

THE INSTITUTION OF HAREM IN VICTORIAN TRAVEL LITERATURE

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English Language and
Literature

by

Rukiye ERYILMAZ

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For my mother,

APPROVAL PAGE

Student : Rukiye ERYILMAZ
Institute : Institute of Social Sciences
Department : English Language and Literature
Thesis Subject : The Institution of Harem in Victorian Literature
Thesis Date : July 2008

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof. Dr. Visam Mansur
Head of Department

This is to certify that I have read this thesis and that in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Prof Dr. Mohamed Bakari
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

(Prof. Dr. Mohamed Bakari)

(Prof. Dr. Visam Mansur)

(Asst. Prof. Dr. Ali Murat Yel)

(Prof. Dr. Mehmet İpşirli)

It is approved that this thesis has been written in compliance with the formatting rules laid down by the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Orhan
Director

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July, 2008

ABSTRACT

Rukiye ERYILMAZ

July 2008

THE INSTUTION OF HAREM IN VICTORIAN TRAVEL

LITERATURE

This thesis looks for the answers why many a Victorian woman was interested in the harem and the domestic life of the Oriental woman. To be able to answer the question, the thesis examines the dynamics of the woman travel in general and the status of the Victorian women. After brief information about the harem, the thesis deals with the nineteenth century harem literature that mostly consisted of travel writings by Victorian women. Eighteenth century harem literature is also mentioned in order to evince its differences from the latter.

Challenging male accounts on the Oriental women and the harem, the female travelers of the nineteenth century England broke off with the conventions of their society, which confined them to domestic sphere, and expected them to be good homemakers. They traveled to the Orient themselves. This way they established themselves as independent and free women, and recreated their identity as powerful women. They gained symbolic capital by entering into areas such as aristocratic harems, where foreign males could not enter. Revered by the Eastern men, they felt superiority over their oriental counterparts. Moreover, their accounts of the harem gave them reputation and established them as travel writers. Lastly, they also contributed to the British colonial policies in the nineteenth century, although they were not as influential as men.

The thesis as a whole endeavors to demonstrate the contribution of the Victorian travelers, especially the females, to the constitution of harem literature.

Key words:

Female Travel, Harem, Harem Literature, Domesticity, Veil-Covering, Victorian Period, Male Gaze, Orientalism, Imperialism

KISA ÖZET

Rukiye ERYILMAZ

Temmuz 2008

VIKTORYEN GEZİ EDEBİYATINDA HAREM KURUMU

Bu tez neden pek çok Viktoryen kadını, doğulu kadının evcimen yaşamı ve harem kurumuyla ilgilenmiştir sorusunun cevaplarını aramaktadır. Bu soruya cevap verebilmek için, tez kadın seyahatinin genel olarak temel dinamiklerini ve Viktoryen kadının statüsünü inceler. Haremle ilgili kısa bir bilgilendirme sonrasında, on dokuzuncu yüzyılda genellikle Viktoryen kadınları tarafından yazılmış seyahat eserlerinden oluşan harem edebiyatıyla ilgilenir. On sekizinci yüzyıl harem edebiyatına da sonraki dönemin farklarını belli etmesi açısından değinir.

Erkeklerin harem ve doğulu kadınla ilgili yazdıklarına meydan okurcasına bu kadınlar kendilerini domestik çevreyle kısıtlayan ve iyi ev hanımları olmalarını bekleyen Viktoryen geleneklerine karşı koyarak, doğuya bizzat kendileri seyahat etmişlerdir. Böylelikle kendilerini bağımsız ve özgür kılmışlar, baskın ve güçlü kadınlar olarak kimliklerini yeniden yaratmışlardır. Aristokratik harem gibi erkeklerin girmesi yasak olan haremlere girerek sembolik sermaye elde etmişlerdir. Doğulu erkekler tarafından saygı görerek kendilerini doğulu kadından üstün hissetmişlerdir. Ayrıca haremle ilgili aktardıkları bilgiler onlara ün kazandırmış ve kendilerini seyahat yazarı kılmıştır. Son olarak, erkeklerinki kadar etkili olmasa da, İngiltere'nin kolonileştirme politikasına da katkıda bulunmuşlardır.

Tez bir bütün olarak Viktoryen gezginlerinin, özellikle kadın olanlarının, harem edebiyatının oluşumuna katkısını anlatmaya çalışır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Kadın seyahati, Harem, Harem Edebiyatı, Evcimenlik, Çarşaf-örtünme, Viktorya dönemi, Erkek bakışı, Şarkiyatçılık, Emperyalizm

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PREFACE

The idea of writing about the harem abruptly came to me. The harem literature produced by the West was quite a charming topic. However, it was really painstaking to write about such a wide topic. There was many a writing about the harem, but they were so diverse in perspective. There was the risk of getting lost in ideas. To prevent this I mostly considered a specific type of travelers, who lived in the East for a considerable time and found a chance to study the life there.

The travelers were mostly women. They were members of the rigid Victorian society, in which women were expected to live within the limits of the domestic sphere. Travel was the best escape for these women to overcome the oppressions of the society. They recreated their identity and gained *status* as they observed the inner lives of the Oriental women. The women of the harem were also confined to domestic sphere. I constantly asked myself whether the Western woman had sympathy for her Oriental sister or not. Or did she just dominate her by evincing her own superiority through imperialism? Yet, her domination was not only on the other woman; she also competed with the Victorian male who suppressed her at home. The Victorian travelers enriched the harem literature and also dominated the accounts of men, whom were less authentic compared to theirs, since the latter were not allowed to enter the harem.

By meeting upper class people after entering into harem; publishing their accounts, which rendered them famous; proving themselves to be as strong

as men with their *heroic* journeys, these women gained notable symbolic capital and also contributed to colonialism. However, travel literature by women was not valued much by men, who were not very appreciative of women writings. Women travelers, no matter how condemning or imperialistic they were, contributed to the authentic representation of the harem. This thesis aims at eliciting the contributions made by women to Orientalism, colonialism and representation of the Eastern domestic life.

INTRODUCTION

THE VICTORIAN'S HAREM

Harem, as an Eastern myth has always attracted the attention of Western travelers. However, access into harem was not that easy; for men it was almost impossible. Yet, there exist many paintings, information, or films produced by men on the harem. J. A. D. Ingres, John Frederick Lewis, Jean Leon Gerome are outstanding figures of harem painting. Jarrod Hayes notes that “masculine erotic fantasies of the harem were reflected in the paintings of Ingres and Delacroix, the writings of de Sade, Byron, and Loti, and the work of anonymous pornographers.” (2001) However, these pictures mostly degraded harem women to odalisques. In these pictures women either alone or in a group sit lewdly. They represent the type of women, whose main activity is to stay indoors and enjoy life with hedonistic activities like eating, chatting and adoring themselves. The paintings are immensely romantic and similar to each other; they emphasize the sensuality and the idleness of the harem. Note the similarities between the odalisque paintings by several artists of the nineteenth century in figure 2 and figure 3. The Odalisque is usually couched on the cushions as if she is waiting for affection. Her expression is complex. She looks content. On the other hand, her face bares a mixture of melancholy, listlessness and submission. What is clear from the paintings is that she presents herself openly and is not ashamed of being looked at if she is aware that somebody is looking.



Figure 1- Renoir, Auguste. *Odalisque*. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.



Figure 2- The Siesta (1876) by John Frederick Lewis



Figure 3- The Harem by John Frederick Lewis (Victoria and Albert Museum)

The stable idle harem became the symbol of the stable non-developing East. The stereotyping of the East through harem so to speak became a cliché. However, the other side of the medallion is different. There is another harem, of which mysteries the Westerner scrutinized to reveal. The thesis prefers women's harem writings to men's while the former had chances to penetrate into it without much resistance on the part of the Eastern people. Via harem accounts of female travelers, one can learn not only about the domestic life of the East but also the Western woman herself. The challenge is the Eastern writings on the harem are tiny compared to the Western. The objective is one-sided. No matter how informative the accounts of the harem, there is always the possibility that they may contain false information. This is why the thesis engages itself with the reasons of

the interest in the harem rather than the authenticity of the information.

Being rivals to men, the Western women set out to study the *other* women and recreated their identity as adventurous and powerful travelers. They established themselves as travel writers and gained status not only in literature but also in the eye of the men. They did not miss the chance to contribute to imperialism and colonial policy in acting as missionaries, tutors and helpers. They showed the “backwardness” in places like Africa, India and the Middle East and connected it with the situation of women in society. The blend of the motives of women travelers in the nineteenth century made it somehow problematic, since it was difficult to combine all the elements of their travel at one time. They could neither be real *friends* with the other women, whose condition they pitied, nor become serious colonialists because of their own feminine struggle in society. They fluctuated between ideas and tendencies; seemed to struggle for women’ rights in general and in favor of the Oriental woman but they indeed were thinking of themselves in the first place. The most famous of female harem writers are Sophia Lane Poole, Emmeline Lott, Julia Pardoe, Mary Eliza Rogers, Lucy Duff Gordon, Harriet Martineau in the nineteenth century and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in the eighteenth century. The method the thesis follows is to have a brief look at travel, harem and Victorian society separately and then to combine these elements to examine why and how the Victorians observed and wrote about the harem by giving examples of writings of the travelers mentioned above. Although the women are the focus of attention, male travelers’ views

on the harem are recalled in order to evince the differences from female travelers.

CHAPTER 1

TRAVEL AND GENDER

1.1 Travel

Throughout history mankind has, either instinctively or consciously, explored or traveled to new places. The mobility of the man contributed not only to create bonds between lands, nations, culture and people but also to the literature be it political, social or just for the sake of art.

Travel promises adventure, especially when it is made to exotic lands. Penetrating into barely known cultures excites the traveler who is also some kind of “explorer.” It also excites the reader, who sees these lands through the eyes of the traveler. Travel in the concept of the thesis is not a touristic activity. It is rather adventurous and informative. With regards to the adventures of travel, it can be said that mostly men traveled to distant places earlier. At a time when transportation was not developed, it was easier for *men* to travel to faraway places. “The historian Eric J. Leed acknowledges the constitutive masculinity of travel when he argues that, “from the time of Gilgamesh,” journeying has served as “the medium of traditional male immortality,” enabling men to imagine escape from death by the “crossing” of space and the “record[ing]” of adventures “on bricks, in books, and stories.” (From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism, Eric Leed, 1991:286, cited by Smith, 2001: ix) To narrow down travel for the Westerner it can be said that “Until the eighteenth century, travel outside Europe was a predominantly

male experience.” (Nittel, 2001:20) “Yet, even though travel has generally been associated with men and masculine prerogatives, even though it has functioned as a domain of constitutive masculinity, women have always been and continue to be on the move.” (Smith, 2001: x)

Women traveled in rare occasions and generally for a purpose. Jana Nittel notes that “one of the earliest female accounts of a journey is the central piece of *Itinerium Peregrinatio Eteriae*, rediscovered in 1884.” (2001:18) Depending on the religious motivation in the book, Nittel concludes that “the pilgrimage to a holy place as well as the intention to relive the suffering of Jesus Christ manifested the first kind of female travel.” (2001: 18)

In the past, women mostly stayed indoors. Karen Lawrence suggests that “Women (like Penelope) serve as the symbolic embodiment of home.” (1994: 1) But as centuries passed Penelope broke off with the conventions and established herself as traveler. Female travel developed proportionally with time. In the nineteenth century, women transgressed the domestic sphere and female travel did flourish. The nineteenth century witnessed many a travel book:

Motivation for travel in the nineteenth century became a complex issue. Travel in this period was not only a source of enjoyment but was also clearly balanced by a desire for education; in addition, travel provided an opportunity especially for women, to escape the rigidity of the Victorian society, and, very often, to write exemplary travel accounts. An industry emerged to support these various needs, and travel became a

popular means of supplying the most literate with a vicarious journey.

(Blanton, 2002: 20)

1.2 Gendering Travel

Inderpal Grewal perceives travel as a metaphor:

More than a trope, travel is a metaphor that, I argue, became an ontological discourse central to the relations between Self and Other, between different forms of alterity, between nationalisms, women, races, and classes. It remains so to this day, through continuities and discontinuities. Whether travel is a metaphor of exile, mobility, difference, modernity, or hybridity, it suggests the particular ways in which knowledge of a Self, society, and nation was, and is, within European and North American culture, to be understood and obtained.

(1996:4)

Travel indeed became a metaphor for women. The new Penelope, who was eager to be a voyager, took 'home' with herself and confronted the new "world." As she was distanced from home, she got closer to knowing herself. The differences and the similarities in the 'other's land helped her to rediscover 'self' from a distance as Marrone suggested: "Writing from exile allows for both a reconsideration of the self and also a new conceptualization of the homeland from a more distant and critical perspective. Putting pen to paper while abroad often enables women writers to express themselves more freely, to comment on, criticize, and remember the land they left behind." (2000: 30)

The traveler is shaped by the journey. As she affiliates with the new land, her home, which she left behind, acquires new meanings. Travel functions as a mirror to stress the differences and the similarities between the two lands. Moreover, it can mean “the familiarization or the domestication of the unfamiliar at the same time as the defamiliarization of the familiar or the domestic.” (Blunt, 1994: 17) Harem verified this argument in Victorian travel writings. The fact that the Victorian woman’s condition was similar to that of the harem woman’s helped them to domesticate the harem. The mysterious curtain over the harem was gradually lifted by the Victorian woman, who came to terms with her oppression at home.

As transportation got easier and the women got freer in traveling, the number of women, who set out for journeys to distant places increased. The vast mid-nineteenth-century expansion in feminine travel was made possible by, among other things, the increased opportunities for safer travel:

The development of steamships revolutionized travel on the Mediterranean, and the construction of railroad lines between Oriental cities by European colonizers -- such as the Alexandria-Cairo and Cairo-Assouan lines in Egypt and the Symern-Aydin and Constantinople lines in Asia Minor -- furnished western European travelers with the comfort indispensable in encouraging them to make the long journey across the Orient. Moreover, the French occupation of Maghreb, the British presence in India and Egypt and their use of Alexandria as a transfer station to India, and the ending of the Greco-Turkish conflicts in

1828 "stabilized" the sociopolitical situation in the Orient, providing the necessary security for the tourist industry. (Behdad, 1994: 35-36)

1.3. Women Write Travel

Not all travel books by women still exist and not all of them were paid attention to. The reason why most people were not in favor of women's travel writing could be due to the fact that the women who transgressed the domestic sphere and gained a place in the public sphere as adventurers could endanger the mentality of the women at home. "The fear that her ideas might incite other women to step outside traditional family roles created quite a stir. Women who ventured outside the domestic circle constituted a threat to family life. By extension, the makeup of society and humanity at large was called into question." (Marrone, 2000:14) Men also might condemn women because they mostly wrote 'feminine' issues and domestic details such as clothing, eating, maternity, hygiene, and marriage.

As mentioned before, *Itinerium Peregrinatio Eteriae* was rediscovered in the nineteenth century. In this century many travel books by women came to light. Sara Mills implies that "This 'rediscovery', primarily by Virago, of women travel writers is a part of a larger 'reclaiming' of the Victorian period for women's history. The aim of this rewriting process has been to dispel the various mythologies circulating in contemporary Britain about women's position in the Victorian period." (1991: 27) Travel writing, thus functioned as a cover, a compensation for the oppressed status of the women. It is indeed ironic that despite the fact that women were dominated by men in public

sphere, large numbers of women did travel. It is also questionable to what extent these women were really oppressed. Carmen Andras defines them as:

Yet, Dorothy Middleton observes “they were mostly middle-aged and often in poor health, their moral and intellectual standards were extremely high and they left behind them a formidable array of travel books. Nearly always they went alone, blazing no trail and setting no fashion....” (Middleton, 1965: 3-4) They were wealthy, but had difficult family responsibilities (they had to look after invalid parents). The few of them who were married had to carry the burden of their unhappiness even though they accompanied their husbands in their missions abroad. (2005)

Travel writing has been identified by many of its more discerning critics as a mode of colonial discourse that reinforces European norms. (Glage, 2000:37) However, as mentioned before the Victorian female’s travel was not mere imperialist activity. Yet, before imperialistic interests, the writings by women served as a mirror to read these women’s recreation of identity.

