

# FROM “TURKISH RENEGADE” TO A “PENNY UNIVERSITY”: THE INTRODUCTION AND NEGOTIATION OF THE COFFEE-HOUSES IN ENGLAND

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... there is not a single soul who on quitting the house does not believe himself four times wittier than when he entered it (Montesquieu: Persian Letters, Letter XXXVI).

## Abstract

Coffee was introduced to England by Pasqua and Jacob, the two Ottoman citizens. After the introduction of coffee and establishment of coffee-houses in London and Oxford, the public gave a social meaning and metaphysical significance to the Turkish beverage. The assumed social meaning of coffee went far beyond the simple brew in the cup. It was first considered as ugly, black, and evil beverage; and a Turkish enchantment that spoils pure Christian spirit. But in a process of time the coffee and coffee-houses were negotiated by the public, and coffee-houses became a center for intellectual discussion. They served for a long time to enlighten British citizens. The present study investigates the interaction between English and Turkish culture with relation to the introduction and negotiation of coffee-houses in England.

**Keywords:** Ottoman, Coffee, Coffee-house, Public sphere.

## TÜRK OLMAKTAN BİR KURULUŞLUK ÜNİVERSİTEYE: KAHVE VE KAHVEHANENİN İNGİLTERE'YE GİRİŞİ, KABUL EDİLME VE YAYGINLAŞMA ÖYKÜSÜ

### Öz

Kahve ve Kahvehane kültürünü İngiltere'ye tanıtan iki Osmanlı vatandaşı olmuştur, Yunanlı Pasqua ve Musevi Jacob. Jacob'ın Oxford'da ve Pasqua'nın Londra'da İngiltere'nin ilk kahvehanelerini açmaları ile birlikte İngiltere'de halk kahve'ye bir tür Türk büyü, temiz Hıristiyan ruhunu kirleten şeytan içeceği ve bir tür zehir olarak bakmış, kahveye farklı anlamlar yüklemişlerdir. Ancak zamanla kahvehane kültürü toplum tarafından benimsenmiş ve iki Osmanlı vatandaşının İngiltere'ye tanıttığı Kahvehaneler entelektüel tartışmaların yapıldığı ve halkı aydınlatan birer sosyalleşme merkezleri olmuşlardır. Bu çalışmada İngiliz ve Türk kültürü arasındaki etkileşimi kahvehanelerin İngiltere'ye tanıtımı ve İngiliz toplumu tarafından benimsenmesi etrafında tartışacağız.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Osmanlı, Kahve, Kahvehane, Kamoy.

## **Introduction**

Introduction of coffee to England by two Ottoman merchants, Pasqua and Jacob, had commercial as well as social and cultural aspects. At first, coffee came with its already established image of the Orient, thus was taken by English public with suspicion. However, coffee did not remain as purely Oriental beverage. Merchants and investors began to open coffee-houses which considerably changed the image and function of the coffee in England. The present study aims to deal with the introduction, negotiation and influence of coffee and coffee-houses in England.

### **I. Short History of Coffee and Introduction of Coffee-Houses into English Society by Ottoman Citizens**

It was the thirst for knowledge, a spirit of discovery and desire to open up a profitable trade with other worlds that led the travelers to leave home for the journey to distant countries. One of the profits and discoveries of these travelers had been an introduction of coffee to English people. 'In the first half of the seventeenth century certain of these travelers related how Turk and Arab, forbidden by Mohammed to touch intoxicating liquor, were accustomed to drink an aromatic concoction, black in color, and made by infusing the powdered berry of a plant that flourished in Arabia'<sup>1</sup>. They reported with surprise the meeting of men of all ages and ranks in Cairo, Constantinople and other oriental countries to drink this strange beverage. There was something strange in this hot liquor; it dispels the lassitude, quickens the intellect, and loosens the tongue. These and other effects of the black beverage invigorated a speculation concerning the nature of coffee. Some travelers argued that its berries were the parched grain brought by Abigail to calm down David's anger against Nabal; the Italian traveler Pietro del Lavalle, for instance, argued that the black brew was the nepenthe of Helen she had in her disposal.

