scholars of other modern academic disciplines to achieve an acceptable informing of these disciplines. The end results could be that the presentation of Islam and Turkish culture would be more effective for representation with Westerners, drawing on Islamic studies but also engaged and relevant to other academic disciplines. Turkish scholars of Islamic studies would need to be part of the process or consulted at some point to ensure that the results for representation are true to maintaining the integrity of the religion and are comparative at the same time, i.e. “reflexive.” In other words, in representing Islam, we should ask Turkish scholars of Islamic studies if the results are “true, good, and beautiful.”

Consistent with the perspective by Şenay, use of methods within religious studies and Islamic studies to achieve a reflexive description could be considered,¹³ and these descriptions could be examined and reflected upon to inform other disciplines within humanities and social sciences. For example, phenomenology, as an example of modern methodology that could be used comparatively with religious studies, would be part of an analysis that could be used to compare religions and then be incorporated into representation, the end results being more comprehensible to a Western

¹² Bülent Şenay, “The Study of Religion, the History of Religions and Islamic Studies in Turkey: Approaches from “Phenomenological Theology” to Contextualism” in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion Volume 1: Regional, Critical, and Historical Approaches*, Edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, Randi R. Warne, Walter De Gruyter, (Berlin, Germany, 2004), 94-96.

¹³ Bülent Şenay, “The Study of Religion, the History of Religions and Islamic Studies in Turkey: Approaches from “Phenomenological Theology” to Contextualism,” 94-96.

readership.¹⁴ Unfortunately, as Şenay describes, there is a lack of agreement amongst scholars about a “phenomenological approach”, not agreeing what the label means or which philosophical strand to follow.¹⁵ In the field generally, problems with methodology exist elsewhere as Hughes notes that theory and method within the “discipline is in considerable disarray.”¹⁶ Here we might see the opportunity for Turkish scholars of religion for working on this above-described problem, developing theory and method in religious studies that could interest scholars of various academic disciplines, religious studies and others, domestically and perhaps internationally. This would be an important and relevant factor for academic production, also with the above example of phenomenology. It could mean more flexibility or options in approaches to what is published and what is provided as content for teaching and with what a broader group of humanities and social sciences could use in an academic representation of Islam and Turkish culture for a Western readership.

A general strategic scope for understanding the inclusion of Turkish scholarship on religion in other disciplines within an effective representation of Turks and Islam should come from Turkish scholars of various paradigms themselves, the people knowing and working with methodology and establishing the process of acceptably informing other academic disciplines with Turkish academic studies of religion. However, as a qualitative goal associated with this process for how publications might be constructed to more effectively reach a Western readership, what also might be considered for successfully achieving an international reception would be presenting what is recognizably “true, beautiful and good as described above.”¹⁷ This could utilize comparative religious method to present Turkish religious

¹⁴ For example, Thomas McElwain writes about using phenomenology to examine a Christian sect. McElwain defines phenomenology stating that, “The phenomenological approach is an analysis of observable data in view of describing the essence of religious experience. The three major sources are historical documents, archaeological artifacts, and data collected by anthropological participant observation.” Thomas McElwain, *Adventism and Ellen White: A Phenomenon of Religious Materialism, Studies on Inter-Religious Relations 48* (Uppsala Sweden: Swedish Science Press, 2010), 11.

¹⁵ Bülent Şenay, *The Study of Religion, the History of Religions and Islamic Studies in Turkey: Approaches from "Phenomenological Theology" to Contextualism*, 72-73. For more on this in the larger context, see Şenay's complete description of the problems of using phenomenology and the study of religion and history of religions in Turkey, pages 70-100.

¹⁶ Aaron W. Hughes, “Theory and Method in the Study of Religion: Twenty-Five Years On”, 1.