“Travel books authenticate themselves by the authority of the first person narrative voice. This voice establishes a relationship with the reader.... It is the voice of experience, through which the explorer dramatises himself as the focus of events and their interpreter. His expertise is rooted in the undeniable fact of his presence.” (Joyce, 1984:101, cited by Mills, 1991: 152) Later travel books by women were written in the form of epistolary and autobiography. “Travel writing is distinctive because autobiographical

narrative exists alongside, and seems to gain authority from, observational detail.” (Blunt, 1994: 21) Women empowered their writings by endeavoring to be objective by means of meticulous observation. However, the emotional characteristics of women inevitably affected the way women observed and noted and contributed to their works:

It is not surprising therefore that women, because of socialisation, should consider relationships and interest in other people important, since these traits defined them as ‘feminine’ women. This is also interesting when one considers that the type of writing which women were encouraged to do was mainly concerned with this emotional sphere. (Mills, 1991:96)

Mills opines that feminine emotions affect the narration of the travelers. Women do pour their emotions be it affection, biases, admiration, pity, jealousy into their narration:

In women’s travel writing there is a strong influence of the ‘confessional’ model of texts, so that although women are depicted performing strong and adventurous acts, they are far more self-revelatory than men’s. There are significant discursive pressures on women writing travel accounts to position them within the confessional mode. However, it is not possible to consider these texts as referring in some unproblematic way to the lives of the women writers. There is no sense in which it can be assumed that reading a travel journal gives the reader information about the life of the writer. What should be analysed

are the 'various positions of subjectivity' within this confessional field which women writers can occupy and construct for themselves. (Mills, 1991:104)

Travel by women intrinsically differs from men's. In this thesis, it is argued that it is also shaped by the Victorian gender codes. Ludmilla Kostova suggests that "when approaching their [Victorian female traveler] work we should bear in mind that travel writing is a form of selective socio-cultural construction of a particular type of otherness. Recent interpretations of the genre have emphasized its conventional character." (2007)

The stern morality of the Victorian woman traveler led her create her own way of devising travel writing. She mainly focused on the domestic details in the new land. Their travel was so distinctive that it would be too effortless to simply call them as imperialists.

CHAPTER 2

HAREM LITERATURE

2.1. The Harem

“The word *harem* is one of the most important family of words in the vocabulary of Islam derived from the Arabic root *h-r-m*.” (Peirce, 1993:3) Leila Ahmed, the Egyptian American professor of women's studies in religion defines it as: “[...] apartments that were most particularly forbidden to other men-those in which [the women of the master] women resided. (1992:117) Historian Leslie Peirce describes it as “a space to which general access is forbidden or controlled and in which the presence of certain individuals or certain modes of behavior are forbidden.” (1993:4) As the definitions reveal, the outstanding feature of the harem is its inaccessibility.

The harem dates back to the earliest times and was mostly a phenomenon of Islamic culture. Yet, this does not mean that it is essentially an Islamic invention. It was seen in other cultures such as Greek, Roman or Siamese. Ahmed explains that “[...] the origins of the harem system-that is the combination of the seclusion of females with polygamy and concubine- are in the pre-Islamic era. Polygamy, concubine and the various forms of segregation had been practiced in Mediterranean societies *before* the Arab conquest of the Middle East. (1992)

The harem as we know mostly existed in two forms as household and imperial harem. The household harem is mostly polygamous. It is usually the

four wives of the husband and the concubines. The imperial harem was much like the household harem, only more extensive and with a more highly articulated structure. (Peirce, 1993:6) The most famous of the imperial harems is that of the Ottoman Empire's. As the travel writings reveal the Ottoman Empire was one of the favorites of the Western travelers. Imperial harems were notably crowded:

Royalty often maintained large harems consisting of both wives and concubines, though they were considerably smaller than harems under the Persian Sasanids, who ruled the region from 224 to 640 C.E., immediately prior to its conquest by the Muslims. The harem of an Assyrian king of the twelfth century B.C.E., for example, consisted of approximately forty women; that of a Sasanian king, shortly before the Muslim conquest. (Khusrau I, 531-79 C.E.) consisted of some twelve thousand women. (Ahmed, 1992:14)

Harems were usually run by rich people. Village women were less involved in harem system. This meant that travelers that were able to enter into harem- whatever their class was- usually met upper class people.

However, this thesis does not consider the harem just as an institution. It also does not intend to correct the misinformation on the harem by the Westerners or to simply judge them as stereotypical or biased. The word itself is at times used interchangeably with the seclusion of the Oriental females in general. The travelers did not always mean the institution when they mentioned harem. For example, Lucie Duff Gordon, a Victorian traveler

refers to harem as the Oriental women per se. Some travelers talked of the household harem while some mentioned the imperial one. Although they share features in common, harems can vary according to the city, or country that they are in. Eventually the views on them vary.

2.2. The Harem Literature

In his discussion of Orientalism, Said raises the questions:

How does one *represent* other cultures? What is *another* culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the "other")? ...How do ideas acquire authority, "normality," and even the status of "natural" truth? (2003: 325-26)

In Western representation of the harem, the same questions are frequently asked. Representation of harem used to be far from "normal." Before it was shaped by the conventions of time, harem used to be seen as the embodiment of Islamic sexuality. "We in the West are heir to an ancient but still robust tradition of obsession with the sexuality of Islamic society." (Peirce,1993:3) Moran suggests that "The construction of the 'East' as morally unrestrained, sensual, infantile, and barbaric permeated many run-of-the-mill travel books." (2006:110) In order to show the backwardness of the East, the West, especially men represented the harem as a place for sexually and socially oppressed women. Behdad wrote that "the harem, as a

prevalent literary topos in orientalist literature, has been central to the eroticization of the Orient, representing and fulfilling Europe's fantasies of boundless sexuality and desire for domination.” (Behdad, 1989, cited by Behdad, 1994: 107)

Fatema Mernessi supports the same idea:

[...] the Westerner's harem was an orgiastic feast where men benefited from a true miracle: receiving sexual pleasure without resistance or trouble from the women they had reduced to slaves. [They] also referred primarily to pictorial images of harem, such as those seen in paintings of film....Moreover [their harem] was associated with artistic images created by famous painters such as Ingres, Matisse, Delacroix, or Picasso-who reduced women to odalisques...-or by talented Hollywood movie makers, who portrayed harem women as scantily clad bellydancers happy to serve their captors.” (2001: 14)

“Most popular perceptions about Islam originated in travel reports, novels and pictures dating back to the colonial era. Europeans have always been fascinated by the splendid palaces and esoteric colorful bazaars, by the mysticism and by the eroticism of the harem.” (Hafez, 2001: 57) Up to Lady Wortley Montagu, who gave significant accounts of the Ottoman harem in the nineteenth century, the general image of the harem in the West had been erotically shaped and stereotyped. Its exoticism was overemphasized:

In the sixteenth and particularly the seventeenth centuries, many works providing comprehensive descriptions of the Ottoman Empire and its

court were written by European travelers and ambassadors as well as by captives and renegades who had served in the sultan's palace. Descriptions of the harem and the sexual practices of the sultans clearly helped to sell books about the Ottomans and were therefore featured prominently. A mix of fact, hearsay, and fantasy, these works frequently conflate various descriptions of harem life that appear to have their origins in different stages of its evolution. (Peirce, 1993: 114)

Why the Westerners were so interested in the treatment of women in Eastern countries, as Melman suggests is, related with Islam. She argues that “the topos of the sensual Orient has to do with the special status of Islam as one of the three great revealed religions of the world.” (1992:61) She also mentions the factors of the proximity of the Middle East to Europe and then the Ottoman Empire’s role in European politics. Besides Islam being the alternate of Christianity, there is another theory, another explanation for the interest in the Oriental women. “On entering into a strange country, its women are the first objects to the moralist as well as the epicurean, to the former, because the education of a people and the framework of its society, depend mainly upon maternal and domestic character.” (Warburton, 1845: 59) Yahiya Emerick agrees on the importance of the status of woman for learning about Islam:

Perhaps no other issue has influenced people’s imagination more so than the status of women in Islam. In the Middle Ages, when Europeans were engaged in warfare with Muslims in Palestine, the focus was on

painting a picture of Muslims as minions of the Devil. But with the powerful Ottoman Empire holding sway over much of southeastern Europe from the fifteenth century until 1918, many Westerners began changing their views and instead focused on the exotic excesses of Ottoman court life. (2001: 254)

Since men were not able to step into harem, the *relatively* authentic harem literature was produced by women due to their privilege of access into harem. Reina Lewis describes harem literature as “Generally characterized by the first person narration, harem literature emerged by the nineteenth century as a sub-genre of the travel literature: one that especially favored women whose gender gave, and was held to give them special access to the harem’s segregated places.” (2005) In addition, women often write their “impressions” of another culture and are hence able to communicate negative views more subtly than their typical male counterparts, proclaiming to write from an “objective” or scientific viewpoint. (Monicat, 1994-1995, cited by Marrone, 2000:31)

Segregation of genders was strictly practiced in harems. However, the fact that Westerners were so surprised at segregation is interesting since segregation was also seen in their culture, even partially in the Victorian period. The harem was a representation of the general society, in which men and women owned different spheres. To study the harem was an easy way to induct about the general society for the Westerner. “The imaginary space of the harem was read as microcosmic replica of the Muslim empires,

reproducing the symbolic division of the male and female spaces and social and political structures.” (cited by Pohl, 1996: 127)

Time is an additionally important factor in Western narration of the harem. Mohja Kahf in her book *Western Representation of the Muslim Woman from Termagant to Odalisque*¹ examines the Western representation of the Muslim woman from the medieval texts to Romanticism. She opines that the image of the Muslim woman was demeaned over time. The Muslim woman with a strong character turned into an odalisque.² According to Mohja, “the Muslim woman in medieval literature typically appears as a queen or noblewoman wielding power of harm or succor over the hero, reflecting in this the earthly might of Islamic civilization.” (1999:4)

The most informative and authentic writings about harem were those narrated with first person observation. This is what differentiates masculine writing from the women’s. “The culturally most significant feature of the women’s writing is that these are eyewitness descriptions.” (Melman, 1992: 2) “[...] the methodology of participant observation seeks to uncover, make accessible and reveal the meanings (realities) people use to make sense out of their daily lives.” (Jorgensen, 1989:15) The travelers took place in daily

¹ Termagant is the name given by the authors of medieval romances to one of the “Saracen” gods with a violent, overbearing character; sometime in the seventeenth century, it came to mean a quarrelsome, overbearing woman; a virago, vixen, or shrew (OED). (Mohja, 1999: 181-182)

² Historically a female slave or concubine in a harem, especially one in the seraglio of the Sultan of Turkey. An exotic, sexually attractive woman. (*The Oxford Dictionary of English (2nd edition revised)* Oxford University Press, 2008)

lives of the oriental. A harem visit for them usually meant eating with them, sitting with them and even going to baths with them. Their experiences varied; however, the common point in all observations was that the travelers in the harem faced no resistance on the Oriental women; on the contrary, they were welcome.

On the contrary, the harem accounts of the men travelers were far from being eyewitnesses. "With very few exceptions the *haremlik* was sealed to European men." (Melman, 1992:62) Many books on the harem record that it was generally doctors, who were able to see inside of a harem. The first definite account we have of the *harem* is contained in a description of Constantinople by one Domenico Hierosolimitano, entitled *Relatione della gran citta di Costantinopoli* (sic)." (Penzer, 1965: 19) "The first Christian to describe any part of the Seraglio from personal knowledge, apart from those actually employed in the Palace, was an English organ-builder named Thomas Dallam." (Penzer, 1965:31) These first accounts usually took place in Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire. However, late 19th century harem visits usually took place in countries like Egypt, Palestine or Syria.

Eventually, the strict protection of the harem from male gaze led to legitimacy and reliability in female narratives since the women had actually been there unlike men. Bernard Lewis views the early harem accounts by Westerners as a tourist product. He notes that some of these tourists - taking advantage of being physicians- could even enter into harems, where no foreign man was accepted. (Lewis, 2004:147) The veracity of the harem

accounts gradually increased. These writings vary from romanticized narrations to realistic representation. In the nineteenth century, Gustave Flaubert, Gerard de Nerval and Lord Byron visited harems and romanticized them:

Byron typically envisions the harem as a private, domestic, secular space absolutely controlled by an Oriental despot and characterizes it as a social world where women, whether wives, concubines, or daughters, are all defined as the property of the harem master. Because Byron represents only the most privileged Eastern women living in extensive harems, he imagines worlds where multiple wives and concubines are a measure of wealth and where all the women in the harem are closely associated with other luxury possessions. (L. Paxton, 1999:40)

Behdad implies that:

The narrative of his [Nerval's] journey perpetually vacillates between being a naked representation of the modern Orient and a masked figuration of an orientalist romance, between the blunt generalizations of an "official" orientalist and the more subtle understanding of Oriental culture by an amateur traveler, and between unmasked repetition of the institutional discourses of Orientalism and veiled deflection of them. (1994:19)

Inderpal Grewal suggests that "For the European male, the harem

symbolized mystery and allure as well as female subservience and unfreedom, for the Englishwomen the harem became an example of the consequence of the denial of freedom to women as well as the problem of the inferior races” (1996:82). The mystery of the harem, indeed continued, even for the women; however, the way they took the issue was shaped with their own problems related to gender.

With regards to male travelers’ harem, Melman observes that some of the travelers had affairs with Oriental women. For example, Flaubert had a liaison with Küçük Hanim, Loti with Aeizade, Lane with Nefise, and Burton had adventures with several prostitutes. (1992:62)

Said explains the Western obsession with oriental sensuality as such:

We may as well recognize that for nineteenth-century Europe, with its increasing *embourgeoisement*, sex had been institutionalized to a very considerable degree. On the one hand, there was no such things as “free sex”, and on the other, sex in society entailed a web of legal, moral, even political and economic obligations of a detailed and certainly encumbering sort. Just as the various colonial possessions- quite apart from their economic benefit to metropolitan Europe-were useful as places where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe. (2003:190)

He further claims that “Virtually no European writer who wrote on or traveled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself or herself from this quest: Flaubert, Nerval, “Dirty Dick” Burton, and Lane are the most

notable.” (2003:191) The learned image of the Orient manipulated male voyagers.

The arguments take us to another, which is that “Travelers, regardless of sex, or class or education did not operate in an informational vacuum. Men and women had experienced the orient literally before visiting the geographical Middle East, they brought with them that region images, propagated by a long literary tradition.” (Melman, 1992:63) “There were certain images, which made strong impressions in the visitors’ mind. No matter how fictive they are, it is clear that works like *The Thousand and One Nights* had already settled itself in the subconscious of the Westerner.” (Behdad, 1994:26) As later will be revealed, many travelers studied the Orient before they visited it; they practiced the language or beforehand learnt or they read the well known, famous works on the Orient. They brought their biases or hearsay admirations with them when they visited the other’s land.