There are also some other legends about coffee with oriental origin. One of them is about the Prophet Mohammed. He is visited by Angel Gabriel in the sleep. The Angel has brought this unknown beverage and commanded him to drink. He tells the prophet that the beverage is stimulating and invigorating. The story of dancing goats is among the most colorful of the legends with oriental origin. It is told in this legend that in the desert of Yemen there had been a monastery and there was a herd of monastery that wanders and returns even leaner. One day some goats return at dusk and have no wish to sleep. To the surprise and annoyance of the herdsman, they dance and jump, leap and caper and chase each other all through the night. In succeeding nights the whole herds are afflicted with the same dancing and jumping practice. The goatherd first thought that they are victims of the goat-sucker but he decided to follow them to the remotest ground to find a clue. The next morning he follows the herd until a very discreet distance where they are

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<sup>1</sup> Ellis, A. A History of the Coffee-Houses, p.1.

eating from a shrub with leaves like a laurel whose flowers are like the jasmine. Where the flowers die away there are little berries which goats devour. He takes a small branch with berries to show them to the Imam. The Imam does not believe the goatherd and investigates the case himself. He takes some berries and makes several examinations. He boils some water and casts a handful of the powder he has grinded. He drinks and feels stronger and energetic; he does not sleep during that night. This is a very common anecdote among the people in the orient about the origin of coffee<sup>2</sup>. The coffee spread very quickly and became such a common and favorable beverage among Turkish people that the refusal of men to allow their wives to enjoy the pleasure of coffee constituted a reasonable ground for divorce<sup>3</sup>. Ellis quotes Biddulph's, the English traveler, views of coffee and coffee-houses in Turkey:

Their most common drinke is Coffa, which is a black kind of drinke made of a kind of Pulse like Pease, called Coaua; which being grownd in the mill, and boiled in water, they drinke it as hot as they can suffer it; which they find to agree very well with them against their crudities and feeding on herbs and rawe meates. Their coffa houses are more common than ale-houses in England... if there be any news; it is talked of there<sup>4</sup>.

It was a matter of curiosity for travelers in the Ottoman territory to observe so many people from different ranks and social classes coming together in coffee-houses to drink and talk. The travelers did not first understand this and commonly compared what they found similar in their own country; but they always tried to find some justification for this strange coffee-habit of the oriental people. They sometimes made much exaggerated and sometimes interesting explanations. It is written about Dr. William Harvey that he found the circulation of blood thanks to coffee. He must first have had a taste of coffee when he was a student at Padova (in Spain) where he had friends from Arabia. It was possible that he was frequently sent the berries to make coffee by his Arab friends. And his coffee-addiction was made fun that he used to drink coffee to such an extent that it exalted his blood as to realize and discover the circulation of blood<sup>5</sup>. The more reasonable and common argument was about the effect of coffee to the human health. For instance, it is reported that coffee helps digestion and procures the alacrity, comforts the brain, wonderfully clears and enlightens each parts of soul: 'Do but this rare Arabian cordial use and thou may'st all the doctors' slops refuse<sup>6</sup>.

The first coffee-house begins to cure and enlighten English souls in 1650 'at the Angel in the parish of St. Peter', Oxford. A Jewish Ottoman citizen, once

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.2-5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.8.

<sup>5</sup> Heise, U., *Kahve ve Kahvehaneler*, p.32.

<sup>6</sup> Ellis, A., *A History of the Coffee-Houses*, p. 11-19.

working for a Turk who highly prized the berries, brought with him from abroad a store of berries and opened the first coffee-house of Europe in England<sup>7</sup>. Few years later he moved the coffee-house to London. The second in England but first coffee-house in London was opened by a Greek servant Pasqua Rosee, another Ottoman subject. He was brought to London by a Levant merchant David Saunders. The merchant was hospitable person and occasionally invited his friends to drink the “Black Apollo”<sup>8</sup>. When the coffee-ceremony began to interrupt his business, he set up the Greek as a coffee-man in St. Michael’s Alley. Coffee-drinkers, for the first time in London, had a particular place to go and drink the Black Apollo freely. In ten years of time, after the first coffee-house in London, coffee-houses became very popular public places. ‘One did not ask in those days where a man lived, but which coffee-house he frequented’<sup>9</sup>.

There appeared ‘at this time a Turkish drink to be sold, almost in every street, called coffee’<sup>10</sup>. There were people who have ‘scarce Two pence’ to buy bread but spent ‘a penny each evening’ in the coffee-house<sup>11</sup>. Any Londoner had only to walk to the end of the street to see the hanging sign of the coffee-pot or the Turk’s head before the end of seventeenth century. Any one would enter freely and enjoy the privilege and the service inside the coffee-house. ‘No attempt was made to restrict or bar the entry of anyone; ... one penny was all that was needed by any man, rich or poor, to gain entry’<sup>12</sup>. The author of “Hudibras” [Samuel Butler] describes a coffee-house as a market where people of all qualities and conditions meet to drink and discuss news with no rank and distinctions. The customers found in the coffee-houses sober and peaceful circumstances for recognition, discussion and exchange of political, aesthetic, and social issues. No intoxicants were served there; the coffee-houses were ‘innocent, Turkish novelty’<sup>13</sup>. And the Turkish origin was for a long time remained in the coins of the certain coffee-houses which customers submit as a payment. In the Exchange Alley Coffee-house, for example, the coins bear the head of a Turkish Sultan, Amurath, known as Morat the Great, after whom the coffee-house was named: ‘The Beaufoy collection of coffee-house tokens in the Guildhall Museum reveals that Morat and Soliman were popular coffee-house signs in the seventeenth century’<sup>14</sup>. A lot of ‘advertisements appeared in weekly’ papers of the new coffee-houses of London whose distinguishing signs were “The Great Turk”<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Anonymous. Old English Coffee Houses, p. 5

<sup>9</sup> Ellis, A., A History of the Coffee-Houses, p.32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> Anonymous. Old English Coffee Houses, p. 14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 43-48.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 48-49.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> Matar, N. Islam in Britain, p. 115.