¹⁷ For more insight into explanation and interpretation relevant to the comparative presentation of religion generally see Jeppe Sinding Jensen, “Explanation and interpretation in the comparative study of religion”, *Religion* 39 (2009): 331–339.

studies content that achieves this three-fold representation which a Western readership can more easily relate to. This could benefit from knowledge of “modes of comparison” and method, and I will agree with Freiberger when he suggests an “illuminative mode.”¹⁸ This concept of illumination is important and perhaps an illumination of concepts that touch upon what is “beautiful, good and true” would find persons in European and American societies identifying more with Turkish culture and religion which they could find illuminating.

A good example of one major academic area where this modality of religion is clearly and obviously relevant is the field of history. All historians of Ottoman and Turkish history should agree in short order that Turkey has a rich history not only of Islamic scholarship but also a rich cultural history of literature, poetry and religion.¹⁹ Ottoman and Turkish historians should be expected to be generally knowledgeable about and sensitive to historical and contemporary politics and can be expected to be keenly aware already of politics surrounding the representation especially of Islam and secularism and these other religions in Turkish universities.²⁰ Which exact perspectives or interpretations Turkish and Ottoman historians should adopt and represent is not the intention or purpose of this article to prescribe but the importance of a good knowledge of Islam and world religions in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey as a modality for historians and some other scholars of Turkey should be obvious.²¹ There may be different reasons for this need to know about religion but Ottoman and Turkish history is undoubtedly a history of encounter between states and peoples and cultures and religion

¹⁸ Oliver Freiberger, “Elements of a Comparative Methodology in the Study of Religion”, *Religions* 9, no. 38 (2018): 4-5.

¹⁹A simplistic description can be seen with Mehrdad Kia, *Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire* (Santa Barbara, CA, Denver, Co, Oxford, UK, Greenwood Press/ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2011), 151-161. Some of the complexity of some of this Ottoman history can be seen more with the description provided by Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Accessing Turkish representations of history might be more broadly available, as, for example, Halman and Warner are optimistic about better criticism and evaluations of Turkish modern works and the long Turkish literary heritage. Talaat Halman and Jayne L. Warner, *A Millenium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History*, (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011),134.

²⁰ For a short overview of some of the political background of religion in higher education and why Turkish academics are forced to be sensitive to politics, see the section “Turkish Higher Education” in Fatma Nevra Seggie, *Religion and the State in Turkish Universities: The Headscarf Ban*, (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 30-35.

²¹ Mehrdad Kia, *Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, 111-131.

has been a critical part of that encounter.²² Discussing Turkish/Ottoman history requires a knowledge of Islam and also the other religions encountered during that history,²³ and the comparative aspects of representation of religion, described above, are relevant. Discussing or presenting what is “good, true and beautiful” in Turkish history and literature and including a modality of religion might be more appealing for a Western readership and it can be very important to provide an alternative to the sometimes disparaging characterizations that sometimes exist.²⁴

As an example of methodology from another academic discipline, some methodology from international relations can be relevant in historical and contemporary analysis also to work with material from Turkish scholars of religious studies. Turkish religious studies and Islamic studies could inform content within the field of international relations. As for how this might proceed, Snyder states that, “...religion shapes processes that are close to the core of existing international relations paradigms that have the state as their basic unit.”²⁵ Snyder goes on to say that, “it will be worthwhile to consider how religion can be integrated into these existing paradigms without violating their existing assumptions.”²⁶ There can be different approaches to dealing with how to integrate the concept of religion into politics, hence within international relations.²⁷

With all necessary and due respect to our Turkish scholarly colleagues in International Relations and other existing paradigms, this is a process that the Turkish scholars of international relations and other existing paradigms, the people who know the methodology of their existing paradigm, would have to determine. Religion within politics and international relations would also imply a modality of study of religion within a history that necessarily includes international relations. This would rely not only upon methodology within the field of international relations but also upon methodology within the field of religious studies (and Islamic studies) in Turkey.

²² Mehrdad Kia, *Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, 1-31.

²³ Mehrdad Kia, *Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, 111-131.

²⁴ Beyza Ç Tekin, 25-60.

²⁵ Jack Snyder, *Religion and International Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) 6.

²⁶ Jack Snyder, *Religion and International Relations Theory*, 6.