2.2.1. The Thousand and One Nights

One very influential source, which affected many Westerners, *The Thousand and One Nights* (also known as *Arabian Nights*) is a compilation of tales that of “various ethnic origins, Indian, Persian and Arabic.” (Mahdi, 1990: x, cited by Mernissi, 2001:43) “The tales, which are a symbol of Islam’s genius as a pluralist religion and culture, unfold in a territory that stretches from Mali and Morocco on the Atlantic Coast of North Africa to India, Mongolia, and China.” (Mernessi, 2001:43) “There is no single identifiable author responsible for the *Arabian Nights*; they are simply a collection of tales

based on the Scheherazade framework, though there are forty-two stories which the various editors of the *Arabian Nights* consistently included in the four main Arabic collections.” (Zipes, 1999:57)

“That compilation of texts, originally transmitted orally and amassed and transcribed over, at least, eight centuries, had become a definitive text in French and English before it was ever printed in Arabic.” (Melman, 1992:63)

“An art collector, who traveled to the Orient as secretary to the French ambassador, Galland was the first translator of *The Thousand and One Nights*. In 1704, at age fifty-eight, he became an instant success when he allowed Scheherazade to tell her stories in French, and he remained obsessed with translating her tales until his death in 1715.” (Mernessi, 2001: 61)

On the other hand, it was Edward William Lane who translated the Nights from the complete original Arabic text for the first time. (Yamanaka, 2006)

“The translation of the Thousand and One Nights, later more commonly called the Arabian Nights, was an epochal event which triggered off the European fascination for orientalia, and consequently the phenomenon of what is now termed “Orientalism.”” (Yamanaka, 2006: xv)

The impact of the collection on British audiences cannot be underestimated. Westerners were interested in the stories more than the Easterners. Although information about the East had been in circulation for a long while, the tales provided a provocative and imaginative vision of the East to an even wider audience. Its presentation of women was especially noteworthy. (Turhan, 2003: 54)

The tales in the book helped the West’s fixation with the oriental sensuality

to increase:

“The image of female sexuality put forth in *The Thousand and One Nights* was so strong that it helped galvanize the image of the lascivious harem woman in the minds of European readers; for instance, in 1836 Edward Lane actually utilizes the tales as a quick and effective means to describe the licentious character of Egyptian women: "Some of the stories of the intrigues of women in 'The Thousand and One Nights' present faithful pictures of occurrences not unfrequent in the modern metropolis of Egypt." (London, 1836:303-304, cited by Turhan, 2003:54)

. In the stories the narrator is Scheherazade. Shahryar, who was cheated by his former wife, is so frustrated and angry with women that each night he beheads a virgin after having intercourse with them. Scheherazade, the daughter of the Vizier, tells her father that she is volunteered to marry the king because she knows a way to prevent him from killing women. Despite her father's pleadings, Scheherazade marries him. She has a last wish from the king, which is to bid farewell to her sister. However, as planned, the sister asks for a story. The king, who also hears the story is deeply impressed by it and asks for another one. However, Scheherazade turns him down claiming that the dawn has come. So each night she tells the king another story and attaches him to herself. After one thousand and one nights, she becomes his queen. She not only saves herself but also the other girls from death. The most important is that she saves the king from his anger towards the women. Unlike the mute, obedient woman prototype, Scheherazade is talkative and

dominant. She can control a man with her narration of exciting stories. She manages to bind a man, who is a misogynist, to herself just because of her cunning narration skills. Scheherazade is not a typical Oriental woman. The main source of her charm is not her womanhood but her narration. She is indeed a role model for the Victorian travelers, who established themselves as writers with their strong narrations of the domestic life of the Orient.

However, the one difference between Scheherazade and the Victorian travelers are that the latter sought for conveying the truth. They did not merely aim at tantalizing men. They rather struggled for *authenticity*. The book affected many Westerners and played a big role in Western romanticism of the harem and the Oriental women. Travelers mentioned the impact of the stories on them as it will later be revealed.

2.2.2. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

The first, widely acknowledged and appreciated harem account came from the pen of Lady Montagu in the eighteenth century. Montagu “sprang from families lavishly endowed with rank, wealth and power, as well as with ability and achievement.” (Grundy, 1999:1) Before gaining a firm place in travel literature, she already had status and rank. It is crucial to have a look at Lady Montagu’s views on the harem in order to see how much she influenced the Victorians and in which aspects she differed from them. “Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the British ambassador to Turkey from 1717 to 1718, provides at least an impression of the lives of women in the period before the economic encroachment of the West and the changes that

followed. (Ahmed, 1992:121) “Penned in 1717 during the period of her husband’s (Edward Wortley Montagu) ambassadorship to the Ottoman Porte, her [Montagu’s] Embassy Letters (published posthumously in 1763) provided the first female-penned account of the inside of the harem.” (Lewis, 2004:13) Mohja argues that “Lady Mary’s ‘Turkish Letters’ induct an aristocratic Western woman into the new, so far male, subgenre of harem discourse, and initiate a female tradition of harem descriptions that continued to develop outside the dominant, institutionalized male tradition. (1999:118) Hence, her work can be seen as the official beginning of the harem literature written by females.

Montagu had the opportunity to enter the Ottoman harem and wrote firsthand account about the life in the harem. She mainly emphasized the point that the harem women had more freedom compared to their counterparts in the West. “She challenged common perceptions of the harem as a locus of women’s oppression and licentiousness.” (El Guindi, 1999:34) Her accounts were revolutionary since she avoided seeing the harem within the traditional, stereotypical perspective. The harem from her observation was not a claustrophobically oppressed place, filled with too much sensuality and vulgarity. Melman thinks of her letters as “[They] may be appropriately designated a key text, the corner stone in the new, alternative discourse that developed in the West on the Middle East” (1992:78). Her point of view was new and an alternative to traditional discourse.

Melman further states that “the *Letters* exude an auro of broad-

mindedness and tolerance towards the Ottomans, indeed towards Europe's religious and cultural 'other' as such (1992). What Montagu did was to domesticate the harem and represent it as a part of the social-political system of the Ottoman Empire. "She sees the harem, not as an exotic topos, but as a type of aristocratic household that works in ways perfectly understandable from her own Augustan perspective." (Mohja, 1999:121)

Her work was in two volumes and in the form of the epistolary. "Most of the letters are functional and addressed to friends or members of the family as well as the ambassadors or literary representatives of her time." (Nittel, 2001:66). In one letter, we see her writing to a friend, while in another she talks to Mr. Pope. The tone and the content of the letters change accordingly. She talks to everyone about different things. This way, Montagu, indeed, thinks of her audience, who comes from different education levels. Even though her work is in epistolary form, the tone of the letters affects the fact that to what extent the letters are just letters.

What strikes the reader most is that Montagu was already aware of her forthcoming influence. She claimed that she spoke 'truth' about the harem, which the male travelers had so far could not do:

It is a particular pleasure to me here to read the voyages to the Levant, which are generally so far removed from truth and so full of absurdities I am very well diverted with them. They never fail giving you an Account of the Women, which it is certain they never saw, and talking very wisely of the Genius of the Men, into whose Company they are never admitted;

and very often describe Mosques, which they dare not peep into. (1820, II: 9)

Montagu does not abstain from boasting about her privilege to give true accounts of the Turks by emphasizing the fact that most travelers could enter neither into harems, nor mosques:

You will, perhaps, be surprised at an account so different from what you have been entertained with by the common voyage writers, who are very fond of speaking of what they do not know. It must be under a very particular character, or on some extraordinary occasion, that a Christian is admitted into the house of a man of quality; and their *harems* are always forbidden ground. Thus they can only speak of the outside, which makes no great appearance; and the women's apartments are always built backward, removed from sight, and have no other prospect than the gardens, which are enclosed with very high walls. (1820, I: 137)

Montagu was proud of herself for enlightening the audience about the truth of the harem. As a woman she achieved this and intensified it by recording her accounts. Melman claims that “the letters acquired a status and authority comparable with those of Galland’s *Nights*, in the traditional discourse.” (1992: 82) No matter Montagu *really* thought of the harem (since her husband’s job might have affected them in terms of compatibility and tolerance with the other culture) she increased her “status,” owing to her accounts.

Montagu’s views of the Oriental women harem were appreciative. What

she liked most about the harem was the freedom that the Oriental women enjoyed. She did not see those ladies as secluded or oppressed. She did not criticize the veil either; on the contrary, she claimed that the veil gave a sense of freedom: "The *asmack*, or Turkish veil is become not only very easy, but agreeable to me; and if it was not, I would be content to endure, some inconveniency to gratify a passion that is become so powerful with me as curiosity." (1820, II: 30) "I ramble everyday wrapped in my *ferige* and *asmack*, about Constantinople, and amuse myself with seeing all that is curious in it. (1820, II: 38) In an article on Lady Montagu, Elizabeth Fernea wrote: "Robert Halsband, her most recent biographer, has pointed out that [in 1717 Lady Mary] was among the first to suggest that Muslim women were not benighted 'others' bound by a cruel code of restriction and oppression, but might have values and customs that were worthy of, if not emulation, at least of study and respect? (Halsband, 1965:312, cited by Fernea, 1981:329-338) Yet, what Montagu most appreciated was the freedom the Turkish women maintained. "Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire." (1820, I: 114)

Edward Lane, the famous orientalist, who lived in Egypt for a considerable time adopted the Oriental culture in order to be respected by the natives in Egypt. He declared that:

I resided at Musr, at different times, a little more than a year & a quarter. As my pursuits required that I should not be remarked in public as a European, I separated myself as much as possible from the Franks, &

lived in a part of the town (near the Ba'b el-Hhadee'd) somewhat remote from the Frank quarters. Speaking the language of the country, & conforming with the manners of my Moos'lim neighbours, renouncing knives & forks (which, till I saw the really delicate mode of eating with the fingers, as practised in the East, I was rather averse from doing), & abstaining from wine & swine's flesh (both, indeed, loathsome to me), I was treated with respect & affability by all the natives with whom I had any intercourse. (Thompson, 2008)

Lane observes that “to abstain from marriage “when a man has attained a sufficient age, and where there is no just impediment, is esteemed by the Egyptians improper, even disreputable. (Said, 2003:163) Unlike Lane, Montagu feels free to involve with the Oriental culture. “I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them; yet there was not one of them that showed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity but received with the all obliging civility possible (1820, I: 94) The oriental people Montagu represents are tolerant towards her culture and she does not feel forced to adopt their culture in order to be affiliated with them. Although Montagu felt more confident among the Oriental people, she could not completely overcome the feeling that the both cultures needed to complete each other for perfection. Indeed, none of them was perfect per se.

Mohja claims that “Perhaps the distinguishing feature of Lady Mary’s language is her ability to locate congruences between the European and

Islamic elements she experiences, points of overlap or convergence in which she and the Other become permeable substances, partaking of each other not as hard polished fantasms but as mutually vulnerable, porous bodies” (1999:119). Montagu neither abstained from her European identity nor was indifferent to the other culture. She rather behaved as a *hybrid*.

As Montagu gradually accepted her dislocation and revealed in the dissolution of an identity which had been largely defined by her social place, she was able to reconstruct herself, not by finding a new place, but by discovering the hybrid form as a principle of meaningful order within the apparently confusing and contradictory sense data of an unfamiliar world. The concept of hybridity enables her to represent the contradictions she perceives in the lives of Turkish women as it enables her imaginatively to sustain different parts of herself - mother, thinker, correspondent, and writer - without letting biology or culture reduce her perception of personal possibility.” (Kietzman, 1998)

Montagu’s interaction with Fatima, the wife of vizier is quite striking. Montagu appreciates her wit “...now that I understand her language I find her wit as agreeable as her beauty.” (1820, II: 24) She does not see her as a typical handsome, polite, tender harem woman. There is more to appreciate than her beauty. (This actually is a sign that Montagu does view harem women with their beauty and grace similar to Victorians; on usual descriptions she does not credit their mentality very much) She emphasizes that Fatima is also very curious about “the manners of other countries,” which

is indeed a resemblance between them. Both Fatima and Montagu view each other as different from the conventional Christian or Muslim women. Fatima is as hybrid as Montagu. A Greek lady when she sees Fatima tells Montagu that “This is no Turkish lady, she is certainly some Christian.” (1820, II: 24) Montagu is not totally appreciative of the other culture. This is why she likes Fatima the most. She wants to see traces of Christianity in her. Fatima is actually her reflection in the other culture. Both women complete each other and combine the two cultures. Hence, we cannot say that Montagu did identify with her new place. She appreciated but she still sought for her own culture. Both cultures were somehow deficient to her. Montagu’s experience of the harem, more than information or anything, is actually her recreation of her identity. However, while the Victorian travelers recreated their identity as partaking in public sphere, Montagu recreated hers as a hybrid. She synthesized both cultures in her mind.

Though Lady Montagu very much affected the successors of the harem literature, the Victorian harem writings somehow differed from hers. First of all the conventions of the time during Montagu were different. Moreover, her sympathy with Eastern culture was speculated a lot. Some critics, despite her great admiration for Eastern women, thought of her being a real orientalist with colonial interests; while some did not suspect her sympathy. Montagu lived at a time when Enlightenment was at its peak. Robert Halsband proclaims that the Turkish Embassy Letters (1763; ostensibly composed 1717-1718) are Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s “valid credential for a place in

the European Enlightenment” because of their clear sighted observation, their expensive tolerance, and their candid sympathy for an alien culture. (1965-1967: xiv, cited by Van Dyke, 2001:36)

The eighteenth century that Montagu lived in, saw the emergence of the Grand Tour. The grand tour was, at least in intention, not merely a pleasurable round of travel but an indispensable form of education for young men. (Mead, 1970:3) Education and pleasure were the main dynamics of the grand tour and this kind of travel was not confined to the English. It was a general tendency in Europe. Hence, Montagu’s former education, her class (aristocratic) and the tendencies of her time affected the way she saw the Orient. She was neither obsessed with colonial interests nor strictly oppressed by her society. Her letters were productions of comparatively liberal mind with *fine* knowledge of the other.

When Queen Victoria started to reign, the status of the woman changed from the aristocratic to middle. Melman suggests that the first change was that there was a shift “from elites to middle classes and even the populace, and from the exotic to unusual and the ordinary.” (1992:101) Pertinent to this, the Victorians domesticated the harem and “banished the exotic, to recreate the harem in the image of the middle class ‘home’: domestic, feminine and autonomous. While Victorian harem accounts were a lot in number, they had tendencies to be influenced from each other and shared a lot in common. Yet, Montagu’s accounts are individually distinctive and stay in a special place of their own.

Montagu is a very important figure in the constitution of harem literature. Her being a woman and giving significant information on the Turkish people along with the harem rendered her as the pioneer of the later female travelers to the Orient. Although they did not touch upon some intimate issues as frankly as Montagu did, Victorians were really influenced by her. They contributed to decreasing the stereotypical sexual image of the harem. They rather saw it from a socio-political point of view and de-eroticized it. Women produced new ways of perceiving the harem, starting with Montagu.

CHAPTER 3

VICTORIANS IN THE HAREM

The women of the Victorian Period were lucky because transportation became easier and rendered the mobility of the women commoner in the nineteenth century. However, they were still restricted in traveling owing to their gender. They were usually accompanied by a man, who is either a husband or a relative. Traveling alone was still new to that century. Although many women considered traveling alone, they still had attachments to some companions. Take the example of Gertrude Bell. "She subsequently traveled in Asia, went around the world twice, and climbed in the Alps and Himalayas. Yet, in contradiction, she asked her father's permission before every journey and never walked in London without a chaperone." (Holcomb, 1993)

That century witnessed many female travelers, such as Mary Kingsley, Gertrude Bell, Isabella Bird, Lady Anne Blunt, and Isabelle Eberhardt, who traveled to normally unsafe for women places like Africa or deserts in Arabia. Unlike the Grand Tour, that was a kind of travel for pleasure, which was an essentially upper-class European activity in the 18th and early 19th centuries, the Victorian travelers started to travel for professional reasons. Marrone claims that "Whereas men could easily travel alone in the name of adventure or politics, women often had to justify their voyages, particularly if they traveled without a husband. (2000:12-13) Kitzan suggested that "People who traveled in dangerous areas of the world, whether civilized or uncivilized, often appeared to have something to prove to themselves." (2001:17)

Victorian woman fits well into this argument. She had a goal in her travel and made this goal specific in order to justify her *heroic* journey.