## II. English Public's Reactions to the "Turkish Enchantment"

The innocent 'Turkish Novelty' created a strong friction in London and led the establishment of a new public-sphere in English society. The coffeehouses began to capture social imagination. They had for sometime been a dominant subject for the discussion. There appeared eight pamphlets between 1652 and 1675; and a number of poems about coffee and the characters of coffee-house<sup>16</sup>. The *merits* and *faults* of the new beverage had been extensively discussed. The early discussion concerned the effect of coffee upon the health; but afterwards especially when the extension and growth of the coffee-market began to threaten the tavern-keepers, social and moral facets were within the view.

The earliest debate was about the Greek servant Pasqua. He was not a free man, therefore, had no legal right to compete in the British market. The legal authority first forced him to find a partnership in the business, and then he was forced by Puritans to change the religion. It is uncertain how long he remained at the coffee-house, but he was [later] forced to leave the country. There was nothing left by the Pasqua but a verse written by the admirer of coffee<sup>17</sup>. The popularity of the coffee-houses disturbed some English economic, political and social establishments. 'To those who ... had an axe to grind, these early coffee-houses were heartily disliked'<sup>18</sup>. The tavern-keepers blamed the coffee-houses for

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> Ellis, A., A History of the Coffee-Houses, p. 32. This poem reflects the exile of Pasqua. It is anonymously written. It was most probably written by a coffee-lover who frequented Pasqua's Coffee-house in London.

Where not the fountains of my tears  
Each day exhausted by the steam  
Of your Coffee, no doubt appears  
But they would swell to such a stream  
To see Pasqua, thy Affliction

What! Pasqua, you at first did broach  
This Nectar for the public good  
Must you call Kitt down from the Coach  
To drive a trade he understood  
No more than you did then you creed  
Or he doth now to write or to read?

Pull courage, Pasqua, fear no Harms,  
From the besieging foe;  
Make good your ground, Stand to your Arms,  
Hold out this summer, and then tho'  
He'll storm, he will not prevail –your Face  
Shall give the Coffee Pot the chance.  
[the poet signed himself as Adrianus del Tasso]

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

'being hotbeds of sedition' and had a vicious attempt to close them down. In the *Women's Petition Against Coffee*<sup>19</sup> (1674), it was argued that due to the coffee the 'sensible Old English Vigor' was in jeopardy. There remained nothing from a 'Glorious dispensation'; because of the coffee the prince of Spain was forced to make a law which limits the sexual-dispensation with 'nine times' a night. English men 'become mere Cock-sparrow, fluttering things' and so 'far from' and 'not capable of performing those Devoirs which their duty and our Expectation Exact'<sup>20</sup>. It is argued by women that:

Our husbands are bandied to and fro all day between the Coffee-house & Tavern, whilst we poor Souls sit mopeing all alone till Twelve at night, and when at last they come to bed smoakt like Westphalia Hogs-head we have no more comfort of them, than from a Shotten Herring or dried Bulgrush; which forces us to take up this Lamentation and sing, *Tom Farthing, Tom Farthing, where hast thou been, Tom Farthing? Twelve a Clock e're you come in, Two a Clock e're you begin, and then at last can do nothing*<sup>21</sup>.

Women claimed in a vulgar and obscene language that the whole English race was in danger of extinction due to this 'unhappy berry' and 'Turkish Enchantment'. There is a sense in the 'Women's Petition' that the Turks already began to spoil the Christendom; they may come and take over them while men were indulging in their coffee-habits. It is necessary to forbid 'Drinking COFFEE' with sever penalties; the return of old strengthening Liquors of forefathers and Lusty Heroes to improve women's 'interest' and 'replenish' the race<sup>22</sup>. Women were not alone in the petition. There were also poems written by men of anonymous origin, which claimed that coffee renegades the public and corrupts the pure Christian blood. In the poem *A Broadside against Coffee; or the Marriage of the Turk* written in 1672 this attitude is very clear:

*Coffee*, a kind of Turkish Renegade;  
Has late a match with Christian water made;  
At first between them happened a Demur,  
Yet joyn'd they were, but not without great stir;  
For both so cold were, and so faintly met,  
The Turkish Hymen in his Turbant swet<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> It was anonymously written. *The Petition against Coffee* is published by The Rodale Pres in 1954.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Wall, C. *Alexander Pope The Rape of the Lock*, the poem is anonymous and it is quoted in Cynthia Wall's book, p. 360.