²⁷ Nukhet A. Sandal and Jonathan Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory: Interactions and Possibilities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 4-6.

Conclusion : Methodology End Results?

There are different ways to involve and utilize Turkish academic material about religion for representation. We can look at what is “true, good, and beautiful” as described above, to attempt to use Turkish academic material about religion in an academic representation of Turkey with Westerners in ways that are received well. This is true even if some aspects of history are not pleasant to deal with. Of course there are different Turkish scholars in these different academic areas and disciplines with different and variegated perspectives on religion and politics. Nonetheless, all of these Turkish scholars’ academic products can be reviewed for consideration for the effective representation of Turkish history or international relations, involving a modality of Turkish religious studies (and Islamic studies) and following the three-fold strategy for representation with Westerners.

All of this above as a suggested process needs to be qualified with one major point. The challenge is to have “reflexivity” in the process amongst scholars in different existing paradigms, similar to how Şenay has used the word described above. How this informing of other academic paradigms in Turkey with Turkish religious studies and Islamic studies would be done would rely upon and necessarily require that the Turkish scholars in these academic “existing paradigms” would best determine how and to what extent Islamic studies and religious studies could inform their academic representation for a Western readership. In other words, how the methodology of their existing paradigms should best work (how and to what extent) with a representation of Islamic studies and religious studies within their existing paradigms requires the discernment of Turkish scholars in these existing paradigms. To provide more relevant perspective, other academic disciplines in Turkey such as sociology can be consulted to provide relevant information about what the current reality of religion in the modern Turkish community has been and is now.

At this point it would be good to assume that most Turkish scholars of other paradigms already know these matters very well concerning their representations in a Turkish Muslim environment. It could be assumed that most Turkish scholars of academic paradigms are already quite sensitive to matters of representation as they have navigated the landscape described briefly by Seggie above.²⁸ The question in this article has been about how to proceed systematically with an expansion of Turkish academic

²⁸ Fatma Nevra Seggie, *Religion and the State in Turkish Universities: The Headscarf Ban*, 30-35.

representation to be received by a Western readership. Turkish scholars of these different existing paradigms, including Islamic studies and religious studies, can be consulted and their expertise relied upon to achieve best results for an expanded representation of these existing paradigms incorporating a modality of Islamic studies and religious studies.

Therefore, for best results in representation for a Western readership these Turkish scholars or others might ask of their own work certain qualitative questions which they first and foremost should be the ones to answer, these questions being, "is the academic product true from a Turkish perspective? Is the academic representation of Turkey for Westerners good? Is the academic representation for Westerners beautiful or done beautifully?" If the answer is "yes" to these questions and the answer is a comparative answer, involving material that a Western readership can therefore make a connection to for a better understanding, they probably have worked towards a better reception by a Western readership of Turkish academic voices.

Often the most impactful of the three-fold strategy would be beauty, which is a very good subject to follow in planning and assessing various representations with non-Muslims. For scholars looking for how to possibly present beauty in Islam within religious studies or as a modality within other academic disciplines, it might be worthwhile to read what Khaled Abou el-Fadl writes as a series of essays about "the search for beauty in Islam."²⁹ Our contemplative processes and intellectual exertions will probably need to be similar in terms of rigor to Abou el-Fadl's (or approaching his rigor and achievement) to be able to reach a depth in exploration of beauty and to talk in an excellent way for non-Muslims about aspects of beauty in Islam. Speaking about beauty will probably also involve the arts and humanities and Seyyed Hossein Nasr's book *Islamic Art and Spirituality* contains necessarily many references to beauty and Nasr explains much of the importance and relevance of Islamic art and beauty.³⁰ These categories of Islamic art which he outlines provide categories and descriptions of material to discuss with non-Muslims in a representation. However, the concept of beauty in general should describe how Islamic studies and religious studies inform other academic disciplines in Turkey: it can be a beautiful result amidst the many different perspectives that exist amongst scholars in Turkey.