Before examining Victorian travel, it is helpful to have a closer look at the Victorian woman, who had a really distinctive characteristic. As mentioned before, she was referred to as the 'angel' in the house. Many a scholar referred to the same term to describe her. The term is almost cliché. It is ironic that the women in the Middle East and the women in the harem share the same problem, which is to be labeled. They both suffer from being stereotyped. "The women of the middle class in particular suffered from the reinforcement of a strong moral code, leading to the sickening loneliness of many "Angels in the House." (Nittel, 2001:21) Mills suggests that "For many Victorian women, especially those from the middle class, this was indeed the case; however, the lives of working-class and aristocratic women were very different from that of the stereotypical 'angel in the house'." (1991:27) Grewal points at colonization policy as the cause of status of the women:

There is a common ascription for Victorian woman which is the "angel in the house."...They were represented as passive and as victims -- the ideal of nineteenth-century English culture. Denial of subjectivity to women was the practice of a colonial British culture that saw men as individual, autonomous subjects and that had divided women into the infantilized angel of the house and the victimized whore. (1996:41)

It is true that the Victorian woman resembled the Oriental woman in terms

of domesticity. "The discourse of modernity required the construction of the middle-class woman, like the Victorian ideal, as docile, gentle, asexual, and nurturing." (Grewal, 1996:55) So what had been expected from the Victorian woman was to be a good mother as well as an obedient wife. However, the Oriental woman's domesticity was interpreted in a different way by the Western man. While Victorian women were attributed as mothers and homemakers, which are so to speak holy missions, the harem woman's domesticity were sensual and pathetic. Pollard writes:

As Victorian notions of women's position in the domestic realm became more rigidly defined and more clearly articulated, so too did an antithesis to them: while the Victorians increasingly exalted women as mothers, homemakers, domestic 'scientists,' and partners to their husbands, they vilified the inmate of the harem who was, in their fantasies, cloistered, victimized, helpless' the mere object of lust, power, and limitless caprice. (2004:49)

Related to the same issue, Grewal points that:

"Yet the important difference presented to English readers was that the bourgeois Englishwoman's leisure was combined with a nonsexual morality of wifedom and motherhood, while "exotic" women were believed to be sensual with a sexuality that was seldom represented as being connected with motherhood. The discourse of race was thus refracted through that of labor. Whereas the married, middle-class Englishwoman was thought of as being uninterested in anything erotic,

the woman of Asia was endowed with all the sensuality that the Victorian period repressed in its own culture but that it thought available in women of the lower classes and of "Southern lands."(Kabbani 1986:67-85, cited by Grewal, 1996:45)

This double standard has much to do with Western imperialism. To justify their superiority to colonize the East, Western men show Eastern women as oppressed by men and sexually dominated. We shall return to this issue in the thesis.

The Victorian woman also participated in stereotyping the image of the Orient. (Lockwood, 1997:6) Though a traveler observed the life in Egypt, Constantinople or Palestine, she could use the word the Orient or the Oriental. In one instance, Harriet Martineau in her *Eastern Life: Present and Past* mentions the advantages of English and an Eastern education. (1848:259) She replaces the term "Western" with the term "English." However, the other is generalized as "Eastern" as if all nations in the East used the same education code. The cultures in the East are usually treated as similar no matter that it is Palestinian or Egyptian. The tendency of orientalizing the orient also took place in women writing. No matter how objective they endeavored to be, harem literature inevitably became too generalizing. This was, as mentioned before, was firstly related with Islam being the religion of the countries, in which women were secluded in harems or harem like houses. Secondly, they were influenced from other writings on the harem and had already biases. Moreover, their colonial interests in the

Eastern countries led them to see these countries monolithically.

Victorian women's travels are difficult to be simply defined. Their purposes to visit the Eastern countries varied. However, some goals existed in almost all of them, which can be summarized as the recreation of identity, gaining status and superiority, and imperialism. These goals are eventually all related with the feeling of superiority over the other. With recreation of their identity as travelers, who visit barren and intimate places like harems, the Victorian traveler not only feels superior to men but also to Oriental women. These women did really celebrate their power. They proved it three times as to themselves, the Western men and the Oriental people. Otherwise, why would Mary Kingsley try to survive in harsh conditions of Africa as a lonely woman? Could it be a random choice for sheer adventure? In every way, the Victorian woman's travels were reflections of their ego, which needed to be empowered.

3.1. Travel to Self

The primary outstanding feature of Victorian travel to normally "less safe" places like African jungles or Eastern deserts is that it brought about the Victorian woman's self knowing and recreation of identity. As a traveler distances from her 'home', she can come closer to her own self. Through travel, the traveler finds an opportunity to view her culture from a distance, in a more objective way. Moreover, she can compare and contrast the new culture she confronts with hers.

Sentimentality plays an important role in feminine travel. Ezer claims that “Women are by virtue of their socially restricted lives destined to become sentimental travellers; and the yearning for the beyond is connected to the poverty of experience in their early years.” Hence, the amount of the satisfaction or happiness a woman gets by traveling cannot be compared to a man’s. A woman’s travel is beyond its literary meaning. It is a triumph; it is “an implicit celebration of freedom.” (Pomeroy, 2005:28)

Considering the strict conventions of the Victorian period, the woman’s feeling of triumph is not difficult to understand. This feeling eventually leads her to prove her success and share it with others. That sharing generally occurs through writing, in which the women almost seal their accomplishment and immortalize it by recording it.

“The British obsession with religion, triggered by the missionary quest, among other factors, together with the Victorian Englishwoman’s definition of herself as Christian, ensured a reading of herself in the mirror of the opposite culture” (Abdel-Hakim, 2002:121). This mirroring worked with harem women. The Oriental woman was a mirror for the Victorian sister, who enjoyed watching not only herself but also the other. It is ironic that the mirror image at the same time became the *other*. The Victorian woman’s condition at *home* is mirrored by the Eastern woman. However, with transgressing the domestic sphere through traveling, the former so to speak takes the advantage and this time she views the latter as the *other*. Because now that

she traveled she declared her freedom and *otherized* her oriental counterpart as “secluded” and “unfree” while she was publicly seen and free.

A traveler and the visited “other” are reciprocally foreigner. So, this gives the traveler easiness for expressing one self. It is like meeting a new person, whom has the same rights with you in the beginning. In this meeting, there are two people, who are mutually ‘the other’ for each other. In this thesis, the other is the Oriental woman, who is seen from the eye of the Victorian. She is the mirror image of the former, who not only sometimes identifies with her but also rejects to be her similar. As will be shown later, travelers like Lucie Duff Gordon, Sophia Lane, Emmeline Lott, Mary Eliza Rogers did not come into close contacts with Eastern women. They carefully observed them. But for companion and conversation, they rather chose men, who treated them in a very revering way. As an eighteenth century aristocrat, Lady Montagu was closer to her Eastern counterparts compared to the Victorians. The Victorians indeed escaped from women, who reminded them of their own oppression at home. In conclusion, it is not wrong to say that the harem and the domestic Eastern woman helped the Victorian to read herself in Eastern mirror and to confront her own oppression from a distance. Before knowing her Oriental sisters, she initially learned her own status.

3.2. Ways of Gazing

Edward Said describes “Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.” (2003:3) He connects this domination with Foucault’s concept of *discourse*, which is interrelated

with *power*.

We should admit... that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it) because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another, that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Michael Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 1977a:27, cited by McHoul; Grace, 1995:59)

Victorian travel writings definitely can be viewed as Orientalist works since they have a discourse on the Oriental women. The travelers had a so called power on these women and felt them superior since they had *knowledge*. “The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.” (Said, 2003:2) Victorian woman traveler to the domestic life of the East owes her recreation of identity also to orientalism, in which she located herself ‘vis-à-vis the orient’ and spoke ‘in its behalf.’ (Said, 2003:20)

Her initial key to *knowledge* was “to observe.” The main method to get to know the other woman was to look at her. It is striking that almost all travelers, as if they compacted before, gave long descriptions of the physique, costume, environment, eating, bathing and so on. They used their gaze on the Orientale without abstaining.

3.2.1. Physique and Costume

The physical descriptions of the Oriental women occupy a lot of space in harem literature. The women are described in great detail. Sophia Lane Poole describes the beauty of the eyes of a veiled woman as "...a remarkable beauty in their large dark eyes, which besides being sufficiently distinguished by nature, are rendered more conspicuous by the black border of kohl round the lashes, and by concealment of the rest of the features." (42) The passage not only marks the beauty of the women's eyes but also emphasizes the fact that wearing veil accentuates the visible parts. Behdad stated, "The concealment of the body multiplies the signifiers of desire. "Everything, from the hands of the veiled women to the pieces of jewelry that ornament her body, becomes a partial object, a metonymy of desire." (Behdad, 1994:28) Although women did not desire the Orientale, they still materialized it. With immense observation, they degraded them into *object*. Julia Pardoe in *The City of the Sultan* also meticulously describes a harem lady as such:

How shall I describe the beautiful Heymine Hanoum? How paint the soft, sweet, sleepy loveliness of the Pasha's daughter? She was just sixteen, at the age when Oriental beauty is at its height, and Oriental gracefulness unsurpassed by any gracefulness on earth. Her slight, willow-like figure- her dark deep eyes, long and lustrous, with lashes edging like silken fringes their snowy and vein-traced-lids-her luxuriant air, black as the wing of the raven-her white and dazzling teeth-and the

sweet but firm expression of her beautifully formed mouth.- (1854:82)

Both Pardoe and Lane Poole seem to take Montagu as example in describing the physique of the other. The faces of the Oriental women are liked by them and differences like dark eyes are accentuated. However, what strikes one most in the realistic description of Heymine Hanoum by Julia Pardoe is that she labels her beauty as the 'Oriental'. Even the looks of the Oriental women were orientalized.

However, it was not only women but also men, who were meticulously observed in terms of their physique. Mary Eliza Rogers and Lucie Duff Gordon gave descriptions of men, whom were really adorable to them. "I had never in the East seen any men so tall, well proportioned, and handsome as the two Jerrars. Their large, loose, white and brown cloaks hung in graceful folds, and their red and yellow shawl head-dresses shaded bright clear countenances, with classically regular, yet, very expensive features." (1989:238) Duff Gordon lived among the local people of Luxor, so she met a lot of men from working class. Eventually their bodies were strong because of not only hard labor but also the climate. She frankly gave descriptions of the naked chests of the men.

Why the beauty of the other was so much emphasized is thought provoking. The other's gender as woman was stressed. Unlike the Victorian travelers, who dared men by breaking of their roles as angels in the house, harem women are beauty queens, who do nothing but try to look as beautiful as they can. Their beauty is described along with their showy

clothes, jewelry and ornaments. How they look is much to talk about while their mentality or education is slightly touched upon. They are indeed shown the angels in the harem. While the harem women represent idle beauty, the travelers represent reason and knowledge. It is possible that the outlook of the harem woman was stressed to show her pathetic situation. No matter how beautiful she looks, it does not change the fact that she is confined to harem. Materializing of beauty is also a demonstration of how the harem women were embodied as the *other*.

Melman notes that “In Victorian class-culture dress was a mark of class, gender and sexuality. Dress distinguished the rich from the poor, the respectable from the unrespectable, the pure from the impure and, most important here, women from men. (1992:119) Costume was the first thing that could help the observer to differentiate harem women. In the nineteenth century wearing the socially correct dress was seen as a measure of one’s respectability, socially correct dress being the visible manifestation of an individual’s willingness to play by the rules. (Anderson, 2006:209) Although the Victorian lady was away from ‘home’ her consciousness about her own culture did not leave her alone. She paid attention to preserving her Englishness. Moreover, morality and modesty as Victorian codes also affected them in the way they dressed.

Dressing indoors and outdoors were in contrast in the East. For example, inside the harem the ladies wore luxuriant clothes while outside they were totally covered. In ‘domestic sphere’ they were free, while in ‘public sphere,’

almost invisible to any man but their husbands. The veil substituted the harem walls outside. Behdad shows the contradiction of the Oriental costumes with two paintings that illustrate a veiled woman and a naked one:

The covers of the two-volume Garnier-Flammarion edition of Nerval *Voyage en Orient* are illustrated with two orientalist paintings, Lecomte du Nouy's *L'Esclave Blanche* and Rosset *Costumes Orientaux* ...The first painting depicts a naked Circassian slave woman posing lewdly with a cigarette in her hand and an intoxicated gaze, representing her idleness in the harem. The second portrays the severity of Oriental veiling, subtly implying, by the clearly apparent dark eyes of the Oriental woman, a lasciviousness that must be kept hidden behind the mask. These contrasting images of the Orient are striking, above all, because they point to the contradictory stereotypes of Oriental life represented so abundantly in European paintings, postcards, and travel writing since the midseventeenth century -- stereotypes such as the harem as a site of eroticism, the Oriental woman as an object for voyeurism, and the veil as a repressive mask. But the paintings are also interesting for the way they represent the split in the Western vision of its Other: the cleavage of the masked and the exposed, the "cut" between maximum visibility and total inscrutability, the division between a desire to indulge in corporality and a profound repression of the body. (1994:18)

Some views contradict that covering does not make the woman less desirable. As mentioned earlier there were many sensual depictions of the

harem and its women by Western artists. Chard suggests that “The interest you take in a beautiful woman is heightened on seeing her in the dress of a nun. The harem in orientalist writings provides an obvious example of a similar fascination, in which the obstacles confronting the traveler’s gaze - the veil, the walls of the seraglio, the eunuchs guarding the seraglio-serve to emphasize both inaccessibility and extremity of restraint.” (1999:128)

Victorian women were less interested in the sensuality of covering compared to men. They perceived it mostly from a socio-political stance. Oriental dress usually meant covering or in other terms the ‘veil,’ which was as important as the harem, since it contributed to female seclusion.

Although it is identified with the Muslim woman, the veil is indeed multicultural and older than Islam. “The adoption of the veil by Muslim women occurred by a similar process of seamless assimilation of the mores of conquered peoples. The veil apparently was in use in Sasanian society, and segregation of the sexes and use of the veil were heavily in evidence in the Christian Middle East and Mediterranean regions at the time of the rise of the Islam.” (Ahmed, 1992:5)

Similar to Victorians, who saw dress as a marker of social status, the people of Assyria used the veil to classify “women according to their sexual activity and signaled to men which women were under male protection and which were fair game.” (Ahmed, 1992:15) “Wives and daughters of ‘seignors’ had to veil; concubines accompanying their mistress had to veil; former “sacred prostitutes” now married, had to veil, but harlots and slaves

were forbidden to veil.” (Ahmed, 1992:14)

The veil mostly recalls the Muslim or the ‘Oriental’ woman. Yet, the term is metonymical. It recalls not only the Islamic covering or the Oriental woman, but also her seclusion and oppression. Why the Victorians were interested in the veil stems from the fact that it reminded them of the Oriental women’s oppression. The women had to keep themselves from the eyes of the men, which meant they were limited in the public sphere. Melman implies that “the veil worn by Eastern women came to represent the familial, social and economic system known as the harem, symbolizing segregation, multiple marriage and concubinage.” (Ahmed, 1992)

“The veil was included as the part of a fairly standard list of oppressions facing Muslim women; polygyny, seclusion, easy male divorce.” (Bullock, 2002:1) The dislike of the veil in the West does not just mean that they are sad for the Eastern woman who is to cover. The veil in fact irritates them because it limits their gaze at the Orient. Their power is restricted and the veiled woman’s power increases since she still sees them although they cannot see him. Entering into harems was a way to get over this obstacle. This way they could view the woman’s privacy and take their power back. Lifting the veil metaphorically meant to enter into harem.