It was a great shame for English to ‘ape the Turk’. When the Pure English drinks coffee and ‘turn Turk’, they may learn to ‘eat spiders too’. Since coffee represents Turkish blood [it is ‘brown’ (11), and as cold as ‘Earth’ (8) and in need of flames (8)], it is stinky and poisonous. Englishness, on the other hand, is as clear as water Thames (8) and fair as Nymph (13). They are so contrary and they must ‘sue out a Divorce’ (10). The sails of coffee to England were represented in the poem as a marriage of dry and moist berry to Pure English water (14). It is a Turkish agent that threatens ‘Pure’ English identity; it is a Turkish enchantress which magically turns the drinker into Turk. ‘Even if the drinker does not want to “turn Turk”, the secret ingredients of the coffee would overpower’ and convert the drinker into a renegade Turk<sup>24</sup>.

Writers, who are against coffee, went further in the argument as to claim that the complexion of the coffee drinker began to look like a Turk and his moral condition was degenerated. They assumed that coffee was a satanic beverage and a secret agent to destroy English people. These assumptions were reflected in the poem *A Broadside against Coffee; or the Marriage of the Turk*. The poet argued that ‘there was no faith that may allow the marriage of Nymph [English] and Infidels [Turks] (24). However, in this match the Nymph should overcome and ‘kill’ the ‘Bold Asian Brat’ (27) because ‘Water’ [English souls] (28) was too good for ‘Coffee’ [Turkish Renegades]. The conventional order between man and woman were all reversed in the marriage of the Turk and English. The Groom was heavier and the bride light (32). In the end, the clean and unclean met in the confusion, and the ‘Dwarf [coffee] rouse to such a stature’ in this marriage (58).

The poem reflects the avidness of the English public’s mind to the Turkish novelty. The ‘innocent Turkish Novelty’ was no longer innocent. It was not a hot beverage that any English citizen might enjoy in the cold and rainy climate of England. It was a Turkish renegade; it distills the logic, faith and ‘Pure’ characters of English people. It was a secret Turkish agent, with magical power. The coffee possessed “Turkish sobriety”; its extraction had its heat from the hell; and the drinker could not help to be converted into Turk<sup>25</sup>. The coffee-house keepers were also under the spell of the coffee. Matar argues this as follows:

For the English opponent to coffee, this fear was compounded by the coffee-house keepers, some of whom were beginning to adopt Muslim clothes and customs. A writer in 1673 noted that one keeper had changed his hat for a Turban –Ap’d a Turbant- and such was the influence of that new head gear on him that his face had turned Antichristian and appeared perfect Turk<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Matar, N. *Islam in Britain*, p. 113.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

The anxiety was more over the religious and cultural effect of the coffee rather than over the coffee itself. The fear of the Turk and the impact of Turkish culture on English society were transformed into enmity against coffee. It was even argued that coffee made Turk so strong as to kill a thousand Christians at once<sup>27</sup>.

The powerful resistance and enmity against coffee and the coffee-houses prepared a testimony for the government to take precautions. The King is informed of the inconveniency of the coffee-houses. He asked the Lord Keeper and the Judge to proceed against the coffee-houses. It was decided that coffee is used in the common assembly 'to nurse the idleness and pragmatism,' therefore 'might be thought as common nuisances'<sup>28</sup>. The coffee-houses 'effeminate Majesty's subjects' by broaching lies, insinuating people's ears a prejudice' against each other and against government and rulers, therefore, if they remain too long, they will be very 'pernicious and destructive'<sup>29</sup>. The king signed a 'Royal Proclamation' in the Christmas of 1675 to 'suppress' and 'put down' all the coffee-houses; this proclamation presumes 'utmost perils' to the one who retails coffee or spends time in the coffee-houses. This declaration was a kind of 'dictatorial challenge to individual freedom and to the freedom of speech and individual liberty'.

### **III. The Negotiation of the Turkish Novelty by English Publics and Coffee-House as the Space for the Enlightenment of the English Public**

The proclamation had been protested by 'men of all parties' as a sign of 'despotism and tyranny'<sup>30</sup>. Judge Rumsey had the same opinion with the protesting Public and decided:

Whereas formerly Apprentices and clerks with others used to take their morning's draught in Ale, Beer, or Wine, which by the dizziness they cause in the Brain, made many unfit for business, they use now to play the Good-fellows in this wakeful and civil drink: Therefore, that worthy gentleman ... who introduced the practice hereof first to London, deserves much respect of the whole nation<sup>31</sup>.