²⁹ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *The Search for Beauty in Islam: The Conference of the Books*, (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.), 2006.

³⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1987.)

The main contribution of this paper to the field is to understand the realistic possibility of an application of Turkish religious studies (and Islamic studies) content more broadly to achieve an expanded effective academic representation of Turkish religion and culture. Part of this process should probably include more review and development of theory and method and thence content for religious studies in Turkey. The approaches of Turkish academic scholars (history of religions and Islamic studies) achieving “reflexive and multicultural contextualizations”³¹ as described by Şenay could achieve more interesting and relevant content for representation. These “reflexive and multicultural contextualizations” could be able to lead to more effective utilization and perhaps even development of method or content of Turkish scholarship, not only being able to continue on with existing academic research and publication agendas but also being able to inform certain other academic disciplines in Turkey and focus on engaging Westerners in Turkish representations of what is “beautiful, good, and true.”

While some might challenge this approach of relying on these suggested qualitative criteria as “not academic,” for answers to the question of what is “true,” people certainly trust academics for their answers to be true. They trust academics for a good description and analysis. And the work of Turkish academics certainly can and has been done beautifully.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *The Search for Beauty in Islam: The Conference of the Books*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006.

Abu Rabi, Ibrahim M. *The Contemporary Arab Reader on Political Islam*. London, UK: Pluto Press and Edmonton, AL: The University of Alberta Press, 2010.

Abu Rabi', Ibrahim. *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History*. London, Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, 2004.

Allen, Chris. *Islamophobia*. Surry, UK and Burlington, VT.: Ashgate Publishing, 2010

Argon, Kemal. “How Can Turkish Academic Religious Studies Facilitate Peace Building With Europe And North America?” in *Doğu-Bati*

³¹ Bülent Şenay, “The Study of Religion, the History of Religions and Islamic Studies in Turkey: Approaches from “Phenomenological Theology” to Contextualism,” 94.

Medeniyetlerinin İnşasında Tarih, Kültür, Sanat, Felsefe Ve Din. Ed. Prof. Dr. Ertan Özensel, Prof. Dr. Muhiddin Okumuşlar. Türkiye İmam Hatipliler Vakfı Yayınları. Yayın No: 13. Kongre / Sempozyum / Toplantı: 4. Dini Araştırmalar Ve Küresel Barış. İsnb: 978-605-67126-9-2, 348-357. (TIMAV Conference Proceedings No. 4)

Argon, Kemal. "How Can Turkish Academics Be Important And Relevant For Representation Of Turkey?" in 3rd *TIMAV Symposium on Religious Studies and Global Peace/ Medeniyet Ve Birlikte Yaşama Kültürü, Seville, Spain. Medeniyet Ve Birlikte Yaşama Kültürü.* Ed. Prof. Dr. Muhiddin Okumuşlar, Prof. Dr. Ertan Özensel. Türkiye İmam Hatipliler Vakfı Yayınları. Yayın No: 10. Kongre / Sempozyum / Toplantı: 3. Dini Araştırmalar Ve Küresel Barış. İsnb : 978-605-67126-6-1, 155-160. (TIMAV Conference Proceedings No. 3)

Argon, Kemal. "Religious Studies, Pluralism, Interfaith And Intra-Muslim Relations" in *Dini Araştırmalar Ve Küresel Barış – Sempozyum/ Symposium on Religious Studies and Global Peace. Konya, Turkey, 2013.* Eds. Prof. Dr. Muhiddin Okumuşlar; Yrd. Doç. Dr. Necmeddin Güney Yrd. Doç. Dr. Aytekin Şenzyebek, Türkiye İmam Hatipliler Vakfı Yayınları. Yayın No: 6 Kongre / Sempozyum / Toplantı: 1; Dini Araştırmalar Ve Küresel Barış. İsnb : 978-605-86221-6-6 (2. Cilt) , 553-570. (TIMAV Conference Proceedings No. 1)

Argon, Kemal Enz, "Prospects for Islamism, Post-Islamism and Representation of Muslims: Lessons from Pakistan" *Marife*, (Kış 2015): 395-411.