The Oriental costume might be interesting to the Victorian. However, finding another culture’s dress exotic is reciprocal. As Melman argues, “Western costume is exotic and ‘different’ as oriental dress. The Oriental costume was not only to be observed and thought of. Some travelers also

tried it while some totally abstained from it. The experience happened in two ways. Some travelers adopted the Oriental clothes while some adopted the opposite gender's clothes; which meant they cross-dressed. Diane Brydon suggested that "To cross-dress is... to move from the performance of one identity to another. (Empire Bloomers, 1994, cited by Anderson, 1996:198) Costume poses the problem of identity: to wear Oriental clothes is both a way of renouncing one's identity and a form of conversion to the other's imaginary. For people like Edward Lane or Sophia Lane Poole masquerading was a way to sneak into the secrets of the Oriental living. Moreover, Behdad suggests that "Orientalist transvestism suggests the suspension of reality, the desire to liberate oneself from the European sameness symptomatically manifested in the gloomy redingote." (1994:58)

It is necessary to say that some travelers preferred to accommodate with the Oriental culture. They saw no harm in this "I have lived as they live, conforming with their general habits; and, in order to make them familiar and unreserved towards me on every subject, have always avowed my agreement with them in opinion whenever my conscience would allow me, and in most other cases refrained from the expression of my dissent," (Lane, xiii cited by Abdel-Hakim, 2002) says Edward Lane, the famous orientalist, who published *Harem, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* in 1836 and translated *The Thousand One Nights* between 1838 and 1841. It is clear from the passage that Lane, at times, did not always accord with how the Egyptians lived. But he made efforts to affiliate with

them. So he almost imitated what they did in order to gain the “Others” sympathy. Involving with them was in favor of Edward Lane in order to perpetuate his observation.

Thomson suggests that:

Most European travelers in Egypt during Lane’s day adopted Egyptian dress in the hope of passing unnoticed as foreigners. Usually they lived and dressed not as native Egyptians, for whom they could never hope to be mistaken, but as members of Egypt’s Ottoman Turkish elite, who were accepted as an integral, if privileged, part of Egyptian society. That provided the additional advantage of ensuring a degree of deference from the general population. As Lane wrote in his *Description of Egypt*:

If dressed in the European style, he [the traveler] is seldom molested or insulted: but if habited as a Turk, he commands respect, & as he passes the peasant employed in the labours of agriculture, or driving his loaded ass or camel, or riding from one town or village to another, he gives, or returns, the salutation of peace. (2008)

However, adopting the Oriental costume was not easy for women as it was for the men. The veil reminded them of the oppression they previously experienced. Moreover, some travelers strictly avoided it for the fear of rejecting their identity. In her two-volume travel account, *Eastern Life: Present and Past*, Harriet Martineau reveals the significance of clothes while traveling; stating that no Englishwoman should alter her dress during

her travels, for the change might imply her rejection of English ways. Martineau states that the Englishwoman could not look like an Eastern woman. Eastern costume will "obtain for her no respect, but only make her appear ashamed of her own origin and ways." (Grewal, 1996:93)

Adoption of the other lands could be used strategically as Lane did. Some women travelers cross-dressed in order to be comfortable in their observation of the *other*. Gertrude Bell *In Syria; The Desert and the Sown* (1907) notes, it gained the women entry into quarters where even the highest ranked males could not go-the harem. (Anderson, 1996:217) Another Victorian traveler Isabelle Eberhardt, an adventurous Victorian traveler, who traveled to Africa as 'Si Mahmoud Saadi' adopted 'the identity/appearance of a "Algerian nomad/man" and harboring the subjectivity of the "universal/masculine subject", creating the inner as masculine and the surface as female and the outer (sartorial identity) as masculine. (Brinker-Gabler, 1995:312) Eberhardt is a fine example of the paradoxical Victorian female traveler. She wants to be the equal of the men on one hand. On the other hand, she cannot totally turn her back on the Victorian female codes. Her cross-dressing provides her with a safe journey. Yet, inside she perpetuates the social suffering of the Victorian women. Anderson suggests that "Strategic cross-dressing could therefore be useful at the local level as well." (1996:217)

Bored with the European redingote, the gloomy black frock coat that felt like an urban uniform, Flaubert adopted the Egyptian costume as soon

as he arrived in Cairo ...Like most orientalists, Flaubert wore Oriental clothes for strategic reasons, to facilitate his journey. Attentive to the "sensible" advice of other experienced travelers, he wanted to be taken as an Oriental so that he could visit holy shrines and obscure places from which Europeans were excluded. In this sense, the Oriental costume was a disguise, a kind of orientalist masquerade that hid the truth of Flaubert's Europeaness so that he could see more of the Orient. (Behdad, 2004:59)

In Victorian travel, dress was sometimes used as a code "to distance oneself from the other." The ones who wanted to accentuate their identity as European did not adopt the other's clothes. However, the travelers who wanted to facilitate their observation wore oriental clothes. Some female travelers even cross-dressed. Nevertheless, Anderson well summarizes the Victorian attitude towards the other's dress as:

By combining diverse elements of the accepted Euro-imperial-clothes-language the nineteenth century woman traveler hoped to both stress her independence and originality and distance herself from accusations of masculine behaviour, particularly in dress: assembling a look from diverse elements taken out of their immediate social context allowed the nineteenth century woman traveler to become an object of her own devising. (1996:221)

3.2.2. Male Gaze

Said argued that “She [the Oriental woman] never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence or history. He spoke for and represented her.” (2003:6) Here the use of the pronoun ‘she’ can mean the Orient itself. The Orient itself was feminized by the West. Swimming in the Red Seas was, wrote Flaubert, “As though I were lying on a thousand of liquid breasts.” (Bullock, 2002:8)

“The Orient seen as the embodiment of sensuality is always understood in feminine terms and accordingly its place in Western imagery has been constructed through the simultaneous gesture of racialization and feminization.” (Yegenoglu, 1998:73) The insistent representation of the issues of the harem, the veil, polygamy, segregation of women verifies Yegenoglu’s argument. Nearly all the travelers, who went to Orient, pronounced the domestic issues and took up the Oriental woman as an issue. Feminization of the Orient was not a male production. Women also contributed to it. As Bullock suggests, women authors reproduced the dominant male discourse. (2002:8) Although harem literature was female dominant and different from men’s writings, Orientalism in these works to an extent resemble to men’s.

In this thesis, the focus is not “his” representation of the Oriental woman, but “hers.” What changes when she represents the ‘other’ she is endeavored to explain. As it was mentioned before, the Victorian woman was dominated by the Victorian male. The former was confined to the domestic sphere was,

while the latter dominated the public sphere. Though the general portrait of the Victorian society was such, the women had the opportunity to travel to the East. Through traveling, these women in a way undertook the role of their male counterparts. Compared to men, they would still be less powerful but over the Oriental woman they had their superiority.

Women are usually oppressed by men no matter whether they are Western or Eastern. Eventually women writings are also doomed to this oppression. The writings are never treated the same as the men's are treated. Henry Tuckerman wrote 'There are few situations in modern life more suggestive of the ludicrous than that of a woman "of a certain age" professedly visiting a country for the purpose of critically examining and reporting it and its people.' (Tuckerman, 1864, cited by Worley, 1986:43, cited by Mills, 1991:119) No matter how criticized by men, woman mostly took up domestic issues. However, to prove them as the equals of men, they adopted a male like gaze on the Orient. As mentioned before they preferred to spend more time with native men and they were really revered by them. They did not involve with women, whose condition was similar to theirs in Victorian society.

Ali Behdad, attributes a heroic sense to the Orientalist's journey. He argues that the travel to the other from the eye of the Orientalist is difficult and heroic:

"Here, she, [Anne Blunt] like the male orientalists, is an intrepid adventurer who embarks on a difficult journey, overcomes the "hostile"

world, and triumphantly brings back home strategic information or knowledge about the Other. Obstacles of the voyage and the traveler's mastery over them conjure the sense of heroism that Orientalism's ideology of adventure promises." (Behdad, 1994:204)

The heroic journeys made to the Africa and the East increased the masculinity in female narration.

3.3. Do women colonize?

Most studies of European exoticism tend to emphasize its complicity with the hegemonic or imperialistic gaze. (Pal-Lapinski, 1997) The thesis has so far discussed Victorian women's travel in terms of her reconstruction identity and gaining status in public sphere. Each traveler individually contributed to the above mentioned purposes in travel writing. However, the fact that these writings recurred through time as orientalist discourses and the time span and the geographical boundaries of the travel eventually led us to think of colonialism and imperialism in feminine discourse. In *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* Sara Mills raises the question that "the period of 1850-1930 is the one where British colonial interests in other nations were made most apparent; but how was this colonial strength negotiated in texts by women who were conventionally seen not to be part of the colonial expansion?" (1991) Although women were not mostly mentioned under the colonialist work, they indeed contributed to it. However, it was not as direct as the men's and comparatively milder.

The Victorian traveler was so much involved with herself and her own problems pertained to freedom, domesticity and status, so her voice as the colonialist was not very perceptible. She already was struggling with the oppression of the women in her own society; it would be very hypocritical of her to be mere colonialist. For example, Mary Kingsley was considered an imperialist and a woman rights defender at the same time with her activities in Africa. Mills argues that:

Women writers tended to concentrate on descriptions of people as individuals, rather than on statements about the race as a whole. It is in their struggle with the discourses of imperialism and femininity, neither of which they could wholeheartedly adopt, and which pulled them in different textual directions, that their writing exposes the unsteady foundations on which it is based. (1991:3)

However, Mary Louise Pratt's term the "anti-conquest" is also possible for the Victorian female traveler. It is "the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony." (Pratt, 1992:7) However, the texts by the women are so dimensional in perspective that it is difficult to sharply label them.

As was previously told the Western gaze upon the harem varies according to gender, class, time, nation or the background of the observer. What harem means to women is far different from what it means to men as much what it means to the Augustan traveler is different from the Victorian. It is hard to

label all observations about the Oriental woman's seclusion as products of imperialism, racism, colonialism or anti-Islamism. It is also not very true to view the Victorians as the sympathizers of the oriental women. Though there are similar views, each traveler has different dominant attitudes towards the other. Stevenson suggests that "Rather, the Orient was seen as a place for women to regain power through race, which was lost at home because of gender." (1982:125) The thesis agrees with Stevenson's idea. Though the women showed their nations superior to the other through colonization, they indeed showed their personal superiority, which was difficult to gain at home.

How colonialists were these women? Simon answers to the dilemma of women as, "We can argue, for example, that the women of empire did not conceive the colonial mission as a terrible undertaking--the source of modern guilt--but instead viewed it as the only real alternative to domestic imprisonment." (1996:123) The British women traveling to East and being there accentuate the power of their discourse. Their penetrating into East and having the right to be there, stay there or observe the inhabitants show that they had no resistance on the Easterner's part. "The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because he could be there, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient's part." (Said, 2003:7) While the travelers were in the East, no-one tried to send them back or batted their interest back. There is no case in which the women visitors are abhorred or insulted. The East was an open-hearted host towards the British women, who wanted to 'know'

the Orient. The representation of the Orient as such is a reflection of the power of colonialism in the Middle East.

“From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II France and Britain dominated the Orient and Orientalism; since World War II America has dominated the Orient, and approaches it as France and Britain once did.” (Said, 2003:4) The fundamental time span of Orientalism covers the 18th and the 19th centuries, which are the flourishing years of British and French Imperialism on the East. As we already know, harem literature also flourished in those centuries. Therefore, it is essential to check Orientalism and harem literature relationship in terms of gender and power. Said argues that “The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony [...]” (2003:5)

To label all writings on harem as an imperialistic activity would be too inductive. Colonization by women was an amalgamated issue. Some saw female travelers as colonialists, while some argued that they used colonialism as a tool for proving their power in public sphere. The thesis agrees to a point that the women could not totally refrain from imperialism although they most of the time disliked it. However, when they showed the backwardness of the oriental women they did not do it for the sake of imperialism and colonialism. They used it to show the bad aspects of being oppressed in a society. What they demeaned was not only the status of women in the harem, but also the status of Victorian women, who were

dominated by men. Resembling the harem to patriarchal gender relationships in England characterised by *couverture* or the inequalities that resulted from them had a long tradition in feminist thought.” (Robinson-Dunn, 2006:116)

There are two vice-versa opinions on the imperialism policies of the female travelers. One emphasizes the fact that imperialism was a tool for them to help their own situation. “Suffragists used the image of the female confined to help to make their case. They associated the marginalization of the women in politics with Islam and relied on imperialist assumptions regarding the corruption and degradation of the Muslim societies to illustrate the disastrous consequences that denying women the vote would have on the people of England.” (Robinson-Dunn, 2006:118) The other view is that they indeed do imperialize but they use the Eastern women’s situation for it as Ahmed argues, “...in the late nineteenth century the discourses of colonial domination coopted the language of feminism in attacking Muslim societies.” (1993:237)

The thesis adopts Mill’s and Melman’s approaches towards colonization of the East by the female travelers:

Sara Mills argues that the writings of female travellers do not fit neatly into an Orientalist framework and often seem to 'constitute an undermining voice' within the colonial discourse. Their relationship with the 'dominant discourse is problematic because of its conflict with the discourses of "femininity", which were operating on them in equal, and sometimes stronger, measure. Because of these discursive pressures,

their work exhibits contradictory elements which may act as a critique of some of the components of other colonial writings'. (23) The experience of the Victorian female traveller's encounter with the harem was one of sameness and difference which concurrently destabilised and validated Orientalist discourse. For instance, in a published letter to her husband Gordon describes a harem that she visits in Cairo in 1863 as both familiar and exotic. Billie Melman argues that many Victorian female travellers 'did not perceive the oriental woman as absolutely alien, the ultimate "other". Rather oriental women became the feminine West's recognisable image in the mirror'. (24) Gordon's account confirms this:

Suffering from consumption, Gordon's seven-year, self-imposed exile was a desperate attempt to prolong her life in a dry, hot climate. In order to finance her stay she published Letter, from Egypt in 1865. (Ross, 1902:12, cited by Wynne,2006)

Instead of labeling female travelers as colonialists, it is better to say that they were influenced by a long time convention of colonial gaze. No matter how different the women approached the harem, they could not for instance abstain from hinting at the sensuality of it. Although they did not directly mention the sexuality in the harem, with long descriptions of costume, hygiene and eating habits, they euphemized it. Harem literature is filled with detailed descriptions of eating habits of the Eastern women, who really eats much compared to the Victorian. References to the gluttonous women indeed remind the reader of the Victorian eating codes. As Melman suggests, The

Victorians increasingly associated food and eating with gender, class and sexuality. (1992:124) Melman, furthermore, argues that persistent details on the physique and costume “could help the writers distance themselves and their readers from sensitive sexual issues.” (1992:120)

Before colonial interests, “[...] Western women in the nineteenth century often carved out a voice for themselves by through their campaigning, as they saw it, on behalf of the indigenous women.” (Burton, 1992;Grewal,1996; Gayawardana,1995; Ware,1992 cited in Mills & Foster, 2002)

3.4. Egypt, the passion of the West

The majority of the travelers that fit into the type of the traveler that the thesis defines, studied the domestic life in Egypt. A close look at Egypt as the focus of the orientalist discourse on the domestic life will provide the reader with a further understanding of the Victorian female traveler.