Here were all kinds of people from the public who mingle there; there was a common sympathy for the coffee among them. Where can young men, shopkeepers, spend an innocent hour or two in the evening than at the coffeehouse? Where everyone may sit free, be communicative and modestly tell his own idea? The coffee-houses are 'nursery of temperance, delight of frugality and academy of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>28</sup> Ellis, A., A History of the Coffee-Houses, p. 89

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 93-94.

<sup>31</sup> Anonymous. Old English Coffee Houses, p. 7.

civility<sup>32</sup>. The men of London who frequently attended coffee-houses answered the *Women's Petition Against Coffee* in *The Men's Answer to the Petition*. They argued that women have no right for the public complaints. The women should not talk about 'Fumblers of seven or eight hundred years Old' because a 'Larke is better than a Kite and Cock-Sparrows are ... preferable for the work of Generation before dull Ravens'<sup>33</sup>. They say:

But why must innocent COFFEE be the object of your Spleen?  
That harmless and healing Liquor, which Indulgent Providence  
first sent among us, at a time when Brimmers or Rebellion, and  
Fanatick Zeal had intoxicated the Nation and we wanted to drink  
at once to make us Sober and Merry<sup>34</sup>.

The coffee does not make them 'less Active in the Sports of Venus' since so many of the little houses 'with the *Turkish Woman* on their Signs, are nurseries to promote and stock 'hopeful Plants for the future service of the Republique'<sup>35</sup>. Men claimed in the 'Answer' that Coffee is the 'general Drink in Turkey' and men of 'those Eastern Regions' are 'eager performers than Circumcised Gentlemen'<sup>36</sup>. The coffee-houses are the academy of citizens where he learns more wit than ever; News-monger exchange news, wise men recreate, and the Fool make business, and coffeehouses keep men sober.

The corruption of coffee was also discussed and refuted among the men of learning at Cambridge. 'At the universities [the coffee-houses] were attacked as being a time-wasting distraction'<sup>37</sup>. All kinds of people meet in to discuss 'Monster Opinions and Absurdities'<sup>38</sup>. The lazy companions met in the coffee-houses to 'prattle news that they neither understand, nor are concerned in'<sup>39</sup>. The scholarly knowledge had given place to news, and very serious affairs of Christendom were discussed at the coffee-houses. The coffee-houses were held responsible for the decline of serious and solid learning. Upon the complaint from the church the Puritan mayor of Oxford ordered to close down the coffee-houses on Sundays. And Cambridge Professor Dr. John North complained that there was silence and peace in the city before coffee-houses. He claimed that after the opening of the coffee-houses even the scholars became greedy for news and neglected all for it. He says:

But now the case is much altered; for it is become a custom,  
after Chapel, to repair to one or other coffee-houses (for there  
are diverse) where Hours are spent in talking, and less profitable  
reading of News Papers, of which swarms are continually

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<sup>32</sup> Man's Answer to the Petition. In the *Old English Coffee Houses*, p.57

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 21

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>37</sup> Ellis, A., *A History of the Coffee-Houses*, p. 25.

<sup>38</sup> Anonymous. *Old English Coffee Houses*, p.15.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

supplied from London. And the scholars are so greedy after news (which is none of their business) that they neglect all for it ... a vast loss of time grown out of a pure Novelty; for who can apply close to a subject with his head full of the din of a Coffee House?<sup>40</sup>

Mr. North was certainly not a coffee-house frequenter and he was mistaken, since there were numbers of Cambridge scholars who instructed after they have a cup of coffee to keep the mind alerted. Moreover, the Greek coffee-house was patronized by senior members of the Cambridge University. There professors and doctors met in the morning and afternoon to read the news-papers over a cup of coffee and pipe a tobacco and converse on all subjects. The coffee-houses had power to bring endless variety to the University of Cambridge.

The coffee-houses were also in daily touch with people and there were more than gossip and intercourse. Coffee-houses became a public-sphere and forced the government to work for a better society. They played a very crucial role in the battle for freedom and liberation of the public mind at a time when there was no press. In particular, in the early Commonwealth coffee-houses became a case for good fellowship turned Puritan. No intoxicants were served in the Coffee-houses under the Commonwealth and they had very strong Puritan influence<sup>41</sup>. As

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<sup>40</sup> Ellis, A., *A History of the Coffee-Houses*, p. 27.