Fahy, John & Jan-Jonathan Bock, edited by Julian Hargreaves. *Beyond Dialogue? Interfaith Engagement in Delhi, Doha and London.* Available from the Woolf Institute webpage From <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/assets/imported/Beyond-Dialogue-Interfaith-Engagement-in-Delhi-Doha-and-London.pdf> accessed 05/21/2019

Filiz, Şahin and Tahir Uluç. "Contemporary Turkish Thought" in *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought.* Ibrahim Abu Rabi, ed., Oxford UK and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Freiberger, Oliver. "Elements of a Comparative Methodology in the Study of Religion" *Religions* 2018, 9, 38; doi:10.3390/rel9020038

Halman, Talat S. and Jayne L. Warner. *A Millenium of Turkish Literature: A Concise History.* Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011.

Hughes, Aaron W. "Theory and Method in the Study of Religion: Twenty-Five Years On" in *Supplements to Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 1 (2013) Leiden, Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV.

Jensen, Jeppe Sinding. "Explanation and interpretation in the comparative study of religion" *Religion* 39 (2009) 331–339. doi:10.1016/j.religion.2009.08.003

Karpat, Kemal H. *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Kia, Mehrdad. *Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*. Santa Barbara, CA, Denver, Co, Oxford, UK: Greenwood Press/ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2011.

Lafraie, Najibullah. *Revolutionary Ideology and Islamic Militancy: The Iranian Revolution and Interpretations of the Quran*. London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies/I.B. Tauris, 2009.

Martin, John Levi. "The Birth of the True, The Good, and The Beautiful: Toward an Investigation of the Structures of Social Thought" in *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* 35, (2017): 3 – 56; Emerald Group Publishing Limited, ISSN: 0278-1204/doi:10.1108/S0278-12042016000035001

Marshall, Henry Rutgers. "The True, The Good and the Beautiful" *The Philosophical Review* 31 No. 5 (Sep., 1922): 449-470.

McElwain, Thomas. *Adventism and Ellen White: A Phenomenon of Religious Materialism*. Studies on Inter-Religious Relations 48, Uppsala, Sweden: Swedish Science Press, 2010.

Mayton II, Daniel, M. *Nonviolence and Peace Psychology, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Societal and World Peace* (Springer Springer Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York, 2009)

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein Nasr. *Islamic Art and Spirituality*. Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Rabasa, Angel, Cheryl Benard, Peter Chalk, C. Christine Fair, Theodore Karasik, Rollie Lal, Ian Lesser, David Thaler. *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Santa Monica CA: The Rand Corporation, 2004.

Sandal, Nukhet A. and Jonathan Fox. *Religion in International Relations Theory: Interactions and Possibilities*. London and New York. Routledge, 2011.

Seggie, Fatma Nevra. *Religion and the State in Turkish Universities: The Headscarf Ban*. New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.

Şenay, Bülent. "The Study of Religion, the History of Religions and Islamic Studies in Turkey: Approaches from "Phenomenological Theology" to Contextualism" in *New Approaches to the Study of Religion Volume 1: Regional, Critical, and Historical Approaches* Edited by Peter Antes, Armin W. Geertz, Randi R. Warne, Berlin, Germany: Walter De Gruyter, 2004.

Snyder, Jack. *Religion and International Relations Theory*. New York. Chichester, West Sussex. Columbia University Press, 2011.

Swidler, Leonard. *Dialogue for Interreligious Understanding Strategies for the Transformation of Culture-Shaping Institutions*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014.

Tekin, Beyza Ç. . *Representations and Othering in Discourse: The Construction of Turkey in the EU Context*. Volume 39. *Discourse Approaches to Politics, Society and Culture (DAPSAC)*. Amsterdam, NL, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010.

Wood, Robert E. *The Beautiful, The True and the Good: Studies in the History of Thoughts*. (Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy Volume 58. General editor Jude P. Dougherty), Washington DC. Catholic University of America Press, 2015.