The Orient is a generic word. Though it comprises the Eastern countries, in terms of the British and French interests, it mostly recalls Egypt, India, Syria or some Arab countries. Moreover, in many countries, where British interests were blossomed, Islam was the principal religion. However, for the Victorian woman traveler it mostly meant ‘Egypt.’ In the nineteenth century, Egypt did become “the subject of an intense Victorian gaze.” (Hoeveler; Cass, 2006:73)

Herodotus once said that “There is no country that possesses so many wonders, nor any that has such a number of works that defy description”

(1862:45). This land which was once the cradle of civilization has been constantly visited by any one from any culture. Yet, "the Western encounter with Egypt goes back to Greek Civilization." "But if there is a classical age in this encounter, it is the nineteenth century. (Thompson, 2000:1) Lucy Duff Gordon, Sophia Lane Poole, Harriet Martineau, Amelia Edwards, Florence Nightingale are famous female Victorian visitors to Egypt. Out of men travelers, Edward Lane, who wrote *An account of the Manners and Customs of Modern Egyptians* (1836) was the most interested in Egypt. He also wrote a book length manuscript called *Description of Egypt*. However, he could never publish it due to a problem with scholarship. (Thompson, 1996)

This Victorian interest in Egypt was not incidental. First of all, Egypt was charming, not exclusively to Victorians but to all kind of travelers, with its historical and archeological assets. "A major distinction in their [nineteenth century travellers] was that Egypt and its monuments came to them as a new revelation. (Rees, 1995:3) To go to Egypt in the first half of the nineteenth century was to go to a country which was at the same time old and yet also new. (Rees, 1995:3) Being an early and long term civilization, Egypt's location was of great importance. Said argues that "Egypt was the focal point of the relationships between Africa and Asia, between Europe and the East, between memory and actuality." (2003:84)

Placed between Africa and Asia, and communicating easily with Europe, Egypt occupies the center of the ancient continent. This country presents not only great memories; it is the homeland of the arts and

conserves innumerable monuments; its principal temples and the palaces inhabited by its kings still exist, even though its least ancient edifices had already been built by the time of the Trojan war. (Fourier, 1, cited by Said, 2003:84)

Egypt was stunning not only with its present condition but mostly with its strikingly important past with the Europeans. Related to this, Said emphasizes “The Orient in short existed as a set of values attached, not to its modern realities, but to a series of valorized contacts it had had with a distant European past.” (2003:85) Egypt was a Biblical land. Leila Ahmed has pointed out that, as the land of the Bible, Egypt was often construed by Europeans as both foreign and “imaginatively familiar” and that European treatments of the *Nights* reflect this tension (Ahmed, 1992) Grewal claims that the more Biblical the land, the more interested the traveler in the beauty of that land. “If they [travelers] traveled in the biblical lands of Egypt or Palestine, they found beauty because of historical associations with Christianity.” (1996:41)

However, to think of these Egypt travels as sentimental tourist activities, which were made to experience the historical beauty of Egypt would be too naive. Mills argues that books by Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Marie Lois Pratt or Gayatri Spivak about the colonial “discourse” claim that “travel writing is essentially an instrument within colonial expansion and served to reinforce colonial rule once in place.” (1991:2)

During the nineteenth century, Egypt was not what it used to be. As Reina

Lewis in *Gender, Modernity and Liberty* emphasized, "This was the period that saw the emergence of the organized feminism both in both East and West, alongside the advent of the industrial modernity in the West and the accelerated participation of Egypt and Turkey in world markets. Specifically, Istanbul and Cairo were "key locations for the flowering of Middle Eastern feminism." (2006:1)

The British occupation of Egypt started in 1882. However, as mentioned above the interest began far before:

At the same time that Europe's economic and territorial interests in Egypt advanced, travelers, painters, and photographers scrambled to the country in increasing numbers, bringing the harem and the private world of Egypt's upper classes home to audiences that were fascinated, repulsed, and titillated by what they read and saw. Early ethnographies such as Edward Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), for example, opened up the private world of Egypt's upper classes through detailed descriptions of the activities (real and imaginary) of harem women. (Pollard, 2004:49)

"Colonial powers...developed their theories of races and cultures and of a social evolutionary sequence according to which middle-class Victorian England and its beliefs and practices, stood at the culminating point of the evolutionary process and represented the model of ultimate civilization. (Ahmed, 1992:151) Victorian culture's felt superiority over the Oriental woman are apparent in texts as will later be revealed. As Ahmed, suggested

the peculiar practices of Islam with respect to women had always formed part of the Western narrative of the quintessential otherness and inferiority of Islam (1992:149 :

The aim of travel literature became not so much the chronicling of those things that Europeans thought they had found in Egypt, but, rather, the construction of a standard toward which Egypt might evolve. Egyptian women and the domestic realm were used as markers of Egypt's progress or, conversely, its retardation. The reform of women came to symbolize the reform of the body politic. Thus the exposure of the harem and the hovel was not simply a means of knowing Egypt; it became the critical first step in changing it. The intrigue with which earlier travelers viewed Egypt and its 'peculiar' institutions was replaced with descriptions of superior European institutions, ideologies, and life styles, and the travelogue became an arena through which armchair reform was carried out. (Pollard, 2004: 69)

“Over the course of the nineteenth century, Europeans came to understand Egypt's identity from inside the Egyptian domicile.” To know Egypt and to understand its peculiar political and economic institutions was to have entered its homes, traveled through its inner spaces, seen its women” (Pollard, 2004:49):

Egyptian households, their interiors, and their customs were central to the construction of knowledge about Egypt in the nineteenth century. The Egyptian landscape that was created by tourist adventures and

scholarly peregrinations was, to a great extent, shaped and structured by the harem and the hovel, spaces that were, ironically, largely hidden from the traveler's view. Women and their domestic activities were crucial to the West's understanding of Egypt and from whence its political and economic difficulties stemmed. Rather than asking why an obsession with Egypt's women accompanied the construction of 'the Egypt question,' we might begin to ask how 'the Egypt question' could possibly have been constructed without them. (Pollard, 2004:71)

Egypt is the focus of harem literature. This country, which witnessed both the Ottoman rule and the British colonization, functioned as the cradle of civilization. It synthesized the European influences and the Oriental culture. Its biblical and enchanting past also attracted the travelers. Beside Egypt, Palestine, Constantinople, Syria, Arabia, and Egypt hosted many travelers, whose main goal was to reveal the domestic secrets of these countries.

CHAPTER 4

Women Who Wrote Women

Identity processes are “linked to gender, national citizenship, work status, sexuality, class location, generational location, ethnicity and family constellation.” The “different models of identity are put on for particular occasions,” but there are also models of identity which are more easily culturally available in the historical context. (Smith&Watson 2002: 33, 35, 34; Jansson, 2007) The Victorian travelers recreated their identities using the Orientalist discourse on domestic life and the voice of Imperialism. They used the first person “I” in their narratives. While narrating the accounts of the other culture, they also narrated themselves. In this point of view the others are not the main focus of autobiography but they are presented as they are related to the ‘I’. (Jansson, 2007)

During the Victorian Period, many women traveled to East. They, as the thesis endeavored to explain, mostly focused on the domestic life, entered into harems and recorded their observations and even some of them claimed their authenticity and privilege with regards to their knowledge on the harem. However, they also showed different attitudes towards the women. While some saw them as bored and immobile “beautiful” (sometimes as children) some acknowledged their happiness, freedom and content in life. Some travelers focused on the harem whereas some represented the rural women. Although the material on the harem varied, they all gave place to harem in their accounts. In this last chapter, I give examples of what I have in the

previous chapters talked about. Female travelers of the rigid Victorian society cared about their gender. They were sensitive to oppression of women. The East helped them to confront with this specific problem. The Eastern women resembled to their Victorian sisters to an extent. However, the daring travels of the latter rendered them relatively superior. In travel writings, females of the other culture did not represent themselves; they were represented. This chapter gives examples from significant female travelers of the period, who gave first-hand accounts of the harem women. It also discusses the imperialistic tone of these writing to a degree. More than the information on the harem, it focuses on the travelers' recreation of identity thanks to their mobility and observation, as they themselves emphasized.

4.1. Lucie Duff Gordon

Among her other Victorian counterparts, Lucie Duff Gordon has a special place. The first thing that differentiates her from others was her poor health, which forced her to live in a very hot climate. In 1862, at the age of 41 she had to go to Egypt leaving her family behind. Yet she had first gone to South Africa; however, the doctors later recommended her Egypt.

Gordon had friendship with famous people like Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, John Stuart Mill grew a friendship with Alexander Kinglake, who was an English travel writer and historian. After reading his *Eothen*, a travel book about the East, Gordon grew interest for the Islamic culture. She also read works by Sophia Lane Poole, *The English Woman in Egypt* and Edward Lane, *Modern Egyptians*. (Lockwood, 1997:193) Her daughter,

Janet also lived in Alexandria owing to her husband's occupation as a bank director. Socially Gordon was known for her good education, humanity and liberal-mind.

Duff Gordon produced one of the most successful accounts on the Eastern life. Her *Letters from Egypt* (1863-1865) gave wealthy information on people, culture, the living and the socio-political transformations in Egypt. Contrary to other travelers like Sophia Lane Poole, Emmeline Lott or Julia Pardoe, she lived among local people, with whom she had flourishing friendships and close bonds. "I sit among people," (1865:363) she noted in her book.

Gordon did not always speak for the indigenous people. Instead, her characters represented themselves and gave the impression that they played an important role in Gordon's life. People in her book could *speak* for themselves. Like Montagu, Gordon had already a wide knowledge upon the East. Besides, she was well aware of the English interests in this country and knew the troubles the country went through due to colonial policies. Instead of representing people as barbaric and backward, she showed their essential values and characteristics, which made them intrinsically well-natured and true-hearted people. "And you would like the people, poor things! they are complete children but amiable children." (1865:26)

Gordon's attitude towards the Eastern culture and life is assertive and positive. Although she has some prejudices, she mentions that they

gradually disappear. For instance, she mentions the way people speak, 'neither the voices so bad as I expected.' (1865:6) 'quite contrary to the commonplace talk about the Eastern apathy.' (1865:8) 'of all the falsehoods, I have heard about the East...' (1865:13) Gordon was also affected by *the Arabian Nights*. She romanticized the environment upon her first encounters and emphasized the impressive looking of the city, Cairo by writing, in one of her early letters, 'I write to you out of the real Arabian nights.' "The real life and the real people are exactly as described in that most veracious books, the 'Thousand and One Nights.' The tyranny is the same, the people are not altered; and very charming people they are. "(1865:80) She also talked of the country as 'beautiful, new but also *familiar*.' (1865:26, emphasis mine) The comparison of Egypt with the stories is also significant since it shows how Gordon views Egypt in terms of changelessness of the country as well how much she previously heard about it. As in one of the previous chapters was mentioned, the travelers mostly had an already present view on the East, especially Egypt, which had connections with Europe in the past. "The thing that strikes me most is the tolerant spirit that I found everywhere. They say "Ah, it is your custom! and express no condemnation; and Muslims and Christians appear perfectly good friends as my story of Bible goes to proves" (1865:36). As Lane Poole, Gordon frequently mentions how well she is treated by the native people. We English are certainly liked here. "[...].men of one word and of no circumlocutions and, unlike all the Europeans. (1865:220-221)

The native people call Gordon 'noor-ala-noor' (258) Her affiliation with the country is so deep that she sees herself as the daughter of the country; one of the local people. So completely am I now 'Bint el-Veled' (daughter of the country). Evading from the cold, rainy climate of England, Gordon, who sought for refuge in hot, dry Egypt, became the most affiliated traveler with another culture. She certainly was similar to Lady Montagu in her sympathy. Another resemblance between them was that Gordon also had a wide knowledge upon the Arab culture. "Gordon traveled in distinguished intellectual circles throughout her life. As a child she journeyed with her family to Germany and became fluent in the language." (Sage; Greer; Showalter, 1999: 205) Her intellectual capacity provided her with thinking of the fervent situation in Egypt owing to European exploitation of Egypt as well the political and social troubles the country went through.

She was alone in Egypt except servants and lived a life almost that of an exile because of her illness. Yet, she played the role of doctor and a mediator among people, who revered her due to her profound knowledge. Robin Fedden described her as:

Lucie Duff Gordon was beautiful and immensely gifted; her generosity and sympathy were tempered by shrewd good sense; her delicious humour went with deep seriousness. She represented, as Meredith noted, a 'singular union of the balanced intellect with the lively heart'. She was also that rare thing a natural writer. Though slowly dying of consumption throughout her years in Egypt, she appreciated and

understood the country as few others have done, and she has left in her letters a picture of life on the Nile that is delightful, touching, and true. (1958: 21)

Gordon associated herself with men more. There were many male characters in her book. Her intellectual capacity provided her with local men's friendships. She gradually became more like Arab as she learned the Arabic language and even the poetry. Gordon who already was good at languages like German, Latin, and Greek was very zealous to learn Arabic as she mentioned, "If I could but speak the language, I could get into Arab society through two or three people, and see more than many Europeans who have lived here all their lives" (1865:80). There may also be a connection between her being so Arab like and her illness. Gordon indeed might have understood that she could die there. She even wanted her tomb to be of Arab style.

The most important feature of Gordon's accounts of the Eastern life is that she witnessed the very culture by integrating herself into it. She did not separate herself from the people, who were like brothers as she mentioned, "The people of Luxor are my brothers" (1865:182). "In Mary Louise Pratt's terms, Lucie Duff Gordon qualifies as a "sentimental narrator", who unlike the more distanced and scientific "manners-and-customs" travel writer, gains authority from personal interaction with indigenous people. It constitutes its authority by anchoring itself not in informational orders but in situated human subjects." ("Face of the Country", 131-132; cited in

Lockwood, 1997:191)

“Travel writing itself operates as a triadic sign it voices or silences the other; it constructs the narrative subject. (Miller, 1991:33) However, in Gordon’s case the represented also voices itself. Gordon’s great sympathy with the Arab culture is less evident in her observations about the women in the harem. Though she praises the legal rights of an Islamic woman as Montagu did before her, she does not very much approve of the harem life. The case of women in the harem disturbs her. Her usage of the word harem is also different. She means Egyptian women in general when she uses the term. As she did not like harem, she was not involved with women as she did with men. A very interesting incident in the book is a conversation between two Arabs upon the English ladies. Omar, the servant talk about Gordon as, “If I were a rich man and could marry an English hareem like these, I would stand in front of her and serve her like her memlook.” (1865:231) What Omar most likes about Duff is her ‘sweet tongue.’ Duff Gordon no matter how much she likes the Arabs still preserves her identity as an *English lady*. She recreates her identity as a revered English woman, who is superior to the Eastern women. Unlike Gordon who could live far away from her country as an exile, some women she met at Karnak, never visited the ruins there although they live ‘within less than a quarter of a mill.’ (1865:252) For instance in a talk with Eastern woman, a Turkish lady tells her that she had indigestion because of not walking. However, it is the custom. (1865:130) Yet, in some instances, Gordon mentions that men and

women are equal in cases like chastity. She also narrates through his servant Omar's speech that polygamy is not performed only for sensual indulgences; on the contrary it is to care for the deceased wives' sisters. (1865:140)

Gordon established herself as a free, mobile and educated English woman, who could be equal of men in "public sphere," unlike her Eastern counterparts. In a conversation with Yoosuf, she mentions the respect a European woman sees by their men and resembles it to veil. Yoosuf fancies the law gave women upper hand. (1865:267) Gordon does not only represent the other people but also reconstructs the image of European lady as well as the culture. Frequently applying to comparisons, she reinterprets European culture. She plays a very important role between the Arab culture and the European; she evinces the good sides of Arab society sometimes finding it even better than the European. "This Arab architecture is even more lovely than our Gothic." (1865:16) She writes as if she is trying to change the false image of Egypt as barbaric and backwards. She indeed does not find the country very developed; however, she finds people very 'charming.' (1865:80) Her sympathy is clearly mutual. "I am continually complimented on *not hating* the Muslims." (1865:212)

Whether Gordon's genuine sympathy was freed from imperialism is discursive. As mentioned before, the women have their own way of imperializing. Their recreation of themselves as European women who are against the seclusion of women indeed is connected to imperialism.