<sup>41</sup> The Puritans made certain rules and conduct and they posted these rules on the walls in the coffee-houses. The rules were written in verse, and ask everyone to follow the rules. The rules were as follow:

Enter, sirs, freely, but first, if you please,  
Peruse our civil orders, which are these.  
First, gentry, tradesmen, all are welcome hither,  
And may without affront sit down together:  
Pre-eminence of place none here should mind,  
But take the next fit seat that he can find:  
Nor need any, if finer persons come,  
Rise up for to assign to them his room:  
To limit men's expense, we think not fair,  
But let him forfeit twelve-pence that shall swear:  
He that shall any quarrel here begin,  
Shall give each man a dish t' atone the sin;  
And so shall he, whose compliments extend  
So far to drink in coffee to his friend;  
Let noise of loud disputes be quite forborne,  
Nor maudlin lovers here in corner mourn,  
But all be brisk, and talk, but not too much;  
On sacred things, let none presume to touch,  
Nor profane scripture, nor saucily wrong  
Affairs of State with an irreverent tongue:  
Let mirth be innocent, and each man see  
That all his jests without reflection be;  
To keep the house more quite and from blame,  
We banish hence cards, dice, and every game;

the Puritans scorned all complements and gentile breeding, they looked coffee-houses as ideal democratic establishments where men of all classes could meet<sup>42</sup>.

They were the center of literary and aesthetic works of eminent English writers like John Dryden, Samuel Pepys, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. William Urwin's coffee-house, known as *Will's*, inspired many poets and writers and had been for more than forty years a center of public taste and education. The *Will's* was near the Ling Theatre. Players and writers were frequent visitors of the coffee-house. For instance, in the poem the *Will* coffee-house is used as synonymous of Wit:

I have heard much talk of the Wits' Coffee house,  
Thither, says Brindle, thou shall go and see  
Priests sipping coffee, sparks and poets tea;  
Here raged freise, there quality well drest,  
These baffling the Grand Seignior, those a taste<sup>43</sup>.

Jonathan Swift ironically described the *Will* as 'five or six men who had writ plays or at least prologues, or had share in a miscellany, came hither, and entertained one another with their trifling composure in so important an air'<sup>44</sup>. Dryden issued some of the wits in the *Will*. He was the frequent visitor of the *Will* and resided at *Will* and set there the standard for literary criticism and appreciation that was to be adopted and fallowed for a generation. He provided art for easy composition and he was imitated by 18<sup>th</sup> century writers who found their inspiration, their topics and their publics in the coffee-houses. There were two rooms at *Will* where there were separate tables for the "Wit", for the "Grave" [for those who preferred to talk or read quietly], and for the "Rabble" [for the politicians]<sup>45</sup>. It was compared to university in certain aspects. The coffee-house makes people sociable, enable the rich and the poor to meet together for a better understanding and learning, provide a search for good learning and give chance to the frequenters to acquire a master of any particular knowledge by listening to and conversing with the others.

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Nor can allow of wagers, that exceed  
Five Shillings, which oftentimes do troubles breed;  
Let all that's lost or forfeited be spent  
In such good liquor as the house doth vent,  
And customers endeavor, to their powers,  
For to observe still, seasonable hours,  
Lastly, let each man what he calls for prey,  
And so you're welcome every day (Ellis,26).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 45-46

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

The coffee-houses reflected the changing face of the late 17 and early 18<sup>th</sup> century English society, especially of the new –young generations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The young men of fashion, ‘the Beaux’ as they were called, had their favorite coffee-house. The *Man’s Coffee-house* in Scotland Yard was the favorite place of these young adventurers. It was frequented by gentlemen whose families were broken in the war and whose situation prevented them from maintaining the position they were accustomed to. The *Man’s Coffee-house* had a particular attraction for them; they could meet old friends there without embarrassment. They could also influence public in the coffee-house. They could teach people manners of a courtier and the accent to be adopted. Many of them came to the *Man’s* to learn the latest dress and manner of their social superior. The Beaux takes on gold-laced coat, scribbles a verse, visits the *Will’s* first, and then goes to the *Man’s*. It is reported in Ned Ward’s *London Spy* that the Beaux ‘walk backward and forward with their hats in their hands’ to the *Man’s* to exchange about the latest modes or resort to snuff taking<sup>46</sup>. The *Man’s* became representative of the Beaux. The young men were very influential on the common people who frequented the coffee-house. They taught them the proper accent and manners of the cavaliers together with the new fashions of the century.

The poets and men of letter met at the *Will* and the Beaux met at the *Man’s*. There was some other eminent social group of English society who preferred coffee-houses for meeting. They were experimental philosophers and their followers, known as Virtuosi. In the liberal and flexible atmosphere of the coffee-houses they discussed the fundamental principles of philosophy, government and religion. The discussions on natural philosophy, contemporary politics, new science, together with literary wits and fashions enlarged the scope of 18<sup>th</sup> century mind and spirit. The Virtuosi would go the round of coffee-houses, talk mysteriously about new discoveries and share with their fellows the curiosities. The Fellows of the Royal Society frequented Grecian Coffee-house which became the most important meeting place of the “Learned Club” in the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>47</sup>. For instance, Thomas Ken –a member of chemistry class at Oxford- was a frequent visitor of coffee-houses. Whenever he was in London he would seek out old friends of his Oxford days and join them in a coffee-house. His biographer writes that ‘he never lost his great liking for coffee and even though, from his college days, one of his greatest joys was to give almost all he had to others’ but he never sacrificed his ‘beloved coffee-pot’ which he specially mentioned in his will<sup>48</sup>.

Joseph Addison preferred a coffee-house to study, dine and meet his friends. Alexander pope writes this: ‘Addison usually studied every morning, then met his party at the *Button* [Coffee-house], dined there and stayed there for five or six hours; and sometimes far into the night ... I used to see him at *Button’s* Coffee-

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 72-74.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 81-82.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

house almost everyday<sup>49</sup>. He felt ‘obliged to acquaint the public’ in the *Button*’s. He compares himself to the Lion’s Head (sign of the Button’s) whose mouth is always open for the reception of intelligence thrown into it. He aims to publish the ‘roaring of the Lion and hope to make him roar so loud as to be heard over’ the entire British nation:

This head is to open a most wide and veracious mouth, which shall take in such letter and papers as are conveyed to me by correspondents, it being my resolution to have a particular regards to all such matters as come to my hands through the mouth of the Lion ... whatever the Lion swallows I shall digest it for the use of the public ... [the head] will be set up in Button’s coffee-house in Covent Garden<sup>50</sup>.

*The Button* was the earliest sphere of Addison’s journalistic works. It was established as the center of social life under the patronage of Addison<sup>51</sup>. Here Addison worked on *The Guardian* and here he begins to open Men’s eyes to public opinions, to practical and simple lessons about manner and morals. Here, he started the journalistic project and in the coffee-houses the *Spectator* began and flourished. Mackie<sup>52</sup> states that the *Spectator* addresses to the coffee-house audiences who act in ways suitable to rational and genteel exchange and who are concerned with conduct and manners of private and public life; it is designed for the readership of the public and social venues of the coffee-houses and performed an important transaction for the enlightenment of the public. Actually, as argued before, coffee-houses were democratic public places that did not restrict anyone’s entrance and free discussion of any social topic. People of any rank and class were –without distinction- able to have a free entrance and all kinds of topics were freely discussed. And there were particular coffee-houses for particular people and interest. Young cavaliers who delighted in fashions, known as Beaux, frequented the Man’s Coffee-house, poets and writers used to go Will’s Coffee-house and the Grecian Coffee-house was a meeting place of the ‘Learned Club’. The coffee-houses were the ‘Busie part of Mankind’ in London. Any one would benefit from these diversities for a Penny; it was therefore named after a ‘Penny University’. After all, of the aims [and achievements] of the journalistic projects of Addison and Steele was to ‘bring philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges’<sup>53</sup>.

Richard Steele intended to conflate the ideals, freedom and diversities of coffee-houses in the *Tatler* project. He argued this in the Preface of the *Tatler*: ‘*The general Purpose of this Paper, is to expose the false Arts of Life, to pull of the Disguises of cunning, Vanity and Affection, and to recommend a general Simplicity*

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<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Ellis, p. 161.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 185.

<sup>51</sup> Cowan, B. Mr. *Spectator and The Coffee House Public Sphere*, p. 359.

<sup>52</sup> Mackie, E. *The Commerce of Everyday life Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator*, p.19.

<sup>53</sup> Cowan, B. Mr. *Spectator and The Coffee House Public Sphere*, p. 359

*in our Dress, our discourse and our Behavior*<sup>54</sup>. He presumed the Paper for the public-spirited readers, because he thinks that ‘worthy and well-effected Members of the Commonwealth’ who visit coffee-houses and who ‘indulge themselves so much in public affairs as to neglect their own Affairs’ need to be instructed. The purpose and end of this paper, thus, shall be from time to time to report all matters, advices and reflections on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Steele negotiated the *Tatler* and Coffee-house. He argued that the readers without distinction, very much like the coffee-house men, are given out no charge after they pay a penny. He states:

I therefore earnestly desire all Persons, without Distinction, to take it in for the present Gratis [For Free], and hereafter at the Price of One Penny, forbidding all Hawkers to take more for it at the peril. And I desire all Persons to consider, that I am at a very great Charge for the proper materials of this work<sup>55</sup>.

Steele is resolved to bring together the pleasure and gallantry of the Man’s, the learning and scientific exchange of the Grecian’s; wit, literature and poetry of Will’s, political debates, domestic and foreign affairs of the St. James’s in the *Tatler* and present all these to the readers for a Penny. He suggests:

I once more desire my Reader to consider, That as I cannot keep an ingenious man to go daily to Will’s, under Twopence each Day mere for his Charges; to White’s, under Sixpence; nor to the Grecian’s, without allowing him some Plain Spanish, to be as able others at the Learned Table; and that a good observer cannot speak even with Kidney at St. James’s without clean Linnen. I say these considerations will, I hope, make all persons willing to comply with my Humble Request of a Penny a Piece<sup>56</sup>.