“Imperial female travel narratives are sub textual, racialized bildungsromans- though they relate a certain normalized of the reality normality of the travel event or act, they simultaneously fictionalize and construct the white and female subject.” (Miller, 1991:40) Duff Gordon, no matter how she liked the Arabs, contributed to imperialism in her own way. First of all, she frequently mentioned that the English people were liked by the Egyptian people. “He is very kind and hospitable indeed to all the English who come there. I went into his harem.” (1865:64) The way people listen to her and care about her can be seen as a reference to European exploitation, which continually increases. European influence is indeed greater than it seems. “One must come to east to understand absolute social equality...In Alexandria everything is changed, the European ideas and customs have nearly extinguished the Arab.” (1865:89-90) What catches attention is that Gordon frequently emphasized how well she was treated, how much she was revered and listened to.

Duff Gordon, no matter how genuinely sympathizes with people cannot escape materializing them. In one letter, she explicitly mentions the breasts of the naked women as being very good and wants to send a picture of them to her husband. She also mentions the black strong arms of her servant. Yet, her resembling of people to children or direct mentioning of the breasts do not show her less sincere in her feelings towards the people. After a quick reading of the book, one can think of Gordon as an admirer of Egypt with its culture and people. Yet, a close reading will provide the

reader with questions of her sincerity. However, despite all confusing expressions which hint Gordon's feeling superior as a European lady, she is accepted as one of the travelers, who were really sympathetic with the East. Wynne defined her as a woman who "brought about a new perspective on Eastern travel writing." (2006)

4.2. Mary Eliza Rogers

"Mary Eliza Rogers, fondly known as Auntie M.E.R., was a remarkable lady who remained single all her life, but was a caregiver to several members of her family. She had a circle of friends in the artistic and literary society of London, counting Holman Hunt, John Ruskin and Professor Francis Newman (brother of Cardinal Newman) as close friends." (Woodcarvers) She displayed the distinctive characteristics of a Victorian traveler. As a single woman, she overtook a journey, in which she established herself not only as a *white* female writer but also gained a place among the native people. She lived in Palestine and Syria about four years after she had joined his brother Edward Thomas Rogers, who was Vice Consul to Haifa and then Consul to Damascus. Rogers was eager to know about the domestic life in Palestine as she explained in the preface of her book. "The women especially interested me, and I gleaned many facts concerning them, which have never hitherto been published, and probably have never been collected. (1865:1) She aimed at showing her authority on Palestine with her book *Domestic Life in Palestine*. (1836), of which title makes Roger's intention clear. At the beginning she also mentioned that she "mingled freely with the people of all

creeds and classes”, however she generally socialised with other Europeans and local Christians. (Jansson, 2007:5)

Rogers resided in Palestine during the Crimean War, in which the British supported the Turks. The British visitors were welcome in the Ottoman Lands during the period. Though the country itself was troubled, Rogers was safe and well treated. “...they always behaved to me with respectful and chivalrous kindness” (1989:100). Rogers frequently mentioned how welcome she was in the new country.

Rogers’s similarity to her other female travelers is salient in the way she was treated and seen by the local men. Though she sought to observe the domestic life, she was frequently among men, which meant that she was mostly in ‘public.’ She was called by the Palestinian women as *sister*. However, she never was deeply affiliated with these sisters. Most of her time was spent among the dignitaries, who were very tolerant towards her. She had the opportunity to assemble with the Moslem men and could learn about the life of them. In a conversation with Moslem men, she investigated about the Moslem women and was told by a Moslem man, called Mohammed Bek:

If we gave them [women] liberty, they would know how to use it. Their heads are made of wool. They are not like you.” When you speak, we no longer remember that you are a girl: we think we are listening to a sheik. To live in the world knowledge and wisdom are necessary. Our wives and daughters have neither wise nor knowledge. [...] I think I

gave them some new ideas on the capabilities and capacities of women which may in time be turned to account. (1989:101)

The passage shows that the women are demeaned by the local men. Their fate to be free is determined by their men, who see them without capacity to reason or to speak. However, the Western woman is different. She is worth listening when she speaks and has enough wisdom to manage *living*. The statement about the local women is fairly severe. They are seen as half vegetating. They physically exist but mentally are invisible. They do not speak for themselves. They are spoken by their men and then by Rogers via her book. On the other hand, Rogers is seen as a *sheik*, whose words do matter. She not only praises herself through the words of the men but also she accomplishes herself and has superiority, which she may possibly not get in her own land. However, here in Palestine she is nearly a queen. The last sentence is the most striking. Her giving them some new ideas not only accents her superiority but also her nation's superiority. The West is so to speak orientates the East to be 'better' and wants it the 'other' to be as it per se is. It knows which way is better. "It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries." (Said, 2003:57) Rogers indeed does not only try to prove her superiority but also her nation's superiority.

In an instance with a Moslem woman, she is again praised about her

words as “Speak to him, oh, my sister, that he do not take another wife; he will listen to you, for your words are pearls and diamonds.” (1989:103) However, the reason why Rogers is so revered is ambiguous. Her esteemed profile can be only due to her brother’s occupation rather than her being a so called free and sophisticated English woman. A mother in the harem, who mentions that her child is a female, and is made of no account of,” tells Rogers that she cannot name her daughter because she has no power. (1989: 366)

When Rogers says that she could talk to his husband, the woman thinks that her wish is already accepted. Furthermore, the father of the newborn Salih Bek mentions that he would be very happy even the daughter to be taught the way Rogers was. The incident is a very strong example of how Rogers constructed her identity as a white, powerful, superior European woman. Compared to her Eastern counterpart who is silenced in public sphere, Rogers is listened by the Eastern men. “I met no women in the bazaars; men and boys do all the marketing in the towns of the Holy Land.” Rogers, who marks Palestine with regards to its being Biblical, emphasizes that women do not take place in public life. The women she meets are as curious as her about the other’s culture. When she wears her night gown they ask her many questions out of curiosity, since they do not wear one. (1989: 231)

Imperialism is explicit in Rogers. “In constructing herself as a British woman with the agency and power to act decisively within the public sphere,

Rogers helped to construct a model of British imperialism in the Middle East which was highly attractive to her audience in England, and which disguised Britain's imperial motives in Palestine." Rogers' self-representation served as an example of what Mary Louise Pratt has described as the rhetorical move of the "Anti-Conquest," a mystified manifestation of Western imperialism which appears on the surface to be friendly and affiliating, but which ultimately serves to underwrite appropriation and control. (Lockwood, 1997)

When Gordon mentions Eastern hospitality, she feels quite 'at home.' This feeling refers to the degree how much the East was exploited by the Westerners. They were *so much* affective within the Eastern culture that they could even feel 'at home.' There they were not treated as *foreigners*.

Rogers connects the improvement in the nation with the gradual emancipation of women. She, moreover, suggests that for this improvement they need to get rid of their prejudiced ancient customs. However, she warns that a direct attack at those people would result negatively. Instead they should be inspired to think 'earnestly' and they should be awakened in their minds. (1989: 369)

"As Rogers describes the sights of her travels between Haifa, Jerusalem and Neblus, she frequently glides from the present to the biblical past." (Tucker) Like Gordon, who felt a past attachment to Egypt, Rogers was also familiar with Palestine because of its biblicality. Rogers is first and foremost a Christian lady, but she also defines herself through her brother's position as the ambassador's sister. (Jansson, 2007:3) She is one of the travelers, in

whose works imperialism is more evident. Yet, she does it very mildly that she sees no resistance on the other's side.

4.3. Julia Pardoe

A traveler and novelist in the nineteenth century, Julia Pardoe visited Turkey during the time of the Mahmut II. "Suspected consumption led to her traveling extensively abroad during adolescence. [...] In 1835, she traveled to Turkey with her father and familiarised herself sufficiently to write a standard guide to the country, *The City of Sultan* (1937)". (Sutherland, 1989:488) Pardoe established herself as a writer at, fourteen. She was known for many novels and a series of tales. She wrote novels related with harem and Constantinople, which were *The City of the Sultan* (1836), *Romance of the Harem*, *Thousand and One Days*, and *The Beauties of the Bosphorus* (1839) "In these numerous works Miss Pardoe has shown herself as capable of constructing ingenious plots established, of charming by lively, and at times gorgeously coloured narrative, and giving an attractive and novel exposition of history. (Jeaffreson, 1858:384)

Pardoe set out to her journey with a male company, who was her father. They indeed aimed at traveling to Greece and Egypt; however, later on she limited herself to Istanbul, which she studied meticulously. "Pardoe acknowledges her disappointment at not traveling further but writes that she hopes to given her readers a more just and complete insight into Turkish domestic life, than they have hitherto been enabled to obtain' (p. x) (Micklewright; Lewis, 2006:65) Pardoe so to speak challenges the previous

accounts on Turkey. Her visit is not mere tourist activity but informative about Turkish domestic life. Pardoe lived in Istanbul for six months and observed the domestic life; visited baths, harems, mosques and even cemeteries as well as the politics. She was class sensitive and proud of her privilege as being accepted into the domestic life of the Turks.

Aise Asli Sancar opines that “Lady Montague, Julia Pardoe and Lucy Garnett all made a sincere attempt to break away from describing Ottoman women strictly according to the Orientalist erotic stereotype as most European men had done earlier. Pardoe and Garnett were fairly objective observers of Ottoman life. ”(2008) Pardoe almost followed the Montagu fashion. Visiting the Ottoman harem, she had the opportunity to be affiliated with the upper class. Her attitude towards the women in the harem was at first glance positive. She generally presented a positive attitude towards Turkish women in *The City of the Sultan*, of which title seems as inspired from *The Thousand and One Nights*. Pardoe in a way stressed that she visited no ordinary place but a Sultan’s city, an *oriental* place. Moreover, through her accounts, she frequently emphasized the privilege of her situation, as a close observer of the domestic life.

Pardoe pities for the slave girls. Pondering over the restricted status of the slaves in the harem, she writes: “[...] I am grateful to Providence that I was not born in Turkey; while the fair Osmanlis in their turn pity the Frank women with a depth of sentiment almost ludicrous. (1854:43) Yet later on she mentions that she would prefer to be a Turkish slave if she had to be

one, considering how she was protected and cared by the owners. Her participation into the domestic life makes her alternate some of her beforehand views.

The Eastern men pitied Pardoe for traveling like a man, facing many difficulties on the way such as the temptations from the opposite sex, being exposed to sun or wind due to being uncovered, or regretting traveling to those countries at the end. Ironically, what Eastern man sees as Western women's slavery is her triumph. It is what she is proud of. To be almost equal to men, to have the opportunity of mobilizing and to choose what to or not to see, simply to challenge male dominant travel system is indeed what she boasts about.

Pardoe describes harem women as happy. She observes, "The almost total absence of education among Turkish women and the consequently limited range of their ideas is another cause of that quiet, careless, indolent happiness they enjoy... Give her shawls and diamonds, a spacious mansion in Stamboul, and a sunny palace on the Bosphorus, and a Turkish wife is the very type of happiness; amused with trifles, careless of all save the passing hour; a woman in person, but a child at heart. Those women have the mind of a child; they do not interrogate life but just enjoy it. Hedonistic and materialistic, fond of adorning and being prosperous, they are happy with their static lives." (1854:38) Like Lucie Duff and Emmeline Lott, Pardoe resembles women to children. Women, in her view, are not mentally very active and are rather content people, who enjoy a hedonistic

and prosperous life. She views these women as material objects, who meant to be dull in life. Behind her admiration of these women's happiness lays a great condemnation. She actually compares them to herself. In the statement, 'they do not interrogate life but just enjoy,' she emphasizes her interrogative character and establishes herself as a woman, who is less happy but more curious about the world.

The notable parts of Pardoe's narration consist of her visits to bath (hammam), mosque and her description of eating habits. Pardoe finds the Eastern houses very clean. "The most perfect cleanliness is the leading characteristic of Eastern houses. (1854:39) She in length gives a description of the Turkish bath, which is important not only for the description itself but also for emphasizing the transition between the Augustan period and the Victorian Period. (Melman,1992) Pardoe is frank in her views of the bathing process, which she sees as " tedious, exhausting, and troublesome." (1854:48) The bath is almost a party among women, who sing, chat, gossip, eat and etc. Yet, this partying makes Pardoe's breathing even more difficult since she is not comfortable with the dense air in the bath. She also does not like the sights of the women in the bath due to the constant 'sulphureous atmosphere.' (1854:49) Pardoe, who reveals that she does not agree with Lady Montagu's view of the women in bath somewhat wanton, demonstrates that the way the Victorians perceive harem is more prudent. Montagu is relatively 'carefree' in her description of the hammam:

Montagu's language mimics the traditional masculine gesture of

voyeuristic penetration with the gaze, as does Ingres' famous tableau reminiscent of a keyhole voyeur, *Le bain turc* (1862), heavily influenced as it is by Montagu's account of the hammam. Montagu suggests that the total nudity of the women displaces the signs of their psychic readability from the face down to the entire body: "I was here convinc'd of the Truth of a Reflexion that I had often made, that if twas the fashion to go naked, the face would be hardly observ'd" (L, 314). And she observes that the heat had been bothering her, making it "impossible to stay there with one's Cloths on" (L, 313)." (Aravamudan,1995)

Pardoe was distinctive in her accounts of the bath. Unlike the prevailing stereotypical harem paintings of the period, produced by artists like Ingres Pardoe provided a different view and somehow de-eroticized it. (Lewis; Micklewright, 2006:66) Fatema Mernissi suggests that the Christian culture lacked 'the conception of bath as a cleansing ritual.' This was why many Western artists represented it as 'an exotic Oriental fantasy.' (2001:100) "Thus, in the Western mind, to enjoy oneself in the bath had long been linked with terrifying dangers, be they sinful sex or devastating epidemics." (Mernissi, 2001:101)

Pardoe is also known for her visit to the mosque of St. Sophia where she was dressed like a Muslim man. She was so zealous in learning the life in Turkey that she dared even cross-dressing. Despite slight irritations she experienced during her observations, Pardoe usually avoided stereotyping and eroticizing the Orient. She kept her Victorian propriety and established

herself as an outstanding informer on the Oriental life. Ludmilla Kostova suggests that Pardoe always kept a distance towards the women in the harem. (2007) No matter how close she was with them, inside she always wanted to keep her propriety as an English lady. She, similar to many other female travelers, abstained from very close contact with women. She was careful at preserving her identity, yet empowered her status and fame through meticulous domestic narration.

4.4. Sophia Lane Poole

Sophia Lane Poole aided her brother Edward Lane, who could not give much information on the harem, and wrote about the harem. “Although his Manners and Customs had been praised for its completeness, Lane knew that its descriptions of women were superficial: He had been unable to interview Egyptian women and had had to draw almost all of his information about them from Egyptian men. Sophia, however, could go places he had not, and would be able to write about Egyptian women in much more depth.” (Thompson,2008) Hence, he asked her sister to write a completion for his book.