The new project of Richard Steel did attract the attention of the public. The variety of the debates and so many diverse and free issues are well accepted and increasingly affected the readers. ‘Everyone read it with pleasure and good-will’ and the new journalistic project of Steele together with Addison’s *Spectator* became foundations of public manners, morals, literary criticism and 18<sup>th</sup> century wit<sup>57</sup>.

Addison observed the public’s interest in the *Spectator* in the coffee-houses. The following incident relates the story of the minute paper he wrote in the coffee-house. He accidentally dropped what he wrote for the *Spectator* and the boy of the coffee-house read it to the audience to find the writer, which made all the audiences ‘very merry’:

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<sup>54</sup> Steel, R. *The Tatler*, p. Preface April 12, 1709.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, April 12, 1709.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, April 12, 1709.

<sup>57</sup> Ellis, A. *A History of the Coffee-Houses*, p. 166.

About a week since there happened to me a very odd incident, by reason of one of these papers of minutes which I accidentally dropped at Lloyd's Coffee-house, where the auctions are usually kept. Before I missed it, there was a cluster of people who found it, and were divert themselves with it at one end of the coffee-house; it had raised so much laughter among them before I had observed what they were about, that I had not the courage to own it. The boy of the coffee-house, when they had done with it, carried it about with him in his hand, if they had dropped a written paper; but no body challenging it, he was ordered by those merry gentlemen who had perused it, to get up into the auction-pulpit, and read it to the whole room, that if anybody would won it they might. The boy accordingly mounted the pulpit, and with a very audible voice read what proved to be minutes ... which made the whole coffee-house very merry; some of them concluded it was written by a madman, and others by somebody who had been taking notes out of the *Spectator* ... I reached out to the boy, as he was coming out of pulpit, to give it me; which he did accordingly<sup>58</sup>.

Addison wrote that he took the paper, cast a cursory glance at it and lighted the paper with his pipe. He made sure to escape all the suspicion of being author of it. Actually, Addison luckily dropped the 'minute paper' so that he was able to observe and learn the opinions and reflections of the public to the *Spectator*. He was satisfied with his work as not to notice what passed around him afterwards. He witnessed the popularity and well reception of the paper and the London coffeehouse as 'a primary site where the papers were read'<sup>59</sup>.

Unlike the authors' expectation, the *Spectator* and the *Tatler* did not decrease the numbers of visitors to the coffee-houses; rather the 18<sup>th</sup> century English public filled London coffee-houses to read and discuss the periodicals. They contributed to the income of the coffee-houses by attracting more customers. The *Spectator* and *Tatler* were in the hand of everyone and they were the topics of morning conversations in the coffee-houses. They were born out of coffee-house discussions and they provided, in turn, fresh daily topics for debates and discussions which did not only form the standard of public manner and opinions but also Englishmen's desire for daily news. Coffee-houses and periodicals became a center for the public life. They together established a civil social sphere of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain; and they together prepared the ground for an age of democratic revolutions<sup>60</sup>. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century London, Addison and Steele found in the coffeehouses a virtual stage on which they might expose the false arts of life, disguises of cunning, vanity and affection, the general simplicity of dress and discourse' to 'reform the public manners and enlighten the citizens of the

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<sup>58</sup> Addison, J. *The Spectator*, 23 April 1707.

<sup>59</sup> Cowan, B. Mr. *Spectator and The Coffee House Public Sphere*, p. 359.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

Commonwealth. Coffee-houses accomplished what the theater in the Renaissance England did for the public. The periodicals were new dramatic plays and the coffee-houses were virtual stages.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the “Turkish Renegade” had done more than to turn “Pure” English spirit into “ugly Turk”. Introduction of the first coffee-house by Jacob in Cambridge and Pasqua in London [both as Ottoman subjects] would not certainly foresee the achievements. The coffee was first fervently and radically challenged by the British people. They considered coffee as Turkish enchantment and believed that it has a secret ingredient that spoils the Christian spirit and renegades the drinker. However, in a process of time coffee created a friction in the public and it was negotiated within the British culture. Every trade and every profession had its favorite coffee house and it was people who frequented any particular one that gave it its individual character. But in general people of all ranks come together in a democratic assembly for the first time in coffee-houses and it was in the coffee-houses that great political, cultural and aesthetic debates were made and resolved. The coffee-houses flowered all over the country and with the periodical projects fore-grounded a new ‘public sphere’ which became the center for the circulation of democratic and revolutionary ideas and values among the citizens. The enlightenment of the English public, circulation of new discoveries and thoughts and instruction of wit and learning had for more than fifty years been at the coffee-houses.

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