“Sophia worked on her book, aided by Lane, who sometimes supplied material and always offered suggestions. He reviewed and approved each chapter when she finished it. Covered from head to ground in her black *habarah*, her face concealed by a long, heavy veil, Sophia would ride forth on her donkey, accompanied by servants, to visit the harems of the great, including that of the Pasha of Egypt, the

powerful Muhammad Ali, where she always received a warm welcome. These occasions, as she explained, provided “frequent and familiar intercourse with the ladies of the higher and middle classes ... such as, I believe, few Englishwomen have enjoyed.” (Thompson, 2008)

Lane Poole “established herself as a writer after the publication of her text, *The Englishwoman in Egypt*. (1844-46) The title of her book is very interesting. It combines three elements of Lane Poole’s identity. She is English, woman and moreover in Egypt. Poole did not refrain reflecting her proud of being in the East. Thompson writes that a reviewer wrote that “Mrs. Poole has now done for Egypt what Lady Mary Wortley Montague did for Turkey and even more, as her relationship to Mr. Lane, the celebrated Arabic scholar, and long a resident in Egypt, has enabled her to supply information on subjects not generally to be expected from female travelers.” (Thompson,2008) Poole did really gain wide acknowledgment thanks to her accounts :

When her highly popular accounts of a lady’s life in Egypt were published back in London, they caused a mild sensation. It might be permissible for a learned chap like Lane to immerse himself in the exotic culture of the East--but an Englishwoman? A Christian wife and mother dressing herself up in Turkish "trousers" and visiting the city's harems? Living in what she insisted is a haunted house, and witnessing barbarous murders almost on her own doorstep? And, worst of all, taking Turkish baths with the natives? Sophia tempered the

sensationalist--with a serious study--to complement Lane's *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*--of the habits and customs of harem life in Cairo ... and qualified herself admirably to write a definitive text to Filth's stupendous photographs of Egypt in the 1850s. (Robinson 305, cited in Thompson, 2008)

Lewis and Micklewright mentioned that Sophia Lane in fact came from middle-class. She was the daughter of a middle-class clergy man, and in England would never have had access to wealthy and elite society that she was able to visit in Cairo. Perhaps because of her own awareness of the fine gradations of the social status, she is an acute observer of status in Egyptian context, always careful to establish her own high rank vis-à-vis other visitors, but also to delineate the social hierarchies among women, whose homes she visited. In the following quotation her zealously for the higher classes is emphasized. To learn the domestic life of the ladies helped her to provide herself with penetration into the higher classes although it was temporary. (2006:78)

"The opportunities I might enjoy of obtaining an insight into the mode of life of the higher classes of the ladies in this country, and of seeing many things highly interesting in themselves, and rendered more so by their being accessible only to a lady, suggested to him the idea that I might both gratify my own curiosity and collect much information of a novel and interesting nature, which he proposed I should embody in a series of familiar letters to a friend." (1845:v)

As a Victorian feminine travel convention, Lane Poole also mentioned her easy access into harem: "Some European ladies, a short time since, offered twenty dollars to procure admission, and were refused. I did not offer a bribe; for I never have condescended to obtain access to a hareem through the servants, and have either been introduced by my kind friend Mrs. Sieder, or paid my visit without any explanation to the slaves, and have never met with the slightest opposition." (1845, II:179)

She also mentions the nice treatment she saw as :

I judge not only from the remarks I hear, but from the honorable manner in which I am treated; and the reception, entertainment, and farewell I experience are in every respect highly flattering.

I told you of great politeness that was shown me on the occasion of my first visit to the royal ladies I have just mentioned. On my second visit to them I was almost perplexed by the honour with which, they distinguished me; for the chief lady resigned her own place, and seated herself below me." (1845, II:43)

Sophia was extremely proud of the way she was treated and frequently mentioned it. She emphasized that she was given the chief lady's place. She not only gained status in the Orient but also in the mind of the reader thanks to her narration.

"I am pleased to find the Eastern women contented, and, without a single exception among my acquaintances, so cheerful, that I naturally

conclude that they are treated with consideration.” (1845, II:18) The expression refers to Poole’s previous bias. She might have thought of the harem ladies as unhappy and depressed. But she finds them contented and feels happy for them.

Similar to her brother Edward Lane, Poole at times adopted the Turkish dress, “at home, and visiting the ladies of the middle class, I wear Turkish dress, which is delightfully comfortable.” (1845, I:211) However, she uses the European dress outside as she furthermore mentions. She furthermore stresses that she in English costume should not gain admittance into many hareems. (1845, I:63)

Like Montagu, Poole also mentioned the liberty of women in the harem. She referred to the tradition that a woman might exclude her husband by putting yellow slippers in front of the door. Yet she observes that most of the ladies are ignorant. “Few of the ladies can read and write even their language.” (1845:II: 31)

Lane Poole is neither very sympathetic with harem like Duff Gordon, nor propagates like Emmeline Lott. What is clear from her accounts is that she does care about class. Her extreme fondness of the treatment she sees in harem shows that whether she likes the harem women or not she likes being there. To write about the Oriental woman is her accomplishment, which brings her success and fame.

4.5. Emmeline Lott

Emmeline Lott went to Egypt to govern the kids of the Court of the Egyptian Viceroy, Ismail Pasha. She published her travel accounts under the name of *The English Governess in Egypt: Harem Life in Egypt and Constantinople*. (1866) Lewis and Mickelwright define such governesses as:

Beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century, elite families in Cairo and Istanbul hired European tutors or governesses for their children. Clearly a sign of status and culture, the tutors and governesses were supposed to teach the children foreign languages and music, as well as to introduce them to European customs. The governesses who lived with the families of their charges were well positioned to observe domestic life, and some took advantage of their privileged access to write about it. (2006:89)

Lott did observe the harem and did not approve of it. It should be here noted that her occupation in the harem lasted only for one year, the next year she was fired. Thus, her negative views on the harem might have not been only as a result of her racial prejudices and feelings of superiority. Lott opined that the reason why the Turks and the Egyptians were semi-barbaric was due to their treatment of the women, who were not educated enough. Moreover, she claimed that some European people, who lived there, adapted the same morals and attitudes towards the women. She calls the inmates of the harem as “the caged beauties of the East.” (1867:45) Lott, whose accounts indeed were not as successful as the travelers’ above, put herself in a different category and claimed that she gave true accounts of the harem. She quoted

from Montagu in her preface and investigated the authenticity of Montagu's accounts. As Widmer-Schnyder noted, "Lott writes that, unlike Lady Montague who describes the *well-prepared* Oriental Harems of the *rich* Turkish upper-classes, she herself saw – and experienced -- the *unprepared* versions, the "real thing," on a *daily* basis while *living in* Harems." (1999: 10)

Lott did not call her book as "domestic life." She exactly named it "harem." And explained her objective in writing this book as: "The object of the following work is to disclose to European society 'Life in the Harems of Egypt and Constantinople.' It has been my aim to give a concise yet impartial and sympathetic account of the daily life of the far-famed Odalisques [the Harem inhabitants] of the nineteenth-century -- those mysterious impersonifications of Eastern loveliness." (1867: viii)

Although Lott told that she would give sympathetic accounts of the harem, the impression taken from the book is not as she claimed. Lott resembles to Poole with regards to her wish to sneak into the mysteries of the East. She finds herself lonely among the crowd of the harem since the ladies of the harem could only speak Arabic or Turkish. However, she can speak several continental languages and thus finds herself "enviable." (1867:70)

Lott feels more than ennui in the harem. She is not only bored and melancholic but also 'unaccustomed to the filthy manners, barbarous costumes, and disgusting habits of all around' her. (1867:104) She uses very offensive words to describe the activities of the Oriental women. For example, the proceedings of the slaves, who roll and loll about the divans all

day are defined as “far more appropriate to beasts than human beings.”

(1867:106) She represented the harem with utmost negative attributions:

It is almost impossible to conceive how difficult it is to talk with individuals, who usually contemplate the world only from behind grated walls, or the curtains of carriages, or caiques and to who so far from being removed from worldly interests, are, to all intents and purposes living in, and stirring in them. For here even more than the body is the female mind immured. Existence in the harems becomes frightfully monotonous; it engenders melancholy madness; an utter carelessness of world things creeps over, a total indifference to everything around you, a lethargic stupor enshrouds the mind. (1867:307)

Despite her relatively sound social positionality as governess, Lott is similarly, if not more so, preoccupied with the distribution of social power in general, and the status of women in particular. (Widmer-Schnyder, 1999: 10) She is very sensitive to class and is afraid of descending into lower class. As a result of her class obsession, Unlike Emmeline Lott records cultural misreadings perpetrated by *both* sides involved in the encounter, that is, by the Oriental *as well as* by herself and other Westerners.

Lott praises herself through the kindness she saw in the harem:

In short the whole of the inmates of the harem soon began thoroughly to appreciate my European ways and habits in my respect. If they were taken ill they consulted me, followed my remedies, and did their best poor ignorant, deluded, neglected creatures, to abandon any habits

which I explained to them were repugnant to delicacy, especially when I told them that were not *a la Franca*, "European. (1867:132)

She concludes the paragraph that 'from princess to sweeper' all in the harem 'treated her with great kindness.' (1867:132) Lott recreated her identity through her status in the harem. However, it was not only the harem woman she criticized. She also hated the fact that all Europeans were treated the same by the Eastern people and wanted to have privilege among them. Lott's principal aim was to keep her status and move it upwards. Her frequent emphasize on how respectfully she was treated and how authentic her accounts were, demonstrated her strong wish to stress her superiority as an English lady in the exotic harem.

4.6. Harriet Martineau, Amelia Edwards and Florence Nightingale

No traveler appreciated harem in all aspects. More or less, each traveler found things to criticize be it freedom, dresses, illiteracy, ignorance, or laziness. Yet, the travelers that were mentioned so far were mild and sometimes euphemistic in their opinions. Direct insult or harsh criticism was not met in any accounts except Emmeline Lott's. However, some travelers who found the harem very oppressive propagated about it negatively. Yet, interestingly most of them did not spend long time in harems. They usually visited few harems for a short time. Harriet Martineau was a great example of harem hostility. She visited some harems when she was in Egypt. "What she saw and learned in harems worked differently for it served not to modify or extend but to reinforce other ideas which she had held long and

passionately.” (Rees, 1995:43) She did not approve of the polygamy and the harem life. She wrote that the life of a harem woman is “the nothingness of external life, and the chaos of internal existence.” (Rees, 1995:43)

Martineau acclaims that the European prejudices against the polygamy are the strongest in the world. She uses the polygamy in the context of the harem. It can be said that she is more critical of polygamy than the harem itself. “If we are to look for a hell on earth it is where polygamy exists and: as that polygamy runs riot in Egypt, Egypt is the lowest depth of this hell.” (1848:260)

She explicitly expresses her hostile view of the ladies in the harem. There is almost nothing she finds meaningful in those ladies. She not only finds them lazy but also the younger ones except one “dull, soulless, brutish or peevish.” (1848:263) She mentions that European ladies like her are not understood by the “different races.” (1848:263) “Everywhere they pity us European women heartily, that we had to go about traveling lonely and appeared in the streets without properly being taken care of, that is- watched.” (1848:263) The incident when Martineau and her accompanies have a problem of interpretation in the harem- the interpreter does not show up- is ironic. Martineau already has her biases, which she heartily acknowledges. This pretext helps her to show her biases explicitly. The fact that she finds these women peevish or deficient in mind does not only stem from the lack of interpretation but also from her authentic prejudices towards these women. They seem to have a superficial disharmony in

communicating; which is, indeed, deeper than it seems. With or without an interpreter, according to Martineau, the harem ladies cannot understand her. They do not have enough reason or vision of life, to compete with Martineau.

Martineau is extremely cruel in her depiction of the harem and she attributes its enormity to Egypt, which is to her, 'atrocious.' She severely criticizes the system of slavery and meanwhile she seizes the opportunity to boast about Christianity and demeans Mohammedans. She opines that as long as the polygamy continues, slavery cannot be totally abolished.

Martineau concludes her accounts on the two harems with the idea that she saw the most corrupted women ever. She really pities 'the most injured human beings.' (1848:270) She is almost the most prejudiced, racist and critical observer of the harem.

Amelia Edwards, a popular novelist, journalist and Egyptologist made a journey to Egypt and wrote *A Thousand Miles up To the Nile*. (1891) Compared to Nightingale or Martineau, her work, on the contrary was seen particularly associated with Egypt. (Rees, 1995:69) She acclaimed that she "had little opportunity of observing domestic life in Egypt." (1982:479) She was charmed with the archeological aspects of country. However, during her journey there she visited one harem. "She found that through the wives of princes and nobles in Cairo and Alexandria had rather more to occupy them, the women of the lesser gentry and upper middle-class were condemned to lives absolutely without mental resources and deprived even

fresh air and exercise.” (Rees, 1995:88) Getting information from her friends, who visited the vice-regal harems at Cairo, she concludes that each occasion has the same dreariness. Egyptian ladies live their lives aimlessly. Her expressions somehow revealed that she already had her own prejudices which could be deduced from her generalizing the harem with second hand information.

Similar to Edwards and Martineau, Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, traveled to the eastern Mediterranean and her Egyptian voyage produced *Letters from Egypt*. (1854) These letters addressed to her family, in which she once mentioned Mahometan religion and compared the situation of the man and woman in this religion. According to her accounts, “The Mahometan religion takes man on the side of his passions; it gratifies all these; it offers him enjoyment as his reward.”(1987:28) But the woman was “not a wife nor a mother: she cannot sit down in the presence of her son, her husband is her master, and her only occupation that of beautifying herself and surpassing the others in his eyes. (1987:28-29) Though not being as offensive as Martineau, Nightingale also did not sympathize with the harem or the Oriental woman very much. However, she did not express it as horrified as Martineau. She shared her contemporaries’ views of the boredom and laziness in the harem: “Oh the ennui of that magnificent place, it will stand in my memory as a circle of hell.” (1987:208)

CONCLUSION

Harem, which was known also as Dar'us-saade (house of happiness) was perceived rather as a house of oppression and boredom by the Westerners. It was perceived as an essential element of the Oriental life. The whole orient is telescoped into the confined chronotope of the harem, indeed the Sultana's bed chamber. (Ballaster, 12) Actually the West used harem as a metaphor to learn about the inner life of the East. In writings on the Middle East the oriental household was commonly identified with female virtue and morality. (Yaeger, 447)

Despite the stereotypical view of the harem in the mind of the Westerner, the thesis showed that women had viewed it different than men from the eighteenth century on. Unlike men, who were not allowed into harems, women had access into harems, where they usually acted as participant observers. Their writings were more authentic and less imaginative compared to men's. However, the female writings on the harem also varied. While some were sympathetic with it, some severely criticized it. The travelers who paid short visits to harems mostly criticized it while long term residents in the East grew relatively sympathetic feelings with it. Yet, one common thing between them was all were proud of themselves as being women who could learn about the mysterious domestic life of the Orient. This way they increased their status as women, who could travel by themselves and produce literature.

Tucker commented on the literature on domestic life of the Orient as, “We have thus come to handle this literature with care, always remembering that we are reading not a record the Middle East, but a record of the European encounter with the Middle East.” (Tucker, 1990) The important thing about these writings is that no matter whether they reflected truth or not, they enlightened the reader about the Western attitudes towards the other. Through harem literature, one can learn about the status and manners of the travelers, most of whom were faced with problems related to gender due to the period they lived in. The writings not only demonstrate to what extent the travelers had an imperialist view on the East but also how much they were influenced by the other culture.

APPENDIX

A LIST OF TRAVELERS WHO TRAVELED TO EAST IN THE 18TH and THE 19TH CENTURIES

- ❑ Bell, Gertrude (1868-1926)
- ❑ Bird, Isabella L. (1831-1904)
- ❑ Blunt, Lady Annabella King-Noel (1837-1917)
- ❑ Blunt, Fanny Janet (1840-n.d.)
- ❑ Burton Isabel, nee Arundel (1831-96)
- ❑ Craven Elisabeth (1750-1828)
- ❑ Edwards, Amelia Ann Blanford (1831-92)
- ❑ Fay, Eliza (1756-1816)
- ❑ Gordon, Lucie Duff (1821-69)
- ❑ Kingsley, Mary (1862-1900)
- ❑ Lane, Edward (1801-1876)
- ❑ Lott, Emmeline
- ❑ Hornby, Emilia Bithynia (n.d.)
- ❑ Postans, Marie
- ❑ Martineau, Harriet (1802-1876)
- ❑ Mary, Wortley Montagu
- ❑ Nightingale, Florence (1820-1910)
- ❑ Pardoe, Julia Sophia (1806-1862)
- ❑ Poole, Sophia Lane (1804-91)
- ❑ Rogers, Mary Eliza (n.d.)
- ❑ Stanhope, Lady Hester Lucy (1776-1839)